

TUNSTALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 9th December, 2013

Present: Cllr. L. Burgess – Chair
Cllr. P. Mitchell – Vice-Chair
Cllr. C. Browning
Cllr. A. Spicer
Cllr. J. Mills
Cllr. I. Davison
Lynda Fisher, Clerk
14 Parishioners

The Chairman welcomed visitors to the meeting and because many had come to discuss the school proposal extended the normal 15 minutes put aside for the public session.

Members of the Public – A gentleman thanked the Parish Council for extending the time for the public to convey their opinions. He wished to draw particular attention to the highway problems associated with the School proposal; no matter how well the development is designed it cannot disguise the fact that there will be immense problems with the road. The drop-off point mentioned will be problematic; parents do not arrive just to drop off/collect their children, at times they need to stop and talk to a member of staff, etc. If the school extends to 420 pupils at least three quarters will not come from the local catchment area so there could be 300 cars arriving between 8.30 to 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 to 3.30 p.m. There is no provision in the plan for 300 cars arriving and staying there. If cars park in Tunstall Road it will create a major traffic hazard. Cars could also back up into Cranbrook Drive, Chegworth Gardens, etc., and the traffic calming will not help with the situation. He suggested that the Council takes this up very strongly with KCC Highways.

The Chairman thanked the gentleman for his input and stated that the plans that have been seen so far are not the actual planning application, only drafts of what might be forthcoming and are subject to change. He added that with it being a Church of England School the catchment area is not the same as for a Community School. Should the planning application arrive outside the normal monthly meeting the Parish Council will hold an Extraordinary Meeting.

One member of the public felt it should remain a village school for village people and not allowed to increase in size.

A member of the public mentioned that it was not only 420 places for the school, but it included a Nursery. The Chairman responded that he had been advised that no Nursery will be included with this application.

Concern was expressed that it had been mentioned that children will be able to walk to school; if you try and walk down Tunstall Road there are no footpaths as such.

Another member of the public felt that there would not be enough religious children to fill the school. She lives on Woodstock Road and every day it is bumper to bumper with vehicles; at the moment there are 740 cars morning and evening and she felt it was a ludicrous place to build a school.

The Chairman commented that when the planning application comes in it is important for members of the public to write to KCC with their views, both for and against the proposal. He believes the

planning document may be issued on the 10th January, 2014. The Education Cabinet meets to discuss the proposal on the 14th January, commencing at 10.00 a.m. at County Hall; the public can attend.

A gentleman from Cromers Road did not know about the first consultation and only heard about the drop-in the day before. He felt that it was such a major development that it will destroy the hamlet.

A member of the public spoke to support the proposal. He thought the design would take account of the traffic with the school managing it on site; however another person could not see how it would be possible to manage this with the narrowness of the road.

The tenant who farms the proposed site mentioned that she had been asked for permission for a company to go on to her land to do some trials, to which she agreed. However the company then brought a JCB and Water Bowser on to the site, the machinery got stuck in the mud and ended up gouging out deep ruts in the earth and damaging the crops.

A member of the public asked if it is possible for the Parish Council to make the point that when this new school is put into place KCC will be taking away the rights of the children who live in this Parish to attend a small village school.

The Chairman reminded those in attendance that there is nothing firm on the table at the moment; the present plans are only a draft and subject to change and when the final ones do arrive the Parish Council will need to look at all material planning considerations when making a response.

Borough/County Councillors/PCSO – Disappointingly during this important period no Borough or County Councillors were present to hear the public's concerns/support for the school proposal.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input and formally opened up the meeting.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman formally welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Cllr. Davison and the PCSO. None were received from Borough Cllrs. Sylvia Bennett, Derek Conway, Jean and Alan Willicombe or County Cllr. Roger Truelove.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest. However, a Dispensation has already been granted to all Members relating to Tunstall School.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Proposed by Cllr. Spencer and seconded by Cllr. Spicer, the Minutes of the Monthly Parish Council meeting held on the 4th November, 2013, were agreed by Members and signed as a true transcript, with the following amendment:

Councillor Spencer was in attendance at the meeting held on the 4th November, 2013.

4. Tunstall School Consultation

Clerk advised that she has sent by registered post the Parish Council's response to the consultation. The KCC form was accompanied by a letter explaining why the Council could not support the expansion, together with copies of all the responses to the Parish Council's request for comments, both for and against the proposal, which supported this view.

Cllr. Browning expressed concern that members of the public, both within and outside the Parish boundary, are not being made aware of what is going on. Clerk to write expressing concern that there appears to be a lack of information given to residents within the Parish and Ecclesiastical boundaries and to add that we have received complaints about work undertaken on the site by contractors.

There appear to be rumours circulating that the school will close if the proposal does not go ahead; Chair to check with County Cllr. Roger Gough as to the validity of this comment and give feedback to the Clerk for circulation. **Action: Cllr. Burgess/Clerk**

A traffic survey will be carried out as part of the application. Cllr. Mitchell suggested the Parish Council having its own survey carried out – Clerk to ascertain costs. **Action: Clerk**

The Chairman referred to the future planning application and the need for members of the public to respond. When the application arrives it was agreed that an advisory leaflet be distributed to each property in the Parish; giving information as to where the plans can be viewed and how to respond.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

1. **Commemorating Frank Panton** – A hole has been dug for the tree; plaque has been sorted out; Rev. Longbottom is happy to officiate, now just awaiting a date for the Ceremony.
2. **Electoral Commission Consultation – Standing for Election in the UK** – Proposed by Cllr. Spencer and seconded by Cllr. Mitchell, agreed to write objecting to the restriction on the number of Councils Councillors can sit on. **Action: Clerk**
3. **Land Registry Applications 4 x £11** – Proposed by Cllr. Mitchell and seconded by Cllr. Browning, all agreed for Cllr. Spicer to make four applications, (£11 each) to Land Registry appertaining to the new school site. **Action: Cllr. Spicer**
4. **Borough Representatives – Response from the Leader of Swale Borough Council** – As instructed the Clerk wrote to the Leader of the Council regarding the Woodstock Ward Representatives and received the following response:

“The situation with Alan and Jean is one only they can resolve, there is no mechanism to force their resignations unless they are absent from ALL meetings for 6 months. Due to the imminent changes to Ward Boundaries the local Conservative Association had put in place the plans for Alan and Jean and Cllrs Conway and Bennett to work jointly across South Sittingbourne before Alan and Jean sold their house. This was to allow them to understand the issues and for people to get to know them in anticipation that all 4 of them would be candidates somewhere in the area in 2015.”

The Chairman advised that the Willicombes are still active as he is getting e-mails from them. He believes this has now been referred to the Monitoring Officer.

6. Finance

1. **Coffin Pond** – Cllr. Mitchell had a site meeting with one of the companies tendering for this contract to ascertain the full details of the work quoted for. It was agreed Clerk to approach this company again asking for costs to include a skip, traffic barriers and lights. It was proposed by

Cllr. Spencer and seconded by Cllr. Mitchell; all agreed that if the quotation comes back under £2,500 then the Clerk can give instructions for this work to go ahead. **Action: Clerk**

2. **Budget 2014/15**

Clerk circulated a draft budget and asked Councillors to look at the figures and she will bring this back to the January meeting. A letter has been received from Swale Borough Council advising that the support grant, which arose last year to cover the shortfall in funding due to changes in the Benefit Scheme, has been withdrawn. In light of this and the awaited Tax Base Rate figure, the Clerk is unable to determine whether there will be a decrease or an increase in the Precept for 2014/15. Hopefully all figures will be to hand in time for the January meeting.

Action: All Councillors

3. **Cheques raised at this meeting:**

The following cheques were signed and the accounts to the 30th November, 2013, approved.

| Date | Cheque | Details | | Amount |
|-----------------------|--------|----------------------------------|--|----------|
| 09.12.13 | 0968 | H.M. Revenue & Customs | Tax – November, 2013 | £44.80p |
| 09.12.13 | 0969 | L. Fisher | Expenses – Telephone/Broadband; home as office; postage School Consultation parcel. A4 paper & Push Pins – one quarter share | £29.37p |
| 09.12.13 | 0970 | Branchett Limited | Hedge trimming and weed spraying by Pond and opposite Old School House 2013 | £795.00p |
| 09.12.13 | 0971 | Gillett & Johnston (Croydon) Ltd | Church Clock service 1.1.2014 to 31.12.2014 | £250.80p |
| 09.12.13 | 0972 | Tunstall Village Memorial Hall | Hire of Hall 9.12.13 | £20.00 |
| Five Cheques in total | | | | |

Paid by Direct Debit – L. Fisher – Wages, November, 2013: £178.90p

6 **Correspondence**

1. **Have your say on Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority's Safety Plan 2014:** noted.
2. **Refresh of Police and Crime Plan April 2013 to March 2017** – Clerk instructed to write to Gordon Henderson, M.P. expressing concern at the lack of Police and that Members are not happy with the coverage we get. Clerk to also write to Anne Barnes, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, referring to the recent series of break-ins in Tunstall and residents having had no response from the PCSO; commenting that we are not happy with the cuts and believe that there is a need for more Police rather than PCSOs. **Action: Clerk**
3. **Have your say on Police council tax** – Agreed Councillors to respond to this individually. **Action: All Councillors**
4. **Bearing Fruits 2031: The draft Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1** – Details noted.
5. **London Airspace Consultation** – Details noted.
6. **KCC Budget Consultation** – Noted.
7. **Community Governance Review** – Tunstall’s submission is progressing to the second stage.

8. **Planning Training** – None to attend.
9. **Future of Local Audit: Draft Regulations Consultation** – Members agreed to support the response prepared by Kent Association of Local Councils.

7. **Planning**

1. **SW/13/1397** – New poly tunnel type structure for growing plants for research purposes (initially maize and marrow plants) – Land rear of 930 Cornforth Drive, Kent Science Park, Tunstall, ME9 8F – Members raised no objection to this application.

8. **Any Other Matters Arising**

1. Councillor Browning raised a concern that outpatients clinics are closing.

11. **Next Meeting(s)**

The next Meeting will be on Monday 6th January, 2014, commencing at 6.45 p.m. in the Midwinter Room, St. John the Baptist Church, Tunstall.

The meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.