

PADDOCKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON Monday 15th July 2019,
at the Day Centre, Commercial Road, at
7.45 p.m.

- PRESENT:** Cllr M Flashman, in the Chair
 Cllrs R. Atkins (TWBC) D. Boyle, R. Moon, D. Sargison, E. Thomas (TWBC).
 R. Turk, C. Williams
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs N Reay, Town Clerk
 25 residents
 BC M Bailey
- APOLOGIES:** Cllr S. Hamilton, (TWBC, KCC)
- NOT PRESENT:** Cllr B Hills

Fiona Pengelly from the Community Advice Centre thanked the town council for its continued support. (Note: the council will grant the advice centre £6k in 2019/2020).

The cases they were dealing with were becoming more complicated. The main issues were as follows:

- Homelessness and evictions – largely as a result of Universal Credit, which is paid monthly, and some people are used to receiving their benefits weekly which is causing difficulties
- Employment issues – particularly regarding 0-hour contracts
- There were a number of clients with mental health issues who have no support workers as the funding has been cut by Social Services

Members asked/commented as follows:

- Had KCC given any response regarding the lack of support workers for mental health workers? The County Councillor had previously advised that a review was underway
- Volunteers were being put under enormous stress – what could PWTC do to help? More support from the borough council would be appreciated. CAC often have to help people sort out their council tax. More funding would be useful – TWBC fund the CAB but have cut their grants to the CAC. Their running costs are £18k/year.

Members thanked Mrs Pengelly for attending and updating members on the work of the Community Advice Centre.

At the June meeting the Friends of Memorial Field asked if the council would review the Putlands Community Hub Plan from 2015. The group were invited to give a short presentation to the Council outlining why they believe this to be a preferable site for the Community Centre. Mr Thompson spoke on their behalf and outlined the actions the group had taken to date. He also pointed out that they were not opposed to a community centre – just the loss of green space. Mr Thompson then spoken of the reasons why the group believed that the Putlands was a better location for the Community Centre. A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes.

Mr A Mackie then spoke. He advised he was speaking as a local resident although he had been a previous leader of the Community Centre Group. He had been the chair of the group that discussed the original document in March 2015. The plan had reduced the sports hall by half and the number of badminton courts to 1. It also reduced the height of the sports hall as it included a mezzanine floor – this would affect the height for trampolining. There was a risk of overdeveloping the site. The further plan in June 2015 was not looked at as they were advised by the chairman of the council at the time that it did not address the concerns raised.

In the proposals for Putlands the community area is half the size of the that proposed for the Memorial. The main advantage of the proposals is that it is cheaper. TWBC have previously written to say they will not

support the Putlands option. Their support would be needed for the project to go ahead. Mr Mackie also pointed out that the two members of FMF who stood for election in May were not successful.

QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

The following questions were put to the Council.

How could the town council outline the site for the community centre 25th April 2018 when the full council had not approved the site until 19th November 2018.

The Council had the deeds to the Memorial site changed to being in the council's hands in March 2018, again why when the council had not decided until November.

Why was the Memorial Field on the RIBA 1 documents when it had not been decided? Who on the council or whilst wearing the borough hat named the Memorial Field as the chosen site when again the council had not decided?

A written response would be sent.

The Council was asked what its stance was regarding the proposed new housing for Paddock Wood?

The chairman stated that the council's planning advisor was available to assist the Council with its response. However, until the final document is published the town council is not able to comment. It will however be giving its views on the infrastructure, sewage & water problems.

Both the chairman and vice chairman of the Planning Committee expressed grave concerns about the plans for building to the West of Paddock Wood.

A representative of the Parents Against Academisation of the Primary School thanked the council for writing to the Leigh Academy and asked if the letter would appear on the website. The Clerk advised that the council did not normally publish letters. They were also hoping to address Cllr Hamilton. The Clerk advised that Cllr Hamilton was not appointed as a school governor due to her role as a councillor and she should be contacted outside of the meeting.

Following last month's meeting a resident commented that she felt the council was not united and supporting one another. Members should not be discussed in their absence.

QUESTIONS FOR THE BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

The Chairman welcomed Borough Councillor Bailey to the meeting.

The Borough Councillors were asked the following:

Is there any threat to the Wesley Centre, beyond the possible sale of the land to the rear?

BC Thomas advised that there was no threat to the building – it was the only public Victorian building left in Paddock Wood and should be protected. There was a threat of 2 houses on the land to the rear.

BC Thomas also added that the borough council had no control or power over the proposed 4,000 houses Borough Cllr Bailey concurred and stated that the Borough Council was given targets by the government and must allocate land for development or it will be allocated by the Planning Inspectorate. The Borough Council was aware of the flooding issues in Paddock Wood, as were the developers who were working to overcome the problems.

Borough Cllr Atkins referred to the issues and options document which was still on the website for viewing.

Cllr Williams asked if the Borough Councillors would support the town council's efforts along with the MP to persuade Southern Water to carry out the necessary work. It has been calculated that enough funding would be received by the Southern Water from the developers to pay for the around town sewer which was needed.

The County Councillor had advised the Clerk that she would not arrange further meetings with the Highways Officers until the Town Council had submitted a Highways Improvement Plan.

The following questions were still outstanding from previous meetings:

Does the County Councillor support the cuts to libraries?

Does the County Councillor support the 20% increase to the bus passes?

Does the County Councillor oppose the academisation of the primary school?

How did the County Councillor vote on the cuts to the stroke services?

The chairman suggested that the County Councillor should be contacted directly for a response.

C34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C35 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- (a) Cllr Atkins advised that he believed the council had made a mistake during last month's meeting and should not have continued with the meeting after item C24 (b) as the chairman did not re-instate standing orders after suspending them to allow a member of the public to speak.(the clerk was absent from the room at the time). Although absent from the meeting he had listened to a recording of the meeting which had been made by a member of the public. It was agreed that the approval of the minutes should be deferred until Cllr Atkins had forwarded the relevant extract from the recording.

In view of the concerns, the Clerk advised that only item C25 Recording of Meetings, would need to be referred to Council in August. All other items were for information only, and not for decision.

- (b) The minutes of the Estates meeting held on Monday 8th July 2019 were NOTED.

C36 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

- (a) C22 – a letter has been sent to the Leigh Academy Trust.

- (b) C23 – The closing date for applications for co-option was Noon 15th July 2019. Four applications had been received and the Personal Statements would be circulated to members. The co-option meeting would take place on Wednesday 24th July 2019. Members discussed the procedure for the meeting, and the Clerk advised that each seat would be voted for separately. Three ballots would be required.

Cllr Flashman proposed; Cllr Williams seconded:

That the voting should be by secret ballot.

CARRIED unanimously

- (c) C26 – The Council's planning advisor had confirmed that he is available to assist the council when it responds to the Draft Local Plan once the consultation period opens next month.
- (d) C27 – the Council's Annual Financial Return had been sent to PKF Littlejohn, external auditor. The required public notices are on the council website and notice boards.
- (e) C30 – The request for Village Green Status for the Memorial Playing Field was put forward by the Friends of Memorial Field.
- (f) C31 (k) – TWBC have advised that the subsidy paid by the Town Council for the running of Putlands is included in the management fee which is paid by the borough council to Fusion.
- (g) The chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee advised that Greg Clark MP had offered to meet on Friday 19th July before the Councillors Conference. Cllr Moon would attend. Mr Trent, Co-opted member of the P & E Committee, had met with Mr Clark and would forward a written response.

C37 COMMUNITY CENTRE

- (a) Members received a written update for the Project Manager as follows:

RIBA 3

Consultants are finalising RIBA stage 3 (developed design) in anticipation of presenting the final plans to the Council for sign off at an exceptional meeting anticipated to be in September/October. As part of this all project documentation will be updated to enable the Council to consider all aspects of the project.

Subject to sign off by the Council a further five weeks will then be required to finalise and submit the planning application to TWBC.

The Board has agreed that a leaflet will be distributed to increase awareness of the project as part of this stage.

Working party

Invitations are being sent to all local organisations inviting them to have representation on the working party as the project moves into RIBA 4.

Village Green

A village green submission has been received by Kent County Council from the Friends of the Memorial Field. TWBC has responded to requests for information from KCC on this matter.

Future steps

Subject to planning being submitted and being approved, options for the next steps in terms of delivering RIBA stage 4 (detailed designs) and procurement of a contractor will then start to be considered.

- (b) Putlands Community Hub – following the proposals put forward by the Friends of Memorial Field, it was agreed that further discussion should be had at the August meeting to allow members time to consider the proposals and carry out any further research necessary.

The following issues were raised:

Why had there been delays in the sign off for RiBA 3?

Amendments had been requested to the internal design and then a pause was put on the project during the election period.

It was expected that value engineering would take place during the RiBA 4 stage

Cllr Atkins asked for the internal measurements to be forwarded.

It was believed that the both the land and the building at Putlands were owned by the town council but leased to the Borough Council. The Clerk would confirm.

C38 HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Cllrs Williams, Moon and Flashman had conducted a walk about and started compiling the list for the plan.

The following were noted for improvement:

Tactile paving

Drains/gully emptying

Potholes

Sides of the carriage ways

Cars turning left at the from Maidstone Road into Station road

Assistance would be required from all councillors for auditing the highways. Cllr Boyle agreed to look at the area around Ribston, Laxton Gardens etc.

The Council was advised that KCC was looking for an estimate to repair the table tops in Commercial Road.

The clerk circulated a copy of letter from a resident expressing concerns about the roads in Paddock Wood.

C39 WEBSITE

The administrative clerk who manages the website has been researching alternative providers. Members were given a list of three possible providers and the advantages and disadvantages of the each one. Sample websites were also provided. Members were asked to look at the various websites in time for next month's meeting so that they could consider what features they would like the new website to contain. Funding will need to be allocated in the 2020 budget.

C40 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The chairman reported that the development of the Neighbourhood Plan was being delayed by the TWBC draft local plan. Until the master planning process has taken place which TWBC have advised that the NP group will be involved, the group cannot finalise its own policies and move forward with its consultation. The Plan cannot be the centre of objections for the new housing. Monthly updates are written for the Town Crier and appear on the FB page.

The meeting to discuss the draft local plan was deferred from April & May and is now due to be held on 18th July 2019.

Cllr Moon would attend on behalf of the Town Council and Mr A Mackie on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

C41 FINANCE

- (a) The receipts list nos: 86 – 142 was NOTED.
- (b) Cllr Atkins proposed; Cllr Boyle seconded:
That the payments list 79 – 215 be APPROVED
CARRIED unanimously
The clerk was asked to highlight the costs of the traveller incursions.
- (c) The 11th Tonbridge St Andrews Paddock Wood Scouts had written to thank the council for its grant. The funds have been spent on new tents for the troop which will be used for the group camp to celebrate 100 years of scouting in Paddock Wood

C42 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

- (a) Chairman's meeting – the previous minutes of the meeting are not available due to staff changes at the borough council. The following was discussed at the meeting:
- "Visit Tunbridge Wells" website.
 - Rural broadband
 - Civic Amenity Vehicle – will continue this autumn with same vehicles, and same frequency
 - The waste collection day may change
 - Under 2% of the county's waste goes abroad – the majority stays in Kent
 - Does the council wish to lobby to have the lass recycling bins removed once the new waste contract is in place?
 - An update on the Calverley Square project & the cultural and learning hub
 - The leader of the Council, Cllr Alan McDermott, and Cllr Carol Mackonochie will be attending the town council meeting in October
- (b) Paddock Wood Business Association – there has been no meeting
- (c) Bereko Committee – the group had had a stall at the carnival on water as a precious resource.
- (d) KALC – there has been no meeting
- (e) Medway Valley Line - there has been no meeting
- (f) Hop Pickers – next meeting was 16th July 2019.
- (g) Youth Council – the group had had a stall at the carnival and raised funds for Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead. They were looking for new members. Salus who carry out youth work in the Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks & Tonbridge and Malling areas had attended a meeting. They hold events every Monday evening in the Wesley Centre. They will be organising events over the summer including a trip to Chessington World of Adventure.
- (h) Councillor's Surgery – the next surgery would be due in October
- (i) Newsletter – copies would be distributed around the town.
- (j) Training events
- (k) Persimmon Liaison meeting – 16 private properties had been sold and 16 handed over to SAGE housing. The building of the new primary school on the site had been deferred by a year.
- (l) Lights Up Paddock Wood – meeting was coincided with the Town Council meeting.

C43 ANY OTHER INFORMATION

A tanker was parking up late a night near the Esso Station. Did anyone know why?

C44 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday 19th August 2019.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

CHAIRMAN

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give this presentation to the Council this evening about why the Friends of the Memorial Field **believe Paddock Wood Community Hub – Putlands Option – is a much better alternative to building on the Memorial Field.**

I need to start by saying that Friends of the Memorial Field have never been against the need for a Community Centre in Paddock Wood but are against a Community Centre being built on the open green space of the Memorial Field.

So, let me give you some recent background to today

The community centre has been 59 years in planning (how can it have taken you this long and still come up with a plan that is unacceptable to the community.)

- PWTC mailshot residents – using MMRI - get 182 replies – on this basis the Council go ahead to make plans to build on the Memorial Field
- Banner appears on the fence by the entrance to the Memorial Field stating that “this is the site of the new Paddock Wood Community Centre”. You have not even applied for Planning Permission. At the instigation of Friends of the Memorial Field this has subsequently been replaced by one stating “the proposed site ...”
- Wendy Morris founder of Friends of the Memorial Field started a petition July 2018 – 878 signatures – Council vetoed 284 – leaving 594 (more than 3 times the PWTC mailshot)
- Continue to try and engage with the Council. To no avail. Decide best route is to request a Parish Poll which took place in January 2019. We were pleased that Don Kent wanted to propose the poll.
- Residents were asked “Is the Memorial Field the right location for the new Paddock Wood Community Centre?”
- Victory for F0MPF – 409 NO votes; 357 Yes votes

Now let me give you some information about why Friends of the Memorial Field believe the Paddock Wood Community Hub Putlands Option is the best place to accommodate the Community Centre at this time.

SHOW SLIDE OF MATRIX – SCORES – Putlands scored more than Memorial Field

SHOW PWTC VOTE YES – 4 of these statements can be applied to Putlands too. However, £701,784 of developer contributions tied to the site – this is stretching the truth – Berkeley Homes told us on 17 June this year that “should it be the will of **the community** and the Town Council Berkeley would be happy to vary the existing legal agreement to direct the community centre contribution elsewhere within the town, subject to agreement from the Borough Council. (I suggest that had residents not been misled by your leaflet the No vote would have been much higher)

PUTLANDS – A BETTER OPTION AND CHOICE

- Putlands option doesn't require removal of public green space and loss of a cricket / football pitch. Once green space is built on it has gone!
- PWNHP Green Infrastructure Policy clearly states there should be **no loss** of green space – vital for good health and welfare of the community.

- Putlands was the original site for a community centre in the town plan - hence the covenants and stipulations stating that the property is not to be used for any purpose other than as playing fields and a community centre (which is one reason why there should be no swimming pool on this site.)
- Putlands redevelopment saves money. It is potentially cheaper as it doesn't require construction of a whole new building and car park. Putlands car parking can be reconfigured to provide extra parking and is already larger than the proposed car park at the memorial field site.
- Putlands is still central to the town and there is easier access for cars as it does not open immediately on to a very busy main road.
- Putlands at present is an under-utilised facility and currently making losses of £60K per annum.
- Putlands can be converted to a multi-use community and sports facility and thus more likely to make money rather than being a drain on tax-payers. The hub plans of 2015 include a café and bar, as well as a larger gym area, all of which should attract more users and therefore more revenue.
- With the proposal for the Community Centre being at the Memorial Field this council could potentially have two buildings both having to be funded by tax-payers. Would that be such a great legacy for our children and grandchildren?
- The cost of building the planned community centre is £2.8m.
- Does PWTC need to be burdened with the £1.5m loan from the Public Loans and Works Board the largest loan it has ever had? Would you as Councillors be prepared to Guarantee this loan if you were asked? We all know that building costs will escalate before a project is completed!
- Are the people of this Town aware that the Borough contribution of £400K for the Community Centre project is likely to come from the sale of the Wesley Centre a major part of our Towns heritage and history, which the Borough are prepared to destroy for future generations.
- If you read the business plan for the Community Centre you will see that PWTC will be responsible for all of the maintenance and will receive no income for the first 12 years.

And, of course, the land is owned by PWTC.

There are of course other options now becoming available to the Paddock Wood Town Council with the unveiling of The Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils new plans recently showing that Paddock Wood is scheduled to double in size.

We do not wish to make any further comments at this stage as we only had the invitation to talk about Putlands.

I would like to thank all the Friends of The Memorial Playing Field for their support and to the Town Council for listening this evening, I sincerely hope you have heard what we have said and start to make some good decisions for the future generations of this town that they will be suitably proud of.