

PADDOCKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON Monday 21st
January 2019, at the DAY CENTRE COMMERCIAL ROAD, at 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs M Flashman, in the Chair
 Cllrs R. Atkins, D. Boyle, J. Flashman, S. Hamilton, (TWBC & KCC) R. Moon,
 D. Sargison, R. Steward, E. Thomas (TWBC), R. Turk, C. Williams, E. Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N Reay, (Town Clerk)
 Borough Councillors A. Gouda, C. Stewart
 Mr W Benson, Chief Executive TWBC
 36 residents

APOLOGIES: Cllr D Henshaw

QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions not relating to the Community Centre which would be taken first.

The following issues were raised:

- Sewage – the sewage pipes could be routes via Green Lane & Mile Oak Lane through agricultural land before turning left at the railway line at Marden. This would avoid going through the town and avoid the developers building a sewer under the Goldings. The chairman of the Planning Committee said she would be happy to put forward the suggestion to Southern Water.
- Dog fouling – the state of the town was disgusting with dog mess and litter. Could the signs be replaced, and council staff do more? The chairman asked for specific locations to be notified and the council would see what it could do.

Mr Jeremy Thompson as chairman of the Town Meeting then made the following statement with regards to the Parish Poll and proposed Community Centre.

I am giving this statement as I was elected as the Chairman of the Town meeting held on 19 December 2018 in the absence of the leader of our Council, Councillor Meryl Flashman and her Deputy, Councillor, Carol Williams who would otherwise automatically have had the opportunity to Chair the meeting. (Both Councillors did tender their apologies.) The Friends of the Memorial Field hope that all the Councillors will now allow us to engage with them in order that Paddock Wood gets a first-class Community Hall on a site that is appropriate for that aspiration, in order that we leave a Community Hall that we should all be proud of for now and future generations.

Previously you have accepted results from your survey of 182 residents.

Then you would not listen to The Friends of The Memorial Field petition that was organised by Wendy Morris that had 594 signatures, which you verified as a Council.

This led us to arrange a Town Meeting on 19 December in order to request a Parish Poll, the cost of which was unnecessary had you listened to the voice of the community on previous occasions.

On the 15th of January at the Parish Poll we engaged 767 residents who turned out to vote that cost the FOMF £60 for printing and a bit of leg work and time, which was well worth our time. In comparison to ALL the consultations by PWTC it is not only the best value for money but has also engaged the highest number of residents in Paddock Wood.

The reason that we did not get a much higher NO vote was very simple. We are a group with a big passion for Paddock Wood and we had to deal with the misleading information that you have put out.

The major ones being:

- *A misleading sign at the Memorial Playing Field stating it was the site of the New Community Centre (we accept that you took this down and replaced it with an appropriate sign when we requested you to do so).*
- *The issue over losing Section 106 monies.*
- *The issue over losing a contribution of £400K from TWBC (£300k of which it appears to be coming from the possible sale of the land at the rear of the Wesley Centre and £100K from a possible variation of the long-term lease on the Day Centre). We would welcome confirmation if this is the case.*

We have been waiting 60 years for a new Community Hall and we would not wish you to provide a new Community Hall that is not fit for purpose and is not on the best site. We hope that you will now give serious consideration the largest project that Paddock Wood Town Council has ever undertaken.

Lastly, we would like to thank Councillors Hamilton, Atkins and Steward for listening to us about our concerns.

The town council was also asked about the site of the police houses which had now come up for sale. Had the Council engaged with the police regarding that site? The Chairman of the Estates Committee advised that the council had written to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council as it would make an ideal site for social rented accommodation. The council had been advised that the site had an estimated value of £1.2 – 1.8 million which would have to added onto the cost of the community centre if the site was to be purchased for that purpose.

The final comment from residents was regarding the lease to the Day Centre and the sale of the land at the rear of the Wesley Centre. Would the council be honest with public about the £400k donation from TWBC for the Community Centre?

QUESTIONS FOR THE BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Borough Cllr Stewart advised the meeting that the grant from TWBC is on conditional on the Town Council handing over the lease to the Day Centre. The Day Centre will continue to be used for the foreseeable future.

She was also as confident as she could be that the S 106 money cannot be transferred to a different site. Despite extensive research there are only examples of where it has been used by developers.

Borough Cllr Hamilton advised that she had previously spoken to the Police Commissioner about the sale of the police houses and that the town had not been consulted. The plan is for the PCSO's to move to the fire station. The land is valuable development land.

With regards to the variation of the S106 funding she was still waiting for a reply from the Head of Planning as to whether the agreements could be varied, as he will be able to give definitive answer. She felt it was regrettable that a statement had been made that it could not be varied. She had sat on the Borough Council Committee which approved the S106 agreements and had queried what would happen if planning permission was not granted on the site. She had been advised by the planning officer at the time that Berkley Homes would probably be flexible

County Councillor Hamilton was asked about the lighting behind the Day Centre which was still not working. She advised that any issues should be reported using the KCC reporting website. The lights had been reported on several occasions and still there had been no action. The clerk would email CC Hamilton with the details.

The review of the parking in town would be in partnership with the borough council, once the results of the rail franchise were known. There needs to be a consensus from residents regarding parking – investigations for a 20mph speed restriction will take place for Forest Road. Gate ways are due to be installed at the entrances to the town as well.

She will be shortly going on a trip around the town with highways officers and town council members are welcome to accompany her.

Members also asked for support on the proposed reduction in hours to the library. Paddock Wood is to lose 17 hours. Paddock Wood has also been incorrectly classified – and was in the wrong tier. This may have led to reduction in hours.

C100 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C101 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

- (a) The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17th December 2018 were APPROVED.
- (b) The minutes of the Finance meeting held on Monday 14th January 2019 were NOTED. Cllr Boyle thanked the committee for increase in the Grant to the Community Advice Centre.

C102 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- (a) Further to the question regarding the location of the community centre the Clerk had advised that there was no further information to add to that given in November.
- (b) Section 106 money – a statement had been received from TWBC regarding the funding as well as further information which had been supplied by the Head of Planning at TWBC. This had been forwarded to the members of the public who had asked for the information. The details had also been published on the Council's website, and forwarded by email to members
- (c) Parking in Ringden Avenue – Mr J White had visited residents in Ringden Avenue and had advised them of the process for applying for a residents parking scheme.
- (d) C92 (a) The draft minutes of the meeting held with Persimmons on the 13th December had been circulated. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on the 14th February 2019.
- (e) C93 (a) At the Town Meeting held on 19th December 2018 there was a call for a Parish Poll with the following question to be put to residents:
Is The Memorial Playing Field the right place to build the new Paddock Wood Community Centre?
The poll will take place on the 15th January 2019. (see below)
- (f) C94 – a request has been sent to the Head of Planning at TWBC asking for a meeting to discuss the Local Plan.

C103 PADDOCK WOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE – RESULT OF PARISH POLL

Results of the Parish Poll were: 409 No & 357 yes, turnout 13.1%

Mr William Benson, Chief Executive of TWBC & Returning Officer was invited to speak to members.

Mr Benson started by saying that residents with concerns about dog fouling should email the clerk with details. TWBC can issue penalty notices.

He went on to say that TWBC supports Paddock Wood Town Council in the delivery of a community centre. He continued by saying he could not think of another town without one.

The borough will provide support wherever it can. With regards to funding – the leader had given a verbal commitment of a contribution of £400k for this particular scheme, as it was deliverable.

The borough had also secured £1m of section 106 funding from developers, £75,000 of funding from One Public Estates, plus officer time at a value of £50,000. Interest rates are currently low, so it is also a good time to take out a PWLB loan.

Whilst there is currently a commitment for the £400k, that will go back into the Borough's general reserve if the project is stopped. There is a high likelihood that the funding will not be available in the future. The £75,000 funding will be lost, and officer time will be re-allocated.

With regards to the S106 funding he will forward the email from the Head of Planning. He stated the following:

- Church Road funding can be allocated to any site
- Mascalls Farm & Mascalls Court Farm are allocated to the Memorial Field.
- The rules on S106 funding have been changed and strengthened on how it is spent
- A deed of variation would be required
- Would need a specific and developable scheme
- Need to spend within 5 years
- Would rely on developer goodwill – developers employ staff whose specific job it is to claw back S106 funding

The Parish Poll – there was less than 4 weeks between the request for a parish poll and the poll taking place. Christmas and New Year were in between. The results of a parish poll are not binding and are only an expression of the views of residents. 6% of the electorate voted yes and 7 % voted no. There were only 52 votes between the yes and & no.

All public buildings delivered by the Brough Council over the years have been opposed but are now popular buildings which make up Tunbridge Wells. Members have a difficult decision

Mr Benson summed up as follows:

- 1) If the Town Council does not proceed there will be less capacity and resources to deliver another scheme
- 2) The town is growing and should be supported with commensurate facilities
- 3) If it's not on the Memorial Field, where – there will always be objectors wherever it is built.
- 4) The borough council has no designs or plans for the Day Centre

Members were invited to ask questions.

Cllr Hamilton commented that the £400k was part of allocated reserves and there was a commitment which was attributed to the value of the rear of the Wesley Centre. Why was Putlands withdrawn from the equation? Feasibility studies had been carried out on other sites.

Mr Benson was not aware of the details of why Putlands was withdrawn, but pointed out that once feasibility studies have been drawn up they need, the details need to be considered. He would send over the email from the Head of Planning for members information. – but reiterated that any site would need to be deliverable and costed.

Cllr Atkins asked if Mr Benson was speaking on behalf of TWBC and that it was only really £700 k. Mr Benson confirmed he was speaking on behalf of TWBC.

Mr Benson left the meeting and the chairman invited members to speak.

Cllr Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was glad of the level of public engagement • The parish poll precluded a number of residents • Need to take on board the results of the parish poll but it is only advisory • A number of residents had made their views known • Wanted to be honest with residents but the facts were as follows: 15th Feb 2016 Min 105 – advises that the town council wanted the S106 money to be allocated to a community centre. Also identified the Memorial Field and Wesley Centre sites to be put forward for further investigation 17th Oct 2016 – C62 authorised the initial funding & in principle agreement for £1.5 m loan 19th Dec 2016 C85 – further information on the surveys commissioned for the Memorial Field Purpose of quoting these facts were that this project had been ongoing for a long time and the information was all in the public domain
Cllr Turk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed with everything said by Cllr Wilson • All minutes are approved and signed off by the members • Considers himself to be a representative of everyone, those who voted, those who didn't for whatever reason. Those too young to vote and those who come to live here in the future • Will do what he thinks is best • Not had any facility for meetings in the past
Cllr Flashman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town needs a community centre • Spoken to those who did not take part in poll but still want community centre • Results inconclusive • Parking – will be almost central when new developments are completed • Have been concerns about loss of green space – Over half of Putlands Field was lost when the athletics track was built
Cllr Williams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been working on community centre since 2015 • The quoted 182 responses is from one survey • Have also consulted at Carnival annually, POTS football event, community events in the high street and individual group meetings • Many are in favour of the Memorial Field • Wesley Centre was only included as there was no viable second option • Rigorous work has been carried out • Youth Council in support • Represent the young who cannot vote • Should meet with the Friends of Memorial Field to see if a viable alternative site can be found within the next month

Cllr Thomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All want the best for Paddock Wood • Interested in Cllr Williams thoughts about meeting • No real assets in Paddock Wood • All minutes are sanctioned by members
Cllr Sargison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't originally vote for the Memorial Field • Would not like to see the time and money lost
Cllr Steward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding is not at stake • There is no minute in favour of the Memorial Field
Cllr Boyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the youth leaders are saying build it • Don't want it to be the swimming pool of this generation • Think of the unborn of the future
Cllr Moon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue is a difficult one to address • Strong responsibility for the community • Not easy when presented with the Parish Poll which was not decisive • There were no polling cards, limited time • Was not happy originally with the site • Only town in the borough without a community centre • Not an individual decision
Cllr Hamilton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has had minuted her concerns about lack of engagement with the public • There are halls in the town • It will have to be paid for and will not have free access unless sponsored by a business • Traditionally community centres would be sponsored by well meaning members of the community • Don't have qualified council members – ie lawyers, architects or business people • The only qualified engagement was from the questionnaire • Worried that the public is not behind the project • Had photo taken at Memorial Field before the large development sites came forward • Were told by TWBC that had to name a site • Doesn't believe the site is big enough • Wishes to engage with developers • Sensible to use own land • Acknowledges the parish poll • Welcomes Cllr Williams suggestion to speak with Friends of Memorial Field • Thanked everyone for taking part in parish poll
Cllr Atkins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks Wendy Morris and Jeremy Thompson for arranging the Town Meeting and Parish Poll • Shame it was necessary when there was a petition of +500 • The town council considered that a 4% response to a survey was a good response • Many residents believed the funding would be lost • Council has not been transparent, banner at Memorial Field was misleading • Welcomed the suggestion of working with the Friends of Memorial Field and should look for an alternative location • Quoted those who voted in favour of RiBA stage 1 • Council should respect the result of the Poll • Had put in a complaint to Network rail regarding the distribution of the vote Yes fliers at the railway station

The chairman summed up by saying there was a challenging decision for members to make.

Cllr Williams proposed, Cllr Boyle seconded:

Pending discussions with Friends of the Memorial Field if not alternative costed solution is brought forward within 4 weeks then the Town Council proceeds with the Memorial Field as the preferred site.

There followed a brief discussion on timescales and Cllr Thomas put forward the following, seconded by Cllr Turk:

Paddock Wood Town Council wants to engage with the Friends of Memorial Field but should continue to RiBA stage 3 & 4 and stick to the plans for Memorial Field

Cllr Hamilton requested that Standing Orders be suspended to allow residents to speak. The Chairman refused the request.

Voting:

8 in favour, (Cllrs Boyle, Flashman, Mrs Flashman, Sargison, Thomas, Turk, Wilson, Williams)

3 against (Cllrs Atkins, Hamilton, Steward)

1 abstention (Cllr Moon)

The motion was APPROVED

Cllrs Williams and Boyle withdrew the original motion.

(Cllrs Atkins, Hamilton & Steward left the meeting)

C104 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The meeting took place on Wednesday 16th January 2019. Minutes of the previous meeting had been emailed to members. The group had discussed the draft Green Infrastructure policy and the application by Churchill Homes for 34 retirement flats in Commercial Road.

C105 FINANCE

(a) Cllr Thomas proposed, Cllr Boyle seconded

The payments list vouchers nos: 617 – 738 be APPROVED
CARRIED unanimously

(b) The receipts list vouchers nos: 296 – 319 was NOTED

(c) Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Moon seconded;

That the attached budget for 2019/2020 be APPROVED.
CARRIED unanimously

(d) Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Thomas seconded:

That the precept of £451,366 - for 2019/2020 be APPROVED
This equates to a 0.3% increase from the previous year (0.41p per Band D property)
CARRIED unanimously

(e) Members considered grant requests:

There is currently £1,052 remaining in the Grant budget for 2018/2019. The Clerk advised that another 2 applications were expected before the end of the financial year.

i) Home Start – Cllr Thomas proposed, Cllr Turk seconded:

That a grant of £250 should be made

This proposal was subsequently withdrawn

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Sargison:

That a grant of £500 should be made

- CARRIED unanimously
- ii) Tunbridge Wells and District Samaritans (gave £50 in 2017/2018)
Cllr Turk proposed, Cllr Thomas seconded:
That a grant of £100 should be made
CARRIED unanimously

C106 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

To receive a report from the council's representatives when available:

- (a) Chairman's meeting – the minutes had not yet been received. The chairman advised that the changes to community amenity vehicle were discussed. It will no longer be possible to deposit green waste. Members were disappointed that they had not been consulted on this issue, as there will be those who cannot afford the costs of having a brown bin for green waste. The borough should consider enhancements to the service.
- (b) Paddock Wood Business Association – next meeting Tuesday 22nd January 2019.
- (c) Bereko Committee – There will be a soup lunch on 22nd January at 12 pm in St Andrews Church Hall.
- (d) KALC – the draft minutes of the AGM had been emailed to members.
- (e) Medway Valley Line
- (f) Hop Pickers – in discussions with members of the Horsemonden Nostalgia Group, to see if they are interested in joining. Planning a walk in the autumn
- (g) Council Web site – this was now administered in the Town Council office
- (h) Youth Council – No meeting
- (i) Councillor's Surgery – had been cancelled, but discussed using the library for the future
- (j) Newsletter – the next edition will be published at the end of January.
- (k) Training events

C107 NORTH EAST QUADRANT

In June 2018 the Chairman attended a meeting of Parish Councils in the NE quadrant of the Borough. The purpose of the meeting was to consider a joint response from parishes to the borough's draft Local Plan.

The Finance Committee have allocated £5,000 for professional support.

This item was held over until the February meeting.

C108 BREXIT

Members are asked to consider the possible impact of Britain's departure from the EU in March 2019 on the Town Council. The Clerk should be notified of any issue members think are relevant to Town Council business. This will then be put on the agenda for the February meeting.

C109 PUTLANDS SPORT & LEISURE CENTRE MONITORING MEETING

Cllrs Flashman, Williams & Moon, and the Deputy Clerk had met with representatives from Fusion & Putlands., and the minutes of the meeting were circulated. It was not felt this was a very fair reflection on the meeting. There were also rumours about the future of Putlands which needed quashing. The chairman had received a complaint that the fees were almost doubling – this had been reported to TWBC.

C110 ANY OTHER INFORMATION

The Annual Town Meeting will take place on 3rd April 2019. Members are asked to consider the format of the meeting.

The Chairman advised that she would be submitting a comment on the library consultation.

C111 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18TH February 2019.

Meeting closed at 10.25

CHAIRMAN