

**PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL**  
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM ON**  
**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December, AT 7.30 PM**

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PRESENT: Cllr M Flashman, in the Chair  
Cllr R. Atkins, (TWBC) D. Boyle D Kent, R. Moon, M Ridger, D. Sargison,  
R. Turk, C. Williams

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N Reay, Town Clerk  
5 residents

APOLOGIES: S. Hamilton, (KCC & TWBC) E. Thomas (TWBC)

QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS (15 minutes)

The Friends of the Memorial Field have asked the following two questions which relate to the Clerk's Report - Town Council Meeting - 21 December 2020.

C91 Community Centre  
Point 1.3

"Two of the residential development contributions have also been secured based on the Memorial Field Location."

Question: We understood that one developer's contribution was tied to the Memorial Field site. Who agreed that the remaining developers' contributions are site specific and where is this minuted?

*In February 2016 PWTC passed a resolution that it would like Section 106 to be used to fund the building of a community centre and TWBC confirmed it was negotiating for s 106 funding to fund the project. See website.*

*The site was specified in two of the S106 agreements. The decision to have that wording was nothing to do with PWTC and was never discussed with PWTC. It was the planning officer at TWBC who wrote the agreements that were then signed off by the TWBC Planning Committee as part of the planning applications. The information will be in the minutes of the relevant TWBC planning committee meetings where each application was approved.*

Point 1.8

"If the Town Council needs to increase the precept it also needs to evidence public support for the project. It is expected that a poll or survey should be carried out. It is not expected that a referendum should be carried out, but a small basic low-cost poll or consultation."

Question: This is now a £3.454M development. Why would you want to do a low-cost poll or consultation rather than a referendum?

*As this question has not been discussed by the Council, I am unable to answer it beyond saying that a Parish Council is not required to carry out a referendum for an increase in precept in the way that higher authorities are for an increase over a certain percentage. The Comment in the Clerk's*

report is a direct quote from the guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Q1. At the last Full Council Meeting on 18th December 2020, residents were allowed to speak for the first-time since April. Are residents now allowed to be make their voices heard at every meeting? *The Town Council's protocol for virtual meetings (attached) states that all questions should be submitted in advance. This was introduced when meetings had to become virtual as it was a new way of working for everyone, and the chairman needed to be able to manage the meeting efficiently in what was unknown territory. When issuing the agenda for the meeting on the 8th December the Clerk inadvertently omitted to put the reminder on the top, although the protocol was still in place. Rather than cause confusion for those who were not familiar with the Council procedures, and due to the importance of the meeting, I decided to permit questions after the presentation, for that one meeting. The Town Council's protocol for the public attending town council meetings does state that questions should ideally be submitted 2 days in advance.*

Q2. Residents are only allowed to ask questions about agenda items. Is there an equally good mechanism for residents to ask questions about items of interest or concern that are not on the Agenda? i.e., Is there a mechanism by which residents can ask a question in public to the Chair before other councillors and interested residents.

*The purpose of Town Council meetings is for members to make decisions. Therefore, residents are able to ask questions or make a statement regarding the decisions the councillors are about to make. It can be useful for members to hear residents' views before making a decision. Residents can raise any issue they wish at the Annual Town Meeting. The agenda for that is much less restrictive. Residents are free to contact the office or individual councillors at any time. Contact details are readily available. Many residents do contact the office directly and the officers do their best to answer any questions or resolve any issues which are put to them. Any issues which are outside of officer's powers will be forwarded to the appropriate committee or full council.*

Q3. If the answer to the above is "no", could the Standing orders be altered to allow for questions that are not on the agenda.

*The Town Council reviews its Standing Orders at the Annual meeting of the Town Council – and will consider any recommendations from its Policy Committee which meets 4 times a year. As you rightly point out a number of the Standing Orders are not mandatory, and members are free to put forward amendments if they so wish.*

#### BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLORS UPDATE (10 minutes)

The Town Council's Planning Committee has submitted the following questions to the Borough Councillors.

1. In September 2020, the P&E Committee wrote to all Borough Council representatives for Paddock Wood asking for an informal meeting & requesting suggested dates to discuss how Borough Councillors could support the P&E Committee in planning matters in Paddock Wood. In the last three months we have not had an acknowledgement or response to this letter from any of the Borough Councillors. Therefore, we are putting this question again: please could our Borough Councillors meet informally (or formally if preferred) with the P&E Committee to discuss how Borough Councillors can support the planning committee at a time when planning matters are high on Town Council and residents' agendas?

2. Do our Borough Councillors monitor what is happening in Paddock Wood in relation to the three developments, minor developments, road closures and the impact of heavy rainfall on the Town? Please could you provide examples of where you have used this information to provide

support for planning matters in Paddock Wood (this question does not include sewage related matters).

3. The P&E Committee would like to know specifically how Borough Councillors are representing Paddock Wood in issues such as drainage and woodland/ecology on Church Farm, providing examples of impact and outcome on matters raised at Borough which are quite clearly of concern to residents.

Cllr Bailey had supplied a written response to the town council.

Cllr Atkins advised the following:

- Was willing to work with the Town Council, as a borough councillor.
- He receives and reads the P & E Committee minutes
- Attends the Borough's Planning Policy meetings.
- Attends the strategic sites meetings.
- Has assisted residents at times of flooding times.
- Visits the three development sites regularly
- Been in contact with the County Councillor regarding flooding speeding and parking
- He also advised that a Highways Improvement Plan would assist with speeding and parking issues in the town.

#### **C88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **C89 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were APPROVED.
- b) The minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meetings held on the 16<sup>th</sup> November and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were NOTED.
- (c) The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 were NOTED.
- c) The minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were NOTED.

#### **C90 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- a) C81 –Salus youth workers have indicated that they would like to use the Day Centre for some outreach youth work, in the New Year. However, now that Kent was subject to stricter conditions since Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December the regulations would need to be checked again.
- b) A letter had been sent to County Councillor Mike Hills, regarding the Paddock Wood Library.

#### **C91 COMMUNITY CENTRE**

- (a) Working party – a request has been received from Sam Smithson, a Paddock Wood Resident, to join the working party.

Cllr Williams proposed, Cllr Boyle seconded:

*That Mr Smithson should be appointed to the Community Centre Working Party.*

CARRIED unanimously.

- (b) PWLB resolution – now that the Town Council has approved the designs for the community centre ready for planning permission an application needs to be made for borrowing approval from the Dept of Communities and Local Government. Members received a report from the Clerk giving details of the project.

Members considered the report, and the following points were discussed:

- If the project did not go ahead could the Town Council reduce its precept by £60,000? The Clerk advised that this would be a decision for the council to make.

- Due to prudent financial management over the years the town council now had more than enough set aside each year to pay a loan of £1.9 m without any further increase to the precept.
- The Town Council had originally worked the finances out to allow for £400,000 contribution from the borough council. As the terms under which the funds were offered the town council must now make up the shortfall by increasing the borrowing from £1.5m to £1.9 m.

Cllr Williams proposed, Cllr Boyle seconded:

*The council should seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £1.9m over the borrowing term of 50 years for the purposes of building a community centre. The annual loan repayments will come to around £59,408.*

*It is not intended to further increase the council tax percept for the purpose of the loan repayment.*

CARRIED 8 in favour (Cllrs Boyle, Flashman, Kent, Moon, Ridger, Sargison, Turk, Williams) 1 abstention (Cllr Atkins)

- c) The minutes from the Board meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October were attached for information.

#### **C92 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The consultation period had been extended until the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020. Additional forms had been printed and distributed. No meeting had been held in December.

#### **C93 TUNBRIDGE WELLS LOCAL PLAN**

The Borough Council would like to arrange a meeting to enable David Locke Associates, who are working on the master plan to present to the Town Council and provide an opportunity for members to ask any questions and make any comments. Suitable dates are being sought.

#### **C94 FINANCE**

- a) Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:

*That the payments list vouchers numbers: 544 – 615 should be APPROVED.*

CARRIED unanimously

- b) The receipts voucher nos: 143 – 160 was noted.

#### **C95 TUNBRIDGE WELLS AGREEMENT**

Members received a draft copy of the revised Tunbridge Wells agreement. Previously the council.

At its September meeting members had raised made the following points regarding the Agreement. The responses are detailed below:

- Should receive an explanation from TWBC if the comments from the Town/Parish are contrary to the final decision – *this is implied in the agreement*
- Planning enforcement – no point in conditions if not going to be enforced - *if the councils is finding a failure in enforcement it should be raised with the individual Officers and, if necessary, with the Cabinet Member*
- Annual planning workshop – should have one every six months to keep up to date, not annually as suggested – it was felt that if it was more regular members may not be able to attend. *The planning officers had offered more. Regular updates to planning laws etc. are*

*given in the Chairman Meetings hosted by the Leader of TWBC. There is nothing in the agreement preventing more workshops, should they be requested.*

- Need to be able to discuss directly with planning officers the concerns of Paddock Wood. So would like to see provision for town specific meetings – not just generic ones - *As this is Paddock Wood Specific, it is outside the Agreement.*

The Agreement had been approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and member councils have been asked to ratify it.

Cllr Flashman proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:

*Paddock Wood Town Council agrees to adopt the revised agreement.*

CARRIED 7 in favour, 2 abstentions

## **C96 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

- Chairman's meeting – held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – a copy of the presentation from the meeting would be circulated to members.
- Paddock Wood Business Association – last meeting 8<sup>th</sup> December. The chairman was unable to attend.
- Bereko Committee
- KALC – AGM took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020. An Emergency meeting had been held following the introduction of the Tier 4 Covid 19 restrictions.
- Medway Valley Line – no meeting
- Hop Pickers Line – no meeting
- Youth Council – had set up a Just giving page for its Christmas quiz. Funds raised would be donated to the Tree of Hope Appeal.
- Putlands Leisure Centre Liaison meeting – members asked for a meeting to find out what the plans for the future of the centre were.
- Liaison Meeting with construction site representatives – the details of the second and third phases of the Mascalls Court Farm development have been submitted and had been considered by the P & E Committee. Cllrs Ridger and Moon had met with representatives from Countryside and had asked for a quarterly meeting once they were onsite. Borough Councillor Atkins asked to be kept informed of such meetings.
- Strategic sites meeting - deferred until 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and further meeting took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The next meeting will take place in February.

## **C97 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The meeting finished at 9.20 pm.

CHAIRMAN