

Little Bromley Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Thursday 12th July 2012 at 7.30pm at the Haywain Public House, Little Bromley.

In attendance:-

Councillor S. Wilcox -	Chairman
Councillor R. Middleton -	Vice Chairman
Councillor K. Hatch	
Councillor M. Ashmore	
Ms A Spall	Amenity Committee Member
Mrs C Cordwell	Amenity Committee Member
Sarah Candy	County Councillor
Neil Stock	District Councillor
P.C.Kirk	Essex Police

Approx 25 members of the public.

53 12/13 Introduction and Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

For information for all in attendance the Chairman informed the public that they can only participate under “ Public participation”

He stated that normally once the agenda is published no other items can be added, however, in this instance two items have had to be added. 1. Planning Enforcement 2. Village Envelope. As the Village Envelope is of a confidential nature it would be discussed without the public present. Planning enforcement – Bramble Cottage, would be discussed as part of the meeting.

54 12/13 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor Christmas and Sandra Shute – Clerk.

As the clerk was absent Councillor Ashmore took the minutes of the meeting.

55 12/13 Acceptance of Minutes.

The minutes of the meetings dated 8th May, 10th May and 7th June were accepted unanimously by the councillors present and signed by the Chairman.

56 12/13 Declaration of Interests / Code of Conduct – Localism Act.

The code had previously been sent to the councillors for consideration.

Declarations should be made for councillors and partners, however, no one can be forced to declare an interest, failure to declare a relevant interest is an offence. Each councillor must decide if / what they will declare. It is a requirement that these are then published on the website.

All the councillors accepted the Code of Conduct this was then signed by the Chairman.

Action: Clerk

57 12/13 Public Participation.

Ms Spall, owner of Bramble Cottage read out a statement which was given to the council. She was shocked that a letter had been sent to the District Council purporting to support a complaint against her use of her field as a garden, that complaints had also been made regarding her business, whether or not her new conservatory has planning permission and also complaints about her jam making business. She regarded this as a vendetta against her. The public also wished to know what was the problem with the School House and were told it concerned an environmental and planning issue.

The Chairman explained that the council had been asked by a member of the public if the correct consent had been obtained regarding the use of the field at Bramble Cottage as garden. Therefore a letter was sent to Tendring District Council for clarification. The letter read “It has been brought to the attention of the Parish Council that the owners of the above named property have purchased a piece of agricultural land which is being used as part of their garden. Can you please clarify whether or not permission has been obtained for change of land use. (Their initial permission was refused)”

The Chairman said that he spoke to the District Council for advice as to whether or not to go and speak personally to the owners about this issue but was advised not to. The Chairman also stated that all Councillors are bound by confidentiality.

Councillor Stock said that the history of planning applications can be found on the TDC website and although the original planning was refused planning officers may not enforce it. Councillor Candy said that when the house is eventually sold then a change of use will be necessary.

In response to a question from a member of the public, the Chairman explained that items are discussed in a "closed meeting" when there are items of a sensitive nature, applications for tenders etc.

It was reported that the minutes of the meeting dated 10th May 2012 were not on the website. Council confirmed that this would be rectified.

In answer to a question from a member of the public. Details regarding the role of the Parish Council can be found on the Tendring District Council website, the EALC website and also Little Bromley Parish Council's website.

58 12/13 Matters arising from the meeting held on 7th June 2012.

(Clerk's Note: Reports were made before Matters Arising, however the minutes are written in the same order as the Agenda.)

16 12/13 Amenity Committee Mandate.

It had previously been discussed and it was agreed that the Parish Council had responsibility for the Amenity Committee, however, it was stated that in 1991 the playing field fund was renamed the amenity fund and the Amenity Committee members were to become trustees. It was agreed at the meeting that council would continue to investigate the true situation and find the trust agreement and also investigate the link between the Parish Council and the Amenity Committee. It was agreed at the meeting that whilst investigations are taking place, proper controls must be in place.

It was also stated that at the Amenity Committee Meeting held on 14th June, members agreed to ensure proper accounting controls are put in place.

Ms Spall reported that at the meeting held on 10th July the Amenity Committee agreed amongst themselves that they would in future operate separately from the Parish Council.

Councillor Candy has offered to help in getting charitable status for the committee.

The Chairman stated that if the Amenity Committee becomes independent, then the Parish Council may need to set up its own fundraising team. The Chairman said the cheque book would be returned to the Amenity Committee.

Item continued.

9 12/13 Restoration of War Memorial

Councillor Hatch said that no further work has been carried out on the war memorial because of the bad weather. Once the weather improves and we have a period of dry weather then the cracks will be clamped. The groundwork will follow on once these repairs are completed. Councillor Hatch said that the flowerpots on the memorial had been donated by a Parishioner.

11 12/13 Dog Fouling.

Nothing to report at this time.

Item continued.

22 12/13 Standing Orders.

These have now been published on the website.

Item continued.

26 12/13 Vehicle Activated Sign.

The council gave thanks to Mr Shute for preparing the case to support the VAS.

Item continued.

28 12/13 Bus Shelter

Councillor Hatch will arrange a meeting with an officer from the District Council when the officer is available. He stated that the offer of the grant will be withdrawn in March 2013 if not used.

Action: Councillor Hatch.

30 12/13 Hedge Opposite the War Memorial

See County Councillors report.

The hedge has been cut.

Item continued.

50 12/13 Banking and Investment Strategy.

There have been no changes to the banking arrangements at this time.

Item continued.

59 12/13 Reports

59.1 Report from Sarah Candy – County Councillor.

The safety concerns regarding the dangerous junction near the war memorial have been reported to the Highways Panel and a response is still awaited. It is unlikely that the County Council will support a case for a speed activated sign.

£1million pounds has been allocated for the repairs of potholes. A new system of repair is currently being trialled. Councillor Candy requested parishioners to report any flooding in the village to either the District Council or the Parish Council, as it may help to get things changed as has happened in other areas.

59.2 Report from Neil Stock – District Councillor

Tendring District Council has established a £100,000 rural infrastructure fund for villages with no mains water, drainage, gas etc. This money will be used to investigate and improve life in the villages of Tendring; to date the priority appears to be drainage.

The District Council spent £5,000 on an independent report regarding the changes made to the A120 road. The report established that the emergency changes made to Pelhams Corner have made the situation worse. The Highways Agency have also now stated that the “improvements” have actually made the junction more dangerous. The A120 is due to be upgraded in the future.

The Local Plan will be discussed in public for the first time next week and will eventually go out for public consultation.

59.3 12/13 Report from the Amenity Committee.

Ms Spall reported that a meeting of the committee had been held on Tuesday 10th July and members decided that they would become independent from the Parish Council and the funds in the amenity account to remain separate from the Parish Council precept account. Ms Spall stated that there are strong feelings within the village that the current situation of the funds being in a separate bank account should be maintained independently from the Parish Council funds. She presented a petition (signed by 54 people) to the council requesting that the Amenity Committee fund is kept in a separate bank account. The Chairman stated that the financial controls of the Amenity Committee needed to be improved so that public money is correctly accounted for. Councillor Hatch stated that he believed that they already were. The Chairman assured Councillor Hatch that he was not being accused of any wrongdoing, however, financial inconsistencies were identified in the independent audit e.g. the practice of “netting off” funds with no audit trail is unacceptable and accounts had not been maintained. The Chairman said that this means not all monies were being banked. Ms Spall agreed that not all monies of the Amenities Committee were banked as income raised from fundraising events is paid into the bank once expenses have been deducted. Mrs Cordwell said that the Amenity Committee accepted that it needed to improve its “paper trail” and it is important that the committee has the support of the Parish Council. The Chairman confirmed that the Amenities Committee would have the support of the council. Councillor Ashmore stated that the reason the council decided to move the funds into one account was to make it easier to reclaim VAT in the future. Councillor Hatch said there is so little movement on the account that it is not worth reclaiming the VAT. It was pointed out to him that the VAT on the last fireworks alone could have netted approx. £140.

59.4 12/13 Report from the Footpath Representative.

The Footpath Warden reported that the recent poor weather has meant that many of the footpaths are overgrown, both as a result of the perfect growing conditions for the undergrowth and the impact it has had on Essex County Council's cutting schedule.

The Council were made aware of the P3 Partnership in which local volunteers would be provided with equipment and insurance by Essex County Council to clear and maintain their footpaths. The Warden is intending to place notices in the Bromley Messenger and the Council's website to see if sufficient volunteers may be interested in giving up a small amount of their time to participate in the Partnership relating to the Parish's footpaths.

59.4 12/13 Report from the Tree Warden.

Ms Spall said that she has been unsuccessful in obtaining a piece of land on which to plant trees. The jubilee plaque is now in position next to the tree.

59.5 12/13 Speedwatch / Safety Team

It was reported that Highways had confirmed that it was their intention to reduce the speed limit from Paynes Lane and also part of Church Road from 40mph to 30mph. Two speed watches had been held and others cancelled owing to poor weather.

59.6 12/13 Report from the Police.

P.C Kirk was in attendance. There had been no reported crimes in June.

60 12/13 Correspondence.

A letter of thanks has been received from the Parochial Church Council for the grass cutting donation.

A letter has been received from the Audit Commission regarding audit arrangements for next year.

61 12/13 Health and Safety Audit.

The Chairman said that a clause in the insurance states that a health and safety audit must be carried out before any events can take place. The Amenities Committee may be interested in this. Ms Spall asked if the Chairman would assist the Amenities Committee with guidance on this issue. The Chairman informed the Amenity Committee that they should approach their chosen insurer on this matter as each insurer has different requirements.

Item discharged.

62 12/13 Authorisation and Payment of Cheques.

Councillor Hatch said that a member of the public has questioned the car park payment.

It was explained that 3 members of the council attended a training session at Tendring. No mileage was claimed, only car parking.

The following payments were authorised and cheques signed.

TDALC Subscription.	£10.00
S Shute. Stationery / Postage stamps.	£19.40
R Middleton. Car park fee (Training Clacton)	£4.60

63 12/13 Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be on 6th September.

There being no further business the meeting closed to the public at 9.05pm.

The public were requested to leave the meeting and the following was discussed in private.

Closed Meeting.

Planning Village Envelope.

The council discussed this but no decisions were made.

Planning

It was agreed at the meeting that anonymous complaints relating to planning would not be acted upon which is in line with Tendring District Council's policy.

Approved by:..... Chairman Date.....