

LAMBERHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 13th December 2016

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

These had been received from Cllr Francis

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Hurst-Brown introduced Jim Boot (JB) who would address the meeting to explain what a neighbourhood plan might or might not offer a village and to explore the possibilities for Lamberhurst.

Jim Boot explained that he had worked for many years with ACRK on village appraisals and community development and then for local government on planning strategies, core strategy, parish plans and the like. Since then he had set up a freelance community planning practice and worked both on lottery funding and on neighbourhood plans, mainly in Kent.

Jim Boot's accompanying PowerPoint presentation is available below these minutes on the list, entitles "Neighbourhood Plans" and these minutes refer to it and summarise how he expanded upon each slide. He encouraged councillors to comment or ask questions during the presentation. These are minuted as they occurred.

Slide 1

A neighbourhood plan is created by the community and depends on local knowledge and expertise. As a consultant, JB could empower and facilitate the community to carry this out.

Slide 2

The plan allows for a holistic approach so that issues such as planning, housing and flooding might be looked at together. The plan is used by the borough planners to inform their decisions when creating their own local plan.

Slide 3

This 9 step process will take place over approximately 24 months. It is important to secure the involvement of a lot of new people.

DHB: Is agreement from residents a legal requirement?

JB: The decision lies ultimately with the parish council, as a rural body with a legal right to develop a neighbourhood plan.

DHB: If people are not much interested that is a heavy burden on the parish council.

JB: Sandhurst began with a community questionnaire and selected priorities but ultimately took it no further than a new sports pavilion. A local needs housing survey could be undertaken and housing remain the only focus. This way priority needs may be met but none of the work is wasted if a neighbourhood plan is deemed to be the way forward. The neighbourhood plan has the same status as TWBC's development plan.

Slide 4

DHB referred to the village of Newick, which had its neighbourhood plan overridden by the secretary of state.

JB explained that this centred on a site outside the village enclosure and not one agreed in the plan. The plan is not fail safe. However the agreed policies will all apply e.g. landscaping and type of development.

JB explained that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would replace section 106 agreements, which are currently still in use (e.g. having a certain number of

homes secures a contribution for a health centre.) Councils are dragging their feet as section 106 seems to allow more control.

Slide 5

DHB stressed the importance of involving the younger members of the community, there being a lot of longer term issues.

JB added that the challenge lay in involving people who were still working.

Slide 6

DHB wondered what the best way forward might be to gather information as to what local people wanted e.g. a launch event.

JB suggested an application for a small grant from Awards for All to fund an event / survey to test the water. This would take 6 – 8 weeks to process. He could advise and ensure that the project took off.

Slides 7, 8, 9

JB presented information on Lamberhurst Parish which might offer a starting point and suggested that possible outcomes might be to give the parish planning permission for a new community centre, affordable housing or housing in general.

The chairman thanked Jim Boot for his talk and this was followed by discussion as to the way forward. It was agreed that a neighbourhood plan allowed a community to influence how development occurred and what type of development was wanted. Was there a catalyst in the community to drive this forward? How much energy was there in the village to see it through? It was agreed that a decision on how to progress should be made at the January meeting. In the meantime Cllrs Hurst-Brown, Smith and Cannella would liaise to put ideas together.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

The War Memorial Hall - Hearing Loop

The War Memorial Hall had asked for financial help in upgrading the hearing loop system so that it could be used for any function in the hall, at any time, by any user or group who needed it. The cost was estimated to be between £300 and £400. This was unanimously agreed.

Water Leak

There was a leak outside which might prove to be the responsibility of the hall/parish council in relation to the public toilets. This leak was not visible and the bill had now been stopped. The clerk would continue to investigate.

5. EXEMPT ITEMS

See separate page

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

