



**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020**  
**Minutes of the Virtual Meeting**  
**7.30 pm Appledore Village Hall**

Present

James Perkins (Chair), Roger Hiskey, Helen Hennig, Lyndsey Jenkins, Charles Wilkinson and Chris Vane  
In Attendance: County Councillor Mike Hill, District Councillor Mick Burgess and the Clerk Mary Philo  
Members of the Public: 8

**1. Formalities**

- I) The council was quorate. (LGA Act 1972 schedule12, 12/28/45)  
II) Apologies had been received from Councillor Winter. (LGA 1972 schedule12, 12)  
III) Declarations of interest and dispensations:  
Councillor Hiskey advised of a pecuniary interest in the planning application 20/01316/AS 45 The Street  
(Code of Conduct)

**2. Approval of Draft Minutes**

Following minor amendments, it was resolved to agree the minutes of the meetings held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 as a true record. Proposed Councillor Vane and seconded Councillor Wilkinson  
(LGA Act 1972 schedule12,19.1)

**3. Statement by the Chairman**

Dear Fellow Appledore Residents,

I am writing this statement in response to the questionnaire recently circulated to the village.

I am concerned that the questions put to residents and the alternatives proposed are misleading and may have given residents a biased interpretation of the facts.

Appledore Parish Council have consulted with residents and considered various options for the development of the field and use of the proceeds since 2016. Over that period there have been public meetings, consultations, leaflets distributed to every resident and continual updates at our monthly Parish Council meetings. We have throughout aimed to include as many residents as possible in our discussions, asked for ideas to be put forward and listened to all opinions that have been put to us.

I am therefore disappointed at the misleading nature of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire states that £437,000 is allocated for the refurbishment & extension of the village hall. This is not correct, the figure also includes the completion and resurfacing of the village hall car park. We first detailed this in our leaflet to residents in November 2018.

The questionnaire fails to point out that the price for the property we are purchasing is substantially below the market value, that the property is designated for an Appledore family in housing need and that the Parish Council will earn approximately £8000 per year net to be invested in facilities and services for residents. This represents a return on our investment of 3.2%, substantially higher than anything available elsewhere in the market.

The questionnaire states that £40,000 is for 'Yet to be Identified Projects'. This is not correct, the money is allocated to road safety improvements within the village.

A number of the alternative options put forward on the questionnaire have already been considered:

Community Centre – this proposal was brought forward at a Parish Council meeting and discussed by a working group on 19 April 2018 with representatives from the Parish Council, Recreation Ground, Village Hall, History Society and Parish Magazine. The recommendation of the group was not to take the project forward as it would require up to £500,000 in additional funds, there was no ‘project team’ willing to take the project forward and the Village Hall committee did not support the proposal.

Buying the Black Lion as a Community Asset – The money required to buy and refurbish the Black Lion is substantially in excess of the amount we have available, there is no ‘project team’ to take the project forward, or a proposed licensor.

Buying the Heritage Centre, Part of the No1 The Street development – This was originally a Parish Council proposal, we decided not to pursue it because we did not believe the project was commercially viable.

Creating an Outdoor Exercise Area at The Heath – The Parish Council has no objection to this proposal and would support it if residents wished to proceed.

Converting ‘Work in Lieu’ to Cash and Saving the Money for the Longer Term’. In our leaflet published in November 2018 we discussed the options of cash payment and accepting work in kind. In the same leaflet we also explained that we are legally obliged to spend the income from the sale on capital investment projects. We are prohibited by law from ‘Saving the money for the longer term”.

I believe that residents have been misled by the questionnaire.

The Parish Council has held detailed consultations with the Village and kept residents informed of our proposed actions over a period of years. After we concluded our consultations, we signed the contract with Martello in February 2019.

There are no options within the contract to pause or renegotiate it.

We are legally obliged to use our best endeavours to bring the contract to a successful conclusion, to do otherwise would be a breach of our obligations. The Parish Council cannot break the law and cannot ask Councillors to break the law. We cannot legally pause or renegotiate the contract.

The Parish Council believe the terms we have negotiated for the sale of the field will deliver an exceptional level of benefits for Appledore and that the income from the house we are purchasing will allow future Parish Councils to continue investing in the Village.

The amount of money we are investing in the hall is substantial, but it needs to be, the fabric of the building is old and failing with the services coming to the end of their life. We want the hall to continue as the social centre of the village, a place where we can come together for classes, clubs, meetings and social events. To do so we have to make it fit for purpose, which is why we are comprehensively refurbishing it now to serve future generations.

We have a difficult winter ahead with the second wave of COVID 19 gathering pace, I hope I have clarified the points raised in the questionnaire and that we can now pull together as a community to overcome the very real threats that face us in the coming months.

### **Adjournment of Meeting for Reports and Public Question**

The meeting was adjourned at 7.46 pm

### **Public Questions**

#### **Report from County Councillor Hill**

Having expected to focus on reopening services, the county council was again preparing for the second lockdown. Household Waste Centres would remain open for socially distanced use. Social care for adults and children will continue as before. Schools will remain open all the while the government says it is safe to do so. Parks and Rights of Way would remain open. Bus services will continue to run and are being provided in accordance with government guidelines. Community Warden Service will remain fully operational. Wedding and civil services would have to be rebooked. The council was awaiting advice on library, archives and registration services.

The Brexit transition phase would end on the 31<sup>st</sup> December and preparations were being made for

various scenarios. Until Brexit negotiations were completed it would be difficult to predict the full effect on Kent and Dover.

#### **Report from Borough Councillor Mick Burgess**

Ashford Borough Council was preparing for the second lockdown and details would be available shortly. Lorries delayed by Brexit would not be held on the M25 but at both the customs clearance park and lorry parking at junction 10a of the M20 before Operation Brock would be put into operation.

#### **Results of a Questionnaire Delivered to Residents in October regarding the Refurbishment Works from the Sale of the Council field**

A group of about 8 residents had devised, delivered, collected and processed the data from the questionnaire and the following was stated by their representative.

You will by now have all seen the Parish Magazine Report regarding the Village Questionnaire. You will also be aware that I met, one on one with James (Perkins) late Friday afternoon to discuss the headline results of the Questionnaire. We have Quantifiable and Qualifiable Responses from Over 300

Parishioners and have Presented Headline Information:

- 65% are Against the Proposed Use of the Proceeds as Intended by APC
- 74% are Specifically Against the Proposed Further Spend on the Village Hall
- 61% Prefer that the Proceeds are 'Banked' for Spending Later on Agreed Projects APC have consistently advised that they have 'consulted widely' but have not presented any quantitative or qualitative detail, that demonstrates support for the current planned spend, at a level anywhere near the numbers presented as a result of the Questionnaire. In case any of you question the basis of our data, I advised James that an Independent Auditor may examine our data, (perhaps KCC Councillor Mike Hill). James was assured that whoever performs the Audit, will find that we have been scrupulously fair, always favouring the APC position where there was doubt in respect of the responses.

- In recognition of GDPR, we have no way of identifying individuals who completed the Questionnaires, other than if they voluntarily provided their contact details
  - All Questionnaires were pre-numbered to ensure only valid Questionnaires were returned to us
- We have repeatedly asked that APC stop, reconsider and be guided by the majority opinion of Parishioners. We repeated that request again in the current Parish Magazine article. APC could have taken the opportunity to canvas for opinion from Parishioners but preferred to rely on the low-level response gathered at the poorly attended Open Meetings, which we have been informed supported APC's proposals. Remember, this was a long while ago and Pre-Covid. It is not too late - If ever there was a case for a contractual claim of 'Force Major', the Covid Pandemic has provided one.

So, to conclude, will you plough ahead regardless, or will each of you take notice of what your fellow Parishioners, (those that you represent), want you to do?

In response the council restated that except for the acquisition of the Black Lion, these projects had been considered and found unworkable. This remained the case. The questionnaire was, unintentionally, misleading as a result. There was not the facility to take these ideas or any others forward as the contract had been signed over 16 months ago following a year-long consultation with residents.

A different member of the public suggested that the event of Covid would allow the contract to be re-negotiated. In response it was stated that the terms of the contract required the parish council to work positively to complete the contract.

A third member of the public, who believed that there had not been full open consultation between the council and residents, pointed out that Covid-19, like other pandemics, would most likely remain with us and we would have to learn to live with it. With this in mind they felt that the hall refurbishment should wait till more was known. They did not wish to see money wasted on a building that they thought would not be fit for purpose in the future. They included the toilet refurbishments within this.

The developer's architect had reviewed the government's Covid guidelines and the proposed refurbishment for the hall complies with these and will better serve the village. In spite of Covid-19 and working within the guidelines, the hall was still being used and the hall was seeing new interest from

exercise instructors using smaller facilities.

A fourth member of the public believed that the questionnaire demonstrated that there was a considerable body of residents that wished the council to reconsider the planned expenditure, particularly on the hall as they considered these to be unnecessarily large. A hall trustee advised that the expenditure on the hall was required to resolve long term issues with the building. It was noted that those against the refurbishment works seemed to think that the works were predominantly superficial but that was not the case. A case in point being the interest in the replacement of the UPVC windows which were not that effective as technology had moved on.

A councillor queried their recollection that Martello withdrew No. 1 The Street as an option, however it was clarified that it was Appledore Parish Council who withdrew as there was too great a risk in its management and therefore a financial risk.

Following discussion it was clarified that the sum of £437,000 for the village hall included the car park works of about £80,000 - £100,000. Members of the public commented that the council leaflets were not clear and did not ask for feedback.

There was a discussion regarding whether the questionnaire numbers reflected a majority of residents. A comment was made by a fifth member of the public that the questionnaire did not properly inform residents of the full details and so residents did not respond as they would have, if they had full details. As a consequence, the questionnaire results were not a true and honest account of resident's opinions. Clarification was made that when the council voted to take ownership of a small house on the proposed residential development, it was instead of refurbishment works to the recreation ground pavilion. The sum scheduled for other works on the recreation ground, paid for by Martello, remained unaffected by this decision.

The final comments focused on the low number of people attending council meetings. As pointed out by a member of the public, the number of attendees at the current virtual meeting had not been bolstered by large numbers of residents aggrieved at the proposed spending from the sale of the council field. It was advised that some residents did not feel comfortable with council meetings but equally telephone contact numbers had been included in the leaflets and no new people had taken the opportunity to ring and speak to any councillors.

### **Reconvening Meeting at 8.55pm**

#### **3. Statement by the Chairman**

As a final reminder it was pointed out that the council had tried to involve the public over a long period after which the contract had been signed. The parish council had worked with the developer and negotiated the acquisition of the detached house, thus removing any outstanding issues and for the last year had been working with the developer to obtain planning approval for the residential development. The opportunity for further change had long passed. The parish council had worked hard to achieve the best possible outcome for the community. **It was resolved to support the Chairman in his statement.** Proposed by Councillor Wilkinson and seconded by Councillor Hiskey. Councillor Hennig abstained. The statement after further consideration and minor amendment would be published by the council and all households would receive a leaflet including the statement.

#### **4. Planning**

(Town and Country Planning Acts 1990 schedule 1/2010)

##### **4.1 Planning Decisions by Ashford Borough Council:**

20/01209/AS Hornes Place Oast Kenardington Road: Swimming Pool House – Permitted

20/01214/AS School Cottage, School Road: Detached single garage – Permitted.

20/00693/AS Proposed dwelling at rear of 29 Heathside – Erection of detached dwelling - Permitted

##### **4.2 Planning applications to consider**

Councillor Hiskey left the meeting.

**20/01316/AS 45 The Street: Installation of Flue. It was resolved to support the application.**

Proposed by Councillor Jenkins and seconded by Councillor Hennig.  
Councillor Hiskey rejoined the meeting.

## **5. Highways Update**

Councillor Hennig had met with Highways officer Darren Hickman to review the outstanding work from the speed reduction scheme. The 30mph and 40 mph road surface roundels had been scheduled to be burnt off by the time of the meeting but had not happened as yet. Darren would investigate the request for a 30mph repeater sign on Kenardington Road. He advised that repeater signs through the village were not possible but suggested 3 or 4 roundels on the road from the narrows to Fourwents Crossroads. He also agreed a 30mph repeater sign near to Griffin Cottages. The remaining work for Phase I would be carried out as soon as possible. Phase II (the gateways locations) were discussed as well as the condition of the brown tour signs which Highways may remove. Darren Hickman confirmed support for the requested signs to the station and that these would be incorporated in the new rationalised signs proposed for the village. He agreed with all proposed sites and approved the placing of signs to Appledore and Romney Marsh at the Station itself. Speedwatch can only start once all the speed signage is correct.

Councillor Wilkinson asked for an update on progress on replacing damaged verge posts in the centre of the village and advised of a request for a mirror at the Court Lodge and The Street junction to assist with visibility of cars travelling North through the narrows.

The issue of a priority sign at the narrows had been raised again and highways confirmed that it was not possible as there was insufficient space to allow drivers enough visibility to react to the sign.

## **6. Refurbishment of the Village Hall and Public Conveniences – Update**

### **Public Toilets Refurbishment Update**

We held a meeting with our Quantity Surveyor, Sibley Pares and RX architects on 21 October.

We reviewed the schedule of works and agreed a schedule of inspections.

We also agreed our work process in that Sibley Pares will report to Appledore Parish Council and invoice Martello Developments.

The refurbishment works will start on 2nd November and are scheduled to be complete in 6-8 weeks. Martello have agreed to replace the cover of the water meter for the public toilets which has been damaged by vehicles driving over it.

### **Village Hall Update**

The planning conditions for the Village Hall have been discharged

### **Appledore Village Hall Refurbishment- Design review with regard to COVID 19**

Appledore Village Hall Trustees have asked Appledore Parish Council and RX Architects to review the design for the refurbishment of the Village Hall in light of the COVID 19 pandemic with the aim of identifying potential alterations to improve the safety of hall users.

#### **Method**

Appledore Parish Council and RX architects have reviewed Government guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities and indoor sports facilities.

#### **Government COVID-19 Guidance for community facilities**

Government guidance focuses on the management of facilities to keep them safe for users, however within the guidance there are indicators which are relevant to the design of the space, principally these are:

- Use of multiple entry and exit points
- Improved ventilation
- Cleaning

#### **Multiple entry and exit points**

The hall currently has one public entry/exit point with two fire exits and an additional exit via the kitchen. The new design has two primary public entry/exit points, a secondary entry/exit point and one fire exit. It is an improvement on the current design. Further entry/exit points would not improve safety.

### **Improved ventilation**

The hall is currently ventilated by opening windows and the front door. The new design will be better ventilated as both the main hall and the new smaller hall will have two doors at opposite ends. Removal of the suspended ceiling in the main hall will create a significantly larger volume of air in the space to further improve safety. Air circulation in the main hall would be improved by the installation of ceiling fans and these will be included in the specification.

### **Cleaning**

The hall is thoroughly cleaned between user groups however the age of the fittings makes this process difficult. The building refurbishment will renew all the fittings, including those in the kitchen and toilets, improving safety within the building.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The design of the refurbished building will support government guidance for the safe use of community buildings in relation to COVID-19. The addition of ceiling fans to the main hall will improve ventilation and these will be included in the specification. The safe use of the hall is principally derived through good management and we believe that the Hall Trustees already have thorough procedures and guidance in place.

Should COVID-19 continue to present a long-term risk to the community we would recommend that the Trustees consider purchasing a portable fogging machine or UV room sanitiser.

(RX Architects Appledore Parish Council October 2020)

A UV room sanitizer (a simple device that allows the room to be reused quickly) or a portable fogging machine cost under £300.

### **Field Development Update**

We are still awaiting a response from the Ashford legal team with regard to the S106. They are citing their workload as the reason for the lack of progress

## **7. Quantity Surveyor for Refurbishment Works**

QS Support Limited were unable to full fill the brief. **It was resolved to instruct Mark Kenwood through Sibley Pares to check quality and value of the refurbishment work.** Proposed by Councillor Vane and seconded by Councillor Jenkins.

## **8. Two Verge Posts by Toilets Layby**

**It was resolve to apply to highways for permission to install posts on the verge by the layby for the toilets to prevent inconsiderate parking.** Proposed by Councillor Vane and seconded by Councillor Jenkins.

## **9. Recreation ground Report**

A meeting had been scheduled for the week before the meeting but it was weather permitting.

## **10. Finances**

**10.1 Bank Account:** as at 31<sup>st</sup> September 2020 £40,229.70

### **10.2 September Receipts**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| £0.16    | September Bank Interest                                    |
| £3.33    | Iden PC: Share of paper for printer                        |
| £42.46   | Public Donations from toilets                              |
| £28.93   | Public Donations from Toilets                              |
| £3.33    | Pett PC: Share of paper for printer                        |
| £1636.89 | EDF Solar panels Feed In tariff payment April to September |
| £13,000  | Precept Payment (50%)                                      |
| £421.00  | Ashford Borough Council : Council tax support grant        |
| £525.00  | Ashford Borough Council: Concurrent function grant.        |

### **10.3 Payments**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| £58.50    | T P Jones Payroll service July to Sept   |
| £60.20    | Laser: Toilet electricity June to August (vat £2.87)                               |
| £52.80    | VR Sani-Co Ltd: Toilet Sanitary Waste collection September to December (vat £8.80) |
| £41.00    | Refund C Vane: Council Field Update Leaflet  |
| £1,249.73 | September Salaries   |
| £16.46    | Refund B Gray: Toilet requisites   |
| £51.29    | M Philo: Stamps, replacement keys and toilet requisites (vat £ 3.56)               |

### **10.4 Second Quarter Financial Report**

The second quarter finances cover the regular running costs of the council. The public toilets reopening with limited opening hours to allow the cleaner to clean the facilities safely. Litter collection from the road side continued regularly but for a couple of weeks when the staff took a short period of convalescence. The bin outside the village hall was removed as the bin was no longer effective. The council returned to monthly meetings, though on zoom, from September. This coincided with the new website going live. The council received the outstanding share of precept £13,000 along with two grants from Ashford £421 council tax support grant and £525 concurrent function grant. Toilet donations from before the lock down were banked in July. Total donations for the quarter were £165.50. Feed in tariff payment for the first and second quarter of £ 1636.89 were also banked.

Total payments for the quarter were £5,819.55 including vat. Outstanding bills for the previous financial year for Heathside noticeboard: refurbishment and the addition of cork board £352.46 and sign washing £80. The website upload by the Clerk took around 50 hours and cost £644.50 much less than the £1000 quoted by website providers. The difference £355.50, as requested by Councillor Vane who set up the website for free was donated to the village hall. There were some catch up refund payments for toilet requisites made too.

### **10.5 Precept Projects and budgeting for 2021 - 2022**

A second draft had been circulated to councillors to consider. Estimating the water bill for the toilets was difficult as regular readings cannot be provided since the drain cover is jammed down by vehicles driving over it. If we had to include the £3000 cost of a bye-election or parish poll the total estimated costs to the parish council cost would exceed £26,000. Income from Concurrent Function Grant and Council Tax Grant received from Ashford Borough Council could not be relied upon Ashford may be looking to reduce these in order to balance their books. Ashford decision on this may be made after the parish council will have voted on the precept.

### **10.6. External Audit for Financial Year 2019 -2020**

The external auditor had confirmed that the information provided in sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accounting Return was in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters had come to their attention to cause concern. They had noted that the delay in posting the public notice of the public right to inspect the accounts resulted from the Clerk having to isolate, although not usual it did not invalidate the posting.

### **11. Residential Enabling Car Park Court Lodge Car**

Archeological excavations are ongoing. Charles and the Clerk would be meeting, probably by zoom, with Ed Middleton to discuss in detail specifications for the car park surface before bringing it to the council.

### **12. Village Hall Report**

The hall has had new heating installed, this was not expensive, and will allow us to

1. Keep people using the hall for fitness type events warm and
2. Preserve the fabric of the building from damp etc, whilst we await developments on the refurbishment front.

The hall is being used by a number of fitness groups, some of whom are new to the hall. They are making good use of our large space in this time of social distancing, as their previous premises are now

proving to be too small to accommodate a good sustainable class.  
As you know Lyndsey and Huw Jenkins are leaving the Village. We have asked for new trustees and have identified some, although not from a younger generation as we would have wished.  
The hall is being made good use of in the circumstances.

### **13. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 7.30pm

**14. Pursuant to section 1) of the Public Bodies (Admissions Act) 1960, it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during the item regarding council staff.** Proposed by Councillor Hennig and Councillor Vane.

1972 LGA sch. 12A part 1.3

**It was resolved to pay the toilet cleaner during the refurbishment of the Public Conveniences.**

Proposed by Councillor Hennig and seconded by Councillor Hiskey.