

Minutes of Preston and Elmstone Village Society meeting held

10th December 2008 at the Elmstone Court

Present:

David Theoff (Chairman)
Louise Perryman (Secretary)
Roger Ayling
Pip Hazelton
Lorna Listbrain
Patricia Simpson
John Simpson
Duncan Scott
Jan Rudolph
Karen Wright

1. Apologies for absence were received from Ollie Chapman and Alan Coller.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 12th November 2008 were adopted as a true record

3. Matters arising

All of the matters arising were dealt with by items on the agenda.

4. Payment of accounts

AC not present. Nothing to report

5. Young Persons Action Plan

PS reported that she had attended the meeting at Dover District Council offices on 20th November accompanied by Frank Pinnington, Parish Clerk. Representatives from Ash and Wingham had also attended and it had been proposed that the three parishes could jointly appoint 3 part time youth workers to set up a youth club in each village. The cost to each parish would be in the region of £4300 per year, for a 3 year period. A meeting was fixed to take place on 15th January to discuss funding this project from grants from "Awards for All" and other monies set aside for youth grants.

PH volunteered to assist with seeking funding.

6. Reports on Action Plan Progress

Village Hall Refurbishment

JS reported that the meeting with the Village Hall Committee had taken place on 18th November and after some discussion a vote was taken to pursue the option to re-build the village hall, provided that temporary accommodation can be found (possibly by hiring Portacabins) and subject to planning permission being granted and of course raising the necessary funding. The Village Society agreed

to be involved with fundraising towards the refurbishment, with the aim of raising sufficient money initially to pay the costs of getting the plans through planning permission.

Newsletter

JS reported that the Christmas newsletter was just about complete and would be sent to John Grieg tomorrow. It was important to get it printed in time for distribution during the week-end of 19th December.

DT confirmed that Vfast is sponsoring this issue, but we need a sponsor for March

Speed watch

Nothing to report

Neighbourhood Watch

DT reported that more volunteers are still needed for the Wingham end of Preston. So far there is only one representative in that area – Richard Barton.

Community Facilities

Nothing to report

Keep the Village Clean

Nothing to report

Footpaths

Nothing to report

7. Village Design Statement

DS reported that he and OC attended a meeting of the full council of DDC on 26th November where Sue Chandler and Mike Conolly spoke in favour of DS and the role of VDSs generally. Two representatives of Great Mongeham also spoke. On behalf of the Cabinet Trevor Bartlett accepted Sue Chandler's motion urging the Cabinet to investigate ways of giving proper recognition to the VDS within DDC, and the motion was then carried unanimously with full cross party-support. Prior to this Cllr Kenton, the Portfolio Holder for Planning had repeated his bizarre fear that the adoption of Village Design Statements would place the Council in legal jeopardy based on advice from GOSE.

GOSE (Government Office for the South East) advice is at odds with official Government policy. GOSE has been trying to stop production of VDSs in Sheppey and Dover districts because they allegedly have too many urban problems to deal with, while taking no action with regard to six other local authorities which continue to encourage and adopt VDS. On behalf of the four parishes we have sent letters to Hazel Blears and to Jonathan Shaw MP, minister for the South East. DS will also send a letter to Paul Watkins, leader of the DDC Cabinet and to the other 9 Cabinet members, together with copies of the VDS.

DS noted that Richard Alderton, Head of Planning for Ashford B.C., had sent a message wishing us success in our battle to get VDS recognition. The discretion

to adopt VDSs as non-statutory planning guidance is vested in the LPA has been confirmed to us by the DCLG - Dept for Communities and Local Government.

DS has also heard that Ash, Woodnesborough, Tilmanstone and Capel are all intending to produce VDS documents.

The meeting expressed its gratitude for the continuing strong support from our three Ward Councillors and expressed the hope that the Cabinet would now act upon the Motion by according due recognition to properly conducted VDSs.

8. Village Society

DT apologised that he had not brought along the list of who would talk to which group - see last month's minutes – but would complete it and bring it along to the January meeting together with the revised letter - see last month's minutes.

It was agreed that we should be thinking about organising some society events such as dances and quizzes. It was agreed that for this year we should aim for a quarterly event. PS suggested a Valentine's night dance. LP offered to get the details of the Goosebumps lead singer to see whether they may be able to play at a village hall event on Valentine's night or some other time soon.

10. Any Other Business

None

Date of Next Meeting: 14th January 2009.