

DANEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Danehill Parish Council (interim Committee) meeting held on Thursday 30th June, at Danehill C.E. School.

Present: Sylvia Martin, Anne Higgins, Cllr. Roy Galley, Cllr. Peter Roundell.

In Attendance: C.W. Gooders

Meeting started at 7.03pm

11/I Apologies for Absence

None.

12/I Minutes

The minutes of the Danehill Parish Council (Interim Committee) meeting dated 2nd June 2016, having been previously circulated, were unanimously agreed and signed as a true record.

13/I Matters Arising

Anne Higgins – Well done to Roy Galley for arranging for the Wealden District Council fees for temporary payment of Danehill Parish Council invoices to be reduced from £10 to £5 per item.

14/I Danehill C.E. School Shortfall

Sylvia Martin read to the meeting the following statement from Mr Falconer (Headmaster Danehill C.E. School):

As I am sure most people are aware, there has been a reduction in Government funding for schools over the past few years. In real terms, we have £50k less available in our budget next academic year compared with 2013/14. So we have a lot of other fund raising to achieve and can only hope to realise that with a significant donation from the Parish Council.

This reduction is obviously had a real impact in school and we find ourselves in the unfortunate position where our staffing costs now amount to over 95% of our budget. Having looked closely at our expenditure, with both the Business Manager and our Governors, we are managing our budget effectively, but we have already had to make cuts to prevent the budget from going into deficit from September. This has included cutting back on staffing hours (where possible) which will mean less Teaching Assistant hours and the loss of one other part time teaching support staff.

From September 2016, we will find it difficult to fund the day to day costs of running the school effectively including the basics like curriculum resourcing, staff training etc As a result the £10,000 donation, that was agreed by the previous Parish Council, formed part of our budget planning for September 2016 onwards. This money would 'free up' £10,000 to be spent elsewhere on the basics and also ensures that we are able to resource classrooms sufficiently, update some computing based technology and make improvements to the school grounds providing further safeguarding. Not only will this mean that we can continue to provide our children with the best possible education, it also means that we can continue to promote our school as 'the place to learn' in the Ashdown area as we need to increase our pupil numbers to keep Danehill CEP School sustainable for the future.

We discussed our situation with Councillor Montague and the previous Chair was due to present to finance committee and/or full council shortly to update on the outlook for the future. Needless to say the council considered it wholly against the Parish's interest to have

an asset like Danehill School, with its reputation and 150 year history, failing or having to severely cut its provision through no fault of its own. Not just from a house price perspective but also the way it attracts families to the area and acts as one of the few substantial community hubs we have.

I am very proud to be Headteacher of a school that is at the heart of the local community and I would like to ensure that Danehill CEP School remains so in the future.

I am very grateful for the interim Council's time in following up on the previous commitment made and look forward to hearing from you.

Roy Galley proposed that on the basis that a provisional agreement with the previous council to support Danehill C.E School having been given, that a one off payment of £10,000 be made to cover a shortfall in the School's budget. The School are not to rely on an annual payment of this kind. Seconded Peter Roundell. Voting unanimous.

15/I Repainting of Tennis Court Lines

It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk could go out to tender for the necessary work to be carried out.

16/I Process for Appointing a New Clerk

Peter Roundell proposed that Danehill Parish Council employ the services of SSALC at the approximate cost of £400.00 to advertise for a new Clerk, and to seek advice regarding the possibility of advertising locally within the Parish. Seconded Anne Higgins. Voting unanimous.

Meeting closed at 7.20pm

Chairman.....

Date.....