

CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Hayton Baker  
Hall, Ripe on Tuesday 26th May 2015

PRESENT:            Cllr Webb (Chair)            Cllr English  
                         Cllr White                    Cllr Ward  
                         Cllr Dunbar Dempsey        Cllr Brass

ATTENDING: A Stevens (Clerk) and five members of the public were in attendance.

1.    Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shonfeld.

County Councillor Bennett and District Councillor Ede also sent their apologies.

2.    Welcome and Signing in of New Council

Councillors were asked to complete the Acceptance of Office, Register of Interest Forms and Consent to Receive Agendas Electronically Forms and return them duly completed to the Clerk.

3.    To elect a Chairman for the ensuing year

Cllr Dunbar Demspey proposed and Cllr Ward seconded Cllr Webb for the role of Chairman to Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council. All were in favour.

Cllr Webb kindly accepted the role of Chairman to Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council.

4.    To elect a Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year

Cllr Webb proposed and Cllr White seconded Cllr Dunbar Dempsey for the role of Chairman to Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council. All were in favour.

Cllr Dunbar Dempsey kindly accepted the role of Vice-Chairman to Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council.

5.    Minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 6th May 2014 were read, approved and signed.

6.    To adopt the Standing Orders/Financial Regulations for the ensuing year

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council resolved to adopt the latest Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for the ensuing year which had been circulated by the Clerk before the meeting.

7. To appoint Councillors as Representatives of the Parish Council on the following bodies;

Councillors resolved that the following Councillors serve on the outside bodies listed;

Police Joint Action Team	Cllr Webb
Emergency Co-ordinator	Cllr Brass
Wealden District Association of Local Councils	Cllr Dunbar Dempsey
Tree Warden	Cllr Ward
Hayton Baker Hall	Cllr Brass
ESALC AGM	Cllr White

8. To consider payment of the following annual subscriptions;

Councillors resolved unanimously to pay the following subscriptions for the ensuing year;

Wealden District Associations of Local Councils  
Society of Local Council Clerks  
Sussex Association of Local Councils  
Zurich Insurance

9. To agree the meeting dates for the year ahead

Councillors resolved unanimously that the dates will be;

2015

July	6 <sup>th</sup>
September	7 <sup>th</sup>
October	5 <sup>th</sup>
November	2 <sup>nd</sup>
December	7 <sup>th</sup>

2016

January	4 <sup>th</sup>
February	1 <sup>st</sup>
March	7 <sup>th</sup>
April	4 <sup>th</sup>
May	5 <sup>th</sup>
June	6 <sup>th</sup>

The June 2015 is no longer taking place as the date of the May meeting was pushed back for the elections

10. To agree bank signatories

Councillors resolved that the two councilors sign each cheque and that there are three signatories – Councillors Webb, Brass and Ward.

11. To adopt the accounts for the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

Councillors **resolved** to accept the accounts and annual governance statement for the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 which had previously been circulated to them. The existing internal audit arrangement will continue with Peter Frost carrying out the Internal Audit once a year. The Clerk's hours will increase to 8hrs a week in line with SALC's recommendations.

12. To adopt the Code of Conduct for the ensuing year

Councillors resolved to accept the Code of Conduct and Register of Interests introduced by Wealden District Council under the Localism Act 2012.

13. General Power of Competence

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council resolved that it meets the prescribed conditions for the General Power of Competence.

14. Berwick Solar Farm Update

A meeting was convened on 12<sup>th</sup> May to discuss the "Unilateral Undertaking" ("the Undertaking") given by Richard and Sally Carr and Berwick Solar Park Limited to Wealden Council in respect of land at Batbrooks Farm that has been developed as a solar farm.

Those present were;

Mike Garner (Chairman of Arlington Parish Council); Helen Simpson-Wells (Clerk to Arlington Parish Council); Colin Webb (Chairman of Chalvington and Ripe Parish Council) and David Quysner (Chairman of Selmeston Parish Council)

The meeting noted that during the pre-approval phase of the solar farm, the developers had put forward proposals for a "Community Benefit Scheme" ("the Scheme") for the benefit of the community in the local Parishes of Arlington, Berwick, Chalvington and Ripe and Selmeston. Details of the Scheme are contained in the Undertaking.

The Scheme envisaged that a section of the solar farm should be separately financed through a "Community Owned Company". This would raise money through the Enterprise Investment Scheme ("EIS") and local residents would be able to invest with the benefit of EIS tax relief. It was envisaged that this company would make regular payments out of its profits for the benefit of the local communities.

It was further noted that the developers had recently said that it is not possible to proceed with the Community Owned Company. There is, however, a default provision in the Undertaking, as a result of which the developers and the landowner have now paid approximately £34,000 into a Fund, to be administered by Wealden. This is available for purposes described in the Undertaking as:

" the making of grants and/ or loans to offer opportunities to grass roots community voluntary groups and individuals to receive grants for the promotion and installation of energy efficient measures, small-scale renewable energy projects and education and capacity building projects or other projects involving renewable energy, climate

change and nature conservation and enhancing the public realm through planting so they may create and/or deliver outcomes for the benefit of their community and members by a simple effective inclusive programme within the local parishes.”

The Undertaking does not specify how the Fund is to be apportioned amongst the four beneficiary parishes. It might therefore be possible for the Fund to be allocated in a way that would benefit individual parishes or community members in a manner that could be considered unjust.

The meeting recognised that the Undertaking had been given to Wealden, which now held the Fund in Trust and that Wealden would be the ultimate arbiter of the allocation of the Fund but noted that some guidance from the parishes as to their views on the allocation of the Fund might be helpful.

The meeting further recognised that the beneficiary parishes differ in size and structure and that any proposals for funding would be likely to differ in quantum and timing. It would be very difficult to ensure an absolutely equitable distribution of the Fund. However, the meeting also considered that there should be an attempt to ensure that the allocation of funding could be viewed as fair and reasonable and that the Fund should not so far as possible, unless otherwise agreed by all the parishes, be for the benefit of only a few individuals or projects.

It was therefore proposed to approach Wealden to ask for their agreement that any proposals for funding should be referred to a Committee of the parishes (in a similar way to a planning proposal) for their comment and review. The Committee would work to simple guidelines, which David Quysner undertook to draft, which would attempt: 1) to ensure that all parishes should have the opportunity for a reasonable period of time to bring forward proposals and 2) to regulate the award of funding in an equitable manner.

There was discussion as to the types of project that might attract funding. Amongst those mentioned were: biomass boilers, various forms of solar paneling (for Village Halls, Schools and Churches etc); and for tree planting. It was noted that some of the parishes are very small and do not have significant “interest groups” that might apply for funding. DWQ expressed the view that, if there were any application from the residents most affected by the solar farm development, they should be given priority.

The Fund is in place for five years, after which any balance will fall under Wealden's absolute discretion. It was considered reasonable that the parishes should be given time to make residents aware of the Fund and to give them time to bring forward qualifying proposals. It was, however, considered impractical to manage the Fund within Guidelines for a protracted period. To do so might result in viable, qualifying proposals being unable to proceed whilst other proposals, which might not then materialise, were awaited.

After discussion, it was considered that applying the Guidelines until the end of 2015 would give a reasonable period of time within which a degree of equity could be provided. If by then there were unallocated Funds, it would be reasonable to make them available, through the Committee, on a “first come first served basis”.

It was agreed that, if the above process is agreed by the four parishes and by Wealden, details of the arrangements proposed should be circulated to residents, who would thereby be made aware not only of their opportunity to apply for funding but

also that we have done as much as we can to ensure that the Fund is distributed on a fair and reasonable basis.

Chalvington Parish Councillors considered the arrangement detailed above and voted in favour of following this proposed route for allocating the funds from the Berwick Solar farm. Councillors also agreed to put a notice in the next parish magazine asking for proposals for investments which Cllr Webb will bring to the group for consideration.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow comments from the floor.

#### 15. Planning Applications

Mr Whitehead, one of the owners of the Park, described the works proposed in the Deanland Wood Park application.

He said that he has discussed the best position for the new homes with planners. He said the homes are needed and will improve usage of the existing facilities at the site which are currently under used. The new homes will be screened and the views from existing homes would not be contaminated.

Mrs Allcock, a resident at the Park, disagreed. She said the homes are not needed, the site is a greenfield site with a right of way path through and management has enough to do without taking on more. She also feels the entrance to the new homes is too close to the existing entrance. Mr Whitehead said ESCC Highways has been consulted and is happy with the access arrangement.

Mr Whitehead was asked to confirm there will be no more development at the Park. He said he was unable to confirm this indefinitely but the family has no plans too and the site does not lend itself to further development. All work will be controlled by a S106 agreement.

The meeting was then re-opened and the following applications were considered;

WD2015/0890F – Little Meadow Stud, Church Lane – Construction of Hay Barn – Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council has no objections to this application on any planning grounds.

WD2015/1036F – Little Meadow Stud, Church Lane – Proposed detached single storey garage and store - Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council has no objections to this application on any planning grounds.

WD2015/0552MAJ – Deanland Wood Park – Proposed extension to the park with the addition of 26 new residential units – Councillors has no objections to this application on any planning grounds but asked if this can be included in our allocation under the Local Development Framework.

#### 16. Questions from Members

As requested at the April Meeting, Councillor Webb has looked at the deeds and can now confirm the fencing between the village hall and the adjacent field has not officially been gifted to the Parish Council. It does need repairing though and he has received an offer from the owner of the field to pay for part of the repairs and asks the Parish Council to pay for the materials.

Councillors **resolved** to pay for the materials at a maximum cost of £250 on receipt of an invoice because the field is used by the community.

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey asked who owns the fingerpost sign at Langtye Lane and the one near Sheepcote Lane. Councillor Webb will confirm the road details and report back.

Councillor White asked if planning application decisions can be included in the minutes. The Clerk said it will be easier to include them on the website.

Councillor Ward reported that the green street sign at Mark Cross Lane and Darp Lane is leaning over. The Clerk will contact Highways and ask them to repair it.

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey asked what the money from the Kitty Hawk Farm application is being used for. Councillor Brass said it is being used to extend the storage facilities at the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.