

CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF

12th May 2016

held at The Hayton Baker Hall, Ripe

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllr Dunbar Dempsey (Acting Chairman)
Cllr Brass Cllr Shonfeld
Cllr White Cllr Ward

ATTENDING: County Councillor N Bennett, District Councillor P Ede, and A Stevens (Clerk). There were five members of the public in attendance.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs English and Webb.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – The Acting Chairman, Cllr Dunbar Dempsey, read from the Chairman's report which was as follows;

Wealden Local Plan

Wealden DC issued a consultation document, Issues and Options. The two major implications for the Parish are to create a new conservation area in Chalvington and connect the two existing conservation areas in Ripe. And the second issue is the housing development in the settlement of Ripe.

Fingerposts

We are awaiting the completion of the last fingerpost in the village to be replaced in the near future.

The Lamb

During the year the outcome for the pub has continued to be a concern to everyone. Hopefully a conclusion will be reached in June when it goes to auction.

Planning

During the year we considered 11 planning applications and supported 7 and objected to 4.

Councillor Ward is continuing to liaise with Wealden with regards to a Tree Preservation Order in Ripe.

It was agreed that the Parish Council will continue to make sure residents who are affected by planning applications are made aware of them.

Village Plan

It was agreed that the Parish Council will defer any further work on a Village Plan until after the completion of Wealden DC's Local Plan.

Roads

We have continued to work with ESCC Highways Dept to make good the damage to roads and verges in the villages.

Precept

Has remained static for the last few years but it was felt necessary to increase it this year due to the pressures of increased costs.

My thanks to our County Councillor Nick Bennett and our District Councillor Philip Ede for all their help during the year.

Also to all the volunteers who produce our excellent Village Magazine which we all find so useful. And lastly a big thank you to all Parish Councillors and to our excellent clerk Alison.

3. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR –

County Councillor N Bennett read the excerpts from his report. His full report is as follows;

Driving Economic Growth

A bid for devolving additional powers to East Sussex, Surrey and West Sussex has been presented to Government. If successful, the 3SC (Three Southern Counties) bid will help unlock new growth and spearhead a transformation in how public services are delivered in the region, with organisations working together to help tackle the congested road and rail network, pioneer new digital technology, close the skills gap that is holding businesses back and build new affordable homes. The 3SC devolution bid has been developed in partnership with 44 organisations including 23 district and borough councils, 3 local enterprise partnerships, the South Downs National Park and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The 3SC Devolution Newsletter gives regular updates on devolution developments; to subscribe please sign up at:
https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKESCC/subscriber/new?topic_id=UKESCC_121.

A new service has been launched as part of a Government-backed drive to provide a one-stop shop approach to business support, with the aim of boosting economic growth. We have contracted the Let's Do Business Group to launch Business East Sussex, which provides a single point of contact for people looking to start a new business or grow an existing company, providing links to organisations that can provide support, access to research and development, networks and funding. Business East Sussex can be contacted by calling 0845 6018326, by emailing info@businesseastsussex.org.uk, online at www.businesseastsussex.org.uk or on Twitter @BizESussex.

Work under the Employability and Skills Strategy continued throughout 2015/16 and we are now planning ways to further increase opportunities for residents. During 2015 we encouraged contractors to create 785 hours of work experience and 100 hours of on-the-job training. The 'You're Hired' East Sussex Campaign, which seeks to support work-ready young people into apprenticeships, generated 699 work opportunities against a target of 500.

Ofsted, the national body that inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people and services providing education and skills for learners, has reported back on their inspection of the Council's arrangements for supporting school improvement. The School Improvement Service had previously been rated as 'ineffective' (June 2014). The latest inspection took place in November 2015 and the report, which no longer gives rating categories, recognises the impact of Council improvement activity and the difference this is making to the performance of schools and the outcomes for children and young people. Ofsted has not identified a need to re-inspect the service.

The Bexhill Hastings Link Road (Combe Valley Way) opened to traffic on 17th December 2015. The road will bring an estimated £1 billion of economic benefits to the area, providing new jobs, new homes and cutting congestion on the A259 and other local roads. It is expected to reduce congestion on the A259 by up to 40% and there is evidence of reduced journey times for people using the Link Road to access the Conquest Hospital. The route and design of the road were chosen to minimise the impact on the environment and new 'greenways' for walkers, cyclists and horse riders will be completed this year.

Keeping vulnerable people safe from harm

Sixteen direct contacts to the Trading Standards Rapid Action Team were made between April and September 2015, all of which were responded to within the two hour target response time. Two additional visits were made to victims as a result of a relative discovering that their family member had fallen prey to rogue traders. The intervention of the Rapid Action Team saved the consumers a total of £34,850.

The new Specialist Domestic and Sexual Abuse Service, led by RISE (Refuge, Information, Support and Education) in partnership with Survivors Network and the Crime Reduction Partnership was launched in January. The service provides information, advocacy and practical and emotional support to women, men and children living with domestic or sexual abuse or violence in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

The rate of children with a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 children (age 0-17) has reduced to 42.3 against a target of 44.7, demonstrating sustained improvement as a result of steps introduced to safely reduce the number of children with a Plan. Examples of actions include working with Independent Reviewing Officers (whose role is to monitor how the local authority treats children) and Child Protection Advisers to reinforce mechanisms to safeguard children. Many of these children remain Children in Need and continue to be supported by social workers.

A number of Safe Place Schemes are being developed through the goodwill of businesses, organisations and the staff working within them. The schemes aim to

provide vulnerable people, particularly those with a learning disability and older people, with a safe place to go and get help if they are feeling scared or upset while out on their own in the community

Working with East Sussex Young Carers, a charity that supports carers aged between five and 18 across the county, we have launched a new 'working together' policy aimed at ensuring young carers and their families get the support they need. The policy stresses the responsibility of all agencies to identify any issues or needs young carers might have when they first come into contact with them and aims for a more coordinated approach within and across the organisations to ensure young carers' needs are identified and met at the earliest opportunity.

Helping people help themselves

Good progress has been made on East Sussex Better Together (ESBT), the three year programme led by two local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford CCG and Hastings & Rother CCG) and East Sussex County Council to transform health and social care services. The integrated locality teams that will support older adults and those with long-term conditions will be implemented by April 2016 and reformed commissioning functions across health and social care will be implemented by July 2016. The ambition of ESBT is to develop a fully integrated health and social care system in East Sussex by 2018, ensuring every patient or service user enjoys proactive, joined up care that supports them to live as independently as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes.

Between April and November 2015, 100% (4,588) of working age adults and older people receiving our support received self-directed support. 91% of new clients who received short-term services to increase their independence made no further request for support. This means that more service users are planning how they want their social care needs met and have more control over their support.

More than 14,000 young people voted in the elections for the East Sussex Youth Cabinet. The Big Vote elections saw 14,258 votes cast for 39 candidates across 30 schools and colleges, with the 20 winners being announced at a special event in December. Areas of focus for the coming year are expected to include challenging and reducing bullying and abuse, and making local areas a safer and more enjoyable place to live for 11-18 year olds.

We are working with five community and voluntary organisations to support the development of Good Neighbour Schemes, which offer practical help and support to those in need and fight social isolation. East Sussex has one of the largest populations of people over the age of 85 in the country, with around 10% saying they feel lonely. Information about Good Neighbour Schemes, how to set one up and volunteering in the local community can be found on our website: https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/volunteering/good_neighbour_schemes/.

Making the best use of our resources

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2016/17 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on 9th February. For details see <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/finance/budget/>.

The Orbis partnership between East Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council was launched in April 2015 to improve the quality and resilience of business services and provide savings to both authorities. One of the first Orbis projects is the introduction of a paperless billing service that is expected to save the councils around £180,000 annually within three years through reducing the time spent on completing and processing around 125,000 invoices annually. It is estimated that it will cut invoicing costs for businesses by up to 40%, and around 1000 suppliers have enrolled to carry out transactions with us using the paperless service.

This year, projects delivered under the SPACES programme, the collaborative partnership formed of public and third sector organisations in East Sussex with the aim of reducing the cost of the public sector estate through partnership working and co-location, include the Let's Do Business group moving into St Mary's House in Eastbourne and our Bexhill traffic team co-locating with Rother District Council at Bexhill Town Hall. This year's projects reduced revenue expenditure by over £100,000 and we have worked with charities to recycle unwanted furniture and stationery items, saving them in the region of £20,000. The SPACES programme has recently been awarded a Certificate of Excellence by the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE).

A new seven-year contract for the provision of highway services in the county will start on 1st May. The contract with the civil engineering and construction company Costain CH2M will replace the existing arrangement which sees three separate contractors responsible for highways, street lighting and traffic signals. The new deal gives us greater certainty over the cost of highway services for the next seven years and includes a number of incentives and penalties to ensure the best possible service is provided to the public. Highways Stewards, who are responsible for inspecting the county's roads, will be given more powers to fix minor road defects, allowing the work to be carried out more quickly and efficiently.

Diverting waste from landfill during annual maintenance works at the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility saved around £23,000 and reduced the impact on the environment. Waste that would otherwise have been sent to landfill during the planned shutdown was diverted to other energy recovery facilities in the south east. Around 3,500 tonnes of waste, which would otherwise have been destined for landfill, was diverted to facilities in Kent and south east London. This not only saves money but means rubbish is turned into electricity to power homes and businesses via the National Grid, which makes it a greener, more cost-effective way of dealing with the annual maintenance shutdown.

Councillor White asked Councillor Bennett to see what action County can take to reduce the number of road accidents on a sharp bend on the Deanland Road. In answer to this and resident's questions Councillor Bennett asked that residents report damaged verges and highways queries and requests to him and he will then take them up with officers.

District Councillor Ede reported on his first year in office. He said;

- Planning has been the most significant issue. Councillor Ede is on the Planning Committee and has been heavily involved with the new Local Plan. There were 2000 responses most of which expressed concern that most of the building is in the South, or were worried about the lack of infrastructure

(buses, water, sewerage, schools, roads). The next stage is that the Local Plan will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

- Litter clearance is in hand and more regular clearances of the A27 have been promised.
- The Lamb Pub is going to be put up for sale at auction in June and he encouraged people to publicise it as much as possible in the hope of increasing the chances of attracting a buyer who will want to take it over as a pub.
- He has recommended to the County Council that Church Farm Lane in Chalvington is resurfaced.
- Wealden has yet to receive a planning application for the Coach House site.
- He has told officers at Wealden he supports the Parish Council's request to place Tree Preservation Orders on the Jubilee Trees.

In answer to residents questions Councillor Ede agreed damage to verges remains a major concern in the area. He recommends the Parish Council writes to the police and asks them not to divert traffic through the villages of Ripe and Chalvington when there is an accident on the A27 and A22.

4. REPORT FROM THE TRUSTEES OF HAYTON BAKER HALL – Professor Hill sent a written report in which he said that during the year;

The Committee Members during the year were:

Brian Hill	Chairman
Lys Drewett	Secretary
Keith Hopson	Treasurer
Val Hopson	Bookings Secretary
Peter Brass	Parish Council Representative
Gill Ross	P.C.C. Representative
Elaine Nicholls	W.I Representative
Debbie Sylvester	Flower Show Representative
Jooles Jackson	
Margaret Hallowell	
Sue Tyldsley-Hill	

During the year the programme of refurbishment and repairs was continued. Areas were treated for damp and repainted. Thanks to the mediation of the Parish Council a grant was obtained from the Berwick Solar operators to replace the Hall windows. The new windows are much more effective in retaining heat and will not need as much maintenance. A small award of £500 was donated by the Woodhouse Brewery which was used to improve the kitchen facilities. The entrance lobby was also refurbished with a kitchen unit, a lowered ceiling, LED lighting and new carpeting.

Our finances remain sound, aided by donations from the Parish Council, the Flower Show and the Music Festival. The committee was able to operate the Hall without increasing letting fees to users. Keith Hopson, our Treasurer, has guided us wisely and efficiently throughout the year.

During the year the Hall has continued to be used by a variety of local and outside organisations. The pre-school's new owner has further increased opening hours and

pupil numbers. Thanks are due to Val Hopson who oversees this aspect of our activities.

The Committee organised a number of successful events including a village quiz night and a Race Night.

Disappointingly, there has been little progress in expanding the amount of storage space available. Our local Parochial Church Council has been very supportive, but the Diocese has, to date, not given permission for the 2.5 metres of land owned by the PCC to be used to extend the storage area at the rear of the Hall.

Health and Safety and Risk Assessments were carried out and no major problems were detected. The committee decided to join with other village halls in the area and to become members of Action for Rural Sussex.

The Committee met five times during the year and all members discharged their responsibilities effectively.

It has been another successful year and thanks are due to all Members whose dedication ensures that the Village Hall continues to provide a significant asset to our local community. It has been a privilege to work with such a friendly and motivated team'.

5. REPORT FROM THE LITTER WATCH CO-ORDINATOR - Professor Hill sent a written report in which he said that during the year;

'It is twelve years since the Group retrieved the first cans and packets from the verges of our Parish and started its relentless pursuit of a litter-free environment. Since then, an estimated 2,500 bags full of litter have been picked up by the nineteen members in the group.

The main culprits are energy drink containers, closely followed by empty food packages. Inexplicably, some louts have added to these by depositing carrier bags full of dirty nappies, packets of dog poo (neatly tied up) and supermarket "eco" bags full of empty beer cans. Other problems noted were the debris from cars crashing into the infamous trees on the sharp bend just past Deanland and the escape of litter from bins on windy days as they are being emptied into the trucks. It is certain that without the efforts of the LitterWatch team our villages would be a much less pleasant place to live.

A particular problem in recent months has been the mess left by workers at the railway level crossing between Ripe and the A27. Firm action was taken with the contract manager and, fingers crossed, the situation has greatly improved. Sadly, fly tipping of mattresses, old cupboards, fridges, tyres and builders' rubbish continues to be left in lay-bys and field entrances. One member of the group performs sterling work with his trailer and Wealden District Council are to be congratulated on the efficient way in which they turn out, usually within two days, to clear up. What a pity we have not managed to catch a single person actually depositing litter!

The LitterWatch group will continue to work to "clean for the Queen" and for the communities of Ripe and Chalvington'.

6. REPORT FROM THE PARISH EMERGENCY OFFICER – There was no report from the Parish Emergency Officer on this occasion because there have been no emergency situations in the Parish in the past year.

7. OPEN FORUM – Ms Bartter, in her role as Community Champion working with EE, has now heard back from the company. Mr Whitehead has now moved on and the firm is asking for sites to be put forward.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm.