

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

held at The Hayton Baker Hall, Ripe

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

ATTENDING: County Councillor N Bennett and A Stevens (Clerk). There were four members of the public in attendance.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S English and they were accepted by the Full Council. District Councillor Ede also sent his apologies for his absence.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – The Chairman, Colin Webb read from his report which was as follows;

### Wealden Local Plan

'Wealden District Council have issued the Draft Local Plan. The two major implications for the Parish are that there should be no further development in the villages. It also confirms a new conservation area in Chalvington and the connection of the two existing conservation areas in Ripe.

We were pleased that Kelvin Williams head of Planning at Wealden DC and Ann Newton Councillor for Planning at Wealden DC joined us for one of our meetings. They helped us to better understand how the planning procedures worked. No doubt this will help us with our decision-making process in the coming years.

### The Lamb

During the year the outcome for the pub has continued to be a concern to everyone. We have been led to believe by the agent of the owners that a planning application is to be submitted soon.

### Planning

During the year we considered 12 planning applications and supported 10 and objected to 2. Councillor Ward has continuing to liaise with Wealden with regards to a Tree Preservation Order in Ripe with a successful conclusion.

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

## Roads and Footpaths

We have continued to work with ESCC Highways Department to make good the damage to roads and verges in the villages. We are pleased to welcome our new footpath warden James Robertson.

Dog fouling continues to be a problem and we ask that all owners make sure that they clean up after their pets.

## Precept

Will not be increased and is to remain the same as last year.

## Village Shop

We would like to recognise the great work that is carried out by the staff in our village shop and say how well deserved their award was.

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

Also to the Litterwatch Team, the Village Hall Committee and Ripe Nursery for doing such a wonderful job for everyone in our community.

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 for all their work behind the scenes and to our excellent clerk Alison for all she does, and helping us to keep us on track'.

## 3. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR –

County Councillor N Bennett sent his report. His full report is as follows;

### Driving Economic Growth

East Sussex County Council and Skills East Sussex (the county's employment and skills board) were successful in securing funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company for Progress – a new project aimed at equipping people with the skills needed by business and preparing them for the world of work. The project is running between April 2016 and July 2017 and includes work experience for pupils in years 10 and 11, visits to businesses, work readiness programmes, tailored support for young people wishing to access apprenticeships and the STEMfest project, aimed at encouraging students to study science, technology, engineering and maths.

Funding was also secured to allow Business East Sussex – the county's 'growth hub' to continue for two further years. The service is aimed at supporting businesses at all stages of growth, and helps businesses to find all the information, advice and support they need in one place. Since launching in July 2015, the service has engaged with more than 1,100 businesses. More information is available at [www.businesseastsussex.org.uk](http://www.businesseastsussex.org.uk) In addition, Locate East Sussex has helped 35 companies start up, relocate or expand in East Sussex during 2016-17.

New computer terminals have been installed at all of the county's 24 libraries, improving the Council's network of free to access PCs and enabling people to use the internet and email, search for jobs and look up a wide range of information. Among those benefitting from the upgrade are users of the 'IT For You' scheme which offers advice and support on using IT to prepare a CV and apply for work. In addition, the library at Seaford is benefitting from a new café, as part of the £6 million Warwick House development.

A number of positive educational results were reported in the summer, including improvements in GCSE and A level results. At Key Stage 1, the percentage of East Sussex pupils achieving the expected standard was higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. At Key Stage 4 our Progress 8 score was +0.04, significantly higher than the national average of -0.03. 87.1% of primary schools are judged to be good or outstanding, an increase of 10.1 percentage points since August 2015. 77.8% of secondary schools and 100% of maintained special schools are good or outstanding against national averages of 77.6% and 93.2% respectively.

East Sussex was awarded £13.2 million from the Government's Local Growth Fund in February 2017, following a bid by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). East Sussex County Council will receive £8.2 million for the East Sussex Strategic Growth Project to create new employment developments in areas including Bexhill and Eastbourne. £5 million has been granted towards a £44 million redevelopment of the Devonshire Park area including a new conference complex. More than 1,000 new jobs are expected to be created as a result

East Sussex County Council is one of seven local authorities which have agreed to form a partnership called Transport for the South East (TfSE). The vision for this new body is for strategic transport planning for the whole area, unlocking economic growth and improving lives for residents. To begin with, TfSE will run in shadow form as it develops its strategy and operation, consulting with transport operators, businesses and the public. With government agreement, TfSE could move to full operation from 2019.

A new seven-year contract for the provision of highway services in the county began on 1st May 2016. The contract with Costain CH2M replaced the existing arrangement of three separate contractors being responsible for highways, street lighting and traffic signals. The new contract has seen the introduction of a new website and online system for people to report highways issues; [www.eastsussexhighways.com](http://www.eastsussexhighways.com). In the first 6 months of the contract East Sussex Highways completed over 220 planned road works, 10,000 minor works, laid 64 miles of tarmac, answered 26,000 calls and progressed major works in areas such as Hailsham and Uckfield.

Our e-Sussex project to rollout faster broadband in previously isolated areas has improved access to services, jobs and education. Over 66,000 premises have been connected to improved broadband speeds in the first phase of works and the second phase to connect a further 5,000 of the hardest to reach premises in the county is underway

#### Keeping vulnerable people safe from harm

A new integrated service bringing health visiting and children's centres together was launched in June 2016. The new service aims to help families be self-sufficient in their communities by providing appropriate early intervention and support, and keep children aged 0-5 safe and healthy by providing accessible, comprehensive, high quality services, promoting social inclusion and equality and respecting diversity.

The percentage of court proceedings, to ensure timely decision making about long term care for children, completed within 26 weeks has increased from 22% in April 2016 to 63% in December 2016.

Many people affected by domestic violence and abuse who have used the specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence service (Portal) in the first half of 2016/17 say they are more in control of their lives and/or more optimistic about the future. East Sussex County Council supported the 16 Days of Action for the Elimination of Violence Against Women campaign, in November/December 2016. Over the 16 days a range of agencies, groups and individuals came together to work towards ending all forms of violence against women. The Council has been recredited as a White Ribbon authority recognising the Council's commitment to work to end violence and abuse and ensure survivors can access help and support.

Trading Standards have exceeded their target of 80 positive interventions for the year, including supporting victims of financial abuse and over 400 delegates have attended workshops run by Trading Standards in 2016/17 so far. Two recent successful prosecutions include one for a rogue trader who preyed on elderly people and another for a company director who duped investors into paying thousands of pounds for worthless franchises.

#### Helping people help themselves

Significant progress has been made in delivering East Sussex Better Together (ESBT), the 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. In 2016 for example, six integrated locality based teams of health and care professionals were brought under single management to deliver more cohesive care, more quickly. We launched nurse-led Crisis Response Teams, helping to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions along with a new frailty service at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust to support frail people to live independent and healthy lives out of hospital. In addition, Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC) a new integrated point of contact for adult health and care is receiving 8,000-9,000 enquiries a month.

Between April and December 2016, 100% of working age adults and older people supported by Adult Social Care received self-directed support. 98.2% 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. In addition in, 2016-17 so far, 2,872 people have been supported by STEPS, which helps people maintain independence within their own homes.

We took part in a national survey of carers sending surveys to 953 carers in East Sussex and receiving 535 responses. 73.9% of respondents said they were either extremely, very or quite satisfied with the support they receive from Adult Social Care, an improvement from 72.6% reported in 2014/15.

Public Health has been leading a programme of work to tackle the health effects of cold homes. Work included training frontline professionals to enable them to identify people living in cold homes and refer them onto appropriate services. 374 referrals to the Winter Home Check were made between October and December 2016. Public Health also developed a Stay Well this Winter campaign and helped to develop a Locally Enhanced Service for GP staff to help them identify patients at risk of fuel poverty.

## Making the best use of our resources

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2017/18 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on the 7th February 2017. The budget includes spending of £365 million on services for East Sussex and a £95 million capital budget for one off projects. It also includes savings of £17 million, a 3 per cent Adult Social Care levy and a 1.99 per cent council tax increase. The Orbis partnership between East Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council aims to improve the quality and resilience of business services and provide savings to both authorities. In December 2016, the Orbis Joint Committee and the Cabinet approved in principle, Brighton and Hove City Council joining the partnership as a founding partner. This is aligned with our ambition to grow Orbis and is a positive endorsement of the partnership. In addition, plans to bring together the legal operations of Surrey County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and East and West Sussex County Councils were signed off. The aim is to create greater resilience, reduce duplication, generate income and deliver savings of £1 million a year.

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	
Susan Tyldsley-Hill	

During the year the programme of refurbishment and repairs was continued. Areas were treated for damp and repainted. Heating was installed in the lobby and the floors in the two halls were resealed.

Our finances remain sound, aided by donations from the Parish Council, the Flower Show and the Music Festival. However, the unintended consequences of the new government scheme to provide free pre-school tuition for three to four year olds, has meant that schools have been put under severe financial pressure. The committee is working with the school to safeguard this important asset to our community. 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. As well as the pre-school, activities have included many social events, community meetings, parties and official gathering. Thanks are due to Val Hopson who oversees this aspect of our activities.

Health and Safety and Risk Assessments were carried out and no major problems were detected. The emergency lighting and fire extinguishes have been routinely checked.

In the Chairman's Report for the year ending 30 April 2016, our disappointment was highlighted in not being able to resolve problems with the Diocese to purchase 2.5m of land to increase storage space. Sadly, one year on, and in spite of the continued active support of our local Parochial Church Council, little progress has been made. We received a grant of £2,000 from Villages SOS to employ a solicitor and to obtain a formal valuation together with the services of an advisor but, inexplicably, matters have not moved forward. The pressure on storage is such that we have been forced to "temporarily" decommission the gents' toilets and to convert them to a storage area.

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'.

County Councillor Bennett entered the meeting.

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

'It is now 13 years since the LitterWatch group was established and rubbish continues to keep the 19 families in the group busy. At a rough count, 8,000 bags of litter have been collected and responsibly disposed of over the years!!!

The main culprits remain plastic bags, beer cans, fast-food wrappings, energy soft drinks and, new kid on the block, energy jelly which is sucked out of a packet before disposal on the verge

There are indications that the profile of litterers is moving slightly upmarket. Analysis of the Parish shows that wine bottles are on the increase. Firstly, a common Sauvignon was consumed, but more recently, serial drinkers have used their bonuses to upgrade to an expensive German hock! Difficult to spot the connection, perhaps, but the Sauvignon was often placed on the verge, together with neatly packaged, but used, disposable nappies!

McDonalds are obviously doing profitable business locally and it would be good to get some help from them to clean up their customers' mess. Perhaps an official approach from the Parish Council would stimulate a response?

Network Rail have shown the way forward by agreeing to take action to stop the awful littering next to the Ripe level crossing. Also, showing themselves open to pressure, Winters, the turf farmers, agreed to dispose of dangerous items within builders' rubble which had been spread by the road, including glass and sharp tiles that pose a hazard particularly to animals

Continuing the positive theme, Wealden Council should be congratulated on providing an excellent service to control fly-tipping. Sofas, mattresses, old tyres, kitchen units, broken chairs, etc all make their appearance under cover of darkness but rarely stay with us for more than two days due to the diligence of the fly-tipping patrol. The Council also helped in our very successful "Clean for the Queen" weekend, providing us with sacks and cleaning packs.

So much for our efforts within the Parish, but what a difference when we venture out onto the main roads surrounding us. In the last month, some litter-picking activity has been noted, but the problems on these A-roads remain a disgrace. Littering just encourages more litter louts and East Sussex, Brighton, Lewes District and the Highways Authority really have to tackle the problem much more seriously'.

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. REPORT FROM RIPE NURSERY SCHOOL – Kate Fleming sent a report in which she said;

'We have had a busy year at Ripe Nursery School and are delighted to have seen our numbers steadily rising, with several days almost at full capacity. We currently have children attending from the immediate village, with others coming from areas further afield such as Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate. We have recently recruited a new member of staff to our team lives in the village and whose own children attended the Nursery School.

Last summer we were given our 'Outstanding' rating by Ofsted and we have been keen to maintain and build on what we provide. We have worked on developing our opportunities for open-ended, imaginative play and we were thrilled to have the support of both Jill and the Parish Council in putting up a play house in the field, which will be arriving soon.

Our baby and toddler group has continued on a Thursday afternoon and has provided a good place for parents to meet and chat, particularly for those with new babies who feel a little isolated living outside of the local towns.

Our 'topic' work recently has covered gardening and growing, our bodies, and traditional fairy tales. We have enjoyed taking the children's interests as our starting points for this work and then developing it further as the days go by. We have been using a 'mind mapping' technique for recording the children's thoughts, ideas and questions at the start of a topic and then reflecting on it and adding to it as we go on; it has really helped the children to see themselves as learners and to talk about what they know.

The children have enjoyed creating displays for the community, such as our Nativity scene at Christmas and the window displays for the village shop. The shop remains a favourite place to visit for the children (and staff and parents!) and we always feel very well supported by the community around us'.

8. REPORT FROM THE FOOTPATH WARDEN – James Robertson sent a report in which he said;

'The main issues with footpaths will always remain maintenance by the relevant landowners and marking with sufficient waymarks.

Generally the way marking by Wealden D.C. is adequate, if taken in conjunction with an Ordnance Survey map. There are one or two places, particularly where the path passes among farm buildings, where the exact route is not clear.

A slight concern is with the maintenance of the (few) footbridges, some of which are quite new, but already seem in one or two instances to risk falling into disrepair, as they are not kept sufficiently clear of vegetation.

A recurrent problem is where footpaths are shared with bridleways, particularly during the winter when muddy conditions prevail; a particular example of this is the bridleway between Lower Stream Farm on Mill Lane, Laughton and Mark Cross Lane, Ripe; the lack of drainage on a couple of stretches means that at certain times the route is almost impassable to walkers, as the horses have churned up the surface.

I have not as yet looked into preparing a map of paths within the parish, but this would be a useful facility for anyone tempted to try new walking routes, if produced in a convenient format. One idea that has been suggested is to arrange a village event to encourage people to discover the footpaths - perhaps in the form of a treasure-hunt for the children, and an equivalent for the adults which marks points of interest or historical association. That would perhaps best be done during the summer holidays.'

#### 9. OPEN FORUM –

Councillor White asked County Councillor Bennett if the County Council can do anything about the cars which are being advertised for sale on the verges at Golden Cross, because they are dangerous as they obscure drivers' vision. County Councillor Bennett agreed there could be trading and highways issues which are both County Council responsibilities, and there may even be advertising issues which are District Council ones. He asked the Parish Council to email him and copy in the District Councillor, and they will see what they can do. It was noted the grass needs cutting there too.

Councillor White also asked if the road markings can be reinstated at the junction of Langtye Lane, Mill Lane and Darp Lane as he said it is only a matter of time before there is a fatal accident there. Councillors agreed that a 'stop' sign is also needed. County Councillor Bennett asked the Parish Council to email him about this too. He can then carry out a site visit with Safety Engineers from ESCC.

Councillor agreed that Councillor White will send an email to County Councillor Bennett about both issues.

Mrs Hill asked where the nearest nuclear bunker is. The nearest nuclear bunker is understood to be at Kingstanding on the Ashdown Forest.

Professor Hill asked if the Parish Council has a view about what is happening at Kitty Hawk Farm. He says it looks like the runway is being extended and asked if the landowners would need planning permission. The Clerk said she will find out.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.55pm.