

CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF

5th December 2016

held at The Hayton Baker Hall, Ripe

78: Present: Cllr Webb (Chairman) Cllr Dunbar Dempsey
Cllr Shonfeld Cllr Ward
Cllr White

79: Attending: District Councillor P Ede, A Stevens (Clerk) and seven members of the public were also in attendance.

80. Public Session:

District Councillor Ede said he has asked officers at Wealden to revisit The Lamb and see if it breaches S215 of the Town and Country Planning Act now.

Mr Garner said;

- the pension scheme offered to the Clerk is a defined benefit pension which therefore gives rise to serious liabilities and is also likely to have higher than expected deficits. He said the Pension Regulations recommend a viable investment plan to minimise the deficit and liabilities.
- the staff costs are 75% of the precept and so there is not much 'wriggle room' and he asked if the Council has given due thought to the potential implications.
- the villagers should be consulted.

Councillor Webb explained;

- the Parish Council recognises the pension was a serious step to take. It had input from various sources and all the Parish Councillors.
- it considered the risks but felt the benefit of the Scheme outweighed the risks.
- the Parish Council made the decision because it represents the residents.
- the motion was carried by five votes to two.

Mr Robertson spoke in his new role as Footpath Warden and said;

- he had little to report because this time of the year is not too problematic.
- the only considerations for the future are the state of the footbridges and the state of the footpaths and bridleways.

Councillors asked the Clerk to invite the Footpath Officer at ESCC to a future meeting to talk about their role and also ours as a Parish Council.

Professor Hill said it would be really useful to have a map of the footpaths in the Parish. Councillor Webb said there is a map on the ESCC website which is regularly updated and he will put a note on the Parish Council noticeboard to let residents know. Councillor White noted there is a move to open up footpaths to cyclists.

The minutes of the previous meeting were also questioned in regards to the Solar Farm application but they were clarified by the Chairman.

The meeting then opened.

81. Apologies for absence:

Councillor S English sent his apologies for absence and these were accepted by those present. County Councillor N Bennett also sent his apologies for his absence.

82. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 7th November 2016 were amended to include the following;

- Minute 68 – previously said that ‘Councillor Dunbar Dempsey said she feels that Wealden District Council does not address issues raised by Parish Councils’. This was amended to ‘Councillor Dunbar Dempsey said where Wealden imposes conditions, they do not monitor those conditions effectively’.
- Minute 74 – previously said ‘Councillors White and Dunbar Dempsey asked for it to be recorded that they object to the decision and would have preferred to offer a basic pension, which is a defined contribution scheme where the employer’s contribution is capped because they thought the risks could be considerable’. This was amended to ‘Councillors White and Dunbar Dempsey asked for it to be recorded that they object to the decision and would have preferred to offer a defined contribution scheme where the employer’s contribution is capped and is known in advance’.

The minutes were then approved and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.

83. Clerk’s Report on any Matters’ Arising:

The date of the Full Council Meeting in May was changed to 2nd May. The original date was 4th May but it now clashes with the County Council elections. The Clerk will let the Village Magazine know.

84. Disclosures of Interest:

There were no disclosures of interest nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

85. Reports from Outside Meetings:

Councillor White attended the Wealden Planning Panel Meeting on the 5th December and reported that;

- The Government is reviewing the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Lewes District Council (LDC) is considering challenging the decision by the Secretary of State, Sajid Jarvid, to overturn Newick’s Neighbourhood Plan.
- The revised Local Plan has been deferred for three months. When finalised windfall and barn conversions are expected to be included in the housing numbers. The latest application from Deanland is not included in the numbers because the site is not considered to be a permanent one. Reclassifying it as a permanent site could mean it might be more likely to be built on. It could also set a precedent.
- Wealden has 4.1 years of its 5 year land supply. There is also a 20% buffer.
- There is currently a backlog for pre-application talks. If an applicant of a large scale development has not consulted with parishes, it is regarded as a negative.
- There is a new ruling regarding Gypsy and Traveller Sites. Gypsies and Travellers are now classed as a Social Group and not an Ethnic Minority, which means the number of sites needed has been reduced by half.

Councillors resolved to appoint Councillors White and Dunbar Dempsey as their representatives on the Wealden Planning Panel.

Councillors also discussed the definition of housing supply and agreed the formulae used to calculate housing need needs to be standardised.

Chalvington with Ripe has now received a reply to its letter to Maria Caulfield MP which she referred to Gavin Barwell MP at the Department for Communities and Local Government. The letter voiced Councillors concerns about the Government's Housing Planning Policy.

Mr Barwell replied;

'I am 'very conscious of the impact planning decisions can have on local communities and on our environment and I know this is a matter of great importance to the people of Chalvington with Ripe. The Government wants to do all it can to enable local communities to say what sort of place they want to live and give communities real power to influence planning decisions. The National Planning Policy Framework reinforces the role of Local Plans and neighbourhood plans as the primary basis for identifying what development is needed in an area. Local authorities will need to show that the views of local communities and interested parties have been sought and considered for a Local Plan to be sound at examination'.

Councillor agreed this view is contradicted by the Newick Decision.

86. Planning Applications:

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey asked if anyone attended the Planning Committee South meeting where the Deanland application (WD/2016/1548/MAJ) was heard. District Councillor Ede attended the meeting and confirmed the Committee approved the application because the scheme was sustainable, there had only been one objection and it seemed absurd to refuse it. Officers had previously recommended the application for refusal.

87. Traffic on roads in the Parish:

At a previous meeting, the Parish Council requested weight restriction signs on the Firle Road. They received the following reply from Jo Reed at Highways;

'As you may be aware, to prohibit HGV's from using Firle Road would require the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order to make this legally enforceable, but before this, as part of our policy in the implementation of weight restrictions, a survey would need to be carried out to determine if this is being used as a cut through, or those HGV's accessing the lane have a legitimate reason to access the Lane.

Whilst I am sympathetic to the concerns you have relating to large vehicles using Firle Lane, Ripe, I have to remain realistic to the fact that this is an issue raised by local residents on most of our rural road network. Satellite navigation systems have played a big part in all classes of vehicles using routes not previously utilised. The situation is also made worse by the fact that the trunk and main road network within the county is not well developed and therefore drivers are increasingly looking to the minor road network as alternatives.

In respect of controlling the routes used by large vehicles, it is not possible to introduce restrictions on all roads where concerns have been brought to our attention. We need to ensure only those roads which are environmentally unsuitable and which have a disproportionate level of through traffic are considered further for such a prohibition. Furthermore, any weight restriction would still have exemptions for those vehicles that have a legitimate reason to access the Lane, i.e. to pick up deliver goods, agricultural machinery etc.

I have checked the Police Crash Record for the most recent three year period and can advise that there have been no crashes involving HGV's and as such would not be a priority for us to investigate at this present time.

If the Parish Council would like to pursue this further and fund a study of traffic movements in Firlle Lane themselves, you may wish to contact my colleague Penelope Bentley directly in our Transport Monitoring Team on 01273 482248 or penelope.bentley@eastsussex.gov.uk. I have also copied Penelope into this email so she is aware of the situation and she will be able to advise you of the necessary requirements, health and safety etc. associated with carrying out this type of survey.

The outcome of the survey would, of course, not necessarily lead to the work required to implement a restriction as there would be significant costs associated with the making of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and the erection of all of the signing to give effect to the TRO. The siting of the start and finish of any ban would require careful thought as there would be access exemptions for vehicles involved in certain activities and therefore the TRO may not achieve what the residents would expect. As any restriction would need to be enforced by Sussex Police, their views on any proposal would be very important'.

88. Defibrillators:

Councillor Ward has started the application for funding from the Big Lottery Fund which Councillor Webb will now complete.

Councillors also noted that the NHS will no longer maintain defibrillators. This decision could cost the Parish Council approximately £150 a year.

89. Fingerpost Signs:

Councillor resolved to accept the price from Bernard Patience to repair the fingerpost sign at Langtye Lane/Poundfield Lane and clean the fingerpost sign at Mark Cross Lane/Mill Lane.

90. Cheques for Payment:

The following cheques were approved for payment;

A Stevens – Salary – November	Cheque number 100955
Rotary Club of Eastbourne – Crocus' - £60	Cheque number 100956

91. Questions from Parish Councillors:

Councillor White asked for permission to appoint a tree surgeon to check the condition of the 4th tree on the Old Coach House site which had been excluded from the recently issued TPO because it is, allegedly, diseased.

Councillor Shonfeld announced that Deanland has been sold to John Sargeant, The decision should not affect residents and any agreements made with the Parish Council will still stand.

There being no further questions from Parish Councillors, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

