

CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF

7th November 2016

held at The Hayton Baker Hall, Ripe

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

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

62. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no questions from any members of the public on this occasion.

County Councillor Bennett sent a report about the activities of ESCC to Councillors before the meeting. A copy of his report is on the Parish Council website www.chalvingtonwithripe.co.uk. He told those present the County Council is currently in the middle of budget setting and is looking at different ways to provide services.

County Councillor Bennett then left the meeting.

The meeting then opened.

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – District Councillor P Ede sent his apologies for his absence.

64. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS –

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 3rd October 2016 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.

65. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTER'S ARISING –

The Clerk;

- confirmed she will now draft a letter to the MP from the Parish Council, which summarises the individual responses from Councillors about the Government's Housing Planning Policy. The Chairman will circulate a similar letter Isfield Parish Council sent to its MP and the response they got back.
- asked Councillors to confirm they are happy to replace the fingerpost sign at the Selmeston end of Darp Lane. All agreed.
- announced that her application to become a Fellow of the Institute of Council Management has been approved.

Councillor Dunbar-Dempsey updated everyone about the crocuses discussed in minute 56. They have now been planted.

Councillor White suggested those against new developments might like to look at the latest new development in Isfield which has been sympathetically built.

66. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST: There were no disclosures of interest nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

67. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE MEETINGS – Councillor White attended the ESALC AGM on the 4th October. ESCC carried out a presentation on the new Highways Contract. Residents are now asked to report faults on the ESCC website where they can also follow the progress of their enquiry. Faults can also be reported to a Highways Liaison Officer.

Councillor Webb met the Chairman of Chiddingly Parish Council to discuss the possibility of working on a joint Neighbourhood Plan. They decided that as the Wealden Local Plan has been delayed for three months, and it is a key part of any Neighbourhood Plan, it would be better to wait for now.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow comments from the floor. Their comments are included in the Parish Council's responses;

68. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – The following planning applications were considered;

WD2016/2259F – Ayrshire Farm, Darp Lane – Demolition of some of the existing barns on site and construction of 2 new barn style dwellings. (Retention of existing AOC dwelling, lawful dwelling and remaining farm buildings) –

Councillors **object** to this application on the following grounds;

- the utilities are not adequate for the existing properties. BT has already told residents it will not be putting in any additional telephone lines.
- access remains an issue and does not appear to have been addressed in the application. Darp Lane is a very narrow lane and this area is prone to flooding. Passing places are few and far between and vehicles would have to make use of existing driveways owned by Darp Lane's current residents. This could prove hazardous, inconvenient and also add to general wear and tear of a lane which is already in a very poor state of repair.
- there will be considerable light pollution to Lime Barnett from the proposed development.

Councillors also expressed concern about the amount of buildings, such as Rushout Barn, which are being converted within Permitted Development Rights and ask that they are included in the Wealden Local Plan. The Parish Council is not consulted about these applications so Councillors agreed to list any that have taken place since 2013 for the Parish Council's records.

Councillors also asked for the Ayrshire Farm application to be included in the housing numbers.

WD2016/2556F – Green Farm Barn– Construction of an annexe and associated extension of the residential curtilage. Return of part of garden to field. Extension of existing pond.

Councillor have **no objections** to this application as long as;

- the spoil is removed and does not affect neighbouring properties
- measures are taken to remove the risk of flooding from the new pond
- ditches are cleared to ensure water runs away freely and does not build up.

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey said she feels that Wealden District Council does not address issues raised by Parish Councils.

WD2015/1635F – Land at Wick Street, Berwick – Construction of a solar farm to include installation of solar panels to generate up to 4MW of electricity with associated buildings, deer fencing and cameras, landscaping and other associated works. Together with measures to promote biodiversity

and grazing of sheep. Additional landscape visual impact assessment information submitted for consideration.

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council **objects** to this application because;

- 1: This application will spoil the land and adds nothing to it. We are told there will be a food shortage in ten years' time so we will need agricultural land.
- 2: This application industrialises the Low Weald and the Low Weald needs to be protected. Councillors noted there no photographs to show how the farm would look from this Parish.
- 3: Studies should be made about the suitability of industrial sites instead. All industrial and farm building roofs should be considered first.
- 4: Solar energy has a future but agrees with Greg Barker, former Energy Minister, but not at any price in any place

69. FOOTPATH WARDEN – Councillors **resolved** to appoint Mr James Robertson as their Footpath Warden. The role is a voluntary one and Mr Robertson will walk the pathways in the parish and report any problems back to the Parish Council.

Councillors thanked Mr Robertson for agreeing to accept the role and said how much they look forward to working with him.

70. A27 – EAST OF LEWES IMPROVEMENT SCHEME – Highways England has developed four schemes to reduce congestion on the A27. The consultation period is now open and ends on the 8th December. Full details of each can be found on www.highways.gov.uk/A27EastofLewes

Two more exhibitions are to take place, one on Wednesday 9th November at Polegate Free Church between 12pm and 7pm and one on Wednesday 16th November at The William and Patricia Venton Centre in Eastbourne between 12pm and 7pm. Details of these exhibitions will be displayed in the Village Shop and on the Parish Council Notice Boards. All residents are encouraged to respond.

71. TRAFFIC ON ROADS IN THE PARISH –

At the last meeting, Councillors considered carrying out a traffic survey to compare traffic speeds and traffic volume in Ripe with that in the future. As a result, The Clerk contacted the County Council who said they do hold some data already which might be of use and that in July 2015 they carried out a 7 day survey on the Firle Road near the level crossing (their ref A5051), in July 2010 they carried out a 7 day survey on Ripe Lane (their ref A4503) and in November 2009 they carried out a 7 day survey on Deanland Road. (their ref A4420)

They said they appreciate that none of these would tell us precisely the flows passing through the centre of Ripe but they can provide the data if need be. Should the Parish Council wish to commission its own survey they can do a 7 day temporary survey for £400.

Councillors agreed it would be a good idea to carry out a survey when the impact of the new developments is felt and then compare the data with that already held.

Also at the last meeting Councillors requested weight restriction signs for the Firle Road. The request is now with ESCC Traffic and Safety Team and the Parish Council is waiting for a response.

72. DEFIBRILLATORS –The Parish Council now has permission to put a defibrillator on the Outside wall of the shop. The shop will meet the costs of the electricity and Councillor Ward will apply for Lottery Funding.

73. WEBSITE – Councillors considered upgrading the existing website but agreed not to, as it still meets the Parish Council's requirements.

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey asked if it is possible to find out how many hits it gets. The Clerk will find out and report back.

Councillor White said he had some suggestions to improve the website which he will email the Clerk.

74. AUTO ENROLMENT – Councillors discussed which type of scheme the Parish Council would like to offer.

Councillor White read from his report which he said he sourced from Wendy Neller, the Pensions Strategy & Governance Manager at East Sussex Pension Fund (eastssussexpensionfund.org). He said the East Sussex Pension Scheme which SSALC recommends is;

- a defined benefit scheme with the employer responsible for any shortfall.
- Employee current contribution rate is 5.5% for an employee earning £5000 pa.
- The employer's rate is determined following an actuarial review which normally takes place every three years. This review is taking place now with an announcement due in November and will apply from April 2017. The current employer rate for our category is 21.1%.
- The fund as at the last actuarial review in 2013 had assets of £2.9bn and a deficit of £541m or 18%. The deficit has doubled from 2010 so the trend is not encouraging. The employer is responsible for making up any shortfall although the fund tries to spread this liability over future years as far as is possible.
- A new joiner starts from zero with no liability for past performance.
- When an employee retires and if their employer has no other employees in the scheme then the employer will be invoiced for any shortfall. If the employer has other employees in the scheme then the employer's future contribution rate will be adjusted.
- If the employee leaves and joins a non-government employer then a cessation payment will be calculated for which the employer will be liable and could be large if the scheme is in deficit.
- In comparison the legal minimum requirements are:

Currently an employer has to contribute 1% of qualifying earnings but this will increase to 3% by 2018. An employee earning above £10,000 per annum must be auto enrolled into a scheme. If they earn below that but above £5824 then they must be put into a scheme at their request but the scheme only has to meet the minimum requirements stated above. Importantly the scheme can be a defined contribution scheme which means that the employer's contributions are a fixed % and there is no liability for any under performance of the scheme.

- Qualifying earnings are between £5824 and £43000 per annum.
- Contribution comparison of LGPS and the legal minimum.

<u>LGPS</u>	<u>Legal Minimum Salary</u>	<u>Gross per annum.</u>
	£6590	£6590
Qualifying earnings	£6590	£766 (£6590-£5824)
Employers contribution rate	21% uncapped	1% capped (rising to 3% in 2018)
Employer's contribution £	£1383	£7.66 (£22.98 in 2018/19)
Employee contribution rate	5.5%	0.8% (rising to 4% in 2018/19)

Notes:

The employer's rate is not capped under the LGPS and could rise substantially if the fund under performs. The legal minimum is to enrol the employee into a defined contribution scheme where the rate would be fixed. It is the clerk's choice whether she wishes to go into a scheme or not. If she does then it appears that we need to find a suitable scheme.

Decisions to be taken:

- Does the clerk wish to go into a scheme?
- If yes then the PC needs to decide which type of scheme; the LGPS or a defined contribution scheme.

Councillors discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the Scheme at length and **resolved** to offer the Clerk the Local Government Scheme as the risks were historical and minimal. They acknowledged that whilst cheaper Schemes are available they agreed to contribute to the East Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme in recognition of the work done by the Clerk and that the pension will be payable to Alison Stevens from the staging date.

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.

75. PRECEPT 2017-2018 – Councillors read and approved the accounts to 31st October 2016.

Councillors carefully considered the figures distributed and resolved that, subject to any changes in government legislation, the precept for 2017-2018 will be remain £11,000.

76. CHEQUES FOR PAYMENT – The following cheques were approved for payment;

A Stevens – Salary – October	Cheque number 100951
Mass Media – Website - £42.00	Cheque number 100952
Poppy Appeal – Grant - £45.00	Cheque number 100953
Ripe and Chalvington PCC – Grants - £750.00	Cheque number 100954

77. QUESTIONS FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS –

Councillor Webb asked the Clerk to get a price to repair the fingerpost on the corner of Langtye Lane and Poundfield Lane for the next meeting. Councillor Dunbar Dempsey asked if the fingerpost sign on the corner of Mark Cross Lane and Mill Lane can be cleaned at the same time.

Councillor Shonfeld sent his apologies for his absence for the next two meetings.

Councillor White asked if anyone is available to attend the Vert Woods Woodland Management Meeting on the 12th November. If anyone would like to attend they were asked to email the Clerk.

There being no further questions from Parish Councillors, the meeting closed at 9.00pm.