

CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF

7th October 2019

held at The Hayton Baker Hall, Ripe.

78. Present: Cllr Lady Conway (Chairman), Cllr Dunbar Dempsey, Cllr Dashfield, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Turner, Cllr Ward and Cllr White.
79. Attending: County Councillor Bennett, District Councillor Watts, A Stevens (Clerk) and twelve members of the public were also in attendance.
80. Public Session:

Mr Garner asked what the role of the Clerk involves, in this Parish. The last Chairman's Annual Report just seemed to say the Parish Council deals with a number of planning applications, it thanked people and said the Parish Council is carrying out a watching brief on the A27. He asked for a copy of the job description, the terms of conditions of employment and the Clerk's Contract and said he wanted to talk to the elected members not the officer. Councillors said the Parish Council does not have a copy of the contract.

Mr Teager felt there should also be a Staff Appraisal system in place. This was covered later on in the meeting.

It was also noted that all comments about the office of clerk and were not personal to the individual in the role. They said they were concerned because any increase in the precept would be just to pay increased staff costs which includes a very expensive pension scheme and nothing else. They asked the Councillors to consider other formats which do not involve the Clerk such as becoming a Parish Meeting. The Chairman said the Parish Council will be considering other options.

County Councillor Bennett said that the Spending Review at ESCC has been delayed because the Government is still working on Brexit and does not know what its funding will be yet. Cabinet is to meet next week and is expected to discuss pensions and declare a Climate Emergency,

In answer to Councillor's questions County Councillor Bennett;

- Confirmed he will look into having weight restrictions through the village again if the Parish Council writes to him.
- Said the County Council would be happy to consider any tree planting proposals.
- ESCC can consider utilising speed bumps in the area although they are not popular with the ambulance service, undertakers or horse box users.
- Suggested the Parish Council considers employing a specialist consultant if it wants to produce a plan of the village.

Councillor Rogers said the Parish Council has made substantial progress on speeding with the Safer Wealden Partnership. This was covered later on in the meeting.

In answer to residents' questions about flooding he confirmed the County Council does clear ditches and drains but not as often as people would like so it might be an idea to also organise something locally.

Highways issues can be reported via the ESCC website at www.eastsussex.gov.uk or by emailing customer@eastsussexhighways.com

One resident also asked if the Parish Council would consider setting up a Community Garden. The Chairman said it would like to but the Parish Council does not own any land it can build one on.

The meeting was then opened.

81. Apologies for absence:

No apologies for absence were received.

82. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd September 2019:

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 2nd September 2019 were approved by all and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.

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

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey said she was waiting for the outcome of a meeting organised by the MP before she wrote to Wealden about the A27, but the meeting was cancelled and Councillor Rogers has agreed he will write after the next SCATE Meeting instead.

84. Disclosures of Interest:

Councillor Turner declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in planning application WD/2019/1780/F and left the room whilst discussions and the vote took place.

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in planning application WD/1933/F. Councillor Dunbar Dempsey did not take part in discussions and did not take part in the vote.

85. Reports from Outside Meetings:

Councillors Turner, White and Dunbar Dempsey attended Councillor Training Days which were organised by SSALC.

Councillor Turner said they were very informative, the first half was with a lawyer and the second was with the Chief Executive Officer at SSALC.

Councillor White said he learnt;

- The Clerk is also the Responsible Finance Officer.
- Staffing matters can be discussed in public at Parish Council Meetings.
- The Parish Council is eligible for the General Power of Competence if it has two thirds elected members at the last elections and a qualified Clerk.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy can be used for revenue and it can be used to top up revenue budgets.
- A Committee Meeting can consist of two members.
- Committee Meetings are open to the public.
- The Parish Council can hold briefing meetings as long as no decisions are made. These are not open to the public.
- The agenda is the Clerk's agenda although councillors can suggest items provided they are legitimate and are not unlawful.
- It is considered good practice to have Staff Appraisals and there is no need to attend SSALC training.

86. Planning Applications:

The following planning applications were considered;
WD/2019/1933/F - Land In Channers Lane, Ripe, BN8 6AS - New single storey 2 bedroom cottage with off road parking.

Residents who objected did so because they said;

- 1: It is out of keeping with a neighbourhood which contains many Listed Buildings.
- 2: The roof is out of proportion with the rest of the building
- 3: It is not on the building line which has been created by The White Cottage and Bosky Barn
- 4: There is a concrete parking space at the front and therefore there is no cottage garden.
- 5: Channers Lane is a grandiose name for what is essentially an unmade track.
- 6: An earlier application went to Appeal and the Parish Council should take into account the Inspector's Report. This development is infill and the Inspector previously stated infill will destroy the nature of the area.
- 7: This land doesn't have to be built on and there has never been a dwelling on it.
- 8: The cumulative effect of the developments here has had a negative effect on Chipps Cottage so the southerly aspect is even more important to it now.
- 9: The design is poor, suburban, not at all in keeping with the area and does nothing to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.
- 10: The red bricks with black headers are still not sympathetic, the roof is as deep as the rest of the house and implies there could be habitable rooms in the roof in due course. The roof height needs to be reviewed.
- 11: Nothing has been done to address the issue of the elevation of the land. It has not been lowered and it is possible to look into the bedroom and bathroom at Chipps Cottage and the bedroom of The Old Coach House. Chipps Cottage is a Listed Building and as such cannot change its windows or build a high fence to mitigate for this.

One resident pointed out;

- 1: The parking space is gravel and not concrete.
- 2: The brick band design does match some of the barns in the area.
- 3: It is a prime building site and this application is much better than previous ones and needs to be looked at in an unbiased way or we could end up with worse.
- 4: The Council has previously approved a similar application.

Councillors confirmed;

- The Parish Council did not approve the application in question. The District Council is the Planning Authority the Parish Council only comments on planning applications and in this case it objected. They also confirmed each application is treated on its own merits.
- Wealden has declared a Climate Emergency and the Parish Council needs to take that into account now too.
- Eight homes have currently been approved or are awaiting approval within the Local Plan figures. The Parish Council could challenge Wealden via the Ombudsman but if they won it would be a pyrrhic victory resulting only in a slap on the wrist for Wealden.

District Councillor Watts;

- said there have been numerous applications for this site. Different officers have been involved over the years and he and the officer for this application have visited the site on three occasions and the officer concerned is now considering the way forward.
- Confirmed the Parish Council's role is only advisory because Wealden District Council is the Planning Authority.

Councillors considered all the comments and agreed they unanimously object to this application on the grounds listed by residents, namely;

- 1: It is out of keeping with a neighbourhood which contains many Listed Buildings.
- 2: The over-high roof is out of proportion with the rest of the building
- 3: It is not on the building line which has been created by The White Cottage and Bosky Barn
- 4: There is a concrete parking space at the front and no cottage garden.
- 5: Channers Lane is a grandiose name for what is essentially an unmade track.
- 6: An earlier application went to Appeal and the Inspector's Report stated infill will destroy the nature of the area. This is infill.
- 7: This land doesn't have to be built on and there has never been a dwelling on it.
- 8: The cumulative effect of the developments has had a negative effect on Chipps Cottage so the southerly aspect is even more important to it now.
- 9: The design is poor, suburban, not at all in keeping with the area and does nothing to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.
- 10: The red bricks with black headers are not sympathetic, the roof is as deep as the rest of the house and suggests there could be habitable rooms in the roof in due course. The roof height needs to be reviewed.
- 11: Nothing has been done to address the issue of the elevation of the land. It has not been lowered and it is possible to look into the bedroom and bathroom at Chipps Cottage and the bedroom of The Old Coach House. Chipps Cottage is a Listed Building and as such cannot change its windows or build a high fence to mitigate for this.
- 12: The area should be a Community Open Space.
- 13: Channers Lane is not a suitable access. It is too narrow and hidden away.

Councillors also said that if this application is allowed to go ahead it should count towards our allocation within the Wealden Local Plan.

WD/2019/1780/F - New House Farm, Chalvington Road, Chalvington BN27 3TB - New open fronted agricultural barn – Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

WD/2019/1516/F - Mount Pleasant Farm, Sheepcote Lane, Chalvington - Conversion of agricultural building to provide three bedroom holiday accommodation – Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council has no objections to this application as long as it remains a holiday let. Councillors said that if it ever does become a permanent address it should count towards our housing allocation.

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey felt that we should be concerned about potential light pollution from any roof lights because we want to keep the area as dark as possible.

87. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

Twelve proposals have been received, including one from children. No decisions have been made yet. The Working Party will now consider each proposal to make sure they comply with all the regulations and that they can be completed.

Once it has done that other factors will be taken into account, such as public liability and any ongoing maintenance. Meetings will take place between the District Council and the Parish Council and the proposals will be brought to Full Council where they will be discussed in public and a decision will be made. The Parish Council will keep the public up to date at all times.

The proposals for tree planting have been postponed because other sources of funding may be available.

Any residents who have any questions about CIL are asked to contact the members of the Working Party, namely Councillors White, Turner and Ward. Their contact details can be found on the Parish Council website.

88. Parish Council Communication:

Councillor Turner circulated a draft Communication Plan before the meeting which reiterates how the Parish Council communicates with its residents.

Councillors considered the Plan and also agreed;

- Councillor Rogers will produce a summary of the Minutes of each Parish Council Meeting for the village magazine.
- Councillors will continue to put Minutes and agendas on the Parish Council notice boards.
- To set up a Working Party to review the Parish Council's website and consider cheaper options. The Working Party will consist of Councillors Rogers, Turner and Dunbar Dempsey.

Councillor White said the Parish Council has been accused of not communicating effectively enough about CIL. Updates have appeared regularly in the Parish News, on Parish Council Noticeboards and in the Parish Council Minutes for months.

89. Defibrillator:

Councillors resolved that the Clerk can sign the BT contract so BT can disconnect the telephone in readiness for the defibrillator.

Councillors then discussed the defibrillator options and agreed in principle to buy the cPAD Zoll AED 3 Semi Auto Defib+ Rotaid Cabinet from the Community Heartbeat Trust with its annual support package. Councillor White will find out what the process is to apply for funding from ESCC whilst the Parish Council waits for BT to remove the telephone. If ESCC funding is not available the Parish Council will use CIL. Once fitted the defibrillator will be added to the Parish Council's insurance.

90. Noise Pollution at Deanland:

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council has received complaints about excessive noise from a weekend event held at Wicks Farm. It is understood that a lot of complaints have been made to Wealden because the noise was allowed to continue until 2am on both the Saturday and Sunday mornings. A similar event is planned for next year.

Whilst they appreciate nothing can be done about this year Councillors asked the Clerk to write to Wealden and support District Councillor White's conditions if it is allowed to go ahead next year. They said;

- The music must finish by 10.30pm.
- The event needs to be policed better and added to the Noise Pollution Team's list for that weekend.

91. Fingerpost Signs:

Councillor Dunbar Dempsey carried out site visits and reported back to the Full Council on the condition of each fingerpost.

It was confirmed that the County Council will currently pay half the cost of repairing up to two fingerpost signs each year so Councillors decided to set up a rolling programme of repairs.

The Clerk will get prices for the work required and report back.

92. Local Green Spaces:

The Parish Council has been looking into designating some areas in the Parish as Local Green Spaces but initial enquiries to Wealden said they can only be designated within a Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors have considered Neighbourhood Plans in the past but found they;

- are time consuming
- can take up to three years to produce
- are expensive
- can be ignored anyway.
- cannot be used to reduce housing numbers

Councillors understand they can also apply direct to Wealden direct and ask them to designate areas, so they asked the Clerk to challenge Wealden's decision. They will then consult residents and invite them to nominate areas which they will then ask Wealden to designate as Local Green Spaces. Councillors agreed extensive consultation would be needed.

93. Update on traffic calming:

Councillors resolved to accept the offer from the Safer Wealden Partnership to fit a speed monitor in the parish. They would like the monitor to be fitted near the Village Hall because a pre-school use it. It is hoped the evidence can then be used to explore the possibility of having a 20mph limit outside the hall.

Councillors also agreed that Councillor White can write to the County Council and ask how the Parish Council goes about getting weight restrictions on roads in the Parish that do not impact local vehicles and in particular agricultural traffic.

94. Staff Appraisal:

Councillors resolved unanimously to implement a Staff Appraisal System based on the SSALC system. They said that it should;

- be a two way process
- be carried out sensitively on a one to one basis
- help facilitate good working relationships
- improve the performance of the Parish Council.

Both sides will keep a record of the Appraisal.

95. Financial Update:

Councillors discussed the accounts at length in preparation for precept setting at their meeting in November. They considered the possibility of;

- Increasing the precept
- Other forms of income.
- Reducing staff costs, the pension and each item of expenditure in turn.

The Council noted that the estimate for the current year shows a deficit of about £1500. In answer to a question the Clerk said the current balance is approximately £50000 (the second half of the

precept had been received since the latest bank reconciliation) and excluding the CIL the balance is approximately £11000. The Council noted that the forecast indicates that between now and 31st March 2020 expenditure will amount to about £6000 leaving a balance of approximately £5000. The first half of next year's precept will be received in April 2020.

Councillors then agreed they need to take advice from HR Services at SSALC. Councillors Turner and Conway will meet HR Services before the next meeting.

96. Cheques for Payment:

The following cheques were approved for payment;

101097	Mass Media - Website	£ 100.80
101098	SSALC – Training	£ 252.00
101099	A Stevens – Salary – September	
101100	ESCC – Pension	
101101	HMRC – PAYE	
101102	Wealden DC – Election Expenses	£ 310.95
101103	Poppy Appeal	£ 45.00

97. Questions from Parish Councillors:

Councillors agreed to apply for a licence for the Christmas Tree again this year.

Councillor Conway announced the resignation of the Parish Clerk, which she had duly accepted.

There were no further questions and the meeting closed at 10.10pm.