

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd May 2018 in the Reid Hall, Boreham Street

1. Apologies

District Councillor P Doodes sent apologies for her absence.

2. Welcome and Annual Report by the Chairman

The Chairman, Keith Stevens, welcomed the seven members of the public in attendance and read from his report which said;

'Well following on from my comments last year it is still a legal requirement for us to call an Annual Parish Meeting to discuss the Council's affairs and engage with you. Not wholly necessary here in Wartling as nearly all of you attend our meetings on a regular basis and you are not afraid of coming forward to tell us of any problems.

Our accounts indicate that during 2017/18 our income was £8249 and the expenditure was £7425. The income included £1708 in respect of government grants to assist with the costs of complying with the transparency code. Of this sum £540 related to 2016/17 (as I reported last year the grant was agreed in March 2017 but was not actually received until April 2017) and £1208 for 2017/18. This latter amount was made up of a further £540 towards the Clerk's salary costs and the balance towards the costs of our new website. Interesting that the Government concluded that a Clerk will have to spend a minimum of 3 hours a month to fulfil the Parish's duty under the transparency code. I mention this as whilst there was a surplus of approximately £800 last the transparency fund has now closed which is why we took the decision to increase the precept to £7000. Being ever the optimist I am hoping that Government funds will be made available to help Parishes such as ours with the costs of GDPR (general data protection rules) which I can assure you is taking up far more hours than the transparency code ever did. But I'm not that hopeful.

Here I would like to thank Alison for all she does for the Parish Council especially of late with GDPR. It is partially due to the fact that she sits on NALCs smaller council committee that she is ahead of the game in completing our GDPR policies. I know that the models she has prepared with Satswana are being held up as an example to other clerks.

Finance is becoming more important to Parishes as the Government cut backs continue and the spending power of East Sussex County Council diminishes. I am lucky (perhaps not the right word) to attend the County's partners budget meetings and clearly they are having to cut back on all but their statutory duties in order to balance their books.

The simple example is grass cutting but we have to understand that further cuts will take place. I'm sure our County Councillor will mention this. And here at this point I want to thank Bill for all he does for the Parish and indeed for his continued attendance at our meetings. I can assure you that not all County Councillors are as diligent as Bill is.

Sticking with the County Council roads and particularly pot holes remain an issue but I know they are doing all that they can.

Talking of roads I would like to mention SpeedWatch. As we all know accidents in Wealden remain a real problem. 95% of accidents are caused by human behaviours....failing to look properly 38%...failure to judge another person's speed 26%....careless/in a hurry 26%. Speed itself is not the main problem but it is a causation factor in 28.4% of KSIs (Killed & Seriously Injured) in our area. And SpeedWatch is

helping to prosecute offenders by not only reporting speeding but also the use of mobile phones and not wearing seat belts. I know SpeedWatch has its critics but anything that can be done to help reduce the Fatal Four.....drink/drugs..mobile phones..speeding..no seatbelts..has to be good. So thank you Richard and all your team members for all that they do. Training is taking place on the 1st June at the Reid Hall so if you are interested speak to Richard.

Planning always remains an issue but for the most part Wealden has agreed with our comments.....or at least the applicant has by amending their plans. And that is an important factor....when we object we explain why we are objecting not just because we don't like it.....yes sometimes we don't like it but that is not a reason for objecting. We still await the new Wealden Local Plan.....which has the attention of Government and many other districts in the land. Wealden is looking at the environmental and putting it before housing numbers. So the evidence has to be able to stand up to scrutiny and it is that evidence that is taking time as it has to be checked by all the experts. And it will come as no surprise that every expert seems to have a different view. Anyway on planning a big thank you to the Councillors involved but also to those of you who attend the committee meetings.

And lastly this time next year will be election time. I hope all existing councillors Richard, Chris, Denise and Will will remain and that one or two others might step forward and join us'

3. Report from County and District Councillors

District Councillor P Doodes sent a written report in which she said;

'I apologise for not being able to attend the AGM this year, due to a family holiday booked some months ago. I think this is the first AGM I have missed since 2003.

Some positive messages

- 9 out of 10 Wealden Residents like living here and 3/4 are satisfied with the way the Council runs things.
- Wealden carries out a bi-annual telephone survey to measure performance against national councils. This monitoring gives WDC a statistically accurate picture of the views of our residents. Our ratings are 8% higher than the national average.
- Our operating costs have been reduced by £600,000 per annum thanks to the rental income from the Vicarage Fields Shopping centre which WDC purchased last year. This represents a 4.2% improvement on the return the council could make through Treasury investment, and is already making a difference to the councils finances
- The new crematorium, which is expected to contribute over 900K to revenue by 2022/23 is on target and should be completed by December 2018
- Wealden maintains Free Car Parking so as to support local businesses in our market towns.

Waste

Wealden has climbed 23 places in the national recycling league table, currently ranked 62 out of 350 English Local Authorities. We hope to further improve this position. Our new waste contract is currently out to tender.

Wealden's recycling rate is the best in East Sussex with 51.0% of waste being recycled. An additional 48% of waste is sent to the incinerator at Newhaven where it is turned into electricity. Less than 1% of all Wealden's waste is sent to landfill

Litter

WDC supported the Community Clean up day by giving those parishes that were holding an event, sacks, litter picks, gloves and high viz jackets. All the litter collected by the community was picked up and disposed of by Wealden promptly. (Just for information – Hooe’s haul was 26 bags of rubbish, the majority of which, if not all, was thrown from vehicles passing through)

Big Switch

WDC continues to assist residents in getting the best deal for their power through joining together to get better rates. In 2017 953 households switched in the Council’s Big Wealden Switch campaign with ichooser, enjoying an average saving of £228 a year on their domestic bills. Collectively residents saved £217,549

Wealden Local Plan

I am aware that information is being updated almost daily and so I am refraining from reporting as i am sure that Keith will have up to date knowledge at the meeting. However, when I am back I will send an up to the minute report to Alison which I am sure she will circulate to you all.

I can tell you that it is hoped the Plan will go to the Full Council meeting in July

Council Tax

WDC reluctantly increased council tax by £5.00 a year or 2.7% for the average band D property. The government grant, through the Revenue Support Grant has been reduced each of the past few years and has now done altogether, hence the need to raise more locally

At Wealden

At Wealden I have the role of Vice Chairman of the Council, now for the third year. I serve on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which holds the Cabinet to account; the Public Health and Public Safety Portfolio Holder Advisory Group, which advises the Portfolio Holder; from time to time I am also part of small task and finish groups which deal with the day to day aspects of the organisation.

In addition to holding the Cabinet to account and scrutinising the decisions of Wealden, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also has the power to call in and scrutinise the work of other agencies. During the year we have again questioned, amongst others, the Police and the Fire Service.

In Wartling

My high profile activities this year have been around:

- Rubbish and Non – Collections, I am grateful to say missed bins in Wartling are fewer than before although there is still an ongoing problem with garden waste collection in the centre of Wartling which we are trying to resolve. We cannot understand how the general waste crew are able to collect regularly whilst the garden waste crew find it so difficult. Perhaps it is something to do with badly parked vehicle reducing access. Whatever the reason, we shall overcome!
- Fly tips have been dealt with quickly and efficiently, however tips on The Horse Walk continue to cause problems.
- Road Safety – Anti social driving and speeding vehicles. Unfortunately drivers are

- particularly selfish when using rural roads and I envisage this task will continue indefinitely, but that is no excuse for not continuing to try to reduce speeding etc.
- Neighbourhood Policing – Disappearing PCSO's and reducing neighbourhood policing is something that I am and will continue to lobby against.
 - Much of the work I carry out locally is confidential as it is on a one to one basis. This is most rewarding as I can help individuals and very often make a difference. Whilst I cannot tell you about individual cases I can say the topics covered have included:
 1. Assisting with planning matters
 2. Accessing benefits for those finding it increasingly difficult to afford to stay in their own home
 3. Accessing Social Care and obtaining help with attending hospital and Doctor appointments
 4. Signposting those people who find it difficult to understand official literature and helping to fill in forms

I am privileged to have represented Wartling on Wealden District Council since 2003. Thank you for your welcome and continued support. I enjoy working with Wartling PC, have forged a close working relationship with County Councillor Bill Bentley which I value and am always amazed and delighted at the way I am accepted, included and supported by the people who live in the Parish.

I am really sorry not to be with you at the AGM, I will make sure that I catch up with the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman on my return and deal with any concerns that are raised. Please continue to contact me should you have an issue with which you feel I could help'.

County Councillor B Bentley sent a written report which said;

'My annual report this year includes a summary of achievements and outlines future challenges. 2017 was an election year, although the geographical boundaries of the County Council Division changed, I am grateful that electors chose to re-elect me for a further term as your County Councillor. Following the election in May my Cabinet role changed, after 12 years leading Adult Social Care the Leader of the Council, Keith Glazier asked me to take on a new responsibility as Lead Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety. This is a broad portfolio that includes: Archives and Records, Community Safety, Coroner services, Emergency Planning, Gypsies and Travellers, Libraries, Registration Services, Road Safety, Trading Standards and links with the Voluntary Sector.

It has been well reported in news stories that significant increases in costs and demand for social care continues to put pressures on Adults and Children's care services across the country, given East Sussex's unique age profile this will continue to be the most challenging issue that the council will face going forward. We continue to lobby government for a fairer funding formula to ensure that we can provide care for vulnerable people without closing services that are highly valued by residents or asking residents to pay more and more council tax. This year the council is making £17M of savings to balance the budget and in the next 2 years will need to save £31M more so working with Government to find a funding solution from 2021 is now critical.

This year I was elected as Chairman of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel which oversees the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner. Residents valued the Neighbourhood Policing teams and when the 2020 Policing Plan made changes missed this type of visible policing. The Panel have been working hard with the Commissioner, Katy Bourne to see new local policing initiatives introduced in

response to public consultation earlier this year.

Increasingly Policing work is now carried out with regional policing partners in Surrey, Hampshire and Thames Valley. I have therefore led the creation of a regional body to give oversight for these types partnerships. In time this will lead to a national group to lobby the Home Secretary about policing issues on behalf of the community.

I am also pleased to report that I have been appointed as East Sussex Armed Forces Champion supporting serving personnel, Veterans and Cadets across the County; a new responsibility that I am proud to take on.

I would like to thank the residents and businesses within the parish for their continued help and support. I would also like to thank the chairman, councillors and parish clerk for their help during the past year. Parish, District and County Councillors working together have proved an effective team in supporting the needs of residents. A positive outcome which I hope will continue for many years.

Summary of County Council achievements 2017/18

This summary sets out some of the key achievements of East Sussex County Council in 2017/18 (up to February 2018) under the four strategic priorities of the Council. The Council Plan provides further detail of these priorities at: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/keydocuments/councilplan/default.htm. The Council Plan for 2018/19 will be on our website from 1st April 2018.

Driving sustainable economic growth

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is one of seven local authorities that have formed a partnership called Transport for the South East (TfSE). The new partnership brings together the area's 16 transport authorities and a range of other organisations to work directly with the Department for Transport. TfSE is currently operating in shadow form but intends to secure full Government backing and statutory powers. At the first meeting of TfSE in June 2017, partners elected Cllr Keith Glazier, Leader of East Sussex County Council as chairman.

Companies in East Sussex are now able to benefit from a new £2 million grants and business support service, aimed at boosting the county's economy. South East Business Boost offers grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to existing small and medium sized businesses and start-ups for capital projects to help them grow and expand operations. So far £300,000 of grants have been awarded which will bring in over £850,000 in match funding. In addition, £227.4 million has been spent with local suppliers over the last 12 months; 55.8% of total Council spend.

East Sussex Highways, our partnership which looks after the roads, pavements, street lights, grass and winter maintenance won a number of prestigious awards during 2017/18. The customer service team won a silver award at the UK Customer Experience Awards and gold at the European Contact Centre and Customer Service Awards, following their introduction of a new more personalised way of working and a high-tech software system which has seen average call response times slashed from 90 seconds to just nine. In addition East Sussex Highways has been recognised for its work to boost skills in the area, with work in schools and a clear commitment to apprenticeships.

Over 150 carriageway asset improvement schemes were delivered in the first three-quarters of 2017/18. The continued investment by the County Council into highway

maintenance, and specifically the resurfacing of roads, has stemmed the rate of deterioration and maintained road conditions across the county at an acceptable and affordable level. The condition of A, B and C roads across the county have largely remained stable, and as anticipated when Cabinet approved the current investment strategy in 2013. The additional £10m invested in rural lanes, also approved by Cabinet in 2013, has resulted in a noticeable improvement of unclassified roads across the county.

A number of large scale infrastructure projects have also been progressed, including the Newhaven Port Access Road, improvements to Terminus Road in Eastbourne and funding secured to build a new two-lane bridge to replace the current one-lane Exceat Bridge over the Cuckmere river.

Our e-Sussex project to rollout faster broadband in previously isolated areas has continued to improve access to services, jobs and education. Over 70,000 premises have been connected during our first and second contracts. A final phase of works is being procured with the aim to connect as close to 100% of premises in the county as possible.

There was a further improvement in the percentage of secondary schools judged by Ofsted (as at August 2017) to be good or outstanding to 77.8% from 74.1% at the end of 2016/17. The Early Years Improvement Team has also worked with providers, such that 96% of all East Sussex early years settings are graded good or outstanding, up from 76% in 2013. Work continues through our new Excellence for All 2017-2019 strategy to raise standards across all our educational settings. In addition, ESCC was successful in securing funding from the Government's Strategic School Improvement Fund to set up a Secondary Inclusion Partnership which will see county schools working together to share expertise with a focus on disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.

In July 2017, ESCC welcomed funding of nearly £12 million for the arts, announced by Arts Council England for seven projects across the county. This includes funding for Glyndebourne to support its education and outreach work, for the de La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill to promote visual arts, for the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne and the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings.

Keeping vulnerable people safe

In June 2017, the Safer East Sussex Partnership launched a new pilot scheme called 'Ask Me'. The scheme widens opportunities for survivors of domestic abuse to access the help they need from their communities. It provides free domestic abuse training for people to become 'ask me ambassadors' who can respond to a disclosure of domestic abuse, and know where to signpost people for help. 16 Days of Action for the Elimination of Violence Against Women ran from 25 November 2017. Over the 16 days a range of organisations and individuals came together to work to end all forms of violence against women

ESCC's Children's Services Department was runner up in the Social Worker of the Year Awards 2017 in the category of Best Social Work Employer. The Council's submission highlighted our achievements in supporting staff to create a high quality, sustainable system that secures the best outcomes for children and young people. ESCC were successful in securing a £174,000 Warm and Healthy Homes grant from National Energy Action and £440,000 from the Warm Homes Fund to enable eligible vulnerable individuals to benefit from significant home improvements to help them keep warm in cold weather. This means over £1 million in external fuel poverty funding

has been secured during the past two years.

By the end of December 2017, 61 organisations had joined the East Sussex Against Scams Partnership (ESASP) Charter which aims to make East Sussex a scam-free county. Over 687 residents have participated in Friends Against Scams awareness sessions which aim to reduce the likelihood of them, or people they know or care for, from becoming vulnerable victims of fraud and scams.

Helping people help themselves

Plans for closer health and care integration were given the green light by the Alliance partners (Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG, Hastings and Rother CCG, ESCC, East Sussex Health Care NHS Trust and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust) in the East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) programme in July 2017. Our ambition is to deliver a fully integrated health and social care system in East Sussex that will ensure every service user enjoys proactive, joined up care that supports them to live as healthily and independently as possible. We are now developing a single health and care entity to manage the £850 million spent each year on the health and care needs of people in East Sussex. In recognition of this work, the ESBT Alliance won the 'Improved Partnerships between Health and Local Government' award at the prestigious 2017 Health Service Journal Awards. Examples of more integrated services include Locality Link Workers who act as a conduit between the statutory services, the voluntary sector and the community. Integrated locality teams (ILTs), made up of nurses, therapists, social workers and proactive care practitioners from East Sussex Health Care Trust (ESHT) and ESCC, have also been rolled out across the Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford and Hastings and Rother CCG areas.

There have been improvements against Adult Social Care key measures. Delayed transfers of Care (delayed days) from hospital per 100,000 population (aged 18+) has improved from 24.4 in April 2017 to 12.7 in November 2017. The proportion of older people (aged 65+) who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services for April to September 2017 is 91.7% - up from 90.5% in 2016/17.

An initiative helping young people with disabilities travel independently to school, college or training won national recognition. The Learning Independence for Travel (LIFT) training programme was one of just seven schemes shortlisted for a 'best service' award at the GO Excellence in Public Service Awards 2017/18.

One You East Sussex launched in October 2017 offers those who are struggling to make healthy lifestyle changes a bespoke support programme for help with weight loss, stopping smoking, getting active, drinking less and eating a healthy diet. Our Beat the Street East Sussex mass participation physical activity initiative saw more than 42,000 people take part and new Health and Wellbeing Community Hubs are due to be established in Hastings and Bexhill, helping people improve and manage their health by giving them access to information and support in one convenient place.

Schools across the county have been able to access additional funding to improve children's physical and mental health. Last year, 183 schools and colleges across the county received grants of £10,000 to develop and implement school health improvement plans and this year all schools were entitled to an additional £7,000 to further develop activities to boost health. In addition the ESCC primary school menu was accredited with the Soil Associations Food for Life Served Here Gold Standard, which recognises pupils are being served meals with the freshest, ethically sourced ingredients, free from additives and excessive salt and sugar.

Making the best use of our resources

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2018/19 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on the 6th February 2018. The budget includes spending of £371 million on services for East Sussex. It also includes savings of £17 million, a 3 per cent Adult Social Care levy and a 2.99 per cent council tax increase.

The Council's Stand Up for East Sussex campaign, which made the case for East Sussex's particular needs to be recognised, gathered almost 6,000 signatures and was delivered to the Prime Minister in December 2017.

The Orbis partnership between East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and Surrey County Council aims to improve the quality and resilience of business services and provide savings to both authorities. After surpassing its initial financial targets by achieving £4.5 million savings in 2016/17 against a target of £1.1 million, Orbis is currently on target to deliver £3.9 million efficiencies in 2017/18. Teams from across the three Councils have been working together to improve the way Orbis delivers services to its customers, including an online pensions portal and a new e-recruitment system.

County Councillor Bentley also;

- Announced the Rt Hon. James Brokenshire MP is the new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- Confirmed the Wartling Road will be patch repaired this summer and resurfaced next year. Work was delayed because of the bad weather and all work was revaluated as a result. County Councillor Bentley said he will make sure it is done then and suggested anyone who is not happy with the delays should write to Ruper Clubb at ESCC. Councillor Stevens said he will talk to Mr Clubb and complain on behalf of the Parish Council.

4. Reports from Clubs and Associations

Mr Willis, Chairman of the Reid Hall, reported the following. He said;

- The new trustees have been in post for three years now but more are needed.
- The hall lost revenue because of the recent bad weather.
- Plans for the future include employing tradesman to carry out maintenance. The Trustees have been carrying out repairs until now.
- The trustees would like to improve the kitchen, repair the car park, repair the roof and refurbish the floor.
- They have erected a fence which has reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour and illegal fly tipping in the grounds.
- The Trustees are looking into the possibility of becoming a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

5. Open Forum

Concerns were raised about the state of some of the footpaths and stiles in Boreham Street. Residents were asked to report any which need repairing to either Councillor Paterson or the Clerk, with photographs if possible, and they will pass them on to Rights of Way who will either repair them or contact the landowner.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm.