

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd May 2017 in the Reid Hall, Boreham Street

1. Apologies

County Councillors B Bentley and L Keeley sent apologies for their absence.

2. Approval of Annual Parish Minutes 2016

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th May 2016 were read, approved by all and signed by the Chairman.

3. Welcome and Annual Report by the Chairman

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

'We are required by law to call an Annual Parish Meeting between the 1st March and the 1st June each year. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss parish affairs.....basically it is a forum for the council to engage with local residents.

Many people, myself included, regard such meetings as being unnecessary where residents already take an active interest by attending council meetings and also outdated given that all parishes should have websites giving information about local clubs and activities.

But the law must be obeyed so let me just reflect on the past twelve months. Well let's start by reporting that our first business venture under our general powers of competence proved successful and that last year's small loss of £27.50 on the sale of maps has been wiped out by further sales of £50 this year so we are now showing a healthy profit of £22.50. Well done Richard.

In 2015/16 we received £770 from the Government's Transparency Fund to help with the costs of the new reporting rules. Last year we claimed a further £540 which I'm pleased to confirm was approved at the end of March. The funds were released to ESALC at the end of April so they should be in our account this month. Thanks Alison.

These grants have obviously helped the overall financial position and enabled us to make a donation to the Reid Hall to help them obtain funding to help with the improvements here. Well done to the Reid Hall committee. We also made a small donation to the local Brownies which was much appreciated by them. I hope they apply again. Funding for local organisations is becoming more difficult and it is an area where Parish Councils may be able to help.

Traffic and Highways issues remain a problem to us and indeed all Parish Councils. I know the lack of action is frustrating but the council is continuing to push to get things done. The lack of funding remains the central problem and perhaps we are getting to the point where we, the Parish Council, have to consider covering the costs of some of the work. I know people talk about whose responsibility it is and double taxation but sometimes you might just have to bite the bullet.

Planning of course is always interesting. As you probably all know a new Local Plan is expected to be approved by Wealden District Council in the coming weeks and then go out for public consultation. The new plan indicates lower housing numbers mainly as a

result of the nitrogen levels on Ashdown Forest. WDC have issued various papers on the subject of the new plan but the one that best sums up the position was the letter issued to planning agents. It's on the Wealden website but I will ask Alison to attach a copy to this report.

Sadly Michael and Sara stepped down from the Council last year. Let me once again thank them for all their help. It is pleasing however that there were willing volunteers to step in and fill the vacancies. Thank you Will and Denise. At this point I would like to finish by thanking Richard and Chris for all they do....they are now regarded as "old-staggers" and only a few years more before Richard gets that telegram from Katie!

Finally a big thank you to Alison for all she does and for putting up with us. And a formal congratulations from the Council to Alison on being appointed a Fellow of the Institute of Local Council Management'.

4. Report from County and District Councillors

District Councillor P Doodes read from her report. Her report is as follows;

My work at Wealden

At Wealden I have the role of Vice Chairman of the Council. 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, East Sussex Highways, Kier, Freedom Leisure and the Police.

Wealden Local Plan

The review of the current Local Plan started, as required by the Planning Inspector, with the publication of the Issues and Options and recommendations in 2015. Over the last year Wealden has received data that shows the nitrate damage to the Ashdown Forest has been more extensive than at first thought. Consequently the number of houses outlined in the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (A Government formula) has been reduced from 20,000 to 11,456. This lower figure includes 7392 that have already been given planning approval. The proposed Local Plan will therefore include allocating sites for 4064 additional homes for the period to 2033. Those sites are shown in the proposed plan which was published in March. It is important that the infrastructure is provided at the same time as the houses are built and this is included in the plan.

Services and free car parking

Wealden continues to deliver quality services and maintains Free Car Parking so as to support local business in our market towns.

Waste

Wealden's recycling rate is the best in East Sussex with almost 50% of waste being recycled. An additional 49% 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.

Kier

Our contractor, Kier, has performed well over the last year. I am pleased to report missed bins are fewer than before. Wealden continues to collect garden waste without extra charge, unlike our neighbours. Unfortunately street cleaning has been less successful so steps are being taken to introduce improvements. Since Wealden signed up to the joint waste collection contract in 2013 the council has saved almost £4m over what would have been the cost of continuing the In-House Service.

However there have been concerns about how Kier has managed the contract. Over the past few months negotiations have been taking place and the Joint Councils have agreed to terminate the contract with Kier in 2019 and appoint a new contractor from that date. It is expected that the collection method will be similar to the present one.

Housing Company

Wealden has set up a housing company. This will be run on a commercial basis but is aimed at delivering housing to those wishing to downsize, younger residents wishing to get on to the housing ladder and often wanting smaller properties to start out.

The housing company will seek to build some houses for sale, some for rent and will include shared ownership.

Council Tax

After freezing Council Tax for 5 of the last 6 years Wealden has found it necessary to raise Council Tax by 2.8% for the year 2017-2018. This action was essential to maintain the high level of services to our residents.

Crematorium

The planned crematorium is on schedule. This facility will benefit the people of Wealden as its central position in Horam will reduce travel times for many residents.

My work 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. I have also received fewer complaints about the abandonment of bins on the pavement after they are emptied.
- Fly tips has 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. Katy Bourne, Sussex Police Commissioner, knows the high level of our concerns because we take every opportunity to tell her!
- 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 Parish Council, I 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.

County Councillor B Bentley sent a written report which said;

'The annual report for the county council for the past year has both achievement and challenge for the future. My role has continued as Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Community Safety. An area of local government activity that has been much debated both locally and nationally and in which I have represented the East Sussex Community both at County Hall and to Government.

The increase in costs for social care plus a significant increase in demand has led to significant pressures for adult social care, particularly given the demography of our country, this culminated in the budget announcement of increased funding for the next three years and the search for a new funding formula. In East Sussex we lobbied for this and we will receive £22 million over the next three years.

Locally we have launched a new health and social care partnership called East Sussex Better Together, Accountable Care Model, A pioneer scheme which is being closely looked at by ministers and government officials which could develop in time to become a potential new model for the country. Launched at the beginning of this financial year Accountable Care will run in shadow form for 12 months whilst joint commissioning and staffing is transitioned. The intention of this project is to maintain local support structures through your GP surgery. Moving away from acute care towards primary care services delivered either at home or as close to home as possible. The potential release of hospital beds should lead to surgical and medical improvement over time and significantly an opportunity to reduce blocked beds in our hospitals.

My role with the Local Government Association has changed this year to focus on safer and stronger communities; whilst this is an opportunity to examine policies around domestic abuse and white slavery. It also looks at licensing and most importantly has been engaged with the issues of water safety following the deaths which occurred at Camber Sands last year.

I would like to thank the residents and businesses within the Wartling 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 2016/17

This summary sets out some of the key achievements of East Sussex County Council in 2016/17 (up to February 2017) 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 2017/18 will be on our website from 1st April 2017.

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. 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. 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.

81% of people affected by domestic violence and abuse who have exited 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 reaccredited 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.

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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.

In October 2016, the 3SC (Three Southern Counties) partnership of East Sussex, Surrey and West Sussex submitted a proposal to Government, seeking to open formal negotiations on a devolution bid. If successful, the bid will help unlock new growth and spearhead a transformation in how public services are delivered in the region. Due to a Government stock-take on devolution activity and other national developments, formal negotiations on the devolution bid are likely to be delayed and as such a strategic pause on activity began in January 2017. Work on specific activities including the 3SC Infrastructure and Skills Strategies, digital plans and responses to the Industrial Strategy and Housing White Paper are however continuing. Further detail can be found at <https://surreyandsussex.wordpress.com/>

5. Reports from Clubs and Associations

Karolyn Richardson sent a written report of behalf of Wartling Brownies in which she said;

- The Brownies continue to have lots of fun playing games, making arts and crafts and earning badges.
- Wartling Brownies is now the only Guide Association unit in the area.
- The Brownies recently attended the 'Mad Hatters Tea Party' and have also had trips to the Science Centre and Masterpiece.
- She thanked the Parish Council for its donation which enabled them to provide a coach to attend a large division event at Sheffield Park.
- Attendance is now 17 and the unit is thriving as a result.
- The Brownies are hoping to have a summer outing this term and hold a food drive so they can make a donation to the local food bank as part of their Brownie Promise to think of their community.

6. Open Forum

Councillor Lawrence announced there is to be a Barbeque, Bar and Dance on the 22nd July at the Reid Hall to celebrate the hall's 25th Anniversary. Mrs Gainer suggested it might be nice to have a display of the opening cocktail party photos.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00pm.