

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 4th May 2016 in the Reid Hall, Boreham Street

1. Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Approval of Annual Parish Minutes 2015

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th May 2015 were read, approved by all and signed by the Chairman.

3. Welcome and Annual Report by the Chairman

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

'Welcome everybody and thank you for your continued support over the past twelve months.

I know I go on about how well the attendance is at our Parish Meetings but I have been a speaker at some other Annual Parish Meetings recently where the residents were complaining about the Council has been doing over the past year. Had they but attended more Parish Council Meetings like you do I don't think they would be having such problems as they are now.

The year started with the elections and I would like to thank you for turning out to vote for us but in was an uncontested election. But thanks anyway as I'm sure every resident would have voted as I'm sure they will tomorrow.

We finally got the second defibrillator fitted at the Lamb and a further training session was carried out. So if anyone is going to have need of these machines this is the parish to be in.

We also took delivery of our own speed detection device thanks to the Safer Wealden Partnership. I know there are one or two of you who are not fans of SpeedWatch but overall it does seem to have an effect. But "armed" with our own device we will be more active once it gets a bit warmer.

We successfully applied for monies from the transparency fund through SALC thanks to Alison's efforts. This will help with the costs of conforming to the new Transparency Code applicable to Parishes with an annual turnover of less than £25000. The Government has made further monies available and we will be applying for more later this year.

We used our General Power of Competence to start a trading venture. Richard organised the production of a second run of the parish millennium map at the request of new residents. There are a few remaining so if you want one please ask Richard.

In Planning - This time last year you will probably recall we were waiting on the outcome of an Appeal. Anyway we have had a few interesting issues over the past twelve months but in nearly every case Wealden have agreed with our views. Yes there were a couple of exceptions but in those cases I think we always knew how the decision would go.

So in conclusion may I thank my fellow parish Councillors for all that they do. May I also thank our District and County Councillors for what they do and the support they give us.

A special thank you to Alison for keeping us on the straight and narrow and for all her work.

And lastly once again a thank you to you all'.

4. Verbal Report from the Reid Hall Trustees

The new Committee took over this year, bookings are up and there is more money in the bank than before. The Annual General Meeting was successful and members took on board any criticism. The Trustees successfully applied for funding from Wealden District Council and Wartling Parish Council and as a result can now carry out some improvements to the hall. They are also currently negotiating with suppliers to cut costs.

5. Report from Wartling History Group

Now called The Wartling and Herstmonceux Local History Group, members continue to research both parishes.

Last year they produced their eighth book – Lost Forever featuring 42 buildings which do not exist anymore. It has been selling very well. This year they will be publishing two new books, one on each parish, both containing local stories and information on various properties within the parishes.

The Group is currently preparing six boards for the Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme event from 1st to 3rd July at Herstmonceux Castle and will also be attending the Family History Day at Ocklynge School on 17th July.

Members have catalogued nearly 7000 photographs and documents, have sold over 1600 books, 200 calendars and more than 700 postcards. They have raised over £3500 for their three charities – Wartling Church, Herstmonceux Church and Help for Heroes.

Members have also helped a number of family tree researches, some worldwide and sold publications worldwide too. Members tried to stop bulldozers destroying RAF Wartling domestic camp in Herstmonceux but were too late.

Wartling and Herstmonceux Local History Group is staging its next Local History Exhibition on Saturday 15th October at The Reid Hall from 1.30pm to 5.30pm and is appealing for helpers to deliver fliers and help out of the day.

6. Report from County and District Councillors

County Councillor B Bentley read excerpts from his report in which he described the County Council's activities. His report is as follows;

'During the last year I have continued as Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adult Social Care and Community Safety. Last year I reported the publication of the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy (2014/19) a multiagency approach to working together to support residents in East Sussex to have safe, equal, abuse free relationships. From this we have been able to establish new Specialist Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services which I was pleased to launch in January.

In my role as Vice Chair of the Police and Crime Panel I was pleased to support the Police and Crime Commissioner to launch and develop the Youth Commission and Elders Commission. In September I attended the launch of the Sussex Youth Commission Report and recommendations to improve the relationship between young people and Sussex Police. Their report can be downloaded here: <http://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/youth-commission>

The Elders Commission took a different approach and when they published their report at an event in Parliament at the beginning of March; they identified clear concerns by senior citizens about the rise of nuisance calls and scams both online and at the doorstep, additionally they identified concerns about the prevalence of elder abuse and exploitation. Their report can be downloaded here: <http://www.sussexpcc.gov.uk/elders-commission>

I am a member of the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board and during 2015/16 the County Council and its NHS partners have further developed a programme known as East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) to drive ever closer joint working, deliver improved services for patients, achieve better health and care outcomes and best value by commissioning jointly. It is hoped that by 2018 this will become a unique Accountable Care Model (ACM) by joining governance systems to create a fully integrated service. If this ambition is achieved this will be the first service of the type in the UK. The biggest challenge for local government has been the significant reduction in local government revenue support grant. Successful lobbying has permitted the introduction of a 2% council tax precept to protect Adult Social Care but I am ever mindful that that is paid for by residents through their council tax bill. Generally I have received support to protect the most vulnerable within our community however cuts to some services have occurred to ensure that we cope with a significant increase in demand for care and support services and stay within budget.

The chancellor announced further reductions in public spending in his statement on 16th March it is clear that funding of local government will shrink significantly in the next 4 years and the shape and range of local government services will change as will the way public services are delivered.

In July 2015 I was appointed to the Local Government Association (LGA) Community Wellbeing Portfolio (People and Places Policy). This has involved a number of engagements at Regional and National level to contribute to policy development with Ministers and their teams. The LGA has appointed me as their representative to the Disability Action Alliance and the National Learning Disability Program Board.

The end of 2015 saw the long awaited opening of Combe Valley Way (the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road). Despite all of the protests during construction residents feedback has been generally positive with many reporting quicker journey times and a more relaxed journey. Cyclists are now keen to have the Greenway opened and this pedestrian and cycle route alongside the road will follow. Of course the potential benefits are yet to come for the road opens up opportunity to build new homes and businesses; some have already opened and more are under construction.

The SE7 project continues to grow and in particular the Orbis partnership between East Sussex and Surrey County Councils has now expanded to include Brighton & Hove City Council this single Business Services Department serving 3 councils is growing in strength and is achieving economies from scale and benefits all councils from the depth of specialist staff expertise available.

In addition the past year has seen the launch of the 3SC Devolution Bid to Government. If successful this will bring opportunity for local determination of some of the larger issues of concern to Sussex and Surrey Residents. We still await a response to our proposals but already we are seeing benefits from bringing together 44 partners with similar goals. Our contract of many years with Keir for roads maintenance came to an end in April our new contractor Costain CH2M has been in county for the last two months gearing up the new contract which formally started at the beginning of this week. Highways Stewards and many County Council technical staff have transferred to Costain as part of this process. One of the first major projects for this new style contract will be the improvement works for the High Street area in Hailsham.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently reviewing the warding arrangements for both East Sussex and Wealden councils; this is out for consultation until 16 June 2016 and their proposals make changes for District and County representation in Wartling Parish, the draft recommendations are available here: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/>

The BDUK scheme is fast filling in the rural gaps throughout the County and is due to be completed by the spring of 2016 with 97% coverage of the County. This will then be followed by a £6 million project to increase speeds and especially enhance trading estates in the rural stretches. A proposal has been made to SELEP that we jointly pursue improvements to 4G & 5G mobile telephony across the counties of Essex, Kent and East Sussex.

The following three page summary of County Council achievements during 2015-16, illustrates a selection of the services delivered by the council, the hard work and achievement is remarkable given the level of savings the council has made during the same period.

I would like to thank the residents and businesses in Wartling Parish for their continued help and support. As we have entered into a New Parish term I would like to thank the new council and the Parish Clerk for their work during the past year.

East Sussex County Council's Achievements

There will be ongoing challenges for us to overcome in enabling the best service to the community we serve; I am sure that working together will be more effective in that ambition.

These points have been arranged under the four overarching priorities the Council is trying to achieve for local people. The Council Plan provides details of those priorities, the action we plan to take, how we allocate resources and measure our performance. Details can be found on our website: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/keydocuments/councilplan/default.htm The Council Plan for 2016/17 is now available.

Driving economic growth

A bid for devolving additional powers to East Sussex, Surrey and West Sussex has been presented to Government. If successful, the 3SC (Three Southern Counties) bid will help unlock new growth and spearhead a transformation in how public services are delivered in the region, with organisations working together to help tackle the congested road and rail network, pioneer new digital technology, close the skills gap that is holding businesses back and build new affordable homes. The 3SC devolution bid has been

developed in partnership with 44 organisations including 23 district and borough councils, 3 local enterprise partnerships, the South Downs National Park and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The 3SC Devolution Newsletter gives regular updates on devolution developments; to subscribe please sign up at: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKESCC/subscriber/new?topic_id=UKESCC_121.

A new service has been launched as part of a Government-backed drive to provide a one-stop shop approach to business support, with the aim of boosting economic growth. We have contracted the Let's Do Business Group to launch Business East Sussex, which provides a single point of contact for people looking to start a new business or grow an existing company, providing links to organisations that can provide support, access to research and development, networks and funding. Business East Sussex can be contacted by calling 0845 6018326, by emailing info@businessseastsussex.org.uk, online at www.businessseastsussex.org.uk or on Twitter @BizESussex.

Work under the Employability and Skills Strategy continued throughout 2015/16 and we are now planning ways to further increase opportunities for residents. During 2015 we encouraged contractors to create 785 hours of work experience and 100 hours of on-the-job training. The 'You're Hired' East Sussex Campaign, which seeks to support work-ready young people into apprenticeships, generated 699 work opportunities against a target of 500.

Ofsted, the national body that inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people and services providing education and skills for learners, has reported back on their inspection of the Council's arrangements for supporting school improvement. The School Improvement Service had previously been rated as 'ineffective' (June 2014). The latest inspection took place in November 2015 and the report, which no longer gives rating categories, recognises the impact of Council improvement activity and the difference this is making to the performance of schools and the outcomes for children and young people. Ofsted has not identified a need to re-inspect the service.

The Bexhill Hastings Link Road (Combe Valley Way) opened to traffic on 17th December 2015. The road will bring an estimated £1 billion of economic benefits to the area, providing new jobs, new homes and cutting congestion on the A259 and other local roads. It is expected to reduce congestion on the A259 by up to 40% and there is evidence of reduced journey times for people using the Link Road to access the Conquest Hospital. The route and design of the road were chosen to minimise the impact on the environment and new 'greenways' for walkers, cyclists and horse riders will be completed this year.

Keeping vulnerable people safe from harm

Sixteen direct contacts to the Trading Standards Rapid Action Team were made between April and September 2015, all of which were responded to within the two hour target response time. Two additional visits were made to victims as a result of a relative discovering that their family member had fallen prey to rogue traders. The intervention of the Rapid Action Team saved the consumers a total of £34,850.

The new Specialist Domestic and Sexual Abuse Service, led by RISE (Refuge, Information, Support and Education) in partnership with Survivors Network and the Crime Reduction Partnership was launched in January. The service provides information, advocacy and practical and emotional support to women, men and children living with domestic or sexual abuse or violence in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

The rate of children with a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 children (age 0-17) has reduced to 42.3 against a target of 44.7, demonstrating sustained improvement as a result of steps introduced to safely reduce the number of children with a Plan. Examples of actions include working with Independent Reviewing Officers (whose role is to monitor how the local authority treats children) and Child Protection Advisers to reinforce mechanisms to safeguard children. Many of these children remain Children in Need and continue to be supported by social workers.

A number of Safe Place Schemes are being developed through the goodwill of businesses, organisations and the staff working within them. The schemes aim to provide vulnerable people, particularly those with a learning disability and older people, with a safe place to go and get help if they are feeling scared or upset while out on their own in the community.

Working with East Sussex Young Carers, a charity that supports carers aged between five and 18 across the county, we have launched a new 'working together' policy aimed at ensuring young carers and their families get the support they need. The policy stresses the responsibility of all agencies to identify any issues or needs young carers might have when they first come into contact with them and aims for a more coordinated approach within and across the organisations to ensure young carers' needs are identified and met at the earliest opportunity.

Helping people help themselves

Good progress has been made on East Sussex Better Together (ESBT), the three year 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. The integrated locality teams that will support older adults and those with long-term conditions will be implemented by April 2016 and reformed commissioning functions across health and social care will be implemented by July 2016. The ambition of ESBT is to develop a fully integrated health and social care system in East Sussex by 2018, ensuring every patient or service user enjoys proactive, joined up care that supports them to live as independently as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes. Between April and November 2015, 100% (4,588) of working age adults and older people receiving our support received self-directed support. 91% 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.

More than 14,000 young people voted in the elections for the East Sussex Youth Cabinet. The Big Vote elections saw 14,258 votes cast for 39 candidates across 30 schools and colleges, with the 20 winners being announced at a special event in December. Areas of focus for the coming year are expected to include challenging and reducing bullying and abuse, and making local areas a safer and more enjoyable place to live for 11-18 year olds.

We are working with five community and voluntary organisations to support the development of Good Neighbour Schemes, which offer practical help and support to those in need and fight social isolation. East Sussex has one of the largest populations of people over the age of 85 in the country, with around 10% saying they feel lonely. Information about Good Neighbour Schemes, how to set one up and volunteering in the local community can be found on our website: https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/volunteering/good_neighbour_schemes/.

Making the best use of our resources

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2016/17 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on 9th February. For details see <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/finance/budget/>.

The Orbis partnership between East Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council was launched in April 2015 to improve the quality and resilience of business services and provide savings to both authorities. One of the first Orbis projects is the introduction of a paperless billing service that is expected to save the councils around £180,000 annually within three years through reducing the time spent on completing and processing around 125,000 invoices annually. It is estimated that it will cut invoicing costs for businesses by up to 40%, and around 1000 suppliers have enrolled to carry out transactions with us using the paperless service.

This year, projects delivered under the SPACES programme, the collaborative partnership formed of public and third sector organisations in East Sussex with the aim of reducing the cost of the public sector estate through partnership working and co-location, include the Let's Do Business group moving into St Mary's House in Eastbourne and our Bexhill traffic team colocating with Rother District Council at Bexhill Town Hall. This year's projects reduced revenue expenditure by over £100,000 and we have worked with charities to recycle unwanted furniture and stationery items, saving them in the region of £20,000. The SPACES programme has recently been awarded a Certificate of Excellence by the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE). A new seven-year contract for the provision of highway services in the county will start on 1st May. The contract with the civil engineering and construction company Costain CH2M will replace the existing arrangement which sees three separate contractors responsible for highways, street lighting and traffic signals. The new deal gives us greater certainty over the cost of highway services for the next seven years and includes a number of incentives and penalties to ensure the best possible service is provided to the public. Highways Stewards, who are responsible for inspecting the county's roads, will be given more powers to fix minor road defects, allowing the work to be carried out more quickly and efficiently.

Diverting waste from landfill during annual maintenance works at the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility saved around £23,000 and reduced the impact on the environment. Waste that would otherwise have been sent to landfill during the planned shutdown was diverted to other energy recovery facilities in the south east. Around 3,500 tonnes of waste, which would otherwise have been destined for landfill, was diverted to facilities in Kent and south east London. This not only saves money but means rubbish is turned into electricity to power homes and businesses via the National Grid, which makes it a greener, more cost-effective way of dealing with the annual maintenance shutdown.

County Councillor L Keeley said;

- he is encouraging County to encourage more sport in schools to combat childhood obesity.
- he has asked County to guarantee there will be enough funding with the new housing to meet all the resulting infrastructure requirements and he also wants ESCC to provide more money for pothole repairs.
- there will be more Highways Stewards in the new Highways Contract.
- he wants County to provide more passing places in country lanes.
- he is recommending the County Council provides a ring road to the east of Hailsham to alleviate traffic problems in the town.

- Although the Government has provided the County Council with an extra 2% funding for Adult Social Care, care homes may still close.

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

My work at Wealden

At Wealden I serve on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which holds the Cabinet to account; the Public Health and Public Safety Portfolio Holder Advisory Group, advising the Portfolio Holder; the Youth Engagement working party Sub-Committee which is investigating ways of engaging and enthusing youth in democracy in general and the work of the council in particular; the Boundary Sub Committee which is responsible for consulting with members and interested parties and coordinating the Wealden response to the Boundary Commission on changes to Wealden Wards. I was also a part of other, smaller task and finish groups which dealt 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, Kier, Gatwick Airport, and the Police.

My work in Wartling

My high profile activities this year have been around:

- Rubbish and Non – Collections, I am grateful to say missed bins are fewer than before but still there are pockets of the parish where things just will not run smoothly. I have also received fewer complaints about the abandonment of bins on the pavement after they are emptied. Apart from these hiccups I am proud of the service Wealden provides. Our recycling rates are probably the best in East Sussex and unlike neighbouring Councils we still offer a free green waste collection service.
- Fly tipping has been dealt with quickly and efficiently
- 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.
- 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
 5. Assisting in School Appeals

For the first time no one in the parish has contacted me this year about a neighbourly dispute. This year I didn't even have the excitement of an escaped cow!

In conclusion

Wealden continues to deliver quality services and maintains Free Car Parking so as to support local business in our market towns. We keep a very close eye on our running costs; we work closely and share services with other local authorities. However, for the first time this year we found it necessary to reluctantly increase our share of the Council Tax after keeping it the same for the previous five years. We were not alone as other Councils took the same decision. I am delighted to say that I did not receive one complaint about this, nor did the colleagues I have spoken to at Wealden so perhaps we can conclude we still give value for money.

I have represented Wartling on Wealden District Council since 2003 and feel privileged that I have been given the opportunity to continue for another 4 years.

Thank you for your welcome and 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.

7. Reports from Clubs and Associations

There were no reports from any other Clubs or Associations on this occasion.

8. Open Forum

There were no questions from members of the public in the Open Forum.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.05pm.