

WARTLING PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF

4th January 2017

held at The Reid Hall, Boreham Street

59 Present

Councillors K Stevens (Chairman), R Lawrence and C Paterson.

County Councillor B Bentley, District Councillor P Doodles, A Stevens (Clerk) and fifteen members of the public were also in attendance.

60 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

61 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd November 2016 were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

62 Clerk's Report on Matters' Arising

All matters' arising were included elsewhere on the agenda.

63 Disclosures of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest in any items on this agenda nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

The meeting was then suspended.

64 Reports from the County Councillors on matters from the County Council affecting this Parish.

County Councillor Bentley said officers at County are now working on the budgets for the new financial year and will make their recommendations to Full Council in due course.

65 Report from the District Councillor on matters from the County Council affecting this Parish.

District Councillor Doodles said she has not received any complaints about the refuse collection recently. She also said that Wealden:

- will be running free events across the District to encourage residents to switch to Smart Energy meters. There will be an exhibition at Herstmonceux Village Hall on the 18th January and another at Ninfield Memorial Hall on 11th January.
- is again supporting Keep Britain Tidy with the Great Wealden Spring Clean 2017. The Great Wealden Spring Clean will take place over the weekend from Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th March.
- will be charging £70 for pre-application advice from 1st April.
- is planning to open a new Crematorium at Horam in 2018

66 Questions from Members of the Public

Mrs White made the following statement which she directed to the County and District Councillors;

'As a mere mortal, I am never sure who has the responsibility for what. That is to say, either Wealden District Council or East Sussex County Council. And indeed Highways seem to be a separate entity altogether. However I do believe that all these bodies should be there to help us and not oppose us.

Our Parish Council works hard for us and we are very appreciative of what they do. Unfortunately, they do not appear to be listened to by the people I have just mentioned, which is why we have lost so many Parish Councillors recently. We thought the Government wanted to pass down the powers to the people!

It would seem that anything that the parish requires, we are told that it is either not a priority, or there is not enough money.

It would seem however, that money is spent on research into various scenarios that never seem to come to fruition such as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (which has been going on since at least 2014) and the proposed Conservation Area.

The following are examples of things we have been asking for;

1: We have had to fight to get our verges cut in the village and have been asking for our pavements to be widened for many years. This year the verges grew to such a level that they endangered motorists as indeed the pavements endanger pedestrians.

2: I understand a meeting was held about the posts at the top of Boreham Lane, but nothing more came of it.

3: Wealden Council Tree Warden inspected our neighbour's dead tree some time ago and said it was safe. Network Power disagreed with this and cut it down. In the interim we suffered several power cuts because of it.

4: The planning for Barn Cottage to become residential was vetoed by several people in the village and the Parish Council, but it was just ignored and passed.'

In answer to the points raised, Councillor Stevens replied;

1: A site meeting about the posts at Boreham Lane did take place, but Highways said they would be unsafe and would not give the Parish Council permission to install them.

2: The tree was safe from County Council's point of view but Network Power had a different point of view because of the power cuts.

3: The verges were cut this year and the work to cut back the pavements has been scheduled for later.

4: The Government dictates that we need more housing and that drives everything in Planning.

It was also noted that the County Council is facing reduced income of £150m by 2020 from the withdrawal of funding from Central Government and is limited by how much it can increase its Council Tax. Parishes may have to take on more and may have to raise the precept to do so.

County Councillor Bentley added;

- whilst the Government is keen to pass powers on to Parish Councils, there is currently no legislation to do so.
- the MP recently held a Conference to look at changing rural verges to wildflower meadows.
- Wartling has a very good Highways Steward and residents should report any problems to her.
- adding the posts would reduce the road width to a width that is less than the minimum required by the Road Traffic Act.
- The homeowner is ultimately responsible for the tree because it is on their land.

District Councillor Doodes the added;

- that Wealden has to provide more housing, it has no choice and the Parish Council is only a Consultee.
- Parish, District and County Councillors work together to try and do the best for the Parish but could maybe improve feeding back what they do to residents.
- work on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is still ongoing, but the Government keeps changing the goalposts.

Mr Hassell asked if the Parish Council can contact the hunt and ask them to let us know when hunts are taking place. Councillor Stevens said he would try but thought it unlikely because it could increase the risk of the hunt being sabotaged.

Mrs Jones said there are some potholes in Boreham Lane which she will monitor and report when they become a problem.

The meeting was then re-opened.

67 Reports

a) Planning – The following applications have recently been approved by Wealden District Council;

WD2016/2074FA – Barn Cottage – Removal of condition 4 of WD2010/1278F (Change of use of redundant farm building to holiday let cottage) to enable use as dwelling.

WD2016/19580 -,Dormers Farmhouse – Windmill Hill – Outline application for erection of two dwellings with parking and crossing to A271.

b) Environment North

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

c) Footpaths

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

d) Environment South

There have been no new reports of any fly tipping.

e) Highways

Councillor Lawrence recently reported a pothole by the church in Wartling Hill to Highways, and it was fixed within two weeks.

f) Police

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

g) Communication

Cabinet 12 for Broadband is still not running but Cabinet 14 is nearly ready for connection. Councillor Lawrence suggested residents type in their postcode on the BT website for more specific updates.

h) Speedwatch

The Speedwatch Team met in December and recorded four vehicles which were being driven at speeds between 38mph and 44mph.

In 2016 the Speedwatch Team carried out 29 sessions (totalling 96 man hours) in which they noted 122 speeding offences and, as a result, 108 drivers were sent letters.

The Fire Brigade also carried out a Speedwatch Session in Boreham Street but only recorded a few.

i) Trees

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

68 Reports from Outside Meetings and Courses

Councillor Stevens attended a budget meeting at East Sussex County Council on the 4th January, the minutes will be available in due course.

69 Finance Update

Councillors resolved that the precept for 2017-2018 will be £6500. This amount has been agreed to keep the precept in line with its existing expenditure, and was not affected by any legislation announced by Central Government in December 2016.

70 Website

Wartling Parish Council has received two prices to upgrade its website, and Councillors asked the Clerk to find out if they can keep their existing address.

71 Councillor Vacancy

The Parish Council currently has four vacancies for Parish Councillors and has received applications from three residents. All applications will be considered at the next Full Council Meeting. Councillors were asked to let the Clerk know if they have any queries.

72 Questions from Parish Councillors

Councillor Stevens asked Councillors to look at the Employer Discretions Policy for the next Full Council Meeting.

73 Planning Applications

There were no new planning applications to be considered.

There being no further business, this meeting closed at 8.17pm.