



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm**

**Councillors present:** Cllr S Fuller (Chair), Cllr J Branson, Cllr I Haydock, Cllr P Hill, Cllr A Hookham, Cllr M Keller, Cllr R Maxwell, Cllr J Sargent and Cllr P Seeley

**In attendance:** County Cllr S Shing (Item C.317(I)); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

*The Chair welcomed Maria Caulfield MP, who was available to answer questions, and six other members of the public.*

*The Chair invited those present to remember Rob Page, a former councillor (2008 -2015) and chair of the council (2011-2014), who had recently passed away: 'He was a truly gentle and caring man who actively looked for ways to solve problems in the community. He was always willing to offer a helping hand to those most in need. I know that he befriended many people in the village and improved their lives by doing so. He will be sorely missed by all of us'. A minute's silence was held to remember a friend and colleague.*

**Public Session: -**

Improvements on the A259 – Mr S Worsfold commented on the numbered responses to his suggestions (see Appendix to Report 4 – Business in Progress): (1) the 30 mph sign in Gilberts Drive was not visible to motorists turning into the road from Eastbourne; (2) the lighting globes on the pedestrian refuge should be reduced from two to one; (5) the verge on the north side of the A259 Friston Hill was owned by adjacent houses, but there should be scope for placing a name sign where the footpath from Warren Lane crossed the main road; (6) the trees outside Forge Cottage on the highway side of the wall were obstructing the path and had been cut back before. In addition, Mr Worsfold commented that the East Dean sign (owned by the parish council) was in the wrong place, and the 'S' was upside down. It should change places with the ANPR camera pole. The Chair agreed to liaise further with ESCC.

Need for an advance Birling Gap sign for eastbound motorists – Mrs J Booth Clibborn stated that cars would frequently overshoot Gilberts Drive and try to turn in Downsvie Lane, which was impractical. The Chair agreed to raise this with ESCC.

Verge cutting on the Birling Gap Road – Mrs J Booth Clibborn (see Report 11 – Correspondence) stated that tourists were still using an app which directed them to alight from the bus at the former Sheep Centre and walk along the road to Birling Gap. New signage for walkers would not solve this problem. It was essential to cut the verge back hard at least twice a year and/or install a 'pedestrians in road' sign. The Chair agreed that this too would be raised with ESCC.

Village Design Statement – Mr R Webb asked when copies of the VDS would be available to the Residents' Association for inclusion in welcome packs. The Chair stated that they should be ready by February.

Residents' Association 'reports' – Mr Webb objected to the inclusion of the RA in the 'Reports' section of the council's agenda: it was an inappropriate diminution of the independence of the RA. The Chair stated that the intention was purely to cooperate; the reports were described as 'for noting', but the agenda would be reviewed.

Request to hire cricket pavilion in the winter – Mr O Boulet requested use of the pavilion for a large function. The Chair stated that the village hall had become available, but that the council would still consider the request as a matter of policy.

Maria Caulfield MP – Ms Caulfield gave an update on the train strike on the Southern region. She supported the opening of a second railway mainline between Lewes, Uckfield and Canary Wharf, and believed there were now sufficient investors for this project to be feasible. Ms Caulfield also supported the provision of a second bridge at Exceat, for which ESCC had put in a funding bid; and the local project to provide an improved pedestrian crossing point on the A259 near Friston Church. The Chair thanked Ms Caulfield for her support, which was much appreciated.

*The Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting*

**C.308 Acceptance of apologies for absence:** - None

**C.309 Declarations of Interests:** - None

**C.310 Approval of the Minutes:** - The minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**C.311 Business in Progress**

The council considered report 4 on progress since the December meeting, and the following points were raised:

- Downlands Way covenant fees – no response had been received to the offer of terms. If necessary, further legal action would be taken.
- Waste bins and dog bins – responses were awaited from Wealden District council

RESOLVED – That the Progress report be noted and action taken as discussed.

**C.312 Budget 2017/18**

The council considered Report 5 setting out the proposed final budget for 2017/18 [see also Minute C.285 of the meeting held on 3rd November 2016 and Minute C.298 of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016]. The precept would remain unchanged at £48,110. This would equate to a charge of £49.16 per average Band D household (£49.43 in 2016/17).

RESOLVED – To approve the 2017/18 budget and to note the subsequent three years' forecasts

RESOLVED – To advise Wealden District council of a precept requirement of £48,110

RESOLVED - To maintain a reserves target of 50% of precept

**C.313 Wealden District Council 2017/18 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation**

The council took note of the consultation on the 2017/18 Budget and medium term financial strategy but did not wish to comment.

**C.314 Timetable of Meetings 2017**

Members agreed to keep to the pattern of holding meetings of full council on the first Thursday in the month and meetings of committees on the third Tuesday in the month.

RESOLVED – That the timetable of meetings for 2017 be approved

**C.315 Payments and Receipts**

- a) The council considered Report 8a (the Schedule of Payments for the month of January 2017) and noted Receipts. *[Note: the complete Schedule of Payments is published on the council website].*

RESOLVED - That the Payments totalling £2,175.92 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments online

- b) The council considered Report 8b reviewing actual income and expenditure at the end of the third quarter of the financial year. The budget was still underspent on maintenance of assets, though considerable projects were pending e.g. repair of the war memorial (**ACTION: PS to monitor this contract**). The names on the memorial should be refurbished when repairs were complete. Service expenditure was catching up.

RESOLVED – That the Q.3 2016/17 budget review be noted

**C.316 Urgent Items: - None**

**C.317 Reports:**

- a) District Councillor – no report
- b) The Chair - members took note of the Chair's Report 10(c), and the following points were made/noted:
- i. 'Watch your speed' initiative – there was no support for bin stickers, but members agreed in principle to accept the offer from the Sussex Police of a PCSO with a speed gun to monitor a chosen spot on the Estate (the RA to nominate the preferred location); a separate request would be made to have monitoring at the entrance to Gilberts Drive. In addition the ESCC Strengthening Local Relationships committee should be asked whether a speed roundel could be painted on the A259 near the Upper Street junction, and/or whether it would be legal for the Roads Company to paint roundels on Estate roads. Other

points raised in the Public Session on highway matters should also be pursued with SLR. **ACTION: KL**

- ii. Parking at corner of Micheldene Road/A259 – the Highway Code prohibited parking within 10 metres of a junction. This had been a recurrent problem at Micheldene Road/A259; at the Lower Street/Gilberts Drive junction, and at Gilberts Drive/A259 (the latter interfering with the school bus stop). SLR should be consulted about permitted remedial measures, e.g. leaflets on windscreens. **ACTION: KL; ESCC to be asked whether Sussex Police Liaison Officer could be invited to the next SLR meeting; KL to respond positively to SLR customer support survey**
  - iii. Hire of pavilion in winter – full details of the proposed hire were noted (though the village hall was now available). Members noted that the pavilion was a summer building, not fully insulated, and that a large event in winter could damage the grass and have substantial insurance implications as the water would have to be turned back on during cold weather. It would set an undesirable precedent. The budgeted upgrade could extend the range of use of the pavilion, but terms of hire must remain standardised. Fees should be reviewed. **ACTION: SF to respond**
- c) Planning Committee – the Chair reported on the following matter:
- i. Applications for certificates of lawful development – these would in future appear on planning agendas just for noting. There was no obligation to apply for these certificates. Useful background information had been supplied by the planning authority and would be noted at the next committee meeting. In discussion, it was suggested that where a planning application would extend a property to the maximum permitted, any permission should specify that no further LDP extension would be allowed.
- d) Rights of Way Committee – no meeting (next meeting 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017). It was agreed that hanging baskets on the bus shelters had proved popular and should be provided again in 2017. **ACTION: PH**
- e) Finance – the Chair reported that the balance in hand at the end of December was £54,239 and would continue to fall until the end of 2016/17.
- f) Recreation Ground – Cllr Sargent reported that the new dog bin was still awaited. No further details had been received from the Cricket Club about their requirements for the new season. Their storage areas still needed to be cleared and sorted.
- g) The Play Project – Cllr Branson reported that all the contractors had been apprised of the council's choice of Proludic as the preferred provider. Proludic

had provided satisfactory responses to the council's queries, and a satisfactory report had been received from a council in Hampshire with an existing Proludic play area. A round of funding applications would now begin and would take about one year. It had been suggested that the Residents' Association might front the applications to extend the range of organisations that might be asked to donate. The RA committee was willing to consider this, subject to compliance with its articles of association. However, members agreed that both bodies needed further information as to how a formal contractual partnership might work. Detailed advice should be sought from Wealden District Council (**ACTION: JB/RM**).

*The Chair suspended Standing Orders to ask Maria Caulfield MP whether she could commend the project to grant-giving bodies. Ms Caulfield explained that corporations usually preferred to help charities. The Clerk should write to her to put a formal request for help on the record, and Ms Caulfield would then be able to refer this to any potential funders with a letter of support (**ACTION: KL**). The Residents' Association could also write in support. Members thanked Ms Caulfield for her advice and support. Standing Orders were re-imposed.*

- h) Village Events – no report
- i) Sheltered Accommodation – the council took note of the record of the Working Group meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016. The immediate aim should be to prepare a report for the Annual Village Meeting in May 2017.

*The Chair suspended Standing Orders to enable Ms Caulfield MP to comment that although Wealden District Council would receive grant money for providing right-to-buy affordable housing, sheltered housing was subject to different provisions and the right to buy was not usual.*

- j) Residents' Association – no report
- k) Parish Clerk - nothing in addition to the Progress report.
- l) County Councillor – Cllr Shing reported that the county had agreed a 2% increase to its Adult Social Care council tax bill for 2017/18, in addition to the maximum 2% increase for other budgeted expenditure. The application for funding for a new Exceat Bridge was still under consideration.

RESOLVED – That the above reports (a) – (l) be noted and action taken as discussed.

### **C.318 Correspondence**

The council considered Report 11 by the Clerk, and the following matters were discussed:

- a) East Sussex Association of Local Councils - the Chair would attend the spring conference as a reserve **ACTION:KL to book**

- b) Remembering Rob Page – a celebration of Rob Page's life would be held on the afternoon of 24<sup>th</sup> January in the Village Hall, on a maritime theme. All who had worked with him would be welcome.

RESOLVED – That the Correspondence report be noted and action taken as discussed.

**C.319 Date of next meeting** – Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.46 pm.*

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....