

Date: 4th January 2018

Title: Report Item 11 – Correspondence

By: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

Purpose: To report on correspondence received since the December meeting

Recommendations: To note the report

The following items of correspondence have been received since the December council meeting:

- **Big Lottery Fund** – the council has received the excellent news that it has been awarded a grant of £10,000 towards the play area project.
- **SLCC** - When presenting the Local Government Finance Settlement to the House of Commons before Christmas the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that “the government intends to defer the setting of referendum principles for town and parish councils for 3 three years”. This has been hailed by NALC as the right decision.
- **Wealden District Council** – the Independent Remuneration Panel Report on Town and Parish Councillor Allowances 2018-19 has now been published and recommends a 2% increase to the basic councillors and chairman’s allowances, and an increase of £1 on all subsistence allowances; the mileage allowance remains unchanged at the rate recommended by HMRC. East Dean and Friston parish council does not pay allowances but refunds expenses.
- **National Association of Local Councils** - NALC is seeking the views of parishes on developing a national Data Protection Officer service
- **Wealden District Council** has agreed to go out to consultation on a new draft Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023
- **Wealden District Council** – the Birling Gap steps are now open again, and though the work requires some finishing touches, access to the beach will remain open. The Eastbourne and Newhaven Lifeboat Stations and the Coastguard have been informed.
- **Mrs E Worsfold** – the parish council may find it useful to have information about the village blacksmith, Luther Hills (who made the War Memorial railings), to support their application for grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund to refurbish the railings. Mrs Worsfold has kindly supplied some information which is appended to this report.

28/12/2017 – 03/01/2018

LUTHER HILLS

Born on 30th April 1870 in Lewes to Henry Hills and Ruth (nee Garrett) they had three sons and two daughters. Luther was the third child. Ruth died in October 1881 and by 1891 he is recorded as having a new wife Caroline (nee King born Hailsham 1844).

Henry and family moved to East Dean about 1871, but definitely before 1874 to be the village Blacksmith and Wheelwright.

Luther and his elder brother also called Henry, but known as Harry, went to the village school. Luther left when he was 11 years old and went as a carter boy at Birling Manor for 10p a week, then as an apprentice to his father and firstly shod oxen.

In 1890 Luther took over the running of the Forge from his father after he had had an accident from sparks damaging his eyes and Henry became 'mine host' at the Swan, Falmer. His older brother was by this time the Village Wheelwright.

Luther married Elizabeth Ann Fowler of Wannock in October 1892. They did not have any children and Elizabeth died in April 1946.

Over the years he made the wrought iron coronal lamp fittings in both churches, he made the Friston weather vane and mended the school desks and also made pipes for the school plumbing when this was put in.

After the war memorial was built on the Village Green and dedicated in 1920, it had a plinth and flower beds around it, but people from the Tiger would sit on this plinth to drink their beer and the veterans did not like beer being spilt on it so they persuaded Luther to make the railings to surround it. In 1957 the flower bed was removed and replaced with York stone and the railings painted. In 1993 the War Memorial and railings were listed Grade 11. The Parish Council assumed trusteeship of the War Memorial in 1950.

During his life at East Dean as well as being the village Blacksmith he was the Church Sexton at East Dean and rang the Church bells, both until 1935. This job entailed digging over 200 graves and stoking the boiler when the heating was on for which he received 25p. a week plus another 25p when the heating was on. He never missed a church service and always took the collection. He was also sexton at Friston for a time.

He was known as a great singer and sang for the East Dean Choral Society until 1927 when there is the last record of this society.

As he got older and smithying work dried up he took to making models of Sussex wheeled ploughs and carts, some of which still survive.

Luther lived at Forge Cottage from, 1871/4 until retiring in 1961 to an old peoples home, High View House, Ridgewood, Uckfield.

He died on 14th December 1964 in Uckfield and is buried at St. Simon and St. Jude Church, East Dean. In his will he left everything to Mrs. Enid Pindred of East Dean.