



## MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2010 AT 7.30 PM, IN THE SMALL HALL,  
VILLAGE HALL, PLUMPTON GREEN

**PRESENT:** Mr. R. Taylor RT Chairman  
Mrs B Watson BW Vice Chairman  
Mrs. S. Angel SA  
Mrs. S. Akers SAA  
Mr. T Thompsett TT  
Mrs. C Eastwood CE  
Mrs K Wride KW  
Mr R Stone RS

County Councillor Mrs M. Stroude  
District Councillor Mr T Hawthorne  
Sergeant M Theelke  
PCSO Steve Knowles

Network Rail Representatives Mr M Butler, Mr C Robey  
Mr J Pickard

52 Members of the Public (all were signed in with their names)

**1. APOLOGIES:** Mr S Green SG Mr R Wells

**2. MINUTES:** The Minutes of the Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> I, 200 were signed as a true record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING:** None.

Presentation from Network Rail Questions raised by the PC and a MOP who was unable to attend the meeting had been answered prior to the meeting. Full details of these answers are on the PC website. Presentation and graphs are also on the website. Presentation included: Crossing equipment is life expired and replacement parts are becoming harder to resource. Crossing failures are becoming more frequent and increasingly difficult to rectify. Graph charts were shown on the screen: top chart is the failure history of Plumpton LC. The bottom is a comparison of Plumpton LC and Frinton LC, which was converted from gates to barriers in April 2009.

Map of proposed position of road signs was put on the screen and the results of the crossing use in a 9 day census which took place in September 2010.

Safety Risk profiles for different types of crossing: Typically the level risk for a gated crossing and full barrier crossing is similar. NR refining the current risk assessments for Plumpton LC using the census data collected last September.

Plumpton Gate Box – Signal box is Grade 2 listed building. NR would continue to use box as an operational box in items of rail disruption or engineering works. A panel would be installed to operate the crossing locally when required. NR considering manning the box for the level crossing on race days, at least initially.

Q What is a failure?

A Gates not sitting right in proper position, lamps on not working, floodlights not working.

Q Graph – 2009 reflect failures?

A Graph to the present day shows these.

Q What about Frinton?

Q That was the last one we did. There have been teething problems with Frinton.

Q Are the gates closing the same number of times each day?

A Yes.

Q Is there no increase in the rate of failure?

A Some increase, same type of fault. A quarterly inspection takes place and

maintenance on call out.

Q Will there be manning of the crossing on race days.

A Not sure about that yet.

Q What are you proposing on the road near the houses, will there be lights and bells?

A They will be right on the edge of the station – the warblers will be set just above the ambient noise levels, they will be turned down in the evenings, and if the pedestrian use is low enough, we may turn them off at night.

Q What about the decibel level.

A They are set above a specific level.

Q Is the noise just for pedestrians?

A Yes, it can be adjusted if too noisy.

Q Why did NR deny that the census had anything to do with the crossing gates?

It was described as routine maintenance and all those contacted in NR and Southern said that was it was.

A It was considered maintenance and NR had nothing to hide.

Q Is there a consultation period? How long will that be?

A A decision has not been made about the gates, it is the preferred way, to modernise. There will be a statutory consultation period, we will listen and the listed elements of the station will be considered.

Q When this was discussed 20 years ago there was a 2 year fixed consultation period?

A Now under a Level Crossing Order there is a 2 month statutory consultation period, Highways have to be noted, it usually takes 6 months – we are nowhere near that stage yet.

Q What about the safety of animals as there are some kept near the facility?

A There are trespass guards and these are there to deter animals as well as people, they are used at farm crossing.

Q What are the benefits of the proposed scheme – are they for NR or the community?

A NR make operational savings, there are regulatory targets on renewals and operations.

Q What is the time delay before the warning bells sound, with horses more than likely to use the crossing as the racecourse is very close?

A There is no difference.

Q Would you consider watching everyone who crosses?

A Would be able to see who was crossing from the control box. If an animal was on the crossing, the barriers would not be closed. Cameras will pick it up, everything between the stop lines.

Q Will the road be straightened out within the confines of hedges etc?

A Yes.

Q How much will you save rather than renovating the gates and putting them back?

A This will come out when we do our study. There will be cost savings over 25 years.

Q Would everything on the crossing be watched by Three Bridges – is every crossing between here and London watched?

Mr Robey showed a film to illustrate this.

Q We see on TV programmes cars being hit – who is at fault?

A People climbing over the barriers, it does happen, there are lots at Crawley.

Q I represent CPRE – these gates are listed, why can't the gates be replaced by similar gates. LDC Planning Listed Building will make a study of this and planning permission will be required.

A We will look at this. The gates will be offered within the village – we are aware of the Heritage issues, and Listed Building consent would apply.

Q The gates are wooden. I take it spare parts can be replaced?

A Anything can be replaced.

Q I noticed a different signalman – use different technique, the handle goes round quickly, and the gates bash, this must put stress on the linkages. Is there a simple way to have a hydraulic system?

A They are entirely mechanical, it is difficult to wind them on a windy day.

Q Are the new gates to be the same height as existing?

A Same height as Cooksbridge 900mm.

Q Plumpton is the Gateway to the National Park, have you talked to CPRE about that?

A Have not had to consider that.

Q Are the parts difficult to come by – they are only linkages, you could get them made in a forge. There is one in the next village of East Chiltington.

A They could be made in a forge.

Q There is a lot of money being put into this?

A We have to renew the crossing.

Q Have you considered maintaining gates with a modern mechanism?

A We will consider this in the study, we would talk to LDC – it would need a heavier meter.

Q A good Health and Safety reason for altering the gates would have been convincing?

A We are not driven by Health and Safety – the crossing needs renewing, the replacement has to be safe. If nothing was wrong with the crossing, we wouldn't be looking at it. We were looking at changing them in 2011, but there are still a lot more studies to do.

We will come back with proposals to the PC, the drawing up of the specification will take about 4-5 months.

Q It would be sad if they are removed.

A It is not a definite decision.

RT took a vote of elected members of the Parish. 49 people were against changing the gates, and 8 were in favour.

Q Gates are strictly manual – where will power be provided from is it your own?

A Power would from barrier batteries – any interruptions they would be backed up for 12 hours. Someone would be sent out if there was no picture available, no trains can go through if there is no picture on the screen. Designed to be fail safe.

Q What is the timing of the closing of the gates – is it quicker with barriers?

A Slightly longer with a gate.

Q Interested in the signal box – signal box PC offered to take it a way, there is life left in the box, we don't want to lose the box.

A If the gates were kept it would be kept as an operation box. It would not be demolished. We would leave it there, even if was not operational, it may be needed.

RT thanked NR representatives for their presentation and questions answered.

NR said that they would be visiting the PC again, probably several times in the future to discuss this further.

#### **4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT:**

RT thanked the Clerk, BW (Vice Chairman) and all councillors for their hard work throughout the year. Two new Councillors had been elected in 2009, Mr S Green and Mr R. Stone.

South Downs National Park will have full powers in 2011, with 37 members of which 50% will be elected. PPC voted for two councillors to represent PC's on NP Authority, J Carr of Willingdon and Jevington PC and N Harrison of Southease PC

Power cuts had occurred over the last year, and EDF had been contacted many times with letters to the CEO; Mr Baker MP had been asked to help obtain answers to questions from EDF; questions had been answered and a representative would attend the May PC meeting.

SLR meetings had taken place with Highways and other ESCC departments, which are very helpful; subjects raised were road damage, parking problems, speeding, road signs and pathways.

Public Transport Report: Buses: ESCC put on out a consultation document in December, and PPC asked for responses from the public; feedback was small ; PPC communicated to ESCC that there were many gaps in the timetable.

Trains: NR released its Rail Utilisation Strategy Document in the Autumn; PPC responded mentioning an inaccurate figure that 300 people used Plumpton station per day, whereas there are at least 500 people who use it. Southern released its December 2010 timetable for consultation. PPC responded; main problems included severe overcrowding of Victoria evening rush hour service, no peak evening rush hour service at all from London Bridge to Plumpton. Mr Baker MP was working very hard to help with these requests; Southern had agreed to increase carriages, but the request for more daytime services and at least one evening peak hour service form London Bridge had not been reflected in the December 2010 to May 2011 timetable.

PPC's first business plan had been published and distributed to parishioners; it will be reviewed in early 2011. Thanks were given to SAA, RS and SG for their work on this.

Pit Stop: LDC are attempting to trace the owners to see if they can do something to tidy the site up; they are not prepared to do anything in their own right.  
Landraise: Meeting at Newick regarding the proposed landraise site at Piltown, attended by 200 people. PPC has made representation to ESCC.  
PPC have been paying LDC for 5 dog bins and have now been told they should only pay for those on PC land, which are two bins. This problem is to be rectified.  
Trees were planted in memory of Mr Moorhouse (Malus) and Mrs Ridley (Liquid Amber) on the green, in remembrance for all their hard work to the community over many years.

Police Report: Sgt Theelke and PCSO Steve Knowles. Sgt Theelke said that he had 13 PCSO's and three PC's in his team which cover all rural villages as far as Seaford and Lewes. All crime was 11% down, House Burglary down 36%, Vehicle crimes 24%, Damage offences down 21%, All Injury offences down 15%, serious sexual offences down 17%.

Plumpton: 48 crimes for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010, the same as last year. Burglary Dwelling 08/09 2 09/10 1, Violent crime 08/09 0 09./10 2, Criminal Damage 08/09 9, 09/10 10

ASBO includes College 08/09 22 09/10 30.

Plumpton has 26 hours of high visibility time a month. PCSO Knowles also covers East Chiltington and Chailey. Unfortunately PCSO Julie Whittaker Jones was on light duties due to illness, and unlikely to return to Plumpton. PCSO's had been seconded to Seaford recently as there had been a murder there

Farm Watch Scheme available in rural areas – like NW, for farms, livery yards etc. Text messages alert people when there are current crime issues in the area.

PSCO's assigned to Wildlife related crimes such as badger baiting, misuse of firearms etc.

Police response times: ES1 Lewes Town and surrounding villages: ES2 Newhaven, Peacehaven, Seaford and surrounding villages 09/10 1479 Grade 1 calls classified as immediate response – 55% were attended within 10 minutes, 77% within 15 minutes, 88% within 20 minutes, 95% within 30 minutes, and 99% within 60 minutes.

Neighbourhood Panels set up to work to build safer neighbourhoods – Plumpton does not have one.

PCSO Knowles – Village concerns include skateboarding on pavements and roads – visits made to skatepark to encourage young people to use the area rather than go on roads or pavements, posters put up to encourage safe riding.

Inconsiderate parking still happening. Speeding Vehicles – a number of positive actions have been taken to tackle this problem, including regular patrols along Station Road, use of SID and speed gun. Vehicle crime – encourage everyone to remove any valuables from cars, sat navs, stereo facias, CD's and money.

Operation Crackdown – everyone encouraged to report anti social driving.

There has been a spate of break in of vans – encouraged to remove tools. Crime Prevention Roadshow – tool marking free of charge.

Q What is the detection rate of vehicle crime?

A Figures not to hand, my role is to reduce crime and be visible in the area.

Q There has been fly tipping in the area.

A Clerk: LDC now have a dedicated person to deal with this problem, and any incidents are reported to them by the Clerk.

Q It is encouraging that crime figures are going down, but the figures do not add up 43 crimes, 5 cases are not listed.

10 vehicles damaged or broken into.

A It would appear that crime is coming down, but people are not reporting crime.

What categories are the other 5?

Q Crimes such as these appear to happen when there is the campsite at the other side of Lewes.

A Crimes such as shoplifting, common assault, issues at the school – thefts, these are not recorded.

Q On 19<sup>th</sup> March the rural blog said that landrovers in the area were being targeted, there must have been reports – the blog said thefts occurred in Plumpton, Glynde and Ringmer.

A Large numbers of landrovers have been targeted in the surrounding areas. PCSO is

familiar with this one and I did pay a visit.

Q There is no encouragement to report these.

Q SGT Theelke: PSCO Knowles is much busier, he gets more uptakes on the blog. The blogs that come from the PCSO are both negative and positive. I encourage any crime to be reported.

Adopt a Station - Mr Nicholson said that this scheme was taking place. Mr Newman, the Stationmaster had won a Gold Star for his commitment to the community. Mr Nicholson had attended the launch of the Hassock Adopt a Station Scheme. The scheme will ensure the station is painted, well looked after, plant flowers, have a small library, plant wildflowers, and maybe a small cafe. Mr Nicholson said they were looking for support for this; Southern and Garden Pride had given sponsorship and pamphlets would be produced.

No Cold Calling: A box had been placed in the shop, and the slips from the box indicated that 27 people wanted the scheme, and 6 had said no. Further slips filled in at the start of the meeting 10 people said yes, and 3 said no.

It was felt that this was a small sample. Clerk said that the cost of the signs were approximately £50 to £60 and would be attached to village signs, Public Liability insurance from LDC may be needed. Those allowed to call are: Political groups, Religious Groups. Those not allowed are Charities, except if the resident is collecting such as Poppy Day; charities may leave an envelope to be collected later. There are 25 zones in Sussex; the scheme has no legal status, so it is not illegal for rogue traders to call.

Q My PC have discussed this; they feel that signs reduce distraction burglaries, but the downside that the scheme does apply to charities.

Q I have had two cold calls in a year, they were young men selling things; they caused no offence, and I think it is appalling to ban it.

Sgt Theelke: Bishopstone is a No Cold Calling zone, and there has been a decrease in distraction burglaries.

It was decided after the discussion, that the PC would make a final decision at the May Parish Council meeting.

EDF – Power Cuts – Clerk said that questions had been answered by EDF and these were on the website (full edition), parish notice boards, and would be in the parish magazine.

Two representatives of EDF would be coming to the May PC meeting, and it was anticipated further questions would be asked.

## **5 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Mrs Stroude said it was good to see so many people attending the meeting and interested in their community. She thanked the PC for their hard work and the Clerk for keeping up to date with regular PC minutes.

ESCC plan to look for efficiencies and potential savings with their budgets, though the delivery of services would remain as last year. Council tax rise for 2010/11 is 2.7%, the lowest for 14 years.

£800k had been spent to mend potholes, but these have only been temporarily filled. The role of the SDNP is under discussion, ESCC have responsibility for ROW and countryside sites.

ESCC is a member of ES Safer Communities Partnership and through joint working there has been a 30.5% in total crime recorded from 2005 – 2009. There are 75,000 volunteers in the County. £300,000 has been invested in the delivery of support and advice services for voluntary and community organisations.

ESCC have allocated funds for the delivery of free personal care in the home, which is the current government's prediction.

Children's Services – Chailey school delivers outstanding results and has received an award from the Specialist Schools and Academies Result. The care of vulnerable children

continues to be a top priority; there has been a 25% increase in referrals since the Baby P case. There are currently 520 currently in the care of ESCC. The new children's centre at Chailey School has received planning permission. ESCC has looked at every possible area for a waste site, the one proposed at Piltdown is on a flood plain; there has been a lot of representation against this site.

**6. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT:**

Mr Hawthorne said that the PC had good links with ESCC and LDC. In his role as District Councillor he is involved in planning, noise disturbance, small business relief, Artwave, encouraging tourism, employment issues and the scrutiny committee. There has been good community engagement in Plumpton and progress on lots of issues, and he commended the new Business Plan.

Village Action Plan Items:

It had been a good year for the VAP; the voluntary driver scheme is going well, and more volunteer drivers are needed. Please let Jill Medhurst know if you can help. VAP had arranged first aid training for the volunteer drivers and these courses were available to the public. Thanks were given to the Police for using the radar gun. Radar boxes will be placed in the village in the near future to record the speed of vehicles. SID continues to be used in the village. VAP have put up new noticeboards, Communications team are producing a booklet. Cardboard recycling is taking place, and thanks were given to TT for having it at the playing field. Plumpton Goes Green – VAP are doing lots of work on this. Carbon Footprint event 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2010. Footpaths – notelets for sale, leaflets for footpath walks. Wildlife Group set up. Youth Team – CC has provided a youth worker; this group meets every two weeks. Business Team have been working very hard with the racecourse and the shop and have given support to local businesses. Facilities Team are looking at developments at the PF and new Pavilion. Plumpton College Open Day 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2010, Village Fayre 3<sup>rd</sup> July, VAP AGM in September.

**7. CHAIRMAN OF THE VILLAGE HALL REPORT:**

RT thanked Mrs Burgon, Mrs Donovan, all the committee members, Mrs K Beard for organising the jumble sales, Mr Satchell the Finance Manager, and Mr M Beard for all the work, often at short notice, on the hall. Jumble sales have raised £858 and £1128 for the hall. WI have placed a seat on the green to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the WI. There will be refurbishment of the kitchen, bar and stage equipment, which will be funded from a PWLB loan. A Village Fayre is to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, organised by Mr Satchell. Additions to the hall include a new front red stage curtain winder, additional floodlighting at the entrance door, and a wall mounted heater in the committee room. New small tables are to be purchased. Interior painting has also taken place.

Q I would like to complement the way the floor in the main hall has been kept up. Is it going to be done every year?

A Every three years, we will look at it next year and see if it needs attention.

**8. CHAIRMAN OF PLAYING FIELD REPORT:**

TT said that the PF continued to be well used, with 200 people belonging to the various clubs. The playing field was kept to a high standard, but the main problem was dog litter; TT appealed for people to use the bins provided or take it home. The inside of the Pavilion has had some refurbishment this year, with new changing room floors, the Football Club and Cricket Club contributing to this. The alarm panel had to be replaced; a break in had occurred but nothing was taken. Honeybees continue to use the facility and individual lettings have been on a par with previous years. Fire Report, Electrical Report, Play Area Reports had all taken place. The cost of utilities is kept under review, with time clocks for the immersion heater. Hiring costs are in line with the rates for the small hall at the VH. Charges have been increased by 5% for regular groups. The skateboard park is well used; LDC are monitoring the noise levels after one complaint

from a local resident. It is expected that a report will be made in the future and the PF committee will deal with the matter. Any remedial work could cost several thousand pounds.

Repairs have been done to the car park. PFC do not intend to increase the area of parking or to alter the access to the playing field at present.

The Football Club, as part of the self help which many of the clubs subscribe to, are arranging for drainage work to the main pitch.

The Fun Day last year was a great success, as was a Jumble Sale and Quiz Night. PFC are looking at the feasibility of a new pavilion and revamping of the play part with the VAP Facilities Team. An energy audit will take place organised by the VAP Green Team. The new basketball court has been successfully completed on budget and in time, and the facility is being enjoyed by many. The new facility has cost the residents nothing apart from the small amount of new fencing necessary. Drivepoint Construction and Mr D Westgate were thanked for their work on the basketball court. CE was particularly thanked for her work in obtaining the grant in the first place and subsequent assistance with the project.

TT thanked the committee for all their hard work and enthusiasm.

#### **9. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Clerk reported that the precept for 10/22 would be £36,121, an increase of £5490.

The precept for 2010/11 is Band D 661.30

The reasons for increase are: reserves have to be kept at 25% of outgoings, increased maintenance charges (dog bins, tree work, play area and skateboard park area, small salary increases, and election costs). Small grants S137 were awarded to: Happy Circle, Windmill Rangers, bulb planting, Victim Support, British Legion, Wildlife Group.

Balanced accounts were on the table for anyone to see. Receipts £36,403.95, Payments £34,522.79, with a balance of £2409.62. These accounts are unaudited; the Audit will take place in August and the summary will be put on the PC noticeboards, and website, and copies of the accounts are available under the Freedom of Information Act.

VH and PF accounts are audited by the Charity Commission.

Q Election Costs – how much?

A £1328.89

Q Council tax has gone up by 36.2%, what plans are there for the future?

A Increase due to tree work, maintenance, etc. election costs wiped out reserves, will try to keep it down next year.

#### **11. TRAVERS TRUST REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT:**

BW said that with the death of Mrs Ridley, a new Trustee had to be appointed. SA was appointed. The previous account was closed and a new Community Account had been opened.

Carried forward £194.23; a donation had been given of £100.

BW asked RT to sign the Accounts, which he did.

RT thanked the ladies who had prepared the refreshments.

CHAIRMAN

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORM AND WILL BE RATIFIED AT THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING IN 2011  
(Date to be decided)