



## MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2010 AT 7.30 PM, IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, PLUMPTON GREEN

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

Mr K Speirs  
Mr O St John  
Mr P Nicholson  
Mrs M Westgate  
Mrs C Nicholson  
Mr M Newman

**APOLOGIES:** None.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 were signed as a true record. The minutes of a planning meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 were signed as a true record.

Mr M Butler (MB) and Mr C Robey (CR) Network Rail attended the meeting. KW suggested that this part of the meeting should be recorded by electronic device, and this was agreed. Clerk was given a map of the station and information on Fault Details of incidents with the gates.

MB said the old gate equipment needed replacing, and that Plumpton was one of the few remaining gated crossings; gates were well over their renewal date as they were constructed in the C19. NR propose to replace with a modern form of barriers which would be controlled by CCTV at a signal box at Three Bridges station by a signaller. NR are aware of the concerns. It was proposed to put flashing warning lights beyond the Racecourse coming north near Station House, and advanced warning signs on the corner (called wig wags).

RT said last time changing the gates was proposed the criteria was a good clear view on the large bend from the racecourse, and people did not see the crossing until too late; this was an issue and the Racecourse were approached to purchase land; also the bus stop had to be within so many metres.

BW and RS both said that the main concern was the proximity of the children's playing field to the track. There was a children's play group at the Pavilion and not many railway lines were so near to areas that children used.

MB said that all areas are risk assessed and there was slightly less risk of using proposed barriers having looked at three types of barriers; there would be very little difference in the risk of proposed barriers than those that are there now.

CR said that there would be 'trespass guards' fitted 3 metres each side.

Mr Newman said that there were currently no guards at the right hand side of the platform near the house.

CR said he could not place that fact, and would come to look. He would be willing to take a small group of interested people to Three Bridges to look at what happens. The operator is able to look at the CCTV at all times and the signaller can put in place a prosecution for anyone going on the line.

KW said the RUS mentioned all types of crossings to be updated, but there was no mention of changing Plumptions.

CR said that NR is not part of the RUS, the replacement of gates are small schemes. KW asked if NR knew how many times the gates at Frinton On Sea have got stuck down? Twice in two months.

CR There will be problems with all gates. There had been 23 incidents of faults from the gates at Plumpton, the parts are harder to source and it is difficult to find suitable training for technicians to maintain the gates. There would be no chance to get the gates repaired.

KW asked what would happen if the gates got stuck?

CR said someone would come from Lewes.

CE asked why the barriers could not be controlled from Lewes, and how bright would the floodlights be, and the noise from the alarms during daylight hours?

CR They are all controlled from Three Bridges – Lewes is on a different line. The alarms are set at ambient noise levels and can be turned down at night though the lights would have to be left on all night for the CCTV.

The crossing has been left for too long.

Mr Newman asked about the use of infra red cameras.

MB said they would not be available at the moment, but were being trialled, this was new technology and NR were not prepared to use it yet.

KW – Will this increase or decrease line speeds?

CR it would not make any difference.

Councillors were very concerned about the safety of children.

KW asked if Plumpton could have new gates but operated by the signaller to improve safety?

CR said the signal box at Berwick was still used but the role of the signaller was not to watch what was happening outside.

RT asked how many trains went through Berwick.

Four an hour.

Mr Speirs asked why no warning had been given to the PC that the barriers were to be changed; NR had denied the strips put on the road and CCTV cameras at the station had anything to do with anything other than routine maintenance taking place. This was disgraceful that they were not able to say what was happening.

MB said he would look into why there had been no consultation and the denials that anything was happening.

CR said that there were 200 manned gates in the country with four in Sussex, it was not cost effective to skill up new technicians.

CE asked what the maintenance cost was.

CR said it was cheaper to put in new barriers. Savings would also be made on not having to staff the signal box and its related costs.

RT asked what the consultation period was, as the previous one had been two years.

MB said it was a statutory two months but more informal discussions would take place, and the proposal was to complete the gates by 2012. The signal box would be kept and maintained as an emergency control point, for the signaller to operate in emergencies and any historical equipment would be kept.

Mr Newman asked what would happen on race days with lots of traffic queuing up to cross the gates.

CR said that the cameras on the crossing will see just beyond the stop lines.

Mr Newman asked if there would be emergency telephone. CR said that these were not normally put on the manual crossings.

CE asked if it could be considered because of the location.

Mrs Nicholson asked about the consultation and trying to convey to people the answers.

MB said that there would be a Statutory Level Crossing Order and anyone can make a representation to the Secretary of State; LDC Planning would also be consulted as part of the process.

Mr Speirs asked if this was a normal consultation period?

MB said it all goes to the Secretary of State, best value and the safest option is considered.

RT said the PC wanted to make the crossing as safe as possible.

Mrs Westgate said that the barriers at Cooksbridge worked well, and that was near a school and she felt it was a personal responsibility to be safe, and could not expect NR

to watch out for other people.

CR said that there were schools programmes to help with this.

Clerk enquired about Listed Building Consent, as she had ascertained from LDC that the gates were curtilage listed which gave them the same protection as the signal box. MB said a planning application under Permitted Development Rights would go forward and listed building consent would be applied for.

CR and MB would return for the Annual Parish Meeting with a OHP presentation (which would take approximately 40 minutes depending on questions) for the public and would take questions. They were both thanked by RT for coming to the meeting.

#### **MATTERS ARISING:**

Circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting: Comments were invited from these.

**Funding for Business Plan** Mr Satchell said he did not believe that such an expenditure should come within the remit of what the Millennium Fund was established for. He suggested finding out how many people would be interested in having a copy of the plan, and to gauge the amount needed from that, also that it should be downloadable on line and announce it was being prepared in the Parish Magazine which may also see who was interested..

**Dual Purpose Bins -** KW had raised this at the LDALC AGM. LDC promised to look into it. It was raised again at the next LDALC meeting with LDC Chief Executive. Many local Councils had responded to this, reporting the very high costs of emptying. Mr Baker MP had contacted LDC in response to the PC's concern. LDC had recommended checking whose land the bins were on as PC's should only be charged for bins on their land. Chief Executive said he would look into the issue of the dual purpose bins and a standard collection rate for the whole of LDC area during a three month investigation.

ACTION: Clerk to contact LDC to say they have only two bins on their land.

**Pit Stop -** Decision would be taken by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2010

**Accident Report Forms:** Sgt Theelke had still not responded to this. Clerk advised to write to Chief Inspector about this.

**Election Costs:** Clerk had pursued this but discussions had taken place with LDC Finance and Election Manager who had said there would be no reduction on the original invoice. There would be a meeting with the Election Department in the near future to discuss better ways of communicating and providing costings to Town and Parish Councils.

ACTION: PC agreed to pay account.

**Licence for Noticeboards:** Insurance company had quoted approximately £40 per annum to cover extra indemnity cost and damage insurance for all boards. Clerk had been asked to contact Mr Hawthorne to ask if the VAP would pay the extra premium. Subsequently Mr Hawthorne said that VAP would pay the premium and is so doing PC should note that this does not pass any liability on to the VAP as the Policy is in the PC's name. The VAP would keep the boards in good order and if they are damaged, carry out repairs which would be claimed back from PC insurance.

ACTION: Clerk asked to put boards on cover and sign licence.

These boards would be used by Clubs and Societies only.

**PF Charity Commission Accounts:** These had been sent off and subsequent acknowledgement received. Copies of past PF accounts had been sent to Mr Ramsay.

**Power Cuts:** A further letter had gone to EDF outlining more details of the power cuts, their duration, locations and dangerous wires.

**Highways:** SLR meeting had taken place on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, and draft minutes had been circulated. ESCC had prepared a Winter Service Policy for 2009/10; this included a section that said they would continue to maintain existing salt bins, but not provide

any new ones. Councils would be able to purchase these at a cost of £273 plus £70 for each filling.

Mr Johnson Highways had received confirmation from NR that the car park near the level crossing belonged to the PC! He attends meeting with rail operators about station parking.

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:** SAA reported that a BT manhole cover in Westgate had been damaged by a lorry. Mr Akers had reported this.

SAA reported that she had received an 'icons and eyesores form; she thought the Pitstop could be included on the form.

KW said that this was from the South Downs Joint Committee, and had asked people to make a list any of these in their area. She would ask Mr Millum to look at this to see if he could identify any

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

**SANDPIT** - Mr Nicholson reported that things were very quiet, though 800 tons had been extracted. It appeared that there were lorries going still going through the village when the school opens and closes.

## **VALE OF SUSSEX SOCIETY: NTR**

KW reported that at a recent LDALC meeting there was a new code of practice set up between LDALC and LDC. Many town and parish councils had contacted ESCC about the obligation to clear snow from roads and pavements. SALC had contacted ESCC who clarified that they have no legal requirement to do so. P Councils are able to clear these providing they have the relevant insurance cover.

**APM** - Clerk circulated Legal Topic Note about APM's and also showed Councillors the official forms advertising the meeting. Everyone has to sign in when coming to the meeting and her and Mrs Burgon would do this together. If any votes had to be taken, a show of hands would be requested to ascertain those who were present but not on the electoral roll and those not on the roll would not be able to vote. If there was a young person's issue, and they were not eligible to vote, this could be done separately for interest only.

This meeting has to take place between 1<sup>st</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> June, the PC Chairman can preside and the Chairman must sign the notices. It had been suggested that some Councils invite clubs and societies to speak at these meetings, but as NR were to give a presentation about the gates at the Station for about 40 minutes, so there would not be time for this.

CE said that the PC could improve its presentation at the APM.

RT said he was happy with the Report of the Council that he gives.

TT suggested considering using technology with an OHP. This would be looked into further and discussed at the next Business Plan meeting.

NR would give an OHP presentation.

SAA asked who was attending the Business Plan meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February. She asked if all Councillors could go through the notes they had been sent before the meeting.

**ADOPT A STATION:** Mr Nicholson said this was in progress and Plumpton was the first station in the region within a showcase programme, of which Plumpton was one of 12. The scheme had been backed by the Racecourse, Plumpton College and the School, and hoped it would enhance the travel experience; it was mainly about the enhancement of the station with more facilities and having plants in tubs and hanging baskets. Southern were very keen to progress on this and an agreement would have to be signed with them.

**ES DRAFT WASTE AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK:** KW had responded to this on behalf of the PC saying that ESCC should be looking at other ways of waste disposal such as anaerobic digestion, more recycling etc. and should look at how other counties and countries cope with their waste. The site at Newick was on a hall, where effluent could run into drinking water, would be visible for miles, the roads were unsuitable for HGV's and by concreting over 60 acres, would affect the flood plans.

**FINANCE:**

The balances at the end of January, 2010 were: Village Hall £5,765.83, Admin £6053.11, Playing Field £17,269.64. NSB accounts had been credited with annual interest; these were relative small numbers, but as the accounts may be needed in the immediate future, it was not prudent to place the funds in higher interest accounts. Clerk reported that there is approximately £300 remaining in the S137 small grant fund. KW asked for two application forms.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT:**

KW reported that the RUS had been published, and had ignored everything she said. It had stated that all of the station car park was only used 85%, when in fact it was used 100% of the time. There were meetings arranged to discuss improvements for parking for rail users. SA reported that she didn't think commuters were parking in East View Fields any more.

**HIGHWAYS**

KW reported that there had been a good SLR meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February and issues on potholes, grit bins etc. had been discussed. One grit bin needed replacing as it was damaged and the idea of moving a grit bin to the north of the village (possibly from the Pitstop area) was discussed. It had been pointed out that when bins are moved the grass below would die and they attract rubbish and dirt around them. Mr St John said he didn't think it was a good idea to take the bin from the Pitstop as this was a dangerous area which could need a grit bin. TT suggested that a new bin was considered when preparing next year's PC budget. Other items covered at the SLR were the suggestion that residents could request to have a white line on the entrances to their houses at a cost to the owners of £35 per house, though there would not be any way to enforce this. It was discussed whether this provision by ESCC Highways should be advertised. SAA thought discussion on this should take place at the Business Plan meeting. RT said this could urbanise the village. SG thought this facility should be publicised. TT agreed but thought the uptake may not be good. It was decided to advertise this in the magazine. Accident Reports: Mrs Nicholson reported that there was an accident report form on the VAP website. KW said that this, and the PC accident box in the shop would provide more details of accidents, but the main aim of the PC is to try to improve the reporting system with Sussex Police and Highways which is currently inadequate. Clerk has been in contact with Mark Dunn at Sussex Police and Chief Inspector. KW had asked Highways if the PC could be told in advance of any major road works such as kerbing. Clerk is in contact with Simon Marchant, ESCC. Mr St John asked why his e mail regarding the attachment to the Road Safety Strategy had not been discussed; he believed it needed further consultation. KW said this was a PC internal working document which had been agreed and ratified by the Council. SG – said it had never been on the website. He suggested that this was discussed further at the Business Plan meeting, which was agreed.

**ENVIRONMENT**

CE said she had planted 200 bulbs around the village. She had forgotten to mention at the SLR asking if certain verges that would have wild flowers on them should be left when cutting takes place. ACTION: CE would send Clerk a list of the verges which she would pass on to ESCC highways

## **FOOTPATHS**

Clerk had requested recent Network Survey Summary for Parish Councils, which had not been sent to the PC. ROW Officer had sent this.

Mrs Nicholson had requested that Clerk contact ROW about the very dangerous stile which is completely broken on Footpath 36. ROW said that the maintenance teams had been to this footpath but may have attended the wrong stile. She had asked the team to inspect the path again.

BW asked what was happening to the footpath at the top of East View Fields.

Patching had been done on this and it was still closed. It will be done when funds are available.

Mr Speirs reported that the Footpath 15 from East View Fields to Jenners Farm did not have a waymarker.

SAA said that the waymarker should be placed opposite the stable block showing people that the path goes straight following the line of the ditch. She thought there was a marker at the end of the ditch which goes across Jenners Farm land.

## **PLANNING AND HOUSING**

The free planning training arranged by Hamsey PC would take place on 25<sup>th</sup> February. TT and BW would attend.

Clerk read out summary of Incentives for Landowners as part of the Communities and Local Government Consultation Paper on Rural Housing. LDC had requested comments by 12<sup>th</sup> February. Clerk had forwarded this document to BW; she had only received the document at the end of January.

ACTION: Clerk to ask LDC planning for extension for a response and to have document e mailed to her again so she could send to all Councillors.

It was mentioned that there was an exception site on 100 Acre Lane in Wivelsfield where there could be 14 affordable houses built.

## **POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

SA reported that two people were found guilty of manslaughter after the fire at the firework factory at Marle Farm in 2006.

Policing Pledge: 1. Treat you fairly with dignity and respect.

2. Provide information about your local neighbourhood policing team.

3. Be visible in the community.

4. Reply to messages for our Neighbourhood teams within 24 hours.

5. Safely attend all emergencies within 15 minutes.

6. Safely attend to vulnerable people and local priorities within 1 hour.

7. Arrange and publicise monthly local meetings in your area.

8. Provide information about crime and court outcomes.

9. Update victims of crime on a regular basis.

10. If you are not happy with our service we will discuss this with you within 24 hours to put it right.

MP's have made renewed calls for Police Force mergers. In some cases, the total cost could be recouped in less than 2 years.

Report from PCSO Knowles – Several burglaries from cars in East View Fields, Station Road and Southdowns. Recent Burglary in the Riddens.

PCSO Whittaker Jones is still on light duties. PCSO Buggins visits Plumpton on occasions in her absence.

Mr Speirs said he had seen no evidence of PCSO's in the village recently.

SA said they work on a shift system, so may not always appear to be out and about but she had seen them.

No Cold Calling: RS suggested this should be discussed at the APM. It should also be mentioned in Parish Magazine and have box in the village shop with form to say whether or not residents think this scheme should be implemented in Plumpton.

KW – maybe an OHP presentation could be done at the APM? TT suggested keeping it simple, with a pile of forms in the shop, to fill in and put in the box. All the Councillors agreed to this.

ACTION: SA would organise this.

**VILLAGE HALL:**

RT reported that card tables would be replaced. There were plans to refurbish the kitchen and finish the theatre lighting; Clerk requested to enquire about PWLB loan to finance work.

**PLAYING FIELD::**

TT reported that there would be a PF meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2010. Basketball court work has started. Honeybees do not need a fence between the court and PF (not an Ofsted requirement although this has to be confirmed). Fence will be erected between court and play park. Spoil from excavation will be stock piled and spread over the lower football pitch to level it up.

Report from LDC for play park still to be implemented.

LDC Environmental Health letter – LDC do not intend to do anything during winter months but have asked for reassurance that PC are doing something about the noise.

ACTION: Clerk to respond saying that they are actively looking at ways to lessen the noise, but are not prepared to take any action without noise level figures.

Alarm has been repaired. Hiring rates for existing users have been researched and are not economic; this will be discussed further. Electricity bill is being investigated.

Fund raising events during 2010 are being planned. £250 had been received from the Cricket Club towards the changing room floor renewal.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Clerk had read out e mail from SG regarding PC report in magazine.

He had received comment recently about the change of format to the report.

Some people would like to see a synopsis of the monthly PC meeting, and it was thought that this was what the Communications Team would do, and producing a separate update as and when appropriate. He felt that recently there had been a mish mash of both which had been confusing, and too much information can be just as bad as not enough. He suggested: A. A short, salient, factual report of each month's meeting and a separate report when appropriate. OR

B. A general report along the lines of February report as long as it was relevant. He preferred option A.

SG said that he felt the article was an embellishment on what was said at the meeting, but he did think the February article was all right.

SAA felt that it was important to report factually about the meeting but that a further report about important issues such as No Cold Calling could be produced.

CE asked what Councillors thought should be done.

SG offered to look at what was written each month.

SG said that he had resigned from the Parish Magazine website, and would be unable to do the VAP website and PC website in the future, but would wait until someone had come forward to take these over. His decision was due to pressure of work. He asked that he was told of anyone who would like to take on the task of the websites.

SG had requested that a discussion on his suggestion to hold a PC meeting on a Saturday morning twice a year to make it accessible to more members of the public be postponed, until he arrived at the meeting.

SAA asked MOP present whether they would be interested and several raised their hands.

BW said Councillors have to be at meetings, and that she struggled to get a quorum for planning meetings on a Saturday morning.

TT proposed that this idea should be given a trial. It was agreed that this would take place, and which month to hold such a meeting to be decided at a later PC meeting.

Mr Newman asked about the power cuts that had taken place in the village recently; he had experienced one for 20 hours.

Clerk explained that she was waiting a reply from EDF, having been sent a standard letter which she had written back with more detailed information and requesting a response. RS has provided her with dates and times of certain power cuts.

**VAP – any items not covered elsewhere**

Team Leaders reports had been received from November 2009 meeting. Report from Environment Team to VAP Steering Committee Footpaths team. Mr Hawthorne had said in an e mail that he had a request sent to the VAP to establish a community based emergency plan to help people in the village during such times as the recent bad weather. This may consist of clearing pavements, better access to the school and shop and having a call out system for owners of 4 x 4 vehicles to help. He asked if Councillors would encourage such a project and if the community based plan could be an extension of the PC's Emergency plan. The PC agreed to look at this.

**CLERKS REPORT:**

Clerk presented to the Council: East Sussex Local Access Forum, SALC Winter Bulletin, East Sussex Rural Forum Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March at Hailsham on ES Environment Strategy and Climate Change Strategy, NHS Important Changes to NHS ambulance services, NALC Local Council Awards 2010, Clerks and Councils Direct January 2010, Steps to Action School Travel Plan, Age Concern Help at Home leaflets, The Clerk January 2010, ESCC new publication regarding Transport and Environment, ESCC Transport and Environment Department summary of winter maintenance policy 2009/2010, Applause January to June events, Nottsport synthetic surfacing catalogue, AIRS Winter 2010 Village Hall Workshops, AIRS Rural priorities for 2010, Anchor leaflets.

News from the School: Head Teacher said she was pleased the way that people had rallied round in the bad weather to help the school function, including sending emergency closure messages on the internet and through text messages. Parent Consultations will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> of March and 15<sup>th</sup> March. Request for new PPTFA members to organise fund raising events. Request for old men's shirts for painting classes.

Clerk received letter from RVRC saying that regular meetings of this organisation would cease; they would continue to lobby LDC and ESCC as and when it was necessary and remain the Rural voice on LDC Local Strategic Partnership.

Letter from Barnados asking for a textile bank to be placed in Plumpton. ACTION: Clerk asked to write to say that this would conflict with the jumble sales held in the village, and also there was no space at the recycling unit.

Clerk reminded those who are involved in risk assessments on council property to ensure regular assessments take place.

Clerk asked if she could purchase a copy of the new Standing Orders from SALC. This was agreed.

Clerk will be taking a week's leave from the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March.

**Chairman**

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORM. THEY WILL BE RATIFIED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL AT THE MEETING ON 9<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2010.

**ABBREVIATIONS USED IN MINUTES:**

SDNP – South Downs National Park  
LDC – Lewes District Council  
ESCC – East Sussex County Council  
VOSS – Vale of Sussex Society  
EA – Environment Agency  
LCR – Local Councils Review  
ROW - Rights of Way  
MOP – Member of the Public  
SLR – Strengthening Local Relationships  
VMT – Village Maintenance Teams  
VAP – Village Action Plan  
RST – Road Safety Team  
PCSO – Police Community Support Officer  
SID – Speed Indicator Device  
SALC – Sussex Association of Local Councils  
AirS – Action in Rural Sussex  
NR – Network Rail  
EH – Environmental Health  
NTR – Nothing to Report  
OHP – Overhead Projector