



MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 13TH OCTOBER, 2009 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)
Mrs S Angel (SA)
Mrs K Wride (KW)
Mrs S Akers (SAA)
Mr R Stone (RS)
Mr T Thompsett (TT)
Mr S Green (SG)
Mr T Hawthorne
Mr N Satchell
PCSO S Knowles
Mr O St John
4 Members of the Public

APOLOGIES: None

MINUTES: SAA asked for an amendment on Page 6 under footpath should read bridge instead of stile.
RS challenged the minute regarding reporting in the press and said this was not what had been said. RT said he was entitled to do this, and asked what he wished to have reported. RS said he did not have a form of words to hand as to what he understood was said, but would produce one.
Clerk said she was unsure of procedure in such a case, but recommended that RT crossed out the contested minute and wrote next to it that it would be amended at the next PC meeting. She would check procedure with Mr Leggo on procedures, as this situation had not occurred before and she did not have her copy of Arnold Baker (Council procedures) with her to refer to.
RT then signed the minutes of the meeting on 8th September, 2009 as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING: Circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting: Also circulated was updates on recent legislation obtained from SALC website; Clerk would send this bi-monthly to Councillors.

Bevern Stream – Nothing heard from EA.

Police Speed Check signs: PCSO Knowles dropped these off to KW.

Dog fouling – LDC sent letter.

Graffiti on a bench at Black Cap: RS had reported this. LDC had given Clerk contact at National Trust who are responsible for the area and would remove the graffiti.

Parking in Chapel Road: PCSO Knowles does not believe there is a business being run from a property there, and as long as a vehicle is taxed and has the right to park where there are no restriction signs, then no law is broken.

PSCO cover: Sgt Theelke contacted Clerk to say it was not anticipated that there would be any cover for PCSO Whittaker Jones, but other PCSO's may be sent to assist PCSO Knowles if available.

Voluntary Driver Scheme: Mrs Nicholson had informed Clerk that £725 had been received from ESCC for this.

Mr Nicholson had suggested that the PC and VAP should work closer in their respective communications for the magazine to avoid potential duplication of events, and the possibility of the same thing being covered in the same month; this could improve the overall image of both parties.

Pit Stop: The building is becoming more and more dilapidated and Clerk has contacted LDC Planning and the Police. Planning are unable to do anything as the property is still owned by someone, and the Police cannot secure the property or intervene for the same reason unless a crime should take place there. PCSO Knowles has been to the property; there is evidence of someone being in there (bottles and debris) and a lot of paperwork which could be a fire hazard. Clerk has identified the owner of some of the paperwork and this has now been removed.

Clerk has contacted LDC Legal who have sent information on contacting the Probate Registry to ascertain who owns the property. PC are not responsible for this building but are actively trying to find the owner, as there have been complaints about the poor state of the property from residents in the village.

ACTION: Clerk requested to contact Probate Registry on behalf of the PC.

National Park – Clerk had circulated first edition of SDNP News to all Councillors.

Tree Planting - This was arranged for the 18th October, 2009 at 2pm and members of the Ridley and Moorhouse family were to be present. RT had arranged tea and biscuits in the Committee Room after the ceremony. The Malus tree (in memory of Keith Moorhouse) would be planted on the island bed in the car park and the Liquid Amber (in memory of Foye Ridley) would be planted by the village sign. Mr Beard would prepare the areas of planting. The plaques were discussed further and these would now be ordered. They would be on gold coloured metal with the names, years of the lives of Keith Moorhouse and Foye Ridley and an inscription 'Valued Member of the Community' on each one. They would be placed and secured in the ground under each tree at a later date.

Councillors were asked if they wish to comment any further on matters arising above. No further comments were made.

Agenda Items:

Budgets for 2010/2011 were discussed. Clerk gave all Councillors estimate forms for the coming year, with certain items of the budget that she had ascertained would have to rise, as a result of her enquiries into increase costs for services and subscriptions. Mr Satchell presented the Council with the draft budget for the Village Hall and TT the budget for the Playing Field.

Councillors then decided on those areas that needed consideration for the next financial year. The budget estimates are in draft form, and the full budget format would be available at the next parish council meeting on 10th November, 2009, when members of the public would be invited to make comments on any increases that have been recommended. The agenda for the next meeting would have an attached paper that would contain details of potential increases, and it was anticipated that these would also be reported in the parish magazine.

Clerk said that if the Council wished to gain POW status, the costs involved would have to be factored in to the budget for next year. It was thought that as there was no major project in mind for the immediate future, that it was not the time to pursue POW status. A vote was taken and all Councillors were in favour of this decision.

SANDPIT: Mr Nicholson had sent copies of Minutes of Meetings of Novington Sandpit Residents Committee on 21st May, 2009 and 17th September, 2009 for Councillors attention.

VALE OF SUSSEX SOCIETY: KW reported that Mr Baker MP had given his support to this, also LDC Councillor Sharon Davy. VOS has been awarded a grant from South Downs Sustainability Fund to produce a booklet containing walks, horse and cycle rides to and in and around the villages of the Eastern section of the SDNP.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: SAA reported that Mr Leggo had been very pleased with the Business Plan when it had been presented at a meeting with him recently. She felt all Councillors should go through it and a further meeting should be called to prepare it for adoption at a Parish Council meeting. Mr Leggo had praised SAA for her hard work, and she said KW also should be thanked for her help with it. This will be discussed by the PC only prior to the next PC meeting, 10th November, 2009 at 6.30 pm.

TT reported that Mr Avery was concerned about cycling down the paths by the Riddens causing a nuisance and potential danger to residents. It was thought that this could be unlawful.

ACTION: Clerk to contact LDC Legal for advice.

SG asked if a list of abbreviations used in the minutes could be added, as it could be confusing to the public who may not understand the abbreviations.

ACTION: Clerk will add this to be minutes.

FINANCE:

The balances at the end of September, 2009 were: Village Hall £6161.80, Playing Field £21,331.28 and Admin £9732.96. August balances:

Funds from the Estate of Mrs Foye Ridley had been received from the Solicitors dealing with probate. A new account in the name of Thomas Travers Trust would be set up with BW and SA as Trustees.

Clerk suggested that a higher rate account should be researched for Parish Council funds, within the guidelines permitted for depositing public funds. PC agreed that she should investigate this.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

A Draft Bus Strategy Consultation document had been sent from ESCC asking for views on their plans to improve bus services in East Sussex, enclosing a questionnaire.

ACTION: KW will complete questionnaire.

KW would attend conference on 27th November, 2009 run by ESCC on the Network Rail's Electrification, Kent and Sussex Route Utilisation Strategies (RUS's)

Mr Ramsay had resigned as representative for the East Coast Commuter Group; KW said her husband, Mr Andy Wride would be happy to replace him.

KW reported that Mr Baker MP had met Lord Adonis to discuss the local train service.

HIGHWAYS

MOP reported the verge opposite the Warren which has been badly churned up by builders lorries.

ACTION: Clerk to report this when builders have finished working on the property Temporary Prohibition of Traffic Order – Plumpton Level Crossing – 28-30th November, 2009. It had been observed that there were CCTV cameras at the station and also strips near the crossing and in view of this, Clerk had been asked to contact Network Rail to enquire what was the nature of the work to be carried out. She had contacted Highways and several departments of NR who all said it was routine maintenance.

Mr St John asked if the possibility of Plumpton signs on the B2116 and Plumpton Lane could be put on the agenda for the SLR meeting.

Mr St John also reported that Highways would be re-installing the missing posts from the Pit Stop.

RS reported that he had observed five cars were parked the wrong way in Station Road on the northbound carriageway. This problem had occurred in the past and PCSO Whittaker Jones had put polite notices on cars. PCSO Knowles said he would check with Traffic Division to see if anything further could be done.

ACTION: KW and RS as village correspondents were asked to put this in the Parish

Pump columns, asking residents to park their cars the right way during dark hours.
Mr Hawthorne sent on a communication to the Clerk on a format requesting items for VMT work the PC would like to have done; this format had already been sent earlier in the year by Highways and had been filled in and returned to them.
ACTION: Clerk to send the previous form again.
Mr Leggo had suggested that the PC investigate the use of speed guns (Speed Watch) as a possible measure for traffic calming; he suggested contacting the Ringmer Parish Clerk as there is a scheme running there.
Clerk had contacted organiser of the scheme who had given the following information:
8 years in Ringmer – radar gun has been on loan to them, but thought around £1000 to purchase now – Police have to give permission, designated locations, and comply with regulations – possibility that Ringmer may be able to do training, operators have to wear yellow vests – has been very successful in Ringer, reduced speed by 5-10 mph – reason to have it: school on road, narrow pavements for pedestrians and push chairs, speeding considered anti social behaviour.
Run by 25 volunteer operators – teams of 3 – roster system, 2-3 times a month for each operator – operated three times a week, morning, afternoon and evening, in daylight hours – main operator holds gun and other two take details of car registration, make, colour, time, speed. Those speeding reported to Police.
Offenders get two letters, and if Police catch offender speeding for the third time, (including being caught in another area) no caution is issued, and fine is then imposed.
PCSO Knowles understood that the cost of the speed gun was £3000, and needed calibrating over a couple of months. He said he would obtain more information about it. He said the SID was useful for information but the use of the gun was much better to stop speeding motorists. KW said that maybe the gun could be purchased in conjunction with other Councils for their use too. PCSO said it was overkill to have SID and the gun, people are getting smart to SID and not taking notice and were getting wise to it. SID results showed 60% of drivers go over 40mph in the 30 mph limit, one car was clocked as doing 49mph outside the vicarage on a school morning.
RT asked if the price of the gun included calibrating.
PCSO said he would let the Clerk know.
TT asked if the budget could be changed to accommodate this cost if it was decided to go ahead with the above scheme.
Clerk said that it would have to be factored in to the budget for next year by December 2009 to include this expense for 2010/2011.

ENVIRONMENT:

CE reported that she had purchased the bulbs at a cost of £45 which would be funded from S137; she asked volunteers for help in planting these.

FOOTPATHS:

Mrs Nicholson had reported to Clerk: Updates from ESCC on prioritisation of repairs to stiles following remapping project across the county.
Work still in progress on priority scheme; initial categorisation on all paths in East Sussex, each path given a hierarchy status; this is taking longer than expected but progress is being made. Problems on Paths 11a and 11b, this path has been classified as level 2 in hierarchy system: this is category of paths immediately behind the Promoted Routes so will receive a fairly high level of importance. Stiles requiring attention in this category in ES is 1000, 600m stiles needing replacement. This will take a while to resolve.

Response to PC's requests to ROW: Path 26 will be inspected and landowner will be contacted to repair stile.
Bridge on Green: not public footpath, so not ESCC ROW responsibility, but PC's as it is on PC owned land.
Path 11b – previously reported stiles too high; measurements have been taken, and although do slightly exceed the BS measurements, the difference is insignificant.
Clerk showed Council the pictures relating to the BS heights of stiles.
MOP sent copy e mail to ROW asking for confirmation that the pathway to East View Fields from the railway bridge is still awaiting maintenance team's attention.
Path 13a ROW advised MOP that inspection had taken place on this path and the estimated costs of repairs was far greater than expected, and as current financial year's surfacing budget has already been allocated, the path will have to be considered in

financial year 2010-2011; likely that path will remain closed for at least 12 months.
ACTION: Clerk to reiterate PC's concern regarding this path to ROW Officer.
SAA said she had received a call from a member of the VAP to looking into the possibility of a permissive accessible path from Strawlands to North Barns Lane. This would be an accessible route for those who are less able to use the footpath. The VAP are doing investigations, and the owner would have to be informed.
It was thought that a map of footpaths should be put on the website. There is a copy on the village hall board.
TT said he would do a map of footpaths for the website.

PLANNING AND HOUSING

The following applications have been granted:
LW/09/0733 Downs House, St Helena Lane, Plumpton. Erection of a single storey hay store .
LW/09/0778 Devon House, Station Road. Convert disused shop to residential and erection of a single storey rear extension.
Notice of Refusal: LW/09/0839 Land at Lentridge, Station Road. Erection of a four bedroom detached dwelling.

The following applications were considered:
LW/09/0981 Hackmans Farm, Plumpton Lane. Erection of a livestock building for Smiths Gore. The PC approved this application.
LW/09/1003 The Warren, Plumpton Lane. Enlargement of dormer window at side (amendment to planning approval LW/08/0023 – erection of detached dwelling with detached double car park). The PC approved this application.

KW sent a response to SDNP to ask for a 37 member board instead of 29 which would be broken down into 15 Principal Authority Members, 8 National Members and 15 Parish Council members; the current proposal is for only 8 Parish Council member (only two for the whole of East Sussex) which goes against current Government policy for community engagement at grass roots and would indicate a bottom up approach instead of top down.

BW – planning could be a problem using different planning authorities from the areas within the park. Mr Leggo said that the preferred option was that all planning was dealt with at LDC.

BW said she had noticed an increase in planning applications, presumably being done before the National Park becomes active in 2011.

KW said she had heard there was a council house in Southdowns which was vacant and asked whether residents are allowed to purchase council houses? She asked if the PC are able to find out whether those living in the village had priority for a council house?

Mr Hawthorne said that this system is not the same as before, they have to be on a list.

POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

SA reported from Trading Standards a warning to those leaving out clothes for reputable charity collectors; these are sometimes collected by commercial companies, repacked and sold elsewhere.

Trading Standards are working in partnership with Consumer Direct South East, and offer a range of advice; they can be contacted on 08454 040506. Update from District Commander: September 2009:- Crimes in area: 397 fewer victims (general), 107 fewer car crimes, 342 fewer damage reports (cars etc) and 76 fewer victims of violent crime. SA asked if thanks could be conveyed to PCSO Knowles who is working hard on his beat around Plumpton..

SA had contacted Mr Young regarding No Cold Calling Scheme, with information on a contact at Newick, who already have the scheme, but she had not heard from Mr Young.

SA had two incidents reported to her and she had told the person to report to the police. She requested that PCSO Knowles called and he responded straight away.

ACTION: Clerk to report his quick response and good work around the village to Chief Inspector.

CE mentioned concerns about the skatepark, as it appears that teenagers are coming in on the train and intimidating village children and younger children. She asked if the PCSO could patrol in the early evening and times when the skatepark was used most.

PCSO said he had received complaints about skateboarders using the road, and he had spoken to the offenders. There had been no further complaints, but they are now using the pavements. There is no law against skateboarding on roads, but it is inconsiderate. BW said she had seen intimidation going on when catching the train.

VILLAGE HALL:

RT reported that recent Jumble Sale had raised £860. Mr Satchell had been shown samples of acoustic panels as suggestions for replacements. Mr Satchell had prepared hire rates for next two years; an increase of 5% each year.

Cookers are deteriorating and need to be replaced; meeting with WI in near future to discuss this. Kitchen will eventually be improved. TT was thanked for giving VH four tables from PF; RT may purchase some wider ones, and new card tables.

Village Fair will take place on first Saturday in June 2010.

TT said he would paint pond signs.

SG had been asked for information as to location of VH. He will try to put a Google map on website.

PLAYING FIELD:

TT reported from meeting on 13th October: Next PF meeting, 20th October, 2009 at 7.30pm.

Basketball Court – planning decision expected very shortly, and if granted, it will be full steam ahead to get the project under way. If not successful, it is anticipated that the funds may have to be returned to Awards for All, which would be a great disappointment to the PF committee.

Play Area: revamping is still being discussed.

Car Park: TT has asked Drivepoint to carry out some repairs to surfacing at entrance and fill several of the worst potholes.

Cardboard Recycling: going well, more collections made by LDC. Area kept tidy but some people still leave cardboard when the bins are full.

Fire Precautions: work to be finalised and carried out.

Bookings: new rate for party bookings to be discussed and agreed for all hirers.

Skatepark: nothing heard from LDC Environmental who were monitoring noise.

Problems with rubbish still occurring, more prominent notices may have to be considered.

Electrical Test and Report: carried out, two minor problems with earthing; these will be done as soon as possible.

Water Charges: rather high. PFC will consider a meter.

Accounts: all outstanding accounts have been sent to respective groups.

Cricket season successful and hoped football will be equally successful. Facilities continue to be used and young people are enjoying organised matches and training.

A red car had been seen on the playing field, but this had now gone.

SAA said the 5mph signs had deteriorated on the track to the tennis club. She asked if the basal growth at the bottom of the trees along the concrete track could be cleared.

KW asked if a key for the outside toilet could be available. CE said it could not be open all the time, but in the holidays. Mr St John mentioned a radar key device so that certain groups could use the toilet.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications team had issued a statement regarding its aims and functions and the way forward for its operation, which had been circulated to all Councillors.

CE said that the intention was to mention the budget changes in the parish magazine, in readiness for the next PC meeting.

TT said that the magazine needs to be out before the meeting.

RS said that sometimes unavoidable things happen that make the magazine late, but the team would always try to add things.

VAP – any items not covered elsewhere

Team Leaders reports from 2nd September, 2009 had been circulated to all Councillors. VAP Constitution adopted at the Annual Meeting on 25th October, 2009 had been circulated to all councillors.

The following had been sent to the PC for noting:

Festive Box Scheme – idea is to showcase products available locally and encourage people to be more aware of local skills and available resources; will be self financing, so no cost for VAP or PC.

First Aid Training for Voluntary Drivers: Proposal to find appropriate first aid training

under Voluntary Driver Scheme. Costs will be fully covered by £400 grant from South Downs Council for Voluntary Service.

VAP Youth team had met on the 12th October and they are sorting out the group with Carol Turner, the leader.

CE asked if the Youth Forum could be used as a doorway to try to solve some of the problems at the skatepark.

Mr Hawthorne said the Youth Forum meet every two weeks and a Youth Worker had been employed to work with them.

BW said that she had used the Voluntary Driver Scheme and it works well.

Ditchling surgery had taken away weekly bookings.

TT said he would be attending the AIRS Conference at Ardingly on the 6th November, and asked if he should take any PC material with him.

Clerk advised that maybe he could take a sheet to put up on a board about the achievements of the PC in recent years, proposals for the future, and be on hand to answer any questions that may be asked of him.

A discussion took place as a result of a member of the VAP Road Safety Team asking why certain questions arising from a meeting between the VAP RST and the PC representative, had not been answered by the PC's Highways representative, a Statement of Understanding that had been discussed at this meeting and the VAP RST had asked for this not be sent out before it had been produced in its final form, but it had been sent to Parish Councillors after the meeting. It appeared that both parties had differing views on certain highway matters including traffic calming and data collection for this. To try to come to an understanding between the two parties, it was decided that the PC should have a meeting of Councillors to discuss a way forward and an agreement on how the VAP and PC could work together in the future on these issues. This would be on 2nd November, 2009, and the results of the discussions would then be brought to the Parish Council meeting on 10th November, 2009. RT said he was willing to go to VAP RST meetings in the future.

Chairman

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORM. THEY WILL BE RATIFIED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL AT THE MEETING ON 10th NOVEMBER, 2009.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN MINUTES:

EA – Environment Agency

ESCC – East Sussex County Council

LCR – Local Councils Review

LDC – Lewes District Council

MOP – Member of the Public

PCSO – Police Community Support Officer

ROW - Rights of Way

RST – Road Safety Team

SDNP – South Downs National Park

SID – Speed Indicator Device

SLR – Strengthening Local Relationships

VAP – Village Action Plan

VMT – Village Maintenance Teams

VOSS – Vale of Sussex Society