



MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 10TH NOVEMBER, 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 P Ramsay
Mr K Speirs
Mr P Nicholson
Mrs D Westgate
Mr O St John

APOLOGIES: None

MINUTES: RS requested that the following amendment be added to the minutes of the September meeting 2009: ' RT raised the matter of comments written in the Sussex Express by RS, saying that they were against the rules. RS refuted this even though told that they also applied to KW. RT said he would take advice from Mr Leggo.'
SG asked for amendment to Abbreviations: should read Police Community Support Officer.
The Minutes of the Meeting on 13th October, 2009 were signed as a true record.
The Minutes of a Planning Meeting on 24th October, 2009 were signed as a true record.

The Business Plan was discussed prior to the meeting. A draft had been produced, and it was decided to have a document with photographs of the village incorporating a format of text from the draft that had already been produced. A sub committee was set up: SAA would lead on this, RS and SG would be on the committee. KW said she would be willing to help with the layout. RS said he would take photographs.

Budget: A discussion took place and additions to the first draft of the estimates for 2010/2011 were to be: £750 for electrical testing as part of maintenance at the Playing Field, £400 for printing the Business Plan and £500 for a Highway budget. The second draft would be prepared and ratified at the December PC meeting, after which the precept amount request would be sent to LDC. The allotment rents would be increased to £25 and £30 (for the larger one) – allotment holders would be informed. There had been some discussion about possibly having another PCSO, or sharing one with another village. This would have to be factored into the budget if it was to be considered for the next financial year. Clerk had been asked to find out cost of this. Ringmer pays approximately 40% of the cost of an extra PCSO. PC decided that this would not be included in the next financial year but would be discussed further for the future.

Mr Ramsay asked why the budget was not being cut – what about the grants to the VH and PF being cut?

TT – there are a lot of maintenance done voluntarily at the PF. The floor is to be replaced and the Cricket Club and Football Club may contribute to this. The PF committee are looking at reducing the bills, installing a water meter, and cheaper electricity (when the current contract with EDF ends) – time clocks have been installed.

MATTERS ARISING:

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

ROW – Path 13s is on the list requiring major resurfacing works. The list is prioritised annually and the top priority paths are allocated a portion of the surfacing budget for the following financial year. ROW will put this footpath forward as a top priority in the area.

Pit Stop - Probate Registry did not have an entry for last known owner. The property is an eye sore, and LDC (Legal, Planning and Environmental Health) have all been approached to see if they could do something about it. They were unable to help as there was no documented owner. Letter from Mr Holden reiterating his concern on the state of the building. Clerk had acknowledged this

Clerk had contacted Crowborough Town Council about information regarding compulsory purchase, but as there is no information on the current owner, this probably would not be the answer.

OSTJ – the only way is adverse possession – this takes ten years.

ACTION: Clerk to contact LDC Legal, Planning and Environmental Health to see if building could be boarded up and any further advice on how to proceed with this problem.

Cycling – Riddens - PCSO had informed Clerk that cycling is illegal down paths, and there is a fixed penalty of £30. The sign in Riddens Lane is not clear. Clerk had contacted LDC and they were to erect new signs either side of the path.

PCSO - District Commander Carron had acknowledged the praise sent by PC for PCSO Knowles. PCSO Knowles had expressed his thanks.

Planning Training – LDC planning training session on 10th December to discuss Development Management and Local Development Framework Progress Report. KW and BW are to attend.

Recycling – Mr Hawthorne had sent Clerk information to say that some rural properties would be having the collection points of their boxes changed and those affected would be contacted.

South Downs Questionnaire - SAA had filled this in and a reply had been received saying the information was very useful in shaping their future work and that of the National Park.

No further comments were made on Matters Arising.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: BW – potholes in Barnfield.

ACTION: Clerk to report to Highways.

RS – VAP are intending to put boards in the village so that village clubs and societies can advertise their events, instead of having notices on telegraph poles and trees.

Most of these would be on private land, two would be on highway land, and it was understood that these would need a licence from Highways. The boards would be paid for and maintained by VAP – sites under consideration are the end of East View Fields by the sign and the Half Moon layby. The PC would be asked to be the licensee.

ACTION: RS to ask VAP steering committee to come to PC with proposals.

TT – Pavilion board is damaged – cork inside is wet. PF committee will deal with this.

KW – information sent regarding Fuel Poverty workshops. Also SALC courses available – anyone interested to ask for what type of training they would benefit from.

RS – training courses appear to cost a lot of money.

AGENDA ITEMS:

SANDPIT: Mr Nicholson said things were very quiet.
KW – Lib Dem flyer says that there has been success in stopping lorries coming through the village.
Mr Nicholson said that this comment in the flyer was not strictly accurate.

SG – does the Sandpit still require numbers of vehicles etc?
RT – authorities don't really do anything with them.

VALE OF SUSSEX SOCIETY: Wivelsfield PC has taken on the Slow Down Share the Road scheme. .

ES and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Development Framework – Waste and Minerals Core Strategy – consultation on preferred strategy –
Mr Nicholson said that the Novington Sandpit was the only soft sand pit in East Sussex. The consultation was due to end on 2nd December and could be done on line. He said Mr Dudman will probably ask for an extension beyond 2017, and it was thought ESCC will approve it again.
Mr Nicholson suggested an initial response first and then response as a PC – he will send PC comments. It was hoped that lorries would not be driving through the village during school times.
RT – ESCC authority should enforce the rules for the Sandpit.

FINANCE:

The balances at the end of September, 2009 were: Village Hall £7192.06, Admin £8932.76, Playing Field £21,041.84. Clerk still in negotiation with Barclays Bank over signature mandate form – many conversations with BB for a resolution and have now a dedicated Complaints Officer to deal with this – she had credited Admin Account with £50 as a gesture of goodwill because of the unresolved situation dating back six months. Clerk had obtained details of Halifax investments suitable for Parish Councils.
ACTION: These investment accounts will be discussed at the December meeting.
FWAG Membership: PC decided that they did not want to continue membership for the next year.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

KW reported that the Voluntary Driver Scheme would be filmed in action shortly. Southern Railway timetable up to December 2010 was out for consultation. KW had asked in the Mid Sussex Times column that anyone who wished to respond to this should write to Southern or contact the Clerk. There are concerns that people are to having to stand on the London Bridge trains.

Road Closure: For essential maintenance – Plumpton Level Crossing closed from 0025 22nd December to 0500 22nd December, 2009.

PC had been alerted that road closure in November could be for barriers to be changed.

Clerk had contacted three people in NR and one in Southern who all said it was routine track maintenance.

RT – this had been brought up some years ago, and it was fought as residents did not want it, and it was stopped; this was for a half barrier, which was thought not safe and that a full barrier should be installed.

Mr Speirs said that the village were against full barriers and they supported the retention of the present barriers. Any changes should be discussed with the public.

The gates could be listed, as the Signal Box is.

ACTION: Clerk to check if gates are listed.

Mr Ramsay suggested that a letter should go to Network Rail asking them to clarify what was being done during November, and is it their intention to replace the gates – if so, would this require planning permission.

The gates have been around since the 20th century – there is nobody around to maintain these types of gates anymore.

HIGHWAYS

Plumpton Lane: sealing of joints around patches: LDC – not normally done due to position of joint in respect of wheel track lane. Patching completed on carriageway will not cause any possible issues regarding poor skid resistance on overbanded area. Section on Plumpton Lane will be put in 2010/11 programme to receive a microasphalt surface, though programme is subject to change.

Councillors had met to discuss the Road Safety Strategy and a draft form had been produced; this had been shown to ESCC at the SLR meeting. There is a further draft with additions and this will be discussed at the December meeting. ESCC asked at the SLR meeting if the PC could forward any information on parking issues.

CE – NR would not put down tarmac on their land for parking, as it requires lighting. Communications with NR by the PC enquiring if there was any land that could potentially be used for parking had proved fruitless, and NR said there was no land available for this purpose.

KW – Mr Saunders ESCC had given the PC details of potential tree problems overhanging the highway on rural roads. Trees are the responsibility of the land owner if they are on private land. KW said she would include these details in her Mid Sussex Times column, RS would put it in the Sussex Express and they would be put in the magazine.

There were several trees in the parish that had been reported to PC as possibly being a danger and letters, using the guidelines set out by ESCC, would be sent to relevant land owners.

Mr Ramsay said he had seen in the PC parish magazine article that 'speeding has been proved to represent a major hazard', and enquired where was the information obtained from.

RS – statistics from SID

Mr Ramsay – where are these statistics put down – nothing has been issued to prove this? They have not been published.

RS – statistics have been put out by the VAP.

SG – I was concerned about the article, it was not appropriate and scaremongering, the situation is made to look worse than it is.

SAA – speeding is perceived only.

SG – it does not say that in the article.

KW – PC has asked VAP RST to get data.

SG – it must be seen that the PC are trying to prove this, the facts must be right.

KW – thought she should see items about Highways, as Highways Chairman, before they go in the magazine.

RS – lots of minor things happening – people are concerned about speeding.

RT – the communications team are a new thing and BW and I look at the article to approve it – perhaps there should be another way to review this.

CE – it is good to have feed back on what was written

ENVIRONMENT

SAA – noticed that there is a secure container unit in the Riddens car park – what is it doing there? There is a toilet too. Are LDC doing work there? She was not sure how they got in there as there are problems with the key.

Dual purpose dog bins – discussed at LDC conference in October.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Mr Bryce LDC.

FOOTPATHS:

Clerk received letter from Monday Group explaining their services for stile maintenance to be forwarded to VAP . ACTION: Clerk to forward to Mr Hawthorne.

PLANNING AND HOUSING

The following application have been granted:
LW/09/0831 All Saints Church, Station Road. Demolition of redundant chimney stack.
The following application was considered:
LW/09/1145 43 East View Fields. Conversion of garage to bedroom for Mr Gilbert.
PC approved this application.
Letter from SALC enclosing Nomination Paper for town, parish and meeting representatives for National Park. Councillors felt they were unable to give three days a month as representatives on the NP Authority Board, and had decided not to send in nomination form.
Hamsey PC Planning Workshop by Planning Aid planned for early 2010, asking if Councillors would be interested to attend.
ACTION: Clerk to respond that BW, KW, TT and SAA would be interested in attending.
LDC letter regarding Scrutiny Review of Section 106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission.
Councils invited to express views on this scheme.
ACTION: Clerk to ask if S106 could include other facilities in village, including ones for the elderly, and whether the public should be involved in how the money is spent.
Clerk to check that current S106 funds awarded to Plumpton (Smithys Close) would not be affected retrospectively to any changes made to this scheme in the light of the review.
BW reported on the LDC conference at held at Plumpton College in October.
It was reported at the conference that LDC are losing money on several areas of their income, except car parking. They are considering cutting bus passes, and a reduction in grants being awarded.
PC had asked about election costs and these were being looked into.

POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

SA said she had received information of spoof e mails from the Inland Revenue, informing people that they had overpaid or owed money.
The Police had reported that there had been no problems at the Lewes Bonfire night.
Two teenage girls from Plumpton had reported that they had been followed – an investigation was going on; there may have been another similar incident.
There had also been a recent house burglary.

VILLAGE HALL:

Village Hall outside noticeboard: SAA reported that the Perspex needed replacing. Mr Botterill has some Perspex that could be used. SAA would contact Mr Gamble to ask if he could replace the broken Perspex.
CE enquired about the heater in the committee room. RT said it cost about £60-£70
Mr St John said he was concerned about the stage as it could be a potential hazard if anyone were to fall off the edge. He recommended that a barrier was put up.
RT – will talk to the VH committee about this.

PLAYING FIELD:

TT – next meeting on 11th November, 2009. Basket Ball court – planning permission has been granted and anticipated that a decision will be made to replace a contract at meeting on 11/11/09 This will be paid for in full by grant awarded and additional fencing will be paid for from existing resources.
Repairs to changing room floor will be discussed at meeting.
Replacement windows to be considered and hoped that the major share of this will be funded from money raised by fund raising.
Problem with litter still continues; more signage to be put in Skatepark.
Investigation for a water meter taking place.
Mrs Barrell actively looking in the feasibility of a new pavilion and using input from users and other interested parties.
Entrance to car park has been repaired and large potholes filled in.,
Hiring rate for outside parties is to be based on charges for small hall in the Village Hall.
Problem of more 'mature' young people using the skatepark and these could be from other villages; causing a problem to the younger element who use the park.

Clerk had contacted Fields in Trust about pending basketball court – they require a plan only, and as it is a facility for the public to use, no further action is required from them.

COMMUNICATIONS

KW – what is happening about the Councillor's profiles?

RS – it is in hand.

SG – understand that from the magazine that there is a method of recording accidents, by putting details in an accident box at the shop.

KW – this will be put back when the shop refurbishments have been completed.

It was not thought that this method of reporting would be a true indication of what accidents were taking place. Were accidents actually reported? There have been several at the Half Moon junction that have not been reported, even though emergency services and at one time, a helicopter, attended the scene of an accident.

ACTION: Clerk asked to contact Mark Dunn to ask if a questionnaire could be available for people to fill in and put in the box.

VAP – any items not covered elsewhere

No reports had been received.

TT attended the AirS and SALC AGM at Ardingly on 6/11/09. PC had shared a stand with the VAP. Stand well put together display based on one at recent VAP AGM.

Specific section about PC facilities, VH and PF.

Stand was well attended with a variety of interested parties (other PC's Clerks etc) showing an interest in setting up and continuing progress for the VAP. Several wanted to know the connection with PC and VAP and TT said he was honest in saying that this had not been easy but there had been changes and it was now a lot better.

TT said it was interesting to hear how other PC's raise money for large projects, including PWLB loans, and grants from the Lottery and Viridor. Good way to provide new facilities and to spread cost over some years. AirS have village hall teams to help with fund raising.

Councillors were encouraged, during a discussion on training, to attend courses as it is essential to keep up with current trends. Possible lack of Plumpton's past interest in two groups hosting the event; involvement with other Councils could be a good way of sorting out 'our own problems'.

CLERKS REPORT:

Clerk presented to the Council: Homemove brochures and information, ES Fire and Rescue In Partnership magazine, AIRS Newsletter October, 2009, The Clerk Journal November 2009, Lewes District Leisure Facilities Mapping, District Link Autumn 2009, East Sussex Passenger Transport Map, Sussex County Playing Fields Association Annual Reports and Accounts 2008-2009.

Letters of thanks from Mrs Diana Ridley and Mrs Edith Moorhouse after the tree planting in memory of Foye and Keith. Both were very appreciative and felt the event was a fitting tribute. It had been a fine day, and the PC were thanked for providing the tea afterwards. Clerk showed PC the format for the plaques which were now being made. These would be mounted on wood with ground fixing brackets.

News from the School: Schools Grounds Action Day took place on 17thm October, bulb planting and general maintenance - request for return of baskets for those who won Christmas hampers last year. Governors: LA Governors: Peter Clark and Janet Anthony. Parent Governors: Janice McBrown (Chair) Phil Ashworth (Vice Chair) and Neil Metcalfe. Community Governors: Denise Hall and Julie Russell. Staff Governors Annie Rogers (Headteacher), David Johns (Teacher) and Gill Sutton (Support Staff). Cleaner required 21 hours at week, salary £12,235 pro rata (contact school for details) Film afternoon took place on 16th October.

CE – the grounds committee at the school have said they have some surplus trees. Does the PC want them?

PC agreed to have them, subject to suitability.

LDC – letter new website for Town and Parish conference presentations:

<http://www.lewes.gov.uk/news/15934.asp>

Electronic Banking: E mail from SALC asking PC's who they bank with and if they are

being charged more or being pressurised into using electronic banking (VAT is a particularly problem with this). Clerk had responded to questions.
SALC e mail – asking if any members had used the Clean Neighbourhood Act, and if so, what effect this had had.

Letter from JAIP Project Officer ESCC asking for places where information leaflets on NHS and their services could be put in addition to those listed. PC suggested Village Halls, Village Notice Boards, Shops, Public Houses.

Letter from Anchor – independent living service East Sussex asking if PC would be able to provide a 'safe environment' to talk to people who may be interested in their scheme. PC agreed in principle.

ACTION: Clerk to write for more details and where this service would be advertised.

Mr St John asked about whether there had been any reply to his request for a Plumpton sign on the B2116 from Highways.

ACTION: Clerk to ask Mr Johnson, Highways.

Mr St John mentioned the Lewes Forum, an on-line way in which people could discuss things of interest in a village, and he thought this could be done in Plumpton.

CE – could that idea be forwarded to the VAP Communications Team.

ACTION: Mr Nicholson said he would do this..

Chairman

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORM. THEY WILL BE RATIFIED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL AT THE MEETING ON 8th DECEMBER,, 2009.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN MINUTES:

AirS – Action in Rural Sussex
EA – Environment Agency
ESCC – East Sussex County Council
LCR – Local Councils Review
LDC – Lewes District Council
MOP – Member of the Public
NR – Network Rail
PCSO – Police Community Support Officer
ROW - Rights of Way
RST – Road Safety Team
SALC – Sussex Association of Local Councils
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