

# ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

## CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

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## Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006 in the War Memorial Hall, Alfriston, commencing at 7.30pm.

**Present:** Cllr G. Knights, Chairman, in the Chair  
Cllr A. Banham  
Cllr Mrs S. Charlton  
Cllr A. Lloyd  
Cllr D. Monteath-Wilson

**In attendance:** County Councillor J. Garvican  
PC Ben Blackman  
15 parishioners  
P. Ayers Clerk

Cllr Knights opened the meeting and explained that due to the interest shown in the planning application at White Lodge Hotel, consideration of both applications scheduled for later in the evening would be deferred to allow more time for parishioners to make their views known to Councillors. The Planning Committee would now consider the two applications on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October [*updating note: commencing at 7.30pm in the United Reformed Church Hall*]. Secondly, he pointed out that amplification equipment was being used, as requested at the previous meeting, although there was only one lapel microphone at present. He would canvass opinion at the end of the meeting before exploring options.

### Public Questions

1. Mr Phillips complained about damage being caused already to the Tye by cars driving onto it and parking near to the Hall. It was accepted that blue badge holders could park there, but there appeared to be a few serial offenders. An exchange of views took place including a request for the provision of a parking area on the Tye. Cllr Banham pointed out that the Parish Council was only the Trustee for the Tye and did not own it, so any changes would have to be referred again to the Charity Commission, who had rejected the idea once already. It was agreed to monitor the condition of grass on the Tye over the winter months.

### 636.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Apps and Kegg, whose reasons for absence were recorded in the Attendance Register, and were accepted as valid by Councillors. [*updating note: District Cllr Whitehead extended belated apologies due to a family bereavement*].

### 637.0 MINUTES

637.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2006 had been published and circulated previously. They were taken as read, and there were no amendments. Acceptance as a true record was **proposed** by Cllr Mrs Charlton, **seconded** by Cllr Monteath-Wilson and **all agreed**. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

**The meeting was suspended to allow a presentation to take place.**

### PC Ben Blackman, Neighbourhood Policing Constable, Sussex Police

The Chairman welcomed PC Blackman, who reported on the restructuring exercise started early in 2006 to address the concerns of rural areas after a review 5 years earlier. This had created his current post, although he had fulfilled a similar role around Heathfield throughout most of his long

career. The PCSO for the Alfriston area had left to train as a regular PC, leaving just two currently in the area, with more due out of training soon. The Government had stated that it would make available sufficient funding to enable one PCSO to be appointed to cover every two District wards by 2008. Despite problems with the non emergency telephone number at present, which PC Blackman acknowledged, he urged members of the public to use it to report crime, because otherwise the Police had no means of knowing that a problem had arisen. He answered a range of questions from the floor covering Neighbourhood Watch, and enforcement of weight limits. He stressed that the lower manpower levels in the police force today meant that matters had to be prioritised, citing three fatal accidents over the previous weekend, which had stretched the Traffic Division's resources.

The Chairman thanked PC Blackman for his presentation.

**The meeting was re-convened.**

### **638.0 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Garvican had e-mailed the papers from his NHS meeting to the Clerk, who in turn had made them available to Councillors.

Public Meetings to update stakeholders about the proposals concerning the future provision of services at our local hospitals were being held shortly at three venues across the County, but it was clear that they were to be implemented in the next financial year, and news from across the country showed that this was an increasingly important issue in many areas of England.

Cllr Banham asked about the proposed composting facility proposed at Whitesmith, where the local Parish Council was seeking the support of others. Cllr Garvican had visited a similar but smaller facility in France at his own expense together with representatives from that Council. He described that facility, which was about half the size proposed for Whitesmith. He felt that such a development was unwarranted in a rural environment, and if granted, it would be difficult to object to further industrial development in the area, since the proposal was for a factory producing compost. The application had been due for consideration on 25<sup>th</sup> October, but the applicant had withdrawn it to allow more time to clarify landscaping and other legal challenges.

### **639.0 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

There was no report, in the unavoidable absence of Cllr Whitehead.

### **640.0 RIGHTS OF WAY & COUNTRYSIDE**

#### **640.1 Post on glebeland**

The Clerk had approached ESCC and a meeting with Cllr Monteath-Wilson was being arranged.

#### **640.2 Beachy Head Marathon**

Notification had been received about the Beachy Head Marathon on 28<sup>th</sup> October. The arrangements for marshals and clearing up were similar to those which had been adequate in previous years, and were accepted.

#### **640.3 South Downs draft Management Plan**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson recommended acceptance of the draft proposal, which she saw as comprehensive. She **proposed** acceptance in principle, which was **seconded** by Cllr Lloyd and agreed unanimously.

#### **640.4 Horse Chestnut in Market Square**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson had met Mr Green, the Tree Surgeon, on site together with the Tree Warden and a County Council representative. She had only received the report that afternoon, but it confirmed that the tree was now a safety hazard and should be felled without delay. Mr Green had quoted a price of £1,832 (ex VAT) for removal and clearance, and a further £699 (ex VAT) for provision and planting of a replacement tree in the same planting season. All members expressed their sadness at the news, but accepted the need for urgent action in view of the risks involved. The Clerk pointed out that Standing Orders, which required three written tenders, could be waived in the circumstances. Cllr Monteath-Wilson therefore **proposed** that Standing Orders be waived, and Mr Green be instructed to remove the Horse Chestnut at his earliest convenience. This was **seconded** by Cllr Lloyd and **agreed reluctantly** by all Councillors. Cllr Monteath-Wilson also **proposed** that a Public

Meeting was convened at an early date to brief Parishioners and hear evidence about the suitability of two recommended alternative native replacements – a lime tree or an oak tree. Replacement with another horse chestnut was not recommended due to infections and its increasing unsuitability if global warming continued. *[this was subsequently arranged for Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November in the War Memorial Hall commencing at 7.30pm].*

She also suggested that parishioners were given the opportunity of donating, or contributing towards the replacement tree, with a list of all subscribers retained for posterity in the same way that the Horse Chestnut had been donated as a sapling. In any case, she accepted the importance of planting the replacement tree early in 2007, and finally suggested an approach to ESCC to ensure that the flint retaining wall was re-instated after the new tree had been planted.

## **641.0 THE TYE**

### **641.1 Display of Bye Laws**

A single A4 size notice had been approved, and Cllr Kegg would be asked to arrange for it to be manufactured and mounted.

### **641.2 Fence posts on Tye**

A report was awaited from Cllr Kegg.

### **641.3 Drinking Fountain**

Mr Trowell had made temporary repairs, and following a discussion with the Clerk would proceed with a more permanent job.

### **641.4 Damage to Mine**

It was reported that Cllr Kegg had arranged for the repair to be carried out at the offenders' expense.

### **641.5 Resident's request for reserved parking**

A local resident had requested that consideration was given to reserving some spaces on the Tye Road for the exclusive use of residents on payment of an annual fee, in a similar way to the Dene spaces. Members expressed concern on the practical ground that posts and chains, necessary to give exclusivity, would extend into the road narrowing it to such an extent that problems with the refuse vehicle would recur. There was also the possibility of the limited number of such spaces being used by residents to enhance the value of their own adjacent property, which would put the Council, as Trustee into conflict with the Charity Commission. For those reasons, the request was declined, and the Clerk would explain the circumstances to the correspondent.

## **642.0 TOURISM**

### **642.1 Village of the Year competition**

Cllr Mrs Charlton had circulated the judges reasons for the results [Alfriston being unsuccessful this year], but these had not yet appeared on the website. The Clerk would check that it had been sent. Cllr Mrs Charlton would provide feed-back to Action in rural Sussex, as requested.

### **642.2 Car Park Map**

The Clerk would follow up the absence of the map with the officer responsible as the board was starting to be used by fly posters.

## **643.0 ALLOTMENTS**

### **643.1 Allotment competition**

Cllr Banham reported that the results of the competition had been announced, but he had been unable to contact the winner, so that presentation of the Shield had been deferred. The Clerk was sending a copy of the judges comments to all allotment holders, and the winners were: 1<sup>st</sup> – Plot 23 Mr Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Plot 9 Mr and Mrs West, 3<sup>rd</sup> – Plot 12A Miss Wilde.

### **643.2 Removal of waste area**

The mound had been cleared and Cllr Banham asked the Clerk to thank the contractor for his diligence in cleaning up The Furlongs of mud after completion of the work. In the process of the work, a concrete post adjacent to the Surgery had been damaged, but Mr Trowell had replaced this with a metal one, which it was hoped would be acceptable to Dr Adcock. A skip would be provided alongside the new half plot for the disposal of allotment waste. The

resulting additional half plot had now been let, and there was no longer a waiting list for allotments.

## **644.0 CAR and COACH PARKS**

### **644.1 Proposed revisions to the 'A' permit system**

Cllr Lloyd apologised that pressure of work was still delaying progress.

### **644.2 Dene Spaces – posts**

Cllr Mrs Charlton suggested that the posts should be painted white to make them more visible. The Clerk suggested reflective material as an alternative, since it would be easier to maintain in good condition. This was agreed.

### **644.3 Litter and vegetation**

Wealden operatives had paid three visits since July, and there was now a new arrangement with the Community Punishment team, so that people sentenced in that way were being used for such tasks. It was expected that visits would now be made every six to eight weeks to ensure good clearance. The drain in the Dene car park had now been cleared. Cllr Mrs Charlton also thanked the car park attendants for their efforts to keep the areas tidy. Cllr Lloyd asked that the litter bins were re-marked to make them more visible. Cllr Monteath-Wilson had reviewed the sign for the Cuckmere Way, and would ask the South Downs Joint Committee to arrange remedial work.

### **644.4 Lighting to attendants' hut**

The Clerk was asked to establish the reason why an electricity supply could not be provided for the hut. In the meantime, arrangements were being made to purchase a battery powered light, and also a heater for the winter months.

## **645.0 FINANCE**

### **645.1 Invoices for payment – October**

The Clerk presented invoices for payment in October:

#### **ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL**

	£
Clerk: admin and travel	40.67
wages	333.33
Inland Revenue	150.70
HM Revenue & Customs – VAT for second quarter	1,107.42
Trowell Building Co – netting for rear of goalmouth	1,489.90
Trowell Building Co – repairs to drinking fountain and manhole cover	278.47
Trowell Building Co – fencing, clearance and seat repairs	467.65
One2One Waste Solutions – allotment clearance	411.25
Smiths of Derby Ltd – clock maintenance	177.43
EDF Energy – clock	6.47
Mrs J.A. Knights – contribution to Festival presentations & celebrations	47.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>4,511.09</u></b>

#### **CUCKMERE VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

P. Ayers – wages	121.21
Inland Revenue	54.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>176.01</u></b>

#### **WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

P. Ayers – wages	113.34
C. Burden – wages	238.00
D. Skertchly – wages	379.37
Inland Revenue	246.07
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>976.78</u></b>

Payments were **approved** on the **proposal** of Cllr Knights, **seconded** by Cllr Lloyd. An additional payment was approved at Minute 647.4 below.

### **645.2 Discretionary payments**

The Clerk reminded members that S137 Discretionary payments were usually considered at the October meeting, and outlined payments made in the previous year, together with

additional requests received during the current year. The current year's budget had remained at £500. Members agreed to maintain most payments and to increase that to Alfriston Pre School group as follows:

	£
United Reformed Church	90.00
Sunday School	60.00
St Andrew's Church	60.00
Cuckmere Community Bus	60.00
War Memorial Hall	60.00
Alfriston Pre School	40.00
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	35.00
Seaford Citizens' Advice Bureau	<u>35.00</u>
	<u>440.00</u>

Additional requests had been received from Wealden CAB, Cuckmere Flood Forum (for £100), and from The Alfriston Group of the Alfriston and Cuckmere Valley Partnership. As a payment had been agreed for Seaford CAB, the Wealden request would not be accepted. Rather than make a cash payment to the Flood Forum, Councillors chose to offer equivalent facilities without charge. As the Alfriston Group was not a charitable organisation, the Parish Council would not make a payment under the discretionary arrangements, but would seek further clarification from the Group/Partnership with a view to some form of assistance which was of benefit to the village as a whole.

Payments were approved on the **proposal** of Cllr Knights, **seconded** by Cllr Lloyd, and **agreed unanimously**.

#### **645.3 Statement of Finances**

Councillors examined the Statement of Bank Balances on 15<sup>th</sup> October provided by the Clerk, and accepted them as follows:

	£
Precept deposit account	28,453.00
Current account	6,073.78
Savings account	5,116.85
Car Park Account	<u>11,184.83</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>50,828.46</u></b>

#### **646.0 HIGHWAYS and TWITTENS**

##### **646.1 Directional signs to Tye and Churches**

ESCC had declined to replace the post. The intervention of Cllr Garvican would be sought, as the response was regarded as unhelpful.

Cllr Kegg was still to approach the owner of Twytten House to ascertain if he might agree to a sign being placed on the side wall, now that building renovation work had been completed.

##### **646.2 'A' Boards**

Cllr Mrs Charlton had met Mr Guyton of ESCC and was awaiting his proposal.

##### **646.3 Paviers**

Wealden's Conservation Officer had just referred the Clerk to the Wealden Community Grants scheme, where the next closing date for applications was 30<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr Mrs Charlton would submit an application. A date for laying of the new paviers would be sought from ESCC.

##### **646.4 Speed management in East Sussex**

Cllr Mrs Charlton was reviewing the new arrangements and would report further in November.

##### **646.5 Bonfires**

Cllr Mrs Charlton asked the Clerk to remind parishioners of the dangers caused by smoke from bonfires drifting across roads and reducing visibility.

#### **647.0 OUTSIDE BODIES**

##### **647.1 Cuckmere Community Bus**

The organisation was seeking charitable company status to take it forward. The Michelham and Middle Farm Rambler service would be withdrawn for the winter period from 22<sup>nd</sup>

October. A new service, numbered 25, was being introduced on Saturdays only from 28<sup>th</sup> October. The service would connect in Alfriston with the 126 to and from Seaford and then follow the weekday 125 service, serving Charleston Farmhouse additionally in the afternoons.

CCB was investigating the conversion of one bus to run on locally produced bio-diesel. Electronic ticket machines were due to be introduced in the near future with funding support from ESCC.

#### **647.2 Festival**

Presentations had been made recently to long serving Committee Members who had stood down in the last year. A contribution had been made on behalf of the Parish Council.

#### **647.3 Flood Forum**

The Chairman had reflected on his discussions with Cuckmere Valley Parish Council, and concluded that Alfriston should maintain its present stand to ensure that effective measures were in place to provide the best protection for the village. He had queried whether the proposed raising of the banks to the south of the village, could increase the body of water being pushed up stream towards Alfriston.

#### **647.4 HeartStart**

All 12 local volunteers had now completed their training, and a small function had been arranged on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November to celebrate their achievements and present certificates. Cllr Knights **proposed** and Cllr Monteath-Wilson **seconded** a motion to contribute £50 towards the provision of refreshments for that evening. **All agreed.**

#### **647.5 Village Hall Committee**

Current plans included an upgrade of the oven and provision of a large American style refrigerator. A website had been constructed.

### **648.0 PARISH CLERK**

#### **648.1 Charter 88 response**

The Clerk had researched the matter on the internet and concluded that the need for lobbying had passed.

#### **648.2 District/Parish Conference – 1<sup>st</sup> November**

The Clerk had invited attendance at the annual conference, to be held in Uckfield this year. No volunteer had come forward, and accordingly, it seemed that the Parish would not be represented.

#### **648.3 Invitation from South Downs Joint Committee**

Two Councillors would attend the briefing session with the Joint Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

#### **648.4 Attendance at AirS and SALC AGMs**

The Council had not been represented at these events.

### **649.0 PARISH PLAN**

#### **649.1 Progress report**

Cllr Lloyd apologised that work commitments had prevented progress being made. He had secured a price for preparation and analysis of the questionnaire, and he needed to submit a grant application to fund that work.

### **650.0 PLANNING**

#### **650.1 Planning Committee meetings – 8<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

Members received draft Minutes from the Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October, and noted the Committee's decisions on applications as outlined below:

WD/2006/2579/F and 2580/LB Deans Place Hotel, Seaford Road: extension and alterations. *The Parish Council welcomes this application, which will provide facilities for larger weddings, conferences etc., to the benefit of the village. It is important that the extension is in keeping with the existing building.*

WD/2006/2634/F Alfriston Cricket Club, The Furlongs: rear extension for female/disabled WC and storeroom, and extending pitched roof to front elevation to form covered verandah/terrace, together with internal and external alterations. *The Parish Council welcomes this application as the Pavilion in its present state is sub-standard compared with others in the vicinity.*

## **650.2 Matters to be considered by the next Planning Committee meeting**

A meeting would be held in the Committee Room at the War Memorial Hall immediately after the current Parish Council meeting to formally open consideration of the following applications. However, because of the level of interest, thorough consideration would take place at a meeting to be held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October: *[Updating note: the meeting would be held in the United Reformed Church Hall, commencing at 7.30pm]*

WD/2006/2616/F 2, Gwynne Gardens, North Road: proposed alterations and additions to include two dormers to side elevation and front entrance porch.

WD/2006/2752/F White Lodge Hotel, Sloe Lane: change of use from hotel (class C1) to luxury residential care home (class C2). Conversion of garage/stores to new bedrooms. Rebuild flat roof extension to rear. Remodel fire escape and extend west wing pitch roof to create link corridor to rear. Additional dormer to second floor. Infill to rear elevation to provide new first floor accommodation. Remove timber staircase and brick up existing external first floor access to staff flats.

## **650.3 Decisions notified**

WD/2006/2042/F Winton Barn, Winton Street: replacement of existing oil tank to alternative location. *Granted with conditions.*

WD/2006/0643/LDE Pleasant Rise Farm, Cuckmere Road: livery facilities with mixed use agriculture. *Granted with conditions.*

WD/2006/0644/LDE Pleasant Rise Farm, Cuckmere Road: use of Mill View and Lullington View as separate dwellings. *Refused.*

WD/2006/1454/F Moonrakers Restaurant, High Street: change of use from class A3 (restaurant and café) use to class C3 (dwelling house) use. *Refused.*

WD/2006/2491/F garage to The Dene, West Street: proposed conversion of redundant garage to dwelling house with parking space. *Application understood to have been withdrawn.*

## **651.0 PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

There was nothing to report, other than the new Cuckmere Community Bus service reported in Minute 647.1 above.

## **652.0 RECREATION GROUND**

### **652.1 Cricket Pavilion**

The Cricket Club had written to the Parish Council updating them on progress with their applications for grants for the proposed extension as well as giving an idea of price. The need for a more formal lease had been raised as a possible block on loans to undertake the work, as the Club had no long-term security of tenure. Councillors would reflect upon the request and discuss the matter again at the November meeting, as the position of other potential users needed to be taken into account.

### **652.2 Fencing and pruning**

All work had been completed.

### **652.3 Water meter – pipe leak**

Mr Trowell was trying to convene a site meeting with representatives from South East Water, and at present the supply was turned off to avoid wastage.

### **652.4 Goalmouth**

The netting was still on order, and Cllr Banham had agreed to pay for its purchase.

## **653.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

### **653.1 Post Towns – proposal to delete Polegate from Alfriston addresses**

The Clerk read out the response from Royal Mail, outlining the technical reasons why the Post Town needed to be included. Members did not consider it necessary, as many letters omitted it already.

### **653.2 Police request for funding**

The Clerk reported that the request had been withdrawn due to the level of negative responses it had attracted.

### **653.3 Wealden DC – working in partnership with the Probation Service**

The Clerk would circulate copies of a letter just received outlining a scheme to utilise unpaid work time provided through the Community Punishment scheme operated by the Probation Service. The clearance at the Dene car park had been undertaken by such a team, and

members were asked to suggest other projects around the village that would provide gainful employment and improve the village environment.

#### **653.4 ESCC Improvement and Development Agency**

The Clerk read out a report by Mrs Bryan, who represented the Parish at the recent peer review of ESCC's work. Mrs Bryan was thanked for her report.

#### **654.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at 7.30pm in the War Memorial Hall, preceded by Public Questions from 7.15pm.

#### **Public Questions**

1. Mrs Peacock asked that low hanging branches were removed from trees in and around the Dene car park.
2. The Chairman asked for views about the use of a microphone, and whilst it had improved things, the availability of only one unit made things difficult. The present system could not cope with more than four microphones, and therefore enquiries would be made about providing a new system jointly with the War Memorial Hall Committee to enable a larger number of separate microphones to be attached. Initial research suggested that such a system would cost around £1,000.

Signed: (Chairman)

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> November 2006.