

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

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Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 17 November 2008 in the War Memorial Hall, Alfriston, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr D Monteath-Wilson, Chairman, in the Chair
Cllr S Charlton
Cllr J Dumelow
Cllr G Ellis
Cllr R Savage

In attendance: County Councillor J Garvican (arrived 7.35pm)
District Councillor A Watkins
14 Parishioners
S Smith - Clerk

Public Questions

1. Mr Wilson noted that the Sussex Express Group of newspapers had dropped Alfriston from its list of locations served under the banner headline of the local edition and asked the Parish Council to make representations to have it reinstated. Mr Phillips suggested that several editions had been combined into one title. The Clerk will investigate and report at the January Meeting.
2. Mr Hurwood advised that an 'A' board outside Moonrakers Restaurant obstructed the pavement to the detriment of pedestrians. Cllr Charlton said she would speak to the proprietor as a matter of urgency.
3. Mr Hurwood also observed that the problem of dog fouling around the Recreation Ground and Rope Walk had increased. The Chair agreed with his comments and requested the Clerk to make further comment in Cuckmere News and to bring the situation to the attention of the Wealden District Council Dog Warden.
4. Mrs Savage asked for an update on the situation relating to Affordable Housing, about which she had asked a question at the previous Meeting. The Chair advised that it would be dealt with as an Agenda item and that there would be an opportunity for further questions at the end of the Meeting.
5. Mr Phillips observed that there are two elm trees dying from Dutch Elm Disease outside the Tile Barn at the bottom of West Hill. He was concerned that these were the responsibility of East Sussex Council and yet nothing had been done to destroy them, although diseased trees on private property had been ordered to be destroyed, with obvious expense to the landowner. Cllr Dumelow and the Clerk are to take the matter forward.

The Meeting

262.0 Apologies For Absence

262.1 The Clerk had received an apology for absence from Cllr Byford who has extended work commitments. In her absence her Portfolio is being managed on a caretaker basis by Cllr Savage.

262.2 Cllr Knights sent an apology for absence to the Clerk, due to a work commitment and had submitted a report to be read in his absence.

263.0 Minutes

263.1 Unadopted Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2008 had been published and circulated previously. Acceptance of the Minutes as a true record was **proposed** by Cllr Charlton, **seconded** by Cllr Dumelow and **agreed**.

264.0 Report from District Councillor

264.1 Cllr Watkins advised the following points of interest to the village which had come to his knowledge since the October Parish Council Meeting.

- Kerbside recycling is scheduled to be introduced to Alfriston in 2010
- He expects more news on Community recycling in January 2009, although this is not expected to include green waste.
- He noted that Affordable Housing within the village was on the Agenda, so made no further comment.
- It is expected that Wealden District Council will refurbish its rural public conveniences.
- Wealden District Council expects to promote free swimming for the over 60s next year.
- The Local Development Framework is now expected to reach the consultation stage in May 2009
- Wealden District Council had received several complaints from Town and Parish Councils in the Development Control South Sector about the lack of consultation prior to a paper on the future of the Hailsham Polegate Eastbourne Triangle being published.
- He noted that Buxted Parish Council felt they had been ignored by Wealden District Council over a matter debated by Development Control North.
- He advised that the ESCC Highways Department were not yet in a position to upgrade the A27 Trunk road, which had resulted in the postponement of a Planning Application by Pelham Holdings to develop a site at Honey Farm, Polegate, initially for 520 homes.. He observed that if such a development went ahead, it would have a severe impact on local traffic.
- In conclusion, Cllr Watkins provided the Clerk with the name of a contact at the Sussex Express, following the matter raised during Public Questions.

During Cllr Watkins' Presentation, Cllr Garvican joined the Meeting

265.0 Report from County Councillor

265.1 Cllr Garvican apologised for his late arrival and explained that he had only just returned from a visit to Uganda where he had been assisting a village regeneration project in the South of the country. He will provide a report in due course.

265.2 Cllr Garvican was pleased to confirm that East Sussex County Council has no funds invested with Icelandic Banks as a result of its prudent investment policy so Council Taxpayers funds are not at risk as a result of the current economic plight of that country.

265.3 There will be an ESCC Transport Committee meeting in late November, with a full Meeting of the Council in early December. A meeting with Cllr Lock to discuss The Old Coach Road is still awaited.

Cllr Garvican then left the Meeting as he had another Meeting to attend

266.0 Appointments to Outside Bodies

None

267.0 Highways and Twittens

267.1 Matters arising from SLR Meeting 12 September 2008

Details of items discussed follow.

267.2 C39 Flint Wall

No progress - to be followed up next month

267.3 Pedestrian Exit at Willows Car Park

East Sussex CC has agreed to carry out a head and car count.

267.4 Illegal Parking

Cllr Charlton has received a visit from Sgt Liz Keehnan, (who heads our local PCSO team) and been told that the expected increase in visits from our local PCSO has not materialised because of calls on resources from elsewhere in the Division, although it was expected that a greater presence will be available in the New Year. The Chair expressed her concern at the continuing absence of a police presence in the village despite repeated assurances that the village would receive regular visits. She requested the Clerk to write to Sgt Keenan confirming the Parish Council's concerns.

267.5 Monitoring Traffic Volumes

Details of the dates of the pending survey to be undertaken by ESCC are awaited

267.6 Lorry Watch

Cllr Charlton confirmed that the Police are still sending reminders to the registered keepers of offending vehicles.

267.7 Frog Firle

This improvement scheme remains ongoing

267.8 Drainage Problems connected with leaves

Cllr Charlton has informed Wealden District Council of the position

267.9 Potholes in the High Street and Weavers Lane

Cllr Charlton has reported the problem to East Sussex County Council

267.10 Siting of Cones

The Clerk is to investigate the legal position regarding the siting of cones.

267.11 Any other Highway matter

Cllr Charlton reported that a lorry had damaged the flint wall adjacent to the tree in the village centre.

268.0 Rights of Way and Countryside

268.1 Condition of White Bridge

Cllr Dumelow confirmed it was satisfactory at present

268.2 The Old Coach Road

Cllr Dumelow has been advised that the ESCC review is now scheduled for 15 December 2008.

268.3 Any other Rights of Way matter

Cllr Dumelow advised that a tree which had fallen in Haven Road had been removed from the path by the Tree Warden and that she had contacted the South Downs Joint Committee to remove the residue. The Chair drew the Council's attention to the responsibility of the SDJC to clear Rights of Way and consequently bear the cost.

268.4 Manure Heap at Winton Street Stables

The Clerk advised that he had received further information which led him to believe that this item should now be regarded as part of a wider issue which involved possible breaches of Planning consent, which he needed to investigate further.

268.5 Condition of Fence between the Spots and Glebeland

Cllr Dumelow advised that it appears that the fence may belong to St Andrews Church, although it is possible that responsibility for its upkeep rests with the Parish Council. The Clerk is to investigate the matter further

268.6 Any other Countryside matter

Cllr Dumelow reported that the problem tree outside the school has now been dealt with.

268.7 South Downs Campaign

The South Downs Campaign has been informed that the decision on the South Downs National Park is most likely to be taken in the 'early summer'. The Campaign has many concerns, including Planning, housing, access, biodiversity and landscape issues and will continue to make representations to the Secretary of State

268.8 South Downs Joint Committee Annual Report

Cllr Dumelow advised the Meeting of some of the key points of the 23 page document which included:

- The SDJC was involved with 692 Planning applications, of which it objected to 34%, including the proposed wind turbines for Glyndebourne.
- SDJC have been active throughout the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on traffic, noise, light and design issues.

- Under the Dutch Elm Disease project nearly 800 elm trees had to be felled at a cost of £45,000 in 2007.
- There were 46,000 visitors to the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre in 2007/08.

268.9 Any National Park Matter

Nothing more at present.

268.10 Conserving the Elm population

As this had already been covered under the SDJC Annual Report, Cllr Dumelow requested it be removed from the Agenda.

268.11 Any report from Tree Warden

Cllr Dumelow reported that the Tree Warden had completed various works around the village. One tree will require work next year which is to be treated as a separate issue and will be the subject of further quotes for work to be undertaken.

269.0 Strategic Planning

269.1 Affordable Housing

Cllr Knights, the Chair and the Clerk attended a meeting with Wealden District Council officials at which County Cllr Watkins was also present to discuss options for potential Affordable Housing at a site near to Pleasant Rise. The outcome of the meeting was that Wealden would ascertain the landowner's current stance regarding a sale of land, together with the likelihood of Planning Permission being granted, prior to further work being undertaken. We await an update. The Chair will inform the next Council Meeting of any further developments.

269.2 Draft Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2013

No update available

269.3 Registration of Allotment land

The Clerk reported that Registration was proceeding.

269.4 Sussex Rural Affordable Housing Conference

No report available.

269.5 Any other Affordable Housing matter

None

269.6 Parish Plan

The Chair advised that this would be dealt with later in the Meeting.

269.7 Any Website matter

Cllr Knights' Report advised that the website had now been updated with additional features including an enhanced facility for requesting advertising and enquiries.

269.8 Emergency Planning Conference – 28 October - Little Horsted

This was attended by Cllr Knights and the Clerk. Cllr Knights' Report made reference to an absence of any meaningful new information for the benefit of our community when formulating an Emergency Plan. The Clerk concurred with this view.

269.9 Collection of Green/ Garden Waste

The Clerk is in communication with Wealden District Council and will update next month.

269.10 Future of United Reformed Church and Hall

Nothing to report – consultation ongoing

269.11 Additional Surgery Car Parking

Cllr Knights reported that he has been in communication with Dr Adcock and awaited further details in connection with his request to purchase a portion of the allotments.

270.0 The Tye

270.1 Any matters relating to The Tye

Cllr Savage advised that he received a request from the Committee of the Comforts and Joys Festival for part of the Tye to be used for horse rides during the event. This would require the removal and subsequent reinstatement of some fencing. The Committee had provided safeguards against damage to the Tye in the event of inclement weather and Cllr Savage was happy to support their request. Accordingly he **proposed** acceptance of the request to use part of the Tye by the Comforts and Joys Festival. This was **seconded** by Cllr Dumelow and **carried**. In addition permission has been given to the Salvation Army to set up in the turning circle on the Tye for the duration of the Festival.

271.0 Allotments and Recreation Ground

271.1 Allotment availability

No update available.

271.2 Re-letting of Plot 22

Still in process

271.3 Allotment Competition 2008

Carried forward to next month when details of the of the competition will be provided.

271.4 Any other Allotment matter

None

271.5 Pavilion

No update available.

271.6 Licence for Clubs using Pavilion

The Clerk reported this is ongoing

271.7 Rating Assessment - Pavilion

Still in process.

271.8 Recreation Ground – Dog Fouling

Already dealt with during Public Questions.

271.9 Any other Recreation Ground matter

None

272.0 Car and Coach Parks and Public Transport**272.1 White Lines and Entry and Exit Markings in Dene Car Park**

Cllr Ellis reported Wealden District Council is awaiting the 'correct weather' for the work to be done, although it is expected to be completed soon.

272.2 Charges for Parking

Wealden DC has indicated there is no intention on varying charges at the present time.

This item will be removed from the Agenda.

272.3 One Way System in Dene Car Park

The blue exit sign in the Dene Car Park is to be replaced by a red sign by Wealden District Council in an attempt to curb abuse of the one way system.

272.4 Any other Coach and Car Park matter

None

272.5 Siting of Bus Timetables

No further problems – Item will be removed from Agenda

272.5 Any other Public Transport matter

None

273.0 Finance**273.1 Invoices for Payment November 2008**

The Clerk presented the following cheques for payment

- £254.85 – Wages – C Burden
- £148.28 – Wages – D Skertchly
- £832.28 – Wages – S Smith
- £383.53 – HMRC – Tax and NI
- £273.16 - Clerk's Expenses
- £240.00 - Richard Bartlett – Tree Surgery
- £42.01 – EDF Energy – Pavilion
- £37.60 – Star Fireworks – Maroon (exc Delivery)
- £35.00 - Citizens Advice Bureau (Donation)
- £10.00 – Alfriston Festival (Third Party Donation via APC)

Total = £2,256.71

273.2 Statement of Finances

The Clerk advised the summary of bank account balances as at 17 November 2008

Precept Deposit account	21,511.00
Current account	3,886.43
Savings Account	5,484.27

Car Park Account 22,665.93
Total = £53,547.63

A proposal to accept the Finance Report was **proposed** by Cllr Savage, **seconded** by Cllr Dumelow and **agreed**.

273.3 Any other Finance matter

- The Clerk advised that as a result of the VAT inspection which took place in October, the Parish Council will have to repay approx £150.00 to HMRC in respect of an invoice on which VAT had been reclaimed incorrectly last year.
- A Finance Committee Meeting will take place in early December to discuss the Precept.

274.0 Parish Clerk

274.1 Amplification Equipment

The Clerk advised that the amplification equipment should be working and hoped that member of the public would advise if there were continued problems.

274.2 Carving from Old Chestnut Tree

The Chair advised that a Licence had been obtained from the Archdeacon's office and that the carving will be hung in early December, although it has been requested that no formal ceremony was to be held.

274.3 Training

The Clerk confirmed he had attended 3 courses run by SALC since the last Parish Council Meeting and found the content informative. He considered the knowledge gained and the contacts made would be of great assistance in the discharge of his duties to the community.

274.4 Advertising on BT Telephone Kiosk

Wealden District Council has advised that BT may have broken Planning Regulations by placing advertising on the outside of a kiosk situated in a Conservation Area in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Parish Council have been asked to bring any further instances to the attention of their Enforcement Officer. The Clerk and Cllr Ellis will take the matter forward.

274.5 Any other matter

None

275.0 Planning

275.1 Minutes from Planning Committee meetings held since last Parish Meeting

None

275.2 Matters for consideration by Planning Committee this evening

None

275.3 Decisions Notified

None

275.4 Enforcement Action to be Reported

None

275.5 Local Development Framework

Nothing to report

275.6 Liquor Licence applications

None

276.0 Reports from Outside Bodies

276.1 Alfriston and Cuckmere Valley Partnership

The Clerk read a report received giving further details of the Comforts and Joys weekend to be held on 6 and 7 December.

276.2 Cuckmere Community Bus

Nothing to report.

276.3 Cuckmere Flood Forum

No further meeting

276.4 Festival

Cllr Savage advised that £13,000 approx had been distributed by the Festival Committee, with £2,000 approx retained for the future distribution. He made an appeal for anyone who had spare storage facilities which could be used by the Committee to contact him.

276.5 Heartstart

Cllr Dumelow advised that Heartstart will be fund raising during the Comforts and Joys weekend.

276.6 Safer Wealden Partnership

No Meeting

276.7 Village Hall Committee

No meeting

276.8 Wealden District Association of Local Councils

No Report

276.9 Any other Outside reports

Cllr Charlton reported that she found her attendance at the Parish Conference held on 11 November productive.

277.0 Clerk's Correspondence

277.1 Wealden Police Commander's Messages

These have contained no items of specific local note

277.2 Other Correspondence

- The Clerk has received notification from South East Water that its formal response to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report had been delayed and will not now be made until January 2009.
- The Clerk has also received a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding from SAFE (Save Alfriston For Everyone), together with details of the work they will be undertaking, which will be of assistance as we move forward towards improving the environment for our residents and visitors.

277.3 Extraordinary Item

The Chair advised the Meeting that she had received a letter of resignation from Cllr Knights, citing his concerns about the process in which the new seat on the Glebeland was approved. The Chair, whilst accepting his resignation, thanked Cllr Knights in his absence for the hard work and diligent way he had served Alfriston Parish Council for nearly 12 years as both a Councillor and former Chair of the Council.

The Clerk then advised the procedure for appointed a new Councillor.

The Chair then advised that in the interim, Cllr Knight's Portfolio will be distributed as follows:

- Affordable Housing – Chair (and Clerk)
- Registration of Allotment Land – Chair (and Clerk)
- Website – will continue as standalone – Managed by James Knights
- Emergency Planning – Cllrs Dumelow and Savage will form Committee
- Flood Forum – will continue to be standalone – Managed by John Hurwood
- Finance Committee – Cllr Ellis
- Parish Plan – The Chair has received an offer from Professor Vernon Reynolds to take the lead. Cllr Savage will be the Parish Council's representative on a Committee which will be set up to take the Parish Plan forward. Professor Reynolds will update the Council at the January Meeting.

Cllr Savage then reiterated his contention that proper debate had taken place prior to the Glebeland Bench being erected. He confirmed that whilst no policy had been put in place for any future requests, any request would be fully debated at the Parish Council.

277.4 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 19 January 2009 at 7.30pm in the War Memorial Hall, preceded by Public Questions from 7.15pm

The Meeting was then closed, however, the following further Public questions were taken.

- Mrs Gregory requested that a greater number of copies of the Minutes be placed in the Post Office than is currently the case. The Clerk will now place 20 copies which she considered should be sufficient. This is in addition to supplying any parishioner (upon request) with a copy electronically by E-Mail.
- Mr Wilson questioned the timing of the proposed vehicle survey. Cllr Charlton advised that it was necessary for it to be taken now so that it could be funded from existing budgets as it was not known when such an opportunity may occur in the future. In effect it was a case of 'use it or lose it'.
- Mr Hurwood pointed out that the skip adjacent to the allotments was full and needed removing. The Clerk will speak to the owners of the skip.
- Mr Hurwood observed that the lights in the Dene Car Park had again been switched on during daylight hours. The Clerk will speak to Wealden District Council.
- Mrs Embry and Mrs Savage reiterated their concerns from the last meeting about a lack of consultation in connection with sites for Affordable Housing. The Clerk explained the sequence of events which had led to the present position. The Chair then reconfirmed that Affordable Housing will not be imposed upon the village by the actions of the Parish Council without a Referendum being held.