

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

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Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 18th February 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 G. Knights
Cllr R. Savage

In attendance: County Councillor J. Garvican
7 parishioners
P. Ayers Clerk

Public Questions

1. Mr Wilson commented on the 'gift-wrapped' shop in High Street and enquired how long it was expected to remain. The Chairman confirmed that the matter had been referred to Wealden DC for advice under the planning regulations. It appeared that permission was not required, but there remained a doubt about the need for Listed Building and/or Conservation Area consent. Wealden DC was clarifying the position and if they confirmed that no consent was required, the Parish Council could not enforce removal of the decoration as it was a matter of personal taste. She was aware of the concerns, but had also heard compliments expressed, so there was some ambivalence locally. If residents felt the decorations were unsuitable, these comments should be made direct to the proprietor, as well as being passed to the Parish Council. Other Councillors added their own comments and those passed on to them by residents. The Amenity Society declared that it was against the decorations as a long-term measure, although it had accepted them when the shop had first opened.
2. A resident drew attention to items of a suspicious nature found in the Willows coach park. These would be passed on to the local Police with details of when they had been found. This was not the first report of its kind.
3. Mr Burden queried the validity of the planning application at Quakers, River Lane, pointing out that the property no longer bore that name. As the application was in the correct name at the time it had been lodged, and the applicant was named, the application was valid and would be considered by the Planning Committee later that evening.
4. Mr Hurwood asked when the road markings at the junction of Weavers Lane and Star Lane would be repainted, as their absence was quite a hazard. Cllr Mrs Charlton confirmed that she had asked ESCC to undertake the work some time ago and they had stated that they were waiting for weather to improve. She would raise it again at the SLR meeting in March.
5. Mr Phillips drew attention to the loss of business being caused by the unannounced closure of A27 at Polegate for 5 weeks from early February. He had taken this up with the Highways Agency, but advisory signs had not been erected as requested. The Clerk confirmed that he too had pursued this situation with ESCC to pass to the Agency, and had not even had the courtesy of an acknowledgement from the latter.

126.0APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Byford had tendered apologies for absence. Her reason was stated in the attendance book. Members accepted the reason. District Cllr Whitehead had also tendered apologies as he was away on business.

127.0MINUTES

127.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st January 2008 had been published and circulated previously. They were taken as read. Cllr Knights requested an amendment to Minute 117.5 to read **The existing spotlights had been refurbished and were now functioning at their best. The application to Viridor Credits** With that amendment, acceptance as a true record was **proposed** by Cllr Mrs Charlton, **seconded** by Cllr Knights and **agreed**. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

128.0REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Garvican reported that the County Council had set its budget for 2008/9 on 12th February with an increase of 3.9% over the previous year. In recent years, East Sussex had been a 'floor' authority with increases of only ½ - 1% from central Government. This year it had moved off the 'floor' and secured an increase of 3%, above the average of 2.5% for the South East. Elsewhere in England increases of 6.5% were the norm. In East Sussex, the local ratepayer contributed 70p of each £ spent with the balance coming from central Government, whereas in other places (e.g. Co. Durham), the reverse was the case. Increases would be focussed on young and elderly people. The increases would also allow the speed limit review to extend to 6 divisions rather than the four originally proposed. The Primary Care Trust decision to concentrate midwifery services at the Conquest Hospital in Hastings had been discussed at length, and ESCC had referred the decision to the Secretary of State for re-consideration.

Cllr Garvican had pursued the question of the brick pavior policy statement as requested at the last meeting, and expressed his disappointment at the eventual response.

129.0REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Whitehead had submitted a written report to the Clerk covering the Council's search for a single site office. This was proving more controversial than expected and a Cabinet working party had been established to look at all options.

Wealden's budget would be set on 20th February but looked likely to bring an increase of 4.2%. The main issue was Government's requirement to introduce kerbside recycling across the whole District by 2010. Wealden wished to standardise on the scheme currently being piloted in Forest Row and Danehill. This would have considerable cost implications bringing the need to reconsider car parking charges throughout the District.

130.0PARISH CLERK

130.1 Amplification equipment

Cllr Knights reported that the console was to be moved, which would make future use of the system easier. He awaited a price for the supply of additional microphones, which he expected prior to the March meeting. A price in the low hundreds might be expected.

130.2 Village of the Year competition 2007

Cllr Byford had written to suggest the £250 should be given to Alfriston Pre School to assist in the purchase of new equipment. Cllr Knights suggested it might go towards the proposed new microphones, and a request for funding had also been received from Sussex Air Ambulance. Cllr Mrs Charlton still felt that the money should be given to Heartstart, but the Chairman sought clarification as to whether they still wished to receive it.

In view of the competing suggestions, the Clerk would write to the organisations concerned seeking clarification of their position in the hope that a firm decision could be made in March.

130.3 Village of the Year competition 2008

Cllr Mrs Charlton had just received details of the 2008 competition with an earlier closing date. She indicated that she was prepared to lead the entry again. Members thanked her for the offer and asked her to proceed accordingly.

130.4 Risk Assessment Training

Cllr Byford had attended the course, which had been useful and informative. She had picked up a couple of contacts for possible grant applications.

130.5 Vacancy for Clerk

Job descriptions and advertisements had been provided from 2003, and the Chairman and her opposite number from Cuckmere Valley were meeting later in the week with the Clerk to take matters forward.

131.0 PLANNING

131.1 Planning Committee meeting – 21st January

Members received Minutes from the meeting on 21st January (draft). They noted the Committee's decisions on applications as outlined below:

WD/2007/2990/LB Alfriston Village Stores, Market Square: to create an external door where there is currently a window (that had previously been a door) at the rear of the shop to allow access to existing storage building. To remove a timber stud wall and timber staircase from shop ground floor to shop first floor that was built around 1939 that has height restriction problems. To add a staircase in the shop's original staircase position (pre 1939) within the centre of the shop between ground floor and first floor. To raise the existing railings surrounding the first floor staircase opening for safety – *no objections*.

WD/2007/3681/F Quakers, River Lane: loft conversion to include 3 no. pitched roof dormers to front elevation and 1 no. flat roof dormer to rear elevation. Also to replace tile hanging to front, rear and east elevations – *the Committee objected as they felt the proposals were out of character being in a conservation area. With the loss of 2 chimneys and the general design it was out of keeping with the conservation area and the surrounding properties.*

WD/2007/3717/F English Wine Centre, Berwick: replacement toilet block – *no objections*.

WD/2007/3722/F English Wine Centre, Berwick: proposed alterations and part change of use from shop/office to restaurant/café – *no objections*.

WD/2007/3739/F Little Appin, The Broadway: change of fenestration to approved garage – *no objections*.

WD/2008/0008/F Tuckvar, West Street: extension of modern garage – *no objections*.

WD/2008/0059/F The Stables, Pleasant Rise Farm, Cuckmere Road: demolition of existing facilities and construction of new building – *no objections as it was felt that the new proposal was aesthetically more pleasing.*

131.2 Matters for consideration that evening

The Planning Committee would meet immediately after the Council Meeting to consider the following applications:

WD/2007/3681/F Quakers, River Lane: loft conversion to include 3 no. pitched roof dormers to front elevation and 1 no. flat roof dormer to rear elevation. Also to replace tile hanging to front, rear and east elevations. Revised plans showing retention of chimneys.

WD/2008/0214/F Winton Street Farm Stables and Cottage, Winton Street: refurbishment and extensions to both residential properties, demolition of two stable blocks and a rear lobby together with appropriate landscaping and enhancement of existing courtyard.

WD/2008/0218/F Highway Cottage, Winton Street: demolition of a modern rear extension and a modern detached garage building to the side of the property. Replace with a traditional brick built and oak frame single storey extension to provide sitting room, second bedroom and garage.

WD/2008/0219/LB Highway Cottage, Winton Street: demolition of a modern rear extension and a modern detached garage building to the side of the property. Replace with a traditional brick built and oak frame single storey extension to provide sitting room, second bedroom and garage.

WD/2008/0273/F Pailin House, 6, Kings Ride: proposed conversion of roof void to form a games room and bedroom, including the insertion of three dormer windows to the rear roof slope.

131.3 Decisions notified

WD/2007/3310/F Coach House, Sloe Lane: single storey extension to side and rear of property. New conservatory to rear of property. New en-suite shower room to bedroom 2. *Granted with conditions.*

131.4 Local Development Framework – update

Wealden DC had just published the results of their consultation on the proposed Design Guide. This had been generally welcomed and a number of revisions were now recommended prior to formal adoption of the Guide.

131.5 Local List

There was nothing further to report.

131.6 Progress with appeals

Cllr Mrs Charlton reported that an appeal had been lodged against Wealden DC's refusal of application WD/2007/2815/F Pailin House, 6, Kings Ride: erection of conservatory at rear.

132.0 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

132.1 Alfriston and Cuckmere Valley Partnership

The Partnership had nothing to report.

132.2 Cuckmere Flood Forum

Cllr Knights reported on the meeting with representatives of Cuckmere Valley PC, who held strong views that erosion of the banks and creation of a flood plain in the lower Cuckmere Valley could have profound implications for Alfriston, citing the creation of the High Path in support of their views. Alfriston Parish Council had been ambivalent about the matter so far, and traders were in favour of the proposal to flood the lower reaches. Cuckmere Valley's concerns emanated from a fear that the proposals were driven by funding constraints rather than anything else, and they had reports from a qualified engineer in support of their views. Cuckmere Valley PC sought Alfriston's support in seeking further examination and debate on the proposals before irreversible decisions were made. The Chairman and Cllr Knights had concluded that they should support this limited request, and accordingly, Cllr Knights **proposed** that Alfriston PC supports Cuckmere Valley PC in lobbying for further debate, information and data on the risk of flooding before any decisions were made. This was **seconded** by Cllr Savage and **agreed unanimously**.

The Clerk would advise Cuckmere Valley PC accordingly.

133.3 Heartstart

Cllr Dumelow reported that there had not been many calls so far in 2008. Two new Responders had now qualified and one additional recruit had come forward, bringing the total to 9. The AGM would be held later in the week. The Chairman had received a letter from Heartstart thanking the Parish Council for all their support.

133.4 Village Hall Committee

The application to Viridor Credits for funding towards repairing the roof leak and a new floor would be considered at their meeting on 20th March.

133.5 Wealden District Association of Local Councils

The Chairman had picked up from Minutes of the meeting on 6th February that other local councils had expressed their concern about the way in which Wealden DC was approaching the issue of Affordable Housing, echoing the experience locally.

134.0 RIGHTS OF WAY & COUNTRYSIDE

134.1 Condition of White Bridge

Cllr Dumelow had been unable to contact the officer concerned to secure further progress.

134.2 Winton Street signposts

The matter would be raised at the SLR meeting in March.

134.3 Fencing in Cuckmere Road

This remained outstanding.

134.4 Old Coach Road

The Clerk had written to re-affirm the Parish's support for a Traffic Regulation Order. Cllr Dumelow understood that ESCC was meeting next week to progress the matter.

134.5 Mounting block

Cllr Dumelow had been unable to contact the officer concerned to secure further progress.

134.6 New Horse Chestnut tree

The Tree Warden had confirmed the Tye as a suitable location. Cllr Savage would arrange to meet the Tree Warden on site to agree a precise location, although the tree would not be big enough for planting out for a couple more years.

135.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING

135.1 Housing in Alfriston

Cllr Knights reported that no response had been received from Wealden DC until 15th February, offering a meeting in week commencing 25th February. He was dismayed that other local councils were having similar difficulties, which tended to suggest a lack of commitment at Wealden.

135.2 Car parking at Surgery

This matter remained in the hands of solicitors at present.

135.3 Parish Plan

Cllr Knights continued to liaise with Mr Lloyd, but was concerned that the offer from Brighton University of assistance with the production and analysis of the questionnaire may no longer

be available. Without that help, production of the Plan would become more difficult and protracted.

135.4 Parish website

Cllr Knights expressed concern that there were very few forthcoming events showing in the appropriate section of the website at present. The webmaster would only put events on when their organisers made such a request, and although in the early days, there had been a lot of requests, these had tailed off more recently. Comment would be made in *Cuckmere News* seeking notice for forthcoming events for inclusion on a more regular basis.

136.0 THE TYE

136.1 Damage to surface of Tye

Estimates were still awaited, and would be brought to the March meeting. Cllr Savage was keen to get work under way early in April.

136.2 Parking for Community Responders

Heartstart had now confirmed that they still wished to take advantage of the bay, and Cllr Savage would check that the sign had been erected.

136.3 Encroachment of foliage

Work had now been completed.

136.4 Charity Commission reports

The 2007 Annual Return had been submitted. A Newsletter from the Commission had also been circulated for information.

136.5 Contents of Mine

The Clerk had received a request from Heartstart for the contents of the Mine to be donated to their activities for a third year in 2008/9. This was **proposed** by Cllr Knights, **seconded** by Cllr Savage and **agreed unanimously**.

137.0 ALLOTMENTS and RECREATION GROUND

Cllr Byford had provided a written report to the Clerk.

137.1 Allotment holders' social gathering

Cllr Byford had decided not to proceed.

137.2 Boundary fence

The work would be undertaken after completion of work on the Pavilion. Members queried the need for this work to be delayed until completion of the Pavilion. The Clerk would refer the query back to Cllr Byford.

137.3 Allotment rents – 2008

Only one holder had not yet responded. Currently, there were two vacant half plots with potentially a third half plot once the Clerk had tracked down the remaining person. *[updating note: the final tenant did not wish to renew].*

In Cllr Byford's absence, the Chairman **suspended** the meeting to allow Mr G. Ellis, Cricket Club Chairman to report on progress with the Pavilion refurbishment. Because of his direct involvement, Cllr Ellis had registered a direct and prejudicial interest already and would refrain from any vote that took place.

Mr Ellis explained that work was proceeding well and the latest cost estimates suggested that there was sufficient money to complete the project by early April except perhaps some inside work. The Cricket Club was planning another funding bid and activities to cover any shortfall. In the past, low water pressure had caused problems with the showers, and Mr Ellis suggested that it would make good sense for the Parish Council to renew the supply from the Furlongs and then look to split the supply to the Cricket Club and the allotments. There was some evidence of a continuing leak which was costing money and would need putting right. Cllr Byford had obtained a quote from South East Water to provide a new supply from the main at £708.69 + VAT. Work on the pipes across the softer ground could be undertaken by the existing contractors or others, and a rough figure of £1,050 had been put on that work. Mr Wilson suggested that it would be prudent to take new pipes right through to the allotments whilst the work was being done and Mr Trowell concurred. Mr Hurwood urged caution in digging close to tree roots and damaging the trees and all accepted that point. Questions also arose about the bore of pipe to be used and the Clerk confirmed that the quote was based on a 25mm pipe.

The meeting was re-convened.

137.4 Pavilion refurbishment

The Chairman asked if members were content to agree to the work to be undertaken by South East Water. Cllr Knights **proposed** that the South East Water quote was accepted and that if a larger bore pipe was subsequently agreed to be best, that additional expenditure to an overall maximum of £1,000 + VAT should be agreed. This was **seconded** by Cllr Savage and **agreed unanimously** (Cllr Ellis did not vote). Surprise was expressed at the estimate received for the remainder of the work, and alternative prices would be sought, allowing for a separation of supplies to the allotments and the Pavilion.

137.5 Licence for Cricket Club

The Clerk awaited comments from the Cricket Club before the draft lease could be completed.

137.6 Damaged seats on Recreation Ground

The local resident was already in touch with Mr Trowell.

137.7 Annual Playground inspection

There was nothing further to report.

137.8 Photoplod 2008

The Clerk had received a letter from the organisers seeking permission to establish a refreshment station in the north-west corner of the Recreation Ground on Saturday 14th June. In previous years, this had proved to be the most suitable location for all concerned, and provided that it did not interfere with any matches that might be programmed for that date, he suggested that the request was approved subject to the usual condition of leaving the site tidy. Members agreed and the Clerk would respond placing responsibility with Photoplod to check on matches.

138.0 COACH and CAR PARKS and PUBLIC TRANSPORT

138.1 Dene space posts

Cllr Ellis reported that the work was now complete.

138.2 Dene Car Park exit posts

This work was also complete.

138.3 Bench in Willows coach park

The bench was now in place.

138.4 Litter bin replacement

Cllr Ellis was arranging for Mr Trowell to undertake the work early in the new financial year.

138.5 Chained off spaces

The new sign ordered from Wealden DC was still awaited.

138.6 Security of chained off spaces

The Clerk would include a reminder of the need to lock empty spaces when renewals went out in March.

138.7 Entry to and exit from Dene car park

An item would appear in the forthcoming edition of *Cuckmere News*.

138.8 New A permit system

Cllr Ellis had circulated a draft statement of criteria to Members in advance of the meeting and asked if there were any queries. The criteria proposed were as follows:

Permits must include name of holder and registration number of the vehicle.

1. Permits will only be available to residents who live in the centre of the village and have no parking or garage available with their property.
2. Each household can apply for up to two spaces, either A's or Reserved, or one of each.
3. Traders who travel to the village can apply for an A permit or a reserved space [if there is a waiting list for reserved spaces priority will be given to residents].
4. Employees of traders who travel to work can apply for an A permit.
5. Workers for private houses [cleaners, gardeners etc] if employed by more than one private employer and likely to exceed 3 hours can apply for an A permit.
6. Temporary permits may be issued at the discretion of the Clerk for temporary workers, visitors etc..

Cllr Ellis **proposed** acceptance of the proposed criteria. This was **seconded** by Cllr Mrs Charlton and **agreed unanimously**.

more than local interest and should be treated accordingly. Although ESCC did not have funds available to remedy previous faults, Members felt that it would ensure that they could insist on external contractors performing to a higher standard in future. This would be raised at the forthcoming SLR meeting to reinforce the point.

140.2 Frog Firle Traffic Management scheme

The subject would be placed on the Agenda for the March SLR meeting.

140.3 White lines in Winton Street

This matter would also be raised at the SLR meeting to make sure that it was in hand.

140.4 Monitoring of traffic volume

This item would also be referred to the SLR meeting.

140.5 SLR Meeting – 14th March

The Clerk outlined items that he had noted for the Agenda of the March meeting as follows: Policy statement on brick paviers, Frog Firle Traffic Management scheme, Winton Street white lines and signpost, monitoring traffic volume, structural survey of properties, no waiting signs, C39 surface at Manse Corner, white lining at Weavers Lane/Star Lane junction, A27 closure and the excavation trench at Drusillas roundabout. He would advise ESCC accordingly.

140.6A Board requests

Cllr Mrs Charlton had considered and approved requests from Alfriston Heartstart in connection with their event on 23rd February and from the W.I. for a coffee morning on 15th March.

140.7 Lorrywatch

The proposed re-launch was in hand.

140.8 No waiting signs

The matter would be clarified at the March SLR meeting.

140.9 Review of Local Speed Limits

Cllr Mrs Charlton followed on from the report by Cllr Garvican to indicate that whilst the Alfriston division was included in the review for 2008/9, there were in fact no proposals which had a direct effect upon the Parish.

140.10 Closure of A27 at Polegate

Cllr Mrs Charlton reported on the closure with insufficient notice of A27 at its junction with A2270 at Polegate for five weeks from early February. The Clerk had taken this up through East Sussex CC with the Highways Agency and so had the Alfriston and Cuckmere Valley Partnership and Norman Baker MP. So far, there had been no acknowledgement of the problems caused nor provision of signs indicating that businesses were open. All parties were continuing to press the Agency who had advised ESCC of their intentions almost a year previously. Both Norman Baker MP and Graeme Lake (ESCC) had provided helpful responses and were continuing to press the Highways Agency for a satisfactory response.

140.11 A27 re-alignment

Norman Baker MP had written to advise of the possible re-alignment of A27 in the Selmeston area, although work was unlikely to commence before 2016.

140.12 Accidents

Cllr Mrs Charlton reported on two recent incidents, which had caused difficulties in the village, although prompt action had prevented the delays becoming too serious. Firstly, two lorries had met in the narrow section of C39, becoming wedged together. They had been lifted apart, which had caused some further damage to the broken down flint wall. Secondly, a caravan had parted from the car towing it at the south end of the High Street.

140.13 Work in North Street

Morgan Est had completed much needed remedial work in North Street on behalf of ESCC.

140.14 Bench in Market Square

The bench was expected to be back in situ after repairs in about two weeks time.

141.0 CORRESPONDENCE

141.1 Emergency Planning in the Community

Wealden DC's Emergency Planning Officer would be attending the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting on Monday 7th April 2008.

141.2 Health and Social Care in Your Community

The date for comments had now passed and the matter would be dropped.

142.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday 17th March 2008 at 7.30pm in the War Memorial Hall, preceded by Public Questions from 7.15pm.

Public Questions

1. Mr Wilson suggested that a number of agricultural engineers advertising in the 'Magnet' may be interested in quoting to lay the new water supply.
2. Mr Hurwood urged caution in seeking a larger bore pipe, since that would increase water charges.
3. Mr Hurwood and Mr Trowell both queried the need for renewal of the allotment boundary fencing to await completion of work on the Pavilion
4. Mr Hurwood pointed out that the Inquiry into the proposed National Park had re-convened to consider the possible inclusion of additional areas such as Wilmington Green. This was opposed by authorities seeking to widen A27, and he urged Councillors to support Wilmington's stand.
5. Mr Trowell pointed out that land drains near the toilets in the Willows coach park were blocked, causing the area to flood easily. Cllr Ellis would raise the matter with Wealden DC.
6. Mr Burden commented that in addition to closure of A27 in early February, Berwick level crossing had also been closed one Sunday, adding to the congestion locally. The Clerk would make the comment to the Highways Agency when he next wrote.
7. Mr Phillips was encouraged by the statements about brick paviers, whilst accepting that some previous errors were unlikely to be corrected.

Signed: (Chairman)
Date: 17th March 2008.