

THE VILLAGES OF BIRLING GAP, CROWLINK, EAST DEAN AND FRISTON

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of electors held on Thursday 14th March 2013 in the Village Hall, Village Green Lane, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm.

Meeting convened under Schedule 12, Part III of the Local Government Act 1972 by the Chair of the Parish Council, with representatives of the Residents' Association, the Church and the Village Hall Trust.

In the Chair: Councillor R Page (Chair of the Parish Council).

Present: representatives of the Parish Council, the Residents' Association, the Church, the Village Hall Trust; village clubs and societies (twenty two of whom mounted displays); and approximately 100 other residents. Additional clubs and societies contributed to the Annual Village Report (see below).

In attendance: representatives of the South Downs National Park Authority; the National Trust; the Cuckmere Community Bus Company; St Wilfrid's Hospice; and the Sussex Police. Mrs K Larkin (Parish Clerk) took the minutes.

Displays were mounted by village organisations for residents to browse with wine and snacks.

Business commenced at 7.30 pm and the East Sussex flag was raised to the accompaniment of *Sussex by the Sea*.

Welcome: Councillor Rob Page welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained its purpose as a meeting for all villagers entitled to vote (not a Parish Council meeting). The theme was 'the Village Community'. Many of the organisations present, and others not able

to be present, had contributed to the **Annual Village Report**. *[A copy was available for inspection; the Report is also available on the Parish Council website:*

<http://www.parish-council.com/eastdeanandfristonparishcouncil/>,

and further copies can be supplied on request to the Parish Clerk, email eastdeanclerk@btinternet.com, or phone 01323 811870].

The following organisations addressed the meeting with Powerpoint backup:

The Parish Council	Phill Hill and Stewart Fuller
The Residents' Association	Rosie English and Lynda Dean
The Church	The Rev David Baker
The Village Hall Trust	Ron Laws and Dave Cooper
Our National Park	Jeremy Burgess
St Wilfrid's Hospice	The Rev Thomas Duncanson
Downland Heartstart	Flora Richards
Royal British Legion	Peter Hobbs
Coffee Mornings	Rita Laws
Neighbourhood Watch	Dave Cooper
National Trust	Zara Luxford
Over 50s Fitness	Frances Mace
East Dean Players	John Dann
Village Market 10 th Anniversary	Sam Stanisstreet
Community Watch	Sue Matthews
Table Tennis & Badminton	Rita & Ron Laws
Womens' Institute	Cheryl Veitch

The Village Website

Now ten years old, the village website was still going strong but had begun to look dated and needed an overhaul; some organisations

(such as the Parish Council) now had independent websites, and used the village site as an ‘umbrella’ point of contact. It had reached a natural review point, and the webmasters would like to hand over to a new team. They would be glad to have feedback as to what residents valued about the site, and what improvements they would like to see. Volunteers would be especially welcome. The present organisers, Henry Branson and Tony Rix would convene a meeting to consider the way forward.

THE FUTURE – what next for the village?

The meeting was opened for individual contributions from residents, and the following topics were raised:

- Communications – a number of organisations felt communications could be improved within the village, and that there was currently confusion over the meaning of the word ‘parish’, which many people assumed must mean something to do with the Church, though in fact it need not do so. This misunderstanding could affect fund raising. Even the Parish Magazine, which was produced by the Church, was mistakenly assumed by some to be aimed at a church readership, but actually covered all kinds of topics of local interest. There was no obvious solution. Members of the RA said that their Welcome Packs were delivered to any new residents they were aware of, and all village organisations would be welcome to put fliers into the packs. Otherwise there was support and applause for the advice that ‘word of mouth is best’.
- Village Flag - a resident asked whether there would be support for designing a village flag, in which case a competition might be held to design one. The project might not proceed.
- Singles events – a number of residents would welcome more local events which they could attend without a partner.

- The Post Office – the village was fortunate to have a newsagent, general store and post office all under one roof at the Barn Stores. The arrangement had taken time to achieve and was now facing changes caused by controversial new plans being rolled out by the Post Office nationwide. Residents should be alert to the need to support the facility by using it. They could also write to their MP, Normal Baker.
- Litter patrol – the Parish Council was requested to be more proactive in tackling litter. However, the last drive to enlist volunteers had produced only one person, and a team was required. More volunteers would be very welcome.
- North and south – a resident felt that for historical reasons the community fell naturally into two main parts, north and south of the A259, but drew attention to the large number of village organisations which welcomed all comers and fostered a true community spirit.
- Local Walking Guides – the new initiative by the Parish Council to provide walking guides was in fact not entirely new: the Local History Group had prepared its own guides some years ago, and would be glad to liaise with the PC about the preparation of new guides. The guide maps would be produced in a folder which would carry advertising from local sponsors, and would be distributed widely in tourist centres. Potential sponsors would be welcome.
- Public toilets – there was strong support for the provision of public toilets in the village, in addition to those available in the village hall and the church, which visitors would not necessarily be aware of. The Parish Council was on the case, and was investigating the cost of self-cleaning models, which would be relatively inexpensive to maintain.

Her Majesty the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee

The Chair of the Team 2012 Committee, Peter Hobbs, gave a presentation on the events held in the villages to mark the historic Jubilee of 2012. [*This presentation is included in the Annual Report*].

Thanks and closure

Councillor Rob Page on behalf of the organisers thanked all of the 30 village clubs and societies that had taken part in the Annual Meeting, representing over 70% of all the village organisations. Special thanks were due to all who had worked hard on the staging of the event, including the Powerpoint presentation, sound system, bar, and the raising and lowering of the East Sussex flag; and to all colleagues who had contributed in other ways.

The East Sussex flag was then lowered to the accompaniment of *Sussex by the Sea*.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed: (Chairman)

Date: