

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th January 2018 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr M Keller, Cllr B Greenwell, Cllr S Fuller, Cllr I Haydock, Cllr P Hill, Cllr A Hookham, and Cllr P Seeley

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.492 - C.493); District Cllr J Wilton (Items C.486 – C.490); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

The Chair paid tribute to Jolyon Fyfield, the longest serving local councillor on record (1967 to 1999), who had died on 27th December 2017. Mr Fyfield had chaired a number of committees in his time, and had continued to serve as a lay member of the Rights of Way Committee until 2016. He had been deeply involved in the life of the community in other ways too: as a vergger and sexton, a founder member of the Local History Group, and a founder member of the East Dean Players. The council observed a minute's silence as a mark of its respect and gratitude.

C.486 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr T Bryant, Cllr D Clarke

C.487 Declarations of Interests: - None.

C.488 Approval of the Minutes: - The minutes of the parish council meeting held on 7th December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.489 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS

The council considered report 4 on progress since the December meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Community Watch – the council reaffirmed its ongoing financial support for the Watch.
- b) Boundary Commission – District Cllr Wilton stated that the other parishes in the Wealden section of the South Downs National Park had also written to the Boundary Commission in support of staying within the Lewes parliamentary constituency.
- c) Mowing contract – two tenders had been received and a third contractor had requested a site meeting **ACTION: PS/PH**
- d) Play area upgrade - further details of the Big Lottery Fund grant of £10,000 had been published on the council website and would be included in the next edition of *Rendezvous*. Contact should be made with SGN to confirm the council's acceptance of their offer of £1,000 plus some free labour (which

could be used to lay a new pushchair-friendly path to the play area). **ACTION: MK/KL**

- e) Went Way – the completion of maintenance work on the railings had been delayed by wet weather. The contractor had been asked to repaint the fingerpost as well, and new letters had been ordered from Jakk (ESCC approved supplier)
- f) Notice boards – an order had been placed for renovating the Friston board after work on the car park board was complete
- g) War Memorial – with the help of the Local History Group and Mrs Worsfold a good amount of information had already been gathered on the history of the memorial, the people commemorated on it, and the blacksmith (Luther Hills) who had made the railings, all of which could be used to meet the educational criteria required by the Heritage Lottery Fund to support an application for grant aid. It was agreed to propose to the HLF that an information board be installed, subject to obtaining the necessary permissions from the Gilbert Estate (as landowners) and the planning authority. The grant requested should be £3,000 (the estimated total cost of refurbishing the railings). **ACTION: BG to submit the full application; MK to write a piece for a website link.**
- h) Squeeze gate on Footpath 24 – the Gilbert Estate and a resident had queried whether the gate need be repaired as it did not serve its original purpose of keeping livestock in the field now that the right of way had been fenced off. However, the gate carried a memorial plaque and should not be removed without prior consultation with the family. The repair should be done but consideration given to removing the gate in future. The Estate should be reassured that the council had the necessary powers and insurance cover. **ACTION: MK/KL**
- i) Diseased elms – ESCC had now identified some elms in Friston churchyard which must be removed. Elms in the field below the church belonging to the National Trust were previously marked for removal but remained untouched
- j) Hedge cutting – requests to householders must be followed up on Footpath19 and at the lower end of Micheldene Road. **ACTION: KL**
- k) Tree Warden – councillors were requested to search for possible candidates
- l) Best Kept Village Signs – it was suggested that these signs be taken down to prevent further deterioration, but not disposed of. At the Annual Village Meeting residents should be asked about the future of the signs (now 30 years old). **ACTION: MK to contact the Gilbert Estate**

RESOLVED – That the Progress report be noted and action taken as discussed

C.490 REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

District Cllr Wilton reported on the following matters:

- a) Council Tax 2018/19 – Wealden District Council intended to raise the tax by £5 per Band D property, with proportionate rises to other property bands.

- b) Proposed charge for collection of green waste – Wealden District Council proposed to charge £1 per week for green waste collection from 2019 onwards.

RESOLVED - That the report of the District Councillor be noted.

C.491 BUDGET 2018/19

The council considered Report 5 containing the draft Budget 2018/19 and subsequent 3-year forecasts, as previously considered and amended in November and December. The Budget year 2018/19 included a proposed precept of £57,730 resulting in a Band D household payment of £58.62, a large percentage increase but less than £10 pa in actual terms. In discussion it was noted that implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulation could become an additional budget item, in theory amounting to £2,200 for the initial employment of an external Data Protection Officer, plus £1,400pa thereafter, but that this might be unnecessary, and the national debate was being monitored. A query was also raised about the large amount of reserves showing in the accounts of the Cuckmere Buses, given that the parish council's support was proposed to continue at about £2,500 pa. Cllr Fuller declared an interest as a Cuckmere volunteer and treasurer, and explained that the company's reserves were not cash, but had been re-invested in buses. Currently a sum of approx. £100,000 was available but another bus was needed and would cost over £80,000. It was agreed that the council should monitor the local use of the service, which cost £80 per bus day, less income from fares under a subsidised formula. The council thanked the Lead Member for his work on the Budget and forecasts.

RESOLVED - That the 2018/19 Budget be approved

RESOLVED – That the subsequent 3-year forecasts be noted

RESOLVED – That a precept of £57,730 be approved for the Budget year 2018/19, amounting to £58.62 per Band D property

C.492 RECONSIDERATION OF BONFIRE EVENT 2018

The council considered Report 6 by Cllr Haydock, setting out the case for supporting the Sussex bonfire tradition locally, and outlining the practical arrangements for doing so. A message had also been received from a resident, arguing against the proposal. A key part of the argument was that a change of date to Friday 19th October should significantly reduce the influx of non-residents, and that it would be feasible to provide a team of 30 stewards for the event. The event should be cost neutral, and any proceeds donated to charity. In discussion, it was suggested that as bonfire was popular but lacked practical support in the parish, it could be run entirely by an external organisation, with the appropriate insurance, and under licence from the parish council insofar as the venue would be on council land. The organisers would need to consult the Fire Brigade, as promised after the last event, when congestion had impeded emergency services. However, for this to work, the organisers would need to be a formal body suitable for recognition by insurers and other authorities, and would need funds for the initial outlay. The Residents Association would in

theory be a suitable body, but had not been consulted and might not wish to take it on. Funds would need to be made available for the initial outlay, with financial risk incurred if the event did not take place; if the parish council were to put up the money the ownership of any proceeds could become an issue between the council and the organisers. Toby Tomsett (formerly a Captain of Eastbourne Bonfire) had offered practical advice, and it was agreed that a meeting should be held under the auspices of the RA, with Mr Tomsett and representatives of the council in attendance, to consider the proposal further and report to the council in February **ACTION: PS/IH.** Members thanked Cllr Haydock for his report.

C.493 REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) ESCC Budget 2018/19 – the budget was still under discussion, but as previously reported considerable savings must be made
- b) Temporary traffic lights for Airbourne 2018 – Cllr Shing had put in an application for light to be supplied again at Exceat Bridge
- c) New Exceat Bridge – no briefing was yet available.

RESOLVED – That the report of the County Councillor be noted

C.494 ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 2018

The Chair invited members to consider a theme and topics for consideration at the next AVM on Thursday 26th April 2018. It was agreed that the basic structure of the meeting should remain unchanged and the set-up programme brought to the February meeting for approval. Emergency Resilience planning was suggested as a theme because there had been a shift in focus on the part of the blue light services from coping with the community being cut off to coping with a need for evacuation and temporary shelter, even on a precautionary basis. However, this might best be the subject of a separate Emergency Day to which the police, fire brigade, coastguard and Beachy Head Chaplaincy should all be invited. The Sussex Police were celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2018. **ACTION: all members to consider a theme/KL to update the setting up programme.**

C.495 PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The council considered Report 8, the Schedule of Payments and Receipts for January 2018 [*Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website*]. It was noted that VAT could not be reclaimed on purchases made by councillors in their own name on behalf of the council. An invoice made out to the council should be obtained where possible. All payments were approved. The council noted with gratitude the receipt of £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund towards the play area project.

RESOLVED - That the Payments totalling £2,176.94 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments online

C.496 URGENT ITEMS: - None

C.497 REPORTS:

- a) Chair of the council – an informal meeting of the Emergency Resilience Working Group would be held after the Planning Committee meeting on 16th January 2018 to update the council's Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan.
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 12 December 2018. It was noted that fees for planning applications would be increased by 20% from 17th January 2018 onwards.
- c) Finance - the Lead Member reported that the balance in hand at the end of December was £71,313. However, the invoice for the new play equipment was imminent (£27,486 inclusive of VAT).
- d) Rights of Way and Highways:
 - i. The Lead Member reported that the footpath sign recently removed from the entrance to Footpath 8 from The Ridgeway would be re-sited and replaced away from the privately owned verge
 - ii. Bark chips – the programme of spreading chips on paths was complete and thanks were due to Climpsons who had very kindly supplied the chips free of charge. It was agreed that for ease of handling, lifting and transporting the chips, a set of 20 plastic trugs should be bought at £5 each (total cost £100). Dust masks should also be purchased to protect the shovellers from spores.
 - iii. Disappearance of brown tourist sign - the sign at the junction of Gilberts Drive and the A259 had been removed by ESCC Highways following an accident at the end of November. The clerk should enquire whether it was intended to be replaced. **ACTION: KL**
- e) Recreation ground – The request from the Cricket Club that they be permitted to put up a lean-to storage shed behind the pavilion remained outstanding. The Lead Member would ask the club for a sketch of what was required, in order to consult the Gilbert Estate.
- f) Social Media – the Lead Member suggested that the launch of the council's Facebook page could be a topic for the Annual Village Meeting. Cllr Fuller was now setting up email addresses linked to the council website which should in future allow council correspondence to be ring-fenced from private correspondence. The address conventions used by other local government organisations would be followed ('cllr.name.name@edfparishcouncil.org.uk')
- g) General Data Protection Regulation – members noted that an amended legal note on the GDPR had been circulated by the National Association of Local Council. The topic would be discussed at the next meeting of the Wealden District Association of Local Councils on 10th January 2018. The Chair would attend if possible; otherwise the clerk would attend. [See also item C.491 above].

RESOLVED – That the above reports (a) – (g) be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.498 CORRESPONDENCE

The council considered report 11 by the Clerk, and the following matters were noted:

- a) WDC Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023 – it was noted that there were two rough sleepers who used the bus shelters or the church porch in the parish from time to time. Cllr Hill reported that the window in the Friston bus shelter had blown out. It was agreed that this must be replaced. **ACTION: PH/RF**
- b) Birling Gap cliff staircase – it was noted that the staircase was now in use again, though a recent cliff fall had limited access to the beach.

RESOLVED – That the Correspondence report be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.499 Date of next meeting – Thursday 1st February 2018 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.49 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....