

# ARLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on Thursday 11th April 2019 at 7pm in the Upper Dicker Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs Mike Garner (Chairman), John Parsons, Peter Stenning, Vicky Radtke, Jo Robinson-Sivyer, Julie Sellars and Nicky Kinghorn.

**In attendance:** County Councillor Nick Bennett, District Councillors David White, Alison Stevens (Clerk) and two members of the public.

- 1. WELCOME** - The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Mike Garner, welcomed everyone to the Meeting.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor Mark Pinkney.
- 3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018** – these were noted.
- 4. CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT** - The Chairman presented his Report for the year which said;

‘Thank you all for attending this evening. We have a collection of reports available tonight which have kindly been provided by village organisations.

My own report this evening will try to give you the bigger picture of what the Parish Council has been involved in this year;

Councillors continued to make sure the Parish Council is represented at all levels of Local Government – SSALC and the WDALC for example.

They also considered every planning application very carefully, they listened closely to your comments and took them into account when making their response. We would like to encourage anyone making an application to attend the Parish Council meeting where it is due to be discussed and/or send their comments to the Clerk.

Individually Councillors continued to work very hard. For example Councillors Robinson-Sivyer and Radtke successfully applied for funding from Tesco Bags of Life and the work to the Village Green is now complete and looks good. Thank you.

Councillor Parsons continue to work tirelessly with the County Council with the ultimate aim of reducing speeding in the Parish. Bede’s has now submitted a new scheme, and we now await the decision. Unfortunately Councillor Parsons is standing down this year. He will be sorely missed. District Councillor David White will also no longer be representing Arlington following the recent Boundary Review, I would also like to thank him for all the help and support he has given the Parish Council too.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of my Parish Councillors for their tireless work and commitment to both Arlington and Upper Dicker, they are all volunteers and are all unpaid. They all do a lot of extra work that you wouldn’t be aware of such as looking after the recreation ground and carrying out risk assessments. They even do the odd maintenance job!

May I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of all the volunteers in the village who help to make Arlington and Upper Dicker such lovely villages to live in. Thank you.

And last but not least, I would also like to thank our County Councillor Nick Bennett and District Councillors Mark Pinkney for keeping us up to date with activities at County and District Level, and our Clerk for the excellent work she does for the Parish Council. Thank you’.

## 5. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR – County Councillor N Bennett

sent a written report which said;

### ‘Driving sustainable economic growth

Transport for the South East (TfSE), our partnership of the area’s 16 transport authorities, launched its Economic Connectivity Review (the first stage of developing the TfSE Transport Strategy) in May 2018. At this event, it was announced that TfSE would receive a £1million grant from the Department for Transport to assist with the development of the Strategy. TfSE is currently undertaking a period of engagement with stakeholders to gain views on its proposals to Government to secure statutory status and a formal consultation will be launched in May 2019.

Over 160 carriageway asset improvement schemes were delivered in the first three-quarters of 2018-19, with significant improvement works delivered for the A267 and the A22. A major project to reconstruct Heathfield High Street was completed ahead of schedule, with the scheme also seeing parts of the pavement resurfaced and new street lights installed. Work also began on the construction of the Newhaven Port Access Road and on the second and most significant phase of the Eastbourne Town Centre Improvement Scheme. Aimed at modernising the town centre, improving pedestrian conditions and attracting more visitors, it includes the installation of new bus lanes, bus shelters, a high-quality granite road surface and new paving, seating and landscaping.

Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the new Strategy for Library and Information Services, with a range of new library services introduced during the last 12 months. These include an enhanced, modern eLibrary with greater investment, a new children and young people’s offer to support literacy and numeracy, increased outreach work in our most disadvantaged communities, and new Community Library Membership and Teachers Library Memberships. In addition Hastings Library reopened in March 2018, following a multi-million pound revamp. This included the installation of a new roof and lift, lighting and furniture. Crowborough Library was also refurbished with an expanded children’s area, a newly created space for teens and young adults, new free access computer desks and new stock. Libraries at Ringmer and Langney opened as community libraries, with support from ESCC, after they were closed following the review of the county library services, prompted by the need to make budget savings.

We have been supported businesses to create over 150 jobs in the area during the first three quarters of the year. In addition, Locate East Sussex has supported 30 businesses to move into, or relocate within the county. The South East Business Boost service, offering grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to small and medium sized businesses and start-ups for capital projects awarded over £900,000 of grants in East Sussex. In addition, Trading Standards launched a Business Advice & Support Partnership (BAASP) to help businesses and other professionals receive high quality regulatory support and promote their comprehensive range of training workshops including customer care, food allergens and selling on-line. To date, they have led 15 workshops, attracting 244 delegates.

ESCC was named as one of 20 Careers Hubs nationwide, so attracting £200,000 external funding. The East Sussex Careers Hub, which launched in November 2018, will link all secondary schools, special schools and colleges with employers, support organisations and higher and further education providers to improve the guidance and support offered to students. Projects which help young people make the right career choices will also be expanded, including the Industry Champions network (a network of more than 80 champions from local businesses), apprenticeship roadshows, Supported Internships and Apprenticeships for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Open Doors, where businesses open their doors to allow students to visit and learn about the world of work. In November 2018, 44 businesses participated in Open Doors and received workplace visits from over 500 students.

81.5% of secondary schools are judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding, 1.5 percentage points above the national average of 80% as at end May 2018. 92.9% of primary schools in East Sussex are judged to be good or outstanding against the national average of 89.9%. 100% of special schools are judged to be good or outstanding against the national average of 93.4%. Across East Sussex, results for GCSE English and Maths improved with 41.9% of pupils earning grade five – a strong pass or above, an increase from last year’s figure of 38.4%.

## Keeping vulnerable people safe

ESCC became one of the few local authorities to achieve the highest possible rating for its work with vulnerable families. Following an Ofsted inspection, ESCC Children's Social Services is now rated 'Outstanding'. Inspectors were particularly impressed with the 'connected practice' model which places emphasis on social workers creating enduring and trusting relationships with families and children.

Members of ESCC demonstrated their commitment to protect residents by becoming SCAMBassadors for Friends Against Scams. The East Sussex Against Scams Partnership, run by the Safer East Sussex Team, helps to protect residents by raising awareness through over 100 partner organisations, such as local businesses, charities, church groups, community enterprises and councils. Nearly 3,000 residents have participated in Friends Against Scams awareness sessions. Trading Standards have also continued their fight against rogue trading in the county, providing support to the most vulnerable and pursuing those who target them. To date, the team have carried out 180 positive interventions to prevent fraud and other scams, and installed 27 call blocking devices to prevent telephone scams.

ESCC was awarded a silver award under the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Support Scheme, which honours employers that show a commitment to supporting current and former military personnel. Award judges were impressed with the support given to armed forces cadet volunteers and Army Reserve members

Hastings Community Support Service, based in Bexhill, which helps people with learning disabilities live independent lives was rated 'Outstanding' – the highest possible grading in its report from the Care Quality Commission. The service provides specialist support to adults in their own homes, including support with social activities, daily living skills and personal care.

ESCC again took part in the White Ribbon Campaign's 16 Days of Action to help eliminate domestic violence and abuse against women and girls. During the campaign, ESCC promoted a series of events designed to highlight support available to victim, as well as encouraging people to speak out against violence and abuse.

## Helping people help themselves

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex visited our Joff Youth Centre in Peacehaven, where they met 50 young people gathered from youth groups around the county, including the elected Youth Cabinet. Their visit focused on the issue of youth mental health which has been a top priority of the Youth Cabinet this year. In November 2018 over 50 young people took part in our Annual Takeover Day to discuss mental health.

ESCC has worked with the 5 district and borough authorities to set up a new scheme which offers up to 100% Council Tax discounts to Care Leavers aged 18-24, using a single protocol and process. We are one of only nine shire counties in England to adopt such a scheme and one of only four to have a countywide scheme.

There have been further improvements against Adult Social Care . Delayed Transfers of Care from hospital per 100,000 population (aged 18+) has improved from 12.7 in November 2017 to 10.3 in November 2018. The November figure had already reduced from 24.4 in April 2017. The proportion of older people (aged 65+) who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement or rehabilitation services for April to September 2018 is 92.7%, up from 91.7% over the same period in 2018.

The end of 2017-18 saw the end of the current five year cycle for NHS Health Checks. In this period, the Council achieved the highest proportion of people being offered and receiving their check in the South East.

## Making the best use of our resources

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2019/20 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on the 5th February 2019. The budget includes spending of £375 million on services for East Sussex. It also includes savings of £5.1 million. The savings required in the budget were significantly less than first

anticipated due to the success of sustained lobbying of central Government by the Council's Leader and Deputy Leader. The additional funding amounted to:

- Health and Social Care – additional money to continue the Winter Pressures funding, plus extra for Adult and Children's Social care – in 2019-20 this is an extra - £7m (2.586m+£4.417m)
- Business Rates Retention Pilot - £1.6m in 2019-20
- Potholes, bridges and other repair work – Capital Funding of £4.7m – received in 2018-19
- Children's Services – ISEND funding - £1.138m – in 2019-20 (and the same in 2018-19)

ESCC also published its 'Core Offer' –a basic but decent level of service which we believe is the very least residents should be able to expect, even with the intense financial pressures we face. As well as meeting our legal duties across all services delivered, the Core Offer includes measures to grow the economy of East Sussex and make sure we invest resources in some preventative and early intervention work where greater costs may otherwise build up. Views were sought on the Core Offer and over 1200 responses to the questionnaire were received. Feedback from the questionnaire set out that most people – 78% considered that the Government should allocate more funds to meet the financial gap ESCC faces.

Through our capital programme we have delivered improvements to schools buildings and expansion of facilities across the county providing approximately 1,100 additional school places across primary, secondary and special educational needs provision.'

## **6. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS** – District Councillor Mark Pinkney said;

'I would like to say how friendly and helpful you all have been, sorry I haven't been able to do as much I would have liked in my time with you. I wish you all the best for the future. Thank you again.'

District Councillor David White sent a written report in which he said;

'Last year I reported on the delay in the adoption of a new Local Plan for the District that had arisen as a result of the need to undertake further studies on the impact of the District wide developments on the Ashdown Forest. Studies produced to support the level of growth proposed in the new draft local plan published in September 2015 when it was proposed that there should be an allocation of 9500 new homes in Hailsham of which 5500 were to be built in Arlington Parish had confirmed that not only was the then proposed level of development for the next 15 years going to cause irreparable damage for the future but that the damage was already occurring as a result of the District wide developments that had taken place. In the event when the results of those further studies was available in June 2018 it was decided to proceed with a much smaller level of development in Hailsham (some 4500 new homes) and the idea of major development in Arlington was dropped.

The final draft of the Plan, which was adopted for publication at a meeting of full Council on 18 July 2018, defines Arlington and Upper Dicker as "Neighbourhood Settlements" where future growth is to be restricted to no more than 5 new dwellings in Arlington and 25 in Upper Dicker in each case located in, or immediately adjacent to, the newly defined core areas for each settlement. Development in the countryside will be restricted and the pragmatic approach of allowing new build residential development to replace redundant poor quality agricultural buildings withdrawn.

A date for the Examination in Public of the plan has been set beginning at the end of May and it is hoped that the Inspectors final report and the adoption of the new Plan will occur towards the end of the year.

Hopefully thereafter we will have a more ordered approach to development ending the present free for all in planning applications.

In addition to matters of planning, this last year has been taken up with a continued drive to reduce the Council's costs. Government requires Local Authorities to be largely self-funded by 2020 after which grants from central government will cease. The localisation of business rates with the local authorities keeping all of the business rates raised in a district is intended to offset the withdrawal of the central government grant. However for a District such as Wealden, which has a relatively small business rate, the loss of the central funding will not be compensated by the business rate income alone and unless either services are to be cut or Council tax raised, other funding streams have to be identified. In order

to meet the challenge Wealden has built a crematorium at Horam which will both provide a much needed service for local residents and generate a profit, and has invested some of its reserves in the purchase of the Vicarage Fields shopping centre in Hailsham where it is intended to carry out a major regeneration of the town centre. Plans for the regeneration are at an early stage but will include replacing the leisure centre and council offices, a new community centre, a combined base for the fire and police authorities and some 280 new homes.

The Council has terminated the waste collection contract with Kier and as from June the waste will be collected by Biffa. The change will result in an additional cost to the Council but hopefully will also result in an improved service. However again with a view to reducing council tax costs the Council will be introducing a charge for the collection of green (garden) waste.

This year again Wealden along with other precepting authorities i.e. the County Council, the police and fire authorities and most of the Parishes have all found it necessary to increase their respective precepts even to stand still in meeting the increased cost of local services. Wealden has increased its precept by 2.7% resulting in a Band D charge to Arlington residents of £256.70 (£3.70 per week, an increase of 10p a week). With the increases proposed by the County Council, and the Police and Fire authorities the total Band D charge for Arlington residents amounts to £1975.06.

The District Council elections District May 2019 will result in further savings to the Council when the number of District Councillors is reduced from the 55 to 45. In future there will be a new ward of Arlington including Berwick Laughton, Chalvington, Selmeston and Alciston electing one District member and a separate Ward of Hellingly which will include Magham Down and parts of North Hailsham and Cowbeech.

As I live in Hellingly I have chosen to contest the Hellingly ward which means that this will be the last year in which I shall be representing you. I have been one of your District Councillors since 2003. Over that period I have enjoyed working with several the several Chairmen, Clerks and Councillors. I have enjoyed representing the Parish and hope that I have been of some benefit to you. I shall miss that relationship and wish you well for the future'.

## **7. REPORTS FROM CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS –**

Mrs Simpson sent a report from Dicker Links which said;

'The monthly newsletter continues to provide what I hope is a useful source of information relevant to those living in Upper Dicker and the surrounding area. Information is provided by members of various groups in Upper Dicker and the Parish Clerk forwards other items for inclusion in Dicker Links and separately to Arlington Scene. Outside groups also send items. The majority of residents receive Dicker Links via Email. There are now 127 Email addresses on the circulation list. A few printed copies are available from the Village Shop.

In the past year Dicker Links has included a wide range of social events and public information from quizzes to the Harvest Supper, Dicker Day, the Produce Show, Open Gardens, events for Christmas and notices about planning applications, flooding, the Sussex Police and many others. The Email circulation list has also proved useful sending one off messages as when one local cat was lost and fortunately spotted and reunited with its family and another half-starving cat was found and was given a home'

## **8. OPEN FORUM –**

Councillor Stenning acknowledged the work of John McCutcheon, both at the Bluebell Walk and as a former Chairman of the Parish Council. From his latter role he produced the 'Memorandum on Arlington Parish Meeting Books 1841-1949' which Councillor Stenning said he found particularly interesting so he Made copies which he handed out to the Councillors and the Clerk.

There being no further questions, the meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....