

ARLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on Thursday 20th April 2017 at 7pm in the Upper Dicker Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs Mike Garner (Chairman), John Parsons, Ray Collins, Peter Stenning and Vicky Radtke.

In attendance: District Councillors David White and Mark Pinkney, Alison Stevens (Clerk) and fourteen 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 Cllr J Robinson-Sivyer.
- 3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 21st April 2016** – these were noted.
- 4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT** - The Chairman presented his Report for the year which said;

'I would firstly like to thank you all for attending this evening. It is always encouraging to see a large number of villagers attending this meeting, and our regular monthly meetings.

This evening you have before you a collection of detailed reports kindly provided by village organisations, and also by the Parish Council's own Leisure and Recreation Advisory Committee. My own report this evening will try to give you the bigger picture of what the Parish Council has been involved in this year.

This year we were very sorry to see Councillors Helen Wheeler and Helen Proctor leave, both of whom will be sorely missed. We were however pleased to welcome a new Parish Councillor – Peter Stenning who is already proving to be a valuable asset to the Parish Council

On an even more positive note, Councillors continued to be heavily involved in discussions with the District Council about its plans to allow 5000 extra homes in 'West Hailsham'. We can now report that the Plans have been dropped and the number are not in the revised Local Plan.

Councillors continued to make sure the Parish Council is represented at all levels of Local Government. In the case of the Solar Farm they secured £8500 to improve facilities at both Village Halls and both Village Halls have now received their share of the money.

Councillors also continued to consider every planning application very carefully, they listened closely to villagers' comments and took them into account when making their response. We would encourage anyone making an application to attend the Parish Council meeting where it is due to be discussed. Residents are also encouraged to send their comments regarding applications to the Clerk prior to that meeting.

Individually Councillors also continued to work very hard. Councillors Robinson-Sivyer and Radtke successfully applied for funding from Tesco Bags of Life and the Parish Council was awarded £8000 to update the Village Green.

Councillor Collins continues to expertly maintain our website and he also produces our quarterly Parish Council newsletter. I would like to thank him for his sterling work with both and also say thank you to those who assist in the distribution of the newsletter.

Please may I 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 none of them claim the allowance to which they are entitled. They all do a lot of extra work that you wouldn't be aware of such as trimming hedges at the allotments, cutting back dead branches, risk assessments etc.

I would also like 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, and in particular the Cricket Club members. Four of them, including the Captain helped plant the Hazel and Holly saplings recently and also watered them on subsequent occasions.

Finally, I would also like to thank our County Councillor Nick Bennett and District Councillors Mark Pinkney and David White for keeping us up to date with activities at County and District Level and our Clerk for the sterling work she does for the Parish Council. Also thank you to all of the Parish Council members and Mrs Parsons for assisting with the catering for tonight's event. Thank you'.

5. ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS – County Councillor N Bennett sent a written report in which he said;

Driving economic growth

East Sussex County Council and Skills East Sussex (the county's employment and skills board) were successful in securing funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company for Progress – a new project aimed at equipping people with the skills needed by business and preparing them for the world of work. The project is running between April 2016 and July 2017 and includes work experience for pupils in years 10 and 11, visits to businesses, work readiness programmes, tailored support for young people wishing to access apprenticeships and the STEMfest project, aimed at encouraging students to study science, technology, engineering and maths.

Funding was also secured to allow Business East Sussex – the county's growth hub' to continue for two further years. The service is aimed at supporting businesses at all stages of growth, and helps businesses to find all the information, advice and support they need in one place. Since launching in July 2015, the service has engaged with more than 1,100 businesses. More information is available at www.businesseastsussex.org.uk. In addition, Locate East Sussex has helped 35 companies start up, relocate or expand in East Sussex during 2016-17.

New computer terminals have been installed at all of the county's 24 libraries, improving the Council's network of free to access PCs and enabling people to use the internet and email, search for jobs and look up a wide range of information. Among those benefitting from the upgrade are users of the 'IT For You' scheme which offers advice and support on using IT to prepare a CV and apply for work. In addition, the library at Seaford is benefitting from a new café, as part of the £6 million Warwick House development.

A number of positive educational results were reported in the summer, including improvements in GCSE and A level results. At Key Stage 1, the percentage of East Sussex pupils achieving the expected standard was higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. At Key Stage 4 our Progress 8 score was +0.04, significantly higher than the national average of -0.03. 87.1% of primary schools are judged to be good or outstanding, an increase of 10.1 percentage points since August 2015. 77.8% of secondary schools and 100% of maintained special schools are good or outstanding against national averages of 77.6% and 93.2% respectively.

East Sussex was awarded £13.2 million from the Government's Local Growth Fund in February 2017, following a bid by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). East Sussex County Council will receive £8.2 million for the East Sussex Strategic Growth Project to create new employment developments in areas including Bexhill and Eastbourne. £5 million has been granted towards a £44 million redevelopment of the Devonshire Park area including a new conference complex. More than 1,000 new jobs are expected to be created as a result.

East Sussex County Council is one of seven local authorities which have agreed to form a partnership called Transport for the South East (TfSE). The vision for this new body is for strategic transport planning for the whole area, unlocking economic growth and improving lives for residents. To begin with, TfSE will run in shadow form as it develops its strategy and operation, consulting with transport operators, businesses and the public. With government agreement, TfSE could move to full operation from 2019.

A new seven-year contract for the provision of highway services in the county began on 1st May 2016.

The contract with Costain CH2M replaced the existing arrangement of three separate contractors being responsible for highways, street lighting and traffic signals. The new contract has seen the introduction of a new website and online system for people to report highways issues; www.eastsussexhighways.com. In the first 6 months of the contract East Sussex Highways completed over 220 planned road works, 10,000 minor works, laid 64 miles of tarmac, answered 26,000 calls and progressed major works in areas such as Hailsham and Uckfield.

Our e-Sussex project to rollout faster broadband in previously isolated areas has improved access to services, jobs and education. Over 66,000 premises have been connected to improved broadband speeds in the first phase of works and the second phase to connect a further 5,000 of the hardest to reach premises in the county is underway.

Keeping vulnerable people safe from harm

A new integrated service bringing health visiting and children's centres together was launched in June 2016. The new service aims to help families be self-sufficient in their communities by providing appropriate early intervention and support, and keep children aged 0-5 safe and healthy by providing accessible, comprehensive, high quality services, promoting social inclusion and equality and respecting diversity.

The percentage of court proceedings, to ensure timely decision making about long term care for children, completed within 26 weeks has increased from 22% in April 2016 to 63% in December 2016. Many people affected by domestic violence and abuse who have used the specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence service (Portal) in the first half of 2016/17 say they are more in control of their lives and/or more optimistic about the future. East Sussex County Council supported the 16 Days of Action for the Elimination of Violence Against Women campaign, in November/December 2016. Over the 16 days a range of agencies, groups and individuals came together to work towards ending all forms of violence against women. The Council has been reaccredited as a White Ribbon authority recognising the Council's commitment to work to end violence and abuse and ensure survivors can access help and support.

Helping people help themselves

Significant progress has been made in delivering East Sussex Better Together (ESBT), the programme led by two local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford CCG and Hastings & Rother CCG) and East Sussex County Council to transform health and social care services. In 2016 for example, six integrated locality based teams of health and care professionals were brought under single management to deliver more cohesive care, more quickly. We launched nurse-led Crisis Response Teams, helping to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions along with a new frailty service at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust to support frail people to live independent and healthy lives out of hospital. In addition, Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC) a new integrated point of contact for adult health and care is receiving 8,000-9,000 enquiries a month.

Between April and December 2016, 100% of working age adults and older people supported by Adult Social Care received self-directed support. 98.2% of new clients who received short-term services to increase their independence made no further request for support. This means that more service users are planning how they want their social care needs met and have more control over their support. In addition in, 2016-17 so far, 2,872 people have been supported by STEPS, which helps people maintain independence within their own homes.

We took part in a national survey of carers sending surveys to 953 carers in East Sussex and receiving 535 responses. 73.9% of respondents said they were either extremely, very or quite satisfied with the support they receive from Adult Social Care, an improvement from 72.6% reported in 2014/15. Public Health has been leading a programme of work to tackle the health effects of cold homes. Work included training frontline professionals to enable them to identify people living in cold homes and refer them onto appropriate services. 374 referrals to the Winter Home Check were made between October and December 2016. Public Health also developed a Stay Well this Winter campaign and helped to develop a Locally Enhanced Service for GP staff to help them identify patients at risk of fuel poverty.

Making the best use of our resources

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2017/18 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on the 7th February 2017. The budget includes spending of £365 million on services for East Sussex and a £95 million capital budget for one off projects. It also includes savings of £17 million, a 3 per cent Adult Social Care levy and a 1.99 per cent council tax increase.

The Orbis partnership between East Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council aims to improve the quality and resilience of business services and provide savings to both authorities. In December 2016, the Orbis Joint Committee and the Cabinet approved in principle, Brighton and Hove City Council joining the partnership as a founding partner. This is aligned with our ambition to grow Orbis and is a positive endorsement of the partnership. In addition, plans to bring together the legal operations of Surrey County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and East and West Sussex County Councils were signed off. The aim is to create greater resilience, reduce duplication, generate income and deliver savings of £1 million a year'.

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

'Without question, for me as one of your District Councillors, the year has been dominated by two significant matters, namely the changes to the District Ward electoral boundaries and the proposals for a new Local Plan.

Last year I reported on the proposals to reduce the number of District Councillors from the present 55, representing a mix of one, two and three member wards to 45, largely representing single member wards. At present the parishes of Arlington and Hellingly make up a single district council ward represented by two district councillors. The final changes approved by the Boundary Commission and which came into effect on 16 December 2016, will take effect for the District Council elections in May 2019. At that time Arlington Parish will be split from Hellingly Parish, and together with the Parishes of Alciston, Berwick, Chalvington with Ripe, Laughton, and Selmeston will form a new single member ward known as Arlington Ward. An early suggestion to extend the boundaries of two new Hailsham Wards to include Hempstead Lane West as part of a new Hailsham West, and Robin Post Lane and the Glade as part of a new Hailsham South, and to which I had objected, was rejected in favour of retaining the A22 Hailsham by pass as a clearly defined boundary between the town of Hailsham and the rural parish of Arlington, thereby keeping the whole of the present Arlington Parish intact. I must confess to being saddened at the proposed split of Arlington from Hellingly as I believe that the two rural parishes had much in common and that present arrangements have worked well to provide effective representation on the District Council.

In September 2015, as part of the review of the Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, a requirement of the planning inspector when giving approval to the CSLP, Wealden published its draft proposals (the Issues, Options and Recommendations Draft) for a new local plan for the period to 2037. These provided for a total of 20,000 new dwellings, (12500 beyond the 7500 already provided for in the 2013 plan), and for 9380 of those to be located in an expanded Hailsham. I say Hailsham but in reality 5380 of the new dwellings were to be located on an area of Arlington Parish, west of the A22, and the majority of the balance of 4000 allocated to North Hailsham in what in reality is Hellingly Parish. Both are rural Parishes, both, together with Hailsham town, lack the essential infrastructure that necessary to facilitate such an enormous amount of growth at a time when even the limited infrastructure promised as part of earlier plans since 2005, has not been delivered although over 4000 of the initial 7500 dwellings have already been built.

In September 2015 Wealden also published a new Objectively Assessed Housing Needs figure (a requirement of Central Government) showing that Wealden needed to build a total of 835 new dwellings, year on year, for the foreseeable future and that based upon this assessment the District was failing to show a five year supply (another requirement of Central Government). In the absence of a proven five year land supply, government implies a presumption that local plans for new development are out of date and that planning consent should be granted for new developments unless material considerations suggest otherwise. The net result of this taken with the Council's invitation to landowners and developers to put forward land for development, the government's relaxation of permitted development rights for the conversion of redundant rural structures, and the building of up to three new dwellings on farms has resulted in a rush of approvals for new building on sites not previously

considered appropriate for residential development and in most cases not where local residents wished to see development.

Notwithstanding the considerable opposition to the proposals in the IOR draft, with over 60% of those commenting on the proposals for Hailsham being opposed, the Council initially decided to progress the work on its original proposals which were to be confirmed in October 2016 and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination and confirmation early in 2017. However in October 2016 we learnt that work on the studies, needed to support the plan, was not complete and that publication would be delayed until March 2017. In March we learnt that those studies, which included an assessment of the impact of the development on the internationally protected Ashdown Forest, showed that the Forest was being damaged and that any further development above the levels set out in the CSLP 2013 would result in further irreparable damage. In consequence the housing numbers were reduced first to 14,101 and then to 11,456 which after allowing for the 7500 already provided in adopted local plans, left a figure of c4000 of which only 2500 would be located in and around Hailsham. At the same time the period of the plan was to be reduced from 2037 to 2028 but the OHAN figure was increased to 930 dwellings year on year. But none of the development over that already given consent could take place unless and until it could be shown that it would not contribute to the damage being caused to the Forest or until compensatory measures (the provision of alternative heath land) to offset the damage are in place.

With the significant reduction in the housing proposed for Hailsham the threat of substantial development in Arlington Parish, west of the A22 Hailsham by pass, is removed, at least for the present. The new dwellings for Hailsham are now likely to be built in Hellingly (1500) with the balance in East and South Hailsham, but all delayed until the issues of the Forest are resolved. Similarly the new plan proposals to allocate 38,500 sqm of employment space on land north of the A22 between Golden Cross and the Boship will also be conditional upon a resolution of the problems of the Forest. In addition there is still a problem with Southern Water unable to deal with additional connections to the main sewers until they have upgraded the Hailsham North and South Treatment Works which is not scheduled to be completed until 2022. Just what development takes place, where and when, therefore remains to be seen. In the meantime the Council still needs to address the problems of the lack of adequate infrastructure to meet the demands of the development that has so far been approved under the earlier plans.

In addition to boundary changes and development the normal work of Wealden continues. The Government continues to expect District Councils to continue to make savings whilst at the same time expecting delivery of the same level of service. For several years Wealden has made savings and at the same time has been able to restrict increases in Council tax by taking advantage of financial support previously available from the government to those Councils limiting increases in council tax to under 2%. However that support is no longer available and in addition to any increases resulting from additional demands from the County, the Police and Fire service and the Parish, Wealden is raising Council tax by £5 on a Band D property from £3.41 per week to £3.51 per week. Whilst any increases are to be regretted they are inevitable if the level of service is to be protected.

The Government is also continuing with its objective of making local councils self-sufficient, removing reliance upon grants from central government and introducing the localisation of business rates under which local authorities retain the rates raised from local business which have previously been redistributed through central government. Wealden does not have a substantial business rate to rely upon with many small businesses entitled to claim rate relief. It is therefore important for the Council to seek other ways on raising income and with this in mind the Council has resolved to build, and operate, a crematorium at Horam. It is hoped that this will both provide a profit for the community as well as providing a service not presently available in Wealden.

There have been other matters at Wealden which have affected and will affect the Parish and its parishioners to some extent. These have been referred to in the reports that Councillor Mark Pinkney and I have given to the Parish Council's monthly meetings. In this report I have sought only to highlight what I believe to be some of the more important matters.'

District Councillor White's report was supported by District Councillor Pinkney who added that with all the changes nationally, Councils in the future will have to unite to get the services they require.

6. REPORT FROM LARAC MEETING – The Chairman read from the following summary of the LARAC Meetings.

The LARAC Committee met on two occasions this year. Councillors Mike Garner, Victoria Radtke and Jo Robinson-Sivyer attended from the Parish Council. Councillor Helen Proctor chaired the meetings and Matt Hitchens from the Cricket Club also attended.

Upper Dicker's well equipped playground continues to be well used by local families as well as some from further afield. The Parish Council carries out monthly inspections and ROSPA submits an annual report. Defects noted in reports are acted upon and hazardous equipment may be cordoned off, pending repair.

The recreation ground, like other areas became extremely wet, following continuous winter rain. Earlier clearance of a field drain at the roadside reduced the amount of flooding previously experienced. The recreation ground, including the cricket square has again been well maintained by our contractors who we would like to thank for their sterling work. Litter bins and further notices regarding litter and prevention of dog fouling have been provided. Regular risk assessments are completed voluntarily by Councillors on all Parish Council controlled land.

The Dicker Copse benefitted from work party meetings in April and November. Members cut brambles, dog wood and protruding roots. They also thinned out trees, removed a dead tree removed barbed wire and picked up litter. They also successfully applied for and planted a hedge pack from the Woodland Trust. Members of the Cricket Club helped plant the Hazel and Holly saplings recently and also watered them on subsequent occasions.

The allotments were fenced this year and the Parish Council received a petition asking for dogs to be allowed. The Parish Council sent out a questionnaire to all the allotment holders to canvas their opinion and because the majority agreed, it agreed to allow dogs on a trial basis.

A competition was also launched to seek a landscaped design for Upper Dicker's village green. Further consultation ensued, leading to some amendments being made. Councillor Radtke and Robinson-Sivyer successfully applied for funding and the work is now underway.

In January the decision was made to disband the Committee because Councillors agreed there was no longer any need to have a separate Committee for Leisure and Recreation items as all such items can be covered at Full Council.

7. REPORTS FROM CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS – Reports were circulated from Dicker Links, Dicker Village Hall and Bede's School which described their organisation's activities for the past year. Copies of the reports are available on the Parish Council website or from the Clerk upon request.

8. WEALDEN PLAN UPDATE – This was covered under District Councillor White's Report. He also warned that if the Planning Inspector rejects the Plan, parishes will need to have their arguments ready.

Councillor White also updated residents on the timing of the Plan. He said the Plan is expected to be approved by Full Council in June and a six week public consultation will take place over the summer. It will then be submitted to the Planning Inspector and adoption is planned for early 2018. If the Plan is successful it will cover up to 2028, if it is unsuccessful there will be chaos.

9. COMMUNITY ASSET REGISTER – Residents expressed concern over the future of the pubs in Arlington and asked the Parish Council to consider registering The Yew Tree and The Old Oak as Assets of Community Value so that they have the opportunity to bid for them if they come up for sale. They said both are important social hubs and they would hate to lose them. Councillors agreed to put this item on the agenda for the next Full Council Meeting.

10. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION – Residents liked the changes made to the Village Green and suggested photographs should be put on the website. The Clerk confirmed an article about the work is on the website.

Councillor Parson clarified a point made in the Bede's Report. He said Full Planning Permission can not be granted for the Stud Farm application until the S106 has been modified.

There being no further questions, this meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....