

MINUTES OF WHATLINGTON ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON THURSDAY 17th MARCH 2016 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00pm

PRESENT:- Councillor Fisher in the Chair
Councillors, Eade, Underhill and White
District Council Rowlinson
County Councillor Field

Apologies – Councillor Apthorp
PCSO Phillips

There were 13 local electors attending.

SPEAKER MR T KEMP ON ROTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Mr Kemp introduced himself and their treasurer Chis and advised the coordinators for Whatlington are Simon White and Paul Wood.

He explained the group is run by residents for residents with no cost to be a member.. The group send out 6 newsletters a year and weekly information on what is currently happening, when you join you receive a comprehensive Crime Prevention pack including leaflets on home, car and personal security. As a member you will also have access to discounts via a privilege card system which operate in many local shops.in some local shops and it may reduce your home insurance.

Chris then said residents could also consider having CCTV, solar powered led lights and other deterrents. He then explained that he had designed a new Neighbourhood Watch sign, more colorful than the current one. They believe Whatlington would need 3 signs and they would be responsible for putting the signs up, The clerk advised that at the moment we have two signs,, ones near the post box opposite Senlac Farm and is on a East Sussex County Council pole with the council having a licence, the second. as the cost for Highways England to attach was prohibitive is in the front garden of Vinehall Farm.. Simon White advised all properties were leafleted 10 days ago and forms are slowly being returned. Mr. Kemp advised he was available to give a talk to any group who would like this. The Chairman thanked him for his interesting and informative talk

1 PARISH COUNCIL – REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN ROGER FISHER.

The new council began with a vacancy which was promptly filled by Councillor Scott volunteering to join as a co-opted member and I would commence this report by thanking her for stepping in and her particular contribution to council business over the year. We would have had some distinct difficulties in the effectiveness of the council if we had had to run with a vacancy for any period of time.

As in the past I'll commence with some statistics. Councillors achieved a 79% attendance (similar to last year) and we averaged 6.5 member of the public attending each meeting. This, also, was at a similar level to the early years of the previous council, but disguises the fact that one issue - road naming - attracted attendance from 14!

On planning it was a comparatively quiet year with the council being asked to comment on 11 applications. With reference to our precept, councillors agreed a 3.3% rise. This in order to maintain a level of recommended budget contingency whilst continuing to enable the council to meet the needs and demands of the Village and its organisations

The new council also reviewed the existing Financial Planning Policies, Asset Register and Planning Policy - which was amended after discussion.

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN REPORT CONTINUED

New matters concluded during the year included repairs to the Village Hall car park and an, improved, Parish Council website. A valuable addition to village assets was the acquisition, via the Sussex Heart Foundation of a defibrillator. This has been sited at the Royal Oak, and my thanks to Neil and Maria and Shepherd Neame for facilitating this and to the 8 volunteers who undertook a course in CPR, also arranged by the Foundation. This facility has subsequently been further improved by the addition of lighting at the site - again with thanks to Neil and Maria.

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A review of district ward boundaries has resulted in Whatlington being joined with Battle Watch Oak and Netherfield as a District Council Ward

Two other matters concluded during this year were the decision not to have a village barn dance in 2016 and that the reinstatement of the village spring was not a viable financial proposition. These decisions have two common threads, a question of affordability and support for them from villagers. In both instances lack of support was key to deciding not to proceed. Evidence for this for the former was the lack of attendance at

the last event and for the latter as it has not been raised as an issue of concern in responses to the 2016 Village Plan.

With regard to the Village Plan, councillors decided, early in the year, to revisit the 2010 plan and to update. Accordingly questionnaires were delivered, via the Village News, to all household in the Parish last year, with a cut-off date for submission being 31st December. By that time some 31 replies had been received, which was 3 more than for the 2010 plan. This is currently being analysed and will be reported on shortly.

As ever, and inevitably, there are matters that remain to be resolved. We still seek improvements to safety on our road, particularly the A21. The discussion on road names continues as does the siting of a new electric substation. The 2016 Village plan will feed into the council's policies and activities for the foreseeable future.

Finally my thanks to councillor's, Parish, District: and County for the continued, constructive contributions to council business. To the village organizations that continue to promote the spirit of community: the Village News, not only in supporting this but also providing this council with an effective channel of communication to all villagers: the Parish clerk who strives to keep us in line with the administrative essentials

2 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ROWLINSON

First for the inevitable gloom. We were sent some stats and they are staggering.

Rother's funding has been reduced by £800,000 for 2016/17 but with the savings already made can still deliver a balanced budget for that year. Further savings of £450,000 (2017/18), £800,000 (2018/19) and £840,000 (2019/20) will have to be found. By 2019/20 the funding Rother receives from government will have been reduced by approximately £6 million since 2010.

To meet this challenge of reduced funding reduced staffing and reducing reserves Rother have had to evolve. It is now a far leaner organisation. So far the majority of services have been maintained but they need to constantly keep looking for new ways to deliver those services, look at who can deliver those services or if indeed anyone else can deliver those services.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ROWLINSON REPORT CONTINUED

For me one of the best outcomes of this is having so much more on the website and hopefully everyone here is signed up to my alerts. Get all the info from bins collection to any planning applications. By doing more routine things online we are freeing up officer time for those areas that require more thought.

The main website www.rother.gov.uk has been up and running 99.96% of the time. It has had nearly 500,000 unique hits in nine months. That is nearly 100,000 more unique website visitors than the same period last year. 95% financial transactions are conducted online

The amount of waste sent for recycling and re-use continues to improve year on year. The result for the whole of 2014/15 was 45%. In 2015, performance month on month is comparable and currently about 49%. Our target is to achieve at least 50%. There have been some serious problems with missed bins but the figures here are that missed bins are reducing - I really hope that you have seen this happen here.

Rother continues to run its Community Grant Scheme which I know you benefited from which gives funding to community projects and good causes, especially in the rural areas. This year, the Council set aside £10,000 for a small grant scheme to help celebrate the 950th Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings in October 2016.

Regeneration of the district is key. We finally have the new Bexhill to Hastings Link Road. Crucially this is going to provide 50,000 sq. m of business space. So important as Rother will in the future be more and more dependent on business rates to fund services.

Finally thank you for bearing with me as I'm still learning. And can I finally say how well I think this parish council works. You seem to get through so much with the minimum of fuss. Most rare and impressive

3 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR FIELD

Budget

- In many ways this has been the dominant feature this year
- Council tax is to rise by 3.99% which includes 2% Adult Social Care levy
- Revenue Support Grant to be phased out. The cut this year was more than expected and almost exactly the same as the 2% ASC levy
- Councils will be allowed to keep business rates but it is not clear what will happen to net importers

Devolution

- The Council is currently working on a bid with W Sussex and Surrey
- There are many Governance issues to be clarified
- The situation regarding an elected Mayor is not clear
- Ground breaking in that it is 3 separate Counties
- The economy of the 3 counties is in excess of £70bn
- There is already joint working with Surrey in the shape of Orbis. This was launched in April 2015 to provide resilience and quality in business services as well as savings to both councils. An early project is paperless billing

East Sussex Better Together

- This is a three year programme led by two local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford CCG and Hastings & Rother CCG) together with East Sussex County Council to transform health and social care Services are the front line for the NHS and if the organisations are working together properly the need for acute beds will reduce.

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- **COUNTY COUNCILLOR FIELD REPORT CONTINUED**
- The integrated locality teams that will support older adults and those with long-term conditions will be implemented by April 2016
- Reformed commissioning functions across health and social care will be implemented by July 2016.
- The ambition of ESBT is to develop a fully integrated Health and Social Care system in East Sussex by 2018, ensuring every patient or service user enjoys proactive, joined up care which supports them to live as independently as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Funding is coming from the Government's Better Care Fund
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Young Carers

- The Council is working with East Sussex Young Carers, a charity which supports carers aged between five and 18 across the county
- A new 'working together' policy has been launched. It aims to ensure that young carers and their families get the support they need.
- The policy stresses the responsibility of all agencies to identify any issues or needs young carers might have when they first come into contact with them and aims for a more coordinated approach within and across the organisations to ensure young carers' needs are identified and met at the earliest opportunity.

Ofsted

- Ofsted body which inspects and regulates services that care for children is the national and young people as well as services providing education and skills for learners
- It has reported back on its inspection of the Council's arrangements for supporting school improvement.
- The School Improvement Service had previously been rated as 'ineffective' in June 2014
- The latest inspection took place in November 2015 and the report, which no longer gives rating categories, recognised the impact of the Council's improvement activity and the difference this is making to the performance of schools and the outcomes for children and young people.
- Ofsted has not identified a need to re-inspect the service.

Libraries

- The result of the consultation on opening hours has not been published and to date there are no recommendations
- I hope that hours will be extended in the evenings even if this means closing on more days.
- It is important to provide access to young people who are not currently using the service as much as older people. Homework often requires the use of IT and not all young people have access at home; it is available in libraries

Highways

- A new seven-year contract for the provision of highway services in the county will start on 1st May.
- The contract with the civil engineering and construction company Costain CH2M will replace the existing arrangement where there were three separate contractors responsible for highways, street lighting and traffic signals.
- The new deal gives the Council greater certainty over the cost of highway services for the next seven years and includes a number of incentives and penalties to ensure the best possible service is provided to the public.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FIELD REPORT CONTINUED

- Highways Stewards, who are responsible for inspecting the county's roads, will be given more powers to fix minor road defects This will allow the work to be carried out more quickly and efficiently.

Waste

- Diverting waste from landfill during annual maintenance works at the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility saved around £23,000 and reduced the impact on the environment.
- Waste which would otherwise have been sent to landfill during the planned shutdown was diverted to other energy recovery facilities in the south east.
- Around 3,500 tonnes of waste, which would otherwise have been destined for landfill, was diverted to facilities in Kent and south east London. This not only saves money but means rubbish is turned into electricity to power homes and businesses via the National Grid, which makes it a greener, more cost-effective way of dealing with the annual maintenance shut down.
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5 REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

GOOD COMPANIONS

January 14th Lunch at The Queen's Head, Sedlescombe

February 25th Lunch at the Queen's Head, Sedlescombe

March 25th Lunch at The King's Head, Battle

April 22nd Lunch at The Royal Oak. Whatlington

May Postponed and two meetings in June

June 2nd Lunch at the Royal Oak. Whatlington

June 3rd Summer Luncheon, Bring & Share at Whatlington Village Hall

July 22nd Visit to The Orangery Tea Rooms for lunch. Walk in the lovely grounds and visit to the church.

August 26th Visit to Herstmonceux Castle & Grounds. Guided tour of castle & cream teas.

September 23rd Lunch at The Abbey Hotel, Battle

October 28th Lunch at The Royal Oak, Whatlington

November 25th Christmas lunch at Whatlington Village Hall. Bring & Share.

6. SUSSEX POLICE – PCSO PHILLIPS

PCSO Phillips reported 6 incidents of crime over the 12 months commencing February 2015 Excluding RTA and domestics,

7 ST. MARY MAGDALENE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT FROM JEFFREY BRIDGES

Whatlington has been a United Benefice with Sedlescombe since 1924, however the two churches have seemingly always operated as separate entities, sharing one Rector. The Diocese of Chichester, along with many others is struggling with diminishing resources and rising costs, the Bishop, Martin Warner is keen that every church does something to seek to encourage growth.

Against this background more and more rural parishes are finding that as clergy either retire or move on, the posts are not filled with full time people, but instead with House for Duty clergy, as we have at Sedlescombe and Whatlington. Those filling the House for Duty posts are either working in secular jobs, or retired and thus available for a limited amount of time each week.

ST MARY MAGDALENE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT CONTINUED

For our Benefice we are seeking to draw the two churches closer together and also looking at new ways of doing things. To this end there is a modified pattern of church services, on the fifth Sunday of the month, where this occurs, there will be a United Benefice service, alternating between the churches, it was Whatlington in January and will be Sedlescombe in May.

FIRST SUNDAY

The 10.30am Family service at Sedlescombe will cease to be Eucharistic; there will be a Eucharist on this Sunday at Whatlington at 09.30.

SECOND SUNDAY

The Whatlington All Age service will continue at 10.30am on the second Sunday of every month, generally being taken by either a Reader or visiting clergy, there is a 10.30 Eucharist at Sedlescombe on this Sunday.

THIRD SUNDAY

Remains unchanged, 09.30 at Whatlington, 10.30 at Sedlescombe.

FOURTH SUNDAY

Sedlescombe remains at 10.30am with a Eucharist, while at Whatlington, April to October we will introduce an evening service at 6pm, the first will be a Sung Evensong for St. George's Day on April 24th. Between November and March the fourth Sunday will see a return to an 09.30 Parish Communion.

We hope that the evening service will prove attractive and hope people will join us, they will all be followed with light refreshments.

The PCC are always open to comments and feedback with ideas to help sustain the church.

Looking to the more immediate future, the Easter services will be a service of hymns and readings at 5pm on Good Friday. On Easter Sunday we have an 09.30 Easter Communion, taken by Rev. Angela Cooke and followed with refreshments.

Following the All Age service on 10th April the church will be holding the Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 11.45am. This is essentially our AGM where we present the Annual Report and accounts and elect the PCC, church officers and churchwardens.

We were very sorry to learn that Ken Jones will be standing down as warden and are very appreciative of all that he has done in that role to help the church, during a tenure that included the fire and subsequent restoration. The PCC are keen to find new people to come forward and join us to become involved in the running of the church, if anyone is interested please ask me.

Churchyard

Last year the PCC employed professional help to cut the grass in the churchyard, the results were very good, but the cost was prohibitive at £1300. This year we hope to manage things with volunteer help and Yvonne Underhill has kindly offered to co-ordinate this, so if anyone is able to help, please contact Yvonne. It is planned to keep certain areas for wild flowers, as was done last year, we also hope to be able to keep the brambles at bay in the lower part of the churchyard, where at present there are no graves.

The Lime trees in the churchyard, planted along the old boundary line were in times past kept pollarded, latterly they have not been maintained and this is something we hope to attend to, however this is all subject to resources being available.

There is ongoing concern over vehicles driving up the church path, mistakenly thinking it is a roadway, a South East Water van has recently done this and demolished a seat, which is the subject of an insurance claim which is pending.

ST MARY MAGDALENE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT CONTINUED

Building

There are some stonework repairs currently pending inside the tower and some other exterior areas to be observed against probable future attention. With an old building there is always something to do, irrespective of what has already been done.

Chandelier

The brass chandelier, which was severely damaged in the fire of 2010, has been away at West Dean College, near Chichester for restoration. We are presently assured that it will be back by Easter, however, it will still need to be wired for electric light as it was formerly candle only and will then need to be re-hung, along with the Sanctuary lamp. It is curious that the chandelier, which has never been wired for electric light, was found to have been drilled ready for it many, many years ago. The chandelier is believed to have been given to the church pre-war by Reverend Browell.

8. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT FROM ANNETTE McBRIDE CHAIRMAN

We are now entering our third year as the Committee of Whatlington Village Hall and I am very pleased to say that we are very delighted with the progress we have made.

As I am sure you are all aware we hold the Fete - the Festive suppers - and for the first time in April are holding a Wine Tasting - in May we are to hold a picnic in the Field - followed by a musical evening in the Hall - covering all types of music from Latin for the Olympics - to Regal for the Queen's birthday and if wet maybe some Handel's water music - that will then give us the four funding raising events for the year which was our objective - I feel that the Village Hall is very much more on the map - as a venue for functions and parties and organisations to use - which in itself is a good thing and also help us to raise necessary funds - to keep up the ever needy repairs and upgrading. Obviously with the constant help of the Parish Council we have been able to complete and upgrade very necessary items i.e. roof and electrics.

We were very sad to lose our booking clerk Patricia Begg - Pauline Lyon has taken over and we seem to be on an uptrend with new bookings - we have just taken a booking for the whole year-term time only - for the dog training group (and as a bonus they thoroughly clean the floor each Friday night)

We have Battle House of Flowers three times a year a full week's booking on each occasion - the Sedlescombe Guides each week term time only - we also have other regular hirers and quite a few one off hirers.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40pm