

**MINUTES OF WHATLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY
16th MARCH 2017 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30pm**

PRESENT:- Councillor Fisher in the Chair
Councillors Apthorp, Scott, Underhill and White
County Councillor Field

1) OPEN SESSION / LATE ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

There were 12 local electors attending

Councillor Field said she would like to mention two items - firstly the government is to give the County Council 11.7 million pounds toward Social Care costs. It is not clear yet whether the 3% council tax County was going to put towards this, is including in this amount.

Secondly Schools- The NFF is aimed at reducing the discrepancies between Local Authorities in per pupil funding. The London Boroughs stand to lose most from this redistribution. It is a rearrangement of the same pot of money and applies to Academies, Free Schools and LA schools. Under the proposals which are undergoing round 2 of consultations the schools which would not lose out are those which comply with the preferred Academy model; secondary's with 1,000+ pupils and primaries with 2 form entry. 43% of East Sussex Schools do not meet these criteria. This is because most of them are in rural locations serving small rural communities. After round 1 of consultations the government recognised this problem by introducing a "Sparsity Factor" which gives additional funding to those schools which are 5 miles or more from their nearest school. BUT the distance is measured as the crow flies not by the route taken by the road and leaves most East Sussex schools without additional help. We fear that this could result in the closure of some small schools. This will undermine communities and lead to more traffic on our rural roads. In addition to this Local Authorities retain the duty to get children to school in most circumstances so we expect even more pressure on the Home to School Transport budget which already costs us millions. This might be old news as an informed source and mutterings on the radio are suggesting that the Government might be about to have a rethink.

LATE ITEMS

The Boundary Commission for England has published and consulted on their initial proposals for new constituency boundaries. They intend to publish all the representations on 28th February 2017 and invite comments on them for four week until Monday 27th March the website for this is www.bce2018.org.uk.

2) APOLOGIES

District Councillor Barnes and PCSO Phillips

3) DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Councillors Apthorp and White declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in item 11 as both are members of the Village Hall committee.

4) MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 19th January 2017 and the Planning meeting on the 16th February 2017, copies of both had been circulated.

The minutes were then proposed by Councillor Fisher confirmed and signed.

4) MATTERS ARISING

- a) Blocked drains along the C.293. The clerk had been informed a mistake had been made in the information given and the drains had not been cleared, the work will now be done in the coming weeks.
- b) Siting of double white lines on the A.21 junction of Riccards and Stream Lane - Highways England have advised they agree the work is needed to be done for traffic safety and they are now applying for funds not from the general monies but from the Safety funds for the work. Once this is agreed they will engage contractors and carry out all the necessary road orders.
- c) Amendment of car park lease. Letter received from landowner accepting the parish council decision at the October 2016 council meeting on the amendment to Clause 2 (3). A copy has been forwarded to the hall committee for their records.

5) CORRESPONDENCE

- a) This was on the agenda purely for records purposes as councillor's had already been advised. The copy of the confirmation of diversion order for footpath was received from Rother District Council too late for the January meeting.
- b) Whatlington Village Hall Committee asked if the council would agree to have a notice erected in the car park against Dog Fouling on the verge sides. After discussion it was agreed as this could not be enforced a notice would not be suitable.
- c) Mr. Tassell had inspected the fencing around the car park and advised seven of the posts need to be replaced. The cost for this would be approximately £350.00. After discussion it was resolved to have the work carried out. A cheque in payment will be drawn on completion of the work.

6) REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR SCOTT ON THE SUSSEX AND SURREY LOCAL COUNCILS SPRING CONFERENCE.

Councillor Scott had circulated papers from the conference to councillor's. She said it had been a very interesting meeting. Katy Bourne the police and Crime commissioner spoke about the lack of money for the police force. locally. Trading Standards due to the many scams now happening have started a new initiative 'Friends against Scams' and there is good advice for this on their website. She asked that the details be put on the council website, the clerk will do this. Details on this was also given to the village newsletter editor

THE CLERK- REPORT ON THE PROCEDURE AND FINANCE MEETING

We are already carrying out probably 95% of what should do but there are a few areas we need to consider.

1- Detailing who our chosen internal auditor was in the minutes. We now have to send a copy of the minutes regarding the auditor to our External Auditors. This is covered in agenda item 9

2- We do not have a councillor checking the finances during the year. As all our financial dealing are carried out at our meetings, apart from maybe two cheques a year between meetings, this has always been thought satisfactory, the Chairman does sign the bank statements at each meeting.

3-As there has been problems with some council regarding injury to members of the public from council owned trees and property and Insurance Companies do not always pay out if maintenance checks are not carried out. Perhaps, when we review our Health and Safety policy although the small trees we have should not cause a problem loose fencing may and an annual check of the fencing should be made. Councillors agreed to discuss this at our May meeting.

4-We have never had this problem but some councils have even gone to court over it. We were advised that the minutes are the clerk's interpretation of the meeting and should not be altered except for correction of spelling, places or names. If a councillor differs with the wording in the minutes a paragraph needs to be added at the end of the minutes stating –Councillor X interpretation of Agenda item X is ----- This informs the public that there was a difference of opinion.

7) REVIEW OF EQUALITY POLICY

After discussion the policy was approved

8) REQUEST FROM VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE TO MAKE THE TOP BAR EASIER TO MOVE.

The clerk had a meeting with Ripley Forge and Fireplaces Ltd, Robertsbridge, blacksmith and a quote for £456.00 including vat has now been received. This covers re-working the top bar to swing open onto a stand similar to the lower bar- Straighten the bar and add a handle to make it easier to lift off-Braze on 7cm to each side post to re-align height back to original two metres. It was suggested that a lighter bar could be used but the existing metal is the narrowest that should be used for the length of the bar.

After discussion it was resolved to accept the quote. A cheque for payment will be drawn on completion of the work. The Chairman of the Village Hall Committee said they could not find in the car park lease where it said the top bar only to be removed when work is being carried out on the car park. As the clerk did not have the lease with her the Chairman said we will check and write to them also to the Church Warden who requested to also be informed as they use the car park

9) APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR ACCOUNTS 2016-2017

The appointment of David Coupee who lives in Sedlescombe and is an accountant was agreed.

10 PLANNING

RR/2017/435/P Harpenden, Whatlington Road Mr. & Mrs. K Fox
 Proposed outbuilding (to replace dilapidated buildings)
 for workshop / store ancillary to residential use.

A neighbour has advised the council that they are concerned about lighting.

After discussion it was resolved to support the application but forward the council's concern regarding Intrusive Lighting or noise from the replacement building.

11) FINANCE

The balance in Barclays Bank as at the 16th March 2017 was current account £403.13 and
 Deposit account £8556.82

Two accounts paid between meetings

100719 Sussex & Surrey Local Council Ltd. - Councillors Training - £48.00

100720 Sussex & Surrey Local Council Ltd - Clerks Training - £90.00

There were two accounts to pay:-

100721 V. Bennett – Salary - £1235.50

100722 V. Bennett - Administration costs - £97.80

12) GRANT REQUESTS

Councillors Apthorp and White declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in discussion of a grant for the Village Hall Committee and took no part in the discussion for this.

After discussion it was resolved to pay the following:-

100723 Good Companions - To help with running costs - £100.00

100724 Whatlington Village Hall Committee- Upgrading the Hall - £1025.00

The extra £25 than allocated in finances taken from unused monies in section 137

100725 Rother Rural Trust - £50.00

100726 St Mary Magdalene PCC – Purchase of new lawn mower - £425.00

Cheques were drawn and signed; a transfer from savings account to cover all cheques drawn will be made.

13) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This will be the Annual Meeting of the council on Thursday 18th May 2017 at 7.30pm,

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40. p.m.

Minutes remain in draft format until approved at the next Meeting of the Council