

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 13th FEBRUARY 2012 AT 8.00 PM IN THE FOREST ROOM RESTAURANT, BALCOMBE SOCIAL CLUB.

Present: Messrs. Robin Williamson, Robin Lindsay Stewart, Rodney Saunders, Peter Huxley (transport problems arrived 9.20 p m), Mike Talman, Alan Dearden. Mesdames Alison Stevenson, Linda Short, Catherine Dennison & Carol Jarvest.

In attendance: Richard Greig – Clerk to the Council.

At the beginning of the meeting, Haywards Heath based Inspector Paul Tomlinson from Sussex Police gave a short talk & answered questions on local matters. Councillors agreed that the attention given to local crime matters was satisfactory bearing in mind current policing constraints & that PCSO Jayne Milne together with PC Richard Wooding were providing good service to our community. Our now improved NHW scheme, backed up through a number of new volunteers, was being well supported & proving successful.

2854. Public Participation

5 members of the public attended. Mrs Susie Horne spoke asking for clarification on the constitution & terms of reference of the newly formed Fracking Working Group. The Vice Chairman answered this.

2855. Declaration of personal or prejudicial interest

Cllr. Mike Talman declared a personal interest in respect of an existing application **(BA)/11/03653/FUL & 03654/CON** – Dean Land Shaw, Jobes.

2856 Apologies for Absence

Simon Greenwood (on leave).

2857. To approve Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th January 2012

The minutes, having been circulated to all Members, were approved & signed by the Chairman as a true record.

2858. Matters Arising

2840 – (BA)/12/00071/TCA - The Coppice tree application. Cllr. Stevenson clarified the misunderstanding that had been communicated via our District Councillor & explained that there had been no favourable handling. The Tree Officer, after inspection, had now approved the application without dissent although to date no felling had taken place.

2843 – School parking/Crossing Patrol problems- Cllr. Saunders reported on a recent meeting with the school Head Teacher. The situation regarding the congestion on the Westup road needed some firm intervention & with the co-operation of Balcombe Estate more drastic steps such as coning & improved signage. Mention was made of new WSCC Community backing. Recruitment of the additional Crossing Attendant was reported to be progressing.

As regards a controlled pedestrian crossing outside the school this would involve complete rebuilding/reassessment of the present mini-roundabout area at a cost that under present circumstances would be impossible to fund.

2850 - (BA)/11/04052/FUL & 04053/LBC - Bagpiths Cottage. The Chairman mentioned that this application might be resubmitted to MSDC shortly with the existing withdrawn.

2851 – Switchover Meeting – refer **2865** below.

2868 – Jubilee celebrations. Nicky Evans was now in touch & fan update provided in due course.

2836 - Bretts. Following discussion at full committee on 19th January the application had been refused. However a renewed application had now been received – refer **2864** below.

2859. Urgent Matters – items not on the agenda that the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

The Chairman advised Members that matters relating to a personnel matter would be discussed in camera at the conclusion of the open proceedings.

2860. Financial

a). Cash Book Receipts & Payments for January – noted as presented.
b). Budget 2012/13 – the RFO mentioned that this needs to be finalised at the March meeting – the last of the current financial year. At present it seemed that we should be left with a reserve of around £22k, but this did not cover any contingency for the cost of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2861. Working Groups & reports from Group Leaders on

a). *Housing & Environment* - refer comments on Neighbourhood Plan.
b). *Safety & Security* – Cllr. Dearden reported recent attendance at NHW Parish meeting. The locally arranged Saturday drop in had certainly raised Balcombe NHW's profile & was well supported. Crime figures had been released recently & these mirrored details mentioned by the visiting speaker in his earlier talk. Agreed that in future a footpaths map be included in the welcome pack, serviced from Council stocks.

c). *Young People* – Cllr. Jarvest updated Members with the good news that the contract with AirS had now been signed & that active recruitment of a Youth Worker seemed positive. Training is to be provided by WSCVYS. Club meetings would resume on Mondays in the pavilion in due course. The meeting of the Mid Sussex Rural Partnership was attended on 24th January by herself & Cllr. Dennison.

Equipment purchase from MSDC allocated funds was still being researched with Mark Hayler & there were several ideas. Regrettably due to need for provide privacy to adjoining premises it seemed that it would not now be possible to instal a replacement slide.

Cllr. Jarvest additionally reported on her recent attendance at a VHMC meeting. BPC had recently paid one invoice (for toilet renovation) direct; there was a pending order for a new sound system from Avensis & the balance of the allocation would be drawn down by the end of the year. Agreed that we should again budget for a continuing annual grant of £4.5k. Responsibility & management of the WI Room would taken over in the future through a transitional working group of the VHMC. Agreed that if Balcombe Babies were requiring funding they should apply to us in the requested format so that it could be considered.

d). *Traffic Matters* – Cllr. Saunders reported little change in conclusion of outstanding matters, namely

- WSCC securing DOT approval of their proposal to allow a stop sign adjacent to Threads
- Speed limit introduction on the High Street – the latter stretch had now been agreed in combination with the B2036.

Delays were solely due to a heavy work load at WSCC Highways & were regularly being followed up.

The promised traffic survey following an earlier visit from Miles Davey had still not materialised & in view of overall dissatisfaction following numerous excuses for non implementation Cllr. Saunders was authorised to raise our concerns at the delay directly with the Cabinet Member responsible.

There was a general discussion about village parking. Members were reminded of the earlier survey undertaken covering the village centre & Newlands & options possible, including an application for a TRO covering selected yellow lines should this be requested following a village consultation. *Councillor Dearden suggested the introduction of signs similar to those at present placed at the junction of Haywards Heath Road and Deanland Road. Such signs to be placed between Threads and the junction of Stockcroft Road and Bramble Hill.*

e). *Local Societies/Facilities & Amenities.* Cllr. Talman reported that overall the Snow Plan had been a success. There were some modifications necessary but for financial reasons, especially as this scheme is not budgeted, – Snow Plough and Gritting @ £500 +VAT per cycle of roads & Gritting only @ £295+VAT per cycle of roads - costs to date over £1k – it would be impossible to deal with every Balcombe road, especially where access was a problem e.g. Troymede & Bretts.

The contractor EFP had been excellent & will be sent a letter mentioning this. In advance of next season Cllr. Talman & the Chairman will draw up a revised rota & pre-check it with the RFO for Agreed that any snow clearance in the vicinity of Balcombe School must be dealt with by WSCC only. Applications for any additional salt bins would be considered on their merits: these could be filled from bulk stocks held locally under our control.

2862. Neighbourhood Plan – initial report from sub committee

The Chairman advised that it seemed unlikely that this could be completed before the autumn, based on the time table that she was currently drawing up in conjunction with the other group members - Councillors Jarvest, Saunders & assistance on the financial side from Cllr. Williamson (RFO). The required detail would be discussed shortly at a meeting with Clare Tester from MSDC through a Q & A session. There was a contact in Cuckfield who could be useful. In due course it would be necessary to arrange a village information exhibition as well as suitable web site featuring the plan & its advantages. Certainly the former would need extensive display work, including graphics & a large amount of descriptive material.

In April the Parish Council will be holding two information sessions to explain the new Neighbourhood Planning system. Dates to be confirmed.

Consequent to the agreement of two information sessions in April to explain the new Neighbourhood Planning system the Parish Council issued the following press release:

Neighbourhood Planning is a new form of local planning being undertaken as part of the Localism Bill due to come into force in May. Parishes are being asked to form their own plans for where any development will be placed. The process is heavily linked to future infrastructure spending in the Parish by means of the new Community Infrastructure Levy. It is ultimately subject to parish referendum.

What does this mean for Balcombe? It means that we are once again being asked to look for sites for housing. This time led by the Parish rather than the District Council. It also means that we can set out an Infrastructure Plan and say where any developer levy money is spent in the village.

The plan period is from now until 2031. This is hugely important as it will set out the plan for the village over the next 20 years. Please make the effort to come to one of the information sessions.

2863. F O I Requests

The Clerk, with the full authority & agreement of the Council, had replied to two (dealing with aspects of the Council structure) & likewise Cllr. Saunders with the other (dealing with fracking matters).

2864. Oil exploration – Lower Stumble Site & formation of a Fracking Working Group

A working group now formed, comprising four members of Balcombe Parish Council and six other residents of Balcombe - Steven Daultrey, Mostyn Field, Robert Hunter, Peter Huxley *, Carol Jarvest*, Stephanie Maier, Kathryn Metcalfe, Rodney Saunders* (Chairman), Norman Sayer, Alison Stevenson* = Member of Balcombe Parish Council.

A letter was prepared and delivered to every residence within the parish inviting residents who believed that they had relevant expertise and/or experience to volunteer to join the group.

The number of volunteers far exceeded the number of places available on the group - the selected people were felt to offer the best mix of relevant knowledge and each has agreed to serve on the group:

The group is tasked to produce a report setting out the benefits and risks associated with the proposed exploration for, and extraction of, oil or gas at the Lower Stumble site and which may involve the use of the fracking technique.

The group are bound by a rule that they will not divulge what is said before the report is published & it was felt necessary to ban outside communication to enable the group to be able to speak openly.

2865. Planning

a). For representation by 10th February 2012

(BA)/12/00127/TCA - Stumble Ridge, Oldlands Avenue -
Cupressus - fell. Lime - raise crown to 3m above ground. Lime - fell.
Lime - reduce canopy by 25%. Birch - fell.

In view of the earlier consultation between the Tree Officer & the applicant agreed we will accept MSDC's resultant decision.

For representation by 17th February 2012

(BA)/12/00136/COU - Keepers Cottages, Crawley Lane - change of use to re-provide 2 no. dwellings together with first floor extension and alterations. There would be no objection in principle to this proposal providing there are no reservations on the conversion proposals from adjoining neighbours.

For representation by 24th February 2012

(BA)/12/00288/TCA - Clayhurst, Stockcroft Road - Proposal for trees T2 to T6 inclusive as per plan. T2 - Yew, crown lift, thin and cut back off building. T3 and T4 - Limes, reduce crown to previous cut points and lift crown by 2.5m. Comply with statutory clearance over road and pathway. T5 - Yew, Crown lift and comply with statutory clearance over pathway. T6 - Lime reduce crown to previous cut points and lift crown by 2.5m. Comply with statutory clearance over road and pathway. Reduce north facing bough over drive by 50% due to a weak compression fork at union with main trunk at 2m.

In view of the earlier consultation between the Tree Officer & the applicant agreed we will accept MSDC's resultant decision.

(BA)/12/000289/TREE - Clayhurst, Stockcroft Road - Birch – fell.

In view of the earlier consultation between the Tree Officer & the applicant agreed we will accept MSDC's resultant decision.

(BA)/11/00122/COU - New Barns, Brantridge Lane - Conversion of an agricultural barn to business use (B1), including Improvement to external wall finishes.

After careful examination of this latest application relating to the site Members were in agreement that overall there could be no valid grounds for objection. Accordingly the following representation was made to MSDC:

"BPC has no over riding objection to the application. The building is not of character and is not significantly altered externally by the proposal. Activities under use as B1 would not result in a nuisance substantially different from many of the activities already allowed under the present use. Nor would they be contrary to the MSDC structure plan for rural diversification.

We would however ask that MSDC satisfy themselves that the arrangements for parking do not cause an undesirable impact on the rural environment.

It is also not clear how many units the barn will house. We feel that Clarification should be sought on this or a condition applied to restrain the number of units the building can be sub- divided into as this could have an impact. If the unit was split a small industrial/ business unit would result".

b). to consider any additional applications received by the date of the meeting

For representation by 2nd March 2012

(BA)/12/00351/FUL & 00352/CON (new application) Bretts, HH Road – refer also 2858 above. Plans had only been received on the morning of the meeting. A time extension will be sought. Agreed that the relevant working group should handle & report findings for consideration by Councillors at the next meeting.

2866. Digital Changeover meeting Saturday 25th February.

Confirmed that Councillors Jarvest & Huxley, together with the Clerk, will assist AirS in co-ordinating the event.

2867. Fingerposts – update

The Chairman reported that Marcus Slegg was still behind schedule having only completed one of the three promised deadlines. Cllr. Jarvest kindly agreed to assist the Chairman in this matter in view of her current heavy work load.

2868. Correspondence

Chairman – had now replied to the MSDC letter of 23rd January concerning the Infrastructure Development Plan.

M2 – Community Infrastructure Levy.

W3 – Planning School Places 2011/12

Other 1 – Article from Middy re snow clearance.

Other 3 – letter from Charles Oman re fracking. Residents encouraged to comment on Draft District Plan consultation. Copies of the draft District Plan had also been circulated to Members.

Other 7 – agreed the poster for an upcoming HomeBuy event on 10th March should be passed to the Magazine editors. This event is aimed at households who have not heard of HomeBuy as well as those that may already be registered for it. While there are several different HomeBuy options there will be a strong focus on shared ownership. There will be general advice available as well as an independent financial advisor and specific information about schemes that are currently for sale or imminent across the district.

Other 12 – agreed that regrettably it would not be possible to contribute to the St. Catherines Hospice appeal.

SALC – Cllrs. Stevenson, Jarvest & Short confirmed they would be attending the Localism Conference at East Grinstead on 20th April.

2869. Exchange of Information

General – Nicky Evans had been in touch about possible Jubilee celebrations for the village & it was understood she would be arranging a village meeting to discuss a possible plan.

Cllr. Short – asked whether any Snow Plan assistance could be included for Rowhill Lane. She had found recent attendance at the last CLC meeting interesting.

The Chairman – additional planters being considered by the Gardeners' Association.

Cllr. Williamson – usual problems with St. Agnes hedge. Reports that Mr Futers has finally found a buyer.

All Councillors – extended warm wishes to Cllr. Robin Lindsay-Stewart on his recent 80th birthday.

Cllr. Talman – the estimated cost of a handrail on the path leading from Newlands down to the main road would be £1500. Some station cycle users are still not utilising the new racks. Cllr. Huxley will investigate.

Cllr. Jarvest – VHMA may be looking for assistance with a Diamond Jubilee display.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the main meeting at 22.07 hours. Councillors then met in camera – refer **2859**.

Signed.....

Date: 5th March 2012

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY 5th MARCH 2012 AT 8 PM**