

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 15TH OCTOBER 2012 AT 8.00 PM IN THE W I
ROOM, BALCOMBE VICTORY HALL. (F)

Present: Councillors Alison Stevenson, Rodney Saunders, Alan Dearden, Robin Williamson, Simon Greenwood, Mike Talman, Robin Lindsay-Stewart & Carol Jarvest, Linda Short & Catherine Dennison.

In attendance: Richard Greig – Clerk to the Council.

2971. Public Participation

Mr Martin Flint spoke regarding his renewed application (BA)/12/03347/FUL – Netheroak, Stockcroft Road & outlined to Councillors the revisions that had been undertaken. He opined that these made the property more in keeping with those adjoining & would not be detrimental. Mrs Sarah Flint pointed out that as a result of repositioning the extension would “hardly be seen” from the road.

Cllr. Greenwood, speaking in a personal capacity, made observations on the fracking poll document circulated to each household. He opined it could be construed that that some sections might be perceived to be only partially factually correct.

Mr Patrick Horne repeated his misgivings expressed at the previous meeting of September 17th (refer Minute 2956) relating to his interpretation of a poll. Cllr Williamson explained that he had consulted a reliable legal dictionary which confirmed the correctness of the Council’s use of the term to describe the fracking survey. Mention was also made of the handling of the original Cuadrilla planning application in Balcombe compared to one from Europa Oil & Gas by another Council some 11 miles away.

2972. Declaration of personal or prejudicial interest

Cllr. Greenwood declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 2980 (fracking) & Cllr. Jarvest a personal interest in respect of agenda item 2981 - planning application (BA)/12/03347/FUL – Netheroak, Stockcroft Road.

2973. Apologies for absence

Councillor Peter Huxley (Youth Club duties)

2974. To approve Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 17th September

The circulated Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 17th September were approved & signed by the Chairman as a true record.

2975. Matters Arising

2960 (2945) – 272 Bus. Cllr. Jarvest is continuing enquiries.

2948 - Angela Cox memorial tree – matter currently in abeyance.

2954 – Gatwick changes to flight paths. The Clerk had made further enquiries & read out the following reply from the Head of Corporate Responsibility @ Gatwick Airport:

“...the process of PRNAV that we are currently consulting on will not impact on Balcombe and will not lead to an increase in aircraft over flight.

The navigation process of PRNAV that we are consulting on will affect departing aircraft only and Balcombe is not impacted by these.

Balcombe is affected by arriving aircraft into Gatwick both from a westerly and easterly direction. The average altitude of these aircraft is in the region of 7,000 feet, there will be the occasional go-around aircraft that has had to abort its landing for one reason or another and these will be at around 3,000 feet; however these are few in number”.

2970 - attention to the hedge on the London Road up to Newlands. The Clerk, assisted by the Ranger, will review the problem.

- 2976. 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.**
No changes to the agenda introduced.

2977. Financial

- a). To approve Cash Book Receipts & Payments for September 2012 – noted as presented. Noted as presented. The RFO considered that we were still on track for the year’s spend. Agreed that it might be necessary to adjust the £20k contingency for the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Greenwood asked about rental income for the pavilion; the Clerk will provide the requested details to the RFO. Adjustments to the Clerk’s salary may be necessary after March 2013.
- b). Budget 2013/2014 – preliminary views from Group Leaders. Members were reminded that they would need to address the matter & provide recommendations in good time.

2978. Working Groups - reports from Group Leaders on

- a). Housing & Environment – There was no new information to report.
- b). Safety & Security – Cllr. Dearden included comment on reports of unauthorised notes on cars parked on Newlands. Carolyn Robertson, NHW Leader, had been unwell. It is hoped that she will recover in time to attend the Sussex NHW conference on 20th. A new Co-ordinator for the village centre was being sought.
- c). Young People – Cllr. Jarvest was pleased to report continuing progress. 21 had attended last week’s meeting & 16 this week. There had been good support from parents & a satisfactory rota established. Future events arranged would include Guy Fawkes, Food in a Box & Collage of information on your family history.
- d). Traffic Matters – Cllr Saunders mentioned that very few parking questionnaires had been returned from Newlands residents. As no clear guidelines had been established it was agreed that that a working group consisting of three Councillors – Cllr. Saunders, Talman & Dennison together with three from Newlands – Messrs. Bardwell, Wren & Evans. Letters will be sent to all three together with the terms of reference - 1). To consider proposals that have been received to restrict parking and thus improve safety and the flow of traffic on Newlands, including those prepared for the Parish Council by Atkins. 2). To consult WSCC and other relevant parties to establish what measures might be affordable and acceptable 3). To finalise and submit proposals & to keep both the residents of Newlands and Balcombe Parish Council informed of progress.

It was hoped that the Group might meet prior to the next meeting of the Council.

e). Local Societies – Cllr. Lindsay-Stewart. Current activities continue satisfactorily.

f). Facilities & Amenities – Cllr. Talman reported that there were no lighting upgrades pending – a recent maintenance invoice was pending awaiting a reply on the actual number of units under contract.

Re Snow Plan he explained the recent policy of WSCC to plough clear only major through routes; this requires us to deal with our own road ourselves, but £35/hour reimbursement can be claimed back towards the cost from WSCC. The meeting with EPF had been positive, but as their quote included extra roads it would be necessary for an increase in the budget allocation. £2500 should suffice. Proposed by Cllr Saunders & seconded by Cllr. Dennison this was agreed unanimously.

An additional two salt bins would be purchased for Troymede & Rocks Lane (cost approx. £500 total) following a proposal by Cllr Saunders seconded by Cllr Lindsay-Stewart with all in favour.

Once the revised agreement is up & running an article entitled “What to do when it snows” will appear in the Parish Magazine

2979. Neighbourhood Planning – progress report

Recent meetings with the organisation advising us had been most positive & helpful. Drop in sessions had on the whole been worthwhile – helpers for the forthcoming ones would be most welcome.

Cllr. Jarvest was thanked for her help in establishing the new Balcombe website - www.balcombeparishcouncil.com.

A project plan is in preparation & it was agreed that a detailed explanation of (evidence based) points that are permitted to be incorporated in the plan could be useful.

2980. Fracking – to note results of the recent poll & notification of the Council's finding to each Balcombe household

Cllr. Saunders updated Members on the poll results & the resultant information circulated to each Balcombe household. There was unanimous support for details of the detailed work undertaken by the working group to be advised to leading outside parties & it was agreed that such information should be advised in writing to the West Sussex Cabinet Member for Environment & Planning (Lionel Barnard), Cuadrilla Chief Executive, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude, MP, WSCC Councillor Bill Acraman, MSDC Gary Marsh & Balcombe Estate. The text of the letter would be approved by the Chairman prior to despatch. The letter would explain:

- that there was considerable concern locally over the possible exploration for hydrocarbons using the so called fracking technique.
- the Parish Council undertook to investigate the process and the possible effects on Balcombe, to inform residents of the village of the results of those investigations, and then to listen to their views.
- the Parish Council formed a working group which published a report on the risks and benefits of fracking. A copy of this report was delivered to every property in the Parish.

- the Parish Council conducted a poll of the residents.
- in accordance with the majority view of those residents who participated in the poll this Council will oppose any further applications for permission to carry out exploration for, or the extraction of, hydrocarbons within the parish of Balcombe that involve the use of the fracking process.

Members agreed that in the absence of future activity relating to fracking development the working group would stand down, but remain available to act in the interests of residents. The poll returns, checked for veracity by the Chairman prior to release of the results letter, will be retained by the Clerk under confidential cover & should any FOI request be received we will remove any identification features.

2981. Planning. – to consider the following applications:-

a). For representation by 12th October 2012 (extension requested)

(BA)/12/03221/TCA - Abercorn, Stockcroft Road fell one Sycamore & replace with Beech. No objection.

(BA)/12/03222/TCA - Abercorn, Stockcroft Road – reduce canopy of deciduous tree to previous cut points. Remove Fir tree. No objection.

(BA)/12/03223/TCA – Little Meadows, Stockcroft Road – fell one Cherry tree. No objection.

For representation by 26th October 2012

(BA)/12/03338/FUL – Troytown Cottage, Haywards Heath Road – timber summerhouse in garden. No objection.

(BA)/12/03347/FUL – Netheroak, Stockcroft Road – demolition of existing front porch & single storey side extension. Proposed new two storey rear extension & single storey side lean to. Proposed new oak framed porch. New pitched roof to existing detached garage. The following observations were recorded after careful examination of the newly submitted plans – refer 2971 above:

“The plans submitted under this application for Netheroak are a substantial improvement on those previously rejected both in terms of scale and design.

The design is now asymmetrical and better reflects the style and period of the original house. The reduced size is welcomed and the reduced height will lessen the impact on the rear gardens of neighbouring houses.

However this is still a substantial extension and there remains an impact on the neighbours. The double height extension is concentrated to the south of the rear elevation with a cat slide roof to the north. This seems a little odd to us as the rear of the property to the north, Freshfield, is set further back and the proposed rear extension hardly overlaps it whereas the property to the south, Wellgrove Cottage, is set with an elevation on the same line as Netheroak and the overbearing impact to their amenity space of an extension will be greater for them.

Once again the design is better and the occupants have gone to some trouble to achieve this but an impact on Wellgrove Cottage remains”.

b). to consider any additional applications received by the date of the meeting. No applications received.

2982. Appointment of new Clerk – update

The interviewing panel consisted of the Chairman, RFO & Clerk. Cllr. Mike Talman was selected to join the panel.

2983. To discuss recent problems at Balcombe railway station & action plan

The customer service had deteriorated of late

- no booking office or working machine in lieu
- limited ticket availability from machine if/when operative
- newly installed modern waiting room spoils the atmosphere of a rural railway station. Are the Victorian Society/English Heritage aware of this?

Cllr. Saunders will continue his correspondence with the rail managers & now copy in our MP. Cllr. Dearden will draft for approval a separate letter relating to the additional problems reported.

2984. Correspondence

M1. Reminder re disclosable pecuniary interests - Guide to Openness & Transparency. Noted by Members.

2985. Exchange of Information

Cllr. Talman – posters around the village need policing as beginning to get out of hand. The fracking posters around the village are being affixed by heavy industrial staples & using BT or EDF poles for posters is illegal. The purchase of an extra notice board for village events might be a solution & ideas would be welcomed.

The salt bin on Mill Lane is being repositioned following a complaint.

Cllr. Jarvest – the new Balcombe website is now operative.

Cllr. Greenwood – mentioned the recent response from PCSO Jayne Milne did not fully answer his query. Mention was made of the recent WSCC for Highway Volunteers scheme – possibly they could be used for community projects such as those carried out by the Gardeners' Association?

He tendered apologies for absence at our December meeting.

Cllr. Short - she reported further contact with WSCC Highways about the Rock Lane drainage pipe. Background information provided on the history of the station red phone box. Could the location perhaps be tidied up?

Cllr. Talman – he had been in touch with Rob McIntyre of the Gardeners' Association regarding his personal donation of daffodil bulbs & some wild seed for village planting.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 22.00 hours.

Signed.....

Date: 12th November 2012

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2012 IN THE WI ROOM

