

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY
15 JULY 2013 AT 8.00 PM IN BRAMBLE HALL**

Present: Councillors Alison Stevenson (AS), Rodney Saunders (RS), Robin Williamson (RW), Kevin Bottomley (KB), Katherine Daniel (KD), Alan Dearden (AD), Catherine Dennison (CD), Carol Jarvest (CJ), Mike Talman (MT), Simon Greenwood (SG), Peter Huxley (PH)

In attendance: Rosemary Robertson (RR) Clerk to the Council

Before the meeting there was a private audience with Keith Taylor Green Party MEP in advance of Keith's screening of an anti-fracking film made by Lech Kowalski. Mostyn Field, Lech Kowalski and Emil Jablonski, the Mayor of Zurawlow in Eastern Poland, were also in attendance.

3119. Public Participation

AS invited members of the public to speak:-

Paddy Horne said that there was an omission in the Minutes 20 May because his comment about the "peculiar" timings of the announcements of drilling activity by WSCC was not recorded.

3120. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Greenwood declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Item 8 Report from Oil Exploration Working Group (3124), Item 12 Traffic (Estate Car Park offer) (3131) and Neighbourhood Plan (3128).

3121. Approval of Minutes Meeting 17 June

The Minutes of the Meeting 17 June were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3122. Matters Arising

3115. BA)13/01221/FUL *Stumble Ridge, Oldlands Ave, RH17 6LP* Erection of a detached garden office/gym. This had been approved without the suggested relocation; hopefully the owners will follow the Council's suggestion.

(BA)13/01564/FUL *Rocks Lane Cottage* - Application had been withdrawn but will probably be revised and re-submitted.

3117. Brantridge Forest Farm Estate Deposit of Statement & Map (Rights of Way) Joan Dutton had made no comment.

3117. The CLC Grant money had been received which was to be spent on tables, chairs and a Youth Club cupboard. RR to investigate whether if cheaper quotes were secured the surplus could be used for other things. RR to liaise with MT over purchases. It was reported that bookings were weak and CJ asked that Bramble Hall be an Agenda item every meeting. RR had been actively marketing to funeral directors.

3123. Financial

Cash Book Receipts & Payments for June 2013 were noted as presented and approved. The RFO stated that there was nothing exceptional to report. The Neighbourhood Plan figure was still in full because no grant amount had yet been identified. A realistic budget for Bramble Hall was needed because rental income was far less than anticipated. If this was not monitored it would eat into the preferred £10,000 reserve. The Bramble Hall Management Committee will meet to discuss.

The RFO also proposed that an administration request from WSCC involving the Clerk's pension (Discretions Policy) be dealt with by AS and RW (proposed by RS and seconded by SG). This was agreed.

The RFO was reluctant to agree to other expenditure but on the question of the Deanland Road request for signage it was agreed to go ahead and purchase/install No Parking Signs at an estimated amount of £250. MT was authorised to go ahead, source and install.

Fingerpost replacement to be put on hold. All approved the decision.

3124. Report from Oil Exploration Working Group

RS reported that Cuadrilla had applied for a 6 month extension to their permission which would take them to 28 March 2014. They had asked for the extension because the need to apply for waste management permits was unexpected and it had delayed their scheduling. WSCC had acknowledged their application. A document from the Environment Agency (EA) (on balcombeparishcouncil.com) indicated that the Agency were “taking it seriously” and all experience to date had demonstrated that they were doing a thorough job. The Working Group was next meeting 22 July. RW informed the Council that BPC’s formal response to the EA was also on the website. After the consultation period it was expected that a decision would be made in one or two weeks. KB suggested that it may be a good idea for the EA to be invited to the village to address the public/answer questions; this will be discussed by the Group.

3125. MSDC Garden Party Nomination

It was agreed to nominate Richard and Annie Greig for their services to the village.

3126. Victory Hall Management Committee (VHMC) Update

The VHMC had voiced concerns about a conflict of interest with CJ sitting on the Committee given the Council’s lease of Bramble Hall. At the VHMC meeting recently, CJ was unfairly subjected to lengthy and intense questioning which has been deemed by the Council as bullying, and culminated in a vote to remove CJ from the Committee. Despite a positive vote of support by the members of that Committee, CJ had felt her situation was untenable and has subsequently resigned. It was formally noted that Balcombe Parish Council deplored the treatment of Cllr Jarvest by some of the members of the Victory Hall Management Committee.

RW reminded the Council that it had agreed to make an annual, unconditional and non-ring-fenced grant to VHMC, currently set at £4,500, to be used at VHMC’s discretion. A condition of the Grant was that there should be a BPC representative on the VHMC Committee. It was agreed that to allocate another member of the Council would be inappropriate in view of the treatment of CJ. Despite this decision BPC would support the Victory Hall wholeheartedly as a vital village asset, but from now on would revert to previous practice and would expect the VHMC to apply for funds using the Council’s standard application procedure. Each application would be subject to Council approval, and the £4,500 would no longer be ring-fenced.

AS will draft a letter with RW to go to all the members of the VHMC to convey this message. AS also due to write to the VHMC to clarify the mechanism for the CIL.

3127. New arrangement for publication of Draft Minutes

The Clerk suggested that due to the time delay in publishing only signed-off Minutes a draft form should be published as soon as possible to keep members of the public abreast of Balcombe Parish Council activity. She proposed that once all Councillors had had a chance to comment and correct any errors or omissions, then a new draft copy should be circulated giving them 24 hours’ notice of publication on the website. She stressed that it would clearly be labelled as “Draft,” and insisted that she took ownership of the Minutes and that Councillors were only ever allowed to “tweak” minutes for errors or omissions.

3128. Neighbourhood Planning

CD reported that the Neighbourhood Planning Group were now meeting weekly and were moving ahead writing policies and reviewing the evidence base. There had been a delay in application for funding because it was still unclear which parts of the process could be done in-house and which would need consultancy expertise eg KD had attended a course on Environment Assessment and felt qualified to carry this out. CIL calculation policy was also

currently being written and BPC will be giving input on this. SG suggested that BPC should look at how other District Councils calculate the figure, using different criteria. SG was asked to write a synopsis on this. Draft policies ready for public questionnaires were forecast for September/October and focus groups would help identify pertinent questions. It was suggested that a meeting with SG be beneficial to discuss possible housing sites.

3129. Safety & Security

AD reported that there had been two events recently, a car theft and a tyre-slashing. He had been in email dialogue with the police regarding Speedwatch but there had been no progress. AS informed the Council that Jim Stobart Road Safety/ASD Co-ordinator was attending the BPC meeting in September to demonstrate Operation Crackdown software. AD highlighted an excellent service for the disabled run by Southern, RR will post information about this on the website and in the Parish Magazine. AD was happy to deal with pot-hole reporting.

3130. Youth

CJ reported that AiRS had inflated the cost of the Youth Worker to an unrealistic figure of £7,500 from £3,500. She had arranged to have an informal discussion with the Youth Worker to see if she would be prepared to work on a self-employed basis. SALC may be able to help.

3131. Traffic Matters

A meeting with the Newlands Working Group had been scheduled to plan a way forward, RS would report back at the next BPC Meeting. On the matter of the proposed new Car Park on Balcombe Estate land a pre-planning advice request had been submitted to MSDC but the response had been non-committal; RS proposed a meeting with MSDC on site with Ben Skinner to clarify issues.

3132. Facilities & Amenities

MT reported that the perspex memorial cover on the Pavilion had been replaced. Verges had been cut at Springfield Shaw leaving a wildlife area. Weeding had been done at Bramble Hall and British Gas had installed a new "Smart" meter at the hall which could be interrogated remotely. The Haywards Heath Footpath from Mill Lane was still being looked at and MT had invited the Highways Engineer to walk it with him. KD asked to be involved because of her election promise to sort out the mud. The hedges along the path had been trimmed by the owners. In response to the letter concerning the narrowness of the footpath from Bretts Orchard MT took the copy to show the Highways Engineer when he visited. At a recent inspection of lighting the contractor SSE had quoted for the straightening of three leaning lampposts. MT will liaise with the SSE Engineers to see if this is possible without incurring further cost if the lampposts snap. KB had heard from an SSE employee that Balcombe was due new posts – he will investigate further.

3133. Rail Issues

The Working Group had had a constructive meeting and had established useful contacts with Southern and First Capital Connect. They had identified someone who was willing to take responsibility for ticketing issues and it was suggested that the name and number of the individual should be posted on the machines at the station for quick reporting by the public. Car Park issues had been put on hold for the moment. On frequency of service issues there were plans to canvas for a staggering of the service to allow commuters increased options to travel, albeit necessitating a change of train at a station in the opposite direction. KB had asked to be a non-statutory stakeholder to be able to give input on station architecture.

3134. Planning - for representation by 19 July

(BA)13/02113/FUL *Stumble Ridge, Oldlands Avenue, RH17 6LP Replacement of an existing detached garage with a new detached garage.* There was some discussion about building line and location of existing garage but after deliberation and with no knowledge of neighbour complaints there was no objection.

3135. Correspondence

- O10** AS drew attention to the Penland Farm consultation that was taking place at Clair Hall on 16 July, she and CJ would try to attend because of the traffic implications for Balcombe.
- O2** SG suggested that BPC make best efforts to aid Neil Perkins in his dealings with BT Openreach. RR informed the Council that this had been resolved.

3136. Exchange of Information

CJ informed the Council that a new eatery was being built at Junction 10a near the Audi Garage.

PH queried the whereabouts of the picnic tables that had been in the Recreation Ground. MT will investigate.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50 pm.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ON MONDAY 19 AUGUST IN THE WI ROOM.

(This has subsequently been cancelled because of holiday commitments of Councillors – 10/8/13)

Signed.....

Date: 19 August 2013