

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2014 AT 8.00 PM IN BRAMBLE HALL**

Present: Cllrs Alison Stevenson (AS), Rodney Saunders (RS), Robin Williamson (RW), Carol Jarvest (CJ), Peter Huxley (PH), Kevin Bottomley (KB), Simon Greenwood (SG), Alan Dearden (AD), Katherine Daniel (KD), Mike Talman (MT), Catherine Dennison (CD)  
In attendance Rosemary Robertson (RR) Clerk to the Council

**3360. Public Participation**

*Susie Horne* queried the closing of the Kemps Farm railway footpath. The clerk informed her that BPC had been told that a footbridge was to be built and had not realised that official procedure had not been followed. Network Rail and WSCC were currently in discussion. Susie urged the Parish Council to follow this up. The Chair said it was great news that we were getting a footbridge.

*John James* asked about Broadband and urged BPC to put pressure on WSCC to get high speed broadband as soon as possible. The Clerk said that Balcombe cabinets were currently being upgraded and then we would get more idea on timescales. Information from SG was that some of the village (300 houses) would get access to a super-fast service by January 2015. It was agreed to write an official letter. CJ said that Broadband issues were within the Neighbourhood Plan. John also said current traffic levels through the village were intolerable.

*Paddy Horne* said that Kirdford & Wisborough Green and Fernhurst were resisting fracking companies, and New York State had voted for a 3 year moratorium as a result of individual communities resisting fracking: he asked that BPC make more forthright statements. He said people who had been arrested for demonstrating had had charges dropped, BPC had made statements about illegal acts but it was clearly illegal to arrest people unjustifiably. He reminded BPC that it had promised to post the letter from Bolney Resources under FOI from DECC on the BPC website. The Clerk said that she had been trying to check the validity of the letter with DECC, she asked him if he could help her obtain an original copy without the company name changed to Cuadrilla. AS would chase Cuadrilla for an answer in absence of response from DECC.

**3361. Declaration of personal or prejudicial interest**

Cllr. Greenwood declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item 8 Oil Exploration (3365), and a personal interest in Item 17 (3378) and part 19 Kemps Crossing (3379/3360). Cllrs Jarvest & Bottomley declared a personal interest Item 8 (3365) as members of FFBRA.

**3362. To approve Minutes of the Meetings held on 21 May 2014**

The circulated Minutes of the Meeting held 21 May 2014 were approved with a minor amendment (deletion of an extra "s") and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**3363. Clerk's Report on Matters Arising**

**3329** Balcombe Babies had found a Treasurer but they still need a helper.

**3354** Meadow Close - there had been one further incident, monitoring continuing.

**3355** Handcross Bus Grant - a thank you letter had been received

**3358** RR and AD had met with Bob O'Brien re the Birchen Fields development; he had asked that BPC oppose the application because of traffic implications for Balcombe. Cllr Dearden stated that the residents there were also concerned that this project would lead to further developments which might affect Haywards Heath Golf Club. It was resolved to put this on the Agenda in July.

**3358** The Clerk had not posted the FFBRA Judicial Review letter on the BPC website because Sue Taylor had not given permission.

**3364. Financial**

Cash Book Receipts & Payments for May 2014 were noted as presented and unanimously approved. VAT had been reclaimed. Balcombe Parish Council usage of Bramble Hall had been added in blue.

*Cllr Greenwood left the room*

**3365. Report from the Oil Exploration Working Group (OEWG)**

KB reported that it had been a quiet month with no apparent action from Cuadrilla: the planning consent was subject to conditions which he believed had not been tackled. FFBRA were challenging the WSCC planning approval via Judicial Review which could explain the delay. The requirement for local consultation via a Liaison Group and the possibility of traffic movement south had not been progressed. BPC had asked to be consulted on those two items as well as the traffic management/pollution plans and the terms of reference and structure of the Liaison Group. Both BPC and FFBRA had been asked to take part in a WSCC Oil & Gas Exhibition at Pulborough on 21 June, AS and KB to contribute on the subject of community consultation. KB reported that media interest was still prevalent and he advised that BPC decline any invitation to comment. If a Councillor is drawn into giving an opinion they should make clear it is a personal opinion and not the official Parish Council line. In the past comments made by members of BPC have been misrepresented or taken out of context. Timescales were discussed and it appears Cuadrilla have no current plans to return.

*Cllr Greenwood re-entered*

**3366. Residents' Meeting Issues**

The Surgery this month had coincided with the Neighbourhood Plan drop-in sessions and only one person had made comment. Maggie Kear had asked about the Haywards Heath Road path. KD had given her an update. There would be no Surgery in August because there was no BPC meeting and the 5 July Surgery would be by appointment only with a Thursday cut-off, Councillors available if required would be KB, CD and KD.

**3367. Endorsement of Richard Greenwood tribute**

The piece written for the Mid Sussex Times was read out and endorsed by all Councillors. Condolences were given to Councillor Greenwood and his family. It was noted that the memorial service was 3 July.

**3368. To consider the continuation of the lease of Bramble Hall**

Figures were presented which set out actual and forecast income. RS recommended that BPC should not terminate and should enter into discussions for a long term lease (the current arrangement was for 3 years). Losses were of a magnitude that could be tolerated. The need for painting was mentioned. RS congratulated MT on the planters. Alternative premises for the Youth Club would possibly cost more than the loss incurred. Costs might increase but the current hire fee could also be increased. Hirers should be informed about any possible increases. The Clerk pointed out that Bramble Hall was rated as a "nice to have, or better" by 90 people out of 105 in the recent survey. There had been no strong evidence that other venues had suffered but a letter of complaint from a neighbour was highlighted.

It was unanimously agreed to continue with the current lease arrangement (PH proposed, MT seconded). RR to write to the URC Synod.

**3369. Consideration of assistance with the Balcombe Fete Committee with insurance**

It was resolved to contribute a figure not exceeding £100 towards the cost of insurance for the Fete, encouraging a three way split with the Fete Committee and Christmas Tree Society. Next year we would investigate if we could have more involvement and therefore cover it on our own insurance.

**3370. To consider support of Paul Milton's Festival through the use of Bramble Hall**

Paul Milton had asked for free use of Bramble Hall for a weekend in September (c£200) to run an Arts Festival. It was agreed that we should not offer the Hall for free but should invite him to apply for a small grant, offer him non-monetary help and should find out more details. AS to contact him.

**3371. Victory Hall Management Committee Update**

Nothing to report. The proposal to formulate a plan of works had been accepted and AS had been asked for surveyor names, SG to suggest someone too.

**3372. Neighbourhood Plan**

KD reported that c130 forms had been returned from the drop-in sessions and data would soon be available. Landowner meetings were scheduled for early July. A draft plan for discussion was forecast by the end July and the CABE consultant would be asked to assist with the design statement. CD was looking at the Asset List; the Station came out as No 1, the School, Stores and Church all important. People had taken it very seriously giving it a great deal of thought, time and energy. Comments on the professional nature of the presentation and thanks for the work involved had been offered. Feedback forms and posters from the event were on the website. Smaller units of one/ two/ three bedrooms for the young and old were favoured.

**3373. Safety & Security**

AD reported that Bramble Hill, Foxwells and Mill Lane should be resurfaced by the end of August; the patching work was a temporary measure. The Half Moon pothole had been reported. Three welcome packs had been delivered and AD was liaising with Carolyn Robertson on Neighbourhood Watch. The rumble strip break up was discussed, RS pointed out that WSCC should maintain this. AS suggested a letter be written to Highways to urge proper repair work and not patch repairs, and reminding them of their obligation to maintain traffic calming measures. The driveway 43 Newlands was raised –AS to take this up with WSCC, despite assurances by WSCC to both the PC and the owners, it was deemed still dangerous with running water which would be problematic in winter. BPC should seek written confirmation from WSCC that it does conform to specification so that they take responsibility for any accidents that might occur.

**3374. Young People**

Numbers were still healthy even with a stoolball clash. The club would be running a stall at the Fete (possibly a coconut shy) and volunteers were needed.

**3375. Facilities & Amenities**

Grass verges at the bottom of Jobs were discussed – it was suggested that a map be obtained from Gary Marsh to ascertain responsibility. Joy Hopkins memorial bench will be ready to install in the Recreation Ground in the next few weeks. An ash had been dealt with in Newlands.

Three defective showers in the pavilion need replacing, MT to speak to John Day and get quotes for repair and inspection of all showers. A lamp due for repair in Haywards Heath Road would hopefully be included in the inspection due soon.

**3376. Rail Issues**

Southern have been awarded the new franchise (including Thameslink) so it is hoped a better integrated service will follow making negotiation easier. Car parking fee reduction and free weekend parking are still being pursued and a meeting with WSCC and BPC will be scheduled. During this meeting other issues such as ticket machines, staffing, train times etc will be discussed. CJ urged pressure on Southern for more train frequency especially in view of the Station's No 1 rating in the survey. KB said he thought a possible option was to stagger the up and down service to allow changes at HH and 3Bridges.

**3377. Traffic**

The speed limit north of the village needs still further drafting by WSCC but is forecast to be implemented end July. The Newlands TRO is estimated to go forward for implementation March 2015.

**3378. Planning - For representation by 4 July 2014**

*14/01907/LBC and 14/01906/FUL The Old Rectory, Mill Lane RH17 6NS Erection of summerhouse and part retrospective swimming pool – No objection.*

*14/01987/FUL 1 New England Cottages, RH17 6JU side extension and alterations plus pitched roof over single storey – No objection, a sympathetic extension*

The relevant documentation for other late applications had not been received so these would be deferred to July.

Bagpiths Farmhouse 14/01943/LDE did not merit a response.

**3379. Correspondence**

M1 Information on Flood Support to be posted on website

W1 Invitation to Mineral Plan event 8 July Midhurst – KB to attend

O8 Air Ambulance request for funds had been declined

O20 CPRE AGM 10 July 10.30 am at Plumpton College

O24 Mid Sussex CVS Grants had been posted on the website

O2 CJ requested forwarding of Notts Univ.info on the Public Perception of Shale

O19 CPRE Newsletter had reference to Viscount Cowdray and fracking

**3380. Exchange of Information**

KD reported that the Haywards Heath Road path problems may be alleviated by the construction of a new bank and hedge on the other side of the boundary allowing a more severe hedge cut back.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.57 pm.

**THE NEXT PARISH MEETING WOULD BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 JULY AT 8.00 PM IN BRAMBLE HALL**

*Signed.....*

**Date: 16 July 2014**