

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 8.00 PM IN BRAMBLE HALL**

Present: Cllrs Alison Stevenson (AS), Rodney Saunders (RS), Catherine Dennison (CD), Katherine Daniel (KD), Alan Dearden (AD), Carol Jarvest (CJ) and Peter Huxley (PH)
In attendance Rosemary Robertson (RR) Clerk to the Council.

3514. Public Participation

Pam Scutt asked that the Council do something about the Haywards Heath Road footway which was now posing a health and safety risk. She has complained about it for several years and has slipped and injured herself.

3515. Declaration of personal or prejudicial interest

Cllr Jarvest declared personal interest in Item 12 Oil (3524) as a member of FFBRA and a personal interest in Item 19 Planning - Stillfield (3535). Cllr Dennison declared a personal interest in Item 19 Planning – Stillfield (3535).

3516. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllrs Williamson, Bottomley, Talman and Greenwood.

3517 To approve Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 January 2014

The Minutes (circulated) were approved & signed by the Chair as a true record.

3518. Clerk's Report on Matters Arising

3472 Bramble Hill dangerous parking referred to PCSO Jayne Milne and the hedges have now been trimmed.

3435 Kemps footbridge ceremony due to be scheduled, RR, RS, KD and AD would represent BPC plus AS if her schedule allowed. WSCC did not want to be involved.

3498 Balcombe Football Club would probably use the existing referee room for the additional toilet in the pavilion.

3500 Yew Tree/Kelsey Footpath on hold until Fiona Coveney has met with Cluttons.

3502 No new vandalism instances had been reported: hopefully it has stopped.

3512 Newlands 43/48 still ongoing with WSCC saying it does comply but the water issue is being investigated. Cllr Gary Marsh has requested a meeting there.

3511 Parish Room, Pippins, Cobo, 9 Oldlands Ave and Lodgelands all passed.

3430 Natural England had given assent for the clearance works at Greentrees Bridleway and dates had been set by WSCC for clearance, 19 February et al. Many Balcombe equestrians had volunteered their services.

3519. Financial

Cash Book Receipts & Payments for January 2015 were noted as presented and unanimously approved. RR reminded all that budgets would be set at the next meeting and that audit requirements demanded a more rigorous Risk Assessment document which would be proposed as an Agenda item at the next meeting.

3520. To consider the funding of a Rubbish Freighter at a cost of £311.88

Cllr RS proposed that a Rubbish Freighter be booked at a cost of £311.88 (seconded AS), passed unanimously, RR to organise a suitable date similar timing to last year. RS would approach Cllr Williamson to put this into the budget for next year as it was such a valued service within the village.

3521. Request by architects to support plans for land adjacent to St Agnes

It was agreed that the Council should not make any statements of support for any proposals; all applications should be considered on merit when and if they are formally submitted.

3522. Organisation of Balcombe Fete and representative on Committee

Balcombe Parish Council will be involved with organising the Balcombe Fete and RR volunteered to sit on the Fete Committee.

3523. Haywards Heath Road Footpath

Cllr Talman had been talking to WSCC and had been promised that footpath work would be done by March. In the meantime KD suggested a working party be put together to sweep and clear the path, or that MSDC be contacted to bring forward their routine maintenance. It was resolved to notify Mick Norris that this had now become a health and safety issue with injuries occurring and if no imminent date was forthcoming to escalate to Head of Highways at WSCC Geoff Mee.

3524. Report from the Oil Exploration Working Group (OEWG)

The Clerk read Cllr Bottomley's report. The cross-party Environmental Audit Committee recommended that fracking be put on hold on the grounds of the environmental risks and the impact on the UK's commitment to reduce emissions. It also criticized the Government for "rushing through" legislation and called for a moratorium on all fracking and an outright ban on fracking in areas of outstanding natural beauty (like Balcombe), and national parks. The Government did not act on all the recommendations but did ban fracking in areas of outstanding natural beauty and national parks. Cuadrilla does not have consent to frack the Lower Stumble site and have said that they have no current plans to do so. The ban on fracking may have a long term impact on the viability of the Lower Stumble site in that, should the flow rates be inadequate to make the site viable using the techniques that they currently have consent for, the option to apply for a consent to frack no longer exists. This new position, together with the current low price of oil may tip the economic balance and render Lower Stumble unviable.

In Lancashire planners recommended refusal of Cuadrilla's applications to frack and the planning decision has been deferred. Cuadrilla have done nothing yet in attempting to clear the conditions and informatives attached to their latest consent for flow testing in Balcombe (dated 27.4.14 and valid for 3 years). If Cuadrilla do pursue their planning consent, the condition that requires local public consultation via a liaison group will be an area where BPC will press the possibility of traffic movements being allowed South of the site.

KB urged caution in dealings with the press and the public.

3525. Arrangements for Councillor Information Surgery 18 March

This was scheduled for Wednesday 18 March between 6.30 – 8.30 pm. Information for Working Group display boards to KD by 2 March please. Bullet points, not too lengthy and to ideally fit on 2 A3 boards (large fonts).

3526. Second Runway at Gatwick Consultation

The Clerk said that the majority of BP Councillors had opposed the second runway at Gatwick; the formal BPC response was available. BPC had worked with MSDC to give input on their response. The Davies Commission would make their recommendations after the Election. West Sussex County Councillor Bill Acraman informed Council that he had tabled a motion to reverse the WSCC decision to approve a second runway at Gatwick. This had been successful and in fact all local Councils had opposed except East Sussex CC. A group of local MPs had also been strongly opposed. He said that the Davies Commission consultation may be challenged because the list of possible airport sites had been substantially reduced.

3527. Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Report

The Annual Parish Meeting had been scheduled for Thursday 26 March at 7.30 pm in Bramble Hall. A bee expert would give a talk. The deadline for copy to RS for the Annual Report from each of the Working Group leaders was 24 February with RS's deadline for submission for printing 2 March.

3528. Victory Hall Management Committee (VHMC) Update

A draft constitution was being considered with the idea of an AGM and different village organisation representatives appointed to the Committee. A maintenance sub-committee would also be introduced. It was hoped that Julian Smith would take the Chair.

3529. Neighbourhood Plan Update

It was now hoped that amendments would be finished for submission by 17 February which would mean consultation shortly afterwards. The final submission would not be substantially different to what had been proposed before, in fact with fewer houses. Experience with other parishes has indicated that the last public drop-ins were less well attended because input had already been given. Sarah Nicholson and Sarah Hirst had indicated that would be happy to get involved.

3530. Safety & Security

Rural thefts from other parishes had occurred but Balcombe was not suffering in the same way, perhaps our farmers are more security conscious. Potholes continue to be reported, especially the Haywards Heath Road ones. Foxwells due to be resurfaced. Three welcome packs delivered, please advise Alan of new residents.

3531. Young People

CJ would call an AGM in the next month. RR had begun the process of updating the DBS check for the Leader, Jules Beckett.

3532. Facilities & Amenities

In MT's absence RR reported that the road signs had been repaired and the village sign would be done in warmer weather. RR was getting quotes to have a thermostat timer installed in Bramble Hall at a cost of c£120. An App to do this was not possible because there was no phone line. AD asked that the benches in the village be renovated, he will liaise with MT.

3533. Rail Issues

The train service has been awful in the last month because of the temporary arrangements for London Bridge improvements which will take place for the next year or so. This is the price paid for major expansion of the London rail network. Feedback from residents indicates that there is still anti-social parking in Newlands, hopefully the yellow lines will encourage use of the station car park. The ticket machine now seems to be functioning properly and the ticket office open for longer (6.00 am until 11.00 am). Cleanliness varies and the heater in the waiting room is not working, the local manager, Eddy Toase is aware. CJ suggested that BPC write to Southern to complain about timetable changes and cancellation of services. She asked that evidence from residents be copied to KB and RR. BPC should request consultation before the new timetable is finalised.

3534. Traffic Matters

The Newlands TRO consultation finished 5 February with no objections. It is hoped the TRO will be implemented before May 2015.

3535. Planning

14/04627/HOUS Stillfield, Stockcroft Rd - Increase in the ridge height to create first floor accommodation. Single storey extensions to front, side and rear elevations. Demolition of existing garage and carport and construction of new double garage – It was deemed essential to see elevations showing the heights of the neighbouring properties in order to make a judgement, these were lacking. It was suggested that the proposed development could be overbearing on April House and may have a significant visual impact, heightened by its prominent position on the hillside. A lowering of the roof height could alleviate the impact on neighbouring properties. AD and RS would meet to inspect.

DM/15/0244 15 Bramble Mead - Rebuild existing front dormer and form matching dormer to create new studio in lieu of existing balcony – No objection

DM/15/0335 The Anchorage, Stockcroft RH17 6 - Fell 7 no conifers – No objection

DM/15/0164 Forest View, Haywards Heath Rd - Extension to existing utility room, new bay window matching existing. Replacement conservatory and relocation of existing vehicular entrance – No objection provided that Highways are satisfied with the proximity to the junction of the neighbouring slip road to the Green.

3536. Correspondence

013 & 017 Notices had been put on cars to prevent parking on verges at Combers and at the Station: Newlands commuter cars had been ticketed with the help of Rick Evans.

M7 The Help to Buy Flier to be posted on BPC website.

M4 Registering pubs as community assets – RR in the process of applying

W6 WSCC had asked for information on overgrown footpaths, RR had checked with Alex Henderson and Laurie Dunne and they were not aware of any issues. KD suggested 2 paths.

014 Fiona Maxwell had been referred the Fete Committee and Glenda Thomson

012 Fire service cuts – WSCC has the largest number of deaths/injuries in the South East, including London

3537. Exchange of Information

Victory Players were presenting Noises Off by Michael Frayn in May.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.42 pm.

THE NEXT PARISH MEETING WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2015 AT THE LATER TIME OF 8.30 PM IN BRAMBLE HALL

Signed.....

Date: 18 March 2015