

Minutes of the Meeting of Warbleton Parish Council held on 15 April in the Dunn village hall at 7.00 pm

Present

Councillors

Mr B Whitton (chairman)

Mr A Long

Mr C Wells

Mr C Harding

Mrs S Ralph

Mr M Sibbering

Mr D Turton

Mr N Richards

East Sussex County Councillors

Mr R Thomas

Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS)

Mr S Lipa

Miss M Blight

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

Members of the Public

There were three members of the public present.

Apologies for Absence

10.105 Apologies were received from East Sussex County Councillors Mr R Simmons and Mr W Bentley and Councillors Mr J Trunkfield, Mrs K Cook and Mr J Glass.

Declarations of interest

10.106 None.

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March

10.107 It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting on 18 March having been circulated be signed as a correct record.

Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 18 March

10.108 None.

Public Adjournment

10.109 A member of the public raised concerns over the closure by East Sussex County Council of a footpath because a footbridge was being undermined by a stream and repairs were required to prevent further erosion. The County Council had initially indicated that closure would be for a period of six months. Mr Austin confirmed that the footbridge in question was the one he had sent a photograph of the undermining to the clerk who had forwarded it to the County Council. The chairman reported that the County Council had now re-assessed the period of closure and expected the footpath to re-open at the end of July.

10.110 Mr Austin mentioned that the road side hedges at Springfield farm had still not been cut. Councillor Wells confirmed that he had spoken to the landowner some weeks ago about the problem and because he had taken no action asked that the clerk now send the initial warning letter.

10.111 The chairman reported that he and the clerk had visited Furnace lane and noted the hedge and one tree that were in need of cutting. The chairman would be contacting the landowners initially to ask them to cut the vegetation.

Radio Operator

10.112 Councillor Richards reported that the new radio operator had informed him that radio operators in other parishes were not performing the monthly checks and this was being addressed by Wealden District Council.

Reports

East Sussex County Council

10.113 Councillor Thomas reported that the Highways Department had filled some 27,000 potholes. He did not wish to add to the report that he and Councillor Bentley had just given to the annual parish meeting.

Wealden District Council

10.114 Councillor Long reported that he had attended a presentation by East Sussex County Council Transport and Environment Department on winter transport policy. He felt that senior officials of the County Council had been unrealistic in describing

how the Highways Department had dealt with the effects of the recent severe winter weather.

Dunn village hall

10.115 A leak had been found over the entrance door and work to repair the flashing was planned. In addition, it was proposed to re-decorate the hall. The recent auction of promises had raised a total of £2,500 of which £1,250 would be retained by the hall and £1,250 would be sent for the children of Gambia. Councillor Turton said that he had been impressed by the amount of voluntary work that went into running the village hall by the management committee and other volunteers. He had also not realised the large cost involved in running the hall. The Council agreed that a letter should be sent to the village hall management committee thanking them for their commitment in running the hall.

Bodle Street Green village hall

10.116 Councillor Harding reported that the lights had failed during a recent meeting of the hall management committee. The committee had asked the Parish Council for a discretionary grant to help with the cost of repairs. The recent visit and performance by a theatre company had been successful.

Rights of Way committee

10.117 Councillor Sibbering reported that he and Councillor Harding would be attending courses run by the County Council on health and safety before they started with other volunteers to repair styles and clear overgrown footpaths. There were a large number of styles in need of repair as had been shown by a survey undertaken by the County Council.

10.118 The chairman mentioned that a parishioner living at Craile Place had been accused by the County Council of moving a footpath although in fact a tree line had grown up. This would need to be sorted out.

Wealden District Association of Local Councils (WDALC)

10.119 Wealden District Councillor Pam Doodes had attended the last WDALC meeting and talked about the latest edition of the Council's four year corporate plan. Wealden District Councillor Jane Bigsby had also given a presentation on an over 60s group she had set up in Polegate.

Clerk's Report

10.120 The clerk reported that there was very little correspondence from the County and District Councils because of the convention of dealing only with routine administration immediately before a general election.

East Sussex County Council

Village Maintenance Team

10.123 The village maintenance team would be coming to the parish but not until November. The clerk had asked them to clean up all finger posts. The clerk was also asked to send a request to Highways for a grit bin opposite Hodges.

Transport and Environment Department Presentation to Town and Parish Councils

10.124 The clerk had received an e-mail about a presentation of the work of the Transport and Environment Department on 23 July at Uckfield civic centre. Councillor Sibbering had attended the event last year and he agreed to consider going again this year.

Finance

Financial Statement for 15 April

10.125 It was resolved that the financial statement to 15 April be approved and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Accounts for payment.

10.126 The following accounts were approved for payment:

Sussex Association Local Councils	Annual subscription	£333.69
Wealden District Association Of Local Councils	Annual subscription	£20.00
Mr J A Leeves	Purchase postage stamps	£25.00
Mr J A Leeves	Clerk's allowance and stationery	£148.53
Mr J A Leeves	Travel expenses Jan to March	£81.09

10.127 In addition, the clerk had incurred expenditure in relation to the questionnaire for the Rural Access to Services Programme. The questionnaire was currently being printed by Mr Austin who would deliver it to the chairman for distribution. The clerk said that he would provide full details of this expenditure when the Council discussed the Rural Access to Services Programme.

Planning

10.128 Nothing to report.

Rural Access to Services Programme

10.129 The clerk reported that AiRS had sent the Council a cheque for £5,000.00 being the grant payment for the Rural Access to Services Programme. The Council would be the accounting body for the grant and the clerk had set up a separate spreadsheet to record expenditure and receipts for the programme. In addition, the expenditure and bank reconciliation records of the Council would also separately record the same financial information. This was necessary to satisfy auditors as payments were going through the Council's bank account. The grant was ring fenced and not part of the Council's reserves.

10.130 The following expenditure had so far been incurred for the questionnaire:

Purchase of labels and envelopes:	£75.89
Purchase of postage stamps	£368.00
Administrative work by the clerk	£25.35

10.131 There would also be the cost of printing the questionnaire which Mr Austin did not know at this stage. However, he anticipated that the total cost of the questionnaire would be between £500.00 and £600.00. The questionnaire would shortly be ready for despatch and it was anticipated that it would be sent out on 23 April. Mr Austin agreed to publicise the questionnaire in the Parish Pump and the clerk would be asking Mr McKeenan to publicise it in the village Leaf. The questionnaire asked residents to return it by 31 May.

10.132 Mr Lipa then explained that the next step was for the parish to set up a steering/working group to identify and implement projects. Councillor Long had already agreed to participate in the group and Mrs Clifford had also volunteered. The group normally comprised about 4 to 6 members including Ms Blight from AiRS. As soon as the members of the group were known the clerk said he would inform Ms Blight. On the questionnaire, Mr Lipa explained that AiRS would undertake the analysis of the completed forms and submitted the results to the group. The clerk said it would also be useful for the group to see the completed forms so that they could have a quick scan of any comments.

10.133 The clerk explained that the group would not be a committee of the Parish Council which had to be comprised entirely of Councillors. It would be an Advisory committee that would report and make recommendations to the Council.

Warbleton Website

10.134 Mr Gordon the webmaster for the Warbleton website, reported on the content and made proposals for some improvements. Mr Gordon had spoken to Ordnance Survey about putting a map with the parish boundaries on the website. At present this was not possible but Ordnance Survey were working on it and in the future it would be possible. There was a limited amount of advertising on the site at present and he

proposed to approach the editor of the parish magazine to see if advertisers could also feature on the website. He had considered charging but felt that this would put the parish magazines advertising revenue at risk. People trying to trace their family roots often e-mailed the website mail box and he suggested that they should be re-directed to the County Record Office for East Sussex.

10.135 Turning to the domain name and hosting for the website Mr Gordon reminded Councillor's that they paid an annual fee of £34.88 to Mr Site. The domain name was currently warbleton.org which was world wide but the cost could be reduced to £9.00 by having a UK domain name only. Web hosting could be changed to a charitable web hosting organisation which would only cost £9.99 per year. Overall the cost could be lowered to £15-£18.00 per year. Councillors agreed to these changes.

10.136 Mr Gordon suggested that the clerk put the Warbleton website address on the Council's letterhead. As he was not being supplied with copies of the minutes of Council meetings and Planning committee meetings the clerk agreed to do so in future. These would only be the approved minutes and would therefore always be for the previous Council or Planning committee meetings. Mr Gordon confirmed that the minutes once displayed on the website could not be altered by those viewing them.

Matters considered urgent by the chairman

10.137 None.

Dates of next meetings

10.138 The next meetings of the Parish Council would be on 21 May and 17 June in the Bodle Street Green village hall. The meeting on 21 May would be the Annual General Parish Council meeting.

Chairman.....

Date.....