

Ditchling Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting 10th April 2017

Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Upper Hall, Ditchling Village Hall. Monday 10th April 2017 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs.McBeth (Chairman), Smith, Robinson, Madden (Mrs), Madden (Mr), Guggenheim, Keeley, Leaver, Orme, Jones (LDC), the clerk Mrs Michelle Warner and 20 members of the public

Apologies for absence: Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Ingham

1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 8 March 2016, having been circulated, were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.
2. Report of Parochial Charities. Brian Clutterbuck, Chairman of the Dame Isabella Sprott Eleemosynary Charity gave some information on the history of the charity which was founded in 1378 with the fund divided in 1897 with part relating to the church and part relating to helping the poor of the village. The current Trustees are Brain Clutterbuck, Rev David Wallis, Mrs Angela Earwicker, Mrs Mary Holman, Mrs Dorothy Porter, Dr Miriam Wynn, Mrs Naomi Jerrey and Mrs Maralyn Hine.
The income is in the region of £650 per year. The Trustees have recently instituted a policy of making more meaningful grants to fewer people. Mr Clutterbuck thanked his fellow Trustees for their help and support over the past year.
3. Parish Council Chairman's Report. Cllr McBeth reported on the work of the Parish Council over the year including:
 - 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan which has been led so well by Mike Burr, Edwina Rowling and Tom Dufty. The first Neighbourhood Plan meeting took place on 5 August 2013
 - 3.2 The now fully operational football pitch, on the recreation ground. Rugby club have now left the recreation ground. The change of grounds maintenance to contactors to Barcombe Landscapes from 1 March 2017 and the clearing of the groundsman's hut.
 - 3.3 The precept increased slightly to £82,639 having been £81,082 in the year 2016/17. This is an increase of £1,557 or 1.92% or 78p per person. The council hold significant reserves
 - 3.4 The planning application for the car park in Keymer road has been submitted. This has not been linked to parking on Lodge Hill Lane, which is a matter for East Sussex Highways. We hope that the car park will be in place in 12 months time.
 - 3.5 We now have a full complement of councillors. With Robin Orme joining in December, and Peggy Guggenheim and Sam Keeley in January.
 - 3.6 We are expecting super- fast broadband to be available in the village centre in June.
 - 3.7 The council has agreed to upgrade the children's play area and has set aside £15,000. We will try to obtain match funding to provide a further £15,000. We thank Louise Evatt for her very comprehensive paper and suggestions for improvements.
 - 3.8 A mention perhaps of the 2018 Annual fair and the need for volunteers. A meeting will be held on the 25th of April in the White Hart at 7.30 all welcome.
 - 3.9 We have installed and removed a Portland stone plinth from the war memorial.

A resident queried the super- fast broadband delivery date of June 2017 as the BT website shows a date of July. Cllr McBeth said that the June date had been confirmed in writing, but he would check with BT.

A resident asked whether the new car park would have any restriction. Cllr McBeth noted that it would have the same restrictions as the village hall car park.

A resident queried whether cyclist would be able to use the area to park their cars while they cycled in the area. Cllr McBeth explained that the car park was for the use of residents and visitors alike.

A resident asked if the car park would operate on a pay to park basis. Cllr McBeth advised that use of the car park would be free.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Report Mike Burr, chair of the Steering Committee reported on the Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans were set up under the Localism Act of 2011. Neighbourhood Plans slot into the planning system at the lowest tier. Under the joint core strategy the committee had to find sites for at least 15 new homes.

Preparation of the plan began in June 2013, chaired by Tom Dufty. We are very lucky that the communities of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston are full of professionals and Tom recruited them to serve on the 5 focus groups. These professionals included planners, surveyors, traffic engineers, cartographers, environmental scientists, technical writers, PR, IT and web designers.

The initial questionnaire sent to each household had a 50% response rate. It was clear from the analysis of the questionnaires that conservation of the built and natural environment was rated as the single most important aspect of life in the villages. The majority of residents did not want to see additional large houses but 1-2 bedroom starter homes. The focus group also advocated the use where possible of community housing, housing associations and Community Land Trusts, with protected trust ownership to prevent houses becoming available on the open market. Sites for new homes were found using the Lewes DC and the SDNP methodology; land owners were invited to put sites forward for development. The questionnaire recorded that nearly 75% of the population say that traffic has either a huge or significant impact on their quality of life, while 94% support the need for traffic calming.

The public have been extensively consulted throughout the development of the plan and the final draft will be sent to the planning authority by the end of April 2017. The next stage is for the SDNP to carry out its own evaluation and public consultation. A Planning Inspector will be appointed by central government to evaluate the plan. If approved a local referendum will take place, requiring a 50%+1 vote of those who vote for approval. If passed the plan becomes part of statutory planning framework and all planning applications have to be evaluated for approval against the plan's policies. Two recent events give cause for concern, at Newick and Hassocks developers have challenged Neighbourhood Plans and appeals have been allowed.

Mike noted that special thanks should be given to Tom Dufty, Edwina Rowling, Julie Middleton, and Phil Smith.

5. Lewes District Council Report Cllr Jones explained that he was reporting as both the District Councillor and an appointed member of the SDNP. Following a recent judicial review a judge found that the Lewes District Local Plan was valid in areas outside the SDNP. The SDNP does not at this time have a shared local plan. The SDNP is expected to adopt its own local plan towards the end of the year. Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council now share services and senior management positions have been reduced by 50%. LDC is responsible for rubbish collection. The current system with a variety of boxes for recyclables is not effective and a new scheme will be rolled out across the district during this year and next year.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is now in place and new developments will pay into this scheme. Villages with adopted Neighbourhood Plans can apply for 25% of these funds.

A resident asked if the CIL applied to just one new house. Cllr Jones advised that it applied to all new development and extensions to existing properties if the area exceeded 100 sq metres. Affordable and self-build houses are excluded.

In the absence of Cllr Shepherd. Cllr McBeth read from the county council report.

The County Council have had many difficult decisions to make due to Government reduction in funding. Some of our services have been affected but we have continued to give the best possible service with the funds available. Our four main priorities for East Sussex are: Driving economic growth whereby all residents can benefit, supporting those most in need, creating opportunity and encouraging responsibility and making the best use of resources. Council Tax: In the last four years, we have kept Council Tax low by increasing efficiency whilst delivering front line services to residents.

Employment: Since 2013 we have reduced unemployment by 58%. At the same time, average income per household has grown ten times faster than the rest of the country. Environment: Our waste plant, the incinerator, has converted over 500,000 tonnes of the County's waste into £650,000 worth of electricity.

Roads: We have invested £85 million in the maintenance and rebuilding of roads. In the same period, we have repaired 200,000 potholes and resurfaced over 500 km of the County's roads. Recycling: We now recycle 41% of all the waste in the County. Nothing goes to landfill. Education: We have delivered the best results ever, including superb early years provision for 2 – 5 year olds. Safety: We have invested £240,000 in road safety schemes and £1million on programmes to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on local roads.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Chairman _____ **2018**