

Ditchling Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting 17th March 2015

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Old Meeting House on Tuesday, 17th March 2015 at 8pm.
Present Don McBeth Chairman, three Councillors, Tom Jones (District Councillor) and two parishioners.

Apologies Jim Sheppard (County Councillor), Mrs M. Bolton and Mrs C. Robinson (parish Councillors).

1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th March 2014, had been circulated, were taken as read, proposed and seconded as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
2. Report of Parochial Charities. Brian Clutterbuck, Chairman of the Dame Isabella Sprott Eleemosynary Charity reported that half the Trustees were appointed by the Parish Council and the remainder by the Trustees. The current Trustees were Rev David Wallis, Mrs Angela Earwicker, Mrs Mary Holman, Mrs Dorothy Porter, Mrs Agnes Sellens and Dr Miriam Wynn. Grants of £250 had been made to two beneficiaries.
3. Parish Council Chairman's Report. Don McBeth reported that the Neighbourhood Plan had been progressing during the past 18 months. 53% of the questionnaire had been returned, Focus Groups had been looking into how they saw the future. The parking in Lodge Hill Lane had not been included. The question of the proposed additional Car Park in Keymer Road was ongoing. The Precept had been increased by £10,000 to cover the planning application for the Car Park, £4,000 had been added to cover the increased cost of maintaining the Football pitch to Sport England standards and £4,000 for election costs. There had been 42 planning applications during the year including the one for Court Farm on the Keymer Road which had been approved. The fly infestation had not been so bad to date probably thanks to the Red Top Boxes. The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Stall at the Fair had been very successful. Unfortunately, due to the cuts, the local bus services had been curtailed. The Council was very sorry to lose one of its long standing Councillors Mrs Belinda Brittain who had died. Dr Victoria Ingham had been co-opted to serve. A Defibrillator had been purchase to be erected on the Village Hall, training would take place.
4. Lighting Committee Report The Chairman, Mark Madden reported that the columns had been painted in Spring 2014 at a cost of £5,758 Various repairs had taken place ,or ordered. The UKPN faults in Beacon Road were still awaiting repair. The repair to the light in North End was scheduled to take place in the next 6 to 8 weeks due to its complexity. Please report faults to the Clerk or direct to 0345 60 80 193, each lamp post has a number and this helps to identify it, please give lamp number and road name.
5. Burial Ground Committee The Chairman Tom Jones reported that the fences at the entrance and also between Burial Ground and Extension Land were in need of repair. The Burial Ground had been affected by the extreme weather conditions which had made it difficult to keep the ground to a high standard. There had been four burials since the last APM.
6. Grounds Committee the Chairman. Phil Smith reported that following the successful application to Sport Ennland to put in an extensive drainage system for both the Football and Rugby Pitches, the Rugby Club had decided they wanted to develop two pitches of their own and withdrew. Sport England agreed that the money could be spent on the southern football Pitch. The Council was extremely grateful to the Philipson Ditchling Trust the Turner Dumbrell Faoundation and the Ditchling Village Association for the proposed grants of £50,000 £5,000 and £1,000 respectively. Drainage work stared in October but was not completed due to weather conditions.it was agreed to turf rather than seed as this will provide a guaranteed playing surface this year for all the Clubs. The Council was very grateful for the co-operation of the Clubs and the public while the work was ongoing.The bench had been removed from under the old Ash tree in the interest of safety. Thanks were due to Darren for his work in maintaining the grounds.
7. Footpaths Committee Mrs Catharine Robinson had sent a written report thanking the Monday Club for keeping the bridges and stiles in good condition and keeping the footpaths clear. Another wet winter had not helped the walking of the paths. Members of the public were asked to report any problems. The Committee was thanked for walking the paths and highlighting any problems.
8. County Council Report No report
9. Lewes District Council Report Councillor Tom Jones reported that since the Lib Dems left office in 2011, the Conservatives have led Lewes District Council, maintaining its services and finances in

good order under very difficult circumstances. During this four-year period, we have made considerable progress, but there is plenty more for us to do. Our aims are simple: To provide efficient and effective services for the residents of Lewes District, to improve the environment that we all live in. Some of our achievements so far: 1. Secured over £51 million of regeneration funding for Lewes District. 2. Reduced our council tax precept by 9% in real terms by freezing it. 3. Made it easier for residents to access front line services by investing in a new reception area, a new telephone system and a new website. 4. Supported local businesses through a range of initiatives including business rate discounts. 5. Published information on our performance so you can see how we're doing. 6. Created joint enterprises with the private sector to deliver over 250 new affordable homes. 7. Worked tirelessly to reduce spending on contracts by over £300,000. 8. Landed the 'Gentleman of the Road' tour which brought in £2 million for the area. .We Are Tackling Waste and Unfairness . We redressed unfairness by getting specific areas of our District to pay for the maintenance of their own parks and gardens. What we found was that seventy per cent of households across the district were paying for their own parks and gardens AND also for those in the remaining 30 per cent. We thought this was unfair, so we changed it. . Now you only pay for the open spaces in your own area, which effectively means that everyone got a rebate other than people living in Lewes and Newhaven. . We said we would cut down on waste and save you money by tightening up on contract procurement. This is already saving over £300,000 a year, ensuring we have not needed to raise LDC's element of the Council Tax during our administration. . We have made sure that our buildings are more energy efficient by investing in solar panels and insulation. We have introduced food waste and cardboard recycling and improved our recycling performance at a time when many other Councils are seeing theirs decline. .We Have Improved Access to the Council . To the customer, front line staff and the internet ARE the organisation and so we have invested in a new reception area, a new telephone system and a new web site. We have ensured that when someone has a complex problem, they have one point of contact who can coordinate back office staff and get things sorted out quickly. . We have made it easier for you to speak to the person that you need to speak to and we have developed more on line services so that if you are able, you can deal with your query or pay online. Feel free to come and visit the offices to see the improvements. . the Council has become a lot more commercially aware so that it can take advantage of opportunities afforded to it and become more self-sufficient. We needed to do this because, like all authorities, we are legally obliged to provide certain services, but these activities do not necessarily help balance the District's books . A joint venture with the developer Santon in Lewes will see us deliver 416 new housing units of which 165 will be affordable. This project will also generate income for the Council which, in turn, means we can keep the Council Tax low. . We have developed a business support package that includes business rate discounts,

10. Sussex Police Report No report.

11. Any Other Business
Drain in North End by Allotments- needs clearing -
Hole in road outside the Sandrock needs investigating.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

Chairman

March 2016