

Wisborough Green Annual Parish Meeting

Draft Minutes of the Meeting to be agreed on 17th May 2011

Date: Thursday 21st April 2011

Present: Mr K Charman, (Chairman), Mr R Hamilton, Mr A Jackson, Mr M King,
(Councillors)

Apologies: Mr R Bowes and Mr P Mahoney (Councillors)
Mr C Duncton (County Councillor)

In Attendance: Mrs L Davies, Clerk
16 Members of Public
Mr Josef Ransley (Conservative) and Mr Roger Wood (Liberal Democrat) – candidates for forthcoming District Council elections.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.00 pm and welcomed all those present. He was pleased that both candidates for the forthcoming District Council elections had been able to attend; introductions were made and each candidate was invited to address the meeting.

Mr Roger Wood - Liberal Democrat

Mr Wood gave explanation to his life and involvement in Kirdford village organisations and his varied political and working history. Although he had not stood for political office before, he was keen to be involved and add voice to residents' issues, aspirations and demands. He had a strong sense of right and wrong and if elected, would be guided by his conscience and the electorate.

Mr Josef Ransley – Conservative

Over the last 12 months, Mr Ransley explained that he had involved in Kirdford's Community Led Plan (CLP) and this had given an insight into Kirdford's concerns, along with being a Kirdford Parish Councillor. He was now keen to be more involved and if elected, would be a strong and loud voice for Wisborough Green and Kirdford within Chichester District Council (CDC). With the creation of the South Downs National Park, he was concerned that Loxwood, Kirdford, Plaistow and Wisborough Green were isolated from Chichester and it was important that these Parishes were represented in an active way. The concerns identified in Kirdford were probably very similar to Wisborough Green; speeding, road maintenance, schools, housing, employment, bus service. He also gave explanation to the development numbers which CDC was currently considering and the potential implications for the north area outside the Park. Through the Kirdford CLP, he currently emailed regular updates to residents and was keen to extend this to Wisborough Green to ensure that residents were aware of issues and could make their representation to CDC and West Sussex County Council (WSCC).

The Chairman thanked both candidates for attending the meeting.

Chairman's Report – a review of the past year

A comprehensive report had been prepared which gave full explanation to the Parish Council's year. Mr Charman explained that he would not go through the report but highlight a few salient points.

He was extremely grateful for the help and support of all Councillors and the Clerk and extended his thanks to them. He was personally extremely proud of what the Parish Council had achieved during the last year and it was disappointing that there had been apathy towards the recent election nominations; five Councillors were re-standing and 4 expressions of interest to be co-opted onto the Council had now been received.

The Parish Council newsletter continued to be produced on a quarterly basis. It was distributed at no cost to the Parish and was now proving to be a successful and reliable way of communicating to the parish. The website was also being regularly updated and was a good source of reference for a parish of this size.

The Community Speed Watch Group had continued operating the Speed Indicator Device (SID) during the first part of the year and the Chairman extended his grateful thanks to all those involved. Speeding traffic was a continuing issue and the valuable observations and information provided by the Group had been reported to WSCC. This information was now being considered and it was hoped that proposals would result.

When the Garmans development had been built, the developer had given funds for road and safety improvements in Newpound Lane. Due to the width, improvements were limited and earlier in the year the Council was made aware that money remained. The Council applied for a variation to use the money to extend the lay-by in Durbans Road but unfortunately this was rejected by the developers and the money would now be reimbursed.

Littering continued to be a problem around the village but the Chairman extended his thanks to Mrs Beverley Twelvetrees, the new litter warden, and all those who attended the spring and autumn litter picking sessions. He also hoped that the newly restored village benches helped to retain an attractive village centre.

Some of the torrential downpours last summer again highlighted an on-going problem with surface water drainage around the Pavilion. In an attempt to resolve some of the problems, the ditch along Kirdford Road was cleared of years of silt. Investigations were still on-going.

Another Horse Chestnut unfortunately succumbed to disease and was felled. It was doubtful that a truly resistant variety was available and the village might need to change species in order to retain tree cover. It would obviously change the look of the village considerably and would need to be considered carefully.

The children's playground was obviously well used and during the course of the year the Parish Council made the decision to enclose the post and rail fence with mesh to reduce the risk of children running into the road. The Council acknowledged that some refurbishment was required with some additional items for younger children, although it would be a large financial undertaking. The Council was currently obtaining information and might also need to consider the playground's enclosure.

The last Parish Action Plan was published in 2004 and having reviewed the plan, it was clear that all actions had now been achieved. The Parish Council was currently looking at the foundations of a new Action Plan or Community Led Plan (CLP) as it was now known. Mr Charman emphasised the importance of the Localism Bill and as such, the importance of the Parish Council's objective to consult with the village on a new CLP during 2011/2012.

Obviously an important element of the plan was the parish's thoughts on housing. A second working group was currently looking at affordable housing as information from CDC suggested that a number of families were seeking homes in the village. This would obviously be considered carefully in light of the Garmans development experience. It was important that the parish's view was known before CDC's framework was imposed. The Localism Bill promoted the importance of community views.

On a very positive note, the Parish Council was delighted at the success of the Youth Club and was indebted to all those involved. There were 20 young people who now regularly attended.

Mr Charman highlighted one further point regarding the Old Workhouse Wall project. He explained that a survey was commissioned jointly with the Parochial Church Council on the old and historic wall between the Old Workhouse garden and the churchyard. The Parish Council had taken responsibility for the north wall, to which work had now been undertaken for safety reasons, and would make the remedial repairs to the south wall. However, it was the tree roots and pressure from the raised ground that was cause for the east wall concerns. The Council was now in discussion with the Parochial Church Council as to how the work could be jointly undertaken. The necessary planning permissions for the wall work had been received.

And finally, Mr Charman reiterated the main objective for 2011/2012 was to consult on a new Community Led Plan which would be linked to details/requirements in the new Localism Bill. This would obviously involve a great deal of work and would therefore be the sole objective for the next year.

Income and Expenditure for 2010/2011

The Chairman gave explanation to the Income and Expenditure report which had been circulated. He explained that the Parish Council continued to accrue funds for the Village Hall and Workhouse maintenance. The Council was in a good financial position and the year-end figures were as anticipated. There were no further questions.

Public Questions

Mr Armistead expressed his disappointment that the meeting had been held on Maundy Thursday and as such, many who went to Church had been unable to attend. The Chairman explained that due to other Village Hall bookings it had not been possible to change the date but the comment was noted for future years. The Clerk stated that public attendance was about half the usual number.

It was noted that a few properties along Petworth Road and those in Balchins Close received a hand delivered and then posted newsletter. The Clerk would review.

Mr Preston-Jones was aware that the website currently did not publish details of commercial activities and questioned whether the Council's policy could be reviewed. A number of commercial activities had been poorly advertised and attendance affected as a result. It was noted that posters were often removed from the shop railings. Mr Ransley explained that the Kirdford Community Shop website (www.kirdfordvillagestores.com) listed village events for 4 parishes and details from Wisborough Green could be included. Mr Charman agreed that the Parish Council would review.

Mr Hamilton expressed his appreciation to the Wisborough Green Stores which was of huge benefit to many, particularly during the severe winter weather.

Mrs Matthews asked whether the safety of the playground bus stop could be improved. The standing space was very limited and due to the close proximity to traffic, she was concerned for the elderly that might fall into the ditch. The Chairman acknowledged the difficulties but explained that the Council's main priority at the moment was to save the number 76 bus as a review of subsidised bus services was currently being undertaken.

As a previous Chairman, Mr Armistead was aware of the Chairman's role and the work undertaken by the Clerk and other Councillors. He thanked all those involved and asked that his thanks be recorded in the minutes.

As there were no further questions, all present were invited to remain for refreshments.

The meeting was closed at 8.40 pm.

Chairman :

Date: