

Wisborough Green Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: Thursday 25th April 2019

Present: Parish Councillors:

Mr A Burbridge, Mr P Drummond (Chairman), Mr A Jackson, Mr M Newell, Mrs S Overington,
Mr S Rollinson, Mr H True

In Attendance: Mrs L Davies, Clerk
13 Members of Public

Apologies: Parish Councillors: Mr M Watson

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.00 pm and extended a warm welcome. He explained that a detailed Annual Report had been provided, which would also be available on the website. It was not his intention to read the complete report but highlight the main activities.

Chairman's Report – a review of the past year

Wisborough Green was very fortunate in that it had a full Parish Council and vacancies which occurred in the last year were filled. The Council was pleased to welcome Judith Dandy and Steve Rollinson who replaced Nick Beresford and Keith Charman. The village owed Keith a debt of gratitude for his tremendous dedication as councillor and subsequently Chairman, and for steering the Parish Council through some challenging times. He extended his thanks to his fellow eight councillors who were all volunteers. All had expressed an interest in continuing from May, so there would again be a full Council going forward following an uncontested election.

There was the District Council election on 2nd May which would bring about two significant changes. Josef Ransley was not re-standing. The Chairman extended the Council's thanks for all his help and support over the years and for his immense contribution to this area. The other change related to the ward in which Wisborough Green fell. This had now been enlarged and grouped with Kirdford, Loxwood, Plaistow and Ifold, Ebernoe and Northchapel, and represented by two councillors. Quite how this would work in the future was unclear.

Janet Duncton, our elected representative on West Sussex County Council, had long been a Wisborough Green fan and the Chairman expressed thanks for her support. He also congratulated her on a recent election as Chairman of WSCC. Applauded.

It seemed that the village was going to have an active construction site, or two, for years going forward. Jones Homes had been toiling away at Great Meadow; it was exciting that some of the houses there were now occupied and he welcomed the village's newest residents. Runnymede Homes would soon be putting a spade in the ground at Winterfold (Songhurst Meadow), the site behind the Cricketers. The Village Hall committee was making steady progress and following the grant of planning consent, had appointed surveyors, was progressing the drawings to building control level and exploring funding options. The replacement of the Pavilion was also progressing and a small but effective team from the Parish Council and Wisborough Green Sports were progressing the design such that it met the needs of the sports played on the Green and was visually acceptable on our most treasured asset. Lastly, Wisborough Green had been allocated a further 25 homes in the next version of the Chichester Local Plan and a Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group was working on revising our Neighbourhood Plan.

One of the benefits of the building of new homes was that the Parish would be the recipient of quite large sums from Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Parish Council had developed a shopping list of items, based on what the village had told the Parish Council through previous consultations, with financial support of both the Village Hall and Pavilion projects being key. The Parish Council liked to consult village residents when major changes were afoot and the Chairman encouraged everyone to participate.

And finally, for the introduction anyway, he extended his thanks to Louise Davies, the Clerk, without whom the village would not function as well as it had.

The Chairman continued by highlighting the following in the report:

Great Meadow, Petworth Road: This development had not been without issues, primarily related to contractor parking around the village. Despite Jones Homes submitting a Traffic Management Plan which detailed arrangements to contain contractors' parking onsite, the experience has been very different. The Parish Council raised safety concerns with Jones Homes as well as other authorities, but unfortunately was unsuccessful in improving the situation.

Winterfold Fields, Durbans Road (to be called Songhurst Meadow): The developer was frustrated that it had taken so long to meet the planning conditions for this site. The Parish Council has already spoken to Runnymede Homes to ensure that sufficient on-site contractors' parking was provided; development would start this summer.

The Parish Council was asked for a name suggestion and yet again the History Society came up trumps with a historical connection. On the 1842 Tithe Map it stated that the fields were known as Sexton's Meadow, First Sexton and Middle Sexton, owned by Mr Tobbutt with Mr Songhurst as tenant. The Parish Council therefore made the suggestion that the site was named Songhurst Meadow, which Runnymede had now put forward to CDC and the Post Office.

Gatwick Airport: The Parish Council continued to keep a watchful eye on the airport and the potential impact that expansion could have on Wisborough Green. The Chairman was an inaugural member of the Noise Management Board but stood down when taking on the Parish Council Chairmanship, but he was still actively involved. There had been some improvements with the modifications to the Airbus A320 to remove the whine and flight dispersal, but potential expansion was still a concern.

Traffic: The Chairman was pleased to report that WSCC was progressing the Community Highways Scheme to improve pedestrian connectivity and the walking to school route, as well as extending the existing layby and creating a new layby on the Little Green. It was with great sadness that it took a tragic accident for WSCC to agree to re-shape and resurface Hughes Hill to make it safer.

Over the course of a year, the Parish Council undertook quite a great deal of maintenance work. A significant project this year was the restoration and conversation to an information point of the telephone kiosk. This had now been completed and the Council was grateful to Chichester District Council which kindly awarded a grant towards the cost.

It was a bit of a shock to find travellers camping on the Green just before the August Bank Holiday, possibly for the first time in living memory. Unfortunately, it was necessary to follow a legal process to remove them in time for the weekend of events, which cost the village £750.

There But Not There: Wisborough Green was proud to have been asked to be a 'Pathfinder Parish' in the aim to place a representative figure into their place of worship, their school, their workplace or wherever their absence was keenly felt, for as many as possible of the names on local war memorials, around the country.

There were 22 men who did not return to the village and their names were listed on the village war memorials. From mid-September until November, they returned to sit within St Peter ad Vincula church as they may well have as part of the congregation. It was a truly moving experience. In support of this commemoration, a booklet detailing the lives of these men was published. The Chairman acknowledged the tremendous research and work undertaken by Andrew Strudwick and Paul and Sue Killingbeck of the History Society. He believed that the village did the men proud.

The Chairman highlighted that a detailed financial summary had been provided along with explanation of the income and expenditure over the past year: the Clerk would be happy to provide more detailed information, if required.

Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Overington explained that the current Neighbourhood Plan (NP) had worked well for the community, standing up to scrutiny and protecting the village on several occasions from inappropriate development. The NP and its policies had been used as justification by both Chichester District Council (CDC) and independent examiners within their decision making rationale for Wisborough Green.

The document, and its policies, remained sound and without the Local Plan Review would have continued to serve the village and its community for many years. However, the current CDC Local Plan, adopted in 2015, was required by the inspector to be reviewed within five years to ensure sufficient housing was planned to meet the district's need.

This review had brought a requirement for a further 25 housing units in Wisborough Green and as such the Parish Council agreed that a review of our own NP was required to ensure local control over planning development.

The NP Review Steering Group comprised of Parish Council representatives and members of the community. Since the inaugural meeting on the 26th November 2018, six whole group meetings had been held and regular subgroup meetings of the Site Assessment Team and the Policy and Review Management Team.

The Review Timetable ran from November 2018 to May 2021 as our own NP must fit into and within, the Chichester Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, like Russian Dolls.

Due to our prompt response to both the original NP, and the required Review, we were again one of the front runners within the process and were to a large extent ahead in terms of planning and experience, therefore paving the way for others who would go through the same process.

To ensure this did not present any future challenge we had acquired external professional support and guidance from specialists within this subject area, Chapman Planning, Locality and Action in rural Sussex.

Public Consultation would be achieved through postal questionnaires and an open event in the Village Hall at the end of June to ensure the views and the opinions of the community were accurately represented within the Vision, Objectives and Policies of the reviewed NP.

The community of WG would continue to be regularly informed of the review process through articles in the Ad Vincula magazine. Assessment of the sites brought forward for proposed development would commence shortly against professionally agreed criteria. All other necessary work was ongoing to ensure a timely completion of the Wisborough Green NP within the required time frame.

Public Questions

Dr Jill Sutcliffe, a member of the NP Review Steering Group, highlighted that part of the Parish was also in the South Downs National Park and as such, the SDNP Local Plan would also need to be considered as part of the NP Review.

A Newpound Lane resident asked about the site assessment process, the criteria to be used and whether members of the public had an opportunity to contribute at this stage. It was explained that the criteria and assessment used would be similar to last time and examples were available on the village website. An independent consultant had been engaged to review the process and criteria to ensure that it conformed to current policy and legislation. The assessments would be undertaken by the NP Review Group, with validation by a consultancy provided by Locality, a government backed organisation. Details of the assessments would be made available at a public consultation event planned at the end of June.

A resident of The Luth asked what sort of projects the Community Infrastructure Funding would be used for. Reassurance was given that the funding would be used in the parish for projects such as the Village Hall, Pavilion, drainage improvements on the village green, provision of a trail on Songhurst Meadow. In relation to the Public Art fund, this could only be spent on a piece of public art and current thoughts were for a piece of etched glass in the Village Hall to reflect the history of the village and building. The Chairman emphasised that not all the projects put forward could be achieved, but it was important that there were registered with CDC.

The meeting was then closed at 8.25 pm and refreshments served.

Chairman :

Date: