

Wisborough Green Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: Thursday 22nd April 2021

Present: Parish Councillors:
Ms L Bartley, Mr A Burbridge, Mr P Drummond (Chairman), Mr A Jackson,
Mr S Rollinson, Mr H True, Mr M Watson, Mrs S Winship, Mr T Worrall

Mrs L Davies, Parish Council Clerk
Cllr J Duncton, District and County Councillor
4 Members of Public

Apologies: Cllr G Evans, District Councillor

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.00 pm and extended a warm welcome to the first Annual Parish Meeting on Zoom. He advised that the meeting would be recorded for minute preparation only, and the recording then deleted.

A detailed Annual Report would be published shortly on the village website, so it was not his intention to read the complete report which detailed the Parish Council's activities and expenditure over the past year. He would run through a few items that he wished to highlight and then talk further about development, specifically the planning application for the Church fields, adjacent to the Church.

Chairman's Report – a review of the past year

The first thing he spoke about was the people of Wisborough Green. Those who responded to the call for help when the pandemic struck last March. Over 50 people volunteered, far more than those requiring help. This was a tremendous response and indicative of the quality of Wisborough Green and a strong and active community.

The Parish Council and, although not unique, Wisborough Green was immensely fortunate to have a full compliment of Councillors and that vacancies were quickly filled. Last year the Council lost Judith Dandy, Sheena Overington and Michael Newell, who were all excellent Councillors. He paid a special tribute to Sheena Overington, who was an exemplar Councillor. He was delighted that the Council welcomed Lucy Bartley, Sophie Winship and Tim Worrall who were all now actively involved in Council work. He also expressed thanks to Gareth Evans, District Councillor, who offered considerable help and to Janet Duncton, District and County Councillor, whose immense experience was extremely valuable.

Not on the Parish Council, but contributing a considerable amount to Wisborough Green, was Keith Carter, Chair of the Wisborough Green Village Hall Committee and leading the hall refurbishment project. Also, Michael Gadd, Chair of Wisborough Green Sports, who was leading the new Pavilion project. Wisborough Green was a good place with many good people.

There were several large projects within the village. The first was the Village Hall refurbishment which would commence on 26th April 2021; it had been a long time coming but was exciting for the village. Phase 1, the extension and kitchen improvements, would be completed initially and Phase 2 would follow when funding was achieved. The new Pavilion project was still being

progressed, now through a joint Parish Council and Wisborough Green Sports working group that removed misunderstanding through improved communication.

A mid-sized project was the land adjacent to the Songhurst Meadow development. This would provide a wonderful additional green space for the village, different from the village green, with a perimeter footpath, tree planting and wildflowers. Importantly, once handed over to the Parish Council, it would remain a green space in perpetuity. This was a positive achievement for the village and hopefully, this time next year, people would be enjoying the area, with junior cricket next summer.

One smaller project was a new duck house. This was kindly made and donated by the Lee family. Not only did it look fantastic, but it moved up and down with the water level. Yet more good people.

It was too easy to be blasé about the public toilets on the Green, but the facilities were incredibly important for the village and for those who passed through on the A272. Every year the Parish Council received letters of appreciation as well as the occasional donation. A smaller project was the provision of hot water for the cleaner.

The Chairman was personally proud of the Christmas projection on the side of the church. Originally introduced to project the Tommy for the Armistice commemorations, it was decided that it also provided an opportunity for a Christmas illumination as an alternative to a Christmas tree which had been a challenge to provide over the years.

A perennial problem was litter. Unfortunately, it scarred the world and was an issue in Wisborough Green. The Parish Council did pay £1,600 for a litter warden but the decision was made to temporarily suspend the contract to monitor not only how much litter was dropped but how much was collected voluntarily. It was a good sign that more people were now picking up litter in their travels and he would encourage all to do so.

Obviously, the village would have preferred not to have the Great Meadow development on Petworth Road and the scale of the development was not supported by the Parish Council, but it had now turned into a pleasant development, was not too intrusive and had blended into the village. The Section 106 funds emanating from the development would be a real benefit to the village. The Songhurst Meadow development has not only provided a new open space for the village but has contributed almost £109,000 via the Community Infrastructure Levy; how to spend this money has been considered carefully by the Parish Council and projects identified. There are some community benefits to development.

Having spoken about development that had happened, the Chairman gave further explanation to the government's housing drive and the implications for both the Chichester Local Plan and village Neighbourhood Plan, particularly with Chichester not having a 5-year housing land supply. He explained about the original Neighbourhood Plan process, and the guidance given by the village, as well as the consultation process and outcome for the Neighbourhood Plan Review; the draft Revised Plan was on Regulation 14 consultation from Tuesday 4th May for 6 weeks. The Neighbourhood Plan process was led by the Parish Council, with community members involved on the Steering Group. The process was guided by the people in the village and was, as far as it could be, a democratic process for the village to determine where new development should be located.

It was against this backdrop that the Chairman spoke further about the planning application for the field adjacent to St Peter Ad Vincula church. He gave explanation to the results of previous Neighbourhood Plan consultations that demonstrated that the site was not supported by the village. The Parish Council had therefore taken this guide to vigorously oppose the application.

Sites for the minimum of 40 houses allocated to Wisborough Green had been found, decided by the village, on a scale preferred by the village and with the use of Brownfield or pre-used sites.

If 25 dwellings were granted on this field, it could result in a further 55 towards Newpound Lane. There were numerous reasons to object which were detailed on the village website; a recent Court ruling might also help. The Chairman encouraged those, who objected to the application, to make representation to Chichester District Council.

Public Questions

Durbans Road resident – he and his wife regularly collected litter, 2 or 3 times a week, with full bags collected. It was incredibly frustrating, but another concern was the amount of dog waste left on public footpaths. He confirmed that they were registered with CDC and had been provided with the necessary equipment. The Chairman thanked them both for their efforts. They were not alone as many people now picked up litter as they walked around the village rather than as a specific task. It was disappointing that village people were inconsiderate and appeared to lack respect. He encouraged everyone to join in with one of the community litter picking sessions. In terms of litter relating to The Cricketers Arms, the Chairman advised that the outside seating area was on Parish Council land and it was a requirement to keep tidy; the Clerk would speak to the publican.

In answer to a further question, the Chairman confirmed that the Chichester Diocese owned the Church Fields, but an option had been sold to the developer about 5 years ago. Although it was a lovely idea for the Parish to purchase this land, the value would be millions of pounds and was therefore probably not feasible or possible.

Durban Road resident: Asked what was the best argument for objecting to the development. She was advised that 29 points of objection had been included on the village website and residents were asked to select those that they were passionate about and write in their own words. Cllr Worrall recommended walking on the footpaths around the field. The Chairman also spoke about the implications of other development in Billingshurst and surrounding areas. Cllr Rollinson gave explanation to the house prices in the area, and the impact of people moving out from London.

School Road resident: In answer to her question, the Chairman gave further explanation to the Chichester housing land supply.

School Road resident: In answer to his question about the next stage of the application, the Chairman advised that he would attend the Planning Committee meeting and represent the village. The response deadline had been extended to 11th May 2021. Cllr Duncton confirmed that she would also speak and gave further explanation to the procedure and number of representations at the meeting.

Cllr Worrall advised that he, and other people, experienced problems logging onto the CDC website. Cllr Duncton had informed the IT department. The Clerk suggested that representations could also be emailed to the CDC Planning Department or the Planning Officer.

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With the special qualities of the site, Cllr Rollinson asked if there was a process to ensure that Planning Committee members visited the site. Cllr Duncton would make the request, but it could not be guaranteed.

Cllr True was aware that a community poll had previously been considered. The Chairman advised that this was an expensive option and took too much time to organise. Encouraging many individual representations had a similar effect.

As a new member of the Council, Cllr Worrall admired the work undertaken by the Parish Council and now had an understanding of what was involved, in the background, between meetings. He was very impressed at the time, effort and energy, particularly of long-term members, and as a member of the village, wished to say thank you. Endorsed by others.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and reminded them about the full Annual Report, commending it as a good read!

The meeting was then closed at 8.45 pm and refreshments served.

Chairman :

Date: