

Wisborough Green Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: Thursday 21st April 2022

Present: Parish Councillors:
Mr P Drummond (Chairman), Mr A Jackson, Mr H True, Mrs S Winship,
Mr T Worrall

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

Apologies: Councillors - Ms L Bartley, Mr M Watson
Residents - Mr & Mrs C Stride

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.00 pm and extended a warm welcome to all. He read out an email received from Mr & Mrs Stride sending apologies and thanking the Parish Council "The Village wouldn't look so great if it wasn't for all the hard work of your committee."

A full report had been distributed at the meeting, to which the Chairman referred, and would also be published on the website. A summary report had been prepared which would be distributed to all households to highlight the Parish Council's role and raise awareness. It was not his intention to go through the whole report but to highlight a few key points.

Chairman's Report – a review of the past year

Too often little importance was given to the role of a Parish Council, but the Chairman stressed that a Parish Council had an important role and could achieve a great deal for their community; he hoped that the Annual Report demonstrated this. Wisborough Green was very fortunate to have a fantastic group of councillors, who all brought different skills to the Council. Members were unpaid and as there was a vacancy, following the resignation of Mr Steve Rollinson last July, he encouraged anyone to consider joining the Council.

Over the year, a Full Council meeting was held every month with an additional meeting called in December; meetings would not usually be held in August and December. The Finance Committee met on one occasion to scrutinise the budget and accounts, and the Planning Committee met 6 times to meet Chichester District Council (CDC) response deadlines.

The Neighbourhood Review Steering Group, which consisted of Parish Council and Community members, met regularly throughout the year. The last year had been a particularly hard and challenging time, but their commendable work helped to preserve the Wisborough Green that we knew and loved.

Publicity: The Parish Council was keen that its work was known about within the village and meetings were as transparent as possible. This was achieved by: meeting minutes being published on the website; the website generally, which was kept up to date by the Clerk and compared favourably with other village sites; a newsletter published three times each year, and kindly distributed by the Ad Vincula distribution team.

With thanks: There were several people who he wished to mention and express the village's appreciation. Mrs Janet Dunton, the West Sussex County Councillor who had been assisting the village for the past 9 years. Cllr Gareth Evans, a District Councillor, fulfilling this role most admirably. Parish Councillor Sophie Winship, for her sterling work on speeding traffic in the village; along with Steve Rollinson, she was instrumental in re-establishing the Community Speed Watch group and they worked with the police to secure the trial of an acoustic camera to try to discourage noisy supercars and motorbikes. Wisborough Green was the third trial site in the United Kingdom after Kensington/Chelsea in London and Alderley Edge in Cheshire. Sophie was proving a valuable member of the Council, but what a sign of recent times, he met Sophie in person 7 months after she joined the Council; prior to that, it had purely been on Zoom!

Since Cllr Tim Worrall joined the Council, he had been grappling with the complexity of trying to get the installation of FTTP (Fibre to the Premises) in the village. It was an unbelievably complicated process involving Openreach.

The Chairman also wished to thank Keith Carter, the Village Hall Management Committee Chairman, for the truly impressive transformation of the Hall. This now put the Hall in good stead for years to come.

New Pavilion: The Hall was not the only large building project planned for the village and he was pleased to report that the new Pavilion project was being progressed. Initially, the Parish Council and Wisborough Green Sports did not agree all on all aspects, but a combined working group was established with Cllr Andrew Jackson taking the Parish Council lead. The planning application was submitted at the end of last year and a further consultation event held. Cllr Jackson advised the meeting that CDC now seemed fairly positive about the application, and it would hopefully be permitted.

Gatwick: The Chairman had originally joined the Parish Council due to his concerns about aircraft noise and the airport's expansion. He attended a meeting earlier in the day and was sorry to say that Gatwick anticipated that the 2019 levels would be reached this summer, so the village would again suffer with aircraft noise, especially from easterly arrivals. He had been involved for 7 years and had been one of the founders of the Association of Parish Councils Aviation Group. He found it incredibly frustrating that lay people had to become fully conversant with technical details and monitor noise, and that the aircraft industry was having to be monitored and pushed to reduce the impact upon communities.

Young Lives Matter Survey: At the beginning of December, a survey of those from 10 – 17 years was undertaken to identify if any improvements were needed for the young people in the village. Ideas for the provision of informal activities on the Green were now being explored; extending the hard basketball area, provision of a football goal and possibly an outdoor table tennis table. He was also pleased to say that the Scouts would be re-opening later in the year, and with the hugely successful Renegades Youth Club, the village would be very well served with organised youth activity.

Budget and Finances

Community Infrastructure Levy: The Chairman gave explanation to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and how expenditure was restricted. This was the first year that the Council had spent substantial sums, on the Green drainage and levelling, and the Village Hall.

As he had often said, the Green was probably the hardest working turf in Sussex with football, cricket, rugby, events, the fair as well as general recreation for all. This activity all took its toll. With a sizeable contribution from WG Sports, this work was undertaken to improve the drainage

to allow football to be played in the winter months, to level the cricket surface and improve all year round use for all.

Precept: This was the main Parish Council income and formed part of the Council Tax collected by CDC. The Parish Council undertook a budget setting process each year. Although costs were increased, the Parish Council endeavoured to keep costs down and increased the Precept at an inflation-linked figure. He gave explanation to the impact of increasing house numbers on the Precept request.

Songhurst Meadow: The CIL contribution was received for this development. Part of the development was the creation of a new open space within the village which would provide a wonderful addition to the village green, an exciting and positive additional recreational area for the village. The open space would remain in perpetuity and the track around the perimeter (750m, so two laps would be an Olympic mile), to be installed in September, would provide a fully accessible walk for the village and school. Wildflowers had also been planted, along with a Field Maple tree and birch, wild cherry, and rowan trees to commemorate HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

General Finances: Looking after the Parish Council's funds and spending wisely was an important role for the Parish Council. The Clerk undertook guidance and monitoring, and the Chairman expressed his thanks to Louise Davies for all her continuing help, support and guidance; applauded.

Public Questions

The Chairman was asked about progress of the Neighbourhood Plan, whether the housing number had been confirmed and how the water neutrality issue was affecting planning applications.

This was another Kafkaesque issue. The applicant withdrew the Glebe Field application, but this development threat had not gone away. The Parish Council would continue to resist inappropriate development, and in this situation, dense housing right up to an 800-year-old symbol of Wisborough Green was totally inappropriate.

The housing number provided by CDC for inclusion in the Reviewed NP, which was in the Regulation 14 consultation last June, was a minimum of 40, but this number had not been confirmed by CDC. The NP Review Steering Group continued with work to update the NP. Personally, he was totally frustrated that there appeared to be little regard to cross-boundary consideration: hundreds of houses were being built in Billingshurst, in Horsham District but just over the Parish boundary, so why add more in Wisborough Green, particularly as the infrastructure could not support more development and the houses would not be affordable for many/most. In terms of 'water neutrality', developers were now beginning to put measures in place and presumably CDC would find a solution, with other authorities involved.

Being a member of the NP Steering Group, the Clerk gave explanation to the work undertaken since the Regulation 14 consultation; the NP could not progress further until the Local Plan Review had been completed. Cllr Jackson explained that CDC had been provided with numbers to deliver and were challenged by the A27, drainage and other infrastructure issues around Chichester. Having taken advice, CDC had been advised to look at other areas in the district and provide evidence as to why the allocated housing number could not be delivered; this was the exercise that was currently being undertaken. The Parish Council had therefore submitted details of village infrastructure concerns as evidence against further housing numbers.

A Durbans Road resident explained that he and his wife had adopted Durbans Road for litter picking and regularly cleared up a considerable amount. They had also undertaken a litter pick around the village centre on the Easter weekend. He asked if it would be possible to have a litterbin installed at the end of Durbans Road? The Chairman thanked him for his efforts, surmising, and hoping, that the litter dropped was not by Wisborough Green residents. The Clerk explained that having organised a recent community litter pick, litter was evident on other village roads, with a considerable number of bottles picked up from Kirdford Road. She had previously enquired into the provision of a litterbin at the top of Hughes Hill in the layby and been advised against doing so by CDC; locating bins in rural locations encouraged fly tipping. The Clerk had made a request for CDC to do a litter pick on the B2133 but unfortunately, due to staff shortages, this was not currently possible.

A resident noted that the application for the Petworth Road Buffer Zone had been successful. He was advised that WSCC would hopefully progress later in the year. The Chairman gave explanation to the unsuccessful Traffic Regulation Order application for Durbans Road. Unfortunately, the traffic speed had been too high to lower the speed limit; the police were unable to enforce.

As there were no further questions, the meeting was closed at 8.35 pm and refreshments served.

Chairman:

Date: