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BARCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual meeting of Electors held at the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe, at 18.30 on May 9th 2018.

Present: Councillors Councillors Arbenz, Cornwell, Holman, Loughlin, Marler, Mills, Skan, Stewart, District Councillor Linington and nine members of the public.

1. Welcome by the Chairman of the Parish Council

2. Apologies: Cllr Shepherd

3. Signature of the Minutes of the last meeting, Wednesday 24th May 2017: Signed

4. Chairman's report, May 2017 – May 2018

This year Andrew Pearce left the Parish Council after many years of loyal service and we will miss his experience and his enthusiasm for getting things done. Martyn Grover also left the Parish Council as his work commitments make attending difficult.

At last year's AGM, I reported on traffic speeds and updated the position on new development scheduled for Barcombe. These two items still keep cropping up in conversations and comments and as they are both important I shall report on them again.

Speeding and volumes of traffic

During the year we have had two meetings with the Council Highways Representative to discuss again what can be done to slow traffic and we also had a presentation from the Fire Service and Police concerning safety. We have covered the results in previous normal PC meetings, however for clarity I will repeat the situation we are in.

We cannot stop traffic using any the roads around the village. Traffic volumes will increase with the additional 6,700 homes scheduled to be built in Lewes DC by 2030 and the 1,000 or so houses at Ridgewood. This is a problem for all villages, congestion at all pinch points in the area will increase and more sat navs have the ability to direct drivers away from queues and through villages like Barcombe. And - with the increase of internet shopping comes an increased fleet of white vans with deadlines. The speed limit on country roads is 60 mph and will only be lowered in high house density sections, as on the Spithurst Road, but areas such as Barcombe Mills, Town Littleworth and the Hamsey Road do not qualify for a reduction.

Traffic calming measures have been discussed at length and we have been told many times that:-

- Speed humps cannot be added to an unlit road surface. (As a comment they also create noise to nearby houses)
- Road narrowing bollards only work in certain traffic flows, too high a flow and we will get traffic "jams" and too low a flow is pointless. We also have to acknowledge that we are surrounded by active farms and must allow space for tractors, harvesters and lorries.
- Drivers become immune to flashing signs unless they are backed up by Police checks, which the police say is unlikely to happen around Barcombe.

A community speed watch programme did work for a while and if enough volunteers come forward can be re-instated. And a higher level of traffic, theoretically means less speeding – we shall see!

Housing in Barcombe

Lewes District Council has its district development plan – known as the Local Plan Part 2 - going through the final stages of consultation and should be adopted, i.e. given the green light early in 2019 – about a year late.

The expected development in Barcombe, subject to planning approval is

- 6 houses in "The Tickner's Field"
- 25 houses on Hillside (horse field)
- 7 houses on the right and towards the end of Bridgelands

These totals may change. The 40% affordable housing quota will only apply to Hillside

DRAFT

The development is outside the current Village Planning Boundary which will be redrawn to include these areas. I must stress again that the numbers and locations were decided on by Lewes District Council without any discussion or influence of Barcombe Parish Council.

The Steering Group is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan Design Statement to give some detail to the types, sizes, layout and materials that the village would prefer. There will be a presentation to the village and the opportunity for the village to vote on it. At this point there is no indication that any other sites have successfully been put forward by any landowners or that the numbers will change beyond a plus/minus 10.

The Village is not able to change the numbers downwards or the current locations. Issues about access, increased traffic, sewage, broadband and water will need to be resolved between the developer and supplier. These are not issues that LDC will be involved in or be seen as an obstacle to development.

The LDC Planners accept that almost every site considered in the LPP2 will have the same issues of overloading local services – however they have an obligation to provide houses according to Government plans, or face fines. I have been told by the planning department that they don't expect any development to start before 2022. The Governments new building guidelines which are obligatory, known as the National Planning Policy Framework will be published tomorrow and may alter some of the current policies, particularly towards viability studies and affordable housing.

The successful rescue of the Village Shop

The freehold of the shop and flat was transferred from Gordon Gurman to the newly formed Barcombe Village Shop Ltd, whose shareholders are all the investors. Rob and Clara Wallace have leased the shop from BVS, and they are free to develop the shop as they wish, with the proviso that the Post Office is unaltered.

Other developments

- A Good Neighbour Scheme has been set up, which is a wonderful community led service for the community. It is probably true to say that, with council coffers empty, we have to help each other and cannot rely on the state. Thanks to Dilys and all the volunteers who have signed up to help.
- The ongoing development of Wild about Barcombe is extraordinary, and thanks to the group of very qualified volunteers who have and continue to, improve and re-stock the area.
- The re-installation of the Bike Jumps was completed with the design help from experienced youngsters.

We have incurred some chunks of expenditure to catch upon repairs, which are not repeat items

- New bench at the roundabout
- New boiler in the pavilion
- Garage doors repaired and painted
- Installation of the bike jumps
- Toilet block repaired and painted
- Survey of the recreation ground/play areas
- Mower servicing
- A pair of seven aside goals

We have some repairs due for the coming year

- Bus shelter
- Finger post at Church Road
- Barcombe Mills car park, pothole repairs

And finally

The playground equipment is nearing the end of its useful, safe life and we need to make a decision whether to re-locate or repair. We are waiting to see what happens to the classification of the area to the side of the recreation ground as additional play space, and what monies will be available to the village through the building levy, Section 106 or CIL. For info these are levies applied to the developers of all new developments that should go to the villages where the building takes place.

And we will explore the possibility of enlarging the shower area of the pavilion. All costs and plans will be debated to see if it is feasible.

DRAFT

4. Report of the District Councillor, Cllr Linington

In her report, Cllr Linington highlighted some of the Lewes District Council issues which were most relevant to Barcombe Parish. Firstly, she reported on the launch of the Neighbourhood First scheme. This involves a team of Neighbourhood Advisors, of which there are two for this area, who will inspect streets and open spaces, report issues to the Council and give advice to residents. Matters covered will include dog fouling, fly tipping, littering and street cleaning, abandoned vehicles and fallen trees. The Neighbourhood Advisors can be available to attend Parish Council and other community meetings. A date is being arranged for them to attend a Barcombe Parish Council meeting so they can explain more about the scheme. Residents are encouraged to report issues to the Council by using the Report It app.

The first funds from the CIL money paid by developers have been awarded to projects. Hamsey Parish Council was successful in obtaining money for improvements to facilities at Beechwood Park. Barcombe Parish Council could apply for money as long as the project met the criteria of relating to local and community infrastructure.

Cllr Linington informed the meeting that the new recycling bins would be delivered in June/July. A standard sized wheelie bin would be delivered but if anyone wanted a smaller bin then they should contact the Council soon to arrange this. The new recycling system meant that more items could be recycled and she hoped everyone would find it easier, not having to sort the recycling, and that recycling rates would increase.

Cllr Linington praised the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and offered her help as needed.

Lastly, Cllr Linington spoke about 'Vote 100' which is the celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage. There will be an event on 9 July which is to encourage women to become councillors and be involved in local government. Details of the event will be available soon.

5. Report of the County Councillor, Cllr Shepherd

The County is under much pressure at present due to the lack of funding from the Government. Having made savings of £112 million already we are still under pressure to save even more. We must save another £17 million this year plus another £30 million during 2020/21. These cuts in spending will inevitably lead to cuts in services. Reluctantly, we will be reducing the Library services and making changes in how we deliver Adult Social Care. I can now say that seven libraries will be closing. These are at Ore, Ringmer, Polegate, Willingdon, Langney, Pevensey Bay & Mayfield. The mobile library will also be stopped. This will leave 17 libraries still open across the whole County.

However, if there is a community that has lost its library and feels it is in a position to run its own service with volunteers, they will be helped by the County Council potentially offering a lease on a peppercorn rent in a building that the County owns. The Council may also lend, again on a peppercorn rent basis, a selection of core starter stock and the current fixtures and fittings of the library to help overcome these initial barriers. Some local communities are already considering these offers.

The Council's "Stand Up For East Sussex" campaign, which made the case for East Sussex's particular needs to be recognised by Government, gathered almost 6,000 signatures and was delivered to the Prime Minister in December. Councillor Glazier, Leader of East Sussex County Council and Councillor Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council met with Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government recently. They discussed how their Councils and Government can work together to tackle the challenges facing Local Government and communities in the South East, and to get a clearer understanding of Government's approach to Local Government funding. Following the meeting, and publication of the Autumn Budget, Councillor Glazier wrote to the Minister, on behalf of the County Councils, reaffirming the actions required to secure economic growth and the financial sustainability of Local Government in the South East. We are still waiting for his response.

DRAFT

After a very severe winter where the roads froze then thawed the potholes are going to get worse. Please bear with us and be patient, we will get around to repairing them but it takes time and resources.

I am a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel. We care for children being fostered, those being adopted and those in care at Council homes. We also care for children in secure accommodation. This is for their protection from various abuses, even from their own families.

E.S.C.C. is amongst the tenth lowest for school attendance in the whole country. Our "Get a Grip" campaign aims to address this problem by telling parents to stop taking them on holiday during term times.

I am also a member of the East Sussex Fire and rescue authority. The headquarters have just moved from Eastbourne to Lewes where they share premises with Sussex Police. The new Chief Fire Fighter and Chief Executive is Dawn Whittaker appointed after the retirement of C.F.O. Gary Walsh. We have 24 fire stations, 12 crewed and 12 on call.

Almost 4,800 additional premises were able to be connected to superfast broadband at the end of quarter 2 as part of our second contract of works. Take up of superfast services under contract 1 is 46.3%, while the contract 2 take up is 31.7%.

Please note that connection is not automatic. Customers will need to contact the Internet Service Provider of their choice to arrange a new broadband package.

Overall the County is doing the best it can with the resources it has.

5.Report from the Parish Council's representative to Sports Hall Management Committee

The Sports Hall is functioning very well with improved facilities and steady usage. The heating system will be replaced shortly (quotes have been sought). There is £9,000 in the current account and £30,000 in the reserve fund for replacement flooring when required.

Meeting Closed at approx. 19.03