

HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Herstmonceux Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 15 June 2009 in Herstmonceux Village Hall, Herstmonceux.

Present: Councillors Mrs J Angear, D Creasey, K Game, M Goodsell, W Gower, N Lyon, B Naish, Mrs M. Rice, J Tate, K Wheatley and Mrs I Willson. County Councillors W. Bentley, R. Thomas, and District Councillor A. Long attended. Councillor R. Kemp, Hailsham Town Councillor attended to give a presentation on the 'Standards Committee'.

The Responsible Financial Officer, S. P. Goacher took the meeting in the absence of Mrs J McInnes, the clerk.

09.67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Mrs J. E. McInnes, Clerk to the Council.

09.68 MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2009 have been circulated. It was then resolved that the minutes be approved, adopted and signed as the correct record, proposed by Councillor Mrs M. Rice, seconded by Councillor K. Wheatley.

09.69 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES: None.

09.70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor Goodsell - re minor maintenance Council sites.

09.71 FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

The meeting having been presented with the Payment of Account Report and accompanying vouchers, authorised expenditure totalling £2,565.23 (copy attached) proposed by Councillor M Goodsell, seconded by Councillor J. Tate. All Councillors in favour.

09.72 STANDARDS COMMITTEE:

Councillor R. Kemp, Hailsham Town Councillor gave a presentation on the Standards Committee to the meeting. The Standards Board, which oversees the Code of Conduct, devolved the responsibility to receive and investigate complaints made against Town / Parish Councillors to a local Standards Committee set up at County and District Council level. The local Standards Committee is based at Wealden District Council and covers all Town & Parish Councillors within the Wealden area. The Committee comprises totally independent Members and works closely with Trevor Scott, Monitoring Officer at Wealden District Council. The Committee assumes the innocence of the individual Councillor, subject to the complaint, and takes into account all mitigating circumstances. When a complaint is raised, the Standards Committee holds a basic investigation and if the complaint is found to be unable to be upheld, then the complaint is dropped and the individual Councillor is not even told that a complaint had been made. The investigation is undertaken by an Officer, usually someone of some standing such as an ex-Chief Executive. The Monitoring Officer is informed of the findings of the investigation and these are placed before the Standards Committee for discussion and a determination to be made. The cost of such an investigation could cost in the region of £1500 to £2000. Councillor Kemp suggested that Parish Councillors should revise upon the Code of Conduct, especially the status of 'Personal Interests', and 'Prejudicial Interests' and the appropriate actions required by the Councillor.

Councillor Kemp took questions and the Chairman. Councillor Gower thanked him for his presentation.

09.73 DOCTOR'S SURGERY:

Nothing to report.

09.74 AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

Councillor Gower, Mr I. Stewart (on behalf of the Herstmonceux Village Hall), and the Clerk, had a meeting with the builders of the North Lodge site and put a stop to the disputed action regarding the boundary. A wall a close-boarded fence will be built on the inside of the existing outer hedgerow line.

The meeting aired concern on the plight of one local couple who had been advised that they could increase their prospect of being allocated a property on the North Lodge site if they were to have a child. The meeting discussed the issues regarding the allocation of these units, and Councillor Long suggested that Mrs A. Hodge, Head of Housing at Wealden District Council should come along and explain the allocation procedure to the Councillors. The Chairman informed the meeting that he would take up the case of the local couple and bring this back to the Council for possible further investigation.

09.75 PARISH PLAN REVIEW: Nothing to report.

09.76 HERSTMONCEUX REGISTER: The review is ongoing.

09.77 CLERK'S REPORT: Correspondence

ESCC - copy of the summary and consultation on the Eastbourne and Hailsham Accessibility Strategy. Copied to Councillor Gower.

WDC - informing the Council that the affordable housing units at North Lodge will be available on 30 October 2009. All the units will be for rental, none for shared ownership. WDC has also supplied details of the number of people, with a connection to Herstmonceux, on the housing register.

WDC - flu pandemic briefing note.

WDC - copy of Draft Indemnity in respect money to be paid over to the Parish Council under the S106 for North Lodge housing. Two signatures needed on documents.

WDC - informing the Council that the consultation on possible spatial development options for the Local Development Framework has been put back until early July.

Hedleys Solicitors - transfer documents for Denefield Green for signature and comments on the law relating to allotment sheds.

ESCC - information relating to a sign plate at Carters Corner - more information to follow.

WDC - information about bins in Herstmonceux. The bin near the bus stop adjacent to the Brewers Arms has been emptied but it is in a poor state of repair. I have requested a replacement bin together with a replacement bin for the recreation ground as it has been burnt out again. I have asked again if it is possible to have a metal bin in the recreation ground.

Victim Support - application for a grant.

Sussex Police - informing the Council that in the past few weeks the paper-recycling bin in the car park was burnt. Sussex Police attended and Toby Clarke was arrested.

Mrs F Davis - confirming the decision by Herstmonceux Allotment Association that it does not want a Councillor to attend the regular allotment meetings. The Association suggests that the meetings with representatives from the Parish Council and representatives from the Allotment Association continue.

Wartling Parish Council - informing the Council that the retrospective application for the stone lions on Pevensey Levels will be held at 6.30pm in the Reid Hall, Boreham Street on Thursday 18 June 2009.

WDC - informing the Council that a mobile JobCentre unit is available to attend community

events.

Uckfield Town Council - details of playground inspection training.

WDC - details of a project to bid for funding to create new jobs.

Sussex Association of Local Councils - details of training for the Power of Well-Being. If the Council wishes to use this power at any time in the future, nine Councillors from Herstmonceux must attend the training session. The Power allows the Council to award grants to any project in the parish that it currently does not have the powers to support.

Herstmonceux Bowls Club - informing the Council that it is interested on investigating Lime Park as a possible site for a new Bowls Club. A copy of the suggested location is provided. The Ground Committee will meet with representatives from the Bowls Club and report to the Council.

WDC - copy of Housing Needs Survey and copies of posters encouraging people to complete and return their questionnaires.

09.78 REPORTS:

Finance and General Purposes:

Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 9 June 2009, was presented by Councillor Mrs Angear

Present: Councillors J Angear, D Creasey, M Goodsell, J Tate and K Wheatley.

Apologies were received from Councillor W Gower.

Final Accounts 2008-09

The RFO referred Members to their copies of the Final Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2009, and took the meeting through the accounts as required. The RFO stated that the Parish Council's balances as at 31st March 2009, amounting to £116,608.14, consisted of £40,956.31 (General Account), £4,277.17 (Community/Village Account), and £70,374.66 (Reserve/Earmarked Accounts). The RFO reported that the Final Accounts had been audited by the Internal Auditor, whose report was available to any Member.

Recommendation: The F&GP Committee recommends that the Parish Council adopt the Final Accounts for 2008-09, as presented by the RFO and audited by the Internal Auditor, and that authorisation be given to the Chairman of the Council to sign the Annual Return in readiness for submission to Mazars of Southampton, the appointed external Auditors, by 30 June 2009 proposed by Councillor D Creasey, seconded by Councillor M Goodsell. All Councillors in favour.

Internal Auditor

The F&GP Committee recommends that the appointment of Mr Graham John Parish of 9 Tidebrook Gardens, Eastbourne, as the Parish Council's appointed Internal Auditor be re-confirmed for the financial year 2009-10, proposed by Councillor J Tate, seconded by Councillor D Creasy. All Councillors in favour.

Quotation for Notice Board

The F&GP Committee considered the quotation for the renovation of the noticeboard adjacent to the Brewers Arms in Herstmonceux. It was proposed by Councillor J. Tate, seconded by Councillor K Wheatley to accept this quotation. All councillors in favour.

Councillor Mrs Angear thanked the RFO for clear presentation of the Final Accounts and for taking the Members through the Accounts. The Recommendations of the Finance & General Purposes Committee were Proposed by Councillor Creasey; Seconded by Councillor Wheatley. All Councillors in favour.

Planning Committee: Report attached.

Ground Committee

The Chairman, Councillor Gower, stated that there were a lot of issues to be discussed by the Ground Committee, especially on the subject of recommending whether the Parish Council should be recharging the maintenance costs of the various recreational facilities to hirers and on what basis. Councillor Gower felt that it was imperative that the Ground Committee met as soon as possible to initiate such discussions.

Street lighting: Nothing to report,

Highways and Traffic:

Councillor Gower gave a brief report. Resurfacing works had been carried out by ESCC in Lower Road, Herstmonceux. A number of potholes had been reported, and concern was raised at the condition of Fiennes Road, near to Ridgeway. Parking was still a problem at Windmill Hill, and there was a need to monitor the situation. Councillor Tate mentioned the lack of grass cutting at Lime Cross and the top of Church Road.

Footpaths:

Councillor Tate informed the Council that the proposal by ESCC to upgrade two footpaths in the parish has not been successful as the landowners are not agreeable to changing stiles to gates on these footpaths.

Children and Young People:

There has been a problem with young people in the village and the police are trying to build up cases for the issue of ASBO's against certain individuals. It was reported that there had been fires in a recycling bin and in two vans over the past month. CCTV cameras have been promised to assist in combating this sort of occurrence, but these are awaiting priority status.

Information Centre:

Councillor Game reported that a quiz evening had raised £314 towards the running costs of the centre.

East Sussex County Councillor

County Councillor Thomas thanked all those who had supported and voted for Councillor Bentley and himself at the recent County Council elections. Councillor Thomas informed the meeting that the Conservatives had kept the same majority within the East Sussex County Council, as before.

County Councillor Bentley reported that the new County Council had met on Wednesday, 10 June 2009, and that the central thrust of the new council is to look at transport as a priority. The ESCC has joined with 77 other councils in the UK to carry out a Moray Poll on the subject of transport.

Wealden District Councillor: No report.

Tree Warden

Councillor Goodsell (Tree Warden) reported that another tree had been removed from April Cottage, Chapel Row, although TPO's had been requested for three of the trees at this particular property.

Emergency Plan: Nothing to report.

Wealden District Association of Local Councils: No meeting

Village Hall: No report

Allotments: No report

09.79 AGENDA Items – Next Meeting: None requested

Signed by Chairman.....

Date.....