

## BARCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of a Meeting of Barcombe Parish Council held at the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

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**552. Present:** Councillors A J MacGillivray, D J Lloyd, C M Arbenz, J O Cornwell, R Hepple, J C Cornwell, D Skan, N Gant, M Austen and R A Williams.

Also present were County Councillor R St.Pierre, District Councillor D Mitchell, PCSO W Baulcombe and Mr J Smith

**553. Apologies for Absence:** Received from Cllr N C Lear.

**554. Confirmation and signature of the Minutes of the Meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008:** The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 as recorded by minutes 458 to 473 having previously been circulated were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

**555. Declarations of Interest:** None were declared.

**556. Urgent Business pursuant to Standing Order No. 16:** There was no urgent business

**557. Public Question Time:**

(i)PCSO Baulcombe reported that those who broke into the village shop had been arrested in Kent. She also asked that after each parish council meeting the police be advised of the parish council's three priorities for that month; speeding was an issue in almost every village. Cllr Lloyd felt there was a lack of consistency in police responses to community issues e.g. neighbourhood watch. She felt more volunteers were needed for the scheme to be re-established in Barcombe and after an explanation of responsibilities Cllrs Gant and Williams volunteered to join the scheme.

(ii)County Cllr R St.Pierre apologised for not following up the idea of automatic flood signs and asked the Clerk to e mail a reminder; she has alerted ESCC Highways to the problems of flooding at Church Lane (this has also been reported by the Clerk to ESCC maintenance teams); she is meeting with John Robins of ESCC to discuss parking proposals and will organise a site walk with him and Cllrs MacGillivray and Lloyd to mark out draft proposals – the parish council's suggestions will be taken onboard; ESCC have provided generous financial support for a new building at the school; in response to a question from Cllr Lloyd over the condition of Barcombe Mills Road the Clerk reported he had received an e mail from ESCC Highways saying that the holes had been repaired temporarily and that "permanent patching" would be done in April.

(iii)District Cllr D Mitchell reported that a working party on affordable housing was due to report by 31<sup>st</sup> July; central government took £2.9m from the District Council from council rents; the DC has beaten its efficiency targets; central government continues to impose extra responsibilities without providing funding, e.g. bus passes which will cost the council £600k; the Inspector's report on the Glyndebourne wind turbine is due by 21<sup>st</sup> April and will then go to the Secretary of State for a decision; two new vehicles for roadside recycling are to be provided; he has arranged for the licensing officer to meet with the tenant of the Tin Tabernacle on 25<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the issues raised in minute 525. However, Cllr MacGillivray emphasised the parish council's concerns over the whole issue of usage at the Tin Tabernacle and whether appropriate planning permissions as well as licenses were in place. District Cllr Mitchell promised to follow through and report. Cllr Lloyd reported that the public litter bins in the village had not been emptied for three weeks and asked District Cllr Mitchell to investigate.

(iv)Mr J Smith reported that two items had gone missing from the allotments; he had traced them to the stable at the bottom of the field. The PCSO was asked to monitor the situation.

**558. Questions from Councillors:** Cllr D Skan reported on the current position with the new village hall. Confirmation has been received from AirS, the Charity Commission, Stewardship Services and the Charity Action Bank that there is not a problem with anonymous donations. Two “sustainable, eco-friendly” architects have been engaged to do feasibility studies testing the project brief, the potential of the site and ensure there is local support in the village and from ESCC and LDC. The original architects have provided eco-friendly adjustments to their initial design and a final choice will probably be made in May.

Cllr MacGillivray said it would be wise to contact Lewes DC to see what requirements they had given the planning permission expires in October.

**559. The Chairman’s Report:** The Chairman had previously circulated reports from the East Sussex Rural Forum and the Central Rail Corridor Board and these are attached as appendix 1 and 2 respectively. The ESRF report highlights the complex nature of current structures controlling local public expenditure. The CRCB may have to follow the current strategy of no level crossings on new lines so if the line was to go ahead a bridge of some description would be needed at Barcombe Mills. Cllr Gant speculated if the Barcombe Mills Society was taking an active interest in this issue.

### **560. Reports of Committees:**

**(i) Transport and Highways Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr J C Cornwell and seconded by Cllr Gant the Minutes of the Meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 as recorded by Minutes numbered 487 to 498 were adopted.

#### **Matters arising:**

**a) ESCC Parking scheme:** This issue has been covered in item 557(i) above.

**b) Barcombe Mills car park:** The car park will re-open once the weather is good. Mr J Smith was thanked for his help on spreading the aggregate to improve the surface.

**(ii) Recreation Ground Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr D J Lloyd, seconded by Cllr Hepple, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 as recorded by Minutes 487 to 510 were adopted.

#### **Matters arising:**

**(a) tree clearance:** Mr J Smith was thanked for his work in clearing tree damage after recent storms.

**(iii) Planning and Community Services Committee and Planning Applications Sub-Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr C M Arbenz, seconded by Cllr Austen, the Minutes of the Planning Applications Sub-committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 as recorded by minutes 474 to 480 were approved.

After being proposed by Cllr C M Arbenz, seconded by Cllr Williams, the Minutes of the Planning and Community Services Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008 as recorded by Minutes 511 to 530 were approved.

#### **Matters arising:**

**(a) Sandbags:** After a discussion it was agreed a number “3” would be fixed to the garage holding the sandbags

**(b) Emergency planning:** Cllr Lloyd reminded the Clerk to write to the Officer in Charge formally requesting use of a room at the station in the event of an emergency. Cllr MacGillivray and Lloyd are meeting with Mr K Franks after Easter to discuss flooding related issues.

**(c) Barcombe School and other radio masts:** The Head teacher has promised to chase ESCC’s implementation team for a response to the questions raised by Lewes DC’s Environmental Health officers

**(d) Community School Governor:** It was agreed to accept the Committee’s recommendation set out in minute 517. Cllr MacGillivray has prepared a summary of parish council structure and activities which the Clerk will send together with a schedule of meetings, the Annual Report and an invitation and agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors

**e) Parish Plan:** Cllr Gant reported on a study being undertaken between Plumpton College and Brighton University concerning sustainability of local rural agriculture and urban Brighton. He has some ideas on how this could link with a local plan for Barcombe and agreed to work on a formal proposal over the next few months.

**f) Tin Tabernacle:** See minute 557(iii) above.

**g) Lewes District Council – draft sustainable community strategy:** As agreed in minute 527 Cllr MacGillivray had prepared and circulated a draft summary, attached as appendix 3. It was agreed to use this as the basis of a response on behalf of the parish council to be prepared by the Chairman and the Clerk.

**h) Rethink rubbish bus:** Cllr Skan reported the bus was already booked for the date of the WI Fun Day so she would now try for the Flower Show in September.

**(iv) Finance and General Purposes Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr R Hepple, seconded by Cllr J O Cornwell, the Minutes of the Meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008 as recorded by minutes 481 to 486 and 531 to 546 respectively were approved.

**Matters arising:**

**a) Grants:** The grant payments set out in minute 538 were approved

**b) Clerks review and salary:** Minute 541 regarding the Clerks job grading and salary was approved and the Clerk's monthly payment would rise to £452.44 from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008.

**c) Allotments:** It was agreed that Cllr J O Cornwell should accept the quote from Mr Tapp for £475 to level the soil in the new allotment area. This will be from the 2008/09 budget.

**d) Pavilion window:** It was agreed that, in principle, the purchase of a new upvc window with laminated glass for the referee's room should go ahead, again from the 2008/09 budget, but the final decision would depend on the price.

**561. Annual Parish Meeting:** This is to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and after a discussion it was agreed the keynote presentation by Cllrs N Gant and J O Cornwell and Mr J Smith would be on "Wild About Barcombe"

The Clerk was asked to ensure that 6 sets of minutes of the 2007 meeting were available on the night together with sufficient copies of the Annual Report. Refreshments will be offered after the meeting.

**562. Web site:** Cllr Gant will cover this development as part of the presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting

**563. Freedom of Information proposals:** Cllr MacGillivray appraised the meeting of new Freedom of Information proposals that are likely to be in place from January 2009. There are three elements – a Publication Scheme, a Definition document and a Guide to Proactive Publishing information. Given the parish council's current FOI rules the new proposals should not cause the parish council any alarm.

**564. Correspondence:**

**(i) East Sussex County Council:** Letter from highways advising various road closures through the County including Town Littleworth Road for four days from 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008, according to current plans.

**(ii) East Sussex County Council:** The clerk reported on a telephone conversation and an e mail from David Tonge, the Ranger for Lewes District, over plans to build an easy access ramp from the north side of Pike's Bridge to the River Ouse footpath and to remove the "pinch point" stiles. These plans were welcomed by councillors and the Clerk was asked to forward copies of the correspondence to Mr J Smith who would be keen to develop Mr. Tonge's offer of greater and better liaison with the parish council.

**(iii) Affordable housing:** The clerk has received another letter from a Barcombe resident expressing interest in the new development. He will write telling the person he needs to be on the Lewes DC housing list and also give the details of Hastoe Housing Association.

**(iv) Gradwell Park retirement village, Chailey:** The Chairman reported he had been sent a brochure on this development of 85 care beds and 74 sheltered accommodation apartments.

**565. Administration and accounts for payment:** The following payments were approved:

Chandlers - £58.75 – aggregate for Barcombe Mills Car Park

SALC/NALC - subscription for 2008/09 - £406.20

Grants:

Sussex County Playing Fields Association - £15

Anchor Staying Put - £50

Lewes & Seaford Citizens Advice Bureau - £50

Sussex Air Ambulance - £50

Homecall - £50

Victim Support Sussex - £50

Barcombe PCC - £100

Wild About Barcombe - £35 (to be held until required)

**566. Training opportunities for councillors:** The Clerk notified councillors that SALC were organising training opportunities for councillors in East Sussex which would be more convenient than the usual venue in Midhurst. He will circulate details. The Chairman emphasised the value of appropriate training and confirmed the costs would be met by the parish council.

**567. Outstanding Action Points:** The Clerk is attempting to formalise the final details of the transfer of the old scout hut land in the recreation ground car park to the parish council and will liaise with Cllr Lear on his return.

**568. Date, time and place of next meeting:** The Annual Parish meeting would be held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Sports Pavilion. The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Sports Pavilion.

**569. Close of meeting:** There being no further business to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30 p.m.

Barcombe Parish Council 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 – Appendix 1

## **East Sussex Rural Forum**

### **Report of Meeting, 4 March 2008, Hailsham**

John Cornwell and I used to attend the Rural Forum for Lewes DC and SALC respectively. We both found the meetings to be useful occasions for discussion of rural issues. After the unfortunate death of its Chairman, Peter Beck, the Forum fell into abeyance but now seems to be revived under the auspices of another organisation, the Rural Partnership. By chance I found out about the Hailsham meeting through AirS and was able to attend. Most of the topics centred round the East Sussex Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy (ESISCS) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and seemed a natural follow-on to the Eastbourne Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Event held on 5 February (report previously circulated).

However, the first presentation was by a representative of “Year of Food & Farming”, an umbrella campaign that aims to provide children with the chance to learn about food, farming and the countryside. It also provides an opportunity for the Food & Farming Industry to educate this generation of children about healthy diets and allow them to understand the importance of food from “field to fork”. The campaign had been the subject of the last Rural Forum and an update of work in the South East was given. Schools were being encouraged to take part in visits to farms growing food and cooking it. As regards the first, it had been found best to approach specialist farmer groups to enable children learn about the whole system. Web site:

[www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk/southeast](http://www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk/southeast)

ESISCS. A good explanation and update was given on the combined District and County Strategy known as “Pride of Place”. This is a statutory obligation to set out a vision for the County in 2026 and the mechanisms to get there; deals with present social, economic and environmental issues whilst protecting the prospects of future generations; based on reports by local people on what they need and want to improve the quality of their lives. There were three main goals – creating a vibrant, diverse and sustainable economy; creating a great place to live in, work and enjoy; helping people to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. Numerous main themes emerged, viz. from developing the economy through improving health and well-being to enjoying culture, sports and leisure. Priorities identified would be dealt with through a shared Action Plan, in the form of an LAA (see below). Consultation with the public and partners on the draft ESISCS ended in mid-February the Strategy has now been checked for relevance to rural needs, compliance with relevant standards, promotion of equality of opportunity and if based on good facts. An update had now been published at [www.essp.org.uk](http://www.essp.org.uk) and the revised document was now in the hands of the LSPs and principal local authorities for approval.

During discussion I pointed out that with regard to the involvement of local people parish councils did not appear to have been consulted directly and if they had been many would have encountered difficulty because of lack of contact with LSPs; scrutiny of the Strategy showed that whilst the updated version had a focus on Climate Change no such attention appeared to be given to any impending Energy Crisis (e.g. what happens to rural areas when the oil runs out ; how to obtain change in rural life styles ?). The answer was that the Strategy was based on “high level topics”, e.g. Climate Change, and that issues surrounding energy would emerge during debates initiated by these topics (UNBELIEVABLE !).

Ruralproofing the Strategy. A Wealden DC Officer outlined the exercise based on a Defra check-list which he concluded was thorough but needed simplifying. Criteria used included such as analysis of services, transport/access facilities, cost of service delivery, effect on rural businesses. It was hard to ruralproof the Strategy as its contents had to benefit both and rural communities; delivery mechanisms needed ruralproofing. There were concerns over the use of data as regards consistency and the lack of extensive use of rural specific material. The Strategy should give more prominence to the role of parishes. Sport, arts and culture facilities were seen from an urban point of view. The Action Plans, i.e. the LAA, most certainly required ruralproofing.

Local Area Agreement – Update 2008. A good description was given of the purpose and implications of the new LAA. First, it was explained that the LAA is an agreement between Central Government and the local authority and its partners about the priorities for a local area as expressed in the LAA targets. Second, the existing LAA runs to March 2009 but Government has insisted that the new LAA be developed by June 2008 with the final list of “indicators” to be submitted by the end of this month. The LAA is to be based on up to 35 indicators drawn from a National Indicator Set (NIS) plus 16 mandatory targets from the Dept. of Children, Schools and Families. The NIS itself consists of 198 items under the following categories - Stronger Communities (14), Safer Communities (34), Children and Young People (68), Adult health and wellbeing (20), Tackling exclusion and promoting equality (10), Local economy (33), Environmental sustainability (13). *[I have a copy of the list and some are pretty weird.]* The task is now to identify a group of such indicators to reflect priorities in East Sussex. To identify priorities is one issue, to prove their worth is another as numerous considerations have to be made, e.g. are there adequate data, can multiple outcomes be delivered showing improvements within 3 years ? Other issues included the fact that there are no specific rural indicators in the NIS, good data on rural areas are not always available plus a lack of detailed definition of many of the NIS indicators. The important task is now for the LAA negotiators to identify LAA priorities that link with the aims of ESISCS.

Group activities. Those attending then formed groups each of which was given the task of prioritising Indicators for East Sussex from the selected sections of the NIS. Rather inevitably perhaps those identified were such as affordable housing, transport and raising salary levels in the county.

**Conclusion.** The meeting was an interesting development in the discussion on LSPs/Community Strategies/LAAs appropriately chaired by Jeremy Leggett of AirS. Some 20+ people attended, 6 of whom I recognised as parish councillors (but 3 of came by chance through AirS). Despite the claim that all PCs had been contacted, I doubt if this actually occurred.

Nevertheless, this newish area of Community Strategies and LAAs is one which our tier must get to grips with in some form. Not only are these activities setting out important aspects of the future of our communities, whether rural or urban, but also funding support for rural communities is now being incorporated into the LAA programme (so-called “mainstreaming”). Airs has prepared an excellent explanatory and summary paper on these Community Strategy and LAA issues which can be seen at [www.ruralsussex.org.uk/frontpage/East%20Sussex%20Briefing.pdf](http://www.ruralsussex.org.uk/frontpage/East%20Sussex%20Briefing.pdf) Those interested in this area are recommended to read it.

AJMacG; March 2008

Barcombe Parish Council 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 – Appendix 2

**CENTRAL RAIL CORRIDOR BOARD  
Report of Meeting held on 7 March 2008**

This was the first meeting of the Board since the contract was signed with Network Rail (NR) in December to carry out the feasibility study on the re-opening of the Lewes/Uckfield link. Consequently, the main item of business was a report from Chris Curtis of NR on work and progress during the past 2-3 months.

In introducing this item the Chairman, Cllr. Rupert Simmons, stated that to date NO CONCLUSIONS had been reached from the study. An Executive Group whose members include the Director of Planning of both Lewes and Wealden DCs worked behind the scenes on necessary details.

Chris Curtis's report was based on the following areas.

Technical facts. All previous records and reports on the link had been studied. Site visits along the line were currently underway.

Separate costings had been carried out on single and double track systems with the former coming out as cheaper when station facilities, embankments and bridges were taken into consideration.

Level crossing risk assessments were underway with the following conclusion at present: bridges would definitely be required in Uckfield and at the A22; clarification was awaited from the HMRI (Rail Inspectorate) on such for Barcombe Mills, Isfield and Anchor Lane, and at Hamsey depending on the route chosen.

An initial signalling concept for the link was demonstrated which could be converted into a design if necessary.

Access to Lewes line at Hamsey. Three options were being studied, viz. the original 1863 route with modifications; the more northerly 1953 diversion (Hamsey Loop); a new direct route to the north of the Loop. The last option was the current preference.

<p><b>Questions.</b> Clarifications were sought by N. Baker MP and myself on bridges/level crossings particularly at Barcombe. <i>[The current policy of HMRI is to install bridges at road junctions on new railways but they might accept level crossings if road traffic was low or because of the precedent set by the old line. The decision of</i></p>
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*HMRI was awaited.] With reference to the Barcombe Mills Road as “the northern by-pass to Lewes” I was given assurance that comprehensive manual traffic surveys would be carried out to determine 24 hour traffic levels and those at peak times etc. NT was still looking at options for Uckfield town centre.*  
*[If HMRI advocated bridges then the costs would be factored into the estimates for the Final Report; traffic surveys would be carried once the Report had been accepted.] Lindsay Frost asked about flood risks and was given an assurance that options chosen would not increase these.*  
Both NB and myself raised the contentious issue of passage of the link through Hamsey. NB felt that the original line was a non-starter (NR disagreed), the Loop was too near houses but the most northerly direct option was the most feasible.

Estimates. An update had been carried out of previous studies which indicated total costs in excess of £75 million. Taking such as current land, consent and inflation costs into consideration a figure of £100 million was still reasonable.

Operating costs. Information had been requested from Southern Rail. Issues had to be addressed such as potential service and fare levels (present fares apparently suppressed), train leasing costs. With or without electrification the link could be used for train diversion to Eastbourne (but not Brighton).

Benefits. Mott McDonald were investigating such as levels of new passengers from Uckfield to London and from London-Uckfield to Lewes, Newhaven, Brighton and Eastbourne. Generated and diverted trips were being estimated by modelling systems.

**Questions.** NB questioned the following from Matt McDonald: Passenger numbers – were numbers on the network as a whole being used? *[agreed rail system had history of under-estimates; growth in the economy and population were being incorporated]*; diverted trips – were those from Haywards Heath being taken into account? *[being factored in]*; diversions had mentioned only to Eastbourne; how about maintenance problems at weekends in the Three Bridges-Haywards Heath area? *[recognised]*; electrification costs – costed against diesel? *[yes - problems obtaining power for third rail in some areas]*.

Costs/Progress. The £30,000 expenditure to date on the feasibility study was considered to be within budget. A draft report was expected on 25 March with the full Report to be published in April.

Public Interest. There had been considerable interest not only from the public but also from campaign groups and government sources. Many queries were directed to the County Council web-site. Scurrilous rumours regarding costs had been dismissed.

**Questions.** Regarding additional costs, NB said that there were genuine questions regarding signalling up to London.  
NB asked about the new franchise starting in June 2009 and if there could be a secure guarantee regarding the link incorporated. *[agreed a good business case for the link would be helpful in this respect]*  
The question of freight on the proposed link was raised (all discussion so far about passenger traffic). *[a new link could cater for freight but the problem lay north of Uckfield where bridges would have to be re-built to take freight; that would have to be a separate project]*

Next Meeting. The Board would next meet on 23 April 2008. It was agreed that papers on the Report would be circulated in advance to the Board.

A.J. MacGillivray  
March 2008

Barcombe Parish Council 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 – Appendix 3

Lewes District Council Draft Sustainable Community Strategy

**Question 1. Agree/disagree with following statements ?**

Vision reflects where I believe Lewes District should be in 2011: DISAGREE

Priorities will improve quality of life in District: AGREE

Happy with overall strategy: DISAGREE

Strategy easy to read: AGREE

**Question 2. Is there anything missing from the draft strategy ?**

The Strategy document has a format similar to that of its predecessor written in 2003 in that it contains a large component based on the priorities identified by the five associated area partnerships. Furthermore, this “bottom-up” approach is used to form the six “Shared Community Themes and Priorities” summarised on page 5 and detailed in the remainder of the document.

It is regrettable, therefore, that using these Themes and Priorities the Partnership has not drawn together and emphasised major issues which will dominate our communities in the foreseeable future, particularly climate change, peak-oil effects and the need to change life styles. Whilst recognition of such high level priorities is to be found in the Strategy, their presence is hidden in the overall “bottom-up” approach not only in the specific area sections, e.g. “A Valued Environment”, but also in the Summary Section on page 5. A degree of “top-down” direction is necessary to achieve this goal.

As will be explained under Question 4, the Rural Area Profile is unacceptably weak.

**Question 3. Working title given is “Local Voices Local Choices”**

*Do you think that this title should remain on the final strategy ?* NO

Alternative title:

The title above is in fact the given name of the Lewes LSP and to act for the Strategy it lacks local identity and purpose.

Suggest – “Lewes District – A Vision for the Future” *[other suggestions welcome !]*

**Question 4. Any other comments or suggestions ?**

Unfortunately prior to publication the draft of this section was not presented to Rural Voices Rural Choices (RVRC) for consideration. This section requires considerable modification to act an acceptable “profile” and should incorporate reference to sustainable criteria for rural communities, give an accurate account of farming/forestry and indicate implications of changes in local governance. For example, under “Strong Rural Economy” the Themes/Priorities attributed to RVRC contain no reference to agriculture/farming/forestry.

Likewise, the Aims and Priorities of the six Shared Community Themes and Priorities are poor in recognising rural issues. In addition, apart from the Priority Actions of RVRC, there is scant reference to rural areas in Appendix A (Action Plans). Whilst several references are made to rural criteria in Targets and Measures (Appendix B), the Aims of this section should contain a greater range of Indicators for the countryside.