

BARCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Barcombe Parish Council held at the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe on Tuesday 20th November 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

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

Also present were Mr D and Mrs C Ridley and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), Wendy Baulcombe.

376. Apologies for Absence: Received from Cllr R Hepple

377. New PCSO: Barcombe's new PCSO attended the meeting to meet parish councillors. She has been in training for 8 months and has a background in dealing with adults and children with learning difficulties. She sees her role as being preventative in nature and she intends to be a visible presence in the community. She still has to spread her time between Barcombe, Newick and Hamsey but will try and come to the village at different times of day. She is not supposed to be out at night without back-up. She reported there seems to be some car crime developing in her patch, with tools in cars and vans being targeted. She has asked that any doorstep hawkers are reported to the police via the usual channels. She is also keen to re-establish Neighbourhood Watch. Cllr Lloyd has taken her all round the parish

In response to a councillor's question she said she hoped she would be in the role for the foreseeable future to give some much needed continuity.

The clerk was asked to send her dates of future council meetings.

378. Mr D and Mrs C Ridley: Mr & Mrs Ridley have now retired as village caretakers and Cllrs MacGillivray and Lloyd spoke of their long and loyal service and love of the community of Barcombe and the Recreation Ground in particular and presented a garden voucher and flowers on behalf of the parish council as tokens of gratitude and appreciation.

379. Confirmation and signature of the Minutes of the Meetings held on 18th September 2007: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 18th September 2007 as recorded by minutes 280 to 293 having previously been circulated were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

380. Declarations of Interest: Cllr MacGillivray took this opportunity by way of a brief case study to remind all councillors of the need to declare personal or prejudicial interests in line with the Code of Conduct to which all councillors have signed –up. The difficulties of being closely involved in many activities in a small community are understood but proper decision making processes need to be demonstrated to the public. If a councillor is in doubt then seek guidance from the Clerk. The scenario of a committee or the parish council being inquorate because of interests was discussed – in such a case the Clerk would seek a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer. Cllr N Gant declared a personal interest in minute383(iii).

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

382. Public Question Time: There were no public questions

383. Questions from Councillors:

(i)Cllr J O Cornwell referred back to minute 286 concerning sand bags. The store referred to does not need building work to be fit for purpose and he has a site meeting arranged

ascertain the garage in Munster Green where the District Council's store is held and how to get quick access.

(ii) Cllr Gant enquired if there had been any news from Southern Water or the Environment Agency over the release of effluent into the Bevern Stream and the impact on wildlife and pets. The clerk was asked to contact the Environment Agency for an update.

(iii) At the request of Cllr Gant the Clerk read out an e mail he had received from Dr Kevin Baker expressing concerns to the health of children at the school and users of the Recreation Ground from microwaves from a new proposed beam to link the school into a wireless Ethernet with other schools and the Education Authority. After some discussion in which it was agreed the parish council did not have the scientific knowledge to make a meaningful judgement on health issues, the Clerk was asked to write to the school and seek confirmation they had fully considered the possible health risks to children and recreation ground users and that the parish council be kept informed of developments given its Recreation Ground responsibilities.

384. The Chairman's Report: The Chairman's Report is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes

385. Reports of Committees:

(i) **Transport and Highways Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr J C Cornwell and seconded by Cllr R Williams the Minutes of the Meetings held on 6th November 2007 as recorded by Minutes numbered 315 to 326 were adopted.

Matters arising:

a) minute 321 - ESCC Highways: the clerk reported he has written to ESCC Highways asking for another parish visit

b) minute 322 - ESCC Parking scheme: the clerk reported on an e mail from Cty Cllr R StPierre stating that the parking changes were due to be made in December. The clerk has written for clarification from ESCC and sought comfort that local consultation and communication will take place before works begin.

c) minute 321 - Grantham Bank "twitten": No information has been received from County Cllr R St.Pierre.

The Clerk was asked to make the County Councillor aware of the above 3 items

d) minute 323 – W I Street Party: The Clerk has received a response to the council's letter of concerns and these have largely been addressed. The parish council is now generally positive towards the event although there are still concerns over road diversions and turning room for the bus

e) minute 325 – Barcombe Mills car park – Cllr J O Cornwell will inspect after the recent heavy rain and it is likely it will soon be closed for the winter. Clerk will write for rate rebate. The Clerk reported that a planning application for the advertising sign has been submitted.

(ii) **Recreation Ground Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr D J Lloyd and seconded by Cllr J C Cornwell, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th November 2007 as recorded by Minutes 327 to 339 were adopted.

Matters arising:

a) minute 332 - Nature reserve: The clerk has written as instructed and apparently the owners of the pond are known to two members of the group so a personal approach will also be made.

b) minute 336 – Awards For All: It was agreed the Clerk will clarify the position with them.

(iii) **Planning and Community Services Committee and Planning Applications Sub-Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr C M Arbenz and seconded by Cllr N C Lear,

September, 16th October and 30th October as recorded by minutes 274 to 279, 294 to 301 and 308 to 314 respectively were approved.

After being proposed by Cllr N C Lear and seconded by Cllr R Williams, the Minutes of the Planning and Community Services Committee held on 8th November 2007 as recorded by Minutes 340 to 356 were approved.

Matters arising:

a) minute 347 - affordable housing: A copy of the Consultation Event held in October and the Steering Group meeting of 5th November have been circulated previously to Councillors and were noted. After amendment the proposed article on the scheme had been submitted to the Barcombe News.

b) minute 350 - parish action plan: After a discussion of who might best lead this project it was agreed that Cllrs N Gant and J C Cornwell would consider whom in the village might be an appropriate person to lead such a project and report back to the parish council.

(iv) Finance and General Purposes Committee: After being proposed by Cllr N C Lear and seconded by Cllr A J MacGillivray, the Minutes of the Meetings held on 16th October and 8th November 2007 as recorded by minutes 302 to 307 and 357 to 368 respectively were approved.

Matters arising:

a) minute 363 - pavilion expenditure: The RGC/FGP expenditure plans were approved

b) minute 363 - playground expenditure: The RGC/FGP expenditure plans were approved

386. Minutes for public display: It was agreed that approved committee minutes and unadopted minutes of full Parish Council meetings should be displayed on the notice board in the village car park. The latter should be clearly marked as such. The Clerk was asked to make the notice advertising the availability of the minutes more prominent.

387. Correspondence: ESCC – North Wealden Towns and Lewes Local Accessibility Assessment – the Clerk reported on a survey which was available for completion on line by 14th December 2007 at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay in the Current Consultations section.

388. Accounts for payment:

Lewes DC – election expenses - £2921.15 – this payment was not approved. Councillors were shocked at the size of the bill given that four years ago, although no election took place, the cost was estimated at £800. Unfortunately the possible election costs had not been built into the budget for 2007/08 but even if they had a figure of perhaps £1,000 would have been used and not the inflated figure above. The Clerk had spoken to SALC, who have no data on whether the bill is reasonable for a parish of our size. The clerk was asked to approach the District Council and express the parish council's concern over the amount and the lack of warning of such a swingeing increase from eight years ago. He will also ask if it is possible to spread the cost over the life of the current council. The views and experiences of other local parishes where elections were held will also be sought.

Payments of £63.75 to Cllr A J MacGillivray and £8.40 to Cllr R Williams for reimbursed expenditure were approved.

389. Parish Web Site: Cllr N Gant reported the web site is up and running and Cllr A J MacGillivray's article on background to Barcombe would be added shortly. It was agreed the site should be kept simple. Cllr Gant will try and ascertain how many "hits" the site is getting.

390. Clerks pay scales: Following the agreement of new national pay scales it was agreed the Clerks pay should be increased to reflect the increase from 1st April 2007 to his current scale pay (SCP 20). It was also agreed that back pay for the 8 months from 1st April should be made.

391. Outstanding action points: Cllr C M Arbenz gave the Chairman a signed photocopy of the completed Sports Hall agreement

392. Date, time and place of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on 22nd January 2008 at 7.30 pm in the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe.

393. Close of meeting: There being no further business to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30 pm.

Appendix 1 –

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT NOVEMBER 2007

SALC/AirS AGMs, 9 Nov., 2007. Apart from the usual business and administrative functions of these meetings, two aspects are worthy of note. First, SALC produced useful summary papers on its function and financing. In view of discussions at the last FGP Committee regarding the benefits of being in membership of SALC, I hope to obtain copies of these papers for circulation.

In the case of the AirS meeting, the very swift handling of the formal business was followed by a "State of the Nation" type address by their Chief Executive, Jeremy Leggett. JL referred to a similar presentation he had made to the 2000 AirS AGM in which he foresaw three options which Rural Sussex could take in the new Millennium, viz. suffer from a spread of urban culture, become divided and intolerant or become a sustainable idyll. In 2007 aspects of all three options could be said to be in evidence and it was necessary to increase the capacity of rural communities (*AirS has been advocating this for numerous years*). We were suffering from economies of scale brought about by centralisation with the focus of public policy in Sussex being to deal with urban hotspots of need and deprivation. On the other hand, there had been a resurgence of rural action planning and the provision of Broadband had increased the economic drive of rural areas.

Of concern was the introduction of "Mainstreaming" whereby government had replaced specific rural funding programmes such as Vital Villages by incorporation of such funding into combined community finance streams. Hence, rural issues were being taken up across Whitehall, regional agencies and local government. Whilst delivery of rural services was to be "rural proofed" under the new arrangements, it was now imperative to identify specific local ways of meeting rural community needs.

The challenges were to continue monitoring local needs to provide the potential for local action and to work with the mainstream public service partners. Local and

solutions at the rural level. For AirS the challenge is to ensure that things happen but would be doing so at a time of financial uncertainty.

The better news for Sussex centred on the new EU Leader programme (see below).

21st. Century Village Conference. This followed the SALC/AirS AGMs with main speakers being Kate Braithwaite (Carnegie UK Trust, Rural Programme Director) and Oona Muirhead (SEEDA Sustainable Directorate). The former dealt with Insights from around the UK and Ireland under the banner of “Changing Minds, Changing Lives”. She saw three enabling factors for rural communities in future, viz. growing the capacity of local people, agencies and professional that support rural communities; enhancing community assets through building capital; increasing the scope and quality of community planning. In detail, these were fine in principle but questionable in practice. For example, future “vibrant rural communities” would have enhanced capacity through a revitalised system of elected government at community level and the ability to access funding from the EU, central and local government, lottery etc. An assets based approach should be used rather than concentrating simply on needs; communities should take ownership of community assets for public benefit. With regard to community planning, communities should be involved in developing reliable infrastructure (transport, energy, affordable housing etc.); carbon footprints should be reduced; farming integrated into a wider and more diverse rural economy; there would be growth of local social enterprise and entrepreneurial development of local assets.

The SEEDA speaker gave resumes and updates on relevant portions of the S.E. Economic Strategy, Local Area Agreements and a forthcoming review of SEEDA partnerships. Changes would occur with the transfer of SEERA responsibilities to SEEDA and local authorities through the current Sub-National Review. The global competitiveness of the S.E. had to be maintained.

Community Perspectives were given by David Ribbens (Petworth DALC) who described the problems of maintaining stable rural communities and Marina Bury and myself for RVRC on the need for the development of sustainable criteria for rural areas and the problem of changing hearts and minds to accept the implications of sustainability and the energy crisis.

Central Rail Corridor Board. As this also took place on 9 Nov. I was unable to attend and the following comments are derived from those kindly forwarded by Colin Web, the Isfield PC Chairman. The Board approved National Rail (NR) as consultants to carry out the feasibility study “to identify, once and for all, whether there is a case for reopening the Uckfield-Lewes line”. In turn, NR plan to use Mott MacDonald to carry out some of the work. The areas to be investigated are technical feasibility, cost of construction, cost of operation, revenue benefits, socio-economic benefits, funding and alternative options.

Technical feasibility includes structural work to access Uckfield and flood-proof the Lavender Line. Mention is made of junctions onto existing lines but I understand that all options are being looked at with no specific detail as yet concerning connections into Lewes. Assumptions include provision for a double track (but whether double or single initially still an option), track to carry freight, no electrification and no intermediate stations.

Construction costs are estimated to be in excess of £100 million and funding is to follow the principle that beneficiaries pay, i.e. rail industry (capital sum justified by revenue benefits), local and national government may pay a capital sum (on basis of socio-economic benefits) and the private sector may pay for development gain (new

NR estimate that the study can be done in some 18 weeks at a cost in the region of £130,000. Once this is done, if the Board considers it wants to continue with the project then it will go ahead with a consultation exercise with local residents and all other interested parties.

Post Offices. It is probably now generally known that the Barcombe Sub-PO is not scheduled for closure as a result of the exercise just completed. For the record, 49 POs in East and West Sussex are scheduled to close, the nearest being North Chailey and Landport in Lewes.

New EU Leader Programme

(Leader: Liaison entre actions de développement rural)

SEEDA has announced a new Leader funding programme starting in 2008. Bids are being prepared for four areas in Sussex; we are part of the South Downs and Low Weald and it is important to note that this is the first time that the rural areas in the Lewes District have been included in Leader. Each area has a Local Action Group (LAG) which has to submit a bid to SEEDA in January 2008 to outline the type of activity the local programme proposes to support. The bid, if successful, could bring £450,000 to the area in each of the next 6 years. Funding comes from the EU together with new Rural Development Programme money from SEEDA and will be available as from spring 2008. Matched funding of approved projects will be expected.

Bids are invited to support actions in the following areas:

- Forestry and woodlands
- Farming and food production
- Other small businesses (including tourism)
- Local services and communities

The lead organisation is AirS who report that much detail needs to be clarified with SEEDA before January. At present AirS regards reference to “communities” and “community facilities” as meaning provision and delivery of services. In these respects, SEEDA has let it be known that it will provide a one-off fund to deal with projects which may come forward but not be covered by Leader. The lead organisations have been asked to identify such areas; AirS has asked for village halls and community transport to be included in this category.

Various consultation events have taken place in preparation for submitting the bid (but there seems to have been little information to parish councils). For example, the event in Hassocks on 23 Nov., will ask if Leader under supporting local services and rural communities could/should inter alia

- Support the delivery of local services in rural areas such as shops, health, social care, child care, training, advice and information
- Support the improvement and development of community buildings to provide local services and community space
- Help develop community based enterprises and “social enterprises” to deliver local services

The composition of the 25 members of the LAG will be 50/50 public/private sector. As it so happens, I find myself representing SALC on the Group but the experts lie in AirS. However, further details will be published on the LAG’s web-site (www.sussexandwealdleader.co.uk)

AJMacG

Nov 2007