

## BARCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of a Meeting of Barcombe Parish Council held at the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

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

Also present were District Councillor D Mitchell and Mr J Smith

**459. Apologies for Absence:** Received from Cllrs N C Lear and R Williams and County Cllr R St.Pierre

**460. Confirmation and signature of the Minutes of the Meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007:** The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007 as recorded by minutes 375 to 393 having previously been circulated were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

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

**462. Urgent Business pursuant to Standing Order No. 16:**

**(i) Flooding:** Councillors discussed the recent flooding and reached the following conclusions

a) The Clerk was asked to approach the Police, East Sussex CC and Lewes DC to arrange a meeting to establish procedures to be followed in the event of flooding at Barcombe mills and Clappers Bridge. SALC has advised the parish council that the Police are the lead organisation in emergency situations.

b) Residents of Barcombe Mills would be encouraged, via an article in Barcombe News, to register for the Flood alert system, which worked well last week.

c) Residents would be advised, again through Barcombe News, that Lewes DC sandbags are stored in garage number 3 at North Mongers Farm.

d) Cllr J O Cornwell has been told repeatedly by Mr M Wiltshire of Lewes DC Environmental Health that sandbags will be provided at Hays Farm, Barcombe Mills but this has not yet happened – Cllr J O Cornwell will continue to pursue the matter.

e) Following the road improvements on Barcombe Mills Road the ditches where construction works took place had been cleared – however this had not happened on the south side of the road near Bridge Farm and the ditch overflowed over the road. The clerk was asked to inform County Cllr R St.Pierre who will follow through with ESCC.

f) The parish council's preferred solution would be the installation of solar powered automatic warning signs by the A26 and east of Barcombe Cross – the clerk will advise County Cllr R St.Pierre and this proposal will be strongly pushed at the meeting in a) above.

g) Cllr MacGillivray will raise the flooding question at the next meeting of RVRC

**(ii) Emergency road closures:** ESCC had closed the Spithurst Road to remove a dangerous tree. No prior notice had been given to residents and the impact on the school bus not considered. County Cllr R St.Pierre has requested that she be consulted before such an incident happens again.

**(iii) Barcombe Mills Car Park:** Cllr J C Cornwell reported that the lock had been forced and the chain removed and the car park used by joy riders. Cllr Lloyd has a parish council padlock and Cllr J O Cornwell kindly agreed to supply a new chain. It was agreed to consider making the entrance more secure to discourage further such incursions.

**(iv) Fallen signs:** ESCC would be asked to reset the brown information sign highlighting the Anchor at the top of School Hill.

**463. Public Question Time:** The Chairman read out a letter from County Cllr R St.Pierre covering a number of issues:

**a) Grantham Bank Twitten:** (i) ESCC will undertake maintenance work on the part of the path that runs from School Hill across the verge to the hedge as this is their clear

responsibility. Ownership of the “twitten” is unclear she believes and she suggests a local working party under the control of Mr John Smith could level the surface. Cllr D Lloyd commented that at the recent visit by ESCC Highways team they felt the twitten might be their responsibility and the ESCC Rights of Way team could look at repairs. Mr Smith said he could do the work if requires provided scalplings were provided on site. The Rights of Way contact will be pursued first. (ii) forms to claim the twitten as a right of way were given to the Chairman of Transport and Highways for consideration.

**b) Barcombe Mills Road:** she wishes to know of any new areas of flooding following recent ditch clearance work – minute 462(i)(e) describes the position

**c) student bus passes:** these are valid on all East Sussex bus routes – could this be publicised via the Barcombe News

**d) rural buses:** no details are available but she advises that funding for rural services will be under budget pressure – AirS funding only relates to the “dial a ride” service.

District Councillor D Mitchell reported on a number of issues – the Environment Agency pollution permit for the Newhaven incinerator has been quashed; Lewes DC are investigating whether shared services with other authorities could save money; a cardboard recycling scheme is being piloted in Seaford; he is seeking information on what happens to the parking revenues from Lewes

Cllr J O Cornwell reported on a meeting at Lewes DC on a reappraisal of the Barcombe conservation areas, last done in 1996. No action is required at present but it was agreed that the maps of the two conservation areas should be put on display together with the principles that relate to conservation areas to see if any comments from residents are forthcoming. These should be fed back to the parish council for onward transmission to Lewes DC.

**464. Questions from Councillors:** Cllr MacGillivray asked Cllr D Skan to update the meeting on finance arrangements for the new village hall. She reported that 7 anonymous donors had agreed to provide £284,872 with the donations being channelled through a Christian financial services company, Stewardship Services. Advice is being sought from the village halls adviser at AirS and from SALC to see what checks are required over the channelling of monies through such routes. The donors have expressed a desire for a sustainable and environmentally friendly design and architects were to be approached on this basis. New designs and a new business plan were being prepared and applications for funding reflecting this new infusion of cash would be made to Viridor, Biffa etc. It was hoped to double the funding already raised from village activities.

Planning application for a freestanding sign on the site of the new hall had been declined on amenity and highways grounds and the new village hall committee were considering their options

**465. The Chairman’s Report:** This had been circulated and is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1

#### **466. Reports of Committees:**

**(i) Transport and Highways Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr J C Cornwell and seconded by Cllr D J Lloyd, the Minutes of the Meetings held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008 as recorded by Minutes numbered 409 to 419 were adopted.

##### **Matters arising:**

**a) Lewes/Uckfield Rail Link:** The Chairman reported that the latest meeting of the Central Rail Corridor Board had been cancelled. However, the feasibility study was progressing and the first draft report was expected to be published on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

**b) ESCC Parking scheme:** The Clerk has written as instructed on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008 to the Director of Transport and the Environment at East Sussex County Council seeking an answer to the parish council’s concerns. No response as yet, the Clerk will send another copy of the letter by e mail.

**(ii) Recreation Ground Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr D J Lloyd, seconded by Cllr D Skan, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008 as recorded by Minutes 420 to 431 were adopted.

**Matters arising:**

**a) Pavilion works:** Cllr Lloyd reported on that good progress on the kitchen had been made and it was hoped to complete the work by 25<sup>th</sup> January. The contractor would also be asked to undertake the minor works required by the stock survey and the changing room benches if the price was acceptable.

**b) Wild For Barcombe:** Cllr J O Cornwell will obtain contact details for the Meakers so the Clerk can discuss arrangements for a lease(?) over the pond and public liability issues.

**c) Allotments:** Quotes have been received for the fencing (£350 – an Allotment Society cost) and a digger to level the site (Howdens - £292); water costs still awaited. Another willow tree needs to be cleared and it was agreed to ask Mr J Smith to speak to Mr W Tickner in advance of removal to see if he has any concerns.

**d) playground:** no final date for the installation of the new equipment has yet been received.

**(iii) Planning and Community Services Committee and Planning Applications Sub-Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr C M Arbenz, seconded by Cllr R Hepple, the Minutes of the Planning Applications Sub-committee Meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> November and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 as recorded by minutes 369 to 374 and 402 to 408 respectively were approved.

After being proposed by Cllr C M Arbenz, seconded by Cllr D Skan, the Minutes of the Planning and Community Services Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008 as recorded by Minutes 432 to 446 were approved.

**Matters arising:**

**a) Barcombe School and other radio masts:** The Clerk has written as instructed to Lewes District Council's Environmental Health Department. The request for clarification has been acknowledged and officers are investigating and will reply in the near future.

**b) Community School Governor:** After a discussion, and with no obvious volunteer being available, it was agreed to ask the governors to agree that when they had appointed a community governor that that person be co-opted onto an appropriate parish council committee as a liaison point

**c) Affordable Housing:** The Clerk reported that Hastoe Housing had advised that its planning application had been submitted on 14<sup>th</sup> January, but subsequently the parish council has been advised that it has been delayed because of continuing issues with ESCC Highways. The parish council may be asked to comment on its views on traffic issues and it was agreed that positive support should be given once details of the traffic survey were known. The Clerk was asked to seek details of the traffic survey from Hastoe. It was agreed to try and make the full plans of the final application available to members of the public at an appropriate Planning Applications Sub-committee meeting

**(iv) Finance and General Purposes Committee:** After being proposed by Cllr R Hepple, seconded by Cllr J C Cornwell, the Minutes of the Meetings held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008 as recorded by minutes 394 to 401 and 447 to 457 respectively were approved.

**Matters arising:**

**a) election expenses:** A review of charges has been prepared by Lewes DC and is awaiting consideration and a decision from the Chief Executive

**b) precept:** The policy set out in minute 399 of setting future precepts in two stages was agreed

**467. Annual Parish Meeting:** This is to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and after a discussion it was agreed that Cllrs Gant and Lloyd would prepare a presentation on the improvement planned for the Recreation Ground and in particular the Allotment extension and Wild For Barcombe. Committee Chairmen were asked to ensure their contributions for the April edition of Barcombe News were available to meet the publication deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

**468. Correspondence:**

Lewes DC – The Rural Local Action Team has approximately £4,000 of its capital budget unspent and has requested applications for specific projects to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour which will be considered at its next committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

After a brief discussion the Clerk was asked to put forward the idea of replacing the safety fencing between the playground and the recreation ground to incorporate football “goals”, cricket “stumps” etc.

Department for Communities and Local Government – letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2008 (received 18<sup>th</sup> Jan!) seeking views by 15<sup>th</sup> February on Orders and Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England. The Regulations focus on the work of standards boards and it was agreed that Cllr A MacGillivray would review on behalf of the parish council.

SALC – disappointment has been expressed by officers at SALC at the failure of much information to be passed on to councillors by parish clerks across the County. This is due to a number of practical operational factors and SALC have now started to disseminate information via their website with e mail alerts. The first of these had been sent out today (22/1/08) and would be forwarded to councillors by the Clerk.

#### **469. Accounts for payment:**

Howden Joinery - £754.06 – pavilion kitchen fittings

Cllr R Hepple - £19.99 – towel holder for kitchen from Homebase

Cllr D Lloyd - £45.00 – new doormat for kitchen from Pennells Carpets

**470. Parish Web Site:** The site is working well and was proving to be low maintenance as hoped. Cllr Gant would like to grow the “about Barcombe” section provided it remained low maintenance and this approach was agreed. Ideas to be incorporated were to add the dates of parish council and committee meetings and the book of Barcombe walks.

**471. Outstanding Action Points:** The clerk has received a comprehensive reply from Mr W Hope to his queries on land titles and will review and take appropriate action

**472. Date, time and place of next meeting:** This will be on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe

**473. Close of Meeting:** There being no further business to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40 p.m.

### **Appendix 1 - CHAIRMAN’S REPORT JANUARY 2008**

#### **SALC meeting with Chief Constable**

In early December representatives of East & West SALCs met with the new Chief Constable (CC), Martin Richards, formerly of Wiltshire Police; he was accompanied by John Godfrey, Secretary to Sussex Police Authority. The CC has been in post for 3 months having been appointed on a commitment to engaging with local communities. Implementation of this commitment was evident from the meeting with SALC.

Although the agenda for the meeting was based on (i) policy-type issues raised by SALC and (ii) queries from individual member councils, much of the discussions rolled into several discrete areas as outlined below.

Sussex Police/SALC Protocol. This is now 3 years old and the contents considered to be suitable for at least the immediate future. The document (Policy Document 609/2005) can be seen on the Sussex Police web-site.

PCSOs. SALC’s presentation on a proposed rural awareness training programme (devised in conjunction with AirS) produced considerable discussion on the role, funding and future of PCSOs. 350 PCSOs are employed by Sussex Police and the CC is a strong advocate of their role in policing; it is unlikely that Government will authorise funding for additional PCSOs. PCSOs are intended to provide visibility and engagement with their communities and at the same time be involved (along with such as Neighbourhood Watch) in essential intelligence gathering. As evidenced at our meeting, a problem in discussing PCSOs with Sussex Police is that there are

numerous parishes who are very happy with their PCSO cover. Those PCs wishing to consider their own or additional PCSO will have to find £27,000 per year. We are perhaps unusual in that we have reservations about the quality of recruits and our experience of shared officers; Newick (and probably Hamsey) back us in this.

The job description and powers of PCSOs are available on the Sussex Police web-site. Their powers have been extended to include confiscating alcohol in public places, issuing fixed penalty notices for antisocial behaviour, and seizing drugs. Powers at the discretion of CCs include detaining suspects and searching people with suspected dangerous items (Sussex CC unlikely to agree to this).

It was agreed that the SALC/AirS training programme should be furthered and be offered to other officers, including training for new recruits. But it appears that our concerns over PCSO training have been confirmed and that through this training programme the gap has been hopefully plugged. In supporting the initiative, I described our Barcombe thoughts about PCSO job descriptions and lack of training in rural matters.

Operation Crackdown. This initiative was reported during Sept. round of meetings but I wonder if additional publicity might be encouraged. There are examples now of how even part of a car registration no. and make of vehicle can lead to action being taken against motoring offenders.

Neighbourhood Watch. Inevitably discussion on NW surfaced. The CC sees NW as part of information gathering and should concentrate on such as anti-social behaviour and car parking issues. He is concerned as to how effective NW is in combating crime. He will look at some form of Operation Crackdown being available for NW.

Conclusion. Overall, a very friendly and constructive meeting with the new CC.

### **Lewes District Association of Local Councils Meeting; 7 January 2008**

Whilst this was a poorly attended meeting, a wide ranging discussion on regional and local council matters ensued following a presentation by Michael Chater, one of the parish/town council representatives on SEERA and the Vice-Chairman of NALC.

SEERA. MC outlined the function of the Regional Assembly in influencing government policies on planning, transport and economy through its various roles (planning, housing, transport, advocacy, accountability (re SEEDA, NHS etc.) and alignment). SEERA is formed from three groups of partners – councils, economic partners and social/environmental partners. It had been very difficult to have parish/towns councils accepted as a component part of the “councils” section. This had gradually taken place to an extent that MC is now a Vice-Chairman of SEERA.

Most people had heard of SEERA only through its production of the South East Plan. This had been a significant exercise for both SEERA staff and members and all were pleased that in the subsequent scrutiny by Inspectors the latter had accepted 11 of the proposed 12 proposed policies. In the case of the outstanding policy the Inspectors had insisted in a 10% increase in housing allocations which SEERA found could be accommodated.

However, despite such work government had decided to abolish Regional Assemblies as from 2010 and had set up Sub-National Reviews (SRN) with a view to establishing single regional strategies and agencies. Regional accountability would occur through local government and parliamentary regulatory committees with economic development becoming the responsibility of the principal local authorities. Such changes suggested a number of possible options, e.g. no action; shared regional activities; develop key regional governance. To prepare for such changes, the principal local authorities had decided to work closely together and to the exclusion of

other partners; consequently there were fears concerning the future role of parish/town councils in regional matters. The SRN exercise had been delayed but there would be a 3 month consultation period on the proposed changes during which individual parish/town councils were encouraged to respond.

MC then outlined the work of an NALC Review Group in which he, Trevor Leggo and Alex MacG of SALC were involved. Radical changes to the structure and organisation of our tier at national, regional and county level were being considered with a view to proposals being presented at the 2008 NALC Annual Conference to be held in Eastbourne during 20-22 May.

A very active and encouraging discussion resulted, much of it centring on communications. Bodies such as SEERA and NALC were considered too remote for individual councils to have a satisfactory feel as to their role and value. Councillors had difficulty in keeping up with the current information flow particularly if they were not acquainted with the topics involved. SALC felt very strongly that parish councils should encourage more councillors to attend training courses. Another approach would be to ensure that each council had at least one member who could deal with external communications and recommend relevant material for consideration by the others.

[Communications were also discussed at the ESALC Executive Committee held three days later. SALC was disappointed that only 17/100 East Sussex councils had responded to their annual questionnaire on SALC activities and that little attention appeared to have been paid to requests for information on policing and the NALC Review contained in the Autumn SALC Bulletin. Unfortunately and unfairly in all probability, Parish Clerks were being regarded as unreliable in terms of transferring information to councillors. Not so, some of us have explained. I personally am convinced that the lack of response to the questionnaire may have been due to the fact that this and other documents were mailed to Clerks in the pack of SALC AGM papers – that is where I myself found it and responded with little time to spare! In the case of the SALC Bulletin, this was sent to Clerks as hard copy at the end of November, thus missing that month's round of PC meetings and to await attention at, say, the January meetings. Electronic copies are simultaneously posted on the SALC web-site but Clerks have to know this and be able to access the information through a password. 35 Sussex councils apparently never access the SALC web-site regularly and it is important that we realise that this site is now the normal method of communicating such as bulletins and topic notes to member parishes. SALC has been told that perhaps too much is being expected of particularly part-time clerks – is trawling the Internet for information a role for the member(s) of each council with external communications interests? SALC claims that their office alerts Clerks by email of updates on their web-site. Also, a council may have to decide on those topics which should receive preferential treatment as far as rapid circulation is concerned. I'm biased possibly but it seems to me that information from SALC (i.e. information produced by and for our sector) should be given such attention.]

It transpires that the poor attendance at our District Association may have been due to similar communication problems as the Association Secretary sent the agenda to Clerks during December and I know of regular attendees who were not told of the meeting (N.B. Not so Barcombe – John C and I were informed by Malcolm and we attended). It was decided that unless a council gives details of their District Association representatives then the Association Secretary should email relevant material to Clerks, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

The Autumn SALC Bulletin is an informative document with hopefully something in it for everyone. We will arrange for copies to be circulated to the PC.

