

BARCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Barcombe Parish Council held at the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe on Tuesday 22nd July 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

760. Present: Councillors A J MacGillivray, J C Cornwell, J O Cornwell, N Gant, N C Lear, D J Lloyd, D Skan and R A Williams.
PCSO W Baulcombe, D Prior and one member of the public.

761. To receive apologies for absence: Received from Cllrs C M Arbenz, M J Austen and R Hepple

762. Confirmation and signature of the last Minutes of the Council: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 20th May 2008 as recorded by minutes 643 to 698 having previously been circulated were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

763. Declarations of Interest: Cllrs J C Cornwell and J O Cornwell declared interests in minute 768.

764. Urgent Business Pursuant to Standing Order No.16: There was no urgent business.

765. Public Question Time: The member of the public, a resident of Hamsey, commented that the report on the Lewes/Uckfield rail link would probably find that it was feasible to re-instate the line in engineering terms but that the business case for ongoing operations would not be proven. The Chairman said he would report on this topic later in the meeting.

766. Questions from Councillors: A number of comments and questions were directed at the PCSO who had reported there had been no crime in Barcombe since the last parish council meeting, apart from two parking incidents. Key points covered were:

- little benefit was seen in having an intelligence box in the village, but the success of schemes in Ringmer and Wivelsfield would be monitored.
- There is a successful Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Newick and the new Inspector in Lewes is keen for there to be more. Ideally the information would be passed on by e mail. Barcombe has recently suffered from a lack of volunteers. The PCSO was visiting Barcombe Mills next week.
- the new Inspector is also a supporter of Neighbourhood Panels to prioritise issues of concern locally .
- all councillors were still concerned that the PCSO had no transport and had to walk to Barcombe, Newick and Hamsey (and at times Chailey). This wastes a huge amount of time and the parish council did not subscribe to the view that the walking time showed a visible police presence in the locale.
- the PCSO should have more visible support, particularly to help with issues like speeding. The rural specialist, PC Vitler, is the appropriate conduit to the Traffic section and the PCSO was asked to try and get some action on the speeding issue through enforcement rather than just the SID machine.

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Newick and Hamsey parish councils to see if they shared Barcombe's concerns and consider a joint approach to the new Chief Inspector of the Lewes Division.

767. Report from Chairman: It was agreed that the parish council wished to congratulate the Women's Institute for organising a wonderful 90th Birthday Street Fair on Saturday 19th July. The event had been thoroughly enjoyed by the whole village. The Chairman's formal report is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

768. Lewes/Uckfield Rail Link: The Chairman had discussed the best approach with the Chairman of Isfield parish council and in view of the fact that the Central Rail Board's report is to be published 23rd July on the ESCC website the following points were made:

- there are no technical engineering problems with rebuilding the line
- the financial case for operating the line is not strong
- CRB will set out a list of recommendations in the next few days and the focus will be on these more than the report itself
- councillors need to be familiar with the issues so they can brief local residents as required and the press if necessary.
- deadline for public consultation is 1st October with the CRB due to meet on 7th November to consider responses.

After a discussion it was agreed that a special meeting of the parish council would be convened on Wednesday 30th July 2008 at 7.30 p.m. where Councillor MacGillivray will present to councillors a summary of the CRB process, outline the key findings of the Report and the important recommendations, provide copies of the information to be taken away and considered and answers questions generally. Special efforts will be made to alert the public to the meeting. The possibility of a public meeting on the morning of Saturday 2nd August is under consideration.

Concern was expressed by the member of the public that the Report, in its anticipated form, would not be the final definitive conclusion promised to local residents.

769. Reports of Committees:

(i) Transport and Highways: After being proposed by Cllr J C Cornwell, seconded by Cllr R Williams, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th July 2008 as recorded by minutes 684 to 698 were adopted.

Matters arising: (a) Parking (minute 695) - there has been no further news from ESCC

(ii) Recreation Ground: After being proposed by Cllr D J Lloyd, seconded by Cllr D Skan, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th July 2008 as recorded by minutes 699 to 714 were adopted.

Matters arising: (a) Playground – the parish council applauded the work put in by members of the community toward the refurbishment of the playground and a note would appear in Barcombe News **(b) Allotments** – a poly tunnel 40 feet long and 6 feet tall had been offered to the Allotment Society. It was agreed the Clerk would ask Lewes DC if planning permission was needed.

(iii) Planning and Community Services:

After being proposed by Cllr N C Lear, seconded by Cllr R Williams, the Minutes of the Planning Application Sub Committee held on 3rd June, 24th June and 10th July

2008 as recorded by Minutes 664 to 670, 677 to 683 and 715 to 722 respectively were adopted

After being proposed by Cllr N C Lear, seconded by Cllr D Skan, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd June and 10th July 2008 as recorded by Minutes 671 to 676 and 723 to 742 respectively were adopted.

Matters arising:

(a) radio masts(minute 733) and (b) Barcombe School development(minute 734)

The Clerk is still to write to the Governors representative on these issues

(c) flooding(minute 737) Cllr Lear will circulate a report

(d) Newick pharmacy – Cllr MacGillivray has been informed by Newick parish council that the appeal will be heard in the next two months and it will be invited to make representations.

(e) Affordable Housing: Matters were moving forward, albeit slowly, and the Clerk has been asked to give the name of the parish council's solicitors to undertake some legal work. Hastoe will bear the cost. The Clerk was asked to approach SALC to see if Hedleys would be the most appropriate firm to use.

(iv) Finance and General Purposes: After being proposed by Cllr Lloyd, seconded by Cllr MacGillivray, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th July 2008 as recorded by Minutes 743 to 752 were adopted.

770. Account for year ended 31st March 2008 and Annual Return: After being proposed by Cllr MacGillivray, seconded by Cllr Lear, the Annual Accounts for the year 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 were approved. The comments of the internal auditor and the Parish Council's response were noted.

It was also agreed on the proposition of Cllr MacGillivray, seconded by Cllr Lear, that the Statement of Accounts and the Governance Statement in the Annual Return for the same period should be completed as required by the Chairman and the Clerk.

771. Parish Plan: Nothing to report at present but it was noted that any future plan would have to consider the issue of sustainability.

772. Accounts for Payment: the following account was approved for payment:
Lewes District Council – playground inspection - £94

773. Correspondence:

The Clerk has received a copy of a letter sent from the Cricket Club to Mr M Ashwod. No further action at this stage.

Sussex Ouse Conservation Society would like to run their exhibition on Sunday, 21st September from the Barcombe Mills Car Park as the Environment Agency land is unavailable. This was agreed and Cllr J O Cornwell will liaise with Neil Merchant over removing the barrier.

AiRS have asked if the can use the Recreation Ground on 6th (a.m.)and 12th August (p.m.) for the district Play Out programme. This was agreed, they will be directed to Mrs S Hepple to make the booking.

774. Outstanding Action Points: All covered in the agenda, apart from the Land title issues which remain outstanding.

775. Date time and place of next meeting: The Chairman announced the next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday 16th September 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe

776. Close of meeting: There being no further business to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 p.m.

APPENDIX 1 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT JULY 2008

Meetings of East SALC (16 June, 15 July) and Lewes District Association (LDALC) (16 July) meetings

The special June ESALC meeting dealt with two specific topics, viz. P/TC representation on the proposed South Downs National Park and the Sub National Review (Changes to SEERA/SEEDA). For the former, John Cornwell was given a free mandate to negotiate more P/TC representation on the Board (10 seats presently proposed). For the latter, a letter to the appropriate Minister was agreed advocating the need for P/TC involvement in policy making at regional level (e.g. integrated regional strategy). I was asked to discuss the issues with Norman Baker MP. [The MP is against the proposed changes, would prefer a new regional structure in England and will convey SALC's views to his party's spokesperson. A further development has been a letter to "The Times" from Chairman of six Regional Assemblies in which they express a need for a future role for stakeholder representatives. SALC will follow up this statement on behalf of P/TCs.]

Community Empowerment White Paper. A main topic at the July meetings of both Associations was the long awaited White Paper published on 10 July on which Trevor Leggo of SALC gave a detailed presentation. Basically, the contents of the paper refer to the principal local authorities with little of significance for the P/TC sector (unless like NALC one is interested in parishing the likes of London !). Some of the proposals are contentious, some already exist, most critical is ownership of community assets. The main points of TL's presentation are given in the attached appendix. The White Paper can be accessed via the DCLB web-site and an Executive Summary is available on the SALC web-site. At the LDALC meeting disappointment was expressed as to the lack of attention to P/TCs. It was further decided that SALC should respond to the White Paper on behalf of member councils but that the latter should be made aware of the contents and implications.

Sustainable Communities Act. This is an interesting piece of legislation which is still being worked out. Government has difficulty fitting this Act into the current proposed legislation since being a Private Members Bill it was not part of their intended schedule. Again this legislation deals with the principal local authorities with little significance as it stands presently for P/TCs. The essentials are that before submitting any proposal aimed at sustaining a local community, a principal local authority must first establish and consult with a "panel of representatives of local persons", the composition of which has yet to be defined. The Secretary of State has also to appoint a "selector" (who represents the interests of local authorities) to monitor local authority proposals before they are sent to the Secretary for approval. NALC is presently working with Nick Hurd MP on the impact of the Act which they supported during its passage through parliament. NALC is also working with Unlock Democracy (formerly Charter 88) to develop proposals for its implementation including a private member's Bill to amend the Act and strengthen the role of P/TCs. LDALC decided that the Act and its implications for the District should be on the agenda at the Annual P/TC Conference in October.

The following topics were also dealt with at the ESALC meeting.

Crimestoppers. A presentation was given on behalf of this independent charity which allows people to call and give information about crime and criminals anonymously. But it has current financial problems and is looking for donations. Much publicity material and web-site (www.crimestoppers.uk.org)

SALC Member Subscriptions 2009/10. It was agreed that the subscription be raised by 1p to 23p per elector, i.e. an increase of 4.6% (c.f. inflation at 3.8%; RPI at 4.6%). For Barcombe PC the increase would amount to some £10. At both Association meetings it was stressed that active councils should retain membership to have ready access to advice, information and support.

NALC. Much discussion centred on current issues concerning our national body. Due to a withdrawal of government funding following departmental shake-ups, NALC has a cash problem but seems to have reserves to cope for the moment. There were concerns regarding the true effectiveness of the organisation in dealing with Government, e.g. during negotiations on current legislation and community proposals. Obtaining legal advice could be slow. After a full discussion it was agreed to invite the NALC Chief Executive to attend a joint meeting of the ESALC, WSALC and Surrey Association to discuss such issues.

NALC Review. I was able to report that the Group looking at the future organisation, structure and funding of the sector had decided on 14 July to commission consultants to further the work carried out to date.

The following topics were also dealt with at the LDALC meeting.

Representatives on the Lewes District Standards Board. The three names put forward had not been approved by Lewes DC since the individuals had not been appointed on party political grounds. The meeting found the situation unacceptable and agreed that the District Monitoring Officer be contacted regarding the legitimacy of the rejection. Concern was expressed that party politics were being allowed to interfere with the functioning of the Standards Board.

Bevern Group of Parishes. East Chilington, Hamsey, Streat, Westmeston and St. John Without had pursued their idea of seeking devolved partnership working with ESCC on highways maintenance matters. They propose to talk to Burgess Hill TC on their highway arrangements for neighbouring PCs and prepare a business case for consideration by ESCC.

Annual P/TC Conference, Plumpton, Oct. 2008. Discussions led to the following being agreed for the Conference agenda.

Retrospective planning applications (Ditchling had noted that particularly developers were obtaining permission for previously unauthorised work in this way).

Agricultural buildings and permitted development. (A case in Plumpton indicated that clarification of this area was required.)

Section 106 Agreements and the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy.

(Reference to these in the Community Empowerment WP indicated that an update was required.)

Next meeting: 1 October 2008; topic – review of Code of Practice between Lewes DC and LDALC.

Travellers. In view of current problems caused by unauthorised encampments in Lewes and South Highton, the Vice-Chairman and myself have reviewed the situation in the Parish. The Barcombe Mills car park and the Rec. seem to be potentially at risk. As access to establish encampments would probably result in damage (gates, fences), the police would be called. The procedure advocated in East

Sussex is for the Head of Environmental Health, Lewes DC to be informed with the option of calling in the ESCC Travellers Liaison Officer

AJMacG July 2008

Community Empowerment

Part of proposed Community Empowerment, Housing & Economic Regeneration Bill 2008/09

Where does Community Empowerment fit in ?

Government has 4 basic themes:

To create economic stability

To encourage people to make most of their potential

The improvement of public services

To hand power back to the people

(when did they last have it ?)

Impact on local authorities (i.e. principal authorities)

Petitions encouraged and duty imposed on local authorities to respond

Councillor Call for Action – empowers cllrs. to ensure that security and overview committees consider issues of local concern

Participatory budgeting – National Strategy published shortly

Voting incentives to encourage participation

Right to appeal where local authority refuses creation of a new parish council

Make parish polls more accessible, maybe extend hours of opening

Byelaws easier for parish councils to introduce

Introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy alongside S106 Agreements

Young people

Youth Citizenship Commission will report in 2009 considering how to increase Yps participation in politics, volunteering and community engagement

Young advisors with direct access to Sec of State

Opportunity to shadow local and national political figures

DCLG programme of Internships for Yps to work within local democracy

Ownership of community assets

Encouragement of community groups to take over underused or badly run community facilities from local authorities
Establishment of Asset Transfer Unit to step up campaign to effect transfers where appropriate
Local authorities to be more transparent about assets owned

Digital Mentoring Scheme

Govt. to pilot a Scheme in deprived areas
Provide support for communities to develop own web-sites and links with broadcasting

Policing

Improved feedback on crime and punishment in local areas. More identifiable named local police officers with contact information
Details will be contained in Policing Pledge in Green Paper
Chief Constable to be called to account by communities

Councillors

To be more representative from a gender, age and ethnicity point of view
Create a duty on local authorities to promote local democracy
Seek to remove restriction on senior council officers being politically active in councils other than their own
Discretionary localised budgets held by cllrs. to target local concerns
Allow cllrs. to participate and vote remotely
Review time off work for public duties
Review of qualifications for cllrs. possibly to NVQ Level 4
Recognise cllrs. long service and create Alderman and Alder women

Local Area Agreement

LAA offers opportunity for local authorities and partners to present clearly to local people how they intend to tackle major priorities for their area and the contribution to national issues which affect everyone, e.g. climate change