

FAIRLIGHT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at Fairlight Village Hall on Tuesday 23rd February 2016 at 7.15pm.

Present: Councillors Revd. V. Gibbs (Chair), J. Annetts, Mrs C. Gallagher, D. Greenup, A. King, S. Leadbetter, A. Mier and D. Thatcher. Also present: County Cllr C. Maynard, Dist Cllr C. Saint, Parish Clerk J. Edmunds and 11 members of the public.

16018 Apologies for Absence: Dist. Cllr R. Bird

16019 Agenda additions: None although County Cllr Maynard requested an early Agenda Report as he had to leave early to be present at Brede Parish Meeting. The Chair agreed it could be taken at item 5 (a).

16020 Code of Conduct and Disclosure of Interests: None

16021 To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held 26th January 2016.

The minutes having been distributed prior to the meeting and made available to the Public at the meeting, were approved and signed by the newly appointed Chair as a correct record.

16022 Matters arising from the Minutes not otherwise on the Agenda: The Chair raised the Celebration of the Queen's 90th Birthday which is in June and Fairlight has its open gardens weekend at the same time. It was felt that any celebrations should not clash and it was agreed that Members will consider ideas at the March meeting. In the meantime, County Cllr Maynard suggested that small grants may be available from Rother and the idea is being considered by Rother Cabinet at their next meeting.

16023 Police report

Sgt Dave Townsend was in attendance and was invited to address the members.

He explained the new Policing arrangements covering Rother and Hastings Districts and explained that all Officers would be despatched according to incident risk. There are 2 sectors of Policing now, Neighbourhood Response teams and Neighbourhood Policing Team. The former responds to emergency's. PCSO's will need to reapply for jobs and also will have different duties from July.

He handed out window stickers which advise callers not to call and advised that if residents felt threatened by door step callers then they should phone 999. When asked if more were available, he promised to approach Lewes for a supply which could be distributed throughout the Village. 750 were requested.

The Chair suspended standing orders at 7.42 to enable members of the public to ask questions.

Various questions were asked and in response, Sgt Townsend confirmed that any call from Fairlight could result in Officers from either Hastings or Rother attending. The response time should be within 15 minutes. The Commander is currently Paul Phelps but he will be replaced by Warren Franklin in due course. The Police Crime Commissioner is visiting Rye next month. He also suggested ringing 101 to advise Police if any locals intended doing any house collecting/petitioning.

Standing Orders were re-instated at 7.44 pm and The Chair thanked Sgt Townsend for his attendance and information.

16024 County and District Councillors Reports:

County Cllr Maynard reported that the new Hastings-Bexhill link road was working well although workmen are still resolving some snagging issues and also many trees still need to be planted along the route. There has been some reporting of increased traffic along the Ridge but the Planning approval for the Queensway Gateway has now been given by Hastings Planners. Central Government has given more transitional funding than was originally thought and this will go into reserves.

East Sussex CC have reduced the amount of grant funds being available to Adult Social Care and although the Government has allowed additional Council Tax rises for the life of this Parliament (2% per year), it will not raise sufficient funds for all current grants.

The Chair raised the question of Mopp and set out why it was sensible to continue with their grant.

County Cllr Maynard is to take it up with Keith Hinckley (ESCC), who is already trying to find Mopp an alternative source of funding. He will report back to Council.

District Cllr Saint had sent a report prior to the meeting which had been circulated to members.

He had visited the Neighbourhood Plan meeting held on 20th February and found that everyone he spoke to was in favour of the plan.

He was also aware of the issues which have occurred with Kier having supply issues to replace broken bins but all new ones will be delivered within two weeks. He was also made aware of Kier supplying bins from Hastings which had HBC on them. This however will not stop any collection.

There have been some issues with pot holes and County Cllr Maynard again explained how they are repaired both temporary and permanent. If a resident finds a pot hole which hasn't been marked for repair then they should report it to the Highways Contact Centre.

- 16025 Financial Matters**
(a) Discuss and agree amounts to be `vired` to correct budget lines for 2015/16.
 The Clerk explained that some of the budget lines had become `out of line` due to various spends throughout the year including new bins and fingerpost replacements. He suggested that the following be considered by members: Reduce lines Repairs and renewals by £1000, Reserves by £7800, Playground by £750, Training by £500 and Election Costs by £300, totalling £10350. This could then be `vired` to increase the budget for the following lines: Knowle Wood £2000 (1000), Other Maintenance £6350 (5350), Subscriptions £1100 (100), Neighbourhood Plan £7500 (2500), Grants £6250 (250) and Cliffs £3650 (1150).
 Following a brief discussion, Cllr Greenup proposed the transfers as above and Cllr Mier seconded the proposal. All voted in favour. **Resolved**
- (b) Discuss the replacement of the Notice Board at Shepherds Way/Channel Way**
 The Clerk advised that he had obtained a quote for the notice board replacement which was cheaper if a metal option was ordered. It was agreed that Cllr King would speak to a carpenter to see if one could be made for a cheaper price.
- (c) Approve the website fees of £144.35 for 2016**
 Cllr Mier proposed that the website fees of £144.35 be reimbursed to the webmaster: Bill O`Reilly. Cllr Leadbetter seconded the proposal. All voted in favour. **Resolved.**
- 16026 Data Transparency Code**
 The Clerk explained the requirements under the code and what is available on the website. There is a need to place the Policies and Practices which the PC adheres to but as there are a potential 27, it is very time consuming and will require formal adoption. To allow sufficient time for all members to study them, Cllr Mier proposed that they all be added in draft form with the exception of the Code of Conduct which is standard and could be added without approval. Cllr Leadbetter seconded the proposal. All voted in favour. **Resolved.**
- 16027 Review of Officer Roles**
 Following a brief discussion, Members decided they were happy with their existing roles and no changes were made.
- 16028 Parish Assembly**
 After discussion, it was decided to hold the Parish Assembly on Friday 13th May in the Village Hall starting at 6.30pm.
- 16029 Emergency Plan**
 Cllr Mrs Annetts is putting together the Emergency Plan, updating where necessary and it will be re-printed this year. Details of Rother`s Emergency Planning Officer were unclear at the time of the meeting but since, Dist Cllr Saint has advised it is, Nigel Ray, nigel.ray@rother.gov.uk or tel 787861 and he works Monday to Wednesday.
- 16030 Highways**
Monthly report
 The Highways Report had been circulated by Cllr. Revd. Gibbs prior to the Meeting and made available to the Public at the Meeting. The Report is attached as an appendix to these Minutes.
- 16031 Planning**
 The Planning Committee`s report and notes from their meetings for the last month had been circulated prior to the meeting and made available to the Public at the meeting.
 The Reports were noted and are attached as appendices to these Minutes.
 Cllr Leadbetter advised that the Neighbourhood Plan is on track and moving forward slowly. There was a meeting with Rother DC on 28th January 2016. The survey results are on the Village website.
 There was an exhibition in the Village Hall on 20th February where details of the responses were fed back. 134 people attended so that was very pleasing. There will be a report covering the survey and consultation report produced in due course. There will also be a further meeting with AirS and Rother towards the end of March.
 The Neighbourhood Plan is being reviewed every two weeks at Planning Committee meetings.
 The Chair asked for a formal vote of thanks to be recorded for Cllr Leadbetter for all the hard work he is undertaking and for the other Cllrs who are also helping with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 16032 Land Management:**
(a) Monthly Report
 Cllr King reported the following:-
 (1) There has been a collapse of two fence panels at the back of a property adjoining Wood field. This will be attended to.

(2) There have been a couple of complaints about the cutting back in Knowle Wood but otherwise all is well.

(b) Update re ` a suitably worded sign for Lower Waites Lane to deter large vehicles from entering the lane and agree approaching ESCC about the sign`.

ESCC have advised that it is not part of their jurisdiction and advised where signs are currently in place and think the signage is adequate.

It was decided to obtain a quote for Channel Way East regarding the footpath which is now closed due to collapse. The clerk will obtain some quotes.

(c) Report from Cllr Mrs Gallagher on the meeting with Natural England and HBC re The Firehills

Cllr Mrs Gallagher's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and made available to the Public at the meeting.

The Report was noted and is attached as an appendix to these Minutes.

Cllr Gallagher had nothing to add to the report but since the meeting, a member of the public had complained about the malnourished calf which she has reported to Hastings and they are dealing with it.

16033 Approval and Payment of Accounts

The Clerk tabled a list of payments to be made at this meeting.

Approved as follows:-

Cheque No.	Payee	Gross £	VAT(Reclaimable)
1762	AB Fire & Security	49.39	8.23
1763	Mrs V King	xxxxxx	
1764	J Edmunds (Salary and Expenses)	xxxxxx	
1765	HMRC	xxxxxx	
1766	Mrs T Robertson	xxxxxx	
1767	S Leadbetter (NP exps)	136.48	22.17
1768	JCW O'Reilly	144.35	
1769	S Leadbetter (NP exps)	20.56	2.87

16034 Information and/or Future Agenda Items

• **Correspondence**

Correspondence Received:-

A Fairley re Stonelynk Nature Reserve

D Lucas re bonfires in Knowle Wood

ESCC reply to signs letter

Grant requests – Fairfest, St Andrews Church

H Luke – HCP report

Natural England (meeting follow up)

Neighbourhood Plan Consultation reply from HBC

Various Neighbourhood Plan correspondence

Various SALC

Weekly Rural News

Weekly Police updates

Correspondence Sent:

D Lucas (Chair)

ESCC re signs LWL/Channel Way

HBC re Firehills (follow up)

Natural England re gorse

Planning Applicants x5

Rother re TPO confirmation

Wickes re Channel Way

16035 Date of next meeting – Tuesday 22nd March 2016, 7.15pm at Fairlight.

The formal part of the meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Open Forum

- John Pulfer (resident) advised that he had two contacts for signs which he could supply details about and that his son is a RSPCA Inspector and could help with the calf issue. He also advised that a calendar for the Brown bin service will not be printed for 2016.

Parish Council comments:

- 1) Fairlight Parish Council has no objection to this proposal.
- 2) Any comments made by residents in neighbouring properties should be taken into account.

Planning report week 5

RR/2016/272/P

Skyscape - Land at rear, Channel Way, (fronting Shepherds Way), Fairlight TN35 4BP

New dwelling.

Parish Council comments: Not yet considered by Parish Council.

RR/2016/360/P

Maidstone, Briar Close, Fairlight TN35 4DP

Proposed single storey side extension with decking to form family room.

Parish Council comments: Not yet considered by Parish Council.

Planning report week 6

RR/2016/380/P

83 Battery Hill, April Cottage, Fairlight TN35 4AL

Erection of new three/four bedroom.

Parish Council comments: Not yet considered by Parish Council.

2) Planning Decisions

RR/2015/2934/T

The Heathers, Broadway, Fairlight TN35 4DA

Works to trees.

Decision: Approved – 2 specified replacement trees to be planted.

RR/2016/34/P

Full Moon Barn, Warren Road, Fairlight TN35 4AN

Erection of open glass room.

Decision: Approved.

RR/2015/3063/P

Alborada, Farley Way, Fairlight TN35 4AS

First floor extension to form attic bedrooms.

Decision: Refused as it would be dominant, overbearing and detrimental to the residential amenity of neighbours.

RR/2016/34/P

15 Waites Lane, Four Gables, Fairlight TN35 4AR

Change of use from agricultural land to domestic use (extension of rear garden).

Decision: Approved.

Stephen Leadbetter
Planning Committee Chairman
16th February 2016

3. Country Park Visitor Centre

Report to Parish Council Meeting, 23 February 2016

The Visitor Centre Board has not met since my last report. However, members have received a lengthy written update from Groundwork on the progress of the various applications for funding which have been made and on preparations for the tender process.

Councillors will recall that Groundwork South has to secure outside funding if construction of the new Visitor Centre is to be achieved because on its own the c £250k Hastings BC has set aside towards the project from the sale of Warren Cottage is inadequate.

The interesting point with respect to procurement is that through discussions with, and on the advice of the East Sussex Procurement Hub, it has been decided at this point to carry out a procurement exercise for the straw bale option only. Only if this is unsuccessful will a tender for the pre-fabricated option be issued. Groundwork say that this is to ensure that a fair and transparent award criteria methodology is used which will allow the merits of both approaches to be scored, and will protect the reputation of Hastings Council.

Groundwork understands the tender documents will be issued by HBC on the 12th February. As it is acknowledged that the use of the straw bale model is commonplace for public and private buildings in Europe the opportunity will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union, opening up the market to a greater number of contractors making it a more viable competitive process. The tender return period would still be 30 days as per a normal process of this type

So, for the time being, the straw bale construction method is the preferred option for the construction of the Visitor Centre. As I indicated in my last report and as confirmed by Groundwork, the hope is that some European funding can be secured for this. Groundwork South joined other European partners to submit an initial expression of interest to one of the Interreg funding streams. At the time of writing no decision had been received. The anticipated timescale is that a decision will be received around March/April 2016 with a possible project start date of 1 September 2016. Groundwork hopes for £330,000 of European funding.

Meanwhile, two other funding applications are being pursued, namely to the Heritage Lottery Fund (possible decision in September 2016) and to the H B Allen Charitable Trust. The latter is not for construction but for fitting out the Centre and would cover the interpretive costs. A decision on this is hoped for in the early spring.

The application to the HLF needs further development by Groundwork and is, in effect, a 'plan B' if the Interreg application is unsuccessful. Feedback from the HLF to Groundwork's original enquiry suggests that "a very strong case for support must be made" if the application is to succeed. Groundwork will work to develop this case over the next six months so we must keep our eyes and ears open for any consultations, public meetings, focus groups etc., and make sure Fairlight views are represented.

So, for the time being, the likelihood of the Visitor Centre being constructed all depends on whether the additional funding can be secured from one source or another. We should have a clearer view in the spring.

Haydon Luke, 12/02/16

4. Firehills Meeting 29/01/16

**NOTE OF MEETING
BETWEEN FAIRLIGHT PARISH COUNCIL, NATURAL ENGLAND, HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL,
FAIRLIGHT PRESERVATION TRUST AND HAYDON LUKE
HELD ON 29TH JANUARY 2016 AT FAIRLIGHT COUNTRY PARK**

Last year the Parish Council wrote to Natural England with regard to Hastings Country Park and the ongoing work being carried out by Hastings Borough Council. We raised concerns over a proposed burn of a block of gorse by the Fire Brigade the various concerns we had with the general state of the Country Park including their removal of an ancient hedgerow.

A meeting was eventually arranged for the 29th January between Natural England (NE), Hastings Borough Council (HBC), three members of the Parish Council, Paul Capps (PC) of Fairlight Preservation Trust and Haydon Luke.

We had a frank and open discussion on the following:

1. The state of the Country Park, and the fact that we had never seen it so waterlogged as it was now and which, we believed was due to the removal of so much vegetation.
2. We pointed out the state of the remaining trees and bushes, which are beginning to be destroyed by the high winds and salt content.
3. We raised our concerns that the ancient hedgerow had been removed, increasing the amount of water in the ground and had taken away our protection from high winds. We requested both NE and HBC that this be reinstated.

4. We discussed the plan to install a French Drain/Ditch in the Country Park close to Channel Way.

The outcome of our letter and meeting is as follows:

1. The proposed burn by the Fire Brigade was abandoned before Christmas and this is no longer going to take place. The area of gorse has now been drastically cut back but will be allowed to regrow.

HBC pointed out an area, near the far eastern corner of the Country Park, where heather had started to come up after an accidental gorse fire a few years ago. They stated that this is the reason why they had initially agreed to an exercise with the Fire Brigade to burn another block of gorse instead as they thought heather might come up there as well. However, since this meeting we have found out that heather has always grown in the eastern end where the original burn took place and this information has been passed to NE and HBC.

2. The ancient hedgerow is going to be replanted in November with a double row of bushes/trees and we have been told that we can have whatever plants we wish. We have requested blackthorn, hawthorn, elder, and have also asked for rowan trees to be included. We have also written to Natural England and Hastings Borough Council asking if they would consider planting this Spring instead as this is the growing season. Leaving it to November we feel will be the wrong time.
3. Hastings Borough Council have received a quotation for a French Drain to be installed near Channel Way and are also planning to replace the open ditch which was sited along there some years ago. The Parish Council has suggested that HBC liaise with the Fairlight Preservation Trust on the suitability of a ditch or French Drain.
4. Hastings explained what other works they were considering doing, which included some further cutting back, and showed us the areas where these were to be done including removing species of plants that have escaped from gardens i.e. rhododendrons.

Since our meeting all other works have been completed and we have been informed that nothing else will be done.

5. HBC said that once the weather improves they would smooth out the track marks, which have been there for some considerable time.
6. Heather seeds were spread over the cliff area before Christmas and it is hoped that this will grow. HBC pointed out where heather had started to come up after a gorse fire a few years ago.

With respect to work done within the Country Park it is important that we recognise that HBC carries out such work as it does within a formal 'Stewardship Agreement' made with Natural England even though it is HBC, which is the landowner and is responsible for day-to-day management of the Country Park. That Agreement means that grants from the EU and Central Government have been available to HBC to help pay for the upkeep of the Country Park but only if the conditions and requirements set by Natural England about the way the land is to be managed are met. This Higher Level Stewardship Agreement between NE and HBC is due to last until 2023.

As a result of the meeting we have been given a copy of the Agreement, which will help us get ahead and see what might be coming up in the future. We understand that landscape management is a dynamic process. Natural England and HBC recognise that the many users of the Country Park have different (and sometimes conflicting) views of what is best for the area but stressed that all interests had to be balanced. It was not one versus the other, but a balance between the various interests.

Overall, we were reassured that HBC and NE were prepared to discuss these matters with us and were serious about ensuring that in future Fairlight Parish Council would be kept in the picture.