

STORRINGTON & SULLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE MAIN HALL, THE PARISH HALL, THAKEHAM ROAD, STORRINGTON, ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD MAY 2017, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mrs A Worthington-Leese in the Chair, Mr R Eves (Chairman, Information, Communications and Environment Committee), Mr R Jerman (Vice Chairman, Planning and Development Committee), Mrs L Wheatley (Chairman, Recreation and Property Committee).

7 Members of the Public including 6 Parish Councillors

Also Present: Mrs T Euesden, Parish Clerk
Mr T Laker, Premises Manager

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** There were no apologies.
2. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.** These were duly **AGREED** to be a correct record of the proceedings thereat and were signed by the Chairman.
3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.** Mrs Worthington-Leese presented the following report.

As usual the work of the Parish Council has been very varied over the last year and covered a wide range of matters.

A lot of work has been done on trying to improve the mobile phone signal, for which we have to thank Richard Hurley and Cheryl Brown who gathered a large amount of information and as a result we have a new mobile phone mast being installed near the Leisure Centre, which should help, and discussions are still ongoing with Ofcom to see what else can be done, so our thanks to them for all their hard work and also to Marie-Helene Jakob.

We were dealt a significant blow with the closure of Rydon as a middle school, despite huge public opposition. It remains to be seen what the impact of that will be but I would like to thank Richard Eves for all of the work that he did in this respect. This will be a great loss for our community and our children and we think may come back to haunt WSCC at a later date, but we will see.

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A second significant blow to many was the planning permission granted by HDC for an extended doctors' surgery on the Glebe Field. The Parish Council was very much opposed to this, as were many of our residents and we regret that this decision was made and again feel that it will come back to haunt HDC in the future. This was an unnecessary loss of a valued green space and we feel that more pressure should have been put on the diocese to release land without giving in to unnecessary housing. However, the decision has been made so there we are.

We were also extremely disappointed by the decision by Waitrose not to extend the store in Storrington and we are still waiting to see what they intend to do with the land that they purchased for this.

On a more positive note we have completed drainage and levelling works to the Hormare Field which will soon be open for children's football and other community events and we thank everyone for their patience whilst that field has been out of action.

We also now have planning permission for the new toddler playground and skate park and work has begun on that so that both can be open before the school summer holidays. This has been a protracted matter and we have to thank Tracey for all the work she has done on that and for her perseverance!

This year we have also purchased Sullington Recreation Ground, which we previously rented from HDC. Faced with a rent increase and taking into account the fact that we already do all of the maintenance on this area it seemed sensible to purchase it rather than continue paying rent as the cost will be recovered in 10 years. So that piece of land now belongs to the parish.

Despite all of this, we have not increased our precept for this year so the Parish Council element of the council tax will remain the same.

Work is still ongoing on the Neighbourhood Plan following changes in requirements by the government and the fact that several 'made' plans have been challenged and one, Henfield, even quashed. We are confident that our final plan will be robust enough to withstand any challenge and we hope to commence our final public consultation very soon, with a view to going to examination in the autumn, followed by a referendum either late this year or early next year.

Last year I reported frustration with WSCC Highways over their refusal to consider a ban on lorries turning into and out of School Hill onto Manley's Hill. I am pleased to report that this is now actually being considered as part of the ongoing Air Quality work, along with possible measures to prevent parking in North Street and to speed up the flow of traffic along the High Street. I am as frustrated as anyone about the apparent lack of solutions to our air quality but having been involved for several years now I can assure you that there are no easy answers – if there were we would have implemented them by now! The Low Emissions

Trial established that this was not feasible in Storrington – not least because of the poor mobile phone signal!

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As we were expecting the extended Waitrose store to include public toilets we have been looking again at the provision of toilets in the village and we are in discussion with HDC over this. They have agreed to provide a piece of land for a toilet and Tracey has been applying for grants. The stumbling block has always been the servicing and maintenance of toilets but HDC have agreed that this could be added to the list of toilets serviced by their contractor and we are hopeful that the income from the siting of the mobile phone mast on our land at the Leisure Centre will fund that maintenance. We will be discussing this further later this evening.

We were involved in discussions about the charging for rural car parks and have also been instrumental in querying the decision by WSCC to charge for so-called ‘non-household waste’ at amenity tips and are pleased that this charge has now been suspended following advice from central government. We will also be commenting on the gypsy sites proposed in our parish as I am sure many members of the public will....

So it just remains for me to thank all of the councillors for all their hard work over the last year and in particular Lisa Wheatley, my Vice Chairman, and the committee chairmen, Richard Eves and Lisa. Robert Carter and Diana Neophytou have decided not to stand again, so particular thanks to them for their input during their time with us. This means there will be two vacancies on the Parish Council and these will be advertised.

4. **INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNICATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT.** Mr. Eves presented the following report:

I would like to start by thanking my fellow committee members for their support and input over the last year. In particular, I would like to thank Mark Lewis who took over as Chairman on a couple of occasions when I was unable to attend meetings.

As last year, this has been a busy and productive year and it is pleasing to feel that we are making a difference.

We continue to support village events through the applications for licensing or road closures, coordination, management and practical support with setting up before and cleaning up after as well as offering some financial assistance. We hope to welcome back the French and Italian markets as well as the Classic Car Show and Piazza Italia Tour over the next twelve months.

The Christmas night was particularly successful with a number of new businesses using it as an opportunity for marketing.

The Memorial Pond is looking better that it has been for a long time. Tim Laker's maintenance and the introduction of a second pump have helped to keep the water clear and

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the islands are thriving habitats. We have recently introduced some pike to the pond to control the small fish numbers and will be adding some perch in the very near future.

A working party has been formed to produce an updated visitor information map. The village has grown and developed since the last maps were introduced and we will use this opportunity to promote the village as an important gateway to the National Park.

A sub-group of our committee has been working to persuade mobile phone providers to address the problems of poor reception around the Parish and in Washington. A planning application to install a mast at the recreation ground has recently been approved and we hope that this will go some way to improve the mobile signal but the sub-group is determined that the problem will be fully addressed. I would like to thank those involved for all of their hard work on our behalf, Richard Hurley, Cheryl Brown and Marie-Helene Jakob.

Finally 2017 will see us launching the Parish Council's new website as part of our plans to upgrade our digital communications strategy which will also involve the introduction of an electronic newsletter.

5. **RECREATION AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT.** Mrs Wheatley presented the following report:

It has been a busy and varied year for the committee once again.

As Anna reported, work has begun on the new playground at Storrington. New toddler equipment and skate park facilities will result in an improved outdoor area for local children. The purchase of Sullington Recreation Ground from Horsham District Council was viewed as a cost effective purchase by the Parish Council in the wake of rising and uncertain rent costs.

The Parish Council continues to support youth work and through Splash for Schools we fund regular coffee evenings at Costa and other organised activities.

Recently the Hormare field has been upgraded and levelled. The Spierbridge Road recreation ground has suffered heavy use over the last few years with the Storrington Vipers using it free of charge for football games, training and fixtures. It was felt that it would be beneficial to upgrade the Hormare field and in future organised team games will be played on there, leaving the recreation ground free for general enjoyment.

Recently the cricket pavilion has been used by the Terry Bedford Foundation Trust. This fledgling organisation seeks to help sufferers of PTSD by meeting on a regular basis for support and advice.

The Parish Hall has had a new AV system installed which improves the audio visual capabilities of the venue. This improvement will make life easier for our hirers who want to use the hall for guest speakers, meetings and presentations.

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Lastly, a few thank yous!

Thanks to Mark, the Vice chair and to all of the committee for their support, hard work and most of all their sense of humour! Thanks to Tracey, Caroline and Tim for their efficient management of us all! And lastly, thanks to Anna for her impressive dedication to the role of Chairman and her massive contribution to the Council in so many areas.

6. **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT.** Mr Jerman presented the following report:

This year the Planning & Development Committee dealt with a total of 147 applications. Interestingly this number is virtually flat with the two previous years. However, as you will hear, the scale of some of the individual developments was very substantial with very large associated detail submissions.

There were also 12 Appeals of which 5 were dismissed and 2 are at hearing stage. The most significant of those refused was for development on the land adjacent to Bax Close. This resulted in the site being removed from the Neighbourhood Plan. There were also 4 enforcement notices the most significant one being the continual works at Fryern Park Farm. Another enforcement being followed up was the sudden appearance of a five-bar gate and unapproved access from the easternmost property at Sawyards, straight on to Chantry Lane at the dangerous corner with Manley's Hill.

Ongoing throughout this period was of course the time consuming and controversial Glebe Surgery application, the outcome of which has already been discussed.

The year 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 actually started with another large, complex and very controversial application for outline planning permission of a large development for up to 160 dwellings off Fryern Road which would have impacted greatly on the Fryern Dell area and the River Stor conservation area. A theme for the year ahead was that this was neither in the "Call for Sites" of the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore not included in it, nor was it in the Horsham District Planning Framework. This Parish Council strongly objected and Horsham refused the application. It did go to Appeal but in January of this year Gladman Developments withdrew their Appeal submission.

On a more positive note the development on the ex Paula Rosa land at Robell Way by Barratts was reduced to an acceptable number of 98 mixed dwellings and amenity space so that the proposal was in line with the Neighbourhood Plan and could therefore be approved by this committee and indeed Horsham. Work has now begun on this site.

We also had a considerable number of signage applications which reflects on the change of ownership and usage of shops and businesses within Storrington. Possibly following on from this there has been the ever increasing number of “A” Frame advertising boards which have

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started to be both an “eye-sore” on the street scene and a reported hazard by pedestrians and especially mobility vehicle users. At present West Sussex are not acting on their enforcement responsibilities regarding “A” boards and have strongly hinted that they are going to pass this “policing” to Horsham. I think I can see where this one is going to end up! In the meantime we are talking with the businesses concerned and have asked for assistance from the Business Breakfast Club of Storrington.

On a lighter note, we do have our own “Lady in a van”, though unlike Alan Bennett’s version they are not that static, popping up all over the place in their old converted Fire Engine. Throughout the year it has parked up in rural spots until moved on by Horsham enforcement, only to reappear again a mile or so away!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mick Dennes and his fellow volunteers in the Storrington Conservation Society for their work at The Glade, Fryern Dell and around Storrington. Whilst the Planning and Development Committee deal with applications regarding Tree Preservation Orders, Mick and his team do a great practical job regarding enhancing and maintaining our area.

Finally we would like to thank the Committee for their time and effort given, not just to review and visit application sites for both development and tree works but also for their comments made on copious amounts of documents and consultations that have to be answered coming from West Sussex County Council, Horsham District Council and other Governmental Bodies.

7. **FINANCIAL REPORT.** (See Appendix I). The figures for the financial year 1st April, 2016 to 31st March, 2017 were available to view from the Parish Office. These were duly **NOTED.**

8. **TO CONSIDER PROVISION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS.** A member of the public had requested that this matter be revisited by the Parish Council and that consideration be given to increase the precept to cover the cost of providing Neighbourhood Wardens. It was reported that Horsham District Council is accredited by Sussex Police and

works in partnership with the relevant Parish Councils, to operate a small team of Neighbourhood Wardens. The HDC website describes the role of the wardens as follows:
“Based within the community the wardens work alongside partner agencies to improve the quality of life for everyone by undertaking a number of activities from enforcement to community development. As an integral part of the Community Safety Unit the Neighbourhood Wardens work with all sections of the community from elderly and/or vulnerable people through to young people and businesses to find solutions to problems whilst promoting community cohesion and resilience. Neighbourhood Wardens do have enforcement powers and do carry out high visibility patrols in their respective areas to deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The Wardens can utilise certain police powers aimed at

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low-level anti-social behaviour. They can also exercise powers available to them as employees of the District Council in relation to environmental offences and again anti-social behaviour.”

The Clerk had contacted Pulborough Parish Council who had most recently recruited Wardens, to enquire whether there was any evidence of how their presence had impacted upon the community in terms of reduced anti-social behaviour, criminal activity or health and well-being. Pulborough Parish Council had yet to respond but it was noted that the Wardens were well thought of in Ashington Parish where they had been in place for some years. The Clerk at Ashington Parish had advised that it receives a grant from HDC to cover some of the cost of 2 part-time Wardens covering a total of 50 hours per week. The last annual invoice from HDC had been in the region of £42,000. It was not clear whether HDC or Sussex Police were still offering grants to Parish Councils but HDC had advised that the approximate annual cost to Pulborough was in the region of £60,000 and it was suggested that this would be similar to the cost for this Parish.

Members were advised that this would represent an increase to precept of 30% which would equate to an average of £17 per household. They were reminded that this subject had been considered before and two village votes had been held within the last 15 years. The results on both occasions had been overwhelmingly against increasing precept to pay for Wardens.

As the member of the public who requested that this item be placed on the agenda was not present, his reasons for supporting the provision of Neighbourhood Wardens in the parish were not known. The matter was discussed at length but it was generally felt that the need for wardens in this area could not be established at this time and any member of the public raising this in the future should be asked to provide their reasons and views about how the community may benefit so that the Parish Council can undertake further research into this.

8. **PUBLIC TOILETS – UPDATE ON MEETING WITH HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL.** Mrs Worthington-Leese reported that she and the Clerk had attended a meeting with representatives from HDC to progress this matter. HDC had put forward 3 pieces of

land that it owned as a potential location: Land north of Place Villerest, the bus turning circle on Old Mill Drive and the North Street Car Park. The Premises Manager had reviewed the specification for a unisex / disabled facility and had visited each area. He described his findings and the merits of each location were discussed with the following outcome.

Place Villerest	0 Votes
Bus Turning Circle	2 Votes
North Street Car Park	9 Votes

HDC would be advised that the North Street Car Park was the preferred location.

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HDC had obtained a basic quotation for the build at a sum of approximately £32,000 however this did not include decoration and incidentals such as professional fees and planning application fees. The final cost of the project could therefore reach the region of £50,000. The Clerk had ascertained that approximately £18,000 of S106 monies were available for community facilities and had been supplied with details of potential funding opportunities. There was a possibility of a further £11,833 S106 funds but this would require the developer's agreement that the funds could be reallocated from the prescribed purpose of delivering a pop in parlour / silver surfers' group at the Storrington Social Club. The risk of this was that the developer could potentially ask for the funds to be repaid if the prescribed purpose could not be delivered but it was agreed that the Clerk should make the enquiry after checking with the Social Club trustees about the feasibility of a pop in parlour / silver surfers' club coming about.

The Parish Council would be responsible for routine maintenance and upkeep of the facility going forward. HDC had advised that the daily maintenance of the toilet could be added to its own contract with an outside agency at a cost of approximately £5,000 per annum but this would not include opening and closing of the facility. It was suggested that the door could be fitted with an electronic door system similar to that in use at the Parish Hall and Football Pavilion but it was reported that these systems required a phone line. It was suggested that the Premises Manager could make enquiries regarding various security locking systems.

Further progress on this matter will be reported in future meetings of the Parish Council.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A member of the public raised the issue of speeding on the Amberley Road and enquired whether any restrictive measures could be put in place. It was noted that the County Council elections were taking place on 4th May and this might be a good time to raise the issue of speeding on all of the roads into the village with the newly elected Member to investigate

ways to deal with this without the requirement of a Traffic Restriction Order, which is a long process. Village gateway options were discussed along with changes to the texture of the road surface to provide visual references to drivers that they are entering a village where 30 mph limit applies.

The progress of the Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan was discussed

The meeting closed at 8:15 pm.

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