

STORRINGTON & SULLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE MAIN HALL, THE PARISH HALL, THAKEHAM ROAD, STORRINGTON, ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND MAY 2018, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

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

27 Members of the Public including 7 Parish Councillors.

Also Present: Mr Greg Charman (Community Safety Officer, Horsham District Council)
Mrs Carol Boniface (Neighbourhood Warden, Pulborough)
Mr Chris Esdaile (Pulborough Parish Council)
Mrs T Euesden, Parish Clerk
Mrs C Read, Deputy Clerk

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** County Councillor Paul Marshall and District Councillor Ray Dawe had extended their 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.

This has been another busy year for the Parish Council with lots going on. This year we have 3 new councillors: Carol Brooker, Becky Gilligan and Joel Davis, all of whom joined us in June. They all seem to have settled in well and are contributing to the life of the Council.

On the other hand, we have recently lost our Premises Manager, Tim Laker, who has moved on to pastures new so we wish him the best of luck and thank him for the work he has done for us in the 5 years he was with us. We have a new Premises Manager starting shortly so look forward to working with him.

So, this year there has been lots going on. Our new skate park opened in June and is well used, we had another very successful Christmas Night and a very successful SADCASE day in July so thanks to everyone who helped with and supported those events. We have recently installed a 'Silent Soldier' on the island in the Memorial Pond, to commemorate the end of WWI and are liaising with other organisations in the village to assist with other events marking that occasion

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A lot of work has been done on producing a visitor map to go on display in the village centre and of course the never-ending saga of the Neighbourhood Plan has taken up a lot of our time. However, we have now got to the stage of submitting it for examination which will hopefully start within the next few days, so we are hoping to be able to hold the referendum within the next few months. This has taken almost 5 years of work and has been dogged by many movements of the goalposts by the Government so it will be a huge relief to all concerned if and when it is finally 'made'.

Following the granting of permission for a new doctors' surgery on the Glebe Field the old Mill Stream surgery was leased by HDC to Arun Vets and we now have a state of the art veterinary surgery and 24 hour animal hospital, which I think is a real asset to the village. However, despite permission having been granted for a new doctors' surgery, work has yet to begin. We understand that the NHS has not been forthcoming with the funding; despite having previously been told that funding had been secured so I think it is a case of watch this space!

Air Quality continues to be an issue that is extremely hard to resolve. The LEZ trial resulted in the decision that the system was not effective enough to be of use here so the AQ Steering Group has been looking at a series of 'softer' measures. For some time, I, in particular have been pushing for a ban on HGVs turning into and out of School Hill – not just on AQ grounds but also on safety grounds as we all know that the building at the bottom of the hill has been hit numerous times in recent years and the pavements in that area are very narrow. So, I am very pleased that this is now on the schedule of works for WSCC for this financial year. It will consist of a complete ban on HGVs (except for deliveries) between the mini roundabout and the entrance to the car park. Lorries will be routed off the Washington Road and down Water Lane and this will be enforceable. There will also shortly be a consultation for a TRO to implement no waiting at any time at the top end of North Street, opposite the chemist, along with some yellow lines in Monastery Lane and the removal of the 2 parking spaces opposite the fabric shop in West Street. All of this is intended to ease the flow of traffic as it is stopping and starting and queuing traffic that most increases the pollution. However, until the A27 is improved there is a limit to what can be done.

Finally, we have agreed a small increase this year in our precept after several years of no increase. This will equate to an average of £2.81 per Band D household; however, that is obviously in addition to any other increases by Police, District and County Council etc., and possible wardens, as we are going to discuss later.

So, it just remains for me to thank all of the councillors for their support and work over the year, in particular my Vice Chairman, Lisa, and the committee Chairmen, Lisa and Richard Evea. And last but by no means least I have to thank Tracey and Caroline for all their hard work keeping us all on the straight and narrow.

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

I would like to start by once again thanking my fellow committee members for their contributions over the course of the past year. In particular, I would like to thank Mark Lewis for taking the chair when I was unavailable.

The past year has been busy and productive.

The new Parish Council website is up and running and is a big improvement providing enhanced access. Thank you to Caroline and Tracey for all their hard work and to Cheryl Brown for her inputs

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Further progress has been made on the mobile phone issues including the installation of a new phone mast. Thank you to Richard Hurley, Cheryl Brown and Marie-Helene Jakob for their persistence.

The planned new visitor map is almost complete and will be installed soon. It has taken longer than intended but we wanted to ensure it was of a quality that would represent our community. Mark Lewis, Gail Kittle, Richard Jerman and Andy Castle of the Business Breakfast Club have done a fine job.

Work continues on the Memorial Pond and I hope that many of you will have noticed the “Silent Soldier” has joined the memorial poppies on the island. Tim has taken excellent care and the pond is looking as good as it ever has been.

A new village gateway will soon be installed on the Washington Road entrance to the village. We expect this to remind drivers that they are entering a village and to adjust their speed. Designed by Mark Lewis this is intended to be a pilot with more to follow.

Tracey and Caroline continue to organise and coordinate a number of village events including Italian and French markets, the SADCASE event, the Christmas lights and village Christmas event.

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

It has been a relatively quiet year for the committee with the most notable project being the new play and skate facilities at Storrington recreation ground. The area now comprises a comprehensive toddler area, an older children’s offering and a skate park area, all of which are enjoyed by local and visiting young people.

The committee is currently investigating opportunities for new play equipment at the Sullington recreation ground. We are hoping to provide innovative and interesting apparatus- something a little bit different. More details will follow as we progress.

We continue to support local sports and have agreed the positioning of new cricket practice nets for use by the cricket club. It is hoped that this new facility will increase player numbers and continue to encourage the younger members of the club in the enjoyment of the sport.

The football club are in the process of upgrading their facilities with new dug outs, enhanced storage solutions and they are planning a covered seating area adjacent to the pavilion.

The Vipers junior football teams enjoy free use of the Hurston Lane field ensuring that the young players have a regular local venue.

We continue to work with Splash in providing a regular Friday night youth club. Sadly, the very popular evenings at Costa coffee are no longer possible due to staffing issues at the venue. We hope to get this restarted in the future along with expanding our youth work offering, to include outings and organised activities to reach a wider range of young people.

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The Parish Hall continues to be a well-used community venue and the introduction of a new audio visual system has only served to improve the facilities and increase its appeal.

Lastly, I would like to thank Tracey, Caroline and Tim for all of their hard work over the last year. I would also like to thank all members of the committee for their interest, support and diligence throughout the year.

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

Good evening – I will be very brief.

Our Planning Committee has commented on 153 applications this year, up 6 on last year.

There are always some contentious applications including Gladmans for 160 homes at Fryern Park (already refused twice) and more recently the Waitrose application to “stop up” and alter the bus turning circle, which they own. We don’t know the purpose of this but HDC has approved this with a condition that works do not commence until a comprehensive application for the “Diamond Area” has been submitted and approved.

There have been 9 Appeals against planning decisions, 3 down on last year. 6 of these were dismissed with 3 still awaiting decision including the bus turning circle which could place doubt on the HDC decision and condition.

The Committee also deals with enforcement issues and although they are regularly pursued, they can take an age to conclude. Examples are issues at Fryern Park and the unauthorised and unsafe access at Chantry Lane which was initially considered by WSCC as not a public road until the Parish Council explained otherwise.

Our Committee Members examine all applications, make site visits and present our views at HDC’s Planning meetings. Thanks to Anna especially for her attendance at many of these meetings.

We also participate in the planning process by considering and responding to County, District and other consultations which always involve reviewing lengthy and complex documents.

Thank you to all Committee members and to Caroline for organising us. Thanks to Richard for being our own “Tree Man”. Thanks to Mick Deness and his fellow Storrington Conservation Society volunteers for the invaluable work they do at the Glade, Fryern Dell and elsewhere in the community.

Finally, Caroline has reminded me of our Tree Charter. We collected signatures and in exchange received a small Sessile Oak which was planted on the Cricket field in November.

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7. **PUBLIC TOILET.** Mrs Worthington-Leese reported that a planning application had been submitted to install a public toilet in the North Street Car Park and that the tender process had been undertaken. The next stage would be to apply for grants to help with the cost of the project and the Parish Council hoped that it would commence before the end of the year.
8. **FINANCIAL REPORT.** The figures for the financial year 1st April, 2017 to 31st March, 2018 had been prepared for audit and would be presented to the Parish Council at its meeting on 30th May.
9. **PRESENTATION ON THE ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS.** Mrs Worthington – Leese reported that Horsham District Council has contacted all parishes in the district to offer a one-off grant towards the cost of providing Neighbourhood Wardens. The proposal is for a payment of £30,000 towards the cost of a 2 person team for a 2 year pilot scheme. The remainder of £140,000 cost would need to be paid by the Parish Council which would mean an increase to council tax by an average of £17.08 per year per household.

The increase would take effect from April 2019 and would be in addition to any other increases that may be applied for other reasons by the Parish, District or County Council, Police etc. It is for this reason that the Parish Council has invited HDC to give a public presentation on the role of the Neighbourhood Warden.

Later on this year, households will be invited to take part in a public consultation with the results being taken into account by the Parish Council when reaching a final decision whether to go ahead with the scheme.

Mrs Worthington-Leese welcomed Mr Charman to the meeting and he began the presentation. (appendix 1)

He described the background and aims of the service which was introduced in 2001 and explained the key issues behind HDC's decision to offer the funding to Parish Councils at this time.

Mr Charman made clear that Neighbourhood Wardens are not a replacement for the police. He described them as "Responsible Guardians" who provide a visible presence to help deter crime but also report faults, engage with residents and visitors and support community initiatives and events. He presented an example of a yearly action plan and provided statistics of the activities undertaken by the Wardens in Pulborough over the last year.

Mr Charman then invited Carol Boniface and Chris Esdaile to join him to answer questions from the public.

Q. Who do Wardens Report to?

A. Horsham District Council is their employer but 90% of their time is spent in the Parish.

Q. What happened to the dedicated PCSOs?

A. PCSOs were introduced in 2003 with dedicated officers in the villages. However in 2016, changes to the Neighbourhood Policing team meant that there was a reduction of PCSOs and

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there is now a team of 7 officers working together to tackle issues across the whole of the district.

Q. Are the hours of work a set pattern?

A. There are two week shift patterns but these are flexible and can be amended to meet the needs of the parish. Wardens can work alone during the day but must work together during late shifts.

Q. Is cover provided for sickness or other absences?

A. No there are no resources to provide cover for absences.

Q. If one Warden is off sick or on holiday – does that mean that the other one cannot do any late shifts?

A. If there was a particular issue that needed to be dealt with such as Anti-Social behaviour, the Warden could call upon support from the Neighbourhood Policing Team or other HDC officers to deal with that issue.

The idea of joint working between Wardens from different parishes was muted but comments were made that if the Parish Council was paying for the Wardens they would expect them to spend all of their working time in the area. Mr Charman described a recent emergency at Southwater where HDC deployed all Neighbourhood Wardens to attend. He pointed out that Southwater does not currently have any Wardens but that the circumstances of the emergency merited the presence of those from elsewhere.

Q. If the Wardens are District Council employees, why isn't HDC covering the cost?

A. The Wardens will predominantly be working within the parish and HDC is committed to working with individual communities to solve local issues. Some Parish Councils are not equipped to deal with staffing matters, payroll, governance and accountability so makes sense for HDC to cover these and other overarching responsibilities.

Q. What evidence is there that the service is required in this Parish? How do we know that there are vulnerable people that require help? How often are there incidents of Anti-Social behaviour?

A. Each scheme is tailored to meet the needs and requirements of the individual community and this is why the Parish Council is represented on the Steering Group that draws up and reviews the action plan. Local knowledge and information would inform the role of the Warden but it is essential that local research is undertaken to establish the key areas to be addressed.

Q. What area does the warden cover?

A. Each Neighbourhood Warden scheme would cover the relevant parish boundary.

Q. If a Neighbourhood Warden contacted the police about a non-urgent matter, would they be more likely to respond than if contacted by a member of the public about the same issue.

A. It is imperative that the Wardens are not used as a reporting mechanism for criminal matters that should be directed to the police. However, there is the potential that the Warden might be able to provide extra information which would provide the police with evidence to act.

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Carol Boniface and Chris Esdaile then talked about two case studies at Pulborough where joint working had resulted in a vulnerable person being removed from a potentially dangerous situation involving domestic abuse and parking issues outside the local school had been resolved.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.** There being no further business Mrs Worthington-Leese thanked Mr Charman, Mrs Boniface and Mr Esdaile for their presentation and invited the public to take refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8:15 pm.

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