

RUDGWICK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Monday 12th March 2018 at the Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green at 7.30pm

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Richard Landeryou, Chairman of the Parish Council.

37 electors (including 10 Parish Councillors) were present.

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies had been received from Parish Cllr Katie Gilmour.

3. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 13th March 2017 were read out, confirmed as a true record, proposed by Parish Cllr Vera Davis seconded by Parish Cllr Mark Ellis and agreed.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported saying farewell to:

- Parish Cllr Joanne Dove, who had resigned her position and the Chairman thanked her for her work.
- Litter Warden Mr Nigel Romanowitz resigned after being ten years in post.
- Mr Simon Quail took on the role of Litter Warden and has extended the role by taking on reporting potholes, drain blockages etc to the relevant authorities, a fact very much appreciated.

The Chairman thanked the Litter Wardens for their commitment to keep Rudgwick tidy.

- Mrs Barbara Kenward retired after fulfilling the role of Parish Clerk for more than 21 years. The Chairman expressed the Council's thanks for her dedication and hard work.
- Mrs Jonna Foote had taken on the role of Clerk and was welcomed.

It has become apparent that with the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulations legislation (GDPR), the closure of the Rudgwick Sports and Community Centre (RSCC), updating of accounting and banking procedures additional support for the Clerk was required. Currently a temporary staff member is in place and the Council is advertising for a permanent part time (15 hours per week) Assistant Clerk. An Application Form and further details can be obtained from the Clerk.

The Chairman reported the following committees/working groups:

- Halls and Recreation Committee
- Finance and Human Resources Committee
- Planning Committee
- Winter Emergency Working Group
- Traffic Calming Working Group
- RSSC Working Group.

The Chairman commended all those involved for their commitment and support and in specific the RSCC Working Group; Cllr Wild was thanked for the phenomenal amount of work and time he has dedicated to the RSSC project. A brief mention was made of a possible change of name from RSCC to King George V building and the Chairman invited suggestions from parishioners.

In addition, the Chairman thanked the clubs, societies and parishioners who have supported the Council and in specific:

- Mr and Mrs Charlie and Anne Sanders for being the keepers of the Rudgwick Hall keys and taking care of associated tasks.

- Mr Chris Derby for keeping a close eye on Rudgwick Hall and providing support whenever identified.
- Mr Peter Tanner for his support with the RSCC building.
- The Book Exchange volunteers who support this weekly event so important for many Rudgwick residents.
- The gardening group who maintain the Jubilee Hall flower beds.

Reports from Committees/Working Groups followed:

Finance and Human Resources Committee

Parish Councillor Rob Wild, Chairman, reported that the precept for 2018/19 had increased from £66,000 to £73,000.

Significant items contributing to this figure are:

- 5,000 being allocated to the Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan
- Additional employment costs: pension contribution commitments and appointment of assistant clerk. The latter as workload had increased (setting up of new banking/ accounting systems; RSCC; increased responsibilities on the role of a Parish Clerk).
- Wardens' salary increased to the Real Living Wage. Their enthusiasm for the safety, cleanliness and appearance of the village is commendable.
- Maintenance costs of the playing field infrastructure far exceeds income; skate park and playground remedial work that requires to be undertaken.
- £2,000 funding for grants under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 to local groups and organisations "for purposes, which may bring a direct benefit to the area or any part of it for some or all inhabitants". This year nine grants were made available to various organisations: from Rudgwick Pre-school to the air ambulance, along with support for the Preservation Society's Great War project.

No reserve has been made in relation to the RSCC building, it is assumed that income and expenditure will balance. This may return to haunt us.

The Council has been moving towards completing the lease of the tennis courts to the Rudgwick Lawn Tennis Club. This has been delayed due to complications because of the RSCC having been returned to the Council and de-registration with the Land Registry process being complicated.

Halls and Recreation Committee

Chairman Richard Landeryou reported on the following:

- Churchmans Meadow Playground had been repaired, the equipment is coming to the end of its life span. The Council is currently exploring the possibility of replacing the equipment as soon as possible.
- Rudgwick Hall toilets have been refurbished.
- Rudgwick Hall emergency escape ramp is being upgraded later this year.
- Rudgwick Hall boiler/heating system is causing problems and the Council is looking at a replacement system.

Planning Committee

Parish Councillor David Buckley, Chairman, provided a brief overview of the various responses to planning applications. In general applications received had been straight forward. However, there were instances such as:

- Farnbrakes where applications were amended multiple times and completed dwellings still did not adhere to the relevant plans.

- Recurring issues such as Smithers Rough, where it did not seem to make sense to spend substantial amounts of money on a site which was not appropriate due to its location.
- Roman Wood, where retrospective planning applications were not necessarily a reflection of the wider issues.

These cases are extremely frustrating.

Appeals that had taken place were reported: Bowcroft Lane. District Cllr Bailey confirmed that Horsham District Council (HDC) had issued a no- development order on the whole area around Bowcroft Lane following the unsuccessful appeal; Honeywood House and Fairlee.

Cllr Buckley addressed development plans outside of Rudgwick: Dunsfold is increasing from 1,800 to 2,400 dwelling; Ellen's Green development is to be discussed at next week's Ewhurst Council's meeting; Chichester District is not funding Parish Council's appeal costs and Horsham District Council's housing numbers are to be increased, despite Broadbridge Heath, Billingshurst, North Horsham and Mayfield (outside Henfield) housing developments.

Cllr Buckley provided an aerial map of the number local roadworks planned for the next fortnight; he reported the impact these have on the current level of traffic.

Cllr Buckley thanked Committee members, Councillors, the Parish Clerk, parishioners and others for their views and considered opinions, either directly and/or on the website. He also thanked the Action Groups for their contributions and efforts.

QUESTIONS:

A Preservation Society representative commented on/objected to the Roman Woods retrospective planning application and would like the RPC to take a strong line against HDC Planning regarding this application.

Electors reported on information that HDC was aware of issues relating to this this application.

Winter Emergency Working Group

Cllr Landeryou reported that the Working Group did not have to get into action this year.

5. There no questions on Matters from electors

6. Rudgwick Patients Participation Group (RPPG)

Professor Helen Allan, Chairperson of the RPPG Steering group provided background information on the role of the group, which is attached to Rudgwick Medical Practice.

The steering group can consist of maximum 14 members (Rudgwick currently has 10). Electors can ask to be put onto the mailing list to be kept informed of developments/events.

The RPPG aims to

- Involve patients in general health of the community/their own health
- Build participation with National Health Service England (NHSE)
- Know and work with patients
- Represent the community and ensure diversity.

The aim to improve health, increase individual's/groups' responsibility for their health, to be representative of the local population and feed into local commissioning group, help identify solutions to problems.

There are quarterly newsletters (e-mail), fund raising opportunities, and on 19th April 2018, an "Improve your Health and Wellbeing" event is taking place at Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green, Rudgwick from 11.00 – 14.00 with information on/support from a variety of health/community safety groups.

The Chairman thanked Professor Helen Allan for her presentation.

7. Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan (RNHP) Update

Cllr Ian Maclachan, Chair of the Steering Group reported on the latest developments. Planning criteria have seen a number of changes in the last 12 months.

The Housing Needs Assessment covers all sections of society, i.e. needs of the elderly, young people, etc. rather than the previous focus on “social housing”, Southdown National Planning Team Consultants undertook this role on behalf of Rudgwick. The assessment was submitted to HDC Planning Department and no significant changes were required. The number of proposed new dwellings ranged between 70 and 100 (by 2031). HDC Planning Department advised to aim for the upper end and confirmed that the 20 additional Windacres development could be included, however not the original 35 Windacres dwellings or Summerfold development.

Government Consultation in September 2017 “Right Homes, Right Places” resulted in an increased expectation of number of houses in the Horsham Council District: from 16,000 to 19,200 (including 750 windfall developments and 1,600 from village Neighbourhood Plans).

Grounds are shifting: a possible review of build-up boundaries for the HDC villages in the very near future; a tightening up of boundaries of Cox Green (Surrey/West Sussex). The Steering Group has met, attended a HDC Conference on Neighbourhood Plans and this has resulted in the decision to wait three to four months until further information is available.

The Steering Group is disappointed with the slow progress but is aware of the time and money being spent on a plan that will not meet requirements/have the approval of the local community.

QUESTIONS:

Should we not press on and have a RNHP so we can limit the number of developments to the 100? - Considerations are to be given to spending a large amount of money on a plan that will be objected against.

Is there a mechanism for pausing the plan? - No, no one is required to be informed.

Can we be sure that a plan is produced? – There is hope for that. However, we must ensure that the plan appropriate and for that we shall require further clarity.

Three out of 23 neighbourhood plans have been drawn up. Two parishes have had their plan overturned. Up to now £3,000 has been spent on the plan and this could go up to £20,000, possibly more.

8. Update of progress of the RSCC Building

Cllr Rob Wild reported on the latest developments. The RSCC was a community project, bringing together the local sports clubs in one building. Unfortunately, it was a community project that the community largely turned its back on, finally folding in October last year.

As a result, the responsibility of the upkeep of the building, associated car park, roadway and amenity space is now with the Parish Council.

Since October costs (maintenance utilities, insurance, legal costs, etc) incurred are in the region of £11,500 and the 2017/18 precept did not envisage any of this expenditure. It has resulted in our unallocated reserves dropping from £31, 000 to less than £20,000.

The building must generate an income and as such the Council provided the opportunity for interested parties to come forward. A viable plan that came forward is that proposed by the Wolstenholme Family. The building would be used for “Little Street” a play experience for children business, the changing room and a space would still be available for village social activities.

However, the RSCC was subject to a potential clawback of some or all of the Football Foundation

Grant should the changing rooms become unavailable. We cannot be confident that this risk does not fall on the council or any future less of the building. Currently the Parish Council intend to retain responsibility of the building to Little Streets.

Little Street Concept/Business Plan

Mrs Rebecca Wolstenholme gave a short presentation.

“Little Street” offers children (walking up to 7) an opportunity to role play in “a street” with a variety of shops/services such as green grocer, hair dresser, fire station, doctor’s surgery, etc. Through role play children develop a wide variety of skills supporting their general development, independence and leadership skills.

The Business Model operates with four 1.5 hour daily sessions (with a half hour session in-between so staff can prepare The Street for the next sessions) between 9.00 and 18.00 seven days a week. Parents stay with their children and will have the opportunity to use the café on site to buy drinks and snacks. The café will also be accessible to the public and could be hired out, at cost, when not in use by “Little Street”.

There were no questions and Cllr Wild thanked Mrs Rebecca Wolstenholme.

9. Traffic Calming

Cllr Rob Bookham reported on the work of the Traffic Calming Group. They had met with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Areas Highway Manager for Horsham District. The meeting had been very productive and information was obtained on:

- the complexity of signage, rules and regulations
- the cut in WSCC Highways Budget resulting in a need for more effective work
- advantage of a traffic calming package rather than individual points.

Cllr Bookham reported the major danger points the group had identified and options for addressing these:

- Downs Link crossing at A281:
Place white gates with signs (Downslink Crossing – children and horses on road)
Downlink crossing is to be aligned; delays have been caused by work to the bridge and completion of the project is expected by July.
- School crossing outside Pennthorpe:
Pedestrian crossing, white zig-zag lines, possibly with flashing signs (during school start/finish times) – costs is £30/40k compared with traffic lights £130k; cut down three trees that affect visibility and plant three new trees further back, install 20mph signs
- Church Street outside Co-op shop:
Put in “tables” heightened areas that slow down traffic, alternatively painted “optical illusion” areas to alert road users, install 20mph signs.
- Speeding traffic through The Haven:
Place white signs at appropriate place.
- Speeding traffic through Loxwood

Gates require an application to be made to HDC Planning. Traffic calming project would be partly funded with S106 monies and partly by WSCC. However, limited funding is available and need/priority is assessed and as such Rudgwick is competing with the other 30 or so villages.

QUESTIONS:

Why has the area, where you enter Bucks Green/Rudgwick from the Guildford direction, not been

identified as a priority area? The speed of cars exceeds 30 mph.

The crossing near the Church and Pub is extremely dangerous. It is difficult to have sight line, can this be addressed?

Cox Green, children getting of the bus, Hawkridge residents crossing the road, there is a pavement on only one side of the road. Can a red marker be put on the road?

There were several dangerous areas identified in Rudgwick and the Working Group had to prioritise, focussing on the previously mentioned areas.

Can 20/30 mph not be painted on the road, it being a cheaper option? - Painting speed restrictions on the road are classed as a "repeaters" and there are rules and regulations that apply. Secondly, WSCC will pay for the initial painting. They do disappear quite quickly and it would be the Council's responsibility to repaint.

A lot of existing signs are broken/wearing out. Are they still legal? Can these be replaced? -Cllr Bookham would investigate the legality issue and reported that WSCC Highways do not have the funds to replace old signs.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm.

Refreshments were then served.

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Chairman

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Date