

**PARISH OF RUDGWICK  
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019**

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Rudgwick was held at 7.30 pm on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green, Rudgwick RH12 3JJ.

39 Residents, including eight Parish Councillors were present.

Also present were Mr Glen Chipp, Chief Executive Horsham District Council (HDC), Jonna Foote, Parish Clerk, Sarah Hall, Assistant Parish Clerk.

**1. Welcome from the Chairman.**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, David Buckley presided and welcomed all present.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from one Parish Councillor, the County Councillor, the District Councillor and one resident.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 were agreed and duly signed by the Chairman.

**4. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave a brief overview of the Agenda and introduced members of the Council, the Clerk, the newly appointed Assistant Clerk and the guest speaker, the HDC Chief Executive. The Chairman mentioned and thanked those working and supporting the Council for their commitment:

- Simon Quail, Litter Warden
- Andy Mallpress, Open Spaces Warden
- Ted Brown, Tree Warden
- Charlie and Anne Sanders, Rudgwick Hall key keepers
- Chris Darby, keeping King George V field and Rudgwick Hall safe and secure
- Book Exchange Volunteers
- Jonna Foote, the Clerk and he officially welcomed Sarah Hall, Assistant Clerk who just had been appointed to the role.

The Chairman thanked Katie Gilmour, who had resigned her position as a councillor, for her work.

The Chairman continued with mentioning some of the work undertaken by the Parish Clerk's Office during the last year:

- Introduction of the new Parish website
- General Data Protection Regulations legislation implementation
- Leases for the Rudgwick Lawn Tennis Club and King George V Building/Little Street
- Dealing with name/status changes with utility providers
- Setting up Lloyds Bank account encountering numerous difficulties for which compensation had been received.
- Play Areas, maintenance and accessing £26,013 match funding to fund the new Churchmans Meadow playground equipment by entering and winning a competition.

The Chairman then provided some visual background information to support the events that had taken place in Rudgwick during the last year:

- Publication of the two volumes “Rudgwick’s Great War” by Roger Nash. The Chairman commended the undertaking and has appreciated the books.
- 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the crash of a bomber command plane. In January this year, a relative of one of the crew members of the plane located the exact crash site on the county border, Pallinghurst House, now Rickyo School.
- Cash Machine Raid at the Co-op when nearly £90,000 was stolen. Five men have been charged with the crime (and another 10 ram raids across the area). They are to stand trial at Lewes Crown court in June.
- Velo South. The event was badly promoted; there was a lack of communication; TTRO’s were unclear; Rudgwick businesses were badly affected and the Chairman questioned the economic benefit to the area in general. Rudgwick Parish Council (RPC) had contacted the Leader of West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and a meeting had been arranged with Mrs Goldsmith. She subsequently indicated that she was prepared to meet with councillors only and the RPC cancelled the meeting. Velo South 2019 is not taking place, a Velo South 2020 – if in the same format will result in RPC objecting against the event.

The Chairman reported the following committees/working groups:

- Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee
- Halls and Recreation Committee
- Finance and Human Resources Committee
- Planning Committee
- Traffic Calming Working Group
- Section 106 Funding Working Group

The Chairman commended all those involved for their commitment and support.

### **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee**

Cllr Maclachlan, Chairman provided a brief update on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (NHPSC) work. He briefly reflected on the changes of housing requirements, using his grandparents’ housing history as an example. Just as in the nineteen twenties and sixties, there is a shortage of affordable housing, especially for people with specific housing requirements such as young people, the elderly. It was important to meet those needs, in general and in Rudgwick in particular – there is no need for five-bedroom houses in small villages. Development should be focussed in cities, addressing homelessness, bad housing stock and making use of brown field sites.

The Rudgwick NHPSC halted their work last year, waiting for the latest information from HDC. It has now issued a call for site, advertised on village notice boards, Parish Website and Facebook page – the closing date being 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019.

### **Traffic Calming Working Group**

Cllr Bookham, Chairman provided an overview of the Traffic Calming Working Group’s work on a Community Highway Scheme. In recent months the Group has met with a variety of people and organisations relating to the work to be undertaken. Progress is slow, two to three years - due to the number of people and organisations and costs that are involved. A Parish Traffic Calming Proposal submitted to HDC/West Sussex County Council (WSCC) will be competing with those submitted by other

parishes in the area. The Working Group has achieved new signage on the approach to Rudgwick, the Downslink Crossing has been re-aligned and meetings took place with stakeholders. The Working Group is working towards the following:

- A raised table near the Co-op to slow down traffic
- Portable Speed Warning Signs that can be moved between six, seven locations, i.e. The Haven, A281, Church Street and other locations where traffic is travelling too fast. It has been evidenced that permanent signs have very short term, limited impact on traffic speed.
- Remove two trees (beeches) opposite Pennthorpe School to support visibility for road users, especially pedestrians. Cllr Bookham showed a short video of the current situation demonstrating the reduced visibility caused by the trees. The Council is currently in discussion with the various parties involved and when the trees are felled, three new trees will be planted, further back from the road.
- Village Gates at The Haven.
- A new, larger sign on the A281 to make road users aware of the crossing of the Downslink. HDC/WSCC may have the funds to undertake this work. (It involves costs of £3,500 just to get permission.)

The Working Group meeting will take place later this month and comments and ideas are welcomed. Those wishing to attend the meeting, please see the Parish website.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Maclachlan and Bookham for their presentations.

### **Planning**

The Chairman provided a brief outline on planning applications that had resulted in a high level of public interest. The following were objected to by Rudgwick Parish Council for not providing the best outcome for Rudgwick Parish.

- Fairlee – the recent planning application has just been refused.
- Watts Corner – rejected by HDC on the last occasion but it is envisaged that further applications for development of the site will be received in the future.
- Cox Green – two developments that were turned down by Waverley Borough Council
- Pathfield Close – the replacing of six bungalows to be replaced by two storey houses is seen as a loss to the community.
- Windacres development – there have been several issues, the current one being large amounts of mud on the road.
- Brickyard – the contract to extend by six months for filling and then 3-6 months for landscaping the site. The Chairman praised the tolerance of Lyndwick Street residents.

### **Halls and Recreation Committee**

The Chairman commented on the unique position of Rudgwick Parish. The Council has the responsibility for four properties (Rudgwick Hall, Jubilee Hall, King George V Building and Youth Centre Building), two playgrounds, a skatepark, a copse, playing fields and open spaces. He thanked the committee for their continuing work, keeping the halls in good repair and ensuring that fields and open spaces are safe and appropriately maintained.

### **Finances**

The Chairman explained that the Council's annual spending consists of "running costs" of the Council: wages and salaries, Halls and maintenance, play facilities, insurance, street lighting. The Chairman provided information on the difficulties the Council encountered

when adopting the Rudgwick Sports and Community Centre (now known as the King George V Building). £10,000 was allocated in the 2018/19; final costs were in excess of £50,000 due to a high level of unexpected repairs, council tax, insurance, professional and legal costs.

The Chairman provided information on the level of Council Tax for Rudgwick compared with neighbouring wards including some historical data. He apologised for the increase in Council Tax from £53.50 (2018/19) to £69, 51 (2019/20) for a D band property. However, The Council operates within a legal, financial framework and unexpected costs for the King George V Building will have to be recovered in future years. The part of the Building leased now generates a regular income.

## **5. Guest speaker Mr Glen Chipp, HDC Chief Executive on “Challenges for Horsham District Council in the current climate”**

The Chairman introduced the guest speaker, Mr Glen Chipp who started his presentation by providing a brief overview of his background and his interest in meeting with the community. He has been in post since July last year and the challenges identified for HDC are:

- **Financial Constraints**

The uncertainty of Brexit is affecting the economy in a negative manner. Central Government funding is reduced and will continue to decrease. WSCC is under severe financial pressure affecting HDC. The council is identifying revenue sources; making cut backs and as a result have balanced the mid-term gap of £2 million.

- **Review of Local Plan**

The current housing needs information coming down from Government is based on information from the Office of National Statistics. Although this time, the number of houses required to be built is higher than the data implies. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability (SHEELA) is currently undertaking calls for development sites. Housing, and the price, currently 14.5 x average earnings in Horsham District, is a real issue. HDC is to provide 850 dwellings p.a. for the next 20 years. 150 of these are to meet Crawley's housing needs. This is part of the Council's "Duty to Cooperate" where councils are to support neighbouring councils' land needs. HDC will not receive associated funding for these dwellings for development of the required infrastructure. Mr Chip clarified that the Council is working with WSCC, Jeremy Quinn MP and the Bohunt Education Trust for the location of a new school so that Horsham children do not have to travel to Crawley to access education.

- **Aging Demographic Profile**

There is an increased demand on services such as Healthy Life, housing, mental health and dementia care with no additional money available.

- **Customer Service**

HDC is embracing new technology, changing service delivery to meet customers' needs.

- **Economic Growth**

HDC recognises that it underperforms in investment from the Local Enterprise Partnership. Performance, development for infrastructure and business needs to be improved and HDC is taking appropriate actions. HDC is providing value for

money to their residents, the £146 Council Tax covers a wide range of services: planning, waste collection, environmental issues (Food and Hygiene training, inspections), homelessness, leisure and sports (Year of Culture, museums, theatre)

Mr Chipp then continued by answering questions posed to him by Rudgwick Parish Council

**Question 1.** Horsham District Council was a partner in the 2018 VELO South Event. Did the Council perceive any economic benefit? Is the Council a partner/ considering being a partner in future events?

Mr Chipp explained that the event was organised by WSCC and did not require HDC permission. HDC decided to work with WSCC and with external visitors there would be an economic benefit; he recognised that in these situations there are always winners and losers. He acknowledged that the event had been badly handled and if this had been done better, there could have been an economic benefit.

**Question 2.** S106 funding. In general, and in part for the Windacres development in Rudgwick regarding contribution to West Sussex County Council regarding the development of school places. For the Windacres development the sum of £106,000 is allocated to WSCC as capital spending for the creation of six places at Rudgwick Primary School. Could the process of creating these places be clarified?

Mr Chipp explained that WSCC is responsible for the county education planning and HDC will hold the money until WSCC proved the evidence that these spaces can be created. He will provide the Council with contact details for the WSCC person who is able to provide further information on the matter.

**Question 3.** Horsham District Council is currently undertaking a review of Planning Committees with a declared aim of ensuring efficiency & effectiveness whilst meeting the needs of all stakeholders. A recent review of the scheme of delegation of planning matters removed some community call-in rights and was implemented without any Parish Council consultation. Could therefore an update of this latest review, much of which has been held in secret, be provided? Could you clarify the level of involvement of Parish Councils & residents will have, to ensure that their voices are heard?

Mr Chipp stated that there is a Government review on planning committees, the review is not in secret, two public meetings are required to be held (20.11.2018 and 23.1.2019) in order to be able to change the constitution. A recommendation will be made; the Planning Advisory report is now available. Mr Chipp expressed the opinion that if the current system of having two planning committees works, why change it

It is important that District Councillors sitting on a committee should attend relevant planning training; especially as S106 funding is lost if an Appeal is lost. Mr Chipp felt that Ward members should only be on the planning committee if they are interested in being on the committee and access training.

The Scheme of Delegation is to be reviewed, to decide which Planning Applications are to go to committee. If all parties, officer, parish and residents have no objection to a planning application, it should not go to committee. This would then free time which could provide more time to speak during meetings.

Further questions were asked by the public:

- Is it not unreasonable for Horsham to have to help Crawley with Housing needs? Mr Chipp referred to the Duty of Support and “that life is not always fair”.

- Is the purchase by Legal and General of the North Horsham development land from Liberty a good thing? And do Legal and General inherit the Liberty planning application, where the affordable housing need reaches 18% rather than the target of 35%?

Mr Chipp stated that HDC was delighted: Legal and General had a good record of investment and had already started good engagement with HDC. Currently no council was meeting the affordable housing target, if a site is not viable – no developer will want to develop. The North Horsham planning application creates lots of open spaces and a sustainable green corridor.

- There are planning concerns over two developments where it was felt that the Rudgwick ward member did not represent the views of the community for those applications. Could the Chief Executive comment?

Mr Chipp mentioned that Rudgwick Parish Council had asked for clarification on this matter last year. He clarified that a ward member can submit a planning application. A ward member’s role is not to represent the views of the local community; it is to consider the benefit for the community/whole district that a planning application may bring.

- HDC set up a company to enter the affordable housing market. Could the Chief Executive provide further information?

Mr Chipp explained with house prices being at the level they are, medium housing developers dropping out of the market during the recession, large developers hold power and land it was necessary to intervene.

HDC is communication with Saxon Weald Homes Ltd, the relationship has greatly improved and very positive. The HDC company was set up in a particular way: on homelessness HDC is performing well, only a handful of people on the housing list and supply is coming forward. The Policy Development Group is looking at using HDC sites for affordable housing or sell, whatever is most appropriate solution for a site. A number of deals in/around Horsham are currently being explored.

## **6. Question from parishioners**

The Chairman then referred to a question submitted by a resident regarding the setting up of a working group to investigate into the provision of a solar panel farm. The Council is currently not in the position to support this. From a financial point of view, with solar energy subsidy ending at the end of this month, the proposal is not an attractive one.

Mr Chipp contributed by adding that the Cabinet is to pursue the Declaration of Climate Change and Clean Energy and stated that planning for what you can achieve and do was better than signing the declaration when you are not able to do anything.

The Chairman thanked Mr Chipp for coming to the meeting, his presentation and answering questions from the council and residents. He provided Mr Chipp with some local Rudgwick products for which Mr Chipp thanked him.

9.10 pm Mr Chipp left the meeting.

**7. Vote of Thanks**

The Chairman reported that Cllr Wild had confirmed that he was not to stand in May’s Parish Council election. He thanked Cllr Wild for his contributions over the years and especially for the tremendous amount of time and effort he had invested in the RSCC/KGV Building over the last 18 months.

The Chairman also thanked District Cllr Bailey. He has been Rudgwick Ward Councillor for 16 years during which time he served as HDC Chairman, only the second Rudgwick resident to hold the post in over 100 years.

County Cllr Mitchell was thanked for his regular attendance to Council meeting, taking on questions and problems from the council and parishioners.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her commitment, support and hard work over the last year. He continued with thanking the Councillors and supporters for their dedication and support.

A resident addressed Cllr Bookham regarding the traffic situation on Loxwood Road, where traffic often exceeds the recommended 30mph speed limit. The Loxwood Road was not mentioned in the Traffic Calming Action Plan, would it be possible to place further traffic signs as the traffic situation was very dangerous, especially for pedestrians?

Cllr Bookham stated that there are strict traffic sign regulations and with streetlamps being in place, traffic signs were not allowed to be installed. A discussion amongst parishioners and councillors took place; experience had shown that traffic speed surveys, permanent signage had little or no effect. That Loxwood Road would be one of the sites for the earlier mentioned mobile speed sign.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 9.20 pm and the Chairman invited those present to join him for refreshments.

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Chairman  
**D Buckley**

Date