

# WIVELSFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

## Minutes of the Meeting Held Thursday 12 March 2020, 8pm Wivelsfield Village Hall

**Present:** Members of the Parish Council, speakers as detailed below and members of the public as per the signing in book.

1. **WELCOME TO SPEAKERS & INTRODUCTION**  
The Chair of the Parish Council, Ian Dawson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the speakers.
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies had been received from Inspector Ripley of Sussex Police, who was unable to attend due to illness. Barbara Williams and Giles Witcomb from the Hospice were also unable to attend as the Hospice had taken the decision that, due to coronavirus, staff should not attend any non-essential meetings.
3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2019**  
The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.
4. **NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM – SUSSEX POLICE -INSP. EDWARD RIPLEY**  
Inspector Ripley was unable to attend.
5. **RURAL CRIME PCSO – SUSSEX POLICE – OLIVIA CLINTON**  
PCSO Clinton briefly touched on some of the information Inspector Ripley would have covered. Sussex Police is getting a big influx of officers and the Lewes response team will have an extra six officers by the end of this year. Each area has a named PCSO. Unfortunately, the one for Wivelsfield is currently on long-term sick leave, but the area is instead being covered by Sergeants.

In October 2019 the role of Rural PCSOs was created. Their remit is to look at crimes involving agriculture, wildlife and environmental issues eg fly tipping. There have been two arrests since October for fly tipping. The police can prosecute if they catch someone fly-tipping, otherwise it is dealt with by the District Council.

6. **LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL'S WASTE & RECYCLING TEAM – TOM BROAD**  
Tom sought to give a brief overview of matters relating to waste and recycling services. He was aware of the concerns around East Sussex residents no longer being able to access West Sussex waste and recycling sites and had been advised that East and West Sussex County Councils would be meeting later this month to try to find a resolution. Lewes District Council (LDC) is the waste collection authority, but the County Council is responsible for waste disposal.

Garden waste collections - for those who sign up for them - take place fortnightly, with waste collected being taken to a site in Beddingham, where it is broken down into soil. Weekly food

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waste collections go to Whitesmith and are composted, with the compost being sold to farmers to grow more food. The fortnightly mixed recycling collections are taken to a plant with machines that sort all the different materials. LDC has been expanding the types of recycling it can accept, and can now take more food trays and the plastic films from the top of containers. Residual waste is taken to Newhaven, where it is incinerated, with the energy generated as a result going back into the National Grid.

The Lewes District's recycling rates have grown from 20% to 45% in recent years and the district also has some of the lowest rates of recycling contamination (approx. 2-3%, whereas the national figure is thought to be around 10%). The biggest contaminants are clothes/textiles and composite carbons eg tetra packs. Similarly, food left in pots can contaminate recycling, so residents are asked to rinse containers before recycling them.

Litter on the A27 has become a big problem, but LDC cannot litter pick without road closures, the cost of which can run into thousands. As such, they are piggy-backing onto road closures and taking the opportunity to litter pick when Highways England are doing road works.

In terms of carbon reduction, there are a lot of improvements to be made regarding refuse trucks, but LDC has restructured its garden waste collection rounds to save tens of thousands of vehicle miles. They are also about to trial smart litter bins, which have a sensor that tells crews which bins need emptying. These have apparently been implemented in Nottingham, with great success.

A number of questions were asked by members of the public, to which Tom gave the following replies:

- Recycling needs to be rinsed to remove any lumps of food etc, but does not need to be perfectly clean
- Teabags can be included with food waste (although some teabags contain plastic, manufacturers are starting to do away with it)
- Blister packs from medicines cannot currently be recycled as they contain different materials bound together and the same is true of tetra packs and pringle tubes for example. LDC are however looking at how these can be included.
- Shredded paper can be put into a carrier bag or clear refuse sack for recycling (but should not be put in a black refuse sack or left loose).

### 7. ACTION IN RURAL SUSSEX – COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS – GRAHAM MAUNDERS

Graham introduced Action in Rural Sussex (AirS) as a charity, set up in the 1930s, to provide support to community groups. Graham works specifically with helping communities to deliver local housing, in such a way that the community owns the assets. There are currently over three hundred Community Land Trusts in the country, and AirS is working with twenty five of these across Sussex. AirS provides advice, support and technical assistance to communities wishing to set up one of these not-for-profit Trusts.

People often look to get involved because they want to be able to help people to stay within their communities and to have a say in the type of housing, rents and allocation of the properties. Community Land Trusts are used mainly for housing, but have also been used to buy pubs or shops – whatever is of benefit to the community.

To get a Community Land Trust going, you simply need a few people with an interest in doing so, who form a steering group. AirS will help them to form a legal entity – normally a Community Benefit Society. The society has an 'area of benefit' and everyone who lives in that area can pay £1 to become a member of the organisation, making it locally accountable. Local landowners can be approached for land (and sometimes landowners will be willing to give land to a local community, that they would not be prepared to give to a developer).

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Funding a housing scheme can be done through a combination of grants and loans. In 2016 the Government announced a Community Housing Fund, offering specialist grants.

A Community Land Trust/Community Benefit Society does not have to be set up/led by a body like a Parish Council, though it may be useful to have a couple of councillors as members. It works best with a range of skills and experience on board, and local councillors may be able to bring to bear some useful knowledge. Vicky King, a resident from the village, said that in the neighbourhood plan, 62% of people said that they would be interested in a Community Land Trust and asked anyone who might be interested in being involved with such a venture, to get in touch with her.

8. ST PETER & ST JAMES HOSPICE – BARBARA WILLIAMS (CHIEF EXEC) & GILES WITCOMB (HEAD OF INCOME GENERATION)

Hospice staff not available for this item.

9. MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR LEWES – MARIA CAULFIELD

Maria said that, since the general election, parliament had been busy with four areas of priority:

- Brexit – legislation is coming through for a number of areas, including a new agriculture bill, immigration bill, environment bill and fishing bill.
- Public services – lots of investment is going into the NHS and Police. Locally a lot of investment has been going into the Princess Royal and Sussex County Hospitals and school funding per pupil will be going up to over £4k per year. Maria said that she would welcome any suggestions people may have for these services.
- Infrastructure – roads, rail and broadband. Funding has been agreed for access improvements to Wivelsfield Station and rail services seem better than eighteen months ago. From May there will be a return to half-hourly services to Wivelsfield and full formation trains. In terms of broadband and phone services, the Government is passing new legislation to enable phone operators to share masts. With new technology they will be able to put transmitters onto existing masts or posts.
- Coronavirus – in 4-8 weeks the estimated worst-case scenario is that 80% of the population will be affected. Coronavirus symptoms are (for most people) a mild cough, fever and aches which last around seven days, however the concern is for older people. If you have any of those symptoms, self-isolate and contact 111. Maria said we will get to a stage where the Government will need to close schools and stop mass gatherings, but they hope that by May/June we will be over the worst of it.

Maria then answered a couple of questions:

- With regard to a question about potholes, Maria advised that East Sussex County Council had had to work to very tight budgets for four or five years and had to make money go as far as possible. However extra funding is now coming through, so the County Council will be able to do a different type of repair or resurfacing. County Councillor Sheppard conceded that contractors aren't always doing a great job and said East Sussex County Council has admitted that they are losing the war on potholes, not helped by the weather washing repairs out. He did however note that potholes are a national issue.
- A question was raised about making rural lanes more suitable for walkers and horse riders etc. Maria said that she is working with a couple of local communities to reduce the speed limit and engineer the roads a bit too (changing the road surface and adding gateways etc, to make drivers more aware it is a shared space), and once they see how this works, they will look at how this can be rolled out. You do however have to have traffic surveys etc to show that it is a busy enough road to justify these measures.

10. EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR - JIM SHEPPARD

Jim commented on the budget and the benefits that it would bring in terms of having 500 more nurses, 40 more hospitals, a national living wage, £500m to fix potholes and £9.5bn to build

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affordable homes. There will also be 20,000 extra police officers over the next three years: an extra 120 of them in Sussex, in addition to the 250 being recruited at the moment.

East Sussex County Council is in a better financial position than for some time. 75% of its budget goes on adult social care and children's services. The Government has recently increased its contribution, but council tax bills are still having to go up by 2% to fund social care. The libraries that have not been shut have been improved and per child funding for schools has increased. The Chief Executive of East Sussex County Council is also now the Chief Executive of West Sussex County Council and can now liaise between the two.

### 11. LEWES DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – NANCY BIKSON

Nancy noted that, since the elections, there has been an interesting coalition at Lewes District Council. A 2% increase in Council Tax was approved, as was the Lewes Local Plan Part 2, which included provision for a traveller site in Plumpton. Climate change and roads are huge issues. Nancy said that it is great that recycling figures are up, but she would love to see Wivelsfield having 100% adoption rate for the scheme. She acknowledged that there are so many issues it feels like we can do nothing about, but the ability to make a difference with climate change starts in everyone's home. Finally, Nancy stated that her role is to be around for people and to try to get things done, so invited residents to talk to her when needed.

### 12. SIERRA LEONE LINK – PAUL WELCH

Paul explained that there is a link with St Matthews Church in Sierra Leone which has been in place for a number of years and has become very much a community link, with the Church, School and Playgroup all involved. A main theme of the link is to support the education of several children, but the link has also sent medical supplies and supported a maternity nurse who would ordinarily have to buy a lot of her own equipment. The Mothers' Union sent out mosquito nets, which are absolutely vital there. The community also sent money and supplies out to Sierra Leone during the Ebola epidemic, have supported a pre-school and are currently helping St Matthews Church to build a church hall.

The state in Sierra Leone has recently started to supply primary education, so the link is currently supporting eight children through secondary school and a further two through university. To give an indication of the costs involved, Paul explained that to support a child in junior secondary school (school years 7-9 here) costs £100 per year. This pays for fees, books, two sets of uniform, two pairs of shoes, lunch and transport. Senior secondary school costs £120 per year. Half of the children that the link supports are Christian and half are Muslim. Anyone wishing to know more or to get involved with the link is asked to contact Paul directly.

### 13. WIVELSFIELD VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – DEREK STEPHENSON (CHAIR) & PETER BURTON

Derek mentioned having had work done to the trees adjacent to the car park and the success of a grant application enabling the Hall to have new doors and windows, resulting in more light and a warmer building. He also noted a recently agreed arrangement between the Hall and the Hospice which could see the Hall used as an emergency base for the Hospice, should they have to evacuate their building at any point.

Peter spoke about the long-awaited Hall Improvement Project and explained how, over the last two years, the Committee has been fund raising and seeking grant funding to facilitate the project. The Hall is now about forty years old and needs work doing, particularly to things like the toilet facilities, to bring it up to current standards. Detailed plans have been drawn up and the Committee, in conjunction with the Parish Council, are getting everything ready to go to tender. Approximately £400k of roughly £900k needed has been raised and the plan will be to establish how the tenderers could stagger the project into phases, on the basis of the funding in place. The aim is to keep the Hall in use as far as possible, while the building work takes place.

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### 14. WIVELSFIELD PARISH CHURCH - REVEREND CHRISTOPHER POWELL

Christopher said he was pleased not to have heard too much about coronavirus during the meeting, but noted that he is very conscious that many regular worshippers are in the vulnerable category. The Church plans to keep calm and carry on as much as possible, taking simple precautions such as not shaking hands in the congregation and only giving out bread for communion. They hope to be able to continue with planned activities including Easter services, a barn dance on 8 May for VE day and the summer fete at Great Ote Hall.

The Church has two thriving youth clubs for different age groups, which meet on Friday evenings. The younger group has approximately 25 children that attend and there is a very minimal link with the Church, they are simply providing facilities for the young people of the village. On Thursdays the Church Hall hosts Lunch Bunch, which takes a lot of work to set up and they would appreciate any volunteers. The Church has been running an environmental initiative 'Eco Church' and Wivelsfield Church has achieved its bronze award and hopes to move up. The Christmas medieval play was wonderful and ran to a packed church on five nights.

### 15. WIVELSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN, IAN DAWSON

Ian introduced himself as the Parish Council's Chair for the last three years. He introduced fellow councillors and noted that there are still three vacant seats, if anyone wishes to help shape and support the community. Ian noted that it is quite an exciting time and there are various things going on:

- Village Hall Improvement Project – for which the Parish Council is providing some funding
- Within this, changes to the Renshaw Room will see the creation of publicly accessible toilets and a Parish Council office
- The vehicle activated sign on North Common Road is working again and the Parish Council is looking to get a mobile speed indicator device, that can be moved around the village
- The Neighbourhood Plan, which was made around three years ago needs to be reviewed periodically and will be looked at
- CCTV is planned for the green, following a spate of vandalism at the park
- Fly tipping has been seen in a number of locations. The Council has held working parties to clear some of it, including by West Wood on Hundred Acre Lane

The Chair thanked Maria for taking up the issue of access to the tips and said he hoped there would be a resolution of this soon. He also mentioned discussions taking place with St Peter & St James Hospice around them providing allotments for residents' use.

### 16. QUESTION TIME

Questions had been covered during the course of the evening.

### 17. CLOSE

The Chair summarised some of the things he had learned during the course of the evening and thanked the speakers, those who had helped with the event and members of the public for taking the time to attend.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.