

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
13th JANUARY 2014 AT 7.30 PM AT THE STEYNING CENTRE**

PRESENT: Cllr Bowell,(Chairman)
Cllrs Lloyd, Rogers, Muncey, Barling, Toms, Ness-Collins, Marshall, Staines,
Toomey
Also in attendance:
Michael Pearce - Warden
No Press representative & 31 Members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Hopkinson, Alexander, Trundle,

2. DECLARATIONS

There were declarations of interest from Councillor Lloyd in item 7 subject to the decision on item 3.

3. DISPENSATION

A request has been received from Cllr Lloyd for a dispensation under Standing Order 9i (ii & iii) and 9 e-h regarding his involvement in the proposed skateboard facility in MPF.

Cllr Lloyd left the room before consideration of his request.

Cllr Bowell summarised the letter from Cllr Lloyd which had been circulated to all councillors as follows:

Last year I took advice on my involvement in the skateboard facility in the MPF and have not been in any decision making meeting since. However, I feel that a number of key events have taken place that negates any perceived 'interest' I was alleged to have had.

Firstly, the Horsham Road site (opposite the Leisure Centre) has now been dropped by the objectors having instead opted for an alternative in the Leisure Centre car park. In fact, the Horsham Road site has never figured in any publicised plans put forward by the objectors in opposition to the MPF.

Secondly, it would seem to me that any 'reasonable person' would consider it wrong to exclude me, as an elected member (and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council), from any involvement in the proposed MPF site, when it is clear that the Horsham Road site is not being used as the alternative to the MPF. In addition, the site has already been discounted by the Council for well documented fiscal reasons, amongst others.

In my opinion the dropping of the Horsham Road site by the objectors and the fact that the Council has also discounted it, has negated the 'interest' that I was alleged to have had.

Thirdly, even if the Leisure Centre car park site obtains planning permission, it is unlikely to get permission to build from the landowners. However, if by some chance it did, I am not pre-determined on this site.

Lastly, all key decisions have been made by the Council – none of which I have participated in – and the Council now has a democratic mandate from the public to proceed. The decision has been made by Council to continue with the planning application for the MPF and as I believe, the planning application is due to be heard in February 2014, I can have no influence on the outcome of this decision which lies with HDC.

Any future decisions, should planning permission be granted for the MPF site, will be about the funding process, construction, function, management and administration of all areas and I feel that my input would be useful and of benefit to the Council and community.

As Vice- Chair, I am finding it difficult to do the job that my colleagues have asked me to do, as I have a responsibility as an executive officer, to support you and other members in all administrative and financial matters regarding the skateboard facility and, I am restricted in what I can do. I am therefore, requesting that the council gives me a dispensation.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowell, seconded by Cllr Rogers to grant a dispensation to Cllr Lloyd to allow him to participate fully on all matters relating to the proposed skateboard facility in MPF until May 2015 (end of 4 year term of office for all councillors). This was **Agreed** unanimously.

4. MINUTES

It was **proposed** by Cllr Bowell **seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December be Agreed and signed by the Chairman. This was **Agreed**.

5. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS from the last meeting

- 5.1** Costs for High Street CCTV have been sent to Mr. Ivatt.
- 5.2** Standing Orders will be on the website after this meeting.
- 5.3** CoT have been written to regarding Late Night shopping event.

6. POLICE/NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS/LAT REPORTS

The Wardens report is attached to the F & C minutes.

The PCSO report is attached to these minutes.

Water Fair to be held here on 1st March at Steyning Centre and Cllr Bowell brought it to the Wardens' attention that the organisers will be calling on residents with a questionnaire.

Weather and high winds: There is to be PCSO surgery on 30th January and all residents are welcome.

Although mindful of the data protection Act, it was hoped that there will be ways to put vulnerable people on Wardens list so that they can receive help. There was a question from the public:

- There was a Facebook article about a free skateboard trip to HDC.
 - This did not go ahead. Occasionally the wardens get use of a Leisure Link bus and use this if they get the opportunity.

7. UPDATES

Skateboard Facility – The Working Group had met to re-affirm the regard for SDNP purposes. The Working group considered the following:

Purpose 1:

To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park area

(Consider biodiversity, landscape character and qualities, sustainable land management, cultural heritage)

Purpose 2:

To promote opportunities for the understanding, and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

The Working Group concluded that:

The Parish Council felt that the fact that the facility would be right on the edge of one of the largest national parks in England should not prejudice its ability to realise its plans. Steyning Parish Council considered that the proposed siting of a small skateboard facility in the upper part of Memorial Playing Field would not conflict with either of the South Downs National Park Purposes.

Cllr Howell proposed, seconded by Cllr Toms that the council has complied with its duty to give due regard to the SDNP purposes with regard to the proposed skateboard facility in MPF and a further statement of our consideration to be sent to HDC as recommended by the Working Group. This was **Agreed**

Unfortunately, it has been brought to the Council's attention that although HDC were sent the correct D & A statement they have uploaded the incorrect old one. The correct version will be posted in the next couple of days.

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Cllr Howell stated that at the last Full Council meeting there had been considerable disruption and unacceptable behaviour from some members of the public. Cllr Howell reminded the meeting that as stated at the end of each agenda – *"The public do not have a right to speak at meetings but Steyning Parish Council allocates a short time on each Agenda for public participation ("Questions from the floor"), and the Chairman will invite questions or comment on Agenda items at this point only in the meeting"*.

Cllr Howell stated that the Council do not wish to stop the public participation sessions but if there is continued disruption at the meetings the Council will re-visit the whole issue of Questions from the floor. Cllr Howell also reminded the meeting that this is not

the only opportunity that the public have to ask questions of the council and residents can write, email or telephone to the Clerk at the parish council office.

Written question should be delivered to the Clerk at least 8 days prior to a meeting.

Our Standing Orders allow 15 minutes for Questions but this is at the discretion of the Chairman and can be reduced depending on agenda items. It should also be noted that only one question/comment from each member of the public will be taken initially but if time allows a second question may be permitted.

The meeting was suspended to allow questions from members of the public.

There was a written question:

- *“Will the Parish Council make available online and in printed format the full range of notes for meetings at least 24 hours in advance of any meeting rather than just making them available on the actual night of the meeting as at present”.*
 - The notes referred to in the question are in fact the minutes of committee and council meetings for the preceding month.
 - These minutes are already available online in the week prior to the Full Council meeting (usually by the Friday of the preceding week).
- What is the present policy regarding bad weather and flooding.
 - Cllr Barling commented that the worst flooding is at the Leisure Centre and Dog Lane. He had been to the WSCC depot at Clapham to meet with Roger Harding (Assistant Highways Engineer for our area) who said that they were dealing with 151 incidents that day. WSCC got a jetting gang to Dog Lane and this did clear the area. Cllrs Muncey and Toomey and he had been working on this and had obtained quotes for work to clear the gullies in Dog Lane and Operation Watershed has agreed to fund this. Cllrs Howell and Barling had been in touch with Adur Trust and River Trust to start a conversation to alleviate this problem in the long term. River Adur is silting up and has not been dredged recently so this is raising the water table. This is of concern.
- Len Warner once asked if the Council meeting can be recorded but the Council said this would be too costly and burdensome. Is there any reason why we don't as other council's do. Then up to individual to transcribe at their cost.
 - Cllr Howell said that this needs discussion and will get back to you.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

9. BUDGET AND PRECEPT

Cllr Howell reported that the F & C committee had agreed the budget for the financial year 2014/2015. The precept request for the year will be £229,418 (including Council Tax Benefit grant of £8902). This amounts to an annual increase on a Band D property of 18.2% or £13.33 p.a. or 0.25p per week. The council has made allowances for various increases as detailed in the F & C minutes but has kept other budgets as low as possible.

- Cllr Toms – Part of the increase in costs is due to legal costs over the past year. I understand that our insurance has covered some if not all of the legal costs so far.
- Cllr Lloyd responded that the Council has utilised its total legal allowance for this year and the policy is up for renewal in July and therefore there may be a new insurance company. Cllr Lloyd couldn't say whether future legal costs would be excluded or reduced. It was felt prudent to incorporate legal costs in the budget as the Council will be doing a Neighbourhood Plan and any Judicial Reviews over this would have to be

paid by the Council. It was unlikely that the budget would cover all the legal costs but it would reduce the drawing from the reserves.

- Cllr Rogers asked if there was any clarification on whether the cover was per policy year or would it be in existence for following year and it would be very likely that the Council would have to declare what has happened under the previous policy.
- The Clerk responded that believed this to be per policy year and the company may wish to exclude this for the coming year.
- Cllr Staines asked how the Swimming Pool figures came about.
- This was a 60 year agreement and inflated by CPI each year.
- Cllr Muncey said she was concerned about % increase proposed and this seems a large increase which may send out the wrong message in time of austerity. She appreciated that it was a fairly modest weekly increase and she spent some time examining the figures. The Council is amongst the highest spending parishes locally but she realised we do provide more facilities, the Swimming Pool, wardens , the Steyning Centre and Youth Provision and would not wish to lose any of these services. She understood funds for legal challenges but did not think this was a good use of our money it may not have been necessary if we used more main stream calculations for the acoustic report and this has opened a door for legal challenges. Cllr Muncey felt the Council should publicise why the budget is going up so much before people get their bill.
- Cllr Lloyd responded that it was a very good idea to publicise the reasons for the budget increase. The Council had legal costs last year, and with the Neighbourhood Plan coming up, anyone taking part will be under the Council's Code of Conduct rules but any Judicial Reviews as a result of the plan would not be underwritten by the government. On the skate-park noise issue the Council employed consultants and the results have been approved by HDC. The Council has done a second one and will now need to wait and see if this is approved.
- Cllr Barling stated that he never liked putting up Council taxes, and WSCC do not intend to do so this year by utilising the freeze grant to do this and the WSCC element is a large part of the overall council tax. Parish Councils give services directly to residents. Ashurt have a 30% increase. Theirs is £66 and Steynings £86. There is no comparison between the services the two parishes provide. He had not been to Bramber yet. Upper Beeding has decided to use reserves and not to put their precept up.
- Cllr Bowell said that it was a difficult decision and that the Council looked at many issues to mitigate the rise. Having looked at all the services he would not want to see any one of them cut. If we don't get legal challenges this year the budget will go into reserves.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowell, seconded by Cllr Lloyd that the budgets and precept request for 2014/2015 be agreed. This was **Agreed**.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

10.1 Playing Fields – There was no meeting in December 2013.

10.2 Planning 17th December 2013 and 7th January 2014

Cllr Bowell **proposed** agreement to and adoption of the minutes which were **seconded** by Cllr Muncey and **Agreed**.

10.3 Highways & Lighting – 17th December 2013

Cllr Bowell reported that Cllr Muncey has been undertaking some work with regard to areas of flooding and in particular Mouse Lane and Dog Lane.

There were no drainage plans for Dog Lane but improvement could be achieved by clearing foliage and silting. Landbuild proposed a job of jetting culverts and clearing ditches –and an application has been made for the funding, which has been agreed. This had to be done as a matter of urgency as the funding bids were closing.

Mouse Lane, is a much more major problem. There is no trace of a report done some two years ago. WSCC have offered to investigate further and there may be some other funding from WSCC for this.

Cllr Bowell reported that committee had considered the joint purchase of a SiD device with Bramber and Upper Beeding.

Sgt Trevis has advised against SiD device but would prefer the portable gun. Volunteers prepared to use the gun are needed.

It was agreed in principle to share the gun to find out more information on maintenance, calibration costs, any operation costs and legal issues for operators first and come back to committee.

Cllr Bowell reported that the Steyning Community Partnership Visitor & Tourism group have requested permission to place lamp post banners in the High Street to promote major community activities in town. These would be restricted to those events and not for commercial advertisements.

Proposal for 4 banners at the White Horse end of High Street and bottom end of Town and 2 along the middle.

Banners would be displayed approximately one month in advance for most events.

Cllr Bowell proposed, seconded by Cllr Lloyd agreement to and adoption of the minutes and accounts for the period. This was **Agreed**.

10.4 Finance & Community Committee – 7th January 2014

Cllr Lloyd reported that applications have now been invited for the tenders for the Grass cutting and litter contracts for the 3 years to March 2017. An advert appeared in the press last week and the closing date to apply is 20th January.

Cllr Lloyd reported that committee had agreed to minor revisions to Standing Orders and the Committee Terms of Reference. This was to give more clarity to the delegation to the Clerk and to the committees.

Cllr Lloyd reported that the committee has agreed grants to Steyning Partnership Visitor and Tourism group of £45 to cover room hire costs and £150 to 4Sight.

Cllr Lloyd proposed that as WW1 commemoration is coming up this year that a Working Group be set up to consider how the Parish Council might support any events. Members of the public were asked to volunteer for the Working Group and Mr Ian Ivatt agreed to be a member. It was suggested that Mr Bob Brown be asked to be a part of it. Cllrs Toms, Marshall and Barling also volunteered.

Cllr Lloyd also proposed a Working Group headed by Cllr Rogers be set up to look at Older People in Isolation. Cllr Rogers said that this should not just be for older people. She went to a seminar on this issue and has a list of possible actions and is keen to move this forward in Steyning. There is a need for something tangible, there are many groups and clubs but commitment and actions are required to minimise loneliness in the area. Cllr Rogers intended to reach out through the Steyning Showcase event, and by letter to

stakeholder groups. On 4th February the Community Safety Group is focussing on loneliness and isolation. The Working group will consist of Cllr Rogers, Toomey, and other councillors who wish to be involved to email Cllr Rogers. Cllr Rogers believed that it wasn't necessary for people to go on a list, but to make people aware of and to spot signs of loneliness. It is about creating a culture of inclusion.

Cllr Howell stated that there were 98 groups in Steyning and 52 of these will be coming to the Showcase event.

Cllr Lloyd proposed, seconded by Cllr Marshall agreement to and adoption of the minutes and accounts for the period. This was **Agreed**

11. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Rogers – HDC: Cllr Rogers said that she could not confirm the HDC council tax. It is about services and looking at what we provide, the value for money and how to continue with less resources. Cllr Rogers was pleased to see Whites Bridge re-open and also how well the Council had been kept informed.

Cllr Barling – WSCC: Cllr Barling said that it was unfortunate District Cllr Cockman could not be there and we wished him well and looked forward to him returning to his duties. WSCC had a huge challenge to shrink core revenue budget by £141m. This would not happen all in one year but over 4 years - first 2 years £60m. It is intended not to affect front line services as far as possible. There was a firm intention to freeze the Council tax and take the freeze grant.

The next CLC meeting would be held in Steyning on the 5th March. Cllr Barling reported that a grant had been given to the Steyning festival next year for the childrens' parade. There has been an application for a grant from the Steyning Downlands Scheme and that he was in talks with Steyning Community Football Club.

WSCC will be looking at TRO's in the future and there is an application for Penns Court to promote yellow lines around their entrance because of parked cars. Any other TRO's need to be raised with Cllr Barling.

Whites Bridge cost WSCC £82k to repair because it carried all three major services. A first rate job had been done..

Beeding Bridge is due to close on 20th January. This was unavoidable and it will be closed for 4/5 weeks with a shuttle bus service being provided. Footbridge will still be open to pedestrians.

Cllr Barling drew attention to 22nd January HALC meeting and urged Cllrs to attend as it was an interesting subject on the CLC function.

Cllr Howell, thanked Cllr Barling for getting involved in Operation Watershed and could Cllr Barling chase up the devolved works as nothing had been heard on it. The Council would look at this depending on the budget allowed. Cllr Barling believed that WSCC County would still be interested in Devolved works and will try and revive this.

Cllr Howell asked what the policy was at WSCC and HDC on fracking, could the councillors get some information to the Council? Cllr Barling said there was no policy yet. WSCC would involve themselves in planning, countryside and, noise issues. There is an application for a test site at Wisborough Green.

Cllr Rogers said that at present there was no policy in HDC and it would normally be a WSCC matter.

12. ITEMS FOR PRESS RELEASE

Cllr Lloyd confirmed that he would put something together for the budget increase.

13. INFORMATION ITEMS – to receive information items

Cllr Howell reported that regrettably Cllr Hoare has resigned as a parish councillor and the Council thank him for all his hard work. A Notice of Vacancy has been displayed and if anyone is interested or know someone who might be interested in becoming a parish councillor to put them in touch with the Clerk.

Meeting on Water Fair – this is to be held on 1st March and will include a questionnaire, stalls and café and will cover usage, flooding, environment, costs etc. It has a grant from WSCC to talk about all aspects of Water problems and will be at Showcase.

Cllr Howell reminded everyone about the Showcase event on the 8th February.

Cllr Toomey was concerned with Dog Lane flooding. In 1950 all drainage put together, but 6 years ago in Whickham Close they enlarged the gulley there to take flooding away from the High Street. It was not a question of blockage but impediment to water flow. WSCC are to investigate and if there is some work needed this could be a very large job. Cllr Barling said that there could be a number of solutions needed to this problem and WSCC will be looking at them.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 10th February 2014 at 7.30 pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting 8.50 p.m.

ACTIONS

- 8.4 to arrange visit for planning committee to Solar farm
- 9.0 Send precept request to HDC

Cllr MA
Clerk