



BROADBRIDGE HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

held on Monday 20th May 2019 at 7.45pm in St John's Community Hall

Present Were:

Cllr Terry Oliver (Chair) Cllr Viv Edwards (Vice Chair)

Cllr Roy Neilson

Cllr David Trangmar

Cllr Jeanne Coker

Cllr Christine Knight

Cllr Geoff Clark

Cllr David Milbank

Cllr Penny Hayles

Clerk: Jo Ball

Assistant Clerk: Lucinda Edwards

District Councillors: Louise Potter and Matt Allen

Members of the Public: 13

Invited Guests: Two

Press: None

Guest Speakers : David Bridges (DB)– Top Common Nature Project

Sonia Mangan – Age UK

Apologies were received from Cllr Ian Blunnie, Cllr Emily McGowan and County Councillor Christian Mitchell.

The Chairman introduced himself and welcomed everybody to the meeting. Special thanks were given to Cllr Viv Edwards for her longstanding commitment and dedication to the role of Chair. The Chairman gave an overview of the structure of the meeting and introduced the speakers.

2. David Bridges – Top Common

David introduced the Top Common Project emphasising the importance of everyone playing their part in looking after the environment in light of current issues such as global extinction, wildlife conservation and plastic pollution. David presented a map to show the position of the Top Common Nature Conservation area and gave some background to the project. Photos were shown

of the site prior to the works commencing – from its previous use for dirt jumps, through to a photo showing the new landscape.

The project has to date included the installation of a 350m natural pathway, the sowing of 3 kilos of wildflower seeds and the clearing of a lot of vegetation to provide the optimum environment for certain plants and wildlife.

Species such as Red Campion, Ragged Robin and wild garlic can be spotted, along with the Marsh Tit, woodpeckers and dragonflies. Since the project started, a staggering 19 different species of butterfly have been spotted at the site, including the Brown Hair Streak – the rarest attracted so far.

Further works to clear the dense perimeter of the cricket pitch has enabled the creation of a pathway for users of the tennis club, as well as providing an ideal habitat for wildflowers. Further parcels of land within the village offer scope for additional conservation work.

Question – A resident asked if any objection had been received from the residents of Field Place?

Response – It was confirmed that the owner of Field Place had supported the project, assisting with funding and also in building the access bridges.

The Chairman expressed thanks to David for his ongoing voluntary work on the project and invited residents to volunteer with the project in the future.

3. Sonia Mangan – Age UK

Sonia introduced herself and some background behind the charity and its ethos. She spoke of the staggering developments in terms of health and welfare – that we are now living in an aging society. People are living longer, but for some old age brings some challenges and changes – both physical and neurological. There are many people living with long term conditions.

Because of the decline in health and social care resources, there are now less statutory services. It is therefore a challenge for everyone to support one another.

Age UK is a national organisation but Age UK Horsham is setup as a local charity, and is thriving.

Sonia explained that in the last year, to March 2019, an additional £735,000 of previously unclaimed benefit was claimed in the Horsham District as a result of support through Age UK. Because the general radius of movement of the older generations is limited, it was identified that the additional income is generally spent back into the local community.

Sonia spoke about scams and how they can add to loneliness and isolation and how Age UK can support people through those situations.

Broadbridge Heath Parish Council have supported Hayley, who is employed by Age UK as a Village Agent, to act as a conduit between Age UK and the facilities and services available to residents. There is strong evidence that the appointment of a village agent has improved the ability to reach the elderly.

The Chairman expressed thanks to Sonia for her informative presentation.

4. District Councillor Introduction – Louise Potter and Matt Allen

Cllr Louise Potter introduced herself, living in Broadbridge Heath currently, and for most of her life.

She explained that their campaigning works started last year, and that they have knocked on nearly every door in the village. Overall there has been a fantastic response, and it has proven insightful. People were, on the whole, very pleased to be able to feedback with their issues and concerns.

Louise wants to help the community to make sure that voices are heard. Methods of communication with the newly appointed District Councillors were introduced. There is a Facebook page, regular newsletters will be distributed, surgeries will be held for face to face communication, and the councillors can be reached by their email addresses and telephone numbers.

Louise expressed thanks to the Parish Council for their support towards the community.

Cllr Matt Allen introduced himself and spoke about some of the activities that he and Louise had been involved with since being elected 2 weeks ago. Various training at Horsham District Council and raising issues relating to residents' concerns such as the new bypass, Old Wickhurst Lane, the adoption of roads on the Wickhurst Green development.

Question – A resident asked about where the access would be with the planned McDonald's on the Tesco site.

Response – Cllr Allen advised that he would take details and have to respond at a later stage, knowing nothing of this proposal. This was supported by the Parish Councillors who have not received any news of such a proposal.

Question – A resident asked if there were plans to rollout a food waste provision.

Response – Cllr Potter explained that there is a Policy in development stage and that work is already underway to introduce this provision.

Question – A resident asked if there were plans to remove or replace the blue footbridge.

Response – It was confirmed that there are no such plans and this is likely to be a rumour.

Question – A resident asked about the plans relating to the removal of trees at the Village Centre.

Response – Cllr Allen confirmed that he would find out the exact plans and feedback to the resident.

Question – A resident asked about the current traffic management in place at the road closures.

Response – It was confirmed that the traffic management vehicle/officers would remain at the site for as long as required. Issues of abuse have been reported to the Police.

Cllr Oliver thanked both Louise and Matt for attending the meeting and for their presentations.

5. Cllr Oliver introduced the Parish Council, who have a combined 100 years of service. Cllr Oliver gave particular thanks to Cllr Edwards and Cllr Clark who between them, have served the Parish Council as Councillors for over 50 years.

Cllr Oliver invited those present to ask questions throughout the presentation.

An overview of the Parish Council was given - There are currently 11 Councillors, with 2 vacancies. Details of the setting of the precept were explained. Cllr Oliver confirmed that Broadbridge Heath currently has a precept of below national average. Other funding is received through rental of assets and an Environmental Cleansing grant.

Question – A resident requested clarification of what assets the Parish Council receives income from.

Response – The Clerk explained that these assets refer to the contribution by the Funfair for use of the Village Green, and a small rental income from the Cricket Club.

Residents were warmly invited to attend future Parish Council meetings.

The updated map of the village was shown, which now includes the whole community.

Question – A resident asked if there were likely to be more houses built to the south of the new bypass.

Response – It was confirmed that there is nothing in planning at present as far as the Parish Council is aware.

Question – A resident asked if the new map would be updated in light of continuing works.

Response – It was confirmed that the map would be updated at intervals as required.

An overview of the 3 tiers of local government was given, including the responsibilities of each tier. It was explained that the Parish Council will often be the first point of contact, often needing to escalate matters to Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council (for example with issues relating to planning or highways).

Question – A resident asked about the grass cutting process and the fact that grass cuttings are not collected.

Response – It was explained that WSCC set the specification and that the Parish Council is only able to increase the number of cuts, but not change the specification.

The future areas of responsibility of the Parish Council were identified, showing the parcels of land on new development that will be adopted by the Parish Council in the future.

Question – A question was raised over the future of Highwood Hill.

Response – It was explained that Highwood Hill is currently under the control of HDC. It has been acknowledged that there might well be an opportunity for the PC to have some future involvement in the area so as to maintain the environmental value of this green space for the community.

Cllr Oliver gave an overview of Parish Council activities, presenting current and recent projects. This included plans for the Village Centre redevelopment project and the forthcoming updated play area at The Ducky.

Question – A resident asked about the open space at The Ducky and the opportunity for improvements.

Response – It was explained that there is a 4 phased project currently underway at the Ducky, to include the play area, the pond and a new pathway.

Question – A resident asked about the age range of the new play area at the Ducky.

Response – The age range is from toddler to teenage.

Cllr Oliver explained that the Parish Council will be submitting an entry to National Association of Local Council's annual Star Award for Council of the Year.

It was explained that the Toasties Youth Club had been supported over the last 4 years by Horsham Matters and that unfortunately they had needed to withdraw the support. The Parish Council has found a successful organisation to continue with this project in supporting the youth. 4 The Youth will be providing the support required to keep this project going.

An impression of the new Village Centre redevelopment was presented. It was explained that whilst Trustees manage the facility, the Parish Council is facilitating the project using Section 106 monies from recent development and a loan.

Images of recent street-scene projects were displayed and residents were invited to make suggestions for future street-scene provision.

Question – A resident asked if there is a specified date for flying the flag.

Response – It was confirmed that the Parish Council adopted a flag flying policy stating all the dates on which a flag will be flown.

Question – A resident asked where the Silent Soldier has gone.

Response – It was confirmed that the Silent Soldier is currently in storage.

Question – A resident pointed out that the recently planted daffodils on the verges at The Ducky had been hacked away during the most recent grass cut.

Response – It was confirmed that the contractors had already been contacted regarding this and that they had expressed apologies and had offered to buy new bulbs.

Details of the local community activities supported by the Parish Council through Community Grants were provided.

Cllr Edwards spoke about how the over-riding aim of all of the recent works was to bring the whole village together, with the opening of the vista by the neighbourhood centre, the downgrading of the bypass.

Question – A resident asked if the name 'Wickhurst Green' will ever go.

A resident also commented that postcodes for properties on Wickhurst Green are listed as Horsham addresses, not Broadbridge Heath.

Response – It was explained that gateways to create harmonisation are being pursued to include street-scene, with plans for example to extend the provision into the new development areas.

Cllr Oliver expressed his thanks for those attending the meeting and invited everyone to enjoy refreshments.