

WOODCHURCH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

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MINUTES

Minutes of the Woodchurch Annual Parish Meeting, held on Friday, 22 April 2016 at the Memorial Hall, Woodchurch at 7.00 pm

ATTENDANCE: 6 Members of the Public were in attendance and 7 Parish Councillors.

The Parish Council Chairman, Julian West, sent his apologies as he had a prior engagement.

Nominations for the position of chairman for the meeting were invited and Mr Woods proposed Mr N Jones, seconded by Mr Wood.

The Chairman opened the meeting by emphasizing the fact that the Annual Parish Meeting is for Villagers, not the Parish Council and that everyone is entitled to speak, but requested that the normal rules of debate be observed.

The Chairman then introduced ABC Ward Members and Mrs Aline Hicks and Mr Gareth Bradford, County Councillor, Mr Mike Angell and Mrs Judith Batt, Parish Clerk.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An Apology for Absence was received from Mr J West and PCSO Andrew Hoodless

MINUTES OF 2015 MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2015 were accepted and it was unanimously agreed that Mr West should sign them.

Proposed Mr Woods

Seconded Mr Hukins

REPORT BY PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

The Parish Council has discharged its responsibility regarding the village precept to maintain The Green and assets owed by the Parish Council to the best of its ability.

We continue to liaise with the Planning Department to register our views on development within the village and have looked at 41 planning application over the last year.

During the year the Parish Council purchased 2 defibrillators. One has been installed at the Information Centre and the other is due to be installed in Shirkoak Park within the next few weeks. A training course was arranged and a number of residents took advantage of this.

The Council has decided to make part of the new piece of The Green into a wildflower meadow and we are working with Mr Bourne to achieve this.

Part of the Memorial Hall car park has been resurfaced.

I would like to thank Mr Massey for repairing the Woodchurch sign at no cost to the village

During the year the bus shelter at Brattle was knocked down by the contractor mowing the grass. This, luckily, was seen by a resident and reported. The shelter was repaired at no cost to the council.

The Parish Council has been involved with the Conservation Area Consultation and at present we are waiting for the response from Ashford Borough Council.

We continue to report highway and footpath issues to the relevant authorities.

We are grateful to the school for allowing the Parish Council to have a governor on the board. This will mean we are kept up to date with information. During the year one of our members went into the school to give a talk on the Parish Council to the School Council.

One new bench has been installed on The Green and another one will shortly follow.

Woodchurch will be celebrating the Queen's birthday on Saturday 11 June with a party on The Green for the under 11's. This will be alongside a tea for grown-ups. The day will be rounded off by a dance in the Village Hall with Rocketman. To attend any of these events residents will need to get a ticket from the Post Office or the Information Centre. During the day the church bells will sound in celebration.

The Council carries out a weekly inspection of our play area. Also twice a year we carry out a full risk assessment on all our assets as required by law.

Councillors agreed to budget to have the War Memorial cleaned every 3 years.

The Parish Council continues to pay for the maintenance of the church clock.

This year Woodchurch will be entering the Men of Trees Competition.

We would like to thank Mike Angell, our County Councillor for keeping us informed of County news. Aline Hicks and Brad Bradford our Borough Councillors for supporting the Parish Council and also for putting our views forward to the Borough.

We would also like to thank Robert Harris for all his hard work picking up the rubbish over the past year, and Dave Grabham for keeping The Green looking so good..

I would also like to thank the Councillors for their support over the past year, not forgetting Judith who is a mine of information and a great support for any chairman.

Thank you

PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The receipts and payments summary for the year ended 31 March 2016 was circulated.

The accounts book and the minute book are available for public inspection on request. The balance at bank as at 31 March 2016 was £42304.11.

The Precept for the year 2015/16 has been set at £21,800. We are also to receive a Concurrent Functions grant of £ 1150.00 and a Council Tax Support Grant of £1060.00 making a total of £24010.00

A VAT claim for the year ended 31 March 2015 has been submitted for £ 1756.95.

REPORT BY SIMON GODFREY, CHAIRMAN OF WOODCHURCH SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Mr Godfrey reported that there are now 157 pupils on the roll and there is still a class for each year group. 49% of the children live in Woodchurch and the school has a below average number of children with a pupil premium.

The Head Teacher Miss Harrington and Deputy Head Mr Gawthorpe continue to do a very good job.

The school continues to work closely with members of the community who listen to the children read and the scheme has generated a definite improvement in reading standards.

The school now has a full complement of governors.

A recent challenge has been introduction with the new curriculum, as the older children have had to work hard to catch up due to the fact that they had not not been taught the curriculum on which they are now being tested.

With regard to finance, whereas a few years ago the school had a surplus, now every penny is budgeted for.

The school is due an OFSTED inspection shortly and this causes anxiety.

Recruitment is a challenge due to the house prices in the area.

The staff and governors are not happy with the government's desire that all schools should become academies and Mr Godfrey said he would oppose the change for as long as possible.

Councillor Bradford said that the year 6 children were voted best class by those running the Safety in Action Day for all schools in the Borough.

REPORT BY CLLR MIKE ANGELL – KCC

Thank you for inviting me to give you a brief note of my activities during the past year. Since the year 2011/2012 the County Council has saved £500 million. There is still £52 million to be saved over the next year.

The savings have been achieved by restructuring the organisation, entering into commissioning contracts for services which have reduced overheads, whilst still providing value for money without affecting front line services.

The money that was invested in Iceland has now been recovered not only by KCC but also the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service with interest.

I am engaged as follows at County Hall: -

Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee which involves the monitoring of improvement and future plans, Commissioning Advisory Board, Planning Committee, Chairman of the General Purposes Fire Authority Committee, Fire Authority Board, Sussex Community Rail Partnership Strategic Board and the Joint Transportation Board.

This keeps me pretty busy as well as do constituency matters which are growing with the housing developments. Most of my enquiries deal with Highways matters and no doubt there will be school appeals to come to my attention. There are issues which concern me in that the pressure is now on our rural roads and infrastructure or lack of it. I am glad to say that the Parish Councils continue to meet with officers with regard to traffic management, traffic calming and the like.

Among other things I am pressing the NHS for a health centre in Chilmington Green with facilities for X-ray and consultant clinics in order to lessen the need for patients to visit the William Harvey.

Concern was expressed at the problems that we are going to experience when the dualling of the A28 commences.

It was noted that the new LED lights in Rectory Close have received very positive comments.

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR ALINE HICKS– ABC

Over the past year at ABC I have been the Lead Member for Education, chair of the Standards Committee and a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Training Committees as well as keeping a keen interest on the expansion of Ashford.

I am currently also a trustee of Ashford Leisure Trust, a member of the River Stour IDB and attend the Marshlink meetings. This ward of Weald South which I share with Councillor Bradford has 5 parish councils and I try to attend as many meetings as possible. There are also many individual queries to deal with from residents throughout the ward.

In addition, I am Vice Chair of Governors at Kingsnorth Primary School and last November we converted to an academy with Aquilla, the diocese MAT.

Much of the direction of travel at the Borough has been dictated by central government and the fact that from 2019/2020 there will be no formula funding has meant that the borough has to generate much of its own income in addition to rates.

By the end of the decade local government will keep 100% of its business rates income which has yet to be apportioned between KCC and the districts. But any business occupying property with a rateable value of £12,000 or less will no longer pay business rates.

You may recall that when the high speed railway line was built a lot of land along either side became vacant. The Borough is keen that this land is developed both for housing and leisure. The latest money generating proposal is for ABC to purchase the development opposite Debenhams which will comprise of a cinema, hotel and restaurant as well as a car park. ABC has already negotiated deals which give it an income from International House and Park Mall.

The key to improving the town was agreed by the new administration after the election last year and they are: -

The Commercial Quarter

Elwick Place

The Expansion of the Designer Outlet

Central Ashford College

Junction 10a

Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy

Ashford International Signalling

Chilmington Green

And I would add the Ashford Model Railway and Education Centre

Mrs Hicks proceeded to read out an extract from Kent business March issue regarding the college.

Questions were asked about the park and ride that was proposed and Mrs Hicks said that this was not going to be built and that Stagecoach will provide an express bus service from the new estates.

The proposed Halt at Park Farm is not going to be built either

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR GARETH BRADFORD – ABC

Councillor Bradford introduced himself to the meeting and reported that he is the Lead Member of the Health and Wellbeing Committee and the Community Safety Partnership and Transport.

A member of the Parish Council asked about ABC's view on the police cutbacks and a discussion took place. It was agreed that members of the public like to see the police on the street.

REPORT BY PCSO ANDREW HOODLESS 58706

PCSO Hoodless was unable to attend but submitted the following: -

The following crimes took place within the district of Woodchurch between 01/04/2015 to 11/04/2016.

Burglaries – 10

Burglaries other than dwellings – 9

Theft, including theft from motor vehicle – 10

Criminal damage - 10

With the summer approaching, criminals may take the opportunity to commit shed break ins to steal tools and gardening equipment. Members of the public are advised to invest in a good secure lock, consider using a shed alarm and to place items of significant value within a house rather than a shed.

Recent reports have been received regarding an off road motor vehicle riding on private land without permission. I am patrolling the area and carrying out investigations to try and find the rider. If members of the public witness this, they should call 101.

I shall be carrying out speed check operation in areas where the speed limit is often broken. If members of the public have any roads in mind, please inform the parish council who can let me know.

OPEN FORUM

There being no other question the meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

Signed Dated