

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Tuesday 23 May 2017 at 7.30 pm at the Village Centre, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint**

**Present:**

Stephen Hand (Chairman of Council)  
Allan Brown (Vice-chairman of council )  
9 other Parish Councillors  
John Wilkinson (MSDC ward Member)  
The Clerk, three Assistant Clerks, and Maintenance Officer  
38 Members of the public

**1. Introduction by the Chairman:** The Chairman welcomed those present and introduced the Parish and District councillors, and Parish Council staff attending the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 May 2016:** The Minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Annual Report of the Council 2016/17:** The Chairman Stephen Hand presented the Annual Report for the Year 2016/17. It was explained that the following projects had been undertaken:

- South Avenue recreation ground now has a very popular new children's play area
- All 119 street lights owned by the Parish have been replaced with more energy efficient ones reducing energy consumption and maintenance costs
- WSCC have been persuaded to undertake resurfacing of the Cuckfield Road in the second half of the year
- A run-down bus shelter had been replaced, and another refurbished.
- Trinity Road Car Park availability has been increased to 3 hours.
- Councillor surgeries had been introduced on some Saturday mornings.
- The Council now had a Facebook page.
- The Council had worked closely with Mid Sussex District Council in their progress of the District Plan, to protect the interests of the Parish and its Neighbourhood Plan.
- Preparations had been made for taking control of the new parkland areas.

For the coming year the Council hoped to:

- Improve the range and quality of Sayers Common recreation grounds
- 'Streetscene' improvements to the appearance of Hurstpierpoint High Street and elsewhere.
- Continue work with West Sussex CC on establishing a cycle track between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks
- Work with Mid Sussex DC to improve facilities at Court Bushes and Fairfield recreation grounds
- Explore the feasibility of using community wardens to fill the gap left by withdrawal of PCSOs.

In addition, the Council was aware of some demands for additional parking on the east side of Hurstpierpoint, and would continue to explore possibilities, but there had been no viable sites had yet been identified.

The Chairman then thanked the Vice-chairman and the Committee chairmen for their roles during the past year, and noted the retirement of Councillors Matthew Stokes and Pam Mitchell. Matthew had worked energetically on the Council for 11 years. The Chairman also welcomed new councillors Richard Barker and Malcolm Llewellyn to the Council.

**4. Financial Report of the Council:** The Clerk to the Council presented the audited Annual Accounts for the Year 2015/16, the unaudited Accounts for the Year 2016/17, and the revenue and capital expenditure budget for 2017/18. In 2016/17 the Council had a surplus of £72,000, taking the total funds to £168,000. The Council's policy was to ensure that revenue income and expenditure were generally in balance year on year, but that one-off or capital expenditure could be met from grants or borrowing. The Council had borrowed to fund the streetlight replacement programme, which had been shown to be a real economic benefit to the community. Financial contributions from new developers (s106 funds) meant that grants had been obtained to fund the South Avenue Play Area project, and would be used to prepare and maintain the new parkland areas. The Council was therefore holding relatively large funds, but much of these were earmarked for these future projects. There were no questions from the meeting.

**5. District Plan issues:** District councillor John Wilkinson presented on the recent activity by Mid Sussex District Council in progressing their Plan for the period 2014-31. A public Examination, chaired by a Government-appointed Planning Inspector, had started in December 2016, had met on several occasions, and was expected to reconvene in the near future. The main issue of interest was the housing numbers and targets, and housebuilder developers and landowners had been pressing for significant increases from the original MSDC target of 650 dwellings per annum for the whole District. The contentious issue was the calculation of the local housing need and the requirement to meet

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'un-met' need (or overspill) from Crawley of up to 150 dwellings pa. The current proposals put by MSDC were for 826 dpa for 5 years, rising to 1026 dpa for the remainder of the Plan period equating to a total of 15,942 houses, which it was thought met the Inspector's requirements. However, the Inspector had yet to confirm that this was acceptable. Cllr Wilkinson reported that he had recently been appointed vice-chairman of the District Planning Committee which he hoped would help to uphold the role of made Neighbourhood Plans such as that for Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common.

**7. Parkland:** Vice-chairman Allan Brown reminded the meeting that, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, negotiations had taken place with landowners and developers to secure nearly 50 acres of meadowland and woodland on the northern side of Hurstpierpoint, around Highfield Drive and Little Park. These parkland areas were intended as informal recreation space, as conservation areas for natural habitats, and as a buffer against future development. The land would be covenanted against future building in perpetuity. This land was being transferred to the Parish Council including commuted sums of about £400,000 from the developers, to enable and then maintain the parkland areas. The land and funds would be owned by the Council but to ensure that the parkland was provided and maintained appropriately, a Parkland Advisory Board had been formed, comprising members of the public, councillors and representatives of special interest groups. An example of the influence of the Board had been the proposal for a one acre indigenous apple orchard to be planted. The first stage of work comprised preparatory works such as fencing, gates and footpaths, and tenders had been sought and a contractor appointed for the work. It was expected that this work would start shortly.

**7. Streetscene improvements and heritage trail:** The Clerk presented some of the Council's early thoughts on routes for a heritage trail around Hurstpierpoint, connecting points of interest and encouraging residents and visitors to enjoy the village and its surroundings. The Clerk emphasised the Council's moves to encourage a 'sense of place' and a locality of which the residents were proud, and which was cared-for. Examples of the recent work included new public seats, noticeboards and streetlights. The possibilities of floral displays along the High Street and at key visible points on Cuckfield Road and Hassocks Road were also described, and the idea of 'gateways' on the main roads leading into both Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common were being considered. These gateways served the purpose of slowing traffic entering the villages, but also signalled the start of the locality. The Council would welcome comments on these ideas, which it was hoped would be implemented in the next 2 to 3 years.

**8. Open forum for the public:** The Chairman took open questions from the meeting and the following matters were raised:

- (1) A resident asked for clarification about a further 100 houses being built at Little Park and the Chairman and Cllr Wilkinson said that there was no evidence or opportunity for this to happen.
- (2) A High Street trader questioned whether the traffic management was working, complained about vehicles mounting the pavement, and suggested that traffic lights were the solution. The Chairman advised that the County Council highways engineers had said that lights could not be made to work in the complex area of the High Street. The Chairman also expressed the opinion that the High Street was expected to take a large volume of traffic for such a confined area, and that sadly there were too many inconsiderate and impatient drivers. However, the Council would continue to work with the County Council Highway Authority to see whether improvements could be made to signs and bollards.
- (3) A comment was made by a High Street trader about the proposed floral displays, saying that they should be year-round. Consideration should also be given to having the High Street a different colour to signal its purpose, advertising on bollards, and tall planting around the village paid for by developers.
- (4) A question was raised about the removal of the cats-eyes in the road on Hassocks Road. It was noted that West Sussex CC as the highway authority would be informed of the concern.
- (5) A resident of Marchants Close questioned the need for a footpath into the new parkland and expressed concern about possible damage to the ancient woodland. It was explained that the path was intended as access to the parkland and the new 'Bovis' development and was part of the original planning. The Council shared the concern about the woodland and any path would be designed with the intention of avoiding damage.
- (6) A representative of the Hurstpierpoint Cricket Club asked what financial support might be available to improve the ground and pavilion at Fairfield Recreation Ground. The matter of possible access by unauthorised travellers was also raised. The Council advised that developer contribution s106 funds could possibly be available and the Club should approach the Parish and District Councils with its ideas. The Recreation Ground and Pavilion was owned by the District Council.

**9. Closing remarks by the Chairman:**

The Chairman thanked all those attending and noted that he was pleased to see public participation in many aspects of the local community. The meeting applauded. The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Chairman

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