

# PARISH OF WEST DEAN

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH 2017 AT 7PM IN THE MUSIC ROOM AT WEST DEAN COLLEGE

**Present:** Cllrs. I. Odin (Chairman), Mrs. U. Cochrane, S. Corbett, K. Goacher, D Kendall, B. Pearmaine, P. Rice, C Slade

**In attendance:** HL O'Callaghan, Clerk  
County Cllr. J. Hunt  
A. Barron, CEO, EJF  
P. Kirk & Miss C. Willams, Savills  
Ian Graham  
2 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from **Cllr Mrs S Pearmaine, District Councillor H Potter, Mrs G Moss**

### 2. West Dean C of E Primary School

In the absence of Mrs G Moss, Headteacher, Cllr Ian Odin reported on behalf of the school.

*The School Council meet every other Tuesday to discuss school issues which are then reported back to Class Councils. They have input, via Mrs Chilton, into staff meetings and Governor meetings. They communicate with parents via newsletters. Parents, Governors and teachers can consult pupils through the Council.*

*Since September 2016 as School Council, we have:*

- *Discussed the future of the chickens in the orchard*
- *Chestnut class reps have talked about Peer Buddies*
- *Shared our Cohort research focus with the classes*
- *Received a letter from the PTA regarding £100 to spend on playground equipment*
- *Prepared interview questions for the new teacher*
- *Taken part in the interview process for the new teacher*
- *Been round the school environment, inside and out, considering issues raised by a Health and Safety audit. Made the classes aware of these.*
- *Composed a letter to Mr Kirk, regarding a request for funding towards new ICT equipment*
- *Met with Claire Mitchell from the PTA, regarding our 'shopping list' for possible outside equipment*
- *Started the process of interviewing members of our school community for our website*

### 3. Alexander Barron ACA, Chief Executive, The Edward James Foundation

Mr Barron gave a powerpoint presentation (Appendix A) to the meeting outlining the strategic plans for the Foundation moving forward. He stressed that education is at the core of everything the Foundation does and it is important now to align the many arms of the Foundation to focus on sustainability whilst maintaining growth and quality. The College now has 80 full-time students and 5,500 part time students a year.

Following his presentation, Mr Barron took questions on whether any partnership is planned with the Weald and Downland museum to which he replied that a discussion was currently taking place and although he could not comment on specifics at this time he was certain that it was a like minded discussion looking the Foundation and the museum working more closely together.

Responding to a question regarding the raising of capital to fund the ongoing projects Mr Barron told the meeting that the Foundation had recently sold over 200 items totalling around £6 million, he stated that they were also considering a capital fundraising campaign and the possibility of borrowing or alternatively looking at financial investments. Mr Barron said that he had not ruled out selling properties on the Estate where it made sense to do so but at this time he was not looking to sell any houses.

#### **4. Minutes**

On a proposal by Cllr. Brodie, seconded by Cllr. Corbett it was unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors held on 9 March 2016 be approved. They were duly signed as a correct record.

#### **5. Chairman's Report from Cllr. Ian Odin**

Cllr Odin reported that the biggest concern to the Parish Council at this time was the Estate and the plans being taken by the Foundation to reposition the Estate in the future. Cllr Odin commented that he looks forward to input into the process and as such there is little more to report at this stage.

#### **6. Planning Committee Chairman's Annual Report from Cllr. Steve Corbett**

Cllr Corbett gave the following summarisation of the year:

*During the course of the year there were 15 Planning Applications validated or determined concerning West Dean and Chilgrove. Of these, three concerned Trees in a Conservation Area (Notifications only) and two more were for Pre-Planning advice (no decision required). For the rest, the Planning Committee made comments either in support or neutral, with no objections necessary. So all in all a quiet year. Most of the applications were uncontentious and of small scale. Any of note concerned:*

- *Conversion of Foresters Cottage West Dean for student accommodation – Approved*
- *Extension and conversions at Brick Kiln Farm House Chilgrove – Approved.*
- *Change of use for the Farm Office at Brick Kiln Farm Chilgrove – Pending decision.*

*Most notable of all was the application by the SDNPA to create an access point for the cycle path extension so visitors and residents in West Dean can actually use it. This was applied for in August last year, supported by the PC, and approved in October. However, work has just started this week (6 March), some fifteen months after the path itself was opened. The work is expected to last three weeks.*

*It is worth mentioning that members of the Parish Council, the local Primary School, and West Dean Estate, were all fully consulted and involved with providing this solution, unlike with the creation of the cycle path itself. It will be very interesting to see the effects of this once it is open. I will keep all interested parties up to date with any developments.*

## **7. Financial Report from the Clerk, HL O'Callaghan**

*Report from Clerk as follows:*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, Councillors, for those of you that don't know me I am the new Clerk for West Dean and have been in position since January. I hope you will bear with me as this is my first report for the Council.*

*Let me start by saying that I am pleased to report that for the 2015-16 accounts, once again there were no comments!*

*Whilst the Council did not increase the precept in 2016-17, I do have to report an increase for 2017-18 to £12,000.*

*Although savings have been made from reduced maintenance of the Recreation Field as the Council has relinquished a significant part of it back to the landowner, regrettably these are not enough to make up for the loss of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant and also the legal requirement to offer the Council's sole employee a pension.*

*Although the Council's balances are healthy, Councillors were keen that income and expenditure should broadly balance so that these reserves were not depleted over time.*

*The good news is that although our Precept will increase to £12,000, the amount that a Band D Council Tax payer will pay to the Parish Council in 2017-18 will only increase by £6.34 to £55.10.*

*The Council continues to manage its finances prudently, and significant capital projects only pursued when grants secured.*

*If there are any questions I will of course be happy to try, with my limited knowledge at this stage, to answer them*

## **8. Annual Report from County Councillor Jeremy Hunt, Member for Chichester North**

*Good evening Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*West Dean is the first of my parishes to hold its annual meeting so, although I can't believe it, another year has gone by since I gave my last annual report!*

*I have very much enjoyed representing the residents in my Division, particularly the residents of West Dean. This village is very lucky in having such a committed parish council and I'm sure the residents very much appreciate what you do for them. Mind you, I suspect it is rather like being a County Councillor, nobody really notices what you do until something goes wrong!!*

*As I said last year, West Dean is very lucky to have many of the essential elements that help make a thriving community - something that many communities have lost - you have a thriving shop, a pub, an active Church and a wonderful school. None of these things happen*

*by luck, they all take a great deal of hard work and effort, so I would urge everyone to value what you have and remember to support your parish councillors.*

*The County Council, like most organisations, is facing increasing financial pressures and so today we obviously cannot provide the full breadth of services we once did. It is therefore essential to ensure that local communities pull together and do as much as they can to support themselves, especially in the case of an emergency. The county council does a huge amount in supporting community volunteers, from providing flood relief advice, to providing support and training to volunteer groups and, as you will be discussing later, supporting your winter management plans.*

*Whilst talking about the County Council, I am sure you will have seen that at our recent budget meeting we approved an increase in our share of the Council Tax of 2% for adult social care and 1.95% for other services, giving a total increase of 3.95%. That represents an increase of £48.01 per annum for an average Band D tax payer - or an increase of just £0.92 per week.*

*I am pleased to say that we decided not to go for the full allowable increase of 3% for adult social care. Before the government made the announcement of an extra 1% we had, despite having to make savings this year of nearly £17m, a produced balanced budget. We felt that our residents are facing a tough year, with inflation continuing to rise, and with food and fuel prices also increasing, it would not be fair to add an additional 1% to the council tax, over and above the 3.95% already planned.*

*Despite the financial pressures we are under, we do have some really good news stories. For example:*

*We are increasing our net spending on both adult social care by £8.2m and children's services by just under £7m.*

*Following on from the £30m investment in our Better Roads Programme, we are now investing £11m in our Better Pavements Programme.*

*We have plans to invest £77m in our schools over the next few years*

*Moving to areas where we are supporting our communities:*

*We are continuing for another year with Operation Watershed funding - and locally West Dean has benefitted from two schemes; the clearing of the ditches alongside the Chilgrove Road - which definitely improved the situation on that road - and the repairing of the road drains on the A286 in the middle of the village. We are putting another £500k into the pot for next financial year, so if you have any other areas of concern I suggest you apply earlier rather than later.*

*I'm pleased to say that we are also continuing with three other community based grant schemes. These are:*

*the Members Big Society Fund, which is to support community projects for amounts up to £20,000*

*the Community Initiative Fund - once again to support community initiatives, but for helping with smaller projects, up to £2500,*

*and thirdly, our Small Grants programme This is for small grants up to £1000 for projects which support community wellbeing - supporting activities like afternoon tea clubs, and other initiatives which help encourage people out - thus particularly preventing social isolation.*

*Although you were part of a successful MBSF bid a few years ago, I don't believe that we have had any applications from this community to our CIF fund. However, I know you are looking to buy a defibrillator, so if you need any help then that is something we can definitely support. Apart from that, if anyone knows of any local groups or projects that need support, please take a look at our website. All the details of our grant funding can be found there - just type '**WSCC grants**' into your search engine and it will take you to the correct page.*

*Whilst talking about our website, I would encourage you to visit the site, especially our news and campaigns sections. I think you will be amazed at just how much the County gets involved in. Again, just type '**WSCC News and Campaigns**' into Google and it will find the site for you.*

*I must just now turn to the issue of the A27. I just want to say that I am extremely disappointed with the recent outcome - in effect we are back to square one. An initiative has now been launched to try and bring all sides together - in fact we had the first meeting on Monday - so that we can try and find some form of compromise. If we can all agree on this, then at least we might be able to bid for some simple form of junction improvements on the current route, which will be better than nothing.*

*Before I finish I just wanted to mention the fact that there are County Council elections coming up in May, and I wanted to confirm that I am putting myself forward to continue representing you for the next four years.*

*Since being your County Councillor, apart from supporting you in the various projects I have already outlined, I have been involved in promoting the extension of broadband to a majority of the parish, including most of Chilgrove. We are committing another £4m to extend it even further and the one area I am now campaigning for is Binderton.*

*Unfortunately, although we are spending the money, it is BT Openreach who decide where*

*the investment will give the best returns and currently Binderton isn't included. However, I will keep campaigning on that one.*

*I have also supported the PC to work with the County on your winter management plan, as well as supporting your application for some free salt bins - although one was delivered to the wrong location and promptly stolen! It was eventually replaced - at the correct location - but sadly not until after Jenny had retired.*

*Talking of Jenny, I also supported her in liaising with our highways department to ensure that the correct licenses were in place in order for the parish to reinstate the finger post at Stapleash.*

*Finally, I have also had the great pleasure of being a governor of West Dean school. I have really valued my time in helping to ensure that our younger generation get the best possible education, and I can say without contradiction, that all those involved with the school are very proud of its success. I hope that everyone in the village is also very proud of their 'local' school.*

*Oh yes! I nearly forgot one very important announcement - after fifteen months of campaigning I am pleased to say that the damaged road edge at the beginning of Hylters Lane is scheduled to be repaired later this month - all being well!*

*Thank you once again for all your support over the last four years, and I hope that as your County Councillor you feel that I have given you the necessary support. Hopefully therefore, I will continue to represent you for the next four.*

Cllr Hunt then dealt with a question regarding the Openreach wire in place on Hylters Lane. He replied that he had a very good team working on that and would ask them to get in touch directly on that matter.

9. There was no report from District in Cllr. Potters absence

**10. Traffic Action Committee Report from Cllr. Steve Corbett**

Cllr Corbett gave the following summarisation of the year:

*In connection with the Cycle Path Access as noted already, there had been an offer of funds for a village traffic study to improve safety crossing the A286. These funds ceased to be available, from both the SDNPA and WSCC.*

- *A small amount of funds made available by CDC under the New Homes Bonus scheme were therefore unused, but I am pleased to report that these were diverted for the use of installing signs at Binderton, which will be well received once actioned.*
- *No SID activity took place during the year; but there are encouraging signs that the Community Speedwatch Group could be re-activated given enough volunteers. Mr Ian Graham has already put himself forward for which we are grateful. More however are likely to be needed.*

- *Boxgrove Parish have been successfully using the Community SID and have been getting good results. West Dean PC have contributed a share in the cost of upgrading this and look forward to working more closely with Boxgrove and District Councillor Potter to make some progress.*
- *In June last year Cllrs Corbett and Mrs Pearmaine attended a Police Roadshow at the College. We learnt that the management of PSCOs was being re-arranged, PCSOs will have to reapply for their positions, and there will be fewer of them. We remain to be convinced that this will be effective.*

Cllr Corbett took a question regarding the Community SID and its possibly use in other places. He responded that in order to create a new siting for the SID it would need a risk assessment carried out and this was something previously done by the PSCO's which was why he had mentioned them earlier. Cllr Goacher suggested that where there is a national speed limit in place the SID cannot be used. In response Cllr Corbett clarified that the SID can be used but it is deemed to be ineffective but a junction like the one in question can be assessed as a hazard in its own right.

Cllr B Pearmaine volunteered to help with the SID Project and will speak further with Ian Graham.

## **11. Public Session**

There was discussion surrounding the speed and size of vehicles using some of the smaller roads, in particular the B2141. It was asked whether it was necessary for them to use these roads as it was not conducive to members of the public enjoying walking in the National Park. Much discussion was had around the state of the roads following use by big lorries. It was determined that the larger lorries are using the roads to access businesses and not because they are lost or being misled by GPS. It was recognised that speed however is an issue and the state of the repair of the roads is something that will be looked into with highways. It was pointed out that agricultural vehicles are getting bigger and are being directed along the smaller roads because of the railway bridge at West Dean just passed the school.

A member of the public questioned why agricultural vehicles had to use the roads at all and suggested that they should make use of the farmers lands and drive on these instead of the roads. A discussion ensued as to farmers swallowing costs for vehicles accessing their lands instead of the roads. Cllr Odin concluded the discussion by saying that this was not an issue that could or should be resolved within this particular forum.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.47pm.

Signed:

Chairman of the Council

