

Cuckfield Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting held at 8.00 pm on 10th September 2009

Present: Mr Salisbury (Chairman), Mrs Revell, Mrs King, Mrs Burgess, Mr Blanch, Mrs Macintyre, Mr Gilboy

In Attendance: Mrs Jones (Clerk), Mr P Bradbury (WSCC)

102 Public Question Time: There were no members of the public present

103 Apologies for Absence were received from Mr Mercer, Mr Gregory and Mr Gallagher

104 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest regarding any items on the agenda

105 Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July (previously circulated) were approved by the Council

106 Matters arising from the Minutes: The clerk reported as follows:

Minute 08/254.02: Cuckfield Urban Chain of Office: The District Council was currently unable to trace the original Urban District Council regalia but some further investigation was taking place. The Chairman considered that there may have been some confusion when the new Mid Sussex District Council was set up following the 1972 re-organisation of local government.

Minute 09/08: Chairman's Board of Honour: This had been re-placed and was now hanging in the office.

Minute 09/10: Risk Assessments: These have been completed and will be reviewed by each committee on an annual basis.

Minute 09/15: Staff Insurance: Following the incident in the churchyard, letters had now been sent to all members of staff advising them of their responsibilities.

Minute 69.3: Water Bowser: This has been purchased and is now in use by staff

Minute 72: Councillor Training: Response sent to NALC as agreed at last meeting

Minute 73: Land Purchase: This matter is on-going.

Minute 75: District Councillors: A written response had been received from the MSDC representatives. The Chairman stated that he had met with the WSCC & MSDC councillors but that there was a lack of interest from the Cuckfield District Councillors. Members considered that it was difficult for the MSDC councillors to represent the parish council views if they did not attend meetings. The Chairman agreed to contact them again.

107 Chairman's Report

107.1 Economic Development in Cuckfield: The Chairman reported that draft instructions had been given to consultants to look at how best to research economic/business development in Cuckfield. The research project would cost between £35,000 - £40,000 but this would be funded externally through SEEDA and the Gatwick Diamond. The consultants would be looking at the needs of local businesses and identifying the potential of attracting hi-tech, high value companies. The work would provide an understanding of the local economy, including information regarding the number of businesses run from home. The siting of the development would come at a later stage if the need was established. A

'Basepoint' scheme was running in Crawley that offered small units on a flexible basis for businesses and this could provide a model for development in the rural area in or around Cuckfield.. The role of the parish council would be to facilitate and to act as a catalyst for local business, not to act as the developer or business manager.

Members queried as to whether this was the type of development needed in Cuckfield and whether such a project would be supported by the community. Such a development could also increase the pressure for more housing. Small units could be of benefit but there was an existing supply of these in the local area where farmers had diversified and let units at reasonable rates on a short-term basis. Concerns were expressed over the use of consultants and SEEDA and whether their agenda would be different to that of the community.

After further discussion it was agreed that the Chairman would circulate more detailed information about the project. The matter would then be placed on the agenda of another meeting for full consideration and debate once members were fully advised of the proposals.

107.2 Transfer of Assets: The Chairman reported that a meeting was to be held shortly with MSDC but expressed concerns that the agenda seemed to focus on the management of MSDC assets by parish councils rather than the transfer of ownership of these assets.

108 Committee Reports

108.1 Planning Committee: The minutes dated 9th & 30th July, 24th August were noted by Council. As members were aware, both the development at Chatfield Road and for the new Baptist Chapel had been refused by the District Council.

108.2 Roads & Traffic Committee: A meeting was to take place with the new Highways Manager on 11th September following which more information would be available..

108.3 Environment Committee: The minutes dated 30th July were noted by Council. Mrs Burgess reported that the restoration work to the Observer Post was now underway. The grass in the Observer Field would be cut shortly by the WSCC contractors.

108.4 Finance Committee: Mrs Macintyre reported that the finances were under regular review and the reserves remained healthy.

108.5 Queen's Hall Committee: The number of weddings being held at the hall continued to rise. Information regarding the subsidence in the green room was awaited from the surveyor.

109 Schedule of Paid Cheques: The schedule of paid cheques, previously circulated, was approved by the Council

110 Production of Newsletter

The clerk was concerned that no communication had been received from the producer of the newsletter. It was possible that the Council would have to consider taking this back in house. It was hoped that the printing and distribution costs could be met through advertising.

111 Wooden Fingerpost in Broad Street

This post was currently maintained by a resident but was in need of replacement. Mr Bradbury reported that the issue of fingerposts would be discussed at the CLC meeting to be held the following week but that WSCC had no funding for replacement posts. The clerk reported that a quotation of £750 had been

received from the approved WSCC contractor for a new fingerpost.

112 Report the County Councillor

Mr Bradbury highlighted the lack of funds available to the County Council, the financial position of the Council was poor and would result in a reduction in services. The CLC meeting the following week would debate the ongoing development of Bolnore including the provision of social housing and the completion of the relief road. A re-organisation of the 'Special' schools was underway and again further information would be available at the CLC meeting. Tentercroft was not currently on the market but WSCC would be undertaking some grounds maintenance work shortly.

113 Publications: The following publications were available from the Clerk: Local Council Review; MSDC Reports; CLC Papers; Hate Incident Report Service; Partnership News; Health Trainer Scheme; AIRS Newsletter & Review; The Clerk; Safer Roads Partnership

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.