

Cuckfield Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting held on 15th December 2011

Present: Mr R Salisbury (Chairman), Mr N Page, Mr C Mercer, Mr A Burton, Mrs A King, Mr S Blanch, Mr G Darling, Mr P Harrison, Mrs S Burgess

In Attendance: Mrs F Jones (Clerk), Mr P Bradbury (WSCC), Mrs N Sage (Assistant)

227 Public Question Time: There were no members of the public in attendance

228 Apologies for Absence were received and accepted from Mr K Gregory and Mrs K Bourne.

229 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

230 Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The minutes of the meetings held on 15th September, as previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

231 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 142: Consultation on the Draft National Policy Planning Framework: The clerk confirmed that a response had been sent by the Parish Council to the DCLG.

Minute 144: Cuckfield Youth Club: The clerk reported that work on the business plan was ongoing.

Minute 146: Public Toilets in Broad Street: The clerk reported that following the work carried out by the contractors, the hygiene had improved considerably.

232 Committee Reports:

232.1 Planning Committee: The minutes dated 29th September, 20th October, 3rd & 17th November, 1st December were noted by Council. Mr Blanch reported that the Committee had consistently recommended refusal for the change of use of the dental practice in the High Street; that the legal documentation regarding the transfer of a 'ransom' strip of land in Broad Street was awaiting information from the solicitors; that the results of the Ardingly Road appeal were awaited and that the original application for the works at Pelham House had been granted on appeal.

232.2 Roads & Traffic Committee: The minutes dated 3rd November were noted by Council. Mr Mercer reported that the pelican crossing at London Lane had been approved by the CLC and thanked Mr Bradbury for his help in progressing this matter. A meeting had been held with the Traffic Consultant who had advised on the way forward with the other schemes. The priority list, as previously agreed, would be forwarded to the CLC for inclusion on the Infrastructure Plan at the meeting on 9th February. If approval was given by the CLC, progress could then be made with these plans. Mr Bradbury commented that due to the savings required of WSCC, there had been a backlog of TROs but these were now moving forward.

232.3 Environment Committee: The minutes dated 20th October were noted by Council

232.4 Finance Committee: The minutes dated 1st December were noted by Council. Mr Salisbury reported that at that meeting there had been considerable discussion regarding the works to the Green Room at the Queen's Hall and it had been recommended that, in view of the current financial climate, further investigation should be undertaken to the footings (and drains) to establish whether it would be possible to repair rather than re-build this structure. This would result in considerable savings, possibly entirely funded through the S106 monies. However, in view of the uncertainty, the Committee had recommended that a sum of £40,000 be allocated for this work with £20,000 from S106 and £20,000 from Parish Council reserves. It was noted that there was likely to be considerable pressure on reserves for other purposes and

it would be difficult to re-build this fund in the future. The possibility of taking out loans for works in the future, such as the Youth Club, and the need for a policy on this subject, was also briefly discussed.

232.5 Queen's Hall Committee: Mrs King reported that the kitchen and toilets would be redecorated shortly. It was noted that a pew, donation required, from Holy Trinity Church had been allocated by the PCC for the hall ante-room.

233 Reports from the County Councillor and the District Councillor

233.1 West Sussex County Council: Mr Bradbury circulated a copy of the latest WSCC Council Update. The pedestrian accident caused by the uneven road surface in Church Platt had been noted by the Highways Department for action. An increase in hgv movements through Cuckfield had been noted, it appeared that some of the signage was missing/inadequate and the Highways Department had agreed to look at this. Following this work, the Police would undertake to monitor the situation. It was noted that the WSCC Council Tax would be frozen for the forthcoming year but that large scale savings were required. There followed a discussion regarding the future of the Courtmeadow/Horsgate site. The difficulties of this site were recognised and it was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan was investigating the possibility of a Countryside Centre being established on this site.

233.2 Mid Sussex District Council: Mr Salisbury reported that, as with the County Council, the District was also required to make substantial savings. In order to meet their budget, parking charges would rise in the towns and there would also be an increase in the green bin charges. There had been reductions in staffing at the top levels and to executive pay but no front-line services would be affected. Car parking arrangements in the village would remain unchanged.

234 Schedule of Payments

The schedule of payments, previously circulated, was approved by the Council

235 Parish Council Grants

It was noted that £450 remained in the Parish Council grants budget for the current financial year.

A request had been received from Holy Trinity PTA for a contribution towards their library project. This would provide new facilities, using the existing space with an improved layout, and additional books. After discussion it was agreed that a sum of £300 be donated to this project.

A request had also been received for a grant of £500 for the Jubilee Committee towards the cost of the fireworks and programme. After further discussion it was agreed that a sum of £100 be granted immediately and that the Committee be asked to re-apply in the next financial year (after 1st April 2012) for the remainder of the funding.

236 Accounts and Precept for the Financial Year 2012/2013

The accounts for the year to date with a forecast for the end of the financial year and a budget for 2012/13 had been previously circulated. The Chairman reported that the current forecast projected a deficit of £7,000 at the year end although there was a potential for an increase in income. A general reserve of £53,000 with earmarked funds of £17,000 was therefore anticipated. The Finance & General Purposes Committee had recommended the budget for approval which it was noted included an increase of 2.5% in costs for the next financial year but, due to reduced expenditure elsewhere, would enable a nil rise in the precept. It was unanimously **resolved** that a precept of £134,820 be set for the financial year 2012/13.

237 Health & Safety Risk Assessments

The health & safety risk assessments previously approved by the Environment & Queen's Hall Committees were confirmed by Council

238 Glebe Road Allotments

Following the request of the Parish Council that the Glebe Road Allotments be transferred from Mid Sussex District Council to the Parish Council, a letter (previously circulated) had been received from the District Council stating that this transfer would be subject to a payment of £18,500. It was unanimously agreed that this offer not be accepted. The matter would be followed up by the Chairman.

239 Administration of Cuckfield Cemetery

The Chairman outlined the current arrangements for the administration of the cemetery which were now under review. As at present, the Parish Council would remain ultimately responsible for the cemetery with oversight of the procedures. Resources would be provided as required to enable the staff to provide scrutiny of this process. As agreed at the Environment Meeting, a tender document for the outsourcing of this work had been circulated and it was agreed that this be advertised in the new year.

240 Neighbourhood Plan

Mr Page reported that good progress was being made. A consultation day had taken place last month and further two events had been attended by the Group. The questionnaires were now closed and a good response achieved. Consultation had taken place with a number of local groups including Holy Trinity School, Borde Hill and residents groups. A strong group of skilled volunteers had come forward with expertise in planning, sustainability and ecology. A landscape character assessment had also been commissioned. The drafting of the plan would start in the new year. On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman thanked Mr Page and all the volunteers for their work on the Plan.

Signed _____