

CUCKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at 8.15 pm on 15th January 2009

Present: Mr R Salisbury (Chairman), Mr K Gregory (Vice-Chairman), Mr S Blanch, Mr S Gilboy, Mr C Mercer, Mrs S Burgess, Mrs A King, Mr P Gallagher, Mrs J Revell and Mrs R Macintyre
In Attendance: Mrs F Jones (Clerk)

Public Question Time

Several members of the public were present with regard to Item 12 on the agenda regarding ownership and access to Horsgate Lane. Residents raised issues of the uncertain ownership of the Lane, the signage erected by the Parish Council, poor maintenance of the surface, problems caused by parents collecting children from Warden Park School and also the increased amounts of traffic that in particular were giving rise to concerns for the large numbers of children who played in the Lane. A Land Registry search had confirmed that there was no registered owner of the residential section of the Lane although this did not preclude an unregistered owner.

197 Declarations of Interest: Mr Mercer declared a prejudicial interest in Horsgate Lane as a member of his family had access to the Lane. Mrs Macintyre declared an interest in Horsgate Lane as a resident of The Brambles that would be affected by development in Chatfield Road.

198 Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The minutes of the meetings held on 13th November, as previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

The Chairman proposed, and it was unanimously resolved, to change the order of the agenda and to bring forward Item 12 regarding Horsgate Lane. Mr Mercer then left the meeting

199 Ownership and Access to Horsgate Lane

The clerk outlined the background to the Parish Council's involvement in Horsgate Lane stating that in 1992 the Parish Council had undertaken some repairs to the lane and had erected a Cuckfield Parish Council notice warning of the danger of children playing in the lane. The top end of the Lane had been resurfaced when the Caffyns Garage site had been redeveloped and no further work had subsequently been undertaken by the Parish Council. The clerk was not aware of legal position regarding ownership of the lane. Councillors discussed as to whether the work undertaken in 1992 and the subsequent signage would enable the Council to claim ownership or whether the lack of ongoing maintenance would render a claim invalid. It was possible that the Parish Council could own the road but the residents would be liable for the maintenance. For example, in Courtmead Road, the Parish Council owned the road but residents had a legal agreement for all the maintenance costs. There was also the additional complication of the development in Chatfield Road which would result in additional pedestrian and vehicle movements, to the detriment of residents in Horsgate Lane. It was also noted that one property had made a new access onto Horsgate Lane and moved their boundary fence. Concerns were raised that this was a difficult issue to resolve as the ownership was unclear but such action could lead to more vehicles parking in the lane. After further discussion it was agreed that professional advice be sought regarding the ownership and maintenance of the lane. Advice to be sought from the County Council and, if necessary, from the solicitors. It proposed, seconded and unanimously **resolved** that subject to positive legal advice and subject to financial considerations, the Parish Council would seek to take possession of Horsgate Lane. Mr Mercer then returned to the meeting.

200 Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked Mr Gregory for organising the Christmas dinner which had been much appreciated by all those in attendance. The Chairman had attended a recent meeting of the CLC when S106 funding

for the proposed cyclepath to Warden Park school had been discussed. The report had stated that all of the funds remaining from the Meadowlands development be allocated to this project but, following the Chairman's intervention, it had been agreed that this would only be a "contribution" to the scheme. The meeting had also discussed a partnership scheme for replacement fingerposts and a rural trial for fibre optics. The issue of parking at Whitemans Green had been discussed and a survey was to be undertaken to see if improvements could be made. It was understood that the Sports Clubs were in consultation with regard to extending the lease of the new playing field area to enable them to attract funding for more parking. The new parking regulations in Cuckfield had been approved, subject to a possible increase in the white lines by the access to Northern Breach. The Chairman had also attended a 3-Tiers meeting (WSCC, MSDC & Haywards Heath Town Council) when strategic housing had been discussed. Of the eight sites under discussion five were within the boundaries of the rural parishes. A 3-Tier meeting had now been arranged with the parishes neighbouring Haywards Heath when it was hoped a 'vision' statement would be agreed. Information had been received that the developers were not going to include the footpath running from Chatfield Road to the primary school. However, following various interventions, this would be subject to further discussion.

201 Committee Meetings

201.1 Planning Committee: The minutes of the meetings held on 20th November, 11th December were noted by the Council. The Chairman reported that the plans had been refused for Tentercroft; no further information regarding the future of the site was currently available. Other decisions of interest were the refusal of UPVC windows at Tee Vee House in the High Street and the refusal for the conversion of the stable cottage behind the Rose & Crown on the grounds that the room sizes would be too small.

201.2 Roads & Traffic Committee: Matters of interest had been discussed earlier in the meeting. It was noted that plans for 20 mph zones by both schools during morning and afternoon times had received approval. It was noted that new arrangements in the Council would result in fewer meetings for this committee

201.3 Environment Committee: The minutes dated 20th November were noted by the Council. Mr Gregory reported that the clerk had circulated an email regarding additional works required to the clock face. It was agreed that this work was essential with funds to be taken from reserves if required. New dog fouling signs had been ordered for the churchyard and a donation received from the Independent State towards the costs of new Christmas lighting. Mrs Burgess reported that an application had been made to WSCC for a matched grant of £250 for additional planting in the Observer Field.

201.4 Finance & Queen's Hall Committee: The minutes dated 11th December were noted by the Council. Mrs Macintyre reported that items discussed had included the preservation of the burial registers and the employment of an assistant for the clerk. It was agreed that the start date would be dependent on the candidate. A person specification and job description was now required. With regard to the Queen's Hall, it was noted that new arrangements had been put in place and a separate Committee had been reformed to deal with the Hall. Mrs King reported that the decoration of the main hall was complete and the clerk was now in the new office (in the old library). A discussion followed regarding prints for the office and it was agreed that the cost of the proposed reproductions was too high and could not be justified at present, the decision would be deferred until the new financial year. There was an issue regarding the use of the old office and landing by the Museum but it was agreed that this be discussed at the next meeting when all councillors were fully appraised of the situation.

202 Community Bus

A door-to-door service to Burgess Hill from Staplefield, Cuckfield and Ansty had been funded by a grant from Action in Rural Sussex (AIRS) and Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council. The funding from AIRS was for a one-off grant and Ansty had now approached Cuckfield for a grant of £1000 for the next financial

year. It was understood that residents were taking advantage of the bus and it was agreed that publicity be given to the service in the next newsletter and information sought regarding user numbers. It was agreed that a sum of £1000 be allocated for one year towards the cost of the bus.

203 Budget and Precept for the Forthcoming Financial Year

The budget and precept, as recommended by the Finance Committee, had been circulated to all members. A discussion followed regarding replacement chairs for the Hall but it was agreed that this would have to await the end of the year. New gates were also required for the churchyard and the cost of these was awaited. The level of reserves was critical and any additional expenditure would be dependent on this figure at year end. The precept agreed by the Finance Committee would increase the amount by 26% from the previous year. A report from the Chairman advising residents of the proposed increase in the parish precept had been included in the newsletter circulated to all households and no feedback had been received by any councillors. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously **resolved** that a precept of £134,820.00 be set for the forthcoming financial year.

204 Schedule of Paid Cheques

The schedule of paid cheques, previously circulated, was approved by the Council

205 Freedom of Information Scheme for the Parish Council

The new model Freedom of Information Publication Scheme had been circulated by the Clerk. It was unanimously **resolved** to adopt the Scheme.

206 Parish Council Training Policy

The Parish Council Training Policy statement had been circulated by the clerk. The chairman stated that it was now a requirement for Quality Parish Councils to ensure that all members and staff undertook training on a regular basis. Councillors requested that SALC give earlier notification of training events and that arrangements be made, possibly on a joint parish basis, for a local training event.

207 Publications

The following publications were noted by the Council: NHS Commissioning Plan; WSCC Transport Directory; Older People's Council Newsletter; MSDC Members Allowances; CPRE Fieldwork; MSDC Directory of Services, CLG 'Communities in Control' Consultation Paper.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.