

FELBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month (except January and August)
at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday, 6th April 2017 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall

Present: Mr. Jeremy Clarke (Chairman) Mr. Brian Apps
Mrs Linda Hainge Mr Ian McBryde
Mrs Joan Harwood Ms. Georgina Chapman
Mrs Patricia Slatter (in attendance)

The Chairman introduced himself and welcomed fifteen people to the meeting including Parish Councillors.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Mrs. Bridget Huntington; Mr Ken Harwood (District Councillor); Lynda and John Railton; Mrs. Ros White; County Councillor Michael Sydney did not attend the meeting.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 7th April 2016 were noted having been signed previously.

3. **MATTERS ARISING** – None

4. **PRESENTATION BY JOHN WELLS, WARDEN, HEDGECOURT NATURE RESERVE**

Chairman Jeremy Clarke introduced John Wells and thanked him for attending.

John Wells began his presentation by saying that Hedgecourt Nature Reserve was the most important wetland reserve in East Surrey. The 65 acre site is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust in agreement with Natural England. It is one of 4000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in England. Those managing, working and volunteering on the reserve are struggling with a shortage of funds following a reduction in funding by Surrey County Council. The ancient Mill Pond and Lake provide a habitat for a wide range of wildlife including 19 different types of mammals; 5 amphibians; 69 birds; 18 dragonflies; 17 beetles; 16 butterflies and 141 moths as well as 122 flowering plants and 17 trees.

The role of the Warden is one of conservation including repairing damage; removing litter; removing saplings from glades so plants can survive and maintaining footpaths. The area floods regularly so boardwalks are essential to allow continued access. Grants from Felbridge Parish Council covered the cost of buying more boards which were placed by volunteers. 4" green Oak posts are driven into the subsoil and oak treads screwed into place. Residents are welcome to walk around the Reserve to see the wide range of animals and vegetation and make use of the boardwalks subsidised by the Parish Council and made by volunteers.

5. **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Following on from an excellent presentation by Community First Responders and Cllr Michael Sydney's generous offer of funding, a defibrillator has now been installed outside the Village Hall. The instructions are on the cabinet, and specify that you must call 999 to get the code to open the cabinet. Whilst we hope that it won't be required it is good to know that the facility is available to all residents and visitors to the village.

FPC are continuing to review and implement items from the Community Survey. The trial of a Portaloo in the Village Hall grounds was a great success last year and we will hire one again for this year. We have also installed a new fence along the back of the woodland behind the Village Hall to make it less likely that young children will run out onto the Copthorne Road.

The Parish Council website continues to increase the level of information that is available regarding the Village and The Parish Council. The address is www.felbridge-pc.org.uk, please let us know what else you would like to see on the site. This includes a Planning Application tool that allows you to easily find the details of planning applications within the Village.

The condition of our roads is still very poor in some places, with regular areas being repaired and breaking up shortly afterwards. We continue to press Surrey Highways who are responsible for our roads to improve the situation, unfortunately our County Councillor has not attended many recent Council Meetings and therefore has not taken our concerns back to Surrey Highways. We have therefore contacted Surrey County Council direct to be able to discuss our concerns. You will find the current Highway defects lists on the new Parish Council website.

As in previous years, we have had a number of significant planning matters that have raised local concerns. I will try to give a summary of where we are today regarding these. There were two applications totalling 56 houses south of Copthorne Road and Crawley Down Road. Both had been granted consent by Mid Sussex District Council but those consents have now expired and fresh applications would have to be submitted for determination. The entrances to these sites are in Tandridge District and the entrance at 11a Crawley Down Road was refused by TDC but an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate granted consent for the access. The entrance at 17 Copthorne Road was also refused but the Planning Inspector for the appeal supported the rejection including within the reasons the cumulative impact upon the already severely congested Star Junction. The proposed development at Gibbshaven Farm in Mid Sussex was also refused by the Planning Inspectorate including within the reasons the cumulative impact upon the already severely congested Star Junction. These last two decisions by the Planning Inspectorate are significant as they support the view that traffic congestion within the Village is severe and further development, even on a small scale, will make this worse.

The other major local change in planning terms is the adoption of the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan. The CDNP specifies that the land in Worth parish abutting Felbridge (Gibbshaven Farm area) is to be left as open green space to separate the villages of Felbridge and Crawley Down. The EGNP has designated the land between Copthorne Road and Crawley Down Road south to Felbridge Water as being a strategic gap to prevent coalescence of Felbridge into East Grinstead. Thus these Neighbourhood Plans provide legal planning protection to these open areas abutting our Village, this will significantly reduce the likelihood of these areas being developed within the next 10 years.

A negative impact of even small scale development within the village is the congestion caused by construction traffic. TDC and Surrey Highways work together to put planning conditions on developers about where they can park and site traffic management. Unfortunately developments such as at Little Eden had no such conditions applied as it was granted consent on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate rather than by TDC. Our Clerk has worked incredibly hard to try to encourage the developer to take reasonable actions to reduce the impact of their site upon local residents. However, they have not taken positive actions and FPC have had to involve Surrey Police to enforce responsible parking at the junction of Crawley Down Road and Copthorne Road. We will continue to closely monitor the site, but have little ability to improve it other than to notify the relevant authorities.

A positive outcome of development within the Village is the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) within Tandridge. This levy is paid by developers who increase the number of dwellings on a site, and is a direct means of providing funding for improvements to local infrastructure which are needed to meet the increased number of residents. This year the Parish Council will be receiving over £11,000 to support improvements, Tandridge will be receiving £65,000 from development in Felbridge and those funds are prioritised to also be expended on local improvements within the District Council's control. We would like to know if you have any specific local infrastructure improvements that are within our control or the District Council's control. Please note that Highways and Pavements are under the control of the County Council.

Last year at this meeting you heard about Tandridge's Local Plan, this has progressed slowly during the last year and their latest proposal is to allocate a portion of the Green Belt for a Garden Village to deliver the necessary housing for the District, rather than risk lots of small Green Belt areas being developed inefficiently. The single consolidated development would secure large infrastructure projects needed to support it and the immediate area, where the smaller developments cannot achieve this.

Our response to the consultation was to reject a proposal to build 8 houses on land to the East of the A22 as we strongly believe that small level of housing can be achieved by infill within the Village rather than consuming the Green Belt. I would encourage you to respond to further Local Plan consultations to ensure your District Council know what their residents want.

The Parish Council has given financial support over the last year to Felbridge and Sunnyside Cricket Club, St. Catherine's Hospice, CCTV improvements at the Village Hall and East Surrey Museum. Please remember that we can provide funds to support groups in the local area. To consider your requests for funding, you need to provide us with details of what the group does for the local area and what you want the funding to achieve.

Finally I wish to thank all of our Councillors who give their time voluntarily to your Parish Council. I also want to thank Parish Clerk Pat Slatter for her significant input during the past year. I would also like to mention Brian, our Responsible Finance Officer who does a wonderful job. Thank you Brian.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

4th May 2017

Copies sent to:- all Parish Councillors, District Councillor, County Councillor, Felbridge School, Surrey Police, Felbridge School Governors.