

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

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MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Tuesday 17th May 2022 in the Village Hall, High Street, Fletching (7 - 8.05pm).

PRESENT: Councillors C Rothery (Chairman), D Greenish (Vice-Chairman), R Borton, N Collum, R Hannay, K Minch, A Shaw and W Constantinou.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO) and Councillor R Galley (ESCC / WDC).

Members of the Public in Attendance: 17

APOLOGIES: An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Kerwood

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Chris Rothery welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the parish councillors and the new clerk. The working groups and councillor responsibilities were reported to the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 17 MAY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last annual parish meeting held on 17th May 2021 were a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Clerk and RFO, Gabriella Paterson-Griggs, gave a presentation on the income and expenditure for the 2021/22 financial year. She explained that the majority of the Parish Council's income was received from the precept which had not increased for the 2021/22 year. It was also reported that there was a small income received from the Burial Ground and match funding for the fingerposts from ESCC.

In respect of expenditure for the year it was stated that there had been a higher than usual amount spent on maintenance due to badger deterrent works having to be undertaken in the burial ground. Grants were given to Fletching Recreation Ground, the Fletching Parochial Church Council, The Royal British Legion and a tree to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

A breakdown of the income and expenditure was provided.

Councillor Chris Rothery explained that the Council had resolved to increase the precept for the forthcoming year by 3.2%. This was due to the increased costs for contracts etc with the example of the insurance premium for the Council increasing by over £300 for the past two years.

4. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR

Councillor Rothery gave the highlights of the past year as follows:

- A Covid volunteer support programme was maintained during the course of the covid lockdown.
- The process of registering land belonging to Fletching Parish Council had continued.
- A public meeting was held to highlight the latest news on the Local Plan and the latest SHELAA had how it impacted the Parish.
- 2 further fingerposts had been renovated across the Parish with match-funding from ESCC for each post, including the finger post at Splaynes Green.
- The work to restore the Pump House had been undertaken and completed.
- The Council planted an English Oak tree as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- The Parish achieved a Silver Gilt Award in the Parish in Bloom competition for 2021, its highest award yet.
- Work was commissioned and completed to remove the badger sett from the Burial Ground and badger exclusion fencing was installed.
- A number of moles were removed from the Burial Ground
- The Council was working with the Fletching Ukrainian Support Group
- A new Clerk and RFO was appointed in November 2021.

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Parking Working Group

Councillor Ross Borton explained that a Working Group had been set up to look at the parking issues within Fletching village. He reported that those at the meeting had agreed that the parking issues in the village, from the recreation ground on one side through to Clinton Lodge on the other, had become critical and presented a potential danger to public safety. It was also agreed that any solutions needed to be a combination of enforceable parking restrictions, along with the creation of additional parking facilities. The Parish Council was working with Councillor Galley to try and take the issues forward with ESCC.

Fletching CE Primary School

Councillor Richard Hannay reported to the meeting that there were now 87 pupils on the role at Fletching School and that two Ukrainian children were attending. He explained that since the school had become part of the Bluebell Federation the sporting opportunities had increased. He also stated that because the staff at both schools operate as a single teaching body the quality of teaching improved across the Federation. It was noted that the Federation was open to opportunities that might arise with other schools wishing to join it in the future.

Planning Applications

Councillor Chris Rothery explained that the Parish Council had been consulted on 42 planning applications over the last year which was slightly down on the 2020/21 year. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions only 25 sites had been able to be visited but comments had been submitted to the District Council on all the applications received. The applications mainly related to house extensions, garage extensions and swimming pools with some new builds such as at Acorn Garage and on the A272 at Piltdown. He also reported that the Parish Council is represented at meetings with Wealden District Council where the Parish views on the Local Plan and proposed SHELAA sites were reflected.

5. REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR ROY GALLEY

Councillor Roy Galley explained to the meeting about the local authority budgeting three-year plan. He reported that the current bin strike was due to continue until 11th June 2022. It was noted that there were 1300 Ukrainian refugees due to be housed in East Sussex.

In respect of the SHELAA there was nothing new to add but he stated that it was unlikely that there would be a major amount of development in the centre of Fletching. He reported that the main area of development would be down the A22 south of Ridgewood in the Little Horsted area.

The parking issue had been raised with ESCC officers who had expressed the opinion that as there was no-one to enforce any restrictions there was not any point in implementing them. Councillor Galley stated that the issue needed to be taken further. He also explained that Wealden does not belong to the County parking scheme as if it did then it would have to charge for parking - this affected the enforcement ability within the District.

An update on the new Leader of Wealden District Council was given and it was noted that Councillor Galley was no longer a Portfolio Holder and had not been given a place on any of the Council's committees.

Questions were asked in respect of:

Planning – why Uckfield was the area being chosen for further development. Councillor Galley explained he did not know why that was the case.

Highway repairs – whether there had been any success in getting the roads in the parish repaired. Councillor Galley reported that he had been round the Parish with a senior highways steward and had highlighted to them all the areas that needed work. These have been put forward by the Highways steward but the whole process takes a long time and the final decision on where the money is spent is not within their gift. He stated that he was considering getting a petition together across his County Division to try and get improvements to the roads although to be fair there had been some patching works and pothole repairs carried out.

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6. GUEST SPEAKER – MATT JARVIS, PCSO SUSSEX POLICE

Unfortunately, Matt Jarvis did not attend the meeting. His apologies were received after the meeting.

7. PARISH OBJECTIVES 2022-23

The Parish objectives for 2022-23 were reported as:

- To continue as an efficient and effective Parish Council with trained knowledgeable councillors and a trained clerk.
- To update parishioners as to the developments of the Wealden District Local Plan and associated planning implications.
- To work towards having a parking solution agreed for Fletching High Street.
- To effectively manage Fletching Recreation Ground.
- To provide a well-run Burial Ground for the Parish.
- To complete the restoration of the fingerposts in the Parish.
- To continue to support local community groups, charities and the residents of Fletching Parish
- To support the Fletching Recreation Ground Committee to provide a defibrillator at the recreation ground.
- To replace the rotten bollards at Splaynes Green and complete works to the phone box.
- To arrange the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations for the Parish.

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Fingerpost at Shortbridge – it was confirmed that the fingerpost at Shortbridge/Buckham Hill was next on the list to be replaced.

There were no further questions but thanks was given to all the parish councillors for all their hard work over the past year.

9. CLOSE OF MEETING

Councillor Damian Greenish thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for giving feedback to the Parish Council which was immensely helpful.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm