



Minutes of the Chalvington with Ripe Parish Annual Meeting (APM) held on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 6.00pm at the Hayton Baker Hall

There were 16 residents in attendance including the Chair Cllr Conway, Vice Chair Cllr Dunbar-Dempsey and councillors Pankhurst, Ruddock-West, Ward and White. Representatives of outside groups also attended.

### **1. Welcome by the Chair**

Cllr Conway welcomed all to the meeting and reported that this was the first face-to-face APM since the Covid restrictions were lifted. She thanked the many volunteers in the villages who provide very valuable local services to the community. They give their time to supporting many in the villages and she was very grateful for their contribution.

### **2. Reports from Councillors**

The Chair referred to her report which was available, in advance, on the parish council website. Her report is attached at the end of these minutes. No questions were raised.

### **3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Dashfield.

### **4. To accept the meeting notes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

The Chair asked for any comments on the draft minutes. No comments were received from those at the meeting, but the Chair referred to correspondence from a resident that suggested various amendments to the minutes. The resident had agreed to send the Clerk a recording of the previous meeting to support his proposed amendments. The Chair suggested that the minutes be reviewed in light of the proposed comments and be presented for approval at the next APM. No objections to this were received from those attending.

### **5. Reports from outside groups and associations**

- **Lunch Club** – Gill Ross gave an inspiring presentation on the lunch and coffee mornings held in the parish. From a modest start (from her living room 10 years ago), the volunteer service now provides a coffee morning at Ripe Village Stores every week and a monthly lunch at the Yew Tree pub. The pub provides a wonderful meal and only charges 25p per head which is great value for those attending. Demand did drop during the pandemic however many lonely people value the opportunity to socialise at these sessions. Gill is supported by many marvellous volunteers and is ably assisted by Pat Appleby. The service is expanding to include the Mustard Seeds at Laughton. Gill asked residents to contact her about the service by calling 811444. The Chair thanks Gill for her most valuable service to the community that provides a wonderful opportunity for residents to socialise.

- **Nursery** - Kate Fleming (Principal at the Ripe Nursery School) updated the meeting on the activities of the Nursery. Despite Covid, the Nursery did not close during lockdown and continued to provide a valuable service to the community. Two Inspections had been carried out during the year. The Inspection at the Laughton Nursery in November 2021 went well, and Kate was delighted to report that the Ripe Nursery received an “outstanding” Inspection Report in January 2022. Given the last inspection was 6 years ago and that the inspection regime had changed substantially, she was thrilled for the staff and children to receive this accolade. Kate thanked the Village Hall Committee and Revd. Geoffrey Smith (Rector of Laughton, Ripe and Chalvington) for their wonderful support over the last 12 months. The Chair congratulated Kate for the superb Inspection result and thanked her for the report.
  
- **The Parish of St John the Baptist Ripe with St Bartholomew Chalvington** - Revd. Geoffrey Smith (Rector of Laughton, Ripe and Chalvington) referred to his report which was available, in advance, on the parish council website. His report is attached at the end of these minutes. In addition to his report, he advised that 150 trees will be planted as part of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The Chair thanked him for his report.
  
- **Ripe and Chalvington Village Hall Annual Report 2022-2023** – Professor Brian Hill (Chairman of the Village Hall Committee) referred to his report which was available, in advance, on the parish council website. His report is attached at the end of these minutes. In addition to his report, he advised that a “Cook for Ukraine” fund raising event held at the Hall had raised over £1,300 for UNICEF. The Chair thanked him for his report.
  
- **Ripe And Chalvington Litter Watch Group** - Professor Brian Hill (Litter Watch Coordinator) referred to his report which was available, in advance, on the parish council website. His report is attached at the end of these minutes. The Chair thanked him, and the litter watch volunteers for their excellent work
  
- **Footpaths** - James Robertson referred to his report which was available, in advance, on the parish council website. His report is attached at the end of these minutes. In addition to his report, he advised that he would be grateful if residents, when reporting footpath issue, could take a photograph and send it to either himself or the Clerk. The Chair thanked him for his report.
  
- **Parish Council reports.**
  - Cllr Dunbar Dempsey reported on planning in the Parish. Her report is attached at the end of these minutes;
  - Cllr White gave a report on the Community Speedwatch initiative. The Clerk also updated the meeting on the availability of the speed gun which should arrive in the next few weeks. The Clerk also encouraged residents to join the Speedwatch team;
  - Cllr Pankhurst advised that he is the parish council representative on the Village Hall Committee;

- Cllr Ruddock-West reported that the parish council had asked him to be the lead on the A27 bypass/upgrade issues. He reported that a potential threat remains as National Highways are reviewing possible route options for an A27 bypass that could impact the parish. In October 2021, some local residents were contacted by National Highways to request a survey of their land. Concern was expressed by these residents over these proposed activities and the parish council wrote to the Agency objecting to the offline route proposals. He also advised that a group of local parish councils had agreed a common approach in objecting to the offline scheme; and
- Cllr Ward advised that the emergency plan will be updated by the Clerk.

Cllr Pankhurst asked why the Ripe and Chalvington Forum/Community Association were not invited to the meeting. Cllr White reminded him that the APM was a meeting of parishioners and not a parish council meeting. All residents could attend the APM and no invitation was required.

## **6. Public session**

The meeting opened up to parishioners so they could express opinions on subjects related to the parish.

- A resident asked for an update on the A27 bypass proposals. Cllr Dunbar-Dempsey referred to Cllr Ruddock-West's previous report. He reminded those present that the parish council's position is to oppose an offline route and support a refurbishment of the existing A27;
- The Chair asked the Ripe Nursey Principal if speeding vehicles continued to present a danger to those being dropped off and collected at the Nursery. The Principal suggested that this was still an issue and that an advisory sign had blown down in the recent storm. Cllr White agreed to replace the sign;
- A resident thanked Cllr Ruddock-West for his swift action in resolving an issue with a fallen tree; and
- A resident suggested that the previous Zoom APM was better attended than the face-to-face meeting that night. He also thanked a local resident for her work in preparing wreaths for the memorial services. He then referred to the parish council budget for wreaths and suggested that the money available for wreaths had not been paid over the last two years. He found it hard to understand why a small parish council had to spend over £12,000 to pay the Clerk which did not make economic sense to him. He suggested that the parish council spend less on elections. He recalled that in the past, people took turns on the parish council and at the next 2023 election, the cost of elections could be £3,000 whereas the parish council had only set aside £500.

The Chair thanked all for coming

Meeting Closed at 18:47pm

# CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY

### 2022

#### Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council: Chairman's Report 2021-2022

**Covid 19** Covid continues to affect the way we operate. Zoom and Teams remain the way most business with Wealden Council and other official bodies is conducted. Most staff are not back in their offices yet. Although infection continues, regrettably CRPC has no power to reinstate Zoom meetings.

**Planning** This has been a major concern for CRPC over the last year. Cllr Dunbar Dempsey will report on objections by many parish councils to over development in the area. She will also give an update on solar farm applications.

**Speeding** Cllr White organised a Community Speedwatch initiative and a number of parishioners were trained in the use of a used speed gun donated by the police. Our new speed gun has just been delivered. We are particularly concerned about traffic speeding by the village hall at the times when nursery school children are taken to school and when they are collected. This issue has been discussed with the Principal Kate Fleming. CRPC is also aware of damage to verges planted with grass and flowers at approaches to the village. This has been discussed at a Zoom meeting with Highways.

**A27 and Dual Carriageway**– Cllr Ruddock West leads on this issue and keeps a close eye on proposed improvements to the A27, and the frequently raised issue of a proposed new dual carriageway from Lewes to Polegate.

**Ripe Nursery School** flourishes and has gained praise from OFSTED. It is a great pleasure to see children playing outdoors with teachers and assistants. Inside the hall, councillors enjoy the colourful and creative work produced by the children, on the Mondays we are there for meetings.

**Village Hall Committee** Our thanks to the Village Hall committee for their work in organising events post Covid.

**Litter Watch Team** Our thanks to all those under the leadership of Professor Hill who do the clearing up. New legislation allowing domestic building waste to be taken to refuse collection centres without charge could help stop fly tipping.

**Lunch Club** Thanks to Gill Ross and her team who organise lunches at the Yew Tree. The marquee there helps them to socially distance when necessary.

**Footpaths** Thanks to our footpath officer who reports any problems with obstructions to paths, poorly maintained stiles etc. You can contact him or the Clerk via the web site if you have anything to report.

**CIL** – a set of wooden bicycle posts has been installed. It is hoped that after the island improvements are completed, with a bench provided for all visitors, cyclists will respect this new infrastructure and not obstruct the new sitting area with bicycles.

**Deanland** Cllr Dashfield has kindly been in touch with the The Deanland Bowls Club and the Petanque group. Residents from Ripe and Chalvington who would like to use their facilities should contact Mrs Joe Parsons, Captain of the Bowls Club on 01825 873660. Coaching sessions are available. For use of the Petanque pitches please contact Mr Bruce Peapell on 01825 872262. Note: FLAT SHOES must be worn.

**Thanks to** County Councillor Nick Bennett and District Councillor David Watts for their help and support during the year.

**Thanks to** Parish Councillors for their hard work throughout the year and to our excellent Clerk Paul Richards for ensuring we follow due process and the Code of Conduct for councillors.

# **CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

## **The Parish of St John the Baptist Ripe with St Bartholomew Chalvington**

The Church of England's provision for worship in Ripe and Chalvington has for many years now been arranged under one ecclesiastical unit consisting of the churches of Laughton, Ripe and Chalvington with one priest covering the three churches. However this has involved working with two Parochial Church Councils (one at Laughton and one at Ripe with Chalvington) with two sets of churchwardens, treasurers, and administration.

It has been a pleasure for me since my arrival to see how these two parishes have generally worked together in providing worship and other church activities and a frustration for all this to have to be duplicated organizationally.

As from the beginning of May 2022 this has now been resolved by the Church Commissioners by creating the new single parish of 'Laughton, Ripe and Chalvington' with just the one Church Council governing it. We shall now, all the more easily, plan our future activities in presenting the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the residents in the three villages and in Deanland, together as one church.

Covid lockdowns and restrictions have not prevented us from being able to keep our churches open with suitable facilities available and even when church services were not possible we were able to provide streamed services which were accessed from as far afield as Europe and Africa!

We shall provide a 'Service of Thanksgiving for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee' suitable for all residents to attend on Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am in Ripe church.

*The Revd. Geoffrey Smith, Rector of Laughton, Ripe and Chalvington*

2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2022

# CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022

### *Ripe and Chalvington Village Hall Annual Report* *2022-2023*

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

This has been another difficult year due to the COVID pandemic. With the exception of the pre-school, most activities had to cease, with the result that our income has again suffered, whilst ongoing costs for maintenance, heating, repairs etc have increased. For the second year running, no grant was received from the Parish Council to help meet these costs. With the easing of lockdown restrictions, things have thankfully improved in the last three months.

In order to foster community spirit, the Committee has organised a series of events since Christmas. These included the Annual Village Quiz, a talk on Ripe in Roman times and an evening devoted to Ripe at War. All events were well attended and feedback was positive.

The school has continued to operate successfully and Kate and her team should be congratulated on receiving an 'Outstanding' rating from OFSTED. It was gratifying to learn that the facilities and the standard of maintenance provided by the Village Hall were a contributory factor in this success.

During the year negotiations were commenced to receive a gift of land from Jill Phillips. This would enable the creation of a much needed 'Community Space', but sadly Jill passed away before the legal transfer could be effected. The Committee is in touch with the estate's executors to see if the intended gift could still be processed.

The Village Hall is an important asset to Ripe and Chalvington and the Committee will do all it can to ensure the Hall remains in good condition and ready to play its role in supporting local inhabitants. The Hall will continue to provide an attractive venue for social occasions, Parish meetings, various 'Events', clubs and, of course, the pre-school.

Finally, a word of thanks to the team which has been augmented by the appointment of Freddy Pankhurst and Charles Hardy. All members of the Committee continue to volunteer their time for the benefit of the Parish Community and it has been a pleasure to be a part of such a friendly and hard-working Village Hall Committee.

Brian Hill

Chairman

# CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022

### RIPE AND CHALVINGTON LITTER WATCH GROUP

The group has been in operation around the Parish for 18 years and there are now 29 families involved, all volunteers who care about our community. Sadly there has been no significant decrease in the litter problem, even with fewer cars on our roads due to Covid. Approximately 150 bags of litter are picked up from our roads and verges each year, so the diligence and commitment of the group is still of great importance.

- The main culprits are plastic shopping bags (some 'helpfully' hung on tree branches), builders' rubble, drink cans, cigarette packets, empty wine bottles, fast food wrappings, energy drinks and energy jelly.
- Definitely on the increase are used alcohol containers, sometimes one bottle per week of Sauvignon Blanc logged from the same spot - perhaps evidence of regular romantic trysts half-way down Darp Lane??The largest article deposited this year was an old fridge, together with a pile of used car tyres.
- Our serial San Miguel drinker has switched streets, but his faithful Belgian girlfriend Stella Artois is never far behind.
- We have sought to keep up pressure on Maria Caulfield, Wealden, ESCC and Highways about the disgraceful state of the A27 and it is good to see that some collections along the main road have been made, though the problem is far from solved.
- Wealden should be congratulated on their efficient fly-tipping service. Large items of rubbish rarely take more than two days to remove.
- Wealden have also helpfully supported us by providing equipment in the shape of picker sticks, bags, gloves, tabards and hoops.
- Sadly, enforcement of the laws regarding littering is virtually non-existent. It would help, perhaps, to have cameras or at least a more visible anti-littering campaign organised by those who have power over the state of our environment.

Brian Hill, Litter Watch Coordinator.

# CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

## FOOTPATHS REPORT

1<sup>st</sup> MAY 2022

This report is rather cursory, as I have not been resident in Ripe since the New Year, and as a result have not had much time to keep an eye on footpaths in the Parish.

A couple of points that I have made previously: at this time of year the footpaths are beginning to show signs of becoming overgrown, so it really is helpful if people use them a bit more in order to keep the vegetation down. There are indications also that horses have been ridden along one or two footpaths, which does make them awkward for walking.

As mentioned in a previous report, Footpath no: 4 on the Footpaths Map, where it heads off from the fishing lake below Mark Cross Lane and through the coppice beyond, alongside the stream, rapidly becomes overgrown with nettles and other weeds; also affected by a number of fallen trees, it has recently become impassible for normal walking.

Fortunately there have not been any recent instances of crop planting impinging on footpaths, but I shall let the Council know if this does occur during the summer months.

I shall hopefully be resident in the village again before too long.

As always, I am grateful if anyone brings problems to my attention.

JR 01/05/22

# CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022

### Planning report

It has been a busy year on the planning front.

35 planning applications were received in the 12 months between April 2021 and March 2022, an increase on last year. Of these, 20 were approved, 3 refused, 5 withdrawn and the remainder are yet to be determined. Where decisions have been made, Wealden's planning department and our own comments largely agree but there has been one case where local views are at odds with Wealden's decision – Lovers Farmhouse in Chalvington.

Last year I reported on the Deanland Wood Park application for 105 new dwellings that had been refused (in line with our comments). The case, however, went to appeal and was upheld. There are lessons that can be learned from this for the future. If there is any development on greenfield/pasture land then it is very difficult to stop further development on immediately adjacent land, so 26 units on a greenfield site close to existing dwellings at Deanland Wood Park were approved in 2018 and although the Parish and District Councils received assurance that no further development would take place the fact that one development had occurred gave almost carte blanche permission for further adjacent development.

There have been 2 applications for solar farms in our parish, a small scale one in Poundfield Road that was supported by us and has now been approved, and a massive one at Pollards Wood (50MW) which we have robustly objected to; it is yet to be determined and is likely to go to Planning Committee. There has been a large increase in applications for solar farms in Wealden recently with developers wanting to take advantage of government policy on reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Our position has been that we support solar farms but we need to restrict the number and scale in this SW part of Wealden as we are in danger here of reaching saturation. We requested a strategic plan limiting the number in any one area and a clear idea of how we protect the Low Weald landscape; we are unlikely to get this until the draft Wealden Local Plan is produced.

Wealden has published its sites for possible future development (SHELAA sites); these are sites submitted by landowners. Each site needs to be assessed against strict criteria and Wealden is in the process of doing this. It will not however publish the agreed sites until it has heard from the Government regarding a requested reduction in housing targets. We have submitted a response to the proposed sites in our parish, and this can be found on our website under 'Planning'. Briefly, we are opposed to any development on greenfield/pasture land.

<https://www.chalvingtonwithripeparishcouncil.co.uk>

The parish council is also represented at some strategic district wide planning meetings – the Parish Planning Panel (issues that affect parishes in particular) and the South West Cluster Group which feeds directly into the new Wealden Local Plan. Notes from these meetings are made available on our website.

39 Parish and Town councils across Wealden have formed an action and campaigning group called 'Wealden against Overdevelopment'. We have joined them. Parish and town councils are under tremendous pressure to do something urgently to address overdevelopment of Wealden and

adjacent districts, but feel that, while they have the power to express opinions, they are powerless to act to halt it. There is general consternation in many towns and villages that the quality of life and the environment have deteriorated, are deteriorating and will continue to deteriorate under the onslaught of overdevelopment (eg huge increase in traffic through small villages). There is a broad consensus that the key driver of overdevelopment and its consequences is the existing unsustainable and unfair targets for housebuilding set for the South East as a region, and Wealden and adjacent districts specifically. It is these housing targets that the Group is challenging. There have been meetings between Wealden Council leaders and Michael Gove and the housing minister; they say they are listening to us and we await the outcome. We are pleased to be part of this campaigning group; we are stronger together than fighting it separately.

I'd like to thank my fellow councillors and our clerk for their valuable input on planning. I'd also like to thank parishioners who have taken the trouble to make their views known on individual planning applications.

Alison Dunbar-Dempsey

May 2022