

STORRINGTON & SULLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE CHANCTONBURY ROOM,
THE PARISH HALL,
THAKEHAM ROAD, STORRINGTON,
ON WEDNESDAY, 23rd JUNE, 2010,
COMMENCING AT 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. R. Dawe in the Chair, Mr. D. Atkins, Mr. A. Head, Mr. J. Macey, Mr. C. Mason, Mr. A. Mullard, Mr. D. Roper, Mr. J. Sanson, Mrs. L. Wheatley and Mrs. A. Worthington-Leese.

In Attendance: 3 Members of the Public.

Mr. Andrew Smith, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, H.D.C.

Ms. Maria Reardon, Saxon Weald Homes.

30. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Mr. R. Carter (work), Mr. R. Jerman (holiday), Mrs. G. King (work), Mr. E. Gibbons (convalescing) and Mr. J. Williams (work). The reasons for absence were duly **ACCEPTED**. Mr. F. Wilkinson (County Councillor) had given his apologies as he was on holiday.
31. **PRESENTATION BY MR. ANDREW SMITH, HOUSING STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, H.D.C., RE: PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN VILLAGES.** Mr. Smith explained how they went about meeting housing need in the District. Their primary aim in attending was to answer any question on issues around affordable housing and how they deliver and manage the needs in this parish. They wanted to know whether the Council were content with what there was, or if there was a large number of people in the parish that need affordable housing. The Horsham District Community Partnership produced a Community Strategy and one of the goals was to raise awareness of affordable housing in parishes in the Horsham District. This was housing for people that could not afford to buy or rent on the open market. They look at a number of different things to meet the need :-
1. Affordable housing for rent – for people on a low or moderate income who cannot afford a mortgage or rent in the open market and need a home that they can afford. The rents are set at a level determined by Government so that those on Housing Benefit can afford them. The majority work on the land or similar, where salaries are not enough to buy property on the open market. Providing affordable housing to rent was the primary aim for this group. There are 1,500 to 1,600 people on the register. A number of these will be from this parish originally and they either want to live here or return here. They are currently living with parents or struggling to rent through a private landlord.
 2. Intermediate rent – those that can afford a little more, i.e., young professionals who are relatively mobile. They pay 60% - 75% of open market rent as they can manage that and they live in a home provided by an Association.
 3. Buy or Shared Purchase – managed by a Housing Association – when people cannot afford an open market mortgage. Neither are their salaries low enough to qualify for affordable housing. This scheme enables them to get a foot on the ladder by purchasing 40% - 60% of the equity and paying a rent for the rest.

Horsham District Council transferred all its housing stock to a Housing Association and therefore the only housing they now own is for temporary accommodation for those that are homeless.

Maria Reardon reported that sites for affordable housing could come forward to Saxon Weald by a number of means including via landowners, private developer and that a proportion of units on developments have to be “affordable”. Sometimes Housing Associations have land that they own and that they develop. They try to work closely with the local authority and local residents that surround the site. They have to assess who needs a home and what type of homes would be most suitable for that site and then work up a plan with builders in consultation with local residents and other partners. Basically, because they were a Housing Association rather than a private developer, they were not looking to make a profit and were in it for the long term.

Funding was generally from Homes for Communities Agency, an arm of Government, and there is a focus on quality and on sustainability. The housing needed to be easy to maintain and cheap to run for the residents.

Questions were then put :-

- Q. What happened if people were in affordable housing when their financial position improved and they were technically able to afford housing on the open market?
- A. The Housing Associations did not monitor the salary levels of tenants; it was up to the people themselves to make decisions. They had assured tenancies and therefore it was not possible for them to be asked to move out when their salaries rose. There was no legal method to check when people start to earn more money. Normally as soon as people can afford to climb up the ladder, they do. The aspiration of people for home ownership was huge.
- Q. Were there any implications from the recent Government Budget?
- A. There is a crisis of funding with about 50% of the money coming from Government subsidy. There were implications from the Budget but they did not yet know how much money would be made available for affordable housing in the coming months. In Horsham they had people in bed and breakfast accommodation which was not ideal. This was because of the economic situation and how the planning cycle works. Where money would come from for the next 2 – 3 years was not known. There was pressure to do more for less. H.D.C., has a dedicated pot of money from developers that pay money to the Council in lieu of building affordable housing on a site. There was great uncertainty in the house construction market place. HDC currently say that developers need to provide up to 40% of units on a site as affordable accommodation, but in the future it could be that this requirement is not viable.
- Q. What are the local numbers?
- A. The Parish Council should work with Action in rural Sussex to do its own Housing Needs Survey – a robust piece of work to ascertain what is needed in Storrington. It is useful to know what the housing needs are for people that live in or are strongly connected to the parish.

- Q. What are the criteria to get an affordable house?
- A. Accommodation unsuitable for needs; living with parents with a child; homeless or threatened to be homeless.
- Q. Do immigrants get priority over people that had lived in the area for a long time?
- A. To be included on the waiting list people have to have a local connection. Mr. Smith was not sure how immigrants get on the list but he would find out and let the Clerk know.
- Q. In Storrington there are certain problems with the sewage system when there is exceptional rainfall. A number of houses having to be built with septic tanks and sewage storage systems – to what extent did that get taken into account?
- A. At the initial stage they talk to utilities companies like Southern Water to ascertain their view relating to the capacity of existing services. If the system was not up to capacity, they look to see what can be done to compensate.
- Q. Do tenants still have the right to buy?
- A. It is now a “right to acquire”, and the discounts are smaller.
- Mr. Smith mentioned that it was possible to flag up a local connection in S.106 agreements – this had been done in Henfield, so there was no reason that Storrington and Sullington should not do the same.
- Q. Criteria for development: The new environmentally friendly houses built in this parish were quite expensive to construct so if there was a waiting list why not build to a lower specification and get more houses?
- A. Funding from the Homes and Communities Agency was strictly on sustainability standards basis – Building level 3 was the minimum and this would be slightly increased by needing to have lower carbon emissions by 2016. There is a cost associated with higher construction standards but the long term benefits to the residents are high.
- Q. How do you balance building level standard re demand for accommodation?
- A. They do this on a site by site basis – numbers of units would be fixed, but sustainability levels might change depending on money available.
- Q. If in a site where there was some money over because they did not make them to level 4, would that money not automatically transfer to another site?
- A. Each scheme has to wash its own face in. In a three-year programme it is possible to deliver higher level if felt appropriate for that site rather than save money for another site.
- Q. Is rental constant irrespective of what goes into it?

A. No. A lot will depend on design and layout which was nothing to do with cost. Saxon Weald wants to provide homes that are better. In a scheme in Horsham that is at the planning stage, the higher sustainability will come from the way it is laid out, i.e., the way the sun shines, where the trees are, etc. There has to be a will and desire to design things right. It is a motivational factor and a case of moving in the right direction.

Q. Do the Council have a choice of Housing Association that gets the job?

A. The Council had a list of about half-a-dozen preferred partners.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Reardon were thanked for attending and then left the meeting.

32. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS.** There were no declarations of interest from Members.

33. **POLICE MATTERS.** PCSO Carol Boniface introduced P.Sgt. Bob Trevis who is the new Neighbourhood Policing Team Sergeant for the south area. P.Sgt. Trevis stated that he had about 4½ years service remaining and he hoped to stay in this position for the rest of his time with the Police force. The Chairman asked P.Sgt. Trevis how he saw changes to the pattern that had gone before. This Council was concerned about the recent loss of a PCSO. P.Sgt. Trevis stated that he had served for 25 years with Sussex Police, much of the time had been in the Horsham area; Traffic Division for 7 years, Response Team out of Steyning – he knew the area well, although he had some learning to do. He would be working out of Steyning and Pulborough.

PCSO Boniface reported that the crime figures were as follows :-

- 12 Crimes reported.
- 1 Criminal damage.
- 3 Thefts.
- 2 Other thefts from cars. The Police had been putting up posters in car parks.
- 2 Assaults
- 1 Neighbourhood dispute.
- 4 Burglaries – 2 from out buildings with horse tackle taken.
- 2 ATM incidents (fraud).

It was asked if there was a Police view about speeding in the village. P.Sgt. Trevis stated that his knowledge needed to be improved, but the traffic management group had highlighted a number of roads that they felt needed to be looked at. This was more a County Highways issue. Most people would be able to identify places where there are speeding issues and this was one matter that was high on the Storrington agenda. Amberley Road being one area. Enforcement was one issue and education was the other. Engineering could also help but this was the responsibility of WSCC. P.Sgt. Trevis wanted to improve his knowledge before giving a definitive answer though in general, properly placed and with thought given to use, SAVAS devices could be effective.

A number of the public that want to report an incident, do not want to give their name, but want something done. The Crackdown website was a way of reporting which would allow them to remain anonymous. If they get the registration number, it was possible for the Police to do checks through the national computer and if appropriate the registered owner would be spoken to.

P.Sgt. Trevis and PCSO Boniface then left the meeting.

34. **TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THE 19th MAY, 2010.** These minutes were duly **AGREED** to be a correct record of the proceedings thereat and were signed by the Chairman.
35. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THE 28TH APRIL, 2010.** These minutes were duly **AGREED** to be a correct record of the proceedings thereat.

MATTERS ARISING :-

36. **Minute Nos. 249, 260 and 20: Lease with West Chanctonbury Recreation Association.** A letter had today been received from Mr. Wise, the Council's solicitor, stating that he had now spoken to the Leisure Centre Trustees' solicitor and he had confirmed that he had now received instructions on the proposed amendments to the draft Lease. He would be writing to Mr. Wise in the next few days and then if necessary Mr. Wise would meet the solicitor to agree any final wording, subject to Council's final approval. Some Members believed that the Council had already said it was not looking to change anything further in the lease and that this should be made totally clear to WCRA. However, it was mentioned that if WCRA should raise a point that the Council had not previously considered, it would be reasonable that they should be given an opportunity to comment. Apparently there are some changes on the WCRA Trustee board and this might be a cause of some delay. The outstanding issue on the insurance was the MUGA. It was **AGREED** that a meeting should be arranged with WCRA as soon as possible to finalize the matter.
37. **Minute No. 19: Reply from CI Mark Trimmer, Sussex Police re: loss of PCSO.** PCSO Guiney had been posted as a result of redeployment of two PCSO's from the district to other parishes on the division where there was no PCSO cover. It was very unlikely in the near future that the Police will receive replacements for them as the district was over establishment. The Police had created the post for PC Paul Rolland at the start of 2010 and it was believed that his additional powers and his local knowledge would enable issues in the village to be dealt with by calling on support from police colleagues and partners. The Police monitor crime levels and incidents on a daily basis and would react to increase in anti-social behaviour should this occur, however their aim was to continue to reduce it through current partnership agreements.
38. **Minute No. 273 (a): Just Different** – A letter to thanks for the donation had been received.
39. **Minute No. 29: Public Convenience Provision.** Ashington Parish Council had advised that they did not feel able to contribute to any cost as they felt that there was enough pressure on Parish Council finances leaving little scope for additional items such as this.

40. **TO RECEIVE AND IF APPROVED TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:-**

- (a) **Infrastructure, Communications and Environment Committee held on the 2nd June, 2010.** With the exception of the minute on Terms of Reference of Committees, these minutes were duly **ADOPTED.**
- (b) **Recreation and Property Committee held on the 2nd June, 2010.** There was an error in these minutes as the item on Terms of Reference of Committees had not been minuted. With this exception the minutes were duly **ADOPTED.**
- (c) **Planning and Development Committee held on the 10th June, 2010.** With the exception of the minute on Terms and Reference of Committees, the minutes were duly **ADOPTED.**

41. **COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS.** Mr. Mason (District Councillor) reported that there had been an accident on Amberley Road on the 18th June and the road had been closed for five hours. Heavy goods vehicles rat-running through narrow lanes were causing damage to trees and properties. The problem of vehicles coming across from the A.27 had been raised and its impact on air quality in the village. WSCC have got to come up with a plan to deal with that and part of that could be restricting heavy goods vehicles travelling through the village. Signs had been erected at both ends of Hurston Lane and also at the point where the road narrows stating, 'unsuitable for HGVs'. HDC had now ceased training refuse vehicle drivers at its Hurston Lane site, so therefore the traffic levels should reduce.

Mr. Dawe (District Councillor) reported that it had become very clear that there was a problem with the Planning Department at HDC primarily with regard to the new electronic consultation system whereby rather than send hard copies of plans to the Parish Council for comment they were coming via the internet. The trouble was that though an e-mail saying the plans were shortly to be available on the HDC website was being received, there was no direct link offered to get the plans and the Clerk is not told when plans would be actually available. It seemed that this notification system had now become completely unreliable and the impression being given was that nobody is able to offer a quick solution. Mr. Dawe said that the department was currently being entirely reviewed and the results of this would be available on the 5th August.

42. **ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR COUNCILLORS TO READ :-**

- (a) **Southern Water** – South East Water Resources Update and Annual Report 2009-2010. Available in the Parish Office.
- (b) **CPRE Annual Report 2009 and eTools** – a Toolkit. Available in the Parish Office.
- (c) **The News** – South Downs National Park. Available in the Parish Office.
- (d) **St. Barnabas House Life Newsletter.** Available in the Parish Office.
- (e) **Village Living, June, 2010.** Available in the Parish Office.
- (f) **Sussex Local, June 2010.** Available in the Parish Office.
- (g) **RSPC News from the Brooks, May and June, 2010.** Available in the Parish Office.
- (h) **Partnership News** – Newsletter of the West Sussex Public Partnership Forum. Available in the Parish Office.

43. **CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE.**

- (a) **The 37th Annual General Meeting of the Campaign to Protect Rural England** will be held at Arundel on Tuesday, 6th July, 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

- (b) **Local Works**. The Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill was passed into law in the final days of Parliament before the General Election. It was once more requested that the Council write to its MP asking them to sign Early Day Motion 178 urging the government to quickly deal with the Sustainable Communities Act proposals. The Council did not wish a letter to be sent.

44. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**. There were no Chairman's announcements.

45. **TO APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1ST APRIL, 2010 TO 31ST MARCH, 2011**. It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** :-

To once more appoint Mr. Peter Evans as this Council's Internal Auditor.

46. **TO CONSIDER REVISION OF THE FOLLOWING** :-

- (a) **Standing Orders**. This document was now duly **ADOPTED**.
 (b) **Financial Regulations**. This document was now duly **ADOPTED**.
 (c) **Terms of Reference of Committees**. There were different views with regard to which committee should take on responsibility for Trees owned by this Council. Following discussion it was **AGREED** that this responsibility should remain with the Planning and Development Committee. Therefore, the only change to Terms of Reference of Committees was that the Infrastructure, Communications and Environment Committee take on responsibility for the Pond.

47. **TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS FOR DONATIONS** :-

- (a) **St. Barnabas House**. It was **AGREED** :-

To donate the sum of £52.00 (Local Government Act 1972, s. 137)

48. **TO CONSIDER GIVING A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE COST OF THE SAVAS DEVICE**. As no members of the Partnership Liaison Group were present at this meeting, it was **AGREED** :-

To put this item on the agenda of the next Infrastructure, Communications and Environment Committee.

The Clerk reported that she had obtained up-to-date accident statistics over the past five years. However, it was **AGREED** that it would be more helpful to know how many of these accidents were due to speeding. Members also wanted to know more re the long term guaranteed use of this device, its other than short-term effectiveness and the life expectancy of the battery.

49. **TO COMMENT ON THE HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL'S STRONGER ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES: INCORPORATING LOCAL AMBITIONS WITHIN DISTRICT COUNCIL STRATEGIES – TOP FOUR PRIORITIES FOR OUR WIDER AREA, THE PARISH AND BEYOND**. The following was **AGREED** :-

Traffic Matters – There is a need for the A.27 by-pass system as this would result in a reduction in volume of through traffic short cutting to the A.24 and would improve life in villages.

There is a need for a pedestrian crossing by Tesco's roundabout and there is a need for improvements to this dangerous junction, the safest solution would seem to be installation of traffic lights and pelican crossings.

At peak times, there is a need for controls on the Washington roundabout (similar to those at the large roundabout at the entrance to Broadwater, i.e., traffic lights).

Public transport provision needs to be improved.

Planning – Parishes should receive copies of planning applications that are not actually within their parish, but that do affect the parish, i.e., Landfill at Thakeham, Compositing Site at Ashington, etc. The parish is not consulted in such instances, but it is felt that parishes should be consulted when there are major applications where the impact would extend to other areas. The infrastructure of Storrington is affected by developments in other villages and needs looking at.

There should be some means of transferring income to a parish that is a hub/centre where other parishes are dependent upon it for shopping, leisure facilities, doctors, etc. Parish boundaries could be re-assessed.

Affordable housing is needed.

Health – There is a need for a Health Centre in Storrington with proper parking facilities – currently there are two surgeries at different locations and one has restricted parking provision.

Crime and Disorder – The Act dictates that WSCC and HDC have plans – these need reviewing. There is a need to be looking at what is likely to happen over the next few years.

50. **PARISH COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLAN.** HDC had appointed a new officer to deal with this subject, Mr. Tony Skelding. The reason that HDC want to have Emergency Plans from all 33 parishes in the district is for local community resilience. From the problems with the snow last winter it was apparent that there was not much co-ordination between Parish, District and County Councils. The purpose now was to produce a document that the Parish Council can use in order that it may be self-reliant. HDC want to co-ordinate the parish plans with their own. Copies of HDC's draft had been sent to all Members who were requested to fill in any information that they know and then this should be passed to the Infrastructure, Communications and Environment Committee. An electronic version of the document should be obtained.
51. **BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR MAY, 2010** was duly **NOTED.**
52. **ACCOUNTS TO BE PAID** in the sum of £29,014.45 plus V.A.T., were duly **AGREED.** Mr. Mullard asked that the pattern of usage of Gas should be ascertained. **AGREED.**
53. **BUDGET COMPARISON.** This document was looked at in detail and was duly **NOTED.**
- (a) **Councils in England are being urged by the Government to publish details of spending above £500.** The Council should wait until the government firms up on this, but it would be relatively easy to comply if that was required.
- (b) **Aged Debtors.** Mr. Mullard felt it would be useful to review the procedures for following up debts and considered it should be possible to get people to pay promptly. He also felt that debts over a year old should be written off and provision for bad debts should be made. Currently invoices were due within 30 days of invoice

date. It was **AGREED** to tighten financial controls and ask hirers to pay their bills within the 30 days period and not to extend this to 60 days. The following should be added to the bottom of all invoices :-

“Thank you for paying within 30 days.”

54. **TO GIVE DELEGATED POWERS TO THE CLERK UNTIL THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING ON THE 25TH AUGUST, 2010.** It was **AGREED** :-

To give the Clerk delegated powers until the next Council Meeting on the 25th August, 2010.

55. **ADJOURNMENT** – Members of the Public may bring up any matters not included on this agenda.

A resident reported that she had spoken to the landlady of the Anchor Public House who had stated that she had no objection to their facilities being used as public conveniences.

A resident suggested a good location for the proposed skate park would be Gerston Farm, Greyfriars Lane.

The Partnership Environment Group campaign for “Greening” Storrington would be launched in September and they would have a stand on the Village Day.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.25 p.m.