

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 5 May 2021
AT 7.30 PM on Zoom**

Present: The Parish Council Chairman, Jon Millbanks (JM), Vice Chair, Malcolm Kenward, Councillors, the Parish Clerk, Jemma McCarthy plus members of the public: a total of 3 people

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from Cllr Caudrey.

2. To approve the minutes Annual Parish Meeting held on 29 July 2020 (circulated)

The Minutes were signed as a true record of the last Parish Meeting.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave an update on the year in review, recognising the unusual circumstances of the Covid19 pandemic. The thanked out-going councillors and welcomed the new councillors to the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Planning: 84 planning applications were reviewed during the year. The building of homes at the Barnfield site commenced with the Parish Council continuing to work with MSDC and WSCC to ensure planning conditions were met. Planning for the development of the site at the land next to the rectory was received during the year. The Parish Council continue to work with the developers (Shanley Homes) and WSCC to ensure the provision of a village car park is provided for during the development. The Parish Council are also working with the Church to identify and put forward an appropriate site for a new graveyard.

Traffic: Majority of the year was spent advancing the Village Centre Enhancement scheme which is talked about in item 5. The Parish Council has also spent time on tactical initiatives aimed at reducing speeding on the Haywards Heath Road.

Energy: Lower Stumble: In March 2021 WSCC planning committee voted 13 to 0 to refuse the application put forward by Angus Energy.

Street Lighting: BPC has a plan to convert our streetlights to LED as an energy and cost saving initiative, this is progressing.

Public transport: The bus service continues to run from Haywards Heath/Crawley twice a week. A new daily service runs from 9am outside the Half Moon to Crawley. Trains continue to run a twice hourly service and Govia Thameslink Railway implemented improvements at the station using monies allocated from the Passenger Benefit Fund.

In the interests of time, the Chair then referred residents to the Annual Report for further updates on working groups. The below is an extract for reference;

Youth and Wellbeing: The youth club continues to run fortnightly including sessions being held by Zoom during the pandemic. A grant was provided to the Balcombe Primary School to provide additional resources for online learning. The village banded together and created "Balcombe Cares" to offer support to residents during the Pandemic.

Access, Rural & Village Volunteers: Work has been progressing on the village phone boxes, and the Council would like to recognise and thank all our volunteers for their hard work in relation to the Guerilla Gardeners, The Village In Bloom committee and the volunteers helping transform the phone boxes.

Community & Assets: The Pavilion had a leak in the year which was repaired with thanks to local tradesmen. Bramble Hall was forced to close due to Covid regulations but we hope to see our usual groups resuming in the coming year.

5. An update on village centre enhancement plans

BPC held a public consultation in late 2020 in regards to the scheme put forward by our consultants. 123 residents provided feedback, of which 62% were in favour of the scheme. There were some concerns regarding the pinch point on the Haywards Heath road and as such the Parish Council reverted to our consultants to understand options to address this. The Parish Council have engaged consultants to take the project to detailed design, including plans to obtain an experimental traffic order to test out the proposed pinch point and ensure it works as desired before it is permanently implemented.

6. Financial Report for Year 2020/21 ending 31 March 2021

Figures had been circulated. At the Year End bank balances stood at £146,367. BPC paid a grant to the Victory Hall, the School and Tiggers. Reserves have been accumulating to pay for projected village centre traffic calming. The precept has been set at £75,000 to continue building reserves for neighbourhood planning projections, including the development of a new graveyard. We need to be aware that costs may go up as District and County Councils cut back services.

7. Questions from the floor

None taken

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.03 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....