

ICKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8th September 2008 at 7.15pm at The Community Hall, Winchelsea Beach

Present: Councillors Mrs F Bates, C Bronsdon, B Chishick, R Comotto, J Horsman, P Hurrell, Mrs S Lyward, Mrs C Merricks, T Moore, Mrs J Stanford, H Sutton, M Terry, B Thompson.

In attendance: Cllrs. K Glazier (ESCC), N Ramus (RDC), J Cannings (Assistant to the Clerk).

08/152 The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting at 7.15pm.

08/153 The Chairman will invite members of the public to comment or ask questions on any matters they wish to raise, relating to today's business of the Council (15 minutes).

Mr Haywood of Winchelsea Beach reported on a problem with trees in Dogs Hill Road, just past the playground, which were blocking light to his property and touching power lines. He said they needed to be lowered a substantial amount. Cllr. Horsman reported on similar circumstances in Icklesham where sycamore trees at the edge of the Recreation Ground were causing a problem to an adjoining property. The Chairman said he would ask the Clerk to investigate. Cllr. Mrs Lyward said she thought trees touching power lines may be the responsibility of the electricity company.

08/154 To receive reports and ask questions of Cllrs. K Glazier, N Ramus and P Osborne concerning County Council and Rother District Council matters.

Cllr. Ramus gave apologies for absence on behalf of Cllr. Osborne who was attending another meeting. He said there was not a lot to report as August was a quiet time at the Council. He made brief mention of the controversial modernisation programme in Bexhill. He then reported that RDC were going on to the next stage of the garden waste recycling plan, due to start 6th October. 7600 green bins had been obtained and residents will be informed of the collection procedure. He said no-one on the current list for the bins was from Icklesham ward. The delivery of more green bins was imminent and it had been necessary to order a new vehicle to access narrow lanes. Cllr. Stanford asked whether, if there was a two tier system, those householders who did not want a green bin would be entitled to a refund of Council Tax. Cllr. Ramus said this would not be the case.

Cllr. Horsman asked if any progress had been made concerning the concrete blocks adjacent to Church Farm House on the corner of Parsonage Lane and the A259 in Icklesham. Icklesham Parish Council had written to RDC about this matter. Cllr. Ramus advised that RDC was currently consulting with the Highways Dept to establish whether the land is theirs, or privately owned.

Cllr. Glazier said he had very little to report but could comment on the response IPC had received from ESCC on the highways/traffic issues. Concerning the missing sign at Rye Harbour, this was a long standing issue. ESCC could help in terms of a suggested design but the sign would have to be funded by IPC. He reported that the speed limit issue at Winchelsea Beach is not likely to be investigated for 2/3 years due to priority lists. Cllr. Stanford said the situation was very dangerous at the car park at Rye Harbour, the entrance to the Nature Reserve and Frenchman's Beach and asked about traffic calming measures. Cllr. Glazier said that no accidents had occurred in this location which meant it was not on the priority list of possible traffic calming sites. Concerning signs on the road, IPC could put forward suggestions to the Highways Team but funding was not available. Cllr. Bronsdon advised he had been informed that the turning circle land was owned half by RDC and half by the Environment Agency and that legal clarification was being sought. RDC own the car park. Cllr. Hurrell said he accepts the response in the letter regarding a traffic mirror, but the junction in question is very dangerous and many people had complained. Cllr. Thompson said that a 'Slow Down' sign was at one end of Icklesham only and cars go through the village at 80mph. Cllr. Glazier said he would write to Highways but, unfortunately, speeding will never be eradicated. He also expressed the view that traffic mirrors can be dangerous if drivers too become reliant on them.

08/155 The Chairman now formally opened the meeting for business.

08/156 To receive and record any apologies for absence.

There were none.

08/157 Disclosure of interests.

Cllr. Sutton declared personal interests in items 11 and 13, Cllr. Mrs Stanford declared a personal interest in item 13 and Cllr. Comotto declared personal interests in items 12 and 14.

08/158 To consider and approve the signing of the minutes by the chairman of the meetings of the 14th July and the 11th August 2008.

Meeting 11th August: Proposed by Cllr. Horsman, seconded by Cllr. Thompson that the minutes of the 11th August be approved. **Agreed.** The Minutes were duly signed.

Meeting 14th July: Cllr. Chishick referred to item 08/145 (Warning signs at Hog Trough Lane – deferred). The Chairman said this should be brought back to the next meeting. Cllr. Mrs Merricks asked for a typo to be corrected in line 6 of 08/133 in that 'agree' be changed to 'agreed'. With this amendment, the Minutes were duly signed. Proposed by Cllr. Mrs Merricks, seconded by Cllr. Thompson. **Agreed.** Cllr. Mrs Merricks requested that draft minutes be circulated to councillors prior to being provided with the meeting papers.

08/159 Matters arising.

Letter from ESCC in response to the parish council's letter concerning traffic issues.

The Chairman said the letter had been circulated. Cllr Stanford asked whether the council was going to reply. She said it was difficult, when residents raise issues with their ward councillor, to have to go back to them with nothing. Cllr. Comotto commented that it is not possible to change County Council policy but there is other action that can be taken by councillors such as liaison with the local police and community speed watch. Cllr. Stanford said it was a PCSO who had first raised the problems with her. **It was agreed** that the Council would write again to ESCC Highways, expressing its disappointment with their reply and seeking further advice on possible ways forward. Cllr Comotto suggested that any response to ESCC should include evidence about the nature and scale of the traffic problems. Cllr. Glazier said the County Council has to comply with the laws but, although unable to provide funding, can give advice to parish councils. He suggested that, in replying, the Council provide some evidence as well as suggestions for solutions. He said he would be happy to help in this regard. **It was agreed** that the letter of response from ESCC should be displayed on parish notice boards for residents' information.

Cllr. Comotto asked whether, under this item, he could ask for an update on the Mary Stanford Lifeboat House. What were the results of the survey? Cllr. Bronsdon said information was in the July minutes – there had been a low return to the survey. He advised that a letter had been written to the Environment Agency, who had tidied up the building, work was being done by the Friends and no further action was required by the Council.

08/160 Financial Matters.

a) Receipts and payments reports for year to 31st July and 31st August 2008.

The Chairman requested that, as the Clerk was not present, any queries be held over until he was available. Cllr. Mrs Merricks suggested that as the Assistant to the Clerk was responsible for the day to day book-keeping, she might be able to answer queries. No queries were raised. Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Lyward that the reports by approved. **Agreed.**

b) To approve items for payment for September 2008. The Assistant to the Clerk tabled items of expenditure totalling £42,863.81 for September which concerned cheques numbered 1960 to 1972 sequentially, plus £730.00 Standing Orders. (The total was subsequently amended during cheque signing to £42,938.81 due to an error on the list.) The Chairman advised he had the evidence required in order for the cheque to Icklesham Memorial Trust to be issued. Cllr. Terry asked whether there was

evidence of match funding being in place. Cllr. Mrs Merricks said the architect and Trust Secretary were present and could answer questions. Cllr. Bronsdon said the work was not totally completed but felt the grant should be paid in total. Cllr. Comotto noted the decision of the Council to make stage payments upon production of the required evidence and proposed that £26,000 be paid now and the balance in October. The architect reported that work was 80% complete. He said receiving staged payments would cause problems as, if work is completed early which is likely, they would not be in a position to settle final bills and would have to wait until the next parish council meeting. Cllr. Mrs Lyward proposed, and Cllr. Sutton seconded, that a small amount such as £2,000, was held back. Cllr. Comotto proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr. Terry, that £26,636 was paid now to the Memorial Trust. This was put to the vote. **Not approved.** Cllr. Chishick expressed the view that if no extra cost to the council would be incurred if the project over-ran, the full amount should be paid now. The Chairman proposed that the total grant of £40,000 be paid in full. Seconded by Cllr. Mrs Lyward. This was put to the vote. 11 in favour, 2 against. **Approved.**

c) The Clerk requests approval to vire the sum of £675 from the PWLB repayment budget to that of the Icklesham Recreation Ground drainage work.

The Chairman reported that the time delay since receiving the original estimate has meant an increase in costs. He said it would be a false economy not to continue with this work. Cllr. Comotto asked if this matter could be reviewed at the next meeting, with the Clerk providing an overview of the past and projected future costs, what has been done and will be done in the future. Cllr. Mrs Merricks said it was sensible to follow the recommended 3 year maintenance plan. Proposed by Cllr. Horsman, seconded by Cllr. Thompson, that the sum of £675.00 be vired. **Agreed.**

08/161 Councillor Comotto proposes the following resolution (deferred from July meeting):

(that) "Icklesham Parish Council agrees a system of numbering footpaths in the parish with the County Council in order to allow easy identification in the event of issues arising."

A map, showing numbered footpaths in the parish, had been brought to the meeting by Cllr. Sutton and Cllr. Mrs Lyward offered to scan, copy and email the map to anyone who wished to have a copy. Cllr. Mrs Merricks suggested asking for a new original from ESCC which might produce better copies. It was agreed to circulate copies of the map to all Councillors.

08/162 Winchelsea Beach Community Association seek permission to hold their annual bonfire and firework event on 26th October at Harbour Field, subject to the usual conditions of appropriate insurance cover and risk assessment.

Proposed by Cllr. Mrs Stanford, seconded by Cllr. Hurrell. **Agreed.**

08/163 Proposal submitted by Winchelsea ward councillors in respect of grants for major conservation work on the Strand Gate, Winchelsea, and repairs at the Church of St Thomas.

"Fund-raising appeals have been launched to raise £60,000 to pay for major conservation work on the Strand Gate at Winchelsea and some £16,000 for a new boiler for the Church of St Thomas. The Strand Gate is an ancient monument of national importance and an icon of the Ancient Town of Winchelsea. The Church is also of immense historical importance. A grant of £30,000 has been secured from English Heritage towards the work on the Strand Gate, leaving £30,000 to be raised. However, the English Heritage grant requires that work starts in this calendar year. It would be entirely appropriate for the Parish Council to make a substantial contribution towards the conservation of the Strand Gate to ensure that the planned work can take place in 2008. It would also be appropriate for the Council to support the work in the Church. The Winchelsea ward councillors propose that the Council invite the Corporation of Winchelsea to apply to the Council for a grant of up to £20,000 and the Parochial Church Council of St Thomas to apply for a grant of £5,000. In order to allow the grant to the Corporation to be paid in this calendar year, both grants would be funded by a loan to the Council from the Public Works and Loans Board, which would be arranged as soon as possible in this financial year, and would be subject to similar terms and conditions as that applying to the grant to Icklesham Memorial Trust."

Cllr. Comotto outlined the proposed works on the Strand Gate and the requirement for a new boiler for the church. He proposed that Icklesham Parish Council invite Winchelsea Corporation and the PCC to apply for grants. Cllr. Mrs Merricks pointed out that the letter from FOAM asks for modest donations. Cllr. Bronsdon drew Council's attention to the contents of the letter from the Corporation. Cllr. Moore (Mayor of Winchelsea) said the Corporation had sufficient funds and does not intend to ask for a grant. Cllr. Moore left the room at this point. Cllr. Comotto suggested giving the Corporation a month to clarify a donation amount. Cllr. Mrs Merricks queried whether applying for a grant had been discussed with the PCC because she did not think parish councils had the power to give grants to church buildings and Cllr. Comotto said he had spoken to the Rector about the possibility of applying for a grant. Cllr. Horsman felt that funds for the church should be raised by Friends, as at Icklesham. Cllr. Merricks asked whether, if the council does decide to give a donation (as opposed to a grant) to the Strand Gate, it could come out of S137 payments? Cllr. Comotto thought not. Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Terry, that the PCC should be invited to apply for a grant. This was put to the vote. **Not approved.** Cllr. Mrs Merricks said she would look into the power of councils to give to churches.

Cllr. Moore re-joined the meeting.

08/164 Grant applications:

- i) Rye Harbour Village Hall Management Committee.
- ii) Winchelsea Beach Community Association

Cllr. Comotto stated that applications have to be brought to Council as resolutions. Cllr. Chishick suggested such applications should be submitted as resolutions by councillors of the respective wards. Cllr. Comotto suggested that grant applicants should submit their form to their ward councillors and Cllr. Mrs Lyward said that, if this was the case, the wording on the form should be changed to ask applicants to return the form to their ward councillor, not the Clerk. The Chairman deferred the applications, and a decision on procedure, until the next meeting in order to clarify the matter. Cllr. Mrs Stanford expressed disappointment that the applications had to be deferred on the basis of how they had been drafted on the agenda.

08/165 Sussex Police Priority Setting Panels

The Chairman briefly outlined the purpose of the Priority Setting Panels. He said the frequency of meetings was not yet known but thought it would be every two months. Rye Harbour comes under the Rye police district and he had volunteered to be on the panel. He suggested a representative from each ward would be appropriate and asked for volunteers. Cllrs. Comotto (Winchelsea), Bronsdon (Rye Harbour) and Mrs Lyward (Winchelsea Beach) volunteered to represent their ward on the panel.

08/166 Reports from Council Representatives.

Cllr. Mrs Merricks reported on the AGM of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Committee, held in July. Mr A H Lloyd was elected as Chairman, Cllr. J Barnes was elected as Vice-Chairman. Following the warehouse fire on the approach road to Rye Harbour, the issue of extracting water from a SSSI site had been discussed, along with keeping access roads open. She said the RHNR Report was posted on their website and a booklet on Camber Castle available.

08/167 Date and venue for the next meeting.

The Chairman reminded members of the Training Day for councillors arranged for Tuesday 23rd September at the Community Hall, Winchelsea Beach, and circulated the programme. He asked for confirmation of attendance. Cllrs. Mrs Lyward, Mrs Bates, Mrs Stanford, Mrs Merricks, Hurrell, Thompson, Horsman and Bronsdon confirmed attendance. Cllr. Sutton was unsure. The Clerk will also attend.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 13th October 2008 at the New Hall, Winchelsea, commencing at 7.15.

The meeting closed at 8.35p.m.