

09-Mar-2009

## **ICKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th March 2009 at 7.15pm at the New Hall, Winchelsea**

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

In Attendance: Cllrs. N Ramus (RDC), K Glazier (ESCC), PCSO Bevan, D Rosewell (Clerk), J Cannings (Assistant to the Clerk). Members of the public were also present.

**09/047 The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting at 7.15pm.**

**09/048 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 Turner, a Winchelsea resident, read out a letter he had sent to the Clerk questioning Cllr. Comotto's deferred resolutions, specifically item 22(iii) on tonight's agenda. Mr Turner asked council if they agreed with the statement that councillors are not elected to represent just the ward from which they are elected but to serve as a councillor for the parish and represent the views of the whole community. That they must accept and be bound by the majority view of the council as the way forward. That they have no different standing in the ward which elected them than in any other ward as they cannot act independently of the council or seek to represent the council without specific terms of reference being agreed by the parish council to authorise them to operate in this way. He also asked if the councillors elected in Winchelsea ward have the authority of the council to publish articles in the Rye and Battle Observer specific to the operation of the council and, also, whether they have been authorised to act on behalf of the council to consult directly with other authorities on matters relating to Spring Steps and road and pavement repairs in the town. Mr Turner asked would not the council agree that the Clerk is the proper officer of the council to deal with such matters and that any councillors who act outside of this protocol without specific authority are acting outside of their terms of reference and are in breach of their code of conduct? The Chairman said he had, on a previous occasion, sought advice from SALC on the issue of ward representation and read out the reply. Cllr. Comotto responded that Mr Turner had confused issues and that he would like a copy of his letter and would respond next month. Mr Turner said he was happy with that. Cllr. Comotto said he would like to make an interim statement that councillors represent wards. He also stated that, when writing to the paper, Winchelsea councillors do so under their names, not on behalf of the council.

Mr McKinna, a Winchelsea resident, referred to Cllr. Comotto's deferred resolution, item 22(i) on tonight's agenda, concerning the Remembrance Day Wreath. He asked whether, if this was adopted, the council would make a statement of their reduced donation to the British Legion. The Chairman said

this would be discussed when the item was taken.

Mr Bailey, representing the National Trust locally, advised the meeting of plans to convert redundant buildings at Crutches Farm to residential use and outlined details of the proposals. He said plans would come before the planning committee at some point but, in the meantime, he would welcome any views. The Chairman thanked Mr Bailey for his information.

A resident of Winchelsea Beach said the council had installed some high quality fencing around the children's play area in Harbour Field. However, there was a problem in that older children (12-15 year olds) were playing football inside the fenced area which made it unsuitable for younger children to use the play equipment. She asked if a sign could be erected saying "No Ball Games". The Chairman thanked her for bringing this to the council's attention and suggested she spoke to Cllr. Sutton. PCSO Dan Bevan offered to discuss the matter with her.

The Chairman now asked PCSO Bevan for his report on activities in the parish. PCSO Bevan said there had been theft of domestic solar lights in Icklesham. These had not been found. The police had dealt with youths drinking in Icklesham Recreation Ground. There had been a car accident outside the Winchelsea Lodge, resulting in injury. A black Freelander had been stolen in Winchelsea Beach. In Rye Harbour, vandalism of property outside the pub had taken place, a collection box had been broken into and the contents stolen and 2 vehicles had been set on fire and destroyed. Motor bikes had been driven illegally on the Nature Reserve and three bikes had been seized. He advised of a meeting, to be held at 4.00pm on 10th March at Rye Harbour Village Hall, in which a briefing would be given by the Fire Brigade and Police. The Chairman thanked PCSO Bevan for his report.

**09/049 To receive reports and ask questions of Cllrs. K Glazier, N Ramus and P Osborne concerning County Council and Rother District Council matters.**

Cllr. Glazier gave apologies from Cllr. Osborne. He reported that ESCC had set council tax for the coming year, resulting in a 3.5% increase. Concerning the previously raised issue of fly posting, he advised he would be meeting with the Director of Transport and Environment shortly and would raise the matter.

Cllr. Ramus reported that RDC had set their council tax rates. There would be a 3.94% increase. He said this level had been possible because the council had received back some money invested in an Icelandic bank. He said that Cllr. Osborne was still following up the request for a larger bin outside the Winchelsea Toilets but was having trouble in locating the responsible officer. The Village Shop and Post Office meeting in Battle had been very successful. He also advised that a £30,000 Community Grant Scheme had now been set up by RDC. It was a match-fund scheme.

Cllr. Moore queried the necessity for RDC to increase car park charges, at a time when Hastings was reducing them. Cllr. Ramus said he had not been

present at the meeting but imagined it was a cost issue.

**09/050 The meeting was formally opened at 7.38.p.m.**

**09/051 To receive and record any apologies for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Mrs Lyward. The Clerk said this was an opportune moment to apologise for the administrative error in sending out agenda papers with insufficient postage. He invited those concerned to claim refunds at the end of the meeting.

**09/052 Disclosure of interests.**

These were received from Cllr. Comotto (personal) in respect of item 17 and Cllr. Mrs Merricks (personal and prejudicial) in respect of item 20.

**09/053 To consider and approve the signing of the minutes by the chairman of the meeting of the 9th February 2009.**

These had been previously circulated for comment. Cllr. Comotto asked that, in item 09/043(i), 4th line, the word "only" be inserted before "by council decision". With this amendment, the approval of the minutes was proposed by Cllr. Comotto and seconded by Cllr. Chishick. Approved.

**09/054 Matters arising.**

a) Current Activity. The Clerk went through the payment sheet and updated Council on matters that had been proceeding during the month. He advised that the first part of the fencing at Rye Harbour allotments had been completed. It was fairly basic, rabbit proof, fencing and valuable work in clearing the undergrowth had been undertaken by Mr Gould, the owner of the adjacent land, prior to the fencing being installed. The Clerk said he hoped to continue with fencing along the other side of the site in due course.

b) Quality Council/Newsletter. The Clerk tabled a draft mock-up for the newsletter. He said that he, and his assistant, had met with Cllr. Mrs Bates and Winchelsea councillors had contributed a significant amount of material. The main task at present was to decide on a design. Cllr. Mrs Bates said she thought it would be a nice idea to have a competition, asking local primary schools and youth clubs to come up with ideas for a logo. Cllr. Comotto said the current trend was to have simple logos using just initials rather than a design. Cllr. Bronsdon proposed, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Stanford, approaching schools to ask if they would like to participate in a competition for a logo. Agreed. Cllr. Mrs Stanford asked if everyone could have a copy of the draft design and the Clerk said he would email a copy to all councillors.

c) Programme of Works. The Clerk said he was in the process of constructing a programme from the budget. He had had no time to complete it for this meeting but will email councillors with a programme for discussion at the next meeting.

**09/055 The W.U. Arnold Charity.** The Clerk read out Marilyn Shone's letter in which she requested that the record be set straight in that it is the Curate in Charge who is moving, not the Rector. This was noted.

### **09/056 Financial Matters.**

a) Receipts and payments report for year to 28th February 2009. Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Terry that the report be approved. Agreed.

b) To approve items for payment for March 2009. The Clerk tabled items of expenditure totalling £5,893.47 for March which concerned cheques numbered 2049 to 2061 sequentially, plus £730.00 Standing Orders. The list noted that cheque No. 2034 for £4,553.13 to Bourne Amenity for verti-draining would be sent this month. Cllr. Mrs Merricks asked about this. The Clerk explained that the cheque had been prepared, approved and signed in January but then held back pending an independent survey of the work. Cllr. Comotto asked why there was a payment for 5 hall hirings to Icklesham School. It was explained these were the bookings for the year ahead and, because the preferential rate was so small, it was not worth the school processing individual invoices. Proposed by Cllr. Horsman, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Stanford, that the payments be approved. Agreed.

c) Council is asked to approve the sum of £350 for the independent report on drainage work at Icklesham Recreation Ground. Cllr. Mrs Merricks queried that the report was independent as a representative from Bourne's was present at the inspection. Cllr. Terry said it was not valid to say the report was not independent. The Clerk advised that he had invited the representative from Bourne's to attend as he felt the more information there was available, the better. Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Terry, that the sum of £350 be approved. Agreed.

d) Council is asked to approve the sum of £227 for the initial fee to Southern Water to provide an estimate for connection to the mains at Pear Tree Marsh. Photographs were tabled. The Chairman outlined the danger at the allotment site. Allotment tenants were going down the bank to draw water from the river. Aside from tenants, the Chairman said such open access to the river was also a danger to children. He said he had been advised by a tenant that the river water was brackish and had some salt content so was not particularly good for the soil. He proposed connecting mains water to the site. He said he felt the top priority was to fence off access to the river, then get water connected. Cllr. Comotto said he thought there should be a lockable gate, as well as a fence, so that the bank could be accessed if necessary. The Chairman said the initial approach to Southern Water confirmed that the main runs along the A259 outside the allotment site. Cllr. Horsman suggested asking Southern Water if the initial fee would be deducted from the cost of connection. Cllr. Mrs Merricks said it may be cheaper if the required trench work is carried out by a contractor other than Southern Water and this was noted. The Chairman asked, in view of the urgency, whether council would agree to payment being made before the next meeting. This would avoid delaying another month. It was proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Horsman, that quotations for a fence and gate be obtained and that an application be made in March to Southern Water, along with a fee paid, to obtain an estimate for the connection charge. Agreed.

e) Bus Shelters. The Clerk seeks approval to carry out repairs to bus shelters. Estimates had been provided. As repairs were scheduled to shelters in all wards, the Chairman asked ward councillors if they were satisfied with the specification in their ward. With the exception of Winchelsea Beach, where

some minor amendments were made, councillors confirmed approval. Cllr. Horsman asked about the shelter opposite Goldhurst Green in Icklesham. The Clerk's assistant said she had been told it was not owned by IPC. However, it was in good repair. Cllr. Horsman said it would be improved by a coat of paint inside. The Clerk's assistant said she would make enquiries about ownership. Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Stanford, that S Yates Building be asked to carry out the bus shelter repairs. Agreed.

#### **09/057 Correspondence.**

- a) Letter from RDC re covenant on land at Pear Tree Marsh (deferred from last meeting). The Clerk said this would have to be an item on the next agenda.
- b) Letter of reply from ESCC re request to repair the brick pavers in Winchelsea. The Clerk said the response was not positive. ESCC said the pavers were untidy but not a defect and were low priority. They were unable to give a date and suggested the parish maintenance team might undertake the work when next in Winchelsea. Cllr. Comotto said the Highways Authority were due to be working in Higham Gardens on 6th April. It was agreed that the Clerk write to the Highways Authority asking whether they would consider doing this work whilst in Winchelsea.
- c) Letter from the Icklesham Trust Committee requesting permission to hold the Village Fete on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 11th July. Agreed.
- d) Advice received of the Annual Parish Conference at 1.45pm on 9th April at Brede Village Hall. Three delegates had been invited. The Clerk asked councillors to let him know if they wished to attend.
- e) Cllr. Mrs Merricks advised that she had received an email from the Head Teacher of Icklesham Primary School saying she was grateful for the council including funds for a school sign in next year's budget and wondered when it would be done. Cllr. Merricks said the school had provided the wording for the sign and would like the logos of the school and Acorn Centre to be included. They could provide the estimates obtained by them, if we would like them. The Chairman said that would be helpful, and also for them to provide the logos.

#### **09/058 Information Publication Scheme.**

The document had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr. Comotto suggested including parish notice boards as a source of information. The Clerk said the circulated document had been sent to councillors to consider. At the moment he was only asking Council to agree to adopt the scheme. The content could be amended as required; Cllr. Comotto offered to submit potential updates. Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Horsman, that IPC adopt the Information Publication Scheme. Agreed.

#### **09/059 Winchelsea Street Lighting Maintenance Contract.**

The Clerk said progress had been very slow, mainly because the company concerned, Direct Technical Services (DTS), had received a large number of enquiries in respect of their services following EDF's withdrawal from the market. Their offer is attractive in that costs are very competitive and they are employing the person who currently maintains the Winchelsea lighting for EDF. ESCC would only agree to part maintain. The Clerk asked if Council

would agree to delegate the decision to himself, the Chairman and a Winchelsea councillor in view of the fact that the EDF contract finishes at the end of the month, before the next meeting. He said he wanted to look at the Direct Technical Services contract in more detail. The current EDF contract was for £823. The offer from DTS is £596.58. The latter had a relatively short get-out period. ESCC had recommended new equipment, DTS said there was nothing to cause immediate concern. Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Moore, that the decision on the new contractor for Winchelsea street lighting be delegated to the Clerk, Chairman and a Winchelsea councillor. If the Clerk had any doubts, he could bring the matter back to the next meeting. Agreed.

#### **09/060 Risk Assessment and Risk Register arrangements.**

Deferred.

#### **09/061 Icklesham Recreation Ground Drainage.**

The Clerk outlined the background to the works and the decision to seek independent advice. He said the report on the work done takes the view that it is not possible to make a detailed conclusion. The amount of sand in the channels was variable. The overall condition of the ground good. He had circulated the report to councillors for their views and the only response he had received was to pay the invoice. He had spoken to Bourne's concerning the amount of sand. They have agreed to re-ventilate the ground at no further cost. They confirm the amount of sand used was 80 tonnes. Cllr. Merricks said this was not enough and was not the amount originally recommended. Also that the verti-drain slits were not deep enough in some places. Cllr. Horsman said that next time work is done, the Council must be very careful on the specification and Cllr. Mrs Merricks said the weather conditions should have been assessed. The worth of re-ventilating the ground was discussed and it was felt there was no point in doing it without applying sand. Cllr. Terry said Bourne's should only do any further work on condition it will improve the ground. Cllr. Mrs Merricks suggested that Bourne's offer to re-ventilate should be acknowledged in writing, stating that the cost value of such work would be set against any further vertidrainage. Proposed by Cllr. Terry, seconded by Cllr. Thompson, that the withheld cheque for ££4553.13 should be paid. Agreed.

#### **09/062 Tenders for mowing work.**

The Clerk advised that he had sent out tenders to four organisations. One is unable to do the work as cannot gang mow. The estimates received were from Kent County Council £6546, Wealden District Council £9890 and Quadron Services £8120. He said that KCC were the current contractors and their work had been satisfactory. Proposed by Cllr. Bronsdon, seconded by Cllr. Comotto, that the contract for mowing for 2009/10 be given to Kent County Council. Agreed.

#### **09/063 Neighbourhood Watch - Cllr. Comotto to address Council.**

Cllr. Comotto reported on the national initiative to build on the working relationship between Neighbourhood Watch and the police. A new database and communications network is in operation. The police would like more

Neighbourhood Watch schemes and wish to encourage other wards to start schemes. Cllr. Bronsdon suggested that interested councillors speak to their PCSO for details

**09/064 Cllr. Horsman proposes the following:**

"That this Council supply to Rye Observer a report on its proceedings."  
Cllr. Horsman said he thought the report written by Winchelsea councillors, and published in the Rye Observer, was good but felt it should tell the whole picture and cover all wards. He thought a monthly report should be provided to the paper by the Council. Cllr. Chishick queried whether the minutes would be used as a basis for a monthly report as, if so, it would be out of date as minutes are approved a month after each meeting. Winchelsea councillors said it took about 3 months to prepare their report and they did one approx 3 or 4 times a year. They felt it should not fall solely on the Clerk to produce one for the Council, councillors should provide input. Cllr. Merricks said she thought the council, in the past, had given an overview of council business to the Village Voice and said she would check. An amendment was proposed by Cllr. Horsman, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Merricks, "that this Council supply to Rye Observer a report on its proceedings at regular intervals. The interval to be confirmed." Agreed.

**09/065 Cllr. Mrs Stanford proposes the following:**

"That audio recordings should be made of all council meetings."  
Cllr. Mrs Stanford said that, in view of recent events, it would be safer to record meetings. All councillors were in favour. The Chairman said it would be necessary to establish costs and also legalities. He also wondered if it would be off-putting for the public and Cllr. Comotto said the part of a meeting in which the public can speak would not need to be included as it was before formal business commences. Cllr. Mrs Stanford proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr. Thompson "that audio recording should be made of all council meetings, subject to cost". Agreed.  
(Note: Cllr. Chishick had to leave the meeting during this item).

**09/066 Icklesham Recreation Ground Sports Pavilion - Cllr. Mrs Merricks to report.**

Cllr. Mrs Merricks brought to Council's attention that the Memorial Hall Trust Committee would like to do work on the Pavilion in the future. As the Pavilion is on parish land, any proposal for work will have to be brought to Council but there are no definite plans, or dates, at the moment.

**09/067 Love Lane, Winchelsea - Cllr. Sutton.**

Cllr. Sutton explained that Love Lane (a bridle path) had been beautifully maintained for some time by a Mr Alan Turner who spent approx 2 mornings a week keeping it tidy. Unfortunately, due to bad health, he would be unable to do this for at least the next 4 months which would be during the growing season. Cllr. Sutton asked if the council could maintain it. He also suggested the council could write to Mr Turner thanking him for his work. The Clerk will write to ESCC to establish their intentions with regards to maintenance.

**09/068 Cllr. Comotto submits the following resolutions (deferred from**

**last meeting):**

i) "Given the Council's decision that Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial in Winchelsea is to become the official remembrance ceremony for the whole parish, or at least for the Parish Council, the wreath to be laid in Winchelsea will serve for all four wards, which means there is no justification for the Council continuing to donate a sum equivalent to the cost of wreaths on behalf of the other wards of the Parish. Those donations will cease."

Cllr. Mrs Merricks pointed out that Winchelsea is the only ward in the parish with a war memorial, hence only one wreath is laid in the parish. Accordingly, donations to the Royal British Legion were made on behalf of the other three wards in lieu of a wreath.

Proposed by Cllr. Comotto. There was no seconder. Not approved.

ii) "Given the Council's decision that Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial in Winchelsea is to become the official remembrance ceremony for the whole parish, or at least for the Parish Council, a ward councillor from each ward will attend the ceremony and the church service afterwards."

Proposed by Cllr. Comotto, seconded by Cllr. Terry. Not approved.

iii) "Councillors are elected to be representatives of their ward. Councillors have no individual standing in other electoral wards. If a Councillor receives a complaint from a resident of another ward, that Councillor will direct that person to a councillor representing that person's ward of residence, or directly to the Council via Clerk. All written complaints will be copied to the Councillors of the complainant's ward and to the Council via the Clerk." Deferred.

iv) "The Council will write to ESCC to enquire whether it would adopt Smeatons Lane" Deferred.

v) "The Council will in future record the dates on which the trees on its properties have been inspected and archive tree inspection reports in a readily accessible file. A schedule of future work and inspection will be drawn up. The Clerk will report to the Council each September, in advance of budget discussions, on tree work completed during the preceding 12 months and work scheduled for the next 12 months."

Deferred.

vi) "The Council will note its decisions of 9 June 2008 that no expenditure shall be made on re-designing the Council's website until its precise purpose has been clearly defined by the Council, and that Councillors should be actively involved in the design and production of content of newsletter, the website, etc." Deferred.

Due to time restraints, items 23 and 24 were deferred.

**09/069 Date and venue for the next meeting.**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 14th April at the Village Hall, Rye Harbour, at 7.15pm.

The meeting closed at 9.30p.m.

Approved