



**WOODMANCOTE PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held in the Parish Hall on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 7.30p.m.**  
**(Members of the Public were invited to attend)**

**Mrs L Bannister – Clerk to the Council**  
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**Present:** WPC Cllrs. C. Broucke (Chairman), M. Batchelor, A. Underwood and F. Young  
L. Bannister (Clerk)

**Others Present:** 35 approx. members of the public  
HDC Cllrs. B. Staines and C. Coldwell

**1. 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017 Minutes**

These were agreed and duly signed by Cllr. Broucke.

**2. Chairman's update**

Cllr. Broucke reported as follows:-

'The wet Easter weekend that we have all just enjoyed gave me time to think...what do I have to say about the past year as Chairman of the Woodmancote Parish Council?

Yes, it's APM time again.

Just after the meeting last year David Austin and myself had an appointment at Christ Hospital to witness the count of the 4<sup>th</sup> May vote...to approve the Neighbourhood Plan. This was all very formal and controlled.

We spent a couple of hours watching and waiting for our count...good news! All our hard work paid off with a good turn out of residents to vote and a very high approval of the plan. The Plan is now adopted! Thank you all!

The next ongoing project is the village hall. No one thought this would be easy, but we would give it our best shot. As you know, it had been decided to close the hall and get the cottage empty so that works could be approved. The Parish Council were hoping to take a lease on the property and raise the funds unfortunately WPC are not able to lease the hall as the previous conveyance restricts this. Richard Hill has been working hard to find a way forward, and this involves forming a charity to take the lease and raise the funds. WPC has offered its support for this at this time and ongoing. We hope to have good news soon!

As most of you will know over the last two years improvement work to the playing surface and drainage has been going on at the Blackstone ground. This has been very successful. The youth cricket, junior football and local stoolball teams have all benefitted. If you don't want to take part, please go ahead to watch a game and support them.

We hope as councillors we have been able to keep Woodmancote a safe, fun and enjoyable place to live and work.

Thank you everyone for your support.'

### **3. Reports from WSCC/HDC**

Cllr. Coldwell reported as follows:-

The bin collections have now changed from weekly to fortnightly. Cllr. Coldwell believes this has gone smoothly, and the amount of weekly complaints have dropped.

HDC has now adopted new powers to deal with anti-social behaviours. This will allow the rules to be applied more expeditiously, and fines can be given on the spot.

A new Chief Executive Officer has been appointed - Glenn Chipp.

The Horsham District Planning Framework review has now started and some consultations are underway.

Cllr. Staines reported that the HDC magazine details how council tax is broken down and spent.

The car park is due to be demolished at Piries Place. HDC has invested in this area to earn revenue (which will start to come through in around 8 years).

Over the Easter weekend the Italian car event in Horsham brought in 80,000 visitors.

### **4. Scam prevention presentation**

Richard Moore from Sussex Police, gave a presentation about scam prevention which included:-

- Giving some information about the types of scams that are popular at the moment
- Making people aware of the dangers of responding to junk mail
- What should happen if a cold caller knocks at your door
- Showing a short film highlighting real examples of people who have been scammed

- Giving out stickers to prevent cold callers
- Handing out scam prevention booklets and leaflets

## **5. Rampion Wind Farm report**

Sue Vincent from Rampion updated that the project is coming to a close. All of the turbines, and offshore substation have now been installed.

All of the onshore cables have been installed, the only thing outstanding is to reinstate the topsoil and foliage.

Carillion, the firm responsible for the reinstatement, has gone into administration so they are searching for a new contractor.

Once reinstatement has taken place, Rampion has a ten-year commitment to ensure land has gone back to how it was originally.

A community benefit fund of £3.2 million has been announced. Applications for the first round have closed, and the awards will be announced soon. The next round will start in June. More details can be found at [rampionoffshore.com](http://rampionoffshore.com).

A visitor centre will be opened in Brighton just east of the i360. This will provide more information about the windfarm.

Cllr. Underwood said that the sites in Woodmancote are messy and there is a lot of rubbish on the sites. Sue said she will try to get these cleared.

A member of public asked when power would be generated. This started in November. The lifespan of the turbines is between 20-25 years.

Cllr. Broucke asked if Carillion going into administration affected Rampion financially. Sue said that there was some inconvenience, such as moving offices.

Some fact sheets were left for members of the public to take away.

## **6. Vehicle Activated Sign**

Cllr. Broucke reported that WPC is discussing purchasing a portable sign that can be moved to various different locations. There are regulations surrounding this so it will take some time to decide on a suitable place.

Signs in Woodmancote generally will be repaired soon by the Highways Department.

## **7. Woodmancote Hall**

This has now been closed.

Richard Hill reported as follows:-

'Good evening everyone and thank you for coming.

The good news is that Woodmancote can have a community hall. It has been established that both the hall and cottage can be refurbished for the benefit of the parish.

We are aware that there is good support from across the parish. With the invitation to vote in the referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan, which includes a policy recommending the retention and improvement of the hall, a circular was issued calling attention to the condition of the hall. The Neighbourhood Plan was convincingly endorsed at the referendum on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017 less than a year ago.

At an open meeting in early September 2017, the future of the hall was examined with the help of Action in rural Sussex (AirS). At the conclusion of that meeting, there was a majority in favour of retaining and refurbishing the hall. Following that favourable vote, a small Steering Group was set up to plan for the future of the hall. The Steering Group now has a total of 5 members, 3 of whom are members of the Parish Council.

A completely new management team is now in place to agree the future of the hall and cottage. For both the hall and the cottage, the Church has agreed to grant 35 year long leases with extensions. These leases will allow the hall to be used as a community hall, and the income from the restored cottage used to support the hall. At the moment, the hall is classified as an ecclesiastical building. In order to allow the granting of the leases, the Charity Commission needs to give approval for the change of use to a secular building. Accordingly, an application has been made to the Charity Commission, and their approval is expected shortly.

With the endorsement of the Parish Council, a new charity will be set up by the end of this month. The trustees of this charity will be the current members of the Steering Group. This independent charity will take on full responsibility for the hall, the refurbishment, reopening and eventual running.

The setting up of the charity will allow us to make applications to various charitable sources such as Rampion, Garfield Weston and the Big Lottery Fund. A realistic expectation of the total sum raised from these sources, as advised by AirS, is £60,000. £70,000 will be sufficient to carry out the initial works necessary to reopen the hall. This will not allow for all the works required to bring the hall fully up to date.

I am delighted to tell you that we have already raised £10,000 from generous local benefactors.

From enquiries made over the last week or so, we know that sufficient income can be generated to meet the running costs of the hall, but further funds will be needed to ensure the long term future. The charitable funders will not provide funds to restore the cottage as this is seen as a commercial operation. We cannot leave the cottage to go to rack and ruin, so we will need to find funds for the restoration. A proposal will be made to the Parish Council to enable them to raise funds to carry out a complete restoration of the cottage. The cottage will then be let on the open market by the Parish Council, and the rent used to repay the funds. The surplus income from the rent would be donated to the charity for the continuing improvement of the hall.

Our advice is that the support given at the referendum is sufficient to authorise the Parish Council to act.

Safeguards would be put in place to allow the full repayment of the loan to the Parish Council.

These proposals will allow the hall to reopen on a self funding basis, at no cost to the Parish Council or the rate payers, and give effect to the policy set out in the Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

We strongly believe the Parish should have its own community hall. There is good support for it. We have a building, in an excellent position, which is available and capable of being brought back into use for the community. There is evidence to show it will be used and, with a new management structure, additional uses will be encouraged. The whole scheme can be successfully achieved on a self funding basis. It is a win/win situation for the community which must be brought to fruition for us and future generations.

I believe the Chairman will shortly ask for a vote in favour of keeping the hall. Please remember that the hall and cottage can be brought back to life at no cost to you all. All we need you to do tonight is to show your support for the hall to remain with the parish.'

Cllr. Broucke asked members of the public present at the meeting to put forward their views on the above proposal. The overwhelming majority of those present were in support of the hall re-opening on the above basis. In addition, the following questions/comments were made:-

| Question/comment   | Response   |
|--|--|
| How much will the whole project cost? How does this compare with knocking down the hall and rebuilding?                    | Around £180,000. Richard Hill believes this is cheaper than rebuilding, and is easier from an administration point of view.  |
| Is it possible to extend the car park?   | Yes, this has been considered and discussed, but would not be done with the first phase of work.                             |
| How will the hall be run?  | By volunteers. The Steering Group will seek to bring onto the committee representatives from organisations who use the hall. |
| A member of the public was in support of the proposal as long as the hall is used by residents of Woodmancote.             |  |
| Advice was given that the hall would need to be able to compete with neighbouring halls, and car parking must be improved. | Car park improvements were suggested by lots of people present, and this is something that the Steering Group is aware of.   |
| One member of the public thought it would be better to demolish the hall and build social housing.                         |  |

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| More people need to be engaged as only a small number of people were in attendance at the meeting. |                                       |
| Is there a completion date in mind?  | At an estimate, November or December. |

### 8. Question time

The meeting was opened up to questions from members of the public. The following questions/comments were raised:-

| Question/comment  | Response   |
|---|--|
| There is a drainage issue on Blackstone Lane, but Highways has refused to do anything about this. |  |
| There is speeding on the A281.  | The Parish Council is looking into getting Vehicle Automated Signs to reduce speeding throughout the Parish. |
| The verges on Blackstone Lane are eroding due to heavy vehicles using the lane.                   |  |
| Is it known why so many Browns lorries are coming through Woodmancote?                            | It is believed that there may be a new site a Small Dole that they are going to.                             |

*The meeting closed at 9.45 pm for refreshments*