

WOODMANCOTE PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Minutes of Meeting held in the Parish Hall on Tuesday 12th April 2016 at 7.45p.m.
(Members of the Public were invited to attend)

Mrs L Bannister – Clerk to the Council
48 Titmus Drive Tilgate Crawley West Sussex RH10 5ER
Tel: 07921 822869
Email: woodmancoteparishcouncil@gmail.com

Present: WPC Cllrs. C. Broucke (Chairman), M. Grimes, A. Underwood, P. Williams and J. Prangnell
L. Bannister (Clerk)

Others Present: Police Sargeant M. Drabble
3 members of the steering group
Rev'd Doick
HDC Cllrs. D. Coldwell & B. Staines
Leanne Taylor and Steve O'Neill from Eon
16 members of the public

1. Report from Sussex Police

Police Sargeant Martin Drabble attended to represent Sussex Police. He covers all of Horsham District.

In terms of crime reduction, despite cuts to the number of PCSO's they have, crime in Woodmancote has reduced by 17 incidents in the last year.

Sussex Police have suffered cuts to their budget and have had to reduce the number of officers from 280 to 186. This means they can no longer afford to have a high visibility presence, and will work more on intelligence. They are reducing what they are responding to, so they will not attend to all reports of crime.

M. Drabble commended Woodmancote for their plans for a vehicle activated sign. There is already a successful speed reduction device in Storrington. Cllr. Williams asked if M. Drabble thought these signs were effective, which he did.

The main issues that residents of Woodmancote are concerned about is speeding.

The nearest response teams are Steyning, Pulborough and Horsham. There is a station at Haywards Heath, but they cover Mid Sussex.

Cllr. Williams asked whether Woodmancote would have low Police presence because they have low numbers of crime. M. Drabble confirmed this.

M. Drabble thinks vehicle activated signs are effective.

M. Drabble left various printouts of information, including a list of the incidents in Woodmancote, and information on nuisance calls.

M. Drabble left the meeting

2. Minutes of the last meeting

These were agreed and duly signed subject to correcting 'Woodlands Farm' to 'Woodhouse Farm'.

3. Rampion Wind Farm

Leanne Taylor and Steve O'Neill from Eon attended the meeting.

Information is available on their website.

They have been completing the onshore construction for the last six months, and have been working mainly in the south.

Cllr. Staines arriving

Woodmancote is in stage 3 of their plans, and they'll be moving into this area more in the next few weeks. They are looking to topsoil strip when the ground dries out so that the topsoil doesn't get damaged. They have already done the two main road crossings in the last couple of weeks. The main issue has been flooding. Because the weather has been so wet they are behind where they wanted to be at this stage. They have a phone line for the public to call for updates, and if a message is left they will respond within 48 hours.

Cllr. Underwood asked if the road crossings will be tidied up as they look quite messy where the trees have been cut. Eon confirmed that once they've finished they will come back and re plant the trees and tidy up. Cllr. Underwood noted that the management of the crossings was very good, and the traffic issue that was experienced was resolved as soon as it was brought to the attention of the staff.

Mr Mitchell stated that where they have repaired the crossings at the A281, they are not level with the road. Eon said that they lay extra fill so that the material will settle and level out. Mr Mitchell said that this causes issues either side of the bumps where holes are made by large vehicles like buses. Eon would look into this if it happens.

Cllr. Williams said that some of the hedgerows look very messy, and asked when the newt fencing would be going away. Eon will repair the hedgerows when they have finished, and the newt fencing will remain for the duration of the job. That is one of their environmental requirements.

Cllr. Broucke asked if there was any likelihood of funding from Eon. Eon said that there will be a community benefit, but this hasn't been defined yet and so no details are available. In the past on other projects, there

have been pots of money available for people to apply for. They cannot say whether or not this is what will happen again, but they will let us know once the details have been confirmed.

More work is due on the A281 soon, and traffic controls will be in place while they put in the bell mouths for their vehicles.

There will be large amounts of hard core laid to cope with the lorries, but this will be removed at a later date.

4. Chairman's report

Cllr. Broucke reported as follows:

'The past year has been a very busy one for W.P.C , some interesting times and some very frustrating. At last year's APM there were one or two matters raised that concerned local residentsspeeding on the A281 was oneI am able to report that we have paid for a speed wire service, which concluded that the road near the hall was suitable for a flashing sign. This we are looking into for the costs, highways permission and maintenance , they tell me this can take 18 months or more!

Flooding in Blackstone Lane was another concern raised...we did get the 'small pond' in the road at the south end of Blackstone Lane jettied, which was successful at the time, but every spell of rain it re occurs , which we have asked W.S.C.C to investigate into further.

We were able with the help of W.S.C.C and operation watershed to clean some of the ditches in Blackstone Lane and reinstate the verges. This was very successful and went as planned.

The flooding in Green Lane, under the same scheme has not been so easy and as yet W.S.C.C have not been able to complete this successfully.

As most of you will know, a lot of concern was raised over H.D.C plans to sell the garage block in Blackstone at auction.

The Parish Council have been working to prevent parking being lost in the village, we are informed that H.D.C. will not continue with the site as it presently is, but by raising the concerns of the residents that live there we have been able to get H.D.C. to look at making better use of the site for all and keeping us involved in the process. We are waiting for a proposal.

Most of our time has been taken up with the Neighbourhood Plan.....what a minefield!

Lots of rules and regulations, hoops to jump through, boxes to tick...and procedures to follow! Little room for common sense!

But with the help of residents, committee members and our paid advisors we have been able to prepare a draft plan which we believe reflects the information gathered from our surveys and we hope that you have all been able to have a look at this. Some of you will wonder why we need it, some of you will wonder what it means and some of you will agree with it.

A lot of work! But without the plan we lose a lot of our voice when it comes to choosing what Woodmancote will need and look like in the future. Please come and vote in due course!

There has been a dozen or so more planning applications this year...anything from a field gateway to a new house. I think H.D.C. have agreed with most of our comments and decisions.

W.P.C is just 6 volunteers giving up their time to help keep Woodmancote a safe and enjoyable place to live and work, now and in the future, although we are always looking for more people to help on the council!

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me and the P C members this year especially our Clerk Leanne who keeps everything ship shape and us on our toes.'

Councillors thanked Cllr. Broucke for doing a great job.

Cllr. Underwood encouraged people to step forward as councillors.

5. Report from HDC

Cllr Coldwell reported that there is little within HDC to report on that has a direct effect on the Parish because as far as Woodmancote are concerned things have been exceedingly quiet.

Members might be interested to know that the neighbourhood warden scheme has been extended to Pulborough for a 2 year trial under the same arrangements that exist for the Upper Beeding, Bramber and Steyning scheme, that is the wardens are employed by HDC in partnership with the Parishes. Billingshurst has also agreed to have wardens but they will be directly employed by the Parish.

Currently out for consultation is a new Public Places Protection Order. This is part of new measures to allow greater powers to PCs, PCSOs and Wardens in tackling anti-social behaviors and certain of them will be prohibited. They include:-

1. Drinking in public places when asked not to by an authorised person.
2. Parkour/Free running – urban gymnastics which cause damage to buildings in town centres.
3. Horse racing/exercising horse drawn vehicles on dual carriageway roads. This is aimed at the A24 road north of Southwater where the practice is common.
4. Anti social use of vehicles.
5. Dog fouling.

Cllr. Coldwell thanked WPC for their kind words about the Planning department.

Cllr. Staines reported that the new housing bill may affect the district. This has not yet been finalised.

Cllr. Coldwell commented on the Blackstone Rise garages application that HDC will have to be careful about what they do because it is them that will make the planning application, and them that will decide on the application. So, if the committee goes against the application, HDC will have no right of appeal.

Cllr. Grimes asked if the HDPF could be appealed in any way. Cllr. Coldwell said perhaps it could go to judicial review, but this would be very costly, and he wouldn't think that there would be much chance of success.

Cllr. Broucke asked if a picture could be taken for the record. No objections were raised and so a picture was taken of the meeting.

6. Neighbourhood Plan Q & A

Mrs Batchelor asked if residents will see another copy of the Plan once amendments have been made following the consultation period. Cllr. Broucke said the Plan would be made available from HDC once they put the plan out to consultation, but there won't be another consultation made by WPC.

Mr Mitchell asked if WPC will respond to each and every comment that has been made. Cllr. Broucke said that WPC is not duty bound to do this, but all comments will be discussed.

Mr Mitchell suggested that Policy 4 is included in the appendix, as it is quite a task to find it in the HDPF.

Mr Ward asked if once the plan is adopted, it is a 'tablet of stone'. Cllr. Broucke said that parishes are waiting to see whether or not Neighbourhood Plans are challengeable. Cllr. Coldwell added that once the Plan has been made, it becomes a supplementary planning document alongside HDC's Plan.

A member of the public asked whether if an applicant has not submitted ideas at the early stages of the neighbourhood planning process, would they be adversely affected. Cllr. Broucke confirmed that anything under five units would come under the windfall policy. Anything over that amount would not have been included in the Plan.

Cllr. Broucke clarified windfall as five units or less on one site.

Regarding the garages, Cllr. Broucke explained that by trying to keep involved, WPC hope to maintain some control of the development.

A member of the public stated that they couldn't see why it is in HDC's benefit to develop the site at all.

Ms Batchelor stated that HDC have told residents that they are not looking for ideas for the site, which is different to what WPC have told residents. Cllr. Broucke said that WPC only reported what they have been told by HDC, and what we have put in writing to them.

Cllr. Coldwell added that the easiest thing for HDC to do would have been to sell to a developer. So, the current situation should be seen as a positive as HDC are working with WPC.

The residents are concerned about the impact of parking in the road and the traffic issues that would come with development of the garages (if no parking spaces were provided).

Cllr. Coldwell said that HDC are listening, but they have a duty of care to make money out of the site.

A resident of Blackstone made an offer a year ago of £70,000, but didn't have any response. Cllr. Coldwell will follow this up.

Cllr. Staines added that an application cannot be refused for highway reasons as the Highways department is consulted as a separate agency.

Mrs Batchelor said that she hopes that once an application is made there will be an open meeting.

A resident of Blackstone said that she cannot safely get out of her driveway at the moment, and thinks this situation will worsen if the garage site is redeveloped.

Another resident added that HDC should take into account that there are also farm vehicles travelling around Woodmancote, which makes parking on the lane more dangerous.

Cllr. Coldwell reiterated that WPC has done extremely well to get to where they have with the garages as this could have been a very different situation. From the top of his head, a figure given last year for the site was £100,000 minimum.

7. Question time

A resident asked that if the pavements are going to be cleared again this year, could the slope up to the church please be included. Cllr. Broucke confirmed that WPC are trying to get this done at the moment.

Mr Blazeby reported that he is responsible for Neighbourhood Watch in the area. His number is on the WPC website if anyone needs to contact him. At this time of year residents should look out for travellers, be alert to strangers, shut their gates and be aware of what is happening in the Parish.

The meeting closed at 20.45pm for tea and coffee