

**WOODMANCOTE PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**Minutes of Meeting held in the Parish Hall on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 7.45p.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. Grimes, D. Austin, A. Underwood, P. Williams and L. Bannister (Clerk)

**Others Present:** HDC Cllrs. D. Coldwell & J. Goddard  
WSCC Cllr. D. Barling  
11 x members of the public  
Rev'd Paul Doick

### **1. Report from West Sussex County Council**

Cllr. Barling reported that lots of things are happening at County at the moment. A new website has been launched which is very easy to navigate. This has gone live in the last few days.

Cllr. Barling has been involved with a new recycling initiative called 'pots, tubs and trays'. All of these items are now allowed to be recycled. The recycling rate is about 42% in West Sussex, which is diversion away from landfill. This needs to increase by 2020.

There is a lot of downsizing still to do. By 2019 the budget will be £124m smaller to bring it down to around £500m.

WSCC is going to share offices with HDC from June. This will provide quite a saving for rates and council tax.

Council tax has been frozen again.

Cllr. Broucke asking that we don't get any of the recycling in Woodmancote. The plants are currently at Ford and Thatcham.

The Council thanked Cllr. Barling for his continued support for Woodmancote.

### **2. Minutes from the last meeting**

These were agreed and duly signed.

### **3. Chairman's report**

Cllr. Broucke reported as follows:-

*Well it's that time again, 12 months ago I sat thinking, where has the last year gone and what will the next year bring? We had a challenging year but I believe a very productive one. The council got off to a positive start by welcoming our new clerk Leanne on board. What a difference that makes! Everything gets done on time and we all know what's going on! Well Done Leanne, and thank you.*

*The neighbourhood plan got under way earlier in the year with the appointment of AirS to instruct us and bring all the legal requirements together.*

*David Austin was elected as Chairman for the plan, a daunting task! But he has done a sterling job.*

*We met with a team of planning advisers at the Cricket Ground who made a quick impression on us as to how Woodmancote looks to someone not familiar with it.*

*The call for sites was advertised and responses were welcomed. These are all being considered by the steering group at the moment to see how any of them would or could benefit Woodmancote. We have had a good response from the questionnaire we sent out, and some very useful comments from the residents at the open meeting we held, all this will go towards the Draft Plan later in the year. Thank you to everyone involved with this task.*

*Some of the drainage work has been completed at the playing field, at one point it was too dry, then too wet...apparently!*

*This is a brilliant facility for everyone to enjoy.*

*With the help of a small grant we were able to clean the pavements on the A281, this is something we have been trying to do for some time. They are greatly improved.*

*There are 2 drainage jobs in the pipeline which we hoped would have been started by now, one of which we hope will improve Blackstone Lane...we hope!*

*Pam and a team of helpers have installed new gates on the footpaths adjoining Blackstone Lane, a great improvement, we will try & do a couple more in the future.*

*This has been my 5<sup>th</sup> year as Chairman of WPC I have found this both challenging and frustrating at times but enjoyable.*

*There are council elections soon, and everyone at the table has been re-elected, plus one other.*

*Thank you to all the members for your support!*

A member of the public thanked Cllr. Broucke for his work.

#### **4. Drainage**

P. Bates asked about the drainage at Paygate. This has been an issue for many years and has been reported many times. P. Bates has sent complaints to WSCC, and Cllr. Barling is now involved. P. Bates believes something has now been cleared, but believes it will still be an issue.

## **5. Report from Horsham District Council**

Cllr. Coldwell reported as follows:-

*The main business of the council for the past month revolved about the requirement to publish a consultation document about the additional housing required as a result of the inspector's interim report.*

*Members will recall that the inspection process was suspended in December last year, when the inspector concluded that whilst the draft plan under examination was essentially sound, it did not allow for enough homes to be built to house the forecast population of the district. HDC had originally calculated that 650 units per annum would be sufficient, but the inspector believed that 750 was a more realistic figure. Thus the suspension of the examination for six months to allow HDC time to find the added units. It is worth noting that he could have rejected the plan in its entirety thus setting the process back by some years.*

*It is also worth noting that no plan means effectively a free-for-all for the developers because of the lack of a five year land supply and bearing in mind that some developers were saying that we need 1200 houses p.a., the door would have been open for apparently random development schemes like the one in Small Dole.*

*The council held an extra-ordinary meeting 18<sup>th</sup> May and, after a lengthy meeting, approved the amendments for consultation, now running until 5<sup>th</sup> May.*

*Although the south of the district is not significantly impacted but the numbers which are mostly in North Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst, passing of the plan and hopefully its eventual adoption will get the Community Infrastructure Levy back on track.*

*In the Standards committee, Mr John Donaldson, has been co-opted as an independent person to replace Paul Byford who has retired. John is from Henfield and may be known to some of you through his expertise in flood prevention.*

*The office move will be taking place soon. The annual meeting will be held in May in the new offices. The building has been sold for around £6m.*

Cllr. Goddard had nothing to report, but wanted to announce that this was his last meeting as a District Councillor, and it has been a pleasure working with Woodmancote.

## **6. Police report**

The PCSO was unavailable to attend the meeting.

## **7. Neighbourhood Plan**

There were several documents for members of the public to read.

The sites put forward are as follows:-

- Peacock Paddock on the A281
- A site on the corner of the A281 and Blackstone Lane

- A site on Blackstone Lane
- A residential area of Firlands
- A barn conversion at Woodhouse Farm

All sites have now been visited by the Steering Group. Woodmancote are not obliged to include any development in the plan, but the Council believes it would be viewed favourably if Woodmancote can offer something.

Henfield have been working on their plan for two years and are now at a submission stage, however there are still a lot of hoops to jump through.

The decision of what sites to include will be led by the Horsham District Planning Policy Framework, the National Planning Policy Framework and the needs of the parish.

Cllr. Austin urged people to attend open meetings so we can gather opinions, as this will be crucial to the success of the plan.

Historically there has been 1-1.5 developments per year in the parish. However this may not be an indication of the future.

Once this is done we will be in a position for pre submission. Then the plan will go to referendum and parishioners will get a chance to vote on the plan to be adopted. This will then be adopted in law. However this does not necessarily mean that what is included in the plan will get planning permission, equally what is not included may be given permission.

Cllr. Broucke explained that the consequences of not having a plan is a risk to the parish. The Council felt a plan was needed to safeguard the parish boundaries and the nature of the parish.

There will be an open forum when landowners will get a chance to put forward proposals for the sites, and then questions from the floor – which will help inform the Steering Group. Cllr. Austin encouraged everyone to attend. There will be 14 days' notice of this meeting.

From Henfield Parish Council's point of view they agree with WPC continuing with the Neighbourhood Plan. However mentioned that nobody will know the full benefits of the plans until they are complete.

The sites need to be sustainable, and if they are HDC will expect them to be developed. The SEA should give the answer to this. This is a strategic environmental assessment and is part of a sustainability appraisal.

A member of the public said that he is aware of other plans that have been rejected because they have put a ceiling on the amount of development to be included in their plans. However, Woodmancote does not have a set number of development allocated by HDC.

Cllr. Coldwell said that the figures included in the draft plan for HDC for 750 houses a year are approx., and it is an expectation that 1500 houses will come from the parishes, which isn't a great deal considering the number of parishes within the district.

The questionnaire has thrown up a modest need for certain types of development.

## **7. Parish Hall**

Rev'd Paul Doick is a warden of the Church responsible for the trust of the Parish Hall. He is unsure how many of his predecessors have worried about the hall. The legal position is that hall has now been registered with the Land Registry in the name of Diocese. This does not mean that the Diocese has ownership of the hall. They have a trust deed and at the moment they are operating outside of the trust deed, which says that it is a church hall to be used for educational purposes.

The question is how to repair the hall and house and raise funds for this. There are limited funds available. If it can be proved that there is a need for the hall within the Parish, that will hopefully be a way to raise funds for the repairs.

There is no responsibility on the local church.

The Rev'd is open to suggestions as he doesn't know the way forward. The trust deed may need to be changed so that the village hall can be maintained.

The response to a question raised at a meeting relating to the Neighbourhood Plan was that parishioners wanted the hall to be kept, but they were open to development on the land to raise funds to sustain this.

If people locally thought hall was going to close, they would be very upset about it and may raise money.

The Rev'd has access to a judge who is experienced in church law who will give certain amounts of advice. If it is decided to redevelop the site this would need to be paid for, but the Rev'd would need to negotiate who would pay for this.

Cllr. Underwood suggested putting out a questionnaire to all of the Parish to get their views.

A. Tiplady (the caretaker of the hall), said that the hall is the centre of the parish and it is used quite a bit. The booking dates listed in the Parish magazine are often added to after publication, so the magazine is not the most up to date way to find out if the hall is available. It was suggested that perhaps a calendar on notice board would be helpful to rectify this.

Cllr. Grimes asked what the reaction of the church would be if the site were to be sold on the open market? The Rev'd has already asked the charities commission this questions, and they would want proceeds to go towards the trustees in the original document. The Rev'd doesn't think there would be huge objection.

On average the hall has bookings six days a week.

**8. Question time**

P. Bates asking about the telephone box on the Brighton Road. This has been reported several times.

Several sign posts are in a poor state of repair throughout the parish. Cllr. Broucke said two have already been reported.

It was requested that more of the pavements are cleared next year. Cllr. Broucke explained that the Council will try, but that the cost of clearing is more than the grant.

*Meeting closed at 20.45pm*