

**MAYFIELD AND FIVE ASHES PARISH COUNCIL**

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAYFIELD  
AND FIVE ASHES PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD AT MAYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ON MONDAY 10 DECEMBER 2007 AT 1930 HOURS**  
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7C:08

FINAL

MARTIN PITCHER  
CHAIRMAN

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**Chairman Of Mayfield And Five Ashes Parish Council  
Councillor Martin Pitcher**

**SUMMARY OF MEETING**

- Presentation from JB on Mayfield and Five Ashes Rights of Way issues
- Budget 2008/9 approved
- Parish precept approved

**ATTENDANCE**

Martin Pitcher	(MP)	Present and Voting
Paul Amans	(PA)	Present and Voting
Peter Deller	(PD)	Present and Voting
Jane Driscoll	(JD)	Present and Voting
Elaine Wheeler	(EW)	Present and Voting
Patricia Balfour	(PB)	Present and Voting
Jayne Bramwell	(JB)	Present and Voting
Graham Playfoot	(GP)	Present and Voting
Hubert Hills	(HH)	Present and Voting
Deveda Redman	(DR)	Present and Voting
Catherine Swingland	(CS)	Present and Voting
Robert Fitzsimmons	(RF)	Present and Voting
Chris Lilly	(CL)	Present and Voting
Jerry Watkiss	(JW)	Present and Voting
Tony Lay	(TL)	Present and Voting

Present and voting 15      Present and not voting 0  
Apologies for Absence 0      Not present 0      Other Council Business 0

**Also Present**

ESCC Councillors Robert Tidy (RT), Wealden District Councillors Brian Redman (BR) and Graham Wells (GW)  
David Thompson Parish Clerk (DT)

**Apologies for Absence**

C Dowling (ESCC)

**Not Present** Councillor Jonica Fox (WDC)

There were 4 members of the public present.

## **MINUTES**

### **1. COUNCILLORS DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**

- 1.1. GP made a declaration of interest as Chairman of the Five Ashes Village Hall Committee.
- 1.2. There were no other declarations of interest.

### **2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 2.1. The Chairman welcomed Nicholas Hitchen as the new reporter for the Kent and Sussex Courier.

### **3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

- 3.1. Brian Pike noted that the post bus was being withdrawn at the year end and asked what action if any was being taken. The Clerk replied that ESCC in conjunction with the Parish Councils of Wadhurst and Mayfield and Five Ashes were arranging for a new service which would serve Wadhurst, Mayfield, Rotherfield, Jarvis Brook and Crowborough. The service would run three days per week for a trial period of six months. Costs would be shared 50% ESCC and 25% each for Wadhurst and Mayfield and Five Ashes. Clerk to advertise in Yellow Pages.

#### **ACTION DT**

- 3.2. LM reported yet another serious traffic accident at Butchers Cross.
- 3.3. There were no other questions from members of the public.

### **4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD ON NOVEMBER 12 2007**

- 4.1. There were four minor amendments to the minutes, after which they were approved by UNANIMOUS vote and signed by the Chairman.
- 4.2. There were no other issues arising from the minutes.

### **5. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2007**

- 5.1. CL reported on the meeting noting that the internal audit report had been received and accepted by the committee, and commented on the high quality of the report.
- 5.2. The Annual Return had been submitted within the revised time limit.
- 5.3. The Quality Council application had been prepared and the Clerk had arranged for it to be vetted before making the submission.
- 5.4. No errors were reported to the minutes which were accepted by UNANIMOUS VOTE.
- 5.5. PD questioned the problem of the corrupted electronic financial records, and asked whether regular back ups were being made. It was confirmed that this was now being done.
- 5.6. With regard to the Mayfield roundabout County Councillor R Tidy reported that:
  - After two years, negotiations with suitable commercial entities were now concluding.
  - Planting would take place next spring.
  - Consultation would take place before hand.

DR asked what consideration had been given to the merits of designated plants over wild planted areas. RT noted that the roundabouts in prominent positions would be planted and maintained to achieve the best overall affect.

5.7. JD noted that in her view the skateboard park, should not be floodlit, since it would cause light pollution to the area..

5.8. JB asked what the reference to risk management in the internal audit report meant. CL replied that a small sub-committee of F&GP would be formed and would meet a few times per year and would check that sufficient processes were in place to manage possible problems with the various facets of the Council's activities.

The process document had been approved by Council and copies circulated to members.

5.9. The Internal Audit report was **formally noted**.

## 6. REPORT FROM ESCC COUNCILLOR R TIDY

6.1 With regard to the "travellers" occupying the stub end of the old A267 it was reported that:

- ESCC had gone to the Magistrates Court to obtain an eviction for trespass, however the Community Law Partnership acting on behalf of the travellers had obtained a High Court Order to halt these proceedings and had called for a judicial review.
- ESCC and WDC Councillors will visit affected residents on 12 December 2007.
- If the case proceeds arrangements will have to be made to keep the area in good order.

6.2 Rupert Clubb from the Environmental Agency had taken the Director of Transport and Environment post with ESCC. He had published his vision for transport in the future.

6.3 NCN 21 Cuckoo Trail – Councillor Lock will make formal decision on 17 December 2007, but it is likely to be:

- Route A along the route of Newick Lane.
- At the Heathfield end route B to be re-examined.
- Route D considered impractical on financial grounds.
- Further studies necessary to ascertain cost implications.

6.4 The ESCC financial settlement with Central Government allowed for a 2.5% increase for inflation. The overall increase was to be 3.2%. This compared with Cornwall 9%, with 8.5% for some of the northern counties. Council tax will increase by 3.9%, a reduction of 0.4% on the previous year.

6.5 ESCC had gained the local authority award for the reduction in carbon footprint. Down 14% and a leader in the South East region.

6.6 PD noted that the ESCC primary schools were quite well down in the performance tables, and that areas like Stockport, Tyneside and Darlington were doing better. RT noted that ESCC were working hard to make improvements, and that vast sums of money had been poured into education, but had not fully achieved the desired results. Effort was now being placed on leadership and raising aspirations.

- 6.7 JB enquired whether travellers now in site on the old stub of the A267 were gypsies. It was confirmed that the male members of the group were of Romany stock. It was also noted that there was some confusion between WDC and ESCC over the interpretation of the Planning Acts and who were responsible for the provision of sites. BR commented that the WDC were dealing with noise complaints, animal welfare issues and rubbish clearance. He agreed that it was difficult to locate full responsibility, but was trying to resolve it.

## **7. REPORTS FROM WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES B REDMAN AND G WELLS**

- 7.1. GW reported that a new communications initiative was being rolled out with a new district council logo. The idea was to provide impetus and a refreshing image.
- 7.2. A recent engagement strategy review had indicated that 53% of the population thought they were unlikely to influence decision making.
- 7.3. The Council had been strengthening financial controls with a strong policy of zero tolerance. The WDC budget for 2008/9 was expected to increase by 4%.
- 7.4. The affordable housing programme was not going well, but the problems arising were being addressed.
- 7.5. The LDF process was lagging behind schedule and was at risk. It was considered that an agreed delay of five months would achieve needs.
- 7.6. BR noted that the Wincanton site was being kept by WDC as a commercial site and asked the Parish Council to consider whether they wished this, or would request a change of use.
- 7.7. PD raised the issue of the non attendance of Councillor Jonica Fox.
- 7.8. It was noted that Parish LDF responses will be taken into account by WDC.
- 7.9. BR drew attention to the forthcoming WDC Clerk's conference in January 2008.

## **8. FINANCE REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2007**

- 8.1. CL drew attention to the key numbers and trends in the Finance Report. He noted that the next year end forecast review would be at the end of December.
- The results were **approved** and there were no questions.

## **9. BUDGET 2008/9**

- 9.1. Introducing draft 3A of the budget, CL announced that minor changes in content but not total had been made since the last meeting of the Full Council. These covered:
- CCTV costs – now curtailed.
  - Grant for Five Ashes pre school
  - Grant May Fair (Chamber of Commerce)
- 9.2. PD asked the Clerk for an analysis of the administration heading in some comparison with other parishes.

### **ACTION DT**

- 9.3. MP drew attention to the proposals to carry out Risk Assessments in 2008.
- 9.4. CL presented the proposed resolution 7C10 for the adoption of Budget 2008/9.

**PROPOSED CL**

**SECONDED PD**

**VOTE UNANIMOUS**

## **10. PRECEPT 2008/9**

- 10.1. CL proposed resolution 7C11 for the approval and adoption of the precept of £73509 for 2008/9.

**PROPOSED CL**

**SECONDED HH**

**VOTE UNANIMOUS**

**ACTION DT**

## **11. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2007 (7P14)**

- 11.1. There were no changes to the minutes which were accepted by UNANIMOUS VOTE.
- 11.2. RF noted that the application for the cricket pavilion at Mayfield Grange seemed indicate that the structure was being sold on as a gymnasium. It was noted that the plans also included changing facilities.
- 11.3. PD drew attention to the section 106 negotiations with regard to the Mayfield Grange project. Estimates varied between £320,000 and £390,000 for the project. WDC had confirmed £390,000. MP noted that the Clerk had written to WDC asking how much of this total would be coming to Mayfield and Five Ashes.
- 11.4. PD noted that the recent seminar on planning issues held by WDC at Sparrows Green, Wadhurst, had been well attended, and was worthwhile. Messrs Moss and Robbins of WDC had been receptive and helpful and the atmosphere of the seminar was friendly.
- 11.5. PD thanked the members of the Planning Committee for their commitment during the year.

## **12. MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2008 (7D07)**

- 12.1. There were no changes to the minutes which were confirmed by UNANIMOUS VOTE.
- 12.2. DR reported that the meeting had revised the strategy document following the recommendations of the Full Council at its meeting 7C07.
- 12.3. There were no questions.

## **13. RIGHTS OF WAY ISSUES**

- 13.1. JB reported that Mr Sharma had not responded to either WDC or ESCC over the footpath decision. The ESCC solicitors would therefore bring him back to court.
- 13.2. JB then gave a presentation on Rights of Way issues.
- Types of Rights of Way:
    - Footpaths
    - Bridleways
    - Roads as a public path
    - Byways open to all traffic
    - Permissive paths
  - Footpaths and bridleways are marked on maps. Permissive paths are not. There are about 90 miles of Rights of Way in Mayfield and Five Ashes.
  - Rights of Way are managed by ESCC. The County Council has a statutory duty to keep them open. It organises clearance, repair of surfaces, removal of obstructions, organise diversions, legal issues, repairs bridges.

- Land owners have a duty to keep their paths open but are not always aware. The work they have to do is:
    - Cut hedges
    - Over hanging trees
    - Stiles and gates
  - There is a huge gap in resources.
- 13.3. The Rights of Way Committee look after the Rights of Way in Mayfield and Five Ashes. The Committee consists of three councillors and seven lay members. Their tasks are listed:
- Monitor conditions of paths
  - Easy problems are dealt with by the Committee
  - Supply stiles and gates in the form of kits to landowners
  - Encourage the implementation of dog latches
  - Replace old stiles with gates where possible
  - Assist and encourage decisions where difficulties are experienced for example Hairholt diversion
  - Collect witness statements for legal cases
  - Encourage and take forward new paths for adoption
  - Liase with other organisations
  - Produce walks booklets
  - Produce maps
  - Use community services on ROW works
  - Organise volunteer clearance parties (JW trained)
  - Keep list of landowners
  - Improve communications with ESCC
- 13.4. The Ramblers Association report shows urgent need to progress Rights of Way issues, and at the present time the Parish Council is progressing 54 Rights of Way projects. People need to use the paths.
- The Rights of Way budget allocation is used with care and this year some 44 various projects have been completed.
- 13.5. The Chairman thanked JB for her presentation. There were no questions, however PA had Health and Safety training and could help.

#### **14. MINUTES OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2007 (7Y03)**

- 14.1. DR reported that at the present time there was nobody available to run the youth facility. Advertisements were being placed in various papers and newsletter.
- 14.2. There were no errors reported to the minutes which were **approved** by the Council.

## **15. MINUTES OF COURT MEADOW MANAGEMENT GROUP HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2007 (7K02)**

- 15.1. The meeting heard a presentation from B Horwood on the Mayfield new hall of which a key issue for Court Meadow was the possibility of a 99 year lease.
- 15.2. The Court Meadow Management Committee had stated that they fully supported the committee in its endeavours to improve the village hall at Mayfield but were unable to commit to a 99 year lease of public land to a private individual. It was possible in their view that arrangements could be made through the Primary Care Trust.
- 15.3. The Clerk reported progress on trying to arrange meetings for the New Hall Committee with ESCC, AIRS and WDC with regard to finding solutions to funding problems.
- 15.4. Two amendments were accepted for the minutes which were then **approved** by Council.
- 15.5. PD wished to state that with the information available at present
  - No support could be given to the project based on the information available at present.
  - The project so far raised a number of questions which required an answer.MP replied that this was well understood and that the F&GP committee would not support a lease or funding given to a private individual.
- 15.6. MP stated that the Council were in favour of exploring other options with ESCC but neither the F&GP or Court Meadow Management Committees had been minded to bring forward any proposals for decision to the Full Council.

## **16. CLERK'S REPORT**

- 16.1. The Clerk's report was **approved** without amendment.
- 16.2. The Clerk explained to the Council the key issues arising from the forthcoming local government act.
- 16.3. Some minor amendments were accepted for the planning meeting dates and it was noted that traffic committee meetings would be called on a if required basis.

## **17 ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND NEXT AGENDA ITEMS**

- 17.1 JB asked if a light could be fitted in the entrance and access path of the Five Ashes Village Hall.
- 17.2 RF reported a scam whereby an individual will pretend to be bank representative and will 'check' the details of the cards, and then use them to access your account.

**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21.35 HOURS.**

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL WILL BE:**

**VENUE:       MAYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**DATE:         14 JANUARY 2008**

**TIME:         1930 HOURS**