



-----  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAYFIELD  
AND FIVE ASHES PARISH COUNCIL  
ORDINARY MEETING**

**HELD AT FIVE ASHES VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2010 AT 1930 HOURS**  
-----

**Chairman of Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council  
Councillor R Fitzsimmons**

9C10

FINAL

R FITZSIMMONS  
CHAIRMAN

**SUMMARY OF MEETING**

- Finance Report for December approved.
- Office relocation debated and agreed.
- Advice on snow clearance received.
- WDC report housing needs survey published.
- Annual Return approved.

**ATTENDANCE**

Robert Fitzsimmons	(RF)	Present and Voting
Monica Aitkin	(MA)	Present and Voting
Paul Amans	(PA)	Present and Voting
Patricia Balfour	(PB)	Apologies for Absence
Jayne Bramwell	(JB)	Present and Voting
Andrew Burnett	(AB)	Present and Voting
Warwick Child	(WH)	Present and Voting
Jane Driscoll	(JD)	Present and Voting
Hubert Hills	(HH)	Present and Voting
Chris Lilly	(CL)	Present and Voting
Lloyd McLean	(LM)	Present and Voting
Graham Playfoot	(GP)	Present and Voting
Deveda Redman	(DR)	Apologies for Absence (P)
Jerry Watkiss	(JW)	Apologies for Absence (H)
Elaine Wheeler	(EW)	Apologies for Absence (B)

Present and voting 11      Present and not voting 0  
Apologies for Absence 4      Not present 0      Other Council Business 0

**Also in attendance:**

Wealden District Councillors Jonica Fox (JF), Robert Standley (RS),  
ESCC Councillor Robert Tidy (RT)  
David Thompson Parish Clerk (DT) and Courier Reporter

**Apologies for Absence**

WDC Councillors Brian Redman (BR) and Graham Wells (GW) and ESCC Councillor Chris Dowling (CD)

There were no members of the public present.

## MINUTES

### 1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS ON AGENDA ITEMS

- 1.1. There were no declarations of interest by members on the agenda items.

### 2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 2.1. It was noted that PC Etherington was not in attendance, nor was PCSO M Boyle.
- 2.2. It was noted that there was a fire in Punnetts Town and that the road had been closed.
- 2.3. With regard to the complaint made by Councillor B Redman with regard to snow and ice clearance the Clerk reported that he had checked with SALC over the Council's position with regard to snow and ice clearance.

Their advice was:

- The Council is liable to pay due care and attention which means it could be liable for any accidents even if gritting had been carried out after snow clearance.
  - There would be a need to ensure that such activity was covered by the Council's insurance.
- 2.4. It was noted that the responsibility for clearance of pavements was vague and that SALC were going to seek a meeting with East Sussex County Council on the subject in the near future.
  - 2.5. The Chairman reported that the format of the Agenda had been changed in order to place reports from the principal authorities before the main Council business..
  - 2.6. The Chairman reported that work had started on the Five Ashes speed restriction project and some of the road signs had already been changed. The rest of the project work was expected to follow quickly.

### 3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 3.1. JF reported that street light No 83 was not working. LM noted that street light 78 on Fir Toll road was also out of action.

**ACTION DT**

### 4. REPORT FROM ESCC COUNCILLOR R TIDY

- 4.1. Councillor Tidy reported as follows:
  - The ESCC were meeting to approve the budget for 2010/11. revenue expectations were slightly better than envisaged, and the increase in Council Tax would be held at 3.27% which was lower than anticipated.
  - £1m would be spent on filling pot holes.
  - Transport and environment were working on a project to borrow £8m in order to launch a high quality road maintenance programme.
  - Work continued to improve care in children's services following the 'Baby P' case, that was likely to cause an extra 600 referrals by April.
  - Strict criteria would be introduced of the free personal care scheme for the elderly. This would cost £1.5 million this year and £3 million next year.
  - A community business support project was in place.
  - Reserves had been set aside to cater for contingency projects.

- 4.2. The deadline for Parish Council to respond over the provision of grit bins was 10 March, when the Council would complete its winter maintenance programme.

**ACTION DT**

- 4.3. LM questioned the actions being taken over the need to foster or place in care over 600 children, and considered that the parents should shoulder the blame. RT noted that in many cases the children came from third generation benefit families.
- 4.4. AB asked what roads would be covered by the new maintenance programme – answer A and B.
- 4.5. JB noted that road repairs at Heathfield were going to take 17 weeks, and that the traffic flow through Heathfield (A267) was 900 vehicles per hour.

## **5. REPORTS FROM WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCILLORS R STANDLEY (RS) AND JONICA FOX (JF)**

- 5.1. RS reported that:

- Budget consultation with the public had been successful.
- The WDC budget had been approved.
- The administrative offices of WDC would be concentrated at Hailsham and would be achieved by 2010. There would be a presence at Crowborough. Savings were anticipated to be £300,000 per year.
- A recent study of road accidents in the Wealden area had revealed that most accidents were in the summer, between 1600-1800 hours, and located within two miles of the accident victims' homes.

- 5.2. In answer to a question from AB, it was noted that alcohol was not a significant factoring the road accident results.
- 5.3. In answer to a question from JD, it was noted that the WDC Crowborough Site would be sold off, and that allowance for land sales had been made in the calculations.
- 5.4. JF reported that the results for the housing needs survey were available for Mayfield and Five Ashes.

**ACTION DT**

## **6. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2010 (9C10)**

- 6.1 There were no errors or omissions recorded and the minutes were approved by UNANIMOUS vote.

**ACTION DT**

- 6.2 With regard to minute 9C09/4.4, it was noted that the WDC conference would be held later in the year.

## **7. FINANCE REPORT DECEMBER 2009**

- 7.1. The Finance Report for December 2009 had been circulated to members. CL reported that there was little change in the financial trends reported, and the Parish Council finances were generally on course.
- 7.2. Full details were in the report reference 7FA09.

- 7.3. JD asked for explanation of Council Corporate Expenses. In answer it was stated that his consisted of insurance and subscriptions to professional bodies. A full explanation would be sent.

**ACTION DT**

## **8. ANNUAL RETURN 2009**

- 8.1. The Clerk reported that the Annual Return had been completed and the appropriate completion of audit notices had been posted.
- 8.2. It was noted that in this year the Parish Council had been singled out as a Parish within the 5% detailed review. The findings of the External Auditor, together with the RFO's comments were as follows.

### **FORMAL COMMENTS FROM THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR**

#### **OPINION**

1. The Council had not formally reviewed the effectiveness of its system of Internal Audit and minuted the outcome. NALC/SALC guidance.  
RFO comment – The internal audit and general reviews cover all aspects of governance. These will be placed on a formal process for 2009/10 as per the Audit Regulations.

#### **OTHER COMMENTS**

1. The Council had not undertaken a Risk Assessment during 2008/9. We note that this was done after the year end. Risk Assessment should be reviewed on an annual basis going forward.  
RFO Comment - In hand
2. It was necessary for the Annual Return to be sent back for amendment to section 1 Boxes 6, 7, and 8 to reflect the balances as at 31 March 2009, and to add the Chairs signature to section 2. Please ensure the accounts are prepared to 31 March in future years.  
RFO Comment - Parish Council moves from Receipts and Payments method to Income and Expenditure accounting. Issue not noted by internal auditor.  
Corrective Action Taken.
3. The minute reference was omitted from Section 2 it should be the same as section 1  
RFO Comment. Noted
4. The Internal Auditor was not appointed for 2008/9 until after the year end.  
RFO comment. - Noted and corrective Action taken
- 8.3. The Council approved the Annual Return by UNANIMOUS vote.

## **9. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

- 9.1. It was noted that the new Community Development Committee had met for the first time on 1 February 2010, but in the absence of DR the item would be deferred until the March meeting of the Full Council.

**ACTION DT**

## **10. RIGHTS OF WAY REPORT**

- 10.1. JB reported that she was not content with the length of time taken to place minutes 9R04 before the Council for adoption.
- 10.2. It was noted that this was due to the cancellation of the December meeting of the ROW Committee, which meant that the minutes could not be reviewed by the Committee until 20 January 2010. Draft minutes were always available to those who wished to see them.
- 10.3. The Clerk agreed to put the review of Committee minutes on the Agenda for the next meeting.

### **ACTION DT**

- 10.4. With regard to the FP13 appeal, JB reported that she was having difficulty with knowing whether or not she could use a projector at the appeal hearing at the Memorial Hall, and also the use of a microphone.

NOTE – No actions were placed on the Clerk to assist.

## **11. MINUTES FOR ADOPTION**

- 11.1. The following minutes were adopted by the Council by UNANIMOUS vote after noting one amendment noted in minute 11.2.
  - 9P14 Planning Committee Status Approved.
  - 9F06 Finance and General Purposes Committee Status Approved.
  - 9F07 Finance and General Purposes Committee Status Approved.
  - 9R04 Rights of Way and Trees Committee Status Approved.
  - 9D04 Development Committee Status Approved.
- 11.2. It was noted that the name Joanne Aldous should be converted to Rosemary Mays-Smith on the item on the Heathfield Partnership in minutes 9F07.
- 11.3. With regard to minute 6F7/14.2 JD wishes to know the current position with the proposed Five Ashes Children's Play area. The current position was that a decision had not been reached by the landowners (The Nicholson Trust).

## **12. OFFICE RELOCATION**

- 12.1. CL introduced the Clerk's paper setting out the arguments for relocation of the Parish Council office to the Manor House, High Street, Mayfield.  
(Doc Ref A/OFF/10/LOC Annex 1)
- 12.2. AB suggested other alternatives outside of the High Street for example the Wincanton site which may well be available. However it was noted that experience had shown that a High Street site was desirable, particularly as there were a number of elderly residents.
- 12.3. MA noted that although the Parish Council had cut a number of worthwhile small projects from the budget it was now possible to produce a scheme for an office move. CL noted that the day to day running costs were roughly comparable with London House and the Heathfield archive office and in the Clerk's view could be considered within the current budget. The problem lay with the one off costs which could if necessary be met from reserves.
- 12.4. The one off costs showed the worst case scenario, and it was considered that these could be reduced, for example by negotiating a better penalty clause with the Mayfield PCC.
- 12.5. Overall it was considered that the Manor House in the High Street offered an opportunity to establish a quality Parish office.

12.6. WH had concerns over the project and had informed Fr Nigel Prior of the proposals in advance of the meeting for which he apologised to the Council.

12.7. The debate was concluded.

### **13. RESOLUTION 9C21**

13.1 The following Resolution was put before the Full Council:

#### **Resolution 9C21**

Proposed by C Lilly and Seconded by P Amans

Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council **RESOLVE** to relocate the Parish Office to premises at the Manor House, High Street, Mayfield, subject to satisfactory financial negotiations.

The Resolution was approved by UNANIMOUS vote.

13.2 It was agreed that:

- PA/CL would negotiate with Handley's on behalf of the Parish Council.
- DT/RF would negotiate with Fr N Prior on behalf of the Parish Council.

### **14. TRANSITION MAYFIELD**

14.1. With the absence of PB there was no report, however the Clerk noted that he had given assistance to the forthcoming report on green energy strategy for Mayfield and Five Ashes.

### **15. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

15.1. AB reported that at the present time the Chamber was struggling and it was becoming difficult to get new members.

### **16. MAYFIELD VILLAGE CENTRE**

16.1. WH reported that he had attended the regular monthly meetings, and that the recent exhibition had been considered successful. Drawings of the proposed new hall were now being prepared.

16.2. In WH's view, the plans for the new hall needed the support of all residents.

### **17 CLERK'S REPORT FEBRUARY 2010 9X10**

17.1 The Clerk's report was noted by the Full Council.

17.2 The Clerk was requested by JB to follow up the position with regard to the acquisition of the red telephone boxes from BT.

**ACTION DT**

17.3 HH reported on the position with regard to the Court Meadow boundary hedge and the agreement made between the Mayfield pre school and the Mayfield Primary School (See Section 4 of the Clerk's report).

17.4 CL requested a copy of the Business Link presentation item.

**ACTION DT**

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

18.1 WH reported that he was arranging with David Nash to comment on options for the restoration of the War Memorial in Mayfield High Street. When a date was known members would be invited to attend.

18.2 The current position with regard to the Love Lane car park was requested by JB – answer in hand with ESCC, quotation awaited.

**ACTION DT**

18.3 The current position with regard to Police presence at meetings was noted and also a progress report on the Mayfield High Street car parking exercise.

**ACTION DT**

18.4 RF noted that the training session for Councillors would be Monday 15 February 2010, and as before this will cover the following issues for Councillors:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Parish Council Procedures
- Principles of Finance and Budgeting
- Power of Well-being

The meeting will start at 19:30 hours in the Primary School Hall at Mayfield. Other Parishes have nominated delegates.

**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 2135 HOURS.**

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MAYFIELD AND FIVE ASHES PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE:**

**VENUE: MAYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**DATE: MONDAY 8 MARCH 2010 (9C11)**

**TIME: 1930 HOURS**

## Annex 1

### OFFICE RELOCATION



Ref: A/OFF/10/LOC

4 February 2010

#### Introduction

The Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council office has been located on the upper floor of London House for some five years. It is a listed building and comprises a single office space. In addition the Parish Council rent an archive office in Heathfield of some 56 square feet. Two High Street properties have become available. Details are:

<b>Recurring Costs</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Mayfield</b>	<b>Flower House</b>	<b>Manor House</b>
Area square feet	302.25	402	490
	Single office space	Lobby, main office, kitchen and toilet.	Main office, kitchen, toilet and basement
<b>Costs</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Rent	5380	5750	4875
Electricity	200	700	700
Heathfield Warehouse	917	917	-
Business rate	-	950	765
Insurance	-	300*	300
Gas	-	20*	20
Water	-	145*	145
Sewerage	-	387*	387
Repairs	-	200*	200*
<b>Total</b>	<b>6497</b>	<b>9369</b>	<b>7392</b>
Notice days	Mayfield 365 days Heathfield 90 days	Not known	Not known

\* = Estimated

There is no doubt that the London House office enhanced the service that the Parish Council can give to residents, compared with the previous accommodation in the portacabin in St Leonards Mayfield School.

The office has however some major drawbacks:

- The Church has access to the office at all times to use their copying machines which can cause problems when meetings or confidential conversations are being held.
- Although safety certified there could be problems with exit from the building should a significant fire arise.
- Meetings are held in the office (60 per year) which cause administrative problems.
- Access is difficult since the entrance is at the rear of London House and access is by a narrow and ill-lit staircase which is difficult for the elderly to use, and the elderly a significant part of our population.
- There is no storage space and archiving which is done at Heathfield.

## **Relocation**

### **Flower House**

Reported to need significant plumbing and wiring work. Does not lend itself into division into separate units for Clerk, meetings, and storage. Storage would be difficult. The property rent and running costs would be £2872 per annum more expensive than Mayfield, London House, and £1977 more expensive than the Manor House. Access from the road, however, is good.

**The Flower house is ruled out.**

### **Manor House**

Would appear to be in good order. Lends itself to providing a meeting room and reception area and a Clerk's office on the ground floor with, in addition a storage area (roughly equivalent to the Heathfield archive) in the basement area. The building has extensive shelving in place. The building would be more expensive than Mayfield London House for rent and running costs by £895 per year. It has good public access from the High Street and provides adequate access for the elderly.

The Manor House offers significant advantages over London House, both as a work area, public access, and to promote the image of the Parish Council.

**It is therefore the chosen alternative.**

## Non Recurring Costs

Apart from the annual costs of running the Parish Office there would be some one off non recurring costs as outlined in the table below.

Non Recurring Costs		
Description	Flower House	Manor House
	£	£
Legal Fees – Rent Agreement	500*	500*
Legal fees – Landlord	1000*	1000*
Removal Costs	300*	300*
Fitting out	300*	300*
Decoration	300*	300*
IT moving costs	100	100
Change of Business Use	300*	300*
<b>Total</b>	<b>2800</b>	<b>2800</b>

\* = Estimated

Fitting out and redecoration need not necessarily be carried out immediately.

## Penalties

Our current rent requires one year's notice on either side (£5750) and the archive area at Heathfield three months notice (£230) a total of £5980, say £6000.

Some months ago the Clerk was instructed to save £5000 from this year's running costs for the Parish Council in order to build up reserves, and this target will be achieved. This money could be used to off-set the penalties and it may also be possible to negotiate a lower penalty with the Church. It is not considered that significant rent reductions can be made for the Manor House.

It may be possible to negotiate a sub-let with the Mayfield PCC or indeed negotiate better terms of notice, and these are being investigated.

## **Risks**

The greatest risks are the one off penalties imposed by current rent agreement (£6000). These however can be met from reserves should they occur.

Estimated reserves at the Year End are considered to be around £25,000.

Budget requirement 15% of precept £13,000.

Earmarked for MVC £7800.

Total £20800

The balance available to support the risks is £4200, however it may be possible if necessary to use some of the MVC earmarked funds.

## **Conclusion**

The Parish Council is recommended to relocate the Parish Office to the Manor House in Mayfield High Street. The reasons are:

- Gives the Parish Council greater visibility.
- In line with current thinking and developments for Parish Council and is desirable for a Quality Council.
- Gives good public access.
- Provides better meetings facilities.
- Provides better storage facilities.

## **Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council – Decision Required**

- **To relocate the Parish Office to the Manor House, High Street, Mayfield.**
- **To instruct the Clerk to initiate actions, using Parish Council and other expertise where possible to achieve above decision.**

**D Thompson**

**Clerk to Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council**

**4 February 2010**