

# BERWICK PARISH ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Berwick Parish Assembly held at the Berwick Village Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 7:00pm

1. Present

Cllrs B Smith, (Chairman), Keith Winter, Chris Bird and Sally Carnie.

Councillor N Bennett, Alison Stevens (Clerk) and forty three members of the public were also in attendance.

2. Apologies for absence

Councillor V Burrough sent apologies for her absence which were duly accepted by the Parish Council.

District Councillor P Ede also sent apologies for his absence.

The meeting was then suspended.

3. Annual report by the Chairman of Berwick Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for all their help and support this year.

4. Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017

The Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 were noted. They had been approved at the June Full Council Meeting.

5. Representatives from Govia Thameslink Timetable Team

Jane Cobb, 2018 Timetable Consultation Project Manager for Govia Thameslink, said before the new timetable was in place there had been two consultations. The first was in September 2016, the second was in December 2017. There was also a leaflet campaign in Berwick in 2017. Parish Councils were not consulted.

She said Govia Thameslink appreciate the new timetable is not popular with everyone but they need to run it for three months before they can consider making any changes. The advantage of the new timetable is that any problems are contained locally so it should improve efficiency.

Residents said they are not happy with the new service.

One lady now has a choice between waiting two hours for a train at Brighton or taking an earlier one and waiting at Lewes and as a result can no longer pick her child up from nursery. She said employers were losing patience with problems caused by a lack of trains as it was.

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The number of trains to Brighton has now been reduced. Previously there were three but now there is one. Overcrowding is a problem because as well as commuters, the trains also take students to universities, schools and colleges and football fans to the Amex.

Berwick is not a small isolated station, it also serves also serves the residents of Alciston, Alfriston, Arlington, Chalvington, Hailsham, Selmeston and Ripe. Residents are now having to get off the train at Polegate, Eastbourne or Lewes and pay extremely high parking charges or pay for taxis.

Security is also an issue, women particularly are now having to wait for long periods of time in isolated stations at night and feel vulnerable.

Getting off the train at Polegate is not an option for elderly and disabled residents who are unable to get over the footbridge.

The off peak window is now impossible. Residents travelling off peak arrive in London at 11.28am and have to leave at 3pm.

There is no system in place for when disruption occurs, the next train is supposed to stop but this is not happening.

The new timetable does not deliver the service it says. Govia Thameslink seem to be 'fire-fighting' instead.

More staff are needed at stations. Whilst residents agreed the Station Master at Berwick is excellent they find the Customer Service Team on the telephone are not very helpful. More staff are needed to assist disabled travellers because they are having to use more stations.

Data used by Govia Thameslink seems to be based on ticket sales. Many commuters have season tickets to Polegate or Eastbourne because they cost the same as tickets to Berwick but mean they can get off the train at Polegate or Eastbourne when there are no trains stopping at Berwick.

No one in the room has received the leaflet telling them about the changes, the website is very convoluted and only shows week day timetables, and the summary is at best misleading. The new timetable seems to be encouraging people to use the roads instead.

In answer to their concerns, Ms Cobb;

- Said she would speak to the Technical Team and see how practical it would be address some of the more technical issues and she confirmed she will work through the rest as a priority.
- Suggested residents could set up a commuter group because they have proved very successful elsewhere. The Clerk said she will forward Ms Cobb's email address to anyone who would like to set one up.
- Asked the Clerk to provide contact details of neighbouring Parish Councils so they can be included in future consultations.
- Said the new timetable is not set in stone and changes can be made..

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The Chairman thanked Ms Cobb for attending and Ms Cobb then left the meeting.

Mr David Johnson (CPRE) provided a summary of the A27 Stakeholder Meeting which took place earlier in the month. He said the meeting was led by MP's and was based on pressure from Local Authorities. He also said that residents should be aware that there is currently a Judicial Review of a similar by-pass proposed for Arundel and the outcome may affect what happens here.

People attending the Stakeholder Meeting were told Highways England is currently planning £75m worth of improvements to the A27 East of Lewes. A by-pass would cost just under £500m and would be a very long way off. An open meeting has been planned at Folkington Manor on 12<sup>th</sup> June. The meeting is open to everyone.

County Councillor Bennett said;

- A Highways Hub has been set up. Its purpose is to look at the road and rail network in the South East. It is a new Government initiative and will be looking at the A27, A259 and A22.
- The Reference Group was set up by MPs, with the National Parks Authority, ESCC and Highways England. They have already spent £500,000 and improved the cycle crossing at Firle. £3m has been set aside for a scoping study to look into the possibility of having a dual carriageway between Firle and Polegate. £75m has been earmarked to make some time saving improvements in the meantime.
- The dual carriage way is the subject of a business case. The anticipated cost of the dual carriage way is now £450m but it has not been secured or asked for. The case will be available for scrutiny and is expected to be submitted later this year and considered next year. It is competing against many other cases nationwide. The public might only be able to request a summary of the proposals because some of the information in the plan will be sensitive and confidential.

In answer to resident's questions County Councillor Bennett confirmed;

- ESCC is not driving the Plan, it's a Highways England project.
- Residents have a voice through their County Councillor and CPRE.
- A recent flyer was backed by MPs.
- The Ashdown Forest will have an impact on any proposals.
- The dual carriageway proposal is pivotal to the Wealden Local Plan.
- The Group also includes representatives from the commercial sector.
- He has had no new updates from requests to extend the Berwick Way.

## 6. Annual Report from the County Councillor

County Councillor N Bennett had sent his report which said;

### Driving sustainable economic growth

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is one of seven local authorities that have formed a partnership called **Transport for the South East** (TfSE). The new partnership brings together the area's 16 transport authorities and a range of other organisations to work

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directly with the Department for Transport. TfSE is currently operating in shadow form but intends to secure full Government backing and statutory powers. At the first meeting of TfSE in June 2017, partners elected Cllr Keith Glazier, Leader of East Sussex County Council as chairman.

Companies in East Sussex are now able to benefit from a new £2 million grants and **business support** service, aimed at boosting the county's economy. South East Business Boost offers grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to existing small and medium sized businesses and start-ups for capital projects to help them grow and expand operations. So far £300,000 of grants have been awarded which will bring in over £850,000 in match funding. In addition, £227.4 million has been spent with local suppliers over the last 12 months; 55.8% of total Council spend.

**East Sussex Highways**, our partnership which looks after the roads, pavements, street lights, grass and winter maintenance won a number of prestigious awards during 2017/18. The customer service team won a silver award at the UK Customer Experience Awards and gold at the European Contact Centre and Customer Service Awards, following their introduction of a new more personalised way of working and a high-tech software system which has seen average call response times slashed from 90 seconds to just nine. In addition East Sussex Highways has been recognised for its work to boost skills in the area, with work in schools and a clear commitment to apprenticeships.

Over 150 carriageway asset improvement schemes were delivered in the first three-quarters of 2017/18. The continued investment by the County Council into **highway maintenance**, and specifically the resurfacing of roads, has stemmed the rate of deterioration and maintained road conditions across the county at an acceptable and affordable level. The condition of A, B and C roads across the county have largely remained stable, and as anticipated when Cabinet approved the current investment strategy in 2013. The additional £10m invested in rural lanes, also approved by Cabinet in 2013, has resulted in a noticeable improvement of unclassified roads across the county.

A number of large scale **infrastructure projects** have also been progressed, including the Newhaven Port Access Road, improvements to Terminus Road in Eastbourne and funding secured to build a new two-lane bridge to replace the current one-lane Exceat Bridge over the Cuckmere river.

Our e-Sussex project to rollout faster **broadband** in previously isolated areas has continued to improve access to services, jobs and education. Over 70,000 premises have been connected during our first and second contracts. A final phase of works is being procured with the aim to connect as close to 100% of premises in the county as possible.

There was a further improvement in the percentage of secondary **schools** judged by Ofsted (as at August 2017) to be good or outstanding to 77.8% from 74.1% at the end of 2016/17. The Early Years Improvement Team has also worked with providers, such that 96% of all East Sussex early years settings are graded good or outstanding, up from 76% in 2013. Work continues through our new Excellence for All 2017-2019 strategy to raise standards across all our educational settings. In addition, ESCC was successful in securing funding from the Government's Strategic School Improvement Fund to set up a Secondary Inclusion

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Partnership which will see county schools working together to share expertise with a focus on disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.

In July 2017, ESCC welcomed funding of nearly £12 million for the **arts**, announced by Arts Council England for seven projects across the county. This includes funding for Glyndebourne to support its education and outreach work, for the de La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill to promote visual arts, for the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne and the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings.

## Keeping vulnerable people safe

In June 2017, the Safer East Sussex Partnership launched a new pilot scheme called 'Ask Me'. The scheme widens opportunities for survivors of **domestic abuse** to access the help they need from their communities. It provides free domestic abuse training for people to become 'ask me ambassadors' who can respond to a disclosure of domestic abuse, and know where to signpost people for help. 16 Days of Action for the Elimination of Violence Against Women ran from 25 November 2017. Over the 16 days a range of organisations and individuals came together to work to end all forms of violence against women.

ESCC's **Children's Services** Department was runner up in the Social Worker of the Year Awards 2017 in the category of Best Social Work Employer. The Council's submission highlighted our achievements in supporting staff to create a high quality, sustainable system that secures the best outcomes for children and young people.

ESCC were successful in securing a £174,000 Warm and Healthy Homes grant from National Energy Action and £440,000 from the Warm Homes Fund to enable eligible vulnerable individuals to benefit from significant home improvements to help them **keep warm** in cold weather. This means over £1 million in external fuel poverty funding has been secured during the past two years.

By the end of December 2017, 61 organisations had joined the **East Sussex Against Scams** Partnership (ESASP) Charter which aims to make East Sussex a scam-free county. Over 687 residents have participated in Friends Against Scams awareness sessions which aim to reduce the likelihood of them, or people they know or care for, from becoming vulnerable victims of fraud and scams.

## Helping people help themselves

Plans for closer health and care integration were given the green light by the Alliance partners (Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG, Hastings and Rother CCG, ESCC, East Sussex Health Care NHS Trust and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust) in the **East Sussex Better Together** (ESBT) programme in July 2017. Our ambition is to deliver a fully integrated health and social care system in East Sussex that will ensure every service user enjoys proactive, joined up care that supports them to live as healthily and independently as possible. We are now developing a single health and care entity to manage the £850 million spent each year on the health and care needs of people in East Sussex. In recognition of this work, the ESBT Alliance won the 'Improved Partnerships between Health and Local Government' award at the prestigious 2017 Health Service Journal Awards. Examples of more integrated services include Locality Link Workers who act as a conduit between the

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statutory services, the voluntary sector and the community. Integrated locality teams (ILTs), made up of nurses, therapists, social workers and proactive care practitioners from East Sussex Health Care Trust (ESHT) and ESCC, have also been rolled out across the Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford and Hastings and Rother CCG areas.

There have been improvements against **Adult Social Care** key measures. Delayed transfers of Care (delayed days) from hospital per 100,000 population (aged 18+) has improved from 24.4 in April 2017 to 12.7 in November 2017. The proportion of older people (aged 65+) who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services for April to September 2017 is 91.7% - up from 90.5% in 2016/17.

An initiative helping **young people with disabilities** travel independently to school, college or training won national recognition. The Learning Independence for Travel (LIFT) training programme was one of just seven schemes shortlisted for a 'best service' award at the GO Excellence in Public Service Awards 2017/18.

**One You East Sussex** launched in October 2017 offers those who are struggling to make healthy lifestyle changes a bespoke support programme for help with weight loss, stopping smoking, getting active, drinking less and eating a healthy diet. Our **Beat the Street East Sussex** mass participation physical activity initiative saw more than 42,000 people take part and new Health and Wellbeing Community Hubs are due to be established in Hastings and Bexhill, helping people improve and manage their health by giving them access to information and support in one convenient place.

Schools across the county have been able to access additional funding to improve **children's physical and mental health**. Last year, 183 schools and colleges across the county received grants of £10,000 to develop and implement school health improvement plans and this year all schools were entitled to an additional £7,000 to further develop activities to boost health. In addition the ESCC primary school menu was accredited with the Soil Associations Food for Life Served Here Gold Standard, which recognises pupils are being served meals with the freshest, ethically sourced ingredients, free from additives and excessive salt and sugar.

## Making the best use of our resources

The Council's **budget** and Council Plan for 2018/19 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on the 6th February 2018. The budget includes spending of £371 million on services for East Sussex. It also includes savings of £17 million, a 3 per cent Adult Social Care levy and a 2.99 per cent council tax increase.

The Council's **Stand Up for East Sussex** campaign, which made the case for East Sussex's particular needs to be recognised, gathered almost 6,000 signatures and was delivered to the Prime Minister in December 2017.

The **Orbis partnership** between East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and Surrey County Council aims to improve the quality and resilience of business services and provide savings to both authorities. After surpassing its initial financial targets by achieving £4.5 million savings in 2016/17 against a target of £1.1 million, Orbis is currently on target to deliver £3.9 million efficiencies in 2017/18. Teams from across the

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three Councils have been working together to improve the way Orbis delivers services to its customers, including an online pensions portal and a new e-recruitment system.

## 7. Annual Report from the District Councillor

District Councillor Ede sent a written report which said;

Local Plan – Latest draft to be published in the last week of June and will go to Full Council in July to be voted on. Council Member's will be given sight of that draft a day before publication. Then it goes to planning inspectorate for Examination in Public. Timing of that public examination is up to Planning Inspectorate. If passed then the plan can move forward to approval by the Secretary of State.

Budget – Council Tax increase for 18/19 was 2.7%, in line with inflation. The Government grant, known as the Revenue Support Grant has been reduced each of the past few years and has now gone altogether. The Council has tried, given these reductions in grant, to keep Council Tax as low as possible and for 5 of the last 7 years has had zero increase Council Tax.

Investment in Hailsham High Street – WDC acquired Vicarage Fields in Hailsham (Inc Waitrose) with the aim of providing a revenue stream of 600k and also to provide an opportunity to regenerate the town centre.

Police – Wealden liaises with Sussex police and has lobbied hard on the lack of police seen on patrol in many parts of the District in recent months and has voiced concerns regarding the rising crime rate particularly rural crime.

On- Street Parking – This remains a Sussex Police responsibility for now but they have stated it is a low priority. WDC could decriminalise (CPE) and take responsibility but would need to fund the enforcement. County Council proposal was to install Pay and Display meters but WDC Cabinet felt that presented a risk to viability of our High Streets and a majority voted against. Leader of Council recently met with Police Commissioner to discuss the subject and work on a solution.

Waste Collection – residents in Wealden have achieved the highest recycling rate in East Sussex with 51.9% recycled and the council is now 65<sup>th</sup> out of 350 councils in England and Wales. Of remaining waste less than 1% goes into landfill. A new waste contract is being negotiated and will commence June 2019. The existing contractor Kier is not submitting a new bid.

Litter – The amount of litter on the roadside is still a concern and the council continues to put pressure on the current waste contractor (Kier) to improve performance. There will be posters going up to remind motorists that they could be liable to a fine if caught throwing litter.

Wealden Careers Fair – WDC organise this fair which attracts firms from across the County and gives pupils at our schools the opportunity to discuss future career choices with employers and colleges'.

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## 8. Reports from Clubs and Associations

Gill Hesselgrave from Cuckmere Flood Forum sent a written report which said;

'Again I would like to thank Berwick for their continued support.

In spite of the wet winter we had no reports of flooding to properties. The rain came in stages and was able to clear away before the next deluge. The shingle at the river mouth has not been cleared and it is in fact 2/3<sup>rd</sup> blocked, but again the water was able to get away so there were no problems with back-up upstream. We are keeping a close eye on the situation at the mouth.

The new **Cuckmere & Pevensey Levels Water Management Co.** has had a successful first year. Going forward they are appointing a Planning Officer to sit with ESCC Flood team. His role will be to scrutinise planning applications for flood implications. I believe there were over 200 in the district last year and the office at Kings Lynn does not have the capacity to cope with this large amount, originally they were told there would be about 2 per year. This is being funded from money that is collected from new developments.

ESCC are carrying out a two year survey of Ground Water levels in the Hellingly to Willingdon areas with bore holes. At present there is no data on ground water which can be used if developments are proposed where the local population knows there is a problem, other than flooding from the river.

The levy to fund the Cuckmere's part of the Water Management Co has gone up by 70%, but this is from a very low base and not a great amount in practice. A study is being undertaken to see what would happen if the river was de-mained, i.e. taken away from the Environment Agency and run by the Water Management Co. The implications for this are much more relevant to the lower part of the river, although it would have a cost implication for the whole river basin.

We have had problems reported with the drainage on the C39 between Berwick and Arlington and have contacted Highways who are sending the Highway Steward to look at the situation.

There has been a problem with Metaldehyde in the river near the reservoir from the extensive use of slug pellets and this is costly to remove from the drinking water. However SE Water is offering money to farmers to use ferric phosphate pellets, which is a more expensive product. There has been a reduction this year.

Sessingham Weir – It was impossible to remove the weir due to the high cost of relocating the SE Water pipe embedded in it. However, the blade on the top which controlled the level has been removed. The South East Rivers Trust is now looking at putting the river back in the old eastern channel for fish passage. This would cut off the main river in that area, except in flood conditions when it would flush through. Topographical studies are being carried out to see what effect this would have upstream. They are working with local farmers and would welcome any input from interested parties. (You can feed this through me - [stonehouse@hessel.force9.co.uk](mailto:stonehouse@hessel.force9.co.uk)). I understand that local fishermen are not happy with this solution.

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It is planned to complete a comprehensive list of flooding in the area, including flood plains and highways. I will attach the data given to me from ESCC about who to contact.

Once again I would like to thank Berwick for their support'.

## 9. Open Forum

Residents;

- Asked when the plans for the development at Station Farm were approved. They were referred to the Wealden District Council website.
- Asked why their solicitors did not know about the proposed new road near Common Road. It is at this stage just hearsay.
- Discussed where they thought a new dual carriageway might run but also noted plans for a new carriage way have been talked about since the 1930s.

There was no further business and this meeting closed at 8.25pm

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairman

Date:

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