

MINUTES OF THE MEETING FORTY EIGHTH PARISH MEETING OF WEST END PAROCHIAL ELECTORS HELD ON TUESDAY 19TH APRIL 2016 AT 19:30 IN THE SPORTS PAVILION, BENNER LANE, WEST END, WOKING, SURREY, GU24 9JP

Present: There were 40 electors present (together with Parish Councillors A. Page (Chairman), D. Gubbins, G. Alleway, A. Dredge, D. Elliott, J. Medhurst, S. Prideaux-Burns and Mrs S. Price (Clerk for the Council))

The Chairman, Cllr A. Page opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for attending.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Cllr Page presented the Citizen of the Year award to Edna Holt.

Edna has lived in the village since the 1962 and in the early 70's become involved in the local Guiding unit. Originally an assistant guider, or lieutenant as it was known back then, she soon took over from Mrs Tommy Parker and remained a Guide Leader for 17 years. Her first guide camp, which was an annual event, was at Merrist Wood and it was not without drama as one of the guides came down with appendicitis. Tommy Parker and Edna would also fundraise for Guide Dogs for the Blind which involved running a dog show, often held at Gordons. Edna would also collect milk bottle tops in aid of Guide Dogs for the Blind and raise funds locally for the Leprosy Mission.

As a faithful member of the Church, Edna currently delivers the parish magazine to the residents of Meadow Way which she has done for 10 years or so. Together with this she is a Church sideman, reader, Church flower arranger, attends to the graveyard and cleans the Church. Once or twice a week Edna will wash and iron the Church linen, together with the purificators (long runners) as and when required. Edna sorts through hymn sheets and also helps serve coffees after Church service. Twice a week Edna will unlock and lock the Church, morning and evening.

Edna is also a brilliant proof reader which is why for the past 5 years she has had the unenviable task of checking the Ag and Hort show Schedule on an annual basis.

Together with the above, Edna still manages to find time to regularly take neighbours shopping and sell tickets at Teas on the Rec for the weekly raffle. This can involve keeping back prizes for winners who are not present, but Edna will often just drop them round without being asked.

At the age of 86 (87 in June) Edna is a deserved winner of the award, giving up her time freely to help in any way she can, but with much of her work going unnoticed by the wider community.

MINUTES

The minutes of the forty seventh Parish Meeting held on 17th March 2015 were available for the electors to read. The minutes were proposed by Cllr D Gubbins and seconded by Mr J. Kegge. The minutes were signed by the Chairman Cllr A. Page.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

CHAIRMANS REPORT

Cllr A Page summarised the work of the Parish Council during the past year. Cllr Page promoted the community Facebook page to encourage residents to find out what is going on in the village.

The year started with the parish election and Cllr Page welcomed new councilor Sarah Prideaux-Burns who had replaced Ildikó Roth. Cllr Page then spoke about Terry Faulkner who for the past 15 years has been the parish council handy man and a popular figure within the village. Unfortunately Terry had retired due to ill health but had been replaced by Dave Todd, who was welcomed as an employee to the parish council. In summary the work for the parish council 2015-16 was:-

- The War Memorial which was a Grade II listed building had been restored professionally. The letters had been touched in and the War Memorial and surrounding stone cleaned. This was a fitting tribute to those who fell in the two world wars.
- The parish council continued to be involved with the display of event poppies on the lampposts on the A322 and Church Road. These were put up in October and taken down in December as they were in a bad condition, but would be replaced again in October.
- The recreation ground and pitches were maintained to a high standard including verti draining.
- The parish council ditches had been cleared.
- The parish council was approached by local resident Pauline Wells to provide a home for the wildlife which visited the pond. A duck house had been purchased and installed which had been a great draw ever since.
- Additional seating had been provided on the recreation ground with a picnic bench near the play area.
- The junior swings which were unsecure and dangerous had been reinstalled and painted to match the new equipment.
- The parish council had collaborated with local groups and donated £50 to WEVS towards a bench on Brentmoor Heath.
- Roundabout sponsorship had been secured for an additional year. Profits from this would be reinvested back into the highways. Cllr Alleway had suggested a safer crossing from the Doctors surgery across Kerria Way. The roundabout money would be used to create a pathway across verges and drop kerb to make easier for pedestrians and those on mobility scooters.
- A path had been created by WEVS volunteers from Windlesham Road to Hookstone on parish land. The parish council had installed new signs.
- Thanks to Cllr Alleway, who in his own time had fitted non-slip matting to the bridges running over the streams near Hookstone.
- The telephone box in Brentmoor Road had been adopted by the parish council. After resident consultation the telephone box had been converted into a library to swap books. This had been a great success.
- The parish council would be holding a Beacon event, including a BBQ and bar, this Thursday 21st April to celebrate the Queens 90th Birthday.
- Also to commemorate the Queens 90th Birthday the parish council had held a Clean for the Queen event at the beginning of March. The Eco Team from Gordons and Holy Trinity School and other organisations had been involved and collected rubbish around the village.

- Cllr Page had deliberately not mentioned the current developments planned for West End as the West End Action Group were guest speakers and would update the meeting

Plans for next year

- The parish council was looking to put an extension on The Sports Pavilion to provide improved and refurbished showers for the sports clubs, a new boiler, increased storage and an outside toilet.

The Chairman welcomed Guest Speakers Messrs Chris Anthony and Ian Allard from the West End Action Group.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Ian Allard commenced the presentation by thanking Adrian Page, chair of the Parish Council, for inviting WEAG to make a presentation at its 2016 Annual Meeting. He explained the talk would be in two parts, first an outline of the Group's aims and an update on proposed large-scale developments in the village and second, how the villagers and Parish Council might work together to protect the West End environment going forward.

WEAG was re-formed in 2014 to co-ordinate resistance to large-scale development in West End. It saw itself as a voice of residents opposed to inappropriate developments that would place huge pressure on an already stretched infrastructure. The group was registered with Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) as a "Local Resident Group", enabling it to make its case at Borough Planning and Planning Inspectorate meetings.

The status of the three proposed large-scale developments in West End at the time of the Annual Meeting were as follows:

- Land South of Kings Road (84 dwellings) - approved following developer appeal to National Planning Inspectorate which questioned the validity of SHBC's housing targets and ability to meet national house construction requirements.
- Land North of Beldam Bridge Road (85 dwellings) - approved by SHBC using Planning Inspectorate's approval of 'Kings Road' case as a precedent but taking no account of local objections or comments (this proposed development was subsequently the subject of a revised planning application on altered terms)
- Malthouse Farm Development (95 dwellings) – rejected by SHBC and subject to appeal.

The key objections to large-scale developments in the village were summarised as follows:

- 1) proposed total housing numbers at 264 is 13 times greater than outlined in SHBC's Core Strategy, in which the release of the "Reserve Sites" for housing were not planned until after 2025
- 2) inadequate road structure
- 3) lack of school facilities & no scope for their expansion
- 4) stretched medical practice facilities
- 5) destruction of open land & nature habitat
- 6) flood risks from poor surface water drainage in the area

The strength of the villagers' opposition to these developments had been evident over the past two years – strong objections at exit polls at developer presentations; heavily supported petitions to SHBC; large attendance at public meetings; large numbers of individual letters of objection lodged in planning application process; letters to MP Michael Gove.

WEAG believed it had the support of the vast majority of the village and in its view that West End had been unfairly treated compared with other villages in the Borough. Its residents had been made to feel irrelevant in the planning system; SHBC had failed to protect locally significant trees; SHBC had put up poor defence of its Core Housing Strategy at Planning Inspectorate Appeal. In effect SHBC appeared to lack control of its own planning policies.

Ian handed over to Chris Anthony to discuss where the Group believed the Village should 'go from here'. Chris started by suggesting that the village would have to bow to the inevitable that some large-scale development would take place in the next few years but there were strong arguments to work proactively to protect and defend West End's unique character in the Borough and County. To do this, it would be best to try and work in partnership with the Parish Council.

The remainder of the presentation dealt with four considerations:

- 1) The Malthouse Farm situation
- 2) Working in partnership
- 3) Facing a worst-case scenario
- 4) What could be done – individually & collectively

Objections to the Malthouse Appeal should be lodged with SHBC and the following points could be made:

- 1) History – the farm was the oldest dwelling in West End with some buildings dating back to 1380 and as such many of the farm fields are ancient meadows of historic significance;
- 2) Village Character – the fields & farm were an integral part of West End's rural status and the stronghold of much wildlife, some of it rare;
- 3) Trees – the arboriculturalist report commissioned by the developer had identified 15 trees of significance on the site that might be protected as historically and environmentally important. SHBC had given a written undertaking to the village Tree Group to review the trees on the Farm and apply Tree Preservation Orders by Easter (2016?) but nothing had been achieved by the time of the PC Annual Meeting
- 4) Inadequate infrastructure – full schools, swamped medical facilities, inadequate roads and traffic management;
- 5) Drainage – The farmland was frequently waterlogged and the proximity of an ancient stream (now piped from the Streets Heath pond under Benner Lane and past Malthouse Farm) would always pose a surface water issue in the area;
- 6) Traffic & Safety – the proposed site and its exits would increase the flow of traffic past Holy Trinity school, adding to traffic chaos in the morning and evening and posing a real threat to the safety of children and other pedestrians in the Streets Heath and Benner Lane areas.

Given a worst case scenario that the village faced, the Parish Council was asked to consider some of the following actions: 1) place additional pressure upon SCC for more effective traffic management – speed calming humps in the Benner Lane/Streets Heath locality; reduced speed limits (20mph?) outside schools; HGV bans of certain narrow roads; 2) along with local police, promote village participation in speed limit enforcement; 3) place pressure on SCC for investment in village school facilities; 4) raise the problems of village medical facilities at the national level.

Finally, how could residents do their bit? 1) Engage with their Parish Councillors; 2) Badger SHBC and SCC for proactive help for the village; 3) give active support to any WEAG petitions; 4) write to Michael Gove individually to express concerns for the state of West End; 5) continue to lodge objections to any unwanted developments in the area.

The Chairman thanked Ian Allard and Chris Anthony for being the Guest Speakers.

Surrey County Council update from Cllr Adrian Page

Cllr Page gave an overview on the following

- The county had started the financial year with a £50m cut in Government funding and over the next 5 years the council was estimating that savings of around £300m had to be made. The leader David Hodge had led a strong lobby campaign and managed to secure some additional funding for the next two years including a grant of 11.9m this year and £12.2m in 2017/18.
- The biggest spend was on Adult Social Care. The number of elderly people in Surrey was set to increase by around 20,000 by the year 2020.
- 2000 new school places were to be provided for next September however over the next 5 years it was estimated that a further 11,000 extra school places would be required.
- The 3,500 miles of road in Surrey carried almost double the average amount of traffic. The council still needed to fix roads.
- The County was continuing to look at combining services, partnering with back of house services with Sussex, all with the aim of saving money.
- The government was changing the rules to allow County to keep more money generated in Surrey and use within the County rather than lose it back to Westminster where it was traditionally redistributed to other areas of the country.

Surrey Heath Borough Council update from Cllr Adrian Page

- Due to changes introduced by the Chancellor SHBC now had the ability to keep local Business Rates amounting to about 1.5m however there were still some transitional payments to be made back to the Government.
- SHBC had secured £20m of funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership for infrastructure and property acquisition. £10m for The Meadows and A30 to enhance accessibility to Camberley and major networks that would link the Borough better to the motorways.
- £10m of property acquisitions had been made including purchasing Ashwood House near Camberley Station which would provide 94 quality apartments in Camberley Town Centre. St Georges Industrial Site, Frimley had also been purchased in order to increase revenue by £130k per year.
- Efficiencies had been sought within the Council organisation including keeping the salary budget as it was 10 years ago. Unfortunately this had meant a 20% reduction in the workforce.
- The Town Hall now supported other agencies; The Police, Surrey County Council Registrars and Adult Social Care Teams, Department of Work and Pensions – Job Centre and office for NW Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group. This co-location provided much shorter lines of communication and brought in approximately £250k of further revenue
- The Camberley Town Centre project was in progress and included development of Ashted House – Apartments; Town Mall refurbishment; Alders re-development; A new car park on the London Road with retail extension; Highway junction improvements; Station enhancements and the refurbishment of the public realm.

OPEN FORUM

Q.1. Edna Holt - In the housing developments what allowance was there for social housing?

Chris Anthony replied – there were some affordable house in the developments.

Q.2. Edna Holt – West End had changed over the years but she felt that the way the opposition had been presented i.e. stopping people when leaving consultations and signing petitions, was not necessary. Progress had to be made.

Christ Anthony replied – The WEAG accepted that there had to be development but the roads, surgeries and schooling needed to be able to cope with this expansion.

Q.3. Anita Benfield - Referred to the WEAG comment about traffic calming in Benner Lane and advised the meeting that residents needed to be contacted as this was not necessarily what all residents wanted.

Q.4. Jean Williams – Was it is possible to overcome a council? Jean recalled going back to the 1970's the children of West End were going to be bused to Sheerwater Secondary School. The people of West End marched to Kingston and Surrey County Council changed their mind.

Chris Anthony replied – A march was organised by Diane Doney re Land North of Beldam Bridge Road. Although well attended it had no impact at all.

Q.5. There was concern as to where the public toilets were going to be located and whether there were security arrangements so as not to attract unsociable behaviour.

Cllr A. Page replied – the toilet would be on the front of the Sports Pavilion on a time lock facility and was primarily for use by the children using the play area.

Q.6.

Angela Astall – Commented that The Inn @ West End would also benefit from the toilet as if it was signposted from the A322 it would divert members of the public from using the facility at The Inn.

Cllr A. Page replied – The parish council would take this into consideration.

There were no further questions from the residents therefore the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and welcomed all to stay for refreshments.

The meeting closed at 20:55

Signed Chairman Date