**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 10th MAY 2018 IN THE FRESHFIELD HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. Josephson (Chairman), Davies, R Lewin, T Lewin, McKinney, Miller, Moore, Pritchitt, Summers, and Wogan

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Farrar, Hill, Hindler, Melson and Williams

**IN ATTENDANCE:** The Clerk and Asst Clerk

and approximately 57 Members of the Public

1. **INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY CLLR. JENNY JOSEPHSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Cllr. Josephson welcomed everybody and introduced the Councillors and the Clerk and

Assistant Clerk.

Apologies were given and accepted from Cllrs. Farrar, Hill, Hindler, Melson and Williams. Also, District

Cllr Holloway and County Cllr. Whetstone.

She made the following points:

* This was a statutory meeting and she asked people to sign the list which would be circulated.
* Parishioners could also give their e-mail addresses for addition to an e-mail newsletter list – which complied with the new GDPR regulations.
* The Library session run by volunteers on a Friday was working very well.
* The Co-op was due to start the alterations to the Foresters next week. This would entail Lower Road being closed at the Station Road end while steels were unloaded, and some bays in the car park would be used by contractors. The works are hoped to be completed by October.
* The Community Warden had been re-appointed for a further year. He was contracted out to Withyham Parish Council for a few hours per week and other neighbouring parishes were also showing interest in this.
* Forest Row had 2 ‘Silent Soldiers’ – one on the War Memorial Green and one at the Church.
* The Forest Row Festival was not going ahead this year.
* Reports would be given on the Venue on The Green and the proposed closure of the tip/recycling centre.
* The Chairman thanked the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk for taking the minutes and their hard work along with the rest of the staff.
* She thanked her fellow Councillors for giving up their time and energy to do the work of a Parish Councillor.

1. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS.**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th May 2016 were proposed for approval by Cllr. Davies, seconded by Cllr. T Lewin and APPROVED

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th May 2017 were proposed for approval by Cllr. R Lewin, seconded by Cllr. Moore and APPROVED.

Cllr. Josephson signed both sets of Minutes.

1. **CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES – ANSWERING OF QUESTIONS POSED.**

Cllr. R Lewin – Vice-Chairman of Council and Chairman of Finance & Policy Committee

* Community Warden – There had been a debate in Council as to whether to renew the contract. There had been some dissatisfaction with the lack of support from the police, but the decision was taken to renew the contract for a further year as it was felt that the role was useful to the village. The Council would put more pressure on SALC and the Police & Crime Commissioner for more support and possible funding. Other neighbouring parishes were interested in ‘hiring’ the Community Warden which would offset some of the cost.
* Did the Community Warden work nights? No – day and evening shifts.
* New website – this was being looked at.

Cllr. J Wogan – Chairman of Amenities & Services Committee

* This year, parishioners would be asked to nominate gardens to be judged in the Best Kept Garden Competition. The Councillors would judge this, and their decision was final.
* Do we have a tree warden? Someone had been approached and a reply was awaited.
* The zebra crossings needed repainting – this would be passed onto East Sussex Highways.
* Litter picking frequency – could this be increased? This would be discussed by Council.

Cllr. Williams (Chairman( and Cllr. Farrar (Vice-Chairman) of Property & Assets Committee had both

given their apologies. In their absence, Cllr. Pritchitt answered queries.

* Work had been done in the Community Centre – lights had been replaced, decorating had been done. Pictures had been suggested for the walls of the Main Hall – any ideas would be considered.
* The Venu (hut in the car park) would be looked at to see what could be done once the Venue on the Green was completed.
* The far end of the Community Centre would be improved gradually as it could be afforded.
* Complaints had been received regarding the work on cars at the bottom of Upper Close. The installation of yellow lines would be chased up with East Sussex County Council. The issue of working on the road should be enforced by Wealden District Council.

Cllr. Moore – Vice-Chairman of Planning

* The Planning Committee met every 3 weeks to consider plans received.
* The Parish Council was a consultee and made comments on current plans.
* A Working Group had been set up to look into strategic planning for the Parish – this would include the consideration of a Neighbourhood Plan or a Community Land Trust.

Cllr. T Lewin – Chairman of Localism & Community Services

* The Repair Café which ran once a month was a great success.
* Solar Panels had been fitted to the Community Centre roof.
* Electric Car Charging points had been installed in the Community Centre Car Park.
* There were several other projects in the pipeline.

The remainder of the Councillors introduced themselves and stated which Committees they sat on.

1. **VENUE ON THE GREEN UPDATE**

Cllr. R Lewin gave an update on the project.

* This time last year, revised plans had been drawn up to match the available budget.
* Once we went to tender, the reality was that costs were about 50% more than expected.
* The decision was taken to pause and seek more money.
* The building had already been reduced in size and it was felt that it should not be further reduced.
* FRYACC came up trumps with the funding.

Monica Brown of FRYACC reported the following:

* There was now an additional £ 122,500.00.
* This may be a further increase in funds in the next 6-8 weeks.
* Thanks to the architect and Project Manager (Don Sinclair – who volunteered his services) for helping to bring this project to fruition.
* Thanks to the public for all their support over the last 5 years. Everyone in the village helped and there had been a great community spirit.
* There had been a variety of funders – all of whom would be honoured.
* 11 private donors would be asked if they wished to have their names displayed.

Cllr. R Lewin:

* The Parish Council had approved the commencement of the building – any monies not spent would be put towards the games area.
* There were 2 quotes – these needed to be examined and a recommendation made. This would take a little time, so it may be a little while before any activity starts on the build.
* The skate park may be closed for some periods while the build takes place.

1. **PROPOSED TIP CLOSURE UPDATE**

Cllr. Moore gave an update on the proposed closure:

* East Sussex County Council proposed to close the site over 3 years ago – there were a lot of objections and eventually it changed to being open 3 days per week.
* East Sussex County Council is under massive pressure to cut spending on all services.
* The Forest Row tip costs £56,000 pa to run.
* Petitions have been handed into ESCC with 4000/5000 signatures.
* The Parish Council has a Working Group to investigate what can be done.
* The Parish Council has objected to the closure.
* Guidance from DEFRA indicates that charging will be introduced at household waste sites.
* Wealden District Council is likely to start charging for green waste collection.
* Parishioners were asked to respond to the East Sussex County Council consultation, if they had not already done so.
* The decision would be made by ESCC in June – and if the closure was to go ahead, it was anticipated that the tip would close in October.
* County Cllr. Whetstone was against the closure of the Forest Row tip.
* Wealden District Councillors for Forest Row were against the closure of the tip.
* Our Member of Parliament was also against the closure.
* If the closure did go ahead, we might have to think in terms of a ‘Plan B’ of more limited scope.

1. **OPEN FORUM**

**Comments/questions regarding the proposed closure of the tip**

* Vanessa Underwood that the tip was a friendly sociable place with helpful people and it would be anti-social to close it.
* Barbara Gordon said it was a recycling centre as well.
* Linda Chamberlain asked how the cost was broken down. Cllr. Moore replied that some costs were commercially sensitive and recycling did not make as much money as people thought.
* Sue Gregg asked if it was a long contract and when it would be up for renewal. Cllr. R Lewin replied that it was a 25 year contract. We believe that penalties for termination/variation would be nominal.
* Frances Ludman asked if the Parish Council could support the tip. Cllr. Moore advised that this could not be done without a very large rise in the precept.
* Michael Ricks asked if it was Veolia that took away the Wealden District Council rubbish. Cllr. R Lewin advised that it was Kier.
* Gerard Van Dyke asked that the rest of the village should be mobilised into filling in the consultation.

**Comments/questions regarding the building of the Venue on The Green.**

* Alan Beresford asked that as the Rydon building was built on piles, had they been asked to help with the build and what was the response. Monica Brown replied that yes, they had been asked, and no, they did not offer any help.
* Tim Kemp asked how much money was in the budget. Cllr. R Lewin replied that the budget was £ 424,000 of which £15,250 had been spent on professional fees. Other costs were in past years.
* Monica Brown advised that FRYACC had given £90,000 for the installation of the green gym, skatepark, utilities on the village green and a lawn mower for the Junior Football Club.
* Cllr. R Lewin advised that the project had been going on for nearly 10 years and there were costs from the early stages but £ 15,000 was the cost for producing the current plans.
* Ralph Ingram congratulated FRYACC on raising the large amount of money. He expressed his concern about running costs of the building and asked that the Parish Council try to ensure that costs don’t rise too much.
* Lin Smith asked that when the Venue on The Green was finished, would children still hang around in the Community Centre car park kicking balls with the potential for damage. Cllr. Josephson replied that it was a public car park and they couldn’t be stopped. Cllr. McKinney said that he was sure that they would use the new space. Don Sinclair advised that there would be a 5-a-side football pitch size games area with baseball hoops.
* Ruth Steed said that it was vital that the young of the village were looked after, as they were the future. The majority of the FRYACC money had come from the community and it was our responsibility to provide the best possible facilities for them.
* Cllr. Pritchitt stated that the Parish Council had to look after lots of people in the village.
* Joyce Flower asked how the building would be financed. Cllr. Moore advised that it would need to be hired out for a minimum of 13 hours per week – which she considered do-able.

**General comments/questions**

* Alan Beresford advised that the former Abbeyfield building was now called Fairborne House and would be for the care of adults with learning difficulties. He asked that the village make them feel welcome.
* Isabelle Clinton asked about the Parish Council’s communication with parishioners. Cllr. Josephson advised that a Working Group had been set up to look at ‘Communication’ The long- term idea was to provide more access to information for everyone. Cllr. Moore advised that the Parish Council already had a Facebook page, put information in the Forest Row News and the Parish News.
* Kate Ford asked what was happening regarding the yellow lines on Upper Close. The parking was particularly bad on market days. Cllr. Josephson reported that the issue was raised regularly with East Sussex Highways Dept..
* Penny Dickens asked what was happening to the Foresters – when would the Co-Op move. Cllr. Josephson advised that she had covered this earlier in the meeting. Cllr. R Lewin reported that the Co-Op had advised Wealden District Council that they would use smaller vans (rather than large lorries) for deliveries.

Cllr. Josephson thanked everybody for coming.

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**The meeting closed at 9.43 pm**

Signed................................................. Date.......................................

Chairman of the Council