**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 28th MAY 2019 IN THE MAIN HALL OF THE COMMUNTY CENTRE**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. Josephson (Chairman), Davies, Hill, R Lewin, T Lewin, McNally, Miller, Moore, Pritchitt, Royall, and Summers.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Rosenboom, Withers, Williams & Wogan

**IN ATTENDANCE:** The Clerk

District Councillor Vanegas

and 26 Members of the Public

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

Cllr. Josephson welcomed everybody and asked each of the Councillors present to identify

themselves and say what their specific responsibilities were in the Council Committees

Apologies were given and accepted from Cllrs. Rosenboom (holiday), Williams (work), Withers (unwell) and Wogan (holiday). Also, County Cllr. Whetstone.

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 2018 were proposed for approval by Cllr R Lewin, seconded by Cllr Moore and APPROVED by a show of hands

The Chairman made the following points:

* This had been an eventful year.
  + The VENUe on the GREEN was now completed and the formal opening would take place on 22nd June. It was a significant achievement which had been a decade on the making. She wanted to thank in particular Don Sinclair (who was present) who had voluntarily given his expert services as project manager.
  + We had waited a very long time for the Coop to move over to the old Foresters Arms building. This had now happened, and it was quite a relief.
  + The F/R Festival had taken a break last year but would be taking place again this September
  + The Tip had closed during the year – this would be referred to later.
  + The Community Warden was now being ‘hired out’ to Crowborough, Withyham and Rotherfield as well as patrolling Forest Row. Did parishioners think he was still visible enough in Forest Row, or becoming too thinly spread?
  + There had also been very disruptive roadworks across the village centre (and back-to-back additional works in Priory Road had only been postponed after vigorous representations).
  + However, this had led in part and by way of reaction to the formation of a new ‘Business Group’ on the basis that group pressure was likely to achieve more than individuals
  + It had also been a strange year for pollical activity, with local & District elections, and boundary changes which meant that we now nominally had three District Councillors covering the parish area and two county Councillors.
  + This was also the third time we had not had a contested Parish election, although there was no shortage of candidates for co-option. The lack of contest was not the best thing for democracy.
* What did the Parish think should be our ‘major project’ for the coming year? – this did not have to be resolved now, but it would be good to think about it. Re-opening the Tip was an obvious choice. There are many things we do not have power to change – highways & planning for instance, but there were things we could do – as we had some years ago with buying the Community Centre.
* She wished to thank the outgoing Councillors: Farrar, Hindler, McKinney & Melson for their contributions, as also the staff and volunteers. Also to remember our losses- particularly John Coomber, but also some volunteers and patrons who had passed away during the year

**2. UPDATE ON THE VENUe ON THE GREEN**

Cllr. R Lewin made the following points:

* The building was now complete and had been handed over to the Parish on 24th May. The youth would be moving over from their old location on 31st May and the official opening would be on 22nd June. There would be an ‘open day’ for prospective hirers after the official opening.
* An awful lot of time, effort, people and money had gone into the building – about £437K plus expenditure on an earlier plan, and a great deal had been provided by local residents and companies to achieve the goal. Without at this point naming individuals, there had been significant input for the architecture & design, and project management voluntarily or at reduced rates, and FRYACC had to be especially commended for their efforts at raising upwards of 75% of the cost of the building.
* The building itself is magnificent, both practical and modern.in design. It is like an iceberg: the piles are three times as deep as the building is high to comply with flood regulations. The bulk of the construction is in wood, it is environmentally friendly throughout (with an air source heat pump), and the roof is a particularly striking hyperbolic parabola design.
* The outside is not quite finished: the combined goal & basketball hoop remain to be fitted, with the white lining and exterior lighting, but there was initially a budget delay, and at present the matter is still in the hands of the planning department at Wealden.
* Finally, a plea to keep off the seeded areas round the building; children riding bikes over them will only cause damage.

**3. UPDATE ON THE HOUSEHOLD WASTE SITE (‘THE TIP’)**

Cllr T Lewin gave an update as follows:

* The Tip had closed in September 2018 despite vigorous opposition.
* We have formed a working group and obtained some grant money to research feasible alternatives.
* We are developing a three-pronged approach:
  + discovering what we ned as a community;
  + researching how we can use the space;
  + developing a strong re-use / upcycling aspect to the operation
* We cannot yet say what waste streams will be handled. For economic reasons some will have to be relinquished, but the operation will be community-focused.
* We do plan to test the water with a pilot scheme later in the year.
* The status of both the site and the access road are in question, and we might need to look at other sites.
* We will be creating a Community Interest Company so as to operate at arm’s length from the Parish Council, and we will be looking at partnership working with non-Council organisations.

Cllr R Lewin added that an approach had been made (in concert with Wadhurst Parish Council) to Veolia to operate a joint scheme but the costs were too high.

**4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS,**

**beginning with those supplied anonymously on ‘post-it’ notes:**

* Q: Why did the white lines on Priory Road stop& start in an arbitrary fashion?

A: There was no clear answer: ESCC Highways may have been following some protocol of their own.

* Q: Was there any chance of getting parking restrictions on Upper Close at the Hartfield Road junction?

A: This had been on the agenda for 5 years, but has been relegated to the bottom of the pile after the Highways’ reorganisation. There was little chance of re0intatement due to non-enforceability.

* Q: Was there any chance of getting the surface of Lower Road repaired?

A: Not until the depth of degradation met the criteria for repair: it had been reported many times.

* Q: Why was the delay on the Gilham Lane crossing lights so long?

A: We did not know: but the question could be preferred to the SLR meeting in July. .

**OPEN FORUM**

* Q: (J Male) Why had only half the A22 repair scheme been done?

A: Probably because there had been delays in finishing. This could be raised at the next SLR meeting

* Q: (P Brinch) Is the new VENUe for everyone or only for youth hirers?

A: For everyone – there would be an open day for prospective hirers after the official opening.

* Q: (F Mirza) Who will eventually run the Tip?
* A: A Community Interest Company, probably run on a not-for-profit basis.
* Q: Will people use the new site responsibly? The use of the Wealden recycling site did not inspire confidence

A: One hoped a new Tip would enable/ persuade people not to abuse the recycling site

* Q: (P Dickens) Would cardboard be kept as one of the categories at a new Tip?

A: Almost certainly

* Q: (P Brinch) What was the timescale for e-opening the Tip?

A: That depends on a number of variables and we cannot give an exact answer at this point. It will extensively advertised later on.

* Q: (P Watson) Why were we not using Mid/ West Sussex sites?

A: They were not keen on having ‘outsiders’ (There was some discussion over whether they actually refused entry or checked postcodes).

* Q: (B Asmall) What had happened to te old basketball hoop?

A: It was being disposed of

* Q: (A Beresford) Were there any plans for the old Venu building?

A: These were still under discussion.

* Q: (P Rogers) Were we going to form a CIC for the reuse/recycling site?

A: Yes. Although the attitude of ESCC to our proposal was still ambivalent

* Q: (A Potter) Was the nee VENUe for te youth only?

A: Not at all, it would be open to hirers of all types. Note that the Youth Service will always have two adult staff in attendance.

* Q: (unknown) What was happening to the Swan?

A: It was going to be kept as a pub (to the best of our information from the owners). We were chasing it up on a monthly basis.

* Q: (unknown) Is there are a parking attendant in Forest Row?

A: Yes, a Wealden attendant checks on times in their car parks (and issues tickets for overstaying).

* Q: (E Sheen) Does anyone control A – boards on pavements? They are a hazard to the visually impaired

A: They should be monitored (but rarely are) by ESCC. The Community Warden keeps an eye on hazardous placements

* (F Mirza) This was not a question, but a word of praise for the Repair Café
* Q: (D. Sinclair) Would a Neighbourhood Plan be useful to Forest Row?
* This question led to an extended (and inconclusive) exchange about the merits or otherwise of such a Plan, including a difference of opinion as to whether Wealden encourages or discourages them, and as to whether a Plan would be of value in a ‘no development’ zone like Forest Row
* Q: (A Potter) Could the new boundary of the Conservation Area be publicised, together with what it implies for development.

A: Agreed this would be done

* There were several comments from the floor (P Watson & E Sheen) about whether the planning system was as rigorous as it used to be
* The Open Forum concluded with a word of appreciation for the work of the outdoor maintenance team in keeping the village looking good.

The Chairman closed the meeting, with thanks to those who had attended, at 9:35 pm

Signed …………………………….. ………………………………

Chairman of the Council Date