

Minutes of a MEETING of the 107th **ANNUAL ASSEMBLY** of the Local Electors of the Parish of Crowborough held at the Old Hall, All Saints Church, Chapel Green on Thursday 10th March 2011 at 7.30pm.

Town Councillors present:

Paul Adams	Liz Scott
Peter Cowie	Colin Stocks
Philip Fermor	Matthew Street
George Moss	Mark Symons
Kay Moss	Neil Waller
Julian Salmon	Clive Wilson

In attendance:

WDC Councillors:	Jim Hollins	Martyn Prestage
	David Larkin	Antony Quin
	Di Phillips	Chantal Wilson

ESCC Councillors:	Richard Stogdon	Sylvia Tidy
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Philippa Hewes	Town Clerk
Caroline Miles	Events Co-ordinator
Susan Barnard	Operations Administrator
Dale Foden	ESCC Highways
PC Richard Walters	Police
Insp. Tony Wakefield	Police

45 members of the public

Apologies: Town Cllr Sandra Timms, Town Cllr Tatjana Keenan and District Cllr Jane Clark

The Town Mayor, Cllr Kay Moss, welcomed all those present and explained that the Annual Town Conference was being held earlier than usual this year because of local council elections on 5th May.

POLICE

PC Richard Walters gave an overview of the nature of policing in Crowborough, with emphasis on the importance of liaising with the community via local street meetings and panel meetings. Operation 'Quality Street' aims to target ongoing issues such as graffiti, street lighting, fixed penalty tickets etc. Local PCSOs strive to increase police visibility by patrolling the town.

Insp. Tony Wakefield answered questions on areas of concern including speeding traffic, parking, cars jumping traffic lights and the cutbacks in police funding and how this will affect residents in Crowborough. Insp. Wakefield explained that 'Operation Crackdown' provides a means for the public to report anti-social driving via the police website but that it is not an offence for a car to park on the pavement.

The Inspector said he believed that community-led policing was vital and urged people to contact the local PCSOs with their concerns.

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS

Dale Foden outlined the responsibilities of the Highways department with regard to repairing and maintaining the road network, along with bridges, gulleys and footpaths etc. He explained the problems that affect the work, which range from financial constraints and personnel issues to the difficulties involved in organising roadworks in a predominantly rural network and estimating how much bad weather to expect. A risk based approach determines prioritisation of repairs and gritting, the focus being on roads with the highest traffic flows.

Mr Foden answered questions from the public on gritting and winter maintenance and the balance between providing services and the costs involved. It was explained that householders would not be legally liable for clearing snow from the pavement if it had been done in a sensible way. Pot holes can be repaired in the rain by use of a special material. Gulleys are cleaned according to necessity. Utility companies are advised up to a year in advance of major resurfacing works; newly resurfaced roads cannot be dug up for 5 years except for emergency work.

CROWBOROUGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

District Cllr Chantal Wilson, Chairman of CCA2010, gave a presentation on the new Community Centre. Work has started on the Centre which will support the social and cultural regeneration of Crowborough and 'give the town a heart'. Funding for the Centre is coming from Crowborough Town Council (£2.7 million) and the Big Lottery Fund (£0.475 million) and the Town Council was thanked for its co-operation and funding.

Cllr Chantal Wilson reported on the design, facilities and features of the building and the energy efficiency measures to minimise running costs. It is hoped that the Centre will be completed by May 2012. It has been designed to be used for a wide range of activities with availability and accessibility for all. Hiring costs have not yet been agreed but it is expected that there will be a staggered tariff to benefit local groups. For VAT reasons, it will not be possible to provide a café as a business although there may be scope for the kitchen to be for community use.

TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH APRIL 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2010 were confirmed and signed.

TO RECEIVE THE RECORD OF ATTENDANCES

The record of attendances of Town Councillors to meetings of the Council and its committees was received by the meeting. In response to a question regarding low attendance it was explained that a Councillor ceases to be a member of the Council if they fail to attend meetings for six consecutive months.

TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF TRUSTEES AND APPOINTED GOVERNORS

The following reports were received by the meeting:

- Haven Homes Report
- Smith and Fermor Charities Report and Financial Statement
- Beacon Community Governor Report

TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2010

The Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet and Independent Auditors' Report were received. In answer to questions it was explained that rental income derives from the hire of football pitches and buildings etc. There were questions relating to the content of 'other costs' and the reduction in 'other income and contributions'.

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

There were no questions on the Town Mayor's Report, circulated with the Agenda.

REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Questions were invited on the Chairmen's Reports, previously circulated with the Agenda.

Environment

Cllr Colin Stocks, Chairman of the Environment Committee, answered questions regarding transport including bus timetables and the lack of co-ordination with train times and school requirements. A commuter 29X service is to be added from April. Bus timetables are available at the Town Hall. The damaged bus shelter outside the Welcome Stranger is to be replaced and the county council has confirmed this stop is used.

In response to a question on why no progress had been made with part-night street lighting, it was stated that a trial is being conducted in Heathfield for parish and county street lighting. If the trial is successful, the county council will look to extend the practice to other areas.

Finance and General Purposes

No questions were received.

Planning and Development

Cllr George Moss, Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee, thanked committee members for their hard work as Crowborough has the highest number of planning applications in the district. It was explained that Wealden District Council is the planning authority and that the Town Council provides a recommendation on planning applications. Some members of the public expressed frustration at the lack of enforcement action by the district and county councils. The Town Council has limited involvement once a scheme has been approved but will write to the district council/enforcement if required.

As chairman of the Visioning group, Cllr George Moss explained that considerable activity is taking place in conjunction with other public bodies aimed at improving Crowborough over the next 20 years.

Communications and Events

A member of the public asked that Caroline Miles, the Events Co-ordinator, be thanked for all her hard work in organising and improving Town Council events.

Sport, Recreation and Cemetery

Cllr Peter Cowie, Chairman of the Sport, Recreation and Cemetery Committee, explained that the land at Summersales had been owned for about 18 months and that an extensive environmental study is required to assess if the area could potentially be used as a cemetery and natural burial site.

It was confirmed that allotment rent is not charged according to plot area.

John Coleman was thanked for his Annual Rail Report and for his regular reports to the Town Council.

OPEN FORUM

The Town Mayor presented cheques of £8400 to Cllr Chantal Wilson of CCA2010 and Caroline Mack of the Citizens Advice Bureaux, as recipients of the Mayor's Charity Appeal.

Members of U3A and Crowborough Vale WI complained about the withdrawal of availability of the Town Hall for meetings of local groups during the week. The Mayor explained that such meetings had increased in number and caused disruption to the Town Hall staff. Other halls are available for hire in the town.

In response to a question it was explained that some of the Town Council archives are held in Lewes and the rest at the Town Hall. A request was received for additional information to be available on the website and it was explained that a new website is being commissioned.

Comment received about the parking outside the post office and the obstruction of the pavement. The issue is being considered by the Town Council, Police and the Joint Action Group.

It was reported that the reinstatement of the Lewes to Uckfield line is not currently supported by Network Rail and the Department of Transport and that people should actively work to keep the campaign going if they feel strongly about it.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.52pm.