

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held at the Town Hall,
The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 2nd June 2015 at 7.30 pm

Present	Councillors	Margaret Brain Quentin Burch Peter Ellefsen Martyn Garrett David Larkin * Alan Penney Ronald Reed Heather Rogers Greg Rose Wendy Scrace Matthew Street Sandra Timms	Chairman
Also present		John Coleman Cllr Richard Stogdon Cllr Jeannette Towey Philippa Hewes David Foot Daniel Colborne Susan Barnard 2 members of the public	Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Comm. East Sussex County Council Wealden District Council Town Clerk Operations Manager Ranger Operations Administrator

* *Denotes non attendance*

The Chairman welcomed Councillors to the first Environment Committee meeting of the new Council and introduced the new Ranger and representatives from outside bodies.

APOLOGIES

Cllr David Larkin – personal reasons.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MINUTES

Minutes – 24th March and 19th May 2015

7471 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings held on 24th March and 19th May 2015 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)

Lighting improvements at Jarvis Brook pedestrian crossing (7073)

This work is scheduled to be completed by the end of June. NOTED

Widening of footpath by new pedestrian crossing at Beacon Academy

The Town Council continues to be in contact with East Sussex County Council regarding this outstanding item. NOTED

Crowborough Cross Traffic Signals Improvement Scheme

The possibility of studying CCTV recordings to better understand driver behaviour at Crowborough Cross has been suggested by local PCSOs. The scheme designers have agreed to do this to better inform their detailed design. NOTED

Dog waste issues – Willowmead/Hurtis Hill

A number of sites visits have been undertaken and the district council has installed appropriate signage. Cllr Jeannette Towey reported a new initiative entitled 'Paws on Watch', to be administered by PCSOs. Responsible dog owners will be encouraged to sign up to the scheme and asked to look out for owners who do not clear up after their dogs and to encourage them to do so.

RAILWAY REPORT

John Coleman invited interested Councillors to attend Parishes Committee meetings and outlined the brief of this Committee which includes trying to secure more carriages on the Uckfield line to combat overcrowding, electrification and redoubling of the line throughout, reopening the Uckfield to Lewes link and the provision of a further link to Brighton. Due to the extent of the work required on the additional twelve carriages recently received by Southern, only one carriage instead of four is likely to be in use by July. There are now four parking spaces at Crowborough Station for electric cars, with double charging points; this is the result of a recent station-wide initiative by the Department for Transport but has not been much publicised.

CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS

To review Ranger's report of tasks completed against Management Plans and other work

In addition to his previously circulated report, the Ranger spoke about his new role. His most important aim would be to improve biodiversity on all Town Council owned sites, largely from improving connectivity. Also important so far has been the establishment of positive relations with the public, the police, Crowborough Conservation, and establishing contacts at Wealden District Council. The Ranger is keen to engage with schools and youth groups and considers site safety a priority. He has written an article for the next Newsletter.

8.12pm – the Ranger left the meeting.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Bus shelters

Request for shelter at Whitehill Road/Cranborne Gardens junction

This location has been examined but there is insufficient space here for a bus shelter.
NOTED

Redundant bus shelter – Beacon Road

On examination, this shelter was found to be in poor condition and not capable of being relocated. It has now been removed.

Highway items raised at a Jarvis Brook Neighbourhood Panel meeting

A list of highways items from a recent panel meeting has been referred to East Sussex County Council. Some of these issues, particularly the proposed 20mph zone in Jarvis Brook, could be raised at the next Strengthening Local Relationships meeting in September.

North Wealden Community Transport Partnership Limited report February – April 2015

Wealdlink's current situation is largely positive; following the end of the social care contract last year, Wealdlink successfully bid to run three supported bus routes (226, 225 and 224). Passenger numbers and fares income are continuing to rise, partly due to the growing popularity of the Crowborough Lunch Club. The Town Council was thanked for its continued financial support.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Clean Up Crowborough event

It was AGREED that this event should be postponed until the Autumn. It is proposed to involve schools and local groups in a week of educational and practical initiatives.

It was AGREED to form a new working party consisting of Cllrs Margaret Brain, Alan Penney, Heather Rogers, Wendy Scrace, Sandra Timms and District Cllr Jeannette Towey, who will meet to co-ordinate the event.

Inappropriate use of litter bins

The placing of builder's rubble in litter bins around the town has caused back injuries to staff when emptying the bins. The PCSOs have been notified and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators have been alerted along with the public via social media. Councillors were urged to raise the issue at police street meetings.

FINANCE

Management Account Reports to 31st March (subject to year end adjustment) and 30th April 2015

7472 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Management Account Reports for 31st March and 30th April 2015.

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

The fingerpost at Western Road/Rotherfield Road has been replaced. The remaining posts have been inspected and a minor repair for the fingerpost at Steel Cross has been authorised.

A comment has been received that there were no floral displays in the centre of the town for the Summer Fun Day on 30th May. This is a weather related issue and it is often not possible to plant up the town for the end of May.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

**RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 2nd JUNE 2015
MEETING ATTENDED**

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee 13th May 2015

It was reported to the Committee that the train service continued to be poor but not quite as bad as it had been earlier this year. There continued to be delays and cancellations, the latter usually at the southern end of the line. The problems affected off-peak as well as peak services. The overcrowding seemed to be getting worse on occasions.

Southern and Network Rail were still struggling to run a reliable and punctual service.

Both companies were represented at the meeting.

Southern presented the meeting with the May update of the service Improvement Plan put together by Network Rail, Thameslink and Southern that commenced in March 2015.

The following has so far been achieved:-

The Public Performance Measure for Southern services has improved from an awful 75.2% in January to 83.9% in May.

38 key junctions have been investigated and underperforming equipment is being replaced to a prioritised plan

The Thameslink line speed restrictions have been removed.

Remote monitoring of equipment at London Bridge has been introduced.

Additional overnight working has enabled reliability improvement works to be completed.

Additional trains have been provided for Thameslink services.

The revised 17th May timetable has been planned to improve services and reliability, and will be more achievable. The price for this will be another small increase in some journey times, and this must be remembered when the December 2018 timetable, for post the present Thameslink project is considered.

The extra drivers and station staff (at London Bridge and East Croydon) are coming on stream.

Improved management at London Bridge has been put in place together with staff wi-fi, an additional information point and three additional information boards.

More improvements are planned to be in place by the end of the year.

The promised additional twelve carriages for the Uckfield line have now been received by Southern, but unfortunately will require considerable bodywork repairs in addition to the overhaul and refurbishment work that was initially planned. All the work is being rescheduled by the works and will be carried out to get the trains into service ASAP to provide the extra 8-car services. More information will be provided when the planning is completed.

Network Rail advised more details of their future plans.

With one exception the planned platform lengthening, for 10-car trains at the line's stations is on schedule and enabling works will commence in July and construction will start in September 2015 with completion by July 2016. Following the local difficulty at Uckfield, Network Rail is looking at re-designing the planned platform extension. If it proves practicable it may be possible to complete the work there by July 2016 by utilising the existing platform for access.

The ORR has agreed the renewals/improvement works that Network Rail proposed in February for the line and these will take place over the next two to three years.

Network Rail and Southern are agreeing with the DfT the Engineering Line Possessions required for all these works.

The Electrification RUS is still awaited. However, it is understood that the low priority for electrification of our line may have been raised a bit. The costs of third-rail and overhead would be fairly similar but overhead is probably not practicable because of power supply conditions in the area.

The Committee does not believe that the performance problem can be resolved unless the single line sections are re-doubled thus enabling easier recovery of lost time. It was advised that re-doubling would be cheaper than electrification. There would be large costs involved in restoring the missing platforms at Cowden and Buxted and these would have to conform to present day build standards.

At Uckfield, the work for the provision of the new station car park has been delayed because of flooding concerns affecting the neighbouring pub. The necessary drainage has to be put in where there are utilities pipes and cables. Hopefully, the problems are being overcome and the car park will be completed in July 2015.

The £100,000 promised by the Government towards another study into the re-instatement of the Lewes – Uckfield line has not yet been allocated. Further problems on the Brighton Main Line have yet again raised the profile of this project and of BML2.

OTHER

From internet observation it appears to me that the services on the Uckfield line generally ran to time during the first week of the revised timetable.

J N Coleman 25th May 2015