

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held at the Town Hall,
The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 24th March 2015 at 7.30 pm

Present	Councillors	Quentin Burch Michael Cooke Elizabeth Fermor Philip Fermor Beverley Johnstone * Kay Moss Ronald Reed * Wendy Scrace Andrew Steen Sandra Timms	Vice Chairman Chairman
Also present		John Coleman Colin Stocks Cllr Richard Stogdon Cllr Sylvia Tidy Cllr Jeannette Towey Philippa Hewes David Foot Susan Barnard 4 members of the public	Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Comm. Wealdlink Community Transport East Sussex County Council East Sussex County Council Wealden District Council Town Clerk Operations Manager Operations Administrator

* *Denotes non attendance*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public requested that a bus shelter be installed at the bottom of Whitehill Road, at the bus stop adjacent to the new housing development.

APOLOGIES

Cllr Ron Reed – personal reasons.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MINUTES

Minutes – 27th January 2015

- 7418** **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2015 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)

7.35pm – a member of the public left the meeting.

Lighting improvements at Jarvis Brook pedestrian crossing (7073)

The works order has been issued and the lighting posts have already been installed. The work involves the co-ordination of outside contractors and is scheduled to be completed by the end of June. NOTED

Trees at Clokes Corner (7235, 7236)

Replacement trees have been planted. NOTED

Widening of footpath by new pedestrian crossing at Beacon Academy

The works order was issued some time ago but it is not known when this work is scheduled to be carried out. NOTED

Crowborough Cross Traffic Signals Improvement Scheme

The consultant's report has been received and is to be evaluated. Design plans and costs are to be prepared for discussion with the Infrastructure, Design & Delivery Team and the Road Safety Team by the end of April. NOTED

Fingerpost replacement/repairs

The fingerpost at the junction of Western Road/Rotherfield Road is being replaced and the fingerpost at the junction of Western Road/Hadlow Down Road is being repaired. The fingerpost at Steel Cross has been reported to be in need of repair and will be examined.

RAILWAY REPORT

John Coleman reported several additional items that had arisen since his written report. Despite a slight service improvement recently, the underlying timetable problems have not been resolved. Following a successful bid for funding, additional cycle racks for 25 cycles will be installed at Crowborough Station. A recent Rail Transport Strategy meeting agreed to support improvements to the rail service and lines and the ban on third rail electrification is now not definite. The sum of £100,000 has been committed to a new study into the possible reinstatement of the Uckfield – Lewes rail link.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS MEETING 2nd MARCH

Draft minutes had been circulated to Councillors for noting.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Update on speed limit and enforcement on A26 Beacon Road

A recent report states that none of the road collisions in Beacon Road over a three year period indicate excess speed as a contributing factor. Camera enforcement is focused on casualty reduction and the site on Beacon Road will not be taken forward for a mobile speed camera unit at the present time. The request for a pedestrian crossing on the A26 near Church Road has not been included in the County Council's capital funding programme for 2015/16.

Petition for pedestrian crossing on A26 near Sheep Plain

To note East Sussex County Council's response to the petition

East Sussex County Council uses an evidence based process to prioritise schemes which will be of the most benefit to local communities. The proposal for a crossing does not score highly enough to be taken forward at the present time. There is already a central island at the location to help pedestrians cross the road.

Request to install a bus shelter

The Town Council has previously considered the installation of a bus shelter in this location; this was not progressed as other stops in Crowborough had a higher usage. There is no budget in 2015/16 for additional bus shelters.

It was AGREED to examine the possibility of relocating a redundant bus shelter on Beacon Road to a new location.

It was AGREED that a list should be compiled of requests received for additional bus shelters.

Request for a bus shelter to be installed near the Bricklayers Arms, Whitehill Road

The site has been examined but there is insufficient space to install a shelter at this location and it would hinder visibility for traffic using the adjacent access road. This request will not be taken forward.

Minutes of a meeting of Wealdlink Forum and North Wealden Community Transport Partnership Limited 11th February 2015

Wealdlink has been awarded the contract to continue running the 226 service and other routes, which will provide a period of stable funding. Securing additional funding from more parish councils in the future will be vital. Colin Stocks thanked the Town Council on behalf of Wealdlink for its funding support.

Request for speed controlled signage at Hurtis Hill

A request has come forward from the West Ward Neighbourhood Panel for solar activated signs warning of the two dangerous bends in Hurtis Hill; the road forms part of the HGV and bus route. The proposal is not considered a priority by East Sussex County Council. An application could be submitted for consideration under the community match funding programme.

It was AGREED to create a list of highways projects that come forward which could only be considered for implementation if the Town Council provides match funding. A scoring system would be required to prioritise the projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Request to install a dog waste bin at Willowmead/Hurtis Hill

It was AGREED that PCSO Chris Harrison should be asked to investigate and monitor the situation.

It was AGREED that photographic evidence should be sent to Wealden District Council and that appropriate signage should be requested for the area.

Request to install a planter at the junction of Ghyll Road and London Road

It was AGREED not to install a planter at the above location but to leave the concrete base available for a possible future memorial bench request.

Clean Up Crowborough Day

It was AGREED to form a working party consisting of Cllrs Sandra Timms, Wendy Scrace, Kay Moss and District Cllr Jeannette Towey who will consider a date for the Clean Up Crowborough Day, liaise with Wealden District Council and Waitrose, and organise publicity.

8.40pm – a member of the public left the meeting.

CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS

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

A list of tasks completed in February and March 2015, as part of the Management Plans for the Country Park, the Ghyll and the Bluebell Wood, was reviewed.

Members of the Committee officially welcomed the new Ranger, who started work last week.

Crowborough Ghyll Management Plan 2015-2019

The Ranger will be reviewing the plan and drawing up a schedule of tasks for the area. Priorities will include combatting increased vandalism and fly tipping, and increasing community engagement.

- 7419 **RESOLVED** to accept the Crowborough Ghyll Management Plan 2015-2019 with the exception of compartment 13c, which is for sports use and will be removed from the plan.

To renew the Management Agreement for the Bluebell Wood to 31.03.16

- 7420 **RESOLVED** to renew the Management Agreement for the Bluebell Wood until 31.03.16.

FINANCE

Management Account Reports to 31st January and 28th February 2015

- 7421 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Management Account Reports for the two periods ending 31st January and 28th February 2015.

Transfer of funds to Reserves

- 7422 **RESOLVED** to transfer the sum of £2,500 from Environmental Improvements, cost centre 4654/801, to earmarked reserves for future environmental projects.

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

The Chairman thanked members of the Committee for all their work over the last year.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 24th MARCH 2015

MEETINGS ATTENDED

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee 11th March 2015

Southern were not represented.

The Committee was advised that the train service continued to be poor and that Southern and Network Rail were struggling to run a reliable service. It was felt that this was partly due to a still over optimistic timetable being run subsequent to the latest changes at and near to London Bridge. There also appear to be problems with new signalling arrangements which can affect the Victoria trains; this has a knock on effect on all services which use the Brighton Main Line. Unfortunately, this appears to be contrary to what we told when we queried the risk assessment of the size and robustness of the Three Bridges Signalling Control Centre.

In addition to these problems there have been train failures, fatalities, and fallen trees, all adding to the recent woes, as staff have struggled to keep passengers updated with the latest information. There may have been signs of some slight improvement in the last week or so but some services are still late and trains are quite often turned at Crowborough.

The Committee does not believe that the latter problem can be resolved unless the single line sections are re-doubled thus enabling easier recovery of lost time.

Southern, Thameslink and Network Rail have put an Improvement Plan in place and expect to see a big improvement in performance in the course of the next 3 months. The first report of their progress is awaited with interest.

The meeting was attended by the Conservative and Labour parties PPC's who were briefed on the Committee's views and aspirations. Both were supportive.

Reports were received that the awaited Network Rail Electrification Study might be published later this month, ahead of the General Election, which some members thought surprising.

At Uckfield, Network Rail has found local objections to its preferred access route to enable the platform there to be extended.

Also at Uckfield, the work for the provision of the new station car park is apparently not proceeding very quickly, and it is suggested will not be completed by the end of April as planned.

The additional train sets are still due to be transferred to Southern at the end of this month and be operational at the end of July.

Sussex Community Rail Partnership - Uckfield and East Grinstead Lines Steering Group Meeting 17th March 2015

The Chairman updated the meeting with the news of proposals that the remit of Community Rail Partnerships should be changed/extended were being brought forward and that details of a new business plan would be provided as soon as possible. It was also advised that future local funding was of some concern although that from the Train Operating Companies was secure.

The Development Officer's Action Plan was discussed and agreed.

It was reported that the future use of the empty accommodation at Crowborough (and Edenbridge Town) was still unresolved, and that this was apparently due to staff changes at Network Rail.

The Oakleaf group that tends the plant containers at Crowborough has restarted and hopes to produce a good show this year.

One important CRP activity this year will be Rail in the City which will be taking place on 20th May at Blackfriars station. This is an event that will include CRP's from all over the country. The Sussex CRP, assisted by the South Downs National Park, and by volunteers will be there to encourage the use of public transport to visit the our towns and countryside. (The new Blackfriars station, which stands across the river and has great views, is worth a visit at any time [off-peak].)

OTHER

It has been noted that Network Rail has commenced a clearance of the line-side at the Crowborough Engineers Yard and southwards towards Buxted. It also appears to have started assessing possible revision to some signal locations at Crowborough.

J N Coleman 18th March 2015