

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held at the Town Hall,
The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 30th September 2014 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 Sgt Mike Keeler PCSO Chris Harrison Philippa Hewes David Foot Susan Barnard 2 members of the public	Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Comm. Sussex Police Sussex Police Town Clerk Operations Manager Operations Administrator

* *Denotes non attendance*

APOLOGIES

Cllr Beverley Johnstone – personal reason
Cllr Ronald Reed – personal reason
County Cllr Richard Stogdon

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MINUTES

Minutes – 29th July 2014

7280 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2014 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)

Pedestrian crossing at Beacon Academy

The crossing was installed during the school summer break. A partially obscured sign has now been cleared and an issue concerning the width of a footpath is being progressed. NOTED

UNCONFIRMED UNTIL NEXT MEETING

Lighting improvements at Jarvis Brook pedestrian crossing (7073)

The application for match funding was reviewed by the Cross Party Member Panel and recommended for approval. This will be considered by the Lead Member in November. NOTED

Trees at Clokes Corner (7235, 7236)

Advice is being sought from English Woodlands on the type of trees to be planted. NOTED

Also arising from the Minutes of 29th July was an update on East Sussex County Council's proposed changes to subsidised bus services. The Town Council has responded to the consultation and made a representation against the proposed reduction of the 226 service. The nature of Wealdlink's operating licence limits possible funding sources. NOTED

POLICE**To receive a report from PCSO Chris Harrison on Community Speed Watch**

Community Speed Watch schemes have been set up in Green Lane and Southview Road. Due to a lack of resident participation in Green Lane, only Southview Road is proceeding and 41 speeding offenders have been sent warning letters since mid-July. A number of 100-vehicle counts have taken place in other areas. Crowborough has two Speed Watch cameras for use by residents.

In response to a Town Council request, the footpath between Beacon Gardens and Old Lane has been monitored with regard to dog fouling. Residents welcomed a police presence and problems seem to have improved.

Due to inappropriate use, Cllr Richard Stogdon is progressing a move to alter the parking bays in Croft Road (outside This 'n That and Waitrose) into disabled parking bays.

Current policing priorities in Crowborough include parking, road safety and traffic issues, plus anti-social behaviour in the Ghyll. Speeding in Goldsmiths Avenue may be put forward for Community Speed Watch.

To receive a report from Sergeant Michael Keeler on staff changes

Sussex Police crime detection rates are below the national average. There are now two operations teams, based in Hailsham and Uckfield, which are focused on crime detection and investigation, and PC Richard Waters has been transferred to the Uckfield team. Sgt Keeler will now cover a larger area and supervise the PCSOs within it. Two newly-trained PCSOs have started a tutoring attachment in Crowborough and will be used to cover positions following staff changes next year.

PCSO Chris Harrison will continue to provide cover for the whole town. Thanks were recorded for PC Richard Waters' work on behalf of Crowborough.

8 pm – Sgt Mike Keeler and PCSO Chris Harrison left the meeting.

RAILWAY REPORT

Further to his written report, John Coleman stated that Network Rail's draft route study has still not been published, although it was expected this month. Extra carriages for the Uckfield line are in negotiation and station platforms are being surveyed in preparation for lengthening. John Coleman was thanked for his report.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Strengthening Local Relationships meeting 1st September

It was **AGREED** that a list of dirty or defective road signs should be assembled. East Sussex County Council is to be contacted regarding the issue of members of the public cleaning highway signs.

Councillors were asked to consider items for the next Strengthening Local Relationships meeting.

Request for a reduction in the speed limit on Beacon Road

Further to the scheme's assessment at the Lead Member's meeting on 15th September, officers were requested to conduct further investigations. The Town Council has been asked to consider in principle making a contribution towards the estimated cost of £10,000 for altering the speed limit. It was noted that members were reluctant to make a contribution towards the scheme and that a request for further information has been submitted.

A request for a pedestrian crossing on Beacon Road near Church Road has been assessed and has scored 75 points. The scheme will now receive a more detailed appraisal.

Grit bin and fingerpost audit

Minor maintenance is required to the Chapel Green fingerpost and overgrowth is to be cleared from some others. Of 33 grit bins, two require replacing and all but one is full.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

To consider additional planting of shrubs at Clokes Corner

7281 **RESOLVED** to plant shrubs in part of the two front beds containing the hanging basket trees.

To consider planting for the anniversary flower bed for 2015

Specialist design planting cost approximately £2000. Members were invited to submit suggestions for the anniversary bed planting by mid-November. Any planting requirements, beyond the usual summer planting, need to be advised to the nursery supplier by the end of November.

To confirm nursery supplier 2015

- 7282** **RESOLVED** to use Jordans as the nursery supplier for 2015 and to undertake a supplier comparison next summer for the following year.

CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS**Report on visits to the Country Park, the Ghyll and land at Heatherview**

Further to site visits by the Operations Manager and Ranger, ditch clearance, path resurfacing and height barrier replacements have been identified at the Country Park. There is a dip in the car park at the Ghyll and enquiries are being made into suitable materials. A list of tasks/maintenance is being drawn up for the land at Heatherview.

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

A list of tasks completed in August and September 2014 as part of the Management Plans for the Country Park, the Ghyll and the Bluebell Wood was reviewed and noted.

To consider installing a litter bin at the Ghyll car park in Burdett Road

It was **AGREED** to defer the installation of a litter bin in the Ghyll car park as there are already several in the area, and to monitor the situation.

Update on Local Nature Reserve Agreement for Crowborough Ghyll

East Sussex County Council has been asked for an update on the Agreement on the Local Nature Reserve status for the Ghyll. A new solicitor has now taken over the file and will be progressing the work.

8.48pm – John Coleman left the meeting.

FINANCE**Management Account Reports to 31st July and 31st August 2014**

- 7283** **RESOLVED** to adopt the Management Account Reports for the two periods ending 31st July and 31st August 2014.

To review projected spend to the end of the financial year and Reserves

The projected spend to the end of the financial year and Reserves were reviewed and noted.

To consider draft committee budget 2015/16

A draft budget was reviewed and will be considered in more detail at the next meeting. Information is required on the support for Wealdlink

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

It was reported that work has been undertaken on the traffic lights at Crowborough Cross but this has failed to solve the problem of drivers jumping red lights.

The Ranger has given in her notice. Thanks were recorded to the Ranger for all her work at the Country Park and the Ghyll and members wished her well for the future.

The meeting closed at 9.03pm.

**RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
30th SEPTEMBER 2014
MEETINGS ATTENDED**

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee 10th September 2014

Southern attended and provided a presentation covering its improvement training for conductors. Southern believe that conductors should be able and willing to assist passengers and enhance their journey experience. The company believes that progress is being made but more needs to be done so that all staff compare favourably with the best. I believe that the Committee agreed with that assessment and look forward to the target being achieved.

It was reported by members that recently the services had been “not too bad” and also that even some off-peak trains were full before Hurst Green.

The problems and inconvenience for passengers, caused by the termination of late running trains at Crowborough was discussed. Control, which is responsible for sorting these problems out, tries to remedy the situation in a manner which inconveniences the minimum number of people. If the delay to one train will lead to cumulative delays to several others then it may be decided to terminate the first train short. Although there is a small amount of slack in some parts of the timetable it is made more difficult to limit the effect of any delay to a train because of the single line sections that are present on the Uckfield line. Obviously, the best way to avoid the problem is to run to time.

The recent nine-day closure of London Bridge station to Southern and First Capital Connect trains (necessary as part of the Thameslink project) did not appear to cause any major problems and the services were restored on time as planned.

The Committee was expecting a response from Charles Hendry MP, regarding the conditions of the new TSGN franchise in respect of the provision of extra carriages/trains for the Uckfield line and what had been offered by the other bidders in respect of the line. (A response has now been received which attaches a reply from the DfT that refuses to provide any details stating that Commercial Confidentiality clauses in the agreement and the bid process prevents disclosure even under the Freedom of Information Act.)

Network Rail’s Sussex Route Study which is due to be published this month is still awaited.

OTHER

Various reports seem to indicate that additional trains may, at last, become available in about 18 to 24 months time and that initial planning for longer platforms may be in hand.

J N Coleman
22nd September 2014