

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held at the Town Hall,
The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 25th March 2014 at 7.30 pm

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| Present | Councillors | Quentin Burch Michael Cooke Peter Cowie Elizabeth Fermor Philip Fermor Ronald Reed Wendy Scrace David Shaw Andrew Steen Matthew Street Sandra Timms | Vice Chairman Chairman |
| Also present | | John Coleman PCSO Ruth Parnell-Mace PCSO Chris Harrison Cllr Richard Stogdon Philippa Hewes David Foot Susan Barnard 1 member of the press | Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Comm. Sussex Police Sussex Police East Sussex County Council Town Clerk Operations Manager Operations Administrator |

* *Denotes non attendance*

APOLOGIES

None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Wendy Scrace declared a personal interest in the issue of the speed limit on Beacon Road as she lives nearby.

Cllr Sandra Timms declared a personal interest in the issue of the speed limit on Beacon Road as she lives nearby.

MINUTES

Minutes – 28th January 2014

7121 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2014 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)

Pedestrian crossing at Beacon Academy

East Sussex County Council has now commenced the public consultation and, subject to responses from local residents, a Puffin crossing will be constructed in August.
NOTED

UNCONFIRMED UNTIL NEXT MEETING

Planting at Clokes Corner (7023)

Flowering shrubs are due to be planted by the end of March. Work is progressing on the hanging basket trees. NOTED

Grazing at Palesgate Lane Meadow (7071)

A grant of £2,000 has been awarded by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee for fencing the meadow. Installation of the fencing commenced 10th March. NOTED

Bus shelter at Croft Road

The shelter has been ordered and installation is expected by the end of April. NOTED

POLICE

To receive report from PCSO Chris Harrison and PCSO Ruth Parnell-Mace

PCSO Ruth Parnell-Mace reported on her new rôle focusing on burglaries to non-dwellings in Wealden. A consistent problem is seen to be break-ins and thefts from sheds and outbuildings. The police are keen to raise awareness that padlocks alone are not sufficient and that householders should also consider installing battery-operated alarms on doors and windows. There had been a successful trial of shed alarms in Hartfield.

PCSO Chris Harrison provided an update on his current work as the Town Council-sponsored PCSO for Crowborough. He holds a monthly police surgery at the Town Hall and assists other PCSOs with the 'priorities' specific to each ward.

To review CCTV in Crowborough

The contract for CCTV in Crowborough is due for renewal in 2015 and a review is currently taking place of its effectiveness. The police are keen for Crowborough's four cameras to remain in place and the Town Clerk and Operations Manager are due to visit the control centre in Brighton to learn more about how they are used. NOTED

8.07pm – PCSOs Ruth Parnell-Mace and Chris Harrison left the meeting.

RAILWAY REPORT

In addition to his written report, John Coleman explained about the problems with acquiring additional trains. There has been an increase in rail travel; 400,000 individual journeys were recorded to and from Crowborough station last year. The final route of the new Thameslink trains is still unknown.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**Strengthening Local Relationships meeting 3rd March**

A copy of the Minutes had previously been circulated to Councillors. A number of Councillors had attended the meeting at which a presentation of the Community Self-Serve Initiative had taken place and which was considered to have been useful.

To consider support for a petition to reduce the speed limit on the Beacon Road

A petition has been presented to the Chairman of East Sussex County Council by local residents campaigning for a reduction in the speed limit on the A26 at Beacon Road. A response will be issued within 6 months. The new Highways Steward has already started to clear debris from the pavements and has requested residents bordering the road cut back their boundaries in order to make the pavements safer.

7122 **RESOLVED** that Crowborough Town Council will support the petition to reduce the speed limit on Beacon Road.

To review East Sussex County Council's draft two year surfacing/maintenance programme for unclassified roads

Councillors were invited to comment on the draft list of unclassified roads to be resurfaced or to suggest additional roads by contacting Cllr Richard Stogdon.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**Watering/maintenance of verge planting at the station**

It was **AGREED** that the watering of the new planters on the verge at the station would be incorporated within the Council's watering schedule. Any maintenance of the planters would need be undertaken by the volunteer group.

CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS**To renew the Management Agreement for the Bluebell Wood to 31.03.15**

It was **AGREED** to renew the Management Agreement for the Bluebell Wood to 31.03.15.

Report on Local Nature Reserve Agreement for Crowborough Ghyll

East Sussex County Council has agreed to delegate the powers to the Town Council to declare Crowborough Ghyll a Local Nature Reserve and to create appropriate byelaws. Agreements are being drawn up for signature in accordance with a resolution taken in 2010 to declare The Ghyll a Local Nature Reserve. **NOTED**

To review report of tasks completed against Management Plans

A list of tasks completed in February and March 2014 as part of the Management Plans for the Country Park, The Ghyll, Palesgate Lane Meadow and The Bluebell Wood was reviewed and noted.

Dog waste and litter continue to be an issue and are expensive to clear. It was suggested that a voluntary litter picking event may help to raise the profile of the problem.

8.53pm – John Coleman left the meeting.

FINANCE

Management Accounts to 31st January and 28th February 2014

7123 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Management Accounts for the two periods ending 31st January and 28th February 2014.

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

None

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 25th MARCH 2014

MEETINGS ATTENDED

Community Rail Partnership Stakeholders' Meeting 4th February 2014

The CRP continues its work to encourage greater off-peak and leisure use of the railway and its facilities by local groups and individuals, and has ongoing projects at most of the stations on our line. It is always ready to help to develop more projects with local people and organisations.

The new Thameslink Great Northern and Southern Franchise specifies the continuing support for the CRP by the selected train operator.

The new edition of the Uckfield & East Grinstead Lines Guide was published in the latter half of last year and is still available.

The newly planted trees along the station frontage on Farningham Road are mostly doing well after needing much watering last summer.

The new poster boards have not yet appeared.

The planned Art Show at Crowborough station has been delayed by difficulties with the hanging arrangements.

Sharon is working to find a source of additional planters for the station platforms.

A Spring Newsletter is to be published. (This is now available on-line).

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee Meeting 13th March 2014

Southern did not attend the meeting.

It was agreed that the Parishes Committee should write and ask our MP to find out what has happened to the promised final report from Network Rail to the DfT on the usefulness or otherwise of the Lewes – Uckfield link. This was to take account of resultant improvements in the connectivity and economic activity in the region between London and the South Coast.

The Committee noted that it had not received a response from the Sussex Local Economic Partnership in regard to its request for its assistance in improvements and extensions to the Uckfield Line.

The Committee was advised that the plans for the Uckfield station car park would be presented to the Wealden District Council planning meeting in May. If approved, it should be possible to complete the car park by the end of September and the bus station by the end of this year.

Rail services have recovered from the recent trouble caused by the land-slide near Oxted, which caused the closure of the line for 2 weeks in February. However, unfortunately, the 6.30am from Uckfield failed there on Monday of last week.

The Office of the Rail Regulator has just published the annual figures for station usage and these show that Crowborough has increased by 1% and Eridge fell by 1.5% compared with the previous year.

The figures for the other large stations on the line were:-

Buxted +4%, Uckfield +21% whilst Edenbridge Town showed no significant change.

It was agreed that the Committee would discuss at its next meeting what list of priorities should be requested of the new franchised operator who will be selected in May this year.

OTHER

The end of this month should see publication of the agreed Network Rail work plan for Control Period 5 which runs from April 2014 to March 2019, which is expected to include platform lengthening at Crowborough.

Reports of the mock up of the long delayed new rolling stock for the Thameslink services are not very favourable for passengers - unless they don't mind standing. The vehicles are metro style, with airline (or bus) seating layout and the seats are small and hard.

J N Coleman

15th March 2014