

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held at the Town Hall,
The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 24th May 2016 at 7.30 pm

Present	Councillors	Margaret Brain Quentin Burch Martyn Garrett Kay Moss David Neeves Alan Penney Ronald Reed Greg Rose Wendy Scrace * Matthew Street Sandra Timms	Vice Chairman Chairman
Also present		John Coleman Cllr Richard Stogdon David Columbello Philippa Hewes Susan Barnard One member of the public	Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Comm. East Sussex County Council Brighter Crowborough Town Clerk Operations Administrator

* Denotes non attendance

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of the public spoke about the large amounts of litter present in Church Road and on Chapel Green, and from there going down Crowborough Hill to Jarvis Brook. He asked if a public clear-up day could be organised. The Chairman explained that the Brighter Crowborough group had been founded to deal with the growing litter problem and that an imminent 'I Care for Crowborough' event would improve matters.

APOLOGIES

Cllr Wendy Scrace – unwell

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MINUTES

Minutes – 29th March and 17th May 2016

7756 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings held on 29th March and 17th May 2016 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

UNCONFIRMED UNTIL NEXT MEETING

It was reported that a petition had been submitted on 10th May to East Sussex County Council regarding traffic calming measures in the East Beeches Road area

Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)

Community Match funding for parking schemes (7639)

ESCC is reviewing how Community Match will operate with the new contractor. A revised application form is not yet available.

Proposal for creating a Pocket Park Nature Reserve (7696)

A proposal for creating a pocket park nature reserve in the former sports area adjacent to Beacon Academy has been submitted to ESCC; it is not known when a response will be received.

RAILWAY REPORT

Further to his written report, John Coleman explained that it appeared unlikely Southern would take on further additional trains because the first batch had proved so troublesome and because there would be insufficient space at the Southern depot. Low-key celebrations are planned on 25th July to mark the completion of the platform extension works and the commencement of 10-car peak hour trains. The Chairman requested that Town Councillors be invited to any celebration occurring in Crowborough. Some improvement works, such as points work and refurbishment of the lifts at Eridge, have not been carried out due to Network Rail expenditure constraints. Councillors were invited to respond to the ongoing commuter bus survey. The Chairman thanked John Coleman for his work and for agreeing to represent the Town Council for another year.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Report from Brighter Crowborough

A written report from the group's founder, David Columbello, had previously been circulated to Councillors. Founded in February, the main group of volunteers concentrates on clearing litter in Jarvis Brook on alternate Sundays. A second group has been formed in central Crowborough but badly needs more volunteers. Publicity has been obtained via Facebook and an article in the Crowborough Directory. Wealden District Council supplied some bags, and other equipment has been supplied by T&T Plant Hire and Coppards. The group requires funding for more equipment, public liability insurance and leaflets, and will be featured in the Waitrose charity token scheme in October. Brighter Crowborough will be taking part in the 'I Care for Crowborough' event in June, when equipment and support will be provided by the Town Council.

'I Care for Crowborough' event

The aim is for this to become an annual event. Groups who participated last year have been written to, inviting them to take part again. St John's School will be holding its own internal event and Waitrose and Brighter Crowborough will be actively taking part. Promotional flyers will be distributed at Sussex Day on 16th June and at Waitrose on the preceding weekend.

Cllrs Sandra Timms and Matthew Street offered to replace Cllr Heather Rogers on the working party. John Coleman suggested that the Community Rail Partnership be approached for both volunteers and funding. All Councillors were encouraged to take part in the event, which is scheduled for the week commencing 13th June.

8.05pm – David Columbello left the meeting.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Strengthening Local Relationships meeting 20th April

Minutes of the meeting were considered by Councillors. The list of construction and planned maintenance work has still not been released. Cllr Richard Stogdon was requested to chase the footpath work adjacent to Aldervale Cottages, which has only been addressed in parts. The deep potholes outside the garage in Whitehill Road have been repaired today. The Chairman encouraged Councillors to email him regarding highway issues, which he would then pass on to Cllr Richard Stogdon.

CONSULTATION ON ROTHERFIELD HGV SIGNAGE

Councillors were concerned that the proposed ban on HGV's over 10m long passing through Rotherfield would increase the number passing through Crowborough's unsuitable roads, largely due to inadequate signage.

It was agreed that a response be submitted to the consultation, urging for better signage to be installed on the A26 at Boars Head and Sheep Plain, in the same style as that on the A267, clearly stating no access to Rotherfield.

CONSULTATION ON SEASONAL CLOSURE OF BYWAYS

It was agreed that a response be submitted in support of the seasonal closure of Lordswell Lane and recommending that it be permanently closed to vehicles.

CONSULTATION ON COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS STRATEGY

As the closing date for comments is 29th July, it was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting to give members time to review the documents which are available online. A hard copy will be held on reception at the Town Hall.

CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS

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

The Ranger's report was reviewed and noted.

CCTV PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

A report provided by Sussex Police concerning staff changes and contracts with service providers was reviewed by Councillors.

THE PROVISION OF A COMMUNITY WARDEN

It was agreed that the situation regarding imminent changes to neighbourhood policing should be monitored over the next few months and that the possibility of the Town Council providing a Community Warden should be considered at a future meeting.

FINANCE

Management Account Reports to 31st March and 30th April 2016 (the reports at 31st March are noted subject to year end adjustments)

7757 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Management Account Reports to 31st March and 30th April 2016.

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

None

The meeting closed at 8.46pm.

RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 24th MAY 2016 MEETING ATTENDED

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee 11th May 2016

Southern was represented and was able to report on the Network Rail works on our Line as well as its own performance and plans.

The latest update of the Joint Service Improvement Plan for the period 6th March to 6th April shows some improvement in the Southern services but the achievement of about 82% is still poor compared with standards elsewhere and is certainly not acceptable for the future.

The present industrial relations problems at Southern are most regrettable and obviously cause additional problems to an already hard pressed system. However, the effect on passengers is severe as the line is effectively closed on and around strike days.

It is to be hoped that the situation will be resolved at an early date.

Otherwise, on the Uckfield line itself, recent experience seems to show some improvement in the up morning peak service performance.

However, the evening peak still suffers from the on time Uckfield services being held outside or at East Croydon, until a late running East Grinstead train arrives and is allowed to proceed ahead of the Uckfield train. The East Grinstead train which stops at all stations to Oxted causes so much delay to the Uckfield train that this then gets terminated at Crowborough in order to leave on time on its next trip to London. The most regular service affected is reportedly the 1806 from London Bridge which is of course the busiest peak hour train of the day.

It is hoped that this matter will be looked at again by Southern and Network Rail and if the regulation of these trains cannot be better provided then it would seem reasonable to receive an explanation.

On a brighter note, the platform extensions work is proceeding well. This is now so at Crowborough and Eridge which were programmed later than most of the other stations. All work is on or ahead of schedule and the 25th July due date for the start of 10 car peak hour trains still applies.

In addition, some more renewals work is continuing including track, line-side clearance and fencing.

However, some improvement works have been postponed (or cancelled) due to new expenditure constraints imposed within Network Rail.

Southern reported that the first additional train has arrived back at Selhurst depot, and the second will be back on 21st May.

Finishing, re-marshalling, testing and commissioning then have to be completed after which a small amount of driver training will be required as these trains have minor differences to the existing stock.

It is planned that the first unit may be introduced on 3rd July with the full service from the 25th July as mentioned previously.

UNCONFIRMED UNTIL NEXT MEETING

It is planned to have a fairly low key celebratory event. Some of this may be at Crowborough. There are no details at present.

It is now believed that the South Coast Rail Study being produced for the DfT at the behest of the Chancellor has been completed and submitted to the DfT, but there will be no decision made before the autumn.

A question was raised with regard to the possibility of Southern obtaining further additional trains as these become available following cascades elsewhere. This would enable a more resilient service and possibly a better evening peak service on our line and more capacity on Marshlink.

The 2018 (post Thameslink) timetable will be put out for consultation this summer. In addition to an earlier Sunday service it was felt that an improved evening peak service replacing the evening Oxted-Uckfield shuttles with through trains to and from London should be provided.

It was reported that there had been a good response so far, to the ongoing passenger survey with regard to the possible provision of peak hours commuter bus services linking communities in Crowborough, Buxted and Uckfield to the railway stations. This survey is being arranged by the Wealden Bus Alliance supported by the Community Rail Partnership and Wealden District Council.

The Parishes Committee will be represented at the Southern Stakeholder Meeting on 20th June.

J N Coleman 16th May 2016