

DRAFT - MINUTES OF THE SLINDON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 20th MARCH 2017 AT 7PM IN THE CORONATION HALL

PRESENT: Including Parish Councillors Ann Watts, Chairman, Niki Adamson, Barbara Brimblecombe, Peter Fenton, Robert Parfey, Derek Thomas and Margaret Winn, there were a total of 59 people present.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the format for the evening.
- 1.2** Apologies were received from Parish Councillors, Steve Chilver, Robert Parfey and Lee Spencer-Smith. Mr David Thornley, Mr Clemmetsen, Louise Crawford, The Spur, Mr David Quick, Head Master, Slindon College, Mr David Slee, Mr Paul Crawley, Courthill Farm, Sergeant Cheesman, Sussex Police, Mr & Mrs Barrett, Mr David Boyson, South Downs National Park Authority, Historic Buildings Officer, Mr Jazz Kimbell, Secretary, Slindon Sports Association, Mr John and Mrs June Pegler and Mrs Faith Harris.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st MARCH 2016

- 2.1** The minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. PARISH ACCOUNTS 2015/16

- 3.1** The Clerk presented a copy of the summary of the Parish Council's Accounts for the year to 31st March 2016. The summary also included a statement of the Parish Council's reserves indicating where funds had been earmarked for specific projects. It was noted that the profit and loss statement would be published in the next edition of the Parish Magazine.

4. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- 4.1** Time had flown since the last Annual Parish meeting and the Chairman was pleased to report that the community was as busy as ever. This was evidenced by the number of guests that would be addressing the meeting shortly and the pictures on display. The composition of the Parish Council was unchanged from last year and with the help of many individuals and local groups, the Council had achieved much. Following the acquisition a new projector back in 2016, the Coronation Hall had also purchased a screen and these facilities were now being used by community groups at their meetings. With the help of grant funding from national and county organisations the village amenities had been greatly improved. Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, new outdoor fitness equipment had been installed at the Recreation Ground on the Common and the Council had installed three picnic tables. The area had also recently been tidied as part of the Slindon Life litter initiative. Residents would receive a full report on the Sports Association's activities later in the meeting. More recently, defibrillators had been installed at The Forge and the Sports Pavilion with help from the British Heart Foundation. Grant funding from the County Council's Joint Downland Committee secured by the Pudding Club had paid for installation and training which would start shortly. Regular activities continued, including looking after the pond and the memorial garden, responding to planning applications, reporting fly tipping and pot holes.
- 4.2** The forthcoming year would see the Parish Council enter a period of consolidation. Looking forward to 2017/18, essential work in the recreation area at the Top Playing Field was also planned including the introduction of a wildflower meadow. There were also plans to plant a tree to remember the late Mr John Moor, a past Chairman of the Council. Investigations and maintenance work on the drainage around the pond area would continue with the County Council taking the lead. The

coming year would also see the Clerk undertaking a significant amount of training – most notably to help get a Parish Council Facebook project off the ground. Together with the National Park the Council was updating the Conservation Area Statement and a final draft would go out to the parish for consultation later in the year. The Council would also continue to work with the County Council to bring forward planned improvements to the A29 crossroads as part of the next phase of the traffic management scheme in the village. In conclusion, she invited residents to continue to talk to their Parish Councillors. She reminded everyone that each month the first 15 minutes of the Parish Council meeting was a public forum – an opportunity to ask questions. Emphasising that the meetings were public, she stated that residents were always welcome to attend and see how the Council was spending their money.

5. PRESENTATIONS FROM SLINDON COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Chairman invited representatives from local organisations and community groups to give brief presentations and the following points were noted.

5.1 The Community Bus

Parish Councillor Brimblecombe delivered a report on activity on behalf of the Community Bus Committee. She was pleased to report that new bus had been well received. Although slightly smaller than the old bus, it was well used and easier to drive. With no dents or scratches yet! the bus was manned by two groups of volunteer drivers from Slindon and Amberley – more would always be welcome. On behalf of the Committee she thanked them and Parvy Anderson, their accountant who kept their accounts in order.

5.2 SlindonLife

SlindonLife had very recently held their AGM and Mr Imms report was focussed on the year ahead. The usual annual events that were a feature of village life in the parish would continue. This brought into focus the value of the master diary of events in the parish that the group maintained and he urged residents and local groups to make use of this facility to avoid clashes and keep up to date with what's happening. The Great British Clean Up on 4th March had been a great success, supported by the District and Parish Councils. A key event this year would be a mid-summer party near the Folly on 24th June or 2nd July if the weather fails, supported by the National Trust. Finally, the Group was keen to have an event for children in the coming year. Acknowledging that many local children go to schools outside the parish, the Group was exploring ideas for something that would bring them together in the village itself. Finally, he stated that the Group aimed to support the community and invited residents to come forward with ideas that could benefit the village.

5.3 Slindon Horticultural Society

Parish Councillor Adamson reported that, with twenty-two years having passed since the society was formed, it now boasted 141 members. Encompassing Madehurst and Eartham, their AGM would be held on 22nd May. The Society met monthly and for a reasonable fee, members enjoyed talks and outings throughout the year. The Group was honoured to be able to have John Brookes, a truly expert gardener who owns Denmans' Gardens, as Patron. Thanking all the Committee Members for their help and support she invited residents to come along to the AGM and join the group, regardless of their horticultural capabilities!

5.4 Slindon Charities Trust

Presenting a copy of the Charity's Accounts for the year ending 23rd July 2016, Mr Philip Berry gave a brief outline of the foundation and history of the Trust. The Trust's funds which had diminished over the years, were recently replenished

through the organisation of an annual coffee morning event by the late Chairman Mr John Clark who had also bequeathed a generous gift in his will. On behalf of the Trust he thanked the Pudding Club for their work and valuable contribution to village life. The next annual coffee morning would be held on 6th May at Firgrove House in Mill Lane and he thanked Marie, Paul and Gareth for hosting the event.

5.5 Conservation Area Statement Review

Parish Councillor Brimblecombe presented an update on progress with updating the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) for the Conservation Area in the village. The update had been prepared by David Boyson, Historic Buildings Officer at the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) who was working with the Parish Council on this project. It was noted that good progress had been made and that the SDNPA viewed the working relationship with the Parish as very positive. The National Park were in the throes of preparing their own Local Plan however, they were trying to make completion of the CAAMP as high a priority as they could within those constraints. Once the wording had been agreed, the draft final document would go out to public consultation which would last six weeks. Once the consultation was concluded responses would be considered with a view to the Park adopting the updated CAAMP. Once in place, the CAAMP would form part of the SDNPA Development Management and be used to inform the wider activities of the National Park Authority and its partners.

5.6 Slindon Sports Association (SSA)

The Chairman of the Parish Council read out an update on their activities that had been provided by the Association. It was noted that for 2017, there will be three sporting organisations in attendance and playing matches at Slindon Common, the Slindon Ladies Stoolball team, the Slindon Cricket Club and the Barnham Trojans. For the 2017/18 football season, the facilities would be used by Barnham Trojans under 10's, training on Saturday mornings starting late summer and playing matches on Sunday mornings. As part of their agreement with SSA, the Trojans would maintain the playing surfaces, mark out new junior side playing areas, erect new, smaller goalposts, secure the "dug out" seating areas and make good any sections of the wooden fence that secured the playing area. The Cricket Club would continue to play their matches on Sunday afternoons. There were also plans for a summer cricket camp aimed at sub-teenage children in the summer holidays. The cricket square had recently been treated and should give a more even playing surface during the forthcoming season. Work would start with grass cutting over the next few weeks prior to the start of the season in April. In conclusion, residents who may be interested in these activities were invited to call in at the ground or contact the relevant club officers as listed in the Parish News.

5.7 The Venerable Philip Jones, Priest-In-Charge, St Mary's Church

Philip's first full year in the parish had been busy with the work on the spire and the weather vane at the Church completed. The bells had fallen silent having been removed and taken to the famous Whitechapel Foundry for retuning and fettling. It was hoped that they would be back by Easter and a ceremony, overseen by the Bishop of Horsham, was planned to celebrate their return. The Church planned to continue its programme of events based on the traditional calendar and using innovative ideas to make them fun and informative. In conclusion and stating that residents were assured of a warm welcome, he invited everyone to join the congregation which offered friendship and enjoyment.

5.8 Slindon Forge Society Ltd

Mr Imms reported that recent months had been challenging for The Forge. Before setting out plans for the future, he thanked customers, staff, volunteers and the management group who had worked tirelessly to maintain the enterprise in recent months. The Society was undergoing a restructuring of its business that would see

a tenant taking on the day to day running of the business from 27th March. He introduced Craig Ramus who had taken on a five-year tenancy and had experience running a similar operation successfully in Kirdford. There were plans to bring a chef on board and most importantly, the shop would start to replenish its stock. In this respect, he invited feedback from residents about what they would like to see on the shelves. There were plans to review opening hours, broaden the range of services and build on the popularity of the café. In conclusion, he thanked the community for its continued support. In response to questions from the floor, Mr Imms reaffirmed the importance of the volunteer force in terms of its connection to the community and as a valuable resource. It was noted that a date for the AGM would be confirmed once the year end accounts were available.

5.9 Arun District Council (ADC) and The National Park (SDNPA)

Mr Dingemans reported that both ADC and the SDNPA were in the process of developing Local Plans. For the Destruct Council, progress had been hampered by the ever-increasing need to secure a land supply sufficient to meet the needs of a growing population. Already several years in the making it was hoped that a final version would be agreed and adopted later this year. Notwithstanding the disruption caused by a power cut at 7.40pm, Mr Dingemans continued to update the meeting on SDNPA matters.

5.10 Regarding the National Park, they too were progressing a Local Plan, which also included provision for 4,600 houses spread throughout the Park. The ethos of the Park had been tested recently when proposals to dispose of land for development that was held in trust to protect the environment had been successfully defended.

5.11 Slindon History Society

Mr Philip Berry reported that the Society was now established with Mr Robin Upton as its President and Dr Andrew Foster as its Patron. Having recently moved to "the Western Suburbs" of the village, Mr Berry was very close to the West Sussex Records Office which would enable him to take advantage their facilities and allow the Society to participate in their project to digitalise records. The team of researchers that comprised the Society would continue to collect and update local records, arrange publications and talks in the village. Much of the Team's work was focused on bring up to date existing records with individual contributions and using the ever-improving internet to find out more. The next talk would be given by Mr Rodney Gunner on Slindon in The Great War on 6th April and he issued an open invitation to attend.

5.12 West Sussex County Council

Councillor Whittington reported that the 20 mph speed limit was now fully operational in most areas of the old village with signage denoting the restriction. The County Council also continued work to extend the Barnham to Slindon cycleway. Key issues for the County Council going forward would be school funding and pressing for the reinstatement of the Chichester By Pass Project by Highways England (HE). Lamenting the recent decision by HE to withdraw funding from this scheme and in the view of the number of studies which backed the need for improvements, the County Council would continue to press for more meaningful consultation on future proposals for regarding the A27 at both Chichester and Arundel. It was also noted that the Joint Downland Committee had had its last meeting and that parishes would in future be represented in the East and West Arun County forums.

5.13 A Church Hill resident stated that in his opinion, the 20mph speed limit was ineffective. Observing action taken by other villages in an effort to encourage more considerate driving, he asked if the parish could acquire a speed gun. In response, Councillor Whittington stated that Sussex Police operated a Speed Watch scheme which depended on trained volunteers from the community to carry out checks. The scheme relied heavily on evidence drawn from reporting and he emphasised

the importance of ensuring that enquiries of this nature were recorded to help build up a picture of the issues. He referred to Aldingbourne as a parish who had such a scheme in operation. At 8pm, the electrical supply was restored.

- 5.14** Regarding proposals for a by pass on the A27 at Arundel, Mrs Paula Tinker, a Mill Road resident stated that in her opinion residents who lived close to the boundary of the A27 already suffered pollution in many forms and had not been specifically consulted. She therefore called upon the Parish Council to hold a special meeting on improvements to the A27. In response, the Chairman of the Parish Council stated that the Council would consider its position when the relevant authority brought forward proposals. In the meantime, she reminded residents that there was always an opportunity for them to raise issues with Councillors during the public forum session at the beginning of Parish Council meetings.

5.15 Slindon Church of England Primary School

Mrs Jane Walters, Headteacher at the School gave an update on the activities at the School. There were currently 63 children on roll and numbers remained constant. The School had also recently been inspected by both the Diocese and OFSTED. The School continued to be vibrant, its pupils were thriving and they were actively engaged with village life. The School worked closely with residents and local groups to provide activities to enrich the curriculum and the children also participated in Diocese and National Trust projects. There was an active locality group involving the schools in neighbouring villages and pupils would be participating in a local school's sports event soon. It was noted that the annual open day would be held the following day (21st March) and an open invitation was made to residents. The School had recently undertaken maintenance work on its boilers and plans were being developed to introduce a new community room. In conclusion, Mrs Walters stated that she would be leaving the School at the end of the academic year. Speaking of her time at the School, she commended the incredible teaching team and pupils and wished them well in the future.

5.16 The Spur

Parish Councillor Thomas read out a statement in behalf of the Crawford Family who ran The Spur. Since taking over the business six years ago, the family had done much to develop the enterprise and it now offered a wide range of facilities. Building on their past associations and local knowledge, themed evenings, improved catering, quiz nights' skittles and BBQs now complimented the existing community feel that was the mainstay of the pub. Regulars and new comers alike were always welcome and the pub could now cater for larger groups, commercial events, and special family occasions. Changes were planned to expand and enhance the home cooked menu options and the monthly quiz, now firmly established as a local event, would continue to be held on the 4th Wednesday of the month. The family looked forward to welcoming existing and new customers in the forthcoming year.

5.17 National Trust

Mark Wardle, Head Warden, began with an update on the Barn Owl Project. The project had been very successful with a noted improvement in owl number especially at Courthill. With the help of volunteers, there had also been a significant increase in the snow drop show this year and coverage continued to expand. The Trust had also been pleased to work alongside the Parish Council to bring about improvements at the Pond. Work by the Estate on its properties continued and 16 Church Hill was almost finished. Work was also being carried out at 35 School Hill and the need for work at The Lodge was currently under review.

- 5.17** Bob Epsom, Estate Warden, updated the meeting on the progress with the Rise of Northwood Project. A lot had been achieved and the wood harvested from the Estate was being used to create a charcoal burn. Forestry works would continue and the Estate continued to work with volunteers and local schools on various

aspects of the Project. New leaflets were being produced to promote the work of the Trust and would be available in the Forge soon.

- 5.18** Katie Archer, Warden, reported progress with the implementation of new orientation boards around the Estate. A review of Trust led events had resulted in changes to the apple / Halloween seasonal activities and a public charcoal burn was planned to demonstrate how this was done. Half term and summer events were being planned and it was envisaged that there would be more use of The Folly as work should be finished there shortly. In response to a question about the future of the McQuoid House, it was noted that the National Trust Central Team were investigating this.

5.19 Community Land Trust

Mr Peter Fenton addressed the meeting in a personal capacity and spoke about the decline in affordable housing in the parish. Stating that the National Trust had released land for housing development that could accommodate a small affordable housing for rent scheme in the village, he sought support to help form a steering group to investigate this further by way of a Community Land Trust. A discussion ensued and the following points were noted:

- Various housing initiatives had been mooted over the years and this was a new idea that Mr Fenton was pursuing in a personal capacity.
- Although there was the potential for a scheme to cascade to neighbouring villages, it was initially envisaged that any scheme would be for Slindon residents only.
- It was thought the scheme could consist of four dwellings for rent with mixed residential use.
- The site identified was situated on Trust land below the Primary School in Reynolds Lane.

- 5.19** In terms of Parish Council involvement, the Chairman stated that the Council had not yet formally received or considered any proposals in this respect and it would therefore be inappropriate for it to comment on the matter at this stage. She clarified that the Parish Council did not have any direct responsibility for housing provision. She went on to say that more information would be required about the structure, composition and aims of the proposed Steering Group to enable any discussion to take place. It was understood that Mr Fenton's proposals were still at a very early stage and it was noted that the Parish Council would be prepared to consider the matter at a future meeting when the level of community interest was known.

- 5.21** There were calls for a public meeting, including representatives of the Community Land Trust who could explain what this would entail and help to identify residents interested in forming a Steering Group to investigate this further. It was also suggested that SlindonLife might be an appropriate vehicle to take this on. Observing that SlindonLife had a meeting scheduled for 22nd March, representatives from SlindonLife present at this meeting agreed to put the matter on their agenda for discussion. It was noted that feedback would be reported to the Parish Council at its next meeting on 10th April 2017.

- 6.** The Chairman brought the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for taking part.

**The meeting ended at 8.30pm
Councillor Mrs Ann Watts,
Chairman of the Parish Council**