

MINUTES OF THE SLINDON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**HELD ON MONDAY 18th MARCH 2019 AT 7PM IN THE CORONATION HALL**

**PRESENT:** Including Parish Councillors Niki Adamson, Chairman, Barbara Brimblecombe, Peter Fenton, Paul Wilkinson, Steve Chilver and Derek Thomas, there were a total of 60 present.

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the format for the evening.

Apologies were received from Adam Gill, The Forge, Derek Whittington, West Sussex County Councillor and Paul and Madelaine Crawley (Court Hill Farm).

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th MARCH 2018**

**2.1** The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. PARISH ACCOUNTS 2017/18**

**3.1** The Clerk presented a copy of the summary of the Parish Council's Accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. 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** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and set out some of the key actions that had concerned the Parish Council over the last year. The Parish Traffic Management Scheme was an ongoing project which had generated some minor improvements to the pedestrian crossing on the A29 at the crossroads with the Reynolds Lane and Mill Road. The work had been disappointing as the objective was to secure more effective speed reduction measures here. That said, a traffic survey had been conducted at the end of January, the results of which would inform future work. The Council remained alert to developments and would continue to press for more improvements here. In a similar vein, the A27 Arundel Bypass had figured largely and whilst the preferred option (5A) was not as the Council had wished, Members were engaged with Highways England (HE) as they sought to progress their scheme. As things stood, the western section of the scheme would end at a point somewhere between Shellbridge and Mill Roads and the Council was represented in their Elected Representatives Forum created by HE as a sounding board for their plans. A further consultation was planned for the summer.

**4.2** Turning to more practical matters, the Council had undertaken a significant amount of tree work at the Recreation Ground and the Pond. She thanked Beechdown Arboricultural and the National Trust for their help and support with projects in these areas. Going forward, the Council was also now looking at maintenance work at the Memorial Garden and plans to improve the area around the Pond. Signage at the Top Playing Field had been installed to remind dog walkers of the priorities and the climbing frame would soon be replaced. The memorial bench remembering the Late John Moor has also been installed here at a spot which gave out on to one of the best views of the Parish – a fitting memorial.

**4.3** Last November had seen the nationwide commemoration of the centenary of the end of World War One. The village "Tommy" had stood by the flagpole and in the Memorial Garden in the run up to and during Armistice and would be used again in subsequent years.

**4.4** With her Neighbourhood Watch hat on she recalled the unfortunate increase in car break ins over the summer months in particular. Cold callers were also reportedly preying on the vulnerable and she warned residents to be alert and cautious, not

to leave personal belongings where they can be seen and to report suspicious activity. She invited residents to take a warning notice which were available during the meeting.

**4.5** Looking forward to the coming year, the National Park would be celebrating its 9<sup>th</sup> year and this should see the adoption of their Local Plan. A significant milestone for them and for the parishes within the Park as planning applications are a constant feature on their agendas. Reminding residents of the Parish Council's role, she encouraged them to come to meetings to express their views so that Councillors could take them into account when considering their stance.

**4.6** The past year had seen some significant changes in the membership of the Council and the loss of former councillors, Ann Watts, Robert Parfey and Lee Spencer-Smith had reduced numbers. She was sad to report that the current Clerk would be standing down soon and thanked her for support over the last seven years. The Council remained committed to the village and would always be looking at practical ways to help maintain the special character of the village that residents valued. There were local elections on the horizon, and she was pleased to report that the majority of the current Parish Councillors would be standing again. In conclusion, she expressed her thanks to everyone for attending and invited residents to raise questions over refreshments later and during the public forum at the Council's regular monthly meetings.

## **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 Slindon College**

Mr Birkbeck introduced himself as the new Head Master at the College. He was himself an Eartham resident and was a Governor at the Primary School with whom the College also worked closely. Speaking about the ethos and vision for the College, he reminded everyone of the very special nature of the education provided by the College for boys with unique qualities. The pupils came from a broad range of backgrounds and in developing their offer, the College aimed to re-establish links with the village. Referring to the prospectus, he explained that through perseverance, the College offered a varied curriculum which aimed to develop pupils and prepare them for adulthood. Having recently refurbished and updated the ICT suite and key project for the forthcoming year was to gather sponsorship for a new library.

### **5.2 St Mary's Church**

The Venerable Philip Jones began by complementing Mr Birkbeck on how much more a part of the village the College was becoming. The focus for St Mary's over the last year had been significant restoration work and he thanked residents for their interest in, and generous support for the many changes that had taken place. The inside of the Church had been transformed into a much more flexible and welcoming space, home to many more activities. Attention was now turning to the graveyard which was always in need of regular maintenance, despite the efforts volunteers who he thanked. He invited those with a keen interest in lawn mowing to put their skills to the test and help with this work! St Mary's had very close ties with the local primary school and he reported the success of the recently introduced "Messy" Church in bringing together the parents and carers of pupils at the school. This year's Lent Appeal was in support of The Stone Pillow homeless charity whose focus was in helping those who find themselves in this situation.

### **5.3 St Mary's Summer Exhibition**

Mrs Dutton spoke of the broad range of creative and artistic individuals in the village and announced a weekend planned to showcase their work. On 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June, artwork would be displayed in an exhibition, the proceeds of which would be donated to St Marys.

#### **5.4 Slindon Life**

SlindonLife continued to focus on supporting the community through the round robin service, the village website; slindon.com, monitoring the village events diary, and organising activities. Early 2018 saw the Group helping to coordinate submissions to WSCC Highways about the proposed School Safety Zone. Although the plans had been shelved for the time being, child safety was such an important issue, a collaborative initiative had been formed with the school, the parish council and WSCC Highways to find practical ways of maximising child safety without imposing unnecessary restrictions on the rest of the village. Slindonlife was instrumental in co-ordinating the series of events around the Centenary of the end World War 1. This was a true cross-village collaboration including displaying the Primary School WW1 project, an exhibition by the History Group, the Earham Beacon lighting, and various activities at St Mary's plus a specially written commemorative drama with readings and music in St Richards. Flix in the Sticks was more popular than ever, and the Group would continue to work with the National Trust, the College and the Forge on events and activities throughout the year including the planned improvements at the village Pond, designs for which were on display. Lastly, Mr Imms thanked the SlindonLife Committee for their support and help. The Group was very rewarding, and volunteers were always welcome.

#### **5.5 The Community Bus**

Mr Slee reported that following the withdrawal of a nearby commercial bus route serving Amberley and Storrington, the community bus had plans for a new route extending to Storrington. This would involve changes to the current timetable and would be trialled for four months to decide if it would become a permanent feature.

#### **5.6 The Slindon Trust**

The meeting received a copy of the Charity's Accounts for the year ending 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018. Once again, the Trustees thanked the Forge for helping to provide Christmas hampers and those who attended the annual coffee morning which provided much needed additional funds to bolster the legacy that the Trust had received the previous year. The next annual coffee morning would be held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May at Firgrove House and the Trustees thanked the owners for once again agreeing to host the event.

#### **5.7 Slindon Church of England Primary School**

Miss Cooper was pleased to report that the schools was making good progress and once again becoming a feature of village life. A project by pupils had recently been featured in the local press and pupils had been very pleased to join residents in the recent Spring Litter Pick. She urged residents to follow activities on the School website. Finally, she thanked residents for their warm welcome and stated that her aim over the next year was to see the School continue to improve and grow as an active participant in village life.

#### **5.8 Arun District Council (ADC) and The National Park (SDNPA)**

Councillor Dingemans reported that having finally adopted a Local Plan, the work of the District Council was much focussed in meeting the demand for new housing in Arun. The new swimming pool and leisure centre in Littlehampton would be opening shortly, and local elections would be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**5.9** The SDNPA hoped to have an adopted Local Plan in place by July. The Plan was viewed as ground breaking as it was very much focused on the unique landscape

and environment of the South Downs. The Partnership Management Plan was under review and grant funding for affordable housing schemes was being made available. Gateway signage highlighting key points of access to the National Park were being installed including one on the A29 at the junction with the A27.

#### **5.10 The Slindon Community Land Trust (SCLT)**

Mr Peter Fenton addressed the meeting in a personal capacity as Chairman of the SCLT Steering Group and gave an update on progress with the CLT. Since first reporting plans to create an affordable housing scheme, a steering committee had been formed and whilst progress appeared slow, putting together a scheme that would work for the village was coming together. Exploring options and work to formalise the CLT had proved both complex and time consuming. The Steering Group was engaged in meetings with other stakeholders to secure land and funding. A site had been found and the Steering Group was working with the National Trust to form acceptable plans. It was noted that some of the funding windows were extremely tight but that the Steering Group would press on with work with the aim of bringing forward a viable scheme.

#### **5.11 The Forge Shop**

Mr Immes read out a progress report on behalf of the team at the Forge. The shop had had a phenomenal second year and managed to increase shop and cafe sales on the previous year. The range of goods on sale had expanded and fruit and veg regularly delivered to maintain freshness and to meet the demands of the growing customer base. A trend was developing with the café becoming more of a hub for local groups. Regular Monday meetings with the PTA ladies for example have led to the shop being able to support group activities. The café was entered in The Sussex Life Best Cafe/Tea Room and were selected to the final three. The head of the WI came to visit and commented on the warm friendly feeling in the Forge, the balance and charm of the interior. They will be entering again this year, but in the High Street Hero section which was tailored more towards the shop side of the forge, so they would appreciate any votes! The coming year would see work on the outside eating area behind the Forge where the small memorial garden was situated. The garden around the side of the building would also be neatened up with some new railway sleepers being laid to make a path. They were also hoping to create a flat area in the front garden for wheelchair use. A final reminder that they were there for the village and welcomed ideas and feedback was issued as well as a chat.

#### **5.12 Coronation Hall Committee**

Mr Immes addressed the meeting in his capacity as the co-opted Interim Chairman of Coronation Hall Trust. This followed a call for help and support last November because despite the very considerable commitment and work of the existing group of Trustees, more help was required to address the many tasks involved in running the Hall. A gratifying number of villagers had responded and were forming plans to ensure the Hall continued to play its important role in village life. A proper report on progress would be given at their AGM on 23rd April. He went on to acknowledge and thank the former Chairman of the Coronation Hall Trust and his Committee of Trustees for all they had done to maintain and preserve the Hall. Both the building and its finances were in a very good state which most certainly would not have been the case without their dedication and commitment over many years. It was hoped that the Hall could take a more pro-active approach in co-ordinating the range of village activities organised by the many different village groups. He added that with this in mind many of the speakers present could expect a call! He invited volunteers to come forward who wanted to help to move the Coronation Hall forward. Turning to the AGM he stated that this would be an important meeting with news of new Trustees (and old) and the start of a new programme of events. In conclusion he reminded residents of upcoming events;

- Poison Beds – a play based around the real-life story of the Oyster Bed poisoning in Emsworth in 1902 - Saturday 8 June.
- A play with music called Shakspeare's Lost Women - Friday 3 May
- Slindon Cinema – Joe Cormick from Pond Cottage had installed his 35 mm projectors in the projection room and would be hosting film nights.

#### **5.13 The National Trust**

The previous year had seen many staff changes at both the regional Office as well as locally. The forth coming year would see the continuation of the Trust's program of refurbishment to its properties. Regarding the CLT, it was reported that the Trust was helping the Steering Group to understand and navigate the complex legislation that underpinned the scheme as well as providing land. She thanked the Steering Group for their enduring patience as the Trust worked its way through this. She reported that the Trust was also working with Walberton Parish Council on plans to develop the land known as Fontwell Field. It was noted that the rules of the Trust were such that funds realised from the development of their land had to be reinvested in the same area. Draft designs had been published on the Walberton PC website. Locally there had been several changes to the Team. It had been an exciting year with many volunteer activities, mob hedging, pond maintenance and meadow days to name a few. They had all combined to raise the profile of the Trust's work, the popularity of the village and improve the Estate. Several projects were underway most notably linked to the restoration of Downes Barn. The Rise of Northwood Project would be coming to end this autumn and a series of guided walks was planned to mark this. Finally, it was noted that the Trust would be installing height barriers at the entrance to Park Lane car park.

#### **5.14 Slindon Afternoon Group**

Jan Diamond reported that the Group was still going strong and continued to meet on the second Tuesday of the month. Although small, the Group still managed to attract speakers and provided a forum for village reminiscences. All were welcome.

6. The Chairman brought the meeting to a close and thanking the speakers for their contributions, she invited everyone to join Councillors for refreshments.

**The meeting ended at 8.15pm  
Councillor Ms Niki Adamson,  
Chairman of the Parish Council**