

Minutes of Chailey Annual Parish Meeting

Held on 12th May 2017 at Chailey Parish Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Present (in no particular order):

Cllr. Mark Evans: Chairman of Chailey PC and Chairman of the meeting.
Mrs. Kate Evans.
Cllr. Peter Olbrich: Vice-Chairman of Chailey PC.
Cllrs. Pascal Atkins, Stephen Avery, Nick Belcher, Ken Jordan, Mike Lethem and John Millam, all of Chailey PC.
Mrs. Wendy Jordan.
Cllr. Jim Sheppard: ESCC County Councillor
Cllr. Sharon Davy: District Councillor.
Stephen Treharne: Clerk to Chailey PC.
Jack Cranfield: Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
Don Cranfield: Member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
John Smith: Friends of Chailey Windmill.
Margaret Smith: Chailey Evening Women's Institute
Jeremy Stone: Chailey Sports Club and Chailey and Newick Colts FC.
William Coleman: Chailey Commons Society

1. Welcome.

Cllr Evans welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Linda Ball, Mike Berry, Nigel Dean, David Dembury, Jo Heading and Cllr. Philip O'Connor.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6th May 2016.

The minutes of the 2016 Annual Parish meeting were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Annual Report from the Chairman of Chailey Parish Council

Cllr. Evans presented his report of the past year.

Cllr. Evans first thanked Parish Councillors for the work and support they have given to Chailey beyond strict attendance at meetings. He also thanked Cllr. Sheppard, County Councillor, for his advice at Full Council meetings and at meetings with Highways, and who had helped to ensure the County continues to support the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Cllr. Evans also thanked Cllr. Davy, District Councillor, for the work that she has done.

Cllr. Evans said that residents will have noted that, during the year and over the heads of protest from our District Councillor and the Parish Council, the Boundary Commission had forced Chailey into an electoral marriage with Barcombe and Hamsey, divorcing our long-standing link with Wivelsfield.

Cllr. Evans especially thanked those residents who volunteer to serve Chailey in so many different ways which go to make a vibrant life. Any list would be invidious but to name a few: the Church, the Bonfire Society, the Guides, the Commons Society, the Friends of the Windmill, the Horticultural Society, the Painting Group, the Allotments Association and the Sports Club. All these societies depend on the dynamism of members. Cllr. Evans said that he had been sad to note that the Chailey

Youth Group became moribund during the year, but he was delighted to mention the Chailey Litter-Pickers who have returned the Parish's lanes and highways to their natural condition. He was confident that our Neighbourhood Plan, when residents read the draft in the autumn of 2017, will show the many ways in which residents contribute to, and help each other to build, Chailey as a society.

Cllr. Evans reminded the meeting that the Parish Council is accountable for the Local Tax raised from the residents of Chailey – during the year under review £51,000. The greatest part of that sum is already committed. In effect, it keeps the wheels turning, for example by paying to insure Parish assets. He informed the meeting that the Council's insurers, at no extra cost, took under their wing the Chailey Litter-Pickers. Further examples of expenditure were the mowing of the Sports Ground and our various green spaces, the maintenance of our various buildings including the Windmill, bus shelters and the allotments and administration, keeping the Council legal and ensuring these commitments are made to best advantage. The lesser part of our Precept enables Councillors to identify and fund projects which they believe will benefit the village and our society, and residents may not have noticed the Red Oak planted on Cllr. Avery's initiative to mark the Queen's Ninetieth Birthday. Each year the Council makes Small Grants to Chailey societies and groupings for their own projects and administration, but Councillors also spend money on larger projects, which may be dependent on outside contributions. Over the last 18 months the Council has been working with the Sports Club on a project to refurbish our decrepit Sports Pavilion; in the end, and despite the Football Association dangling bait, this project will be funded from the Council's reserves, from private generosity and from funds raised by the Club.

Cllr. Evans said that he had every hope that the draft of the Neighbourhood Plan will meet its completion schedule with a referendum during the late winter. He wished he could be as sanguine about the long-running project to construct a footpath along Warrs Hill for the convenience of residents of New Heritage. This project is funded from a developer contribution, long since paid into to ESCC but leaving it subject to staffing and co-ordination problems within that Council.

For the coming year two projects are being planned: the installation of 3 or 4 defibrillators at key and identifiable spots in our village and the installation of litter-bins with, possibly, an increase in dog-bins. The problem with this project is not purchase of the bin but purchase of the long-term service to empty them.

Cllr. Evans concluded by thanking the Clerk who has brought a new and refreshing standard to the Clerk's job. He was certain that Chailey now has the best Clerk in Sussex and his care and attention to the Council's finances and administration is exemplary.

5. Reports from organisations who work in and/or on behalf of Chailey and its residents.

Cllr. Davy reported on District matters with which she had been involved, including the retention of weekly refuse collections, the maintenance of funding for bus service 31 and the St Peter's School crossing officer. She impressed upon those present the need to use the local bus services so that they can be retained in the longer term. She also referred to the pressure to which Lewes District Council is being subjected on planning and housing and the community infrastructure levy which would benefit parishes such as Chailey. She thanked everyone who serves on the Parish Council and as volunteers around the parish.

Cllr Sheppard referred to the budgetary pressures at East Sussex County Council and the fact that 75% of the budget is spent on adult social care and children's services. Difficult decisions had to be made. Despite this material sums had been spent on roads, including pothole filling. He mentioned that no waste in East Sussex now goes to landfill. Going forward it would be necessary to use available resources to support those most in need. He participated in a discussion about the speed of traffic in South Street, South Chailey and outside St Peter's school where residents thought that 40 mph is too high a speed limit.

Mr. Stone introduced himself as the new Chairman of Chailey Sports Club. The Colts Football Club is thriving; there will be nine teams next season. He thanked those parents who give their time to help run the club. Finally he thanked the Parish Council for the work it is doing on the refurbishment project and for the funding it is providing.

Mr. Smith reminded those present that the Parish Council owns and has financial responsibility for the Windmill. Whilst the Friends of the Windmill look after the Windmill on a day-to-day basis, there are always repairs to be carried out and Mr. Smith thanked the Council for its support in getting these carried out. The Windmill is open on a regular basis and 2016 has seen a good number of visitors.

Mr. Coleman brought the meeting up to date with developments on the Commons. They are an integral part of Chailey, add significantly to people's enjoyment of the area and are being used more. Chailey Commons Society has a good working relationship with Jo Heading, the ESCC Ranger. Heathland restoration is under way with the aim of creating a good habitat for everything that uses the Commons. The plan is to have a mosaic of different areas and habitats. Mr. Coleman explained that the grazing project is now well under way with the various animals grazing the Commons in different way. The year 2017 would see less grazing as it was judged that a period of less intensive grazing would be beneficial. Chailey Commons Society is still working hard in the background and has a programme of activities. Its membership is steady at around 300.

6. The Chailey Neighbourhood Plan ("NHP")

Mr. Jack Cranfield talked about what had been achieved in the past year. A consultant had been engaged to help with formulating the plan and advice and support had been received from Lewes DC. Local businesses had been asked put forward their ideas. A leaflet had been created setting out the objectives. Task groups for the key areas had been formed and very useful public meetings had been held with good feedback being received. The Steering Group is now engaged in revising the objectives and drafting policies. It was hoped that a first draft of the plan would be available in late 2017.

7. Questions and comments.

A discussion took place about the continuing fouling by dogs on the Commons and the repairing of potholes.

Cllr. Olbrich spoke on behalf of Councillors and the village to thank Cllr. Evans for acting as Chairman of the Parish Council over the past year. He advised the meeting that Cllr. Evans was standing down as Chairman and thanked him for all that he had done.

Cllr. Evans thanked Cllr. Olbrich for his comments and those present for attending. He brought the meeting to a close.