

Worth Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
April 8th 2019 commencing at 19.30hrs

Present:

Cllr Anscomb (Chairman)
Mrs T Cruickshank (Admin) 20 members of the public

1 To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting on 9th April 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th April 2018 were signed as a correct record.

2 Chairman's Report

The past year

This has once again been a busy year for the council.

Neighbourhood Planning is still an ongoing issue for us. Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan is currently being reviewed, and Copthorne is still in the process of being made. We debated at length as to whether to combine our two plans into one Worth Parish Neighbourhood Plan, but it was felt preferable to keep them separate for the time being.

However, we did decide to have a Joint Neighbourhood plan Committee to oversee the work of the two Sub Committees. This Committee has the power to spend money, so hopefully will get things moving quicker for both plans.

Crawley Down is reviewing its Plan and issued a survey in December to all households in the village to check local housing need, and also to consult on a matter of other issues. That survey has now been processed, and the Sub Committee is using those results to devise an action plan for the review.

Work on Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan has been very slow. Several residents came off the Sub Committee and despite its best efforts, it has struggled to find replacements. This means that a lot of pressure has been put on the remaining members to process the work.

In order to try to progress the Plan, the Council applied for assistance through Locality, a government organisation. AECOM (pronounced A Com) is working on a heritage survey and looking at assessing sites put forward in the Parish Call for Sites.

Copthorne will also be issuing a survey similar to that of Crawley Down in the next week or so.

In addition, the council decided to employ someone to deal with the general admin work associated with producing and reviewing our Neighbourhood Plans. Tracy Cruickshank started work in December and has already proved to be a valuable member of the staffing team.

We had been looking at updating the council website for some months, and our new site finally went live in September. Regulations require councils to publish certain information such as core documents, agendas and minutes, but we wanted to make the site feel welcoming to all our on-line visitors. I think the new site is very attractive and easy to navigate, and we have received several compliments from people living outside the area on its bright attractive layout.

We were particularly pleased to be able to buy the car park behind the Royal Oak pub in Crawley Down, when previously we had just occupied the land under licence. The Council now owns both car parks in Crawley Down and will be investigating how best to manage these for the benefit of local residents. We may consider putting in parking restrictions so as to discourage overnight parking and possibly limited waiting so that vehicles are not parking there for long periods. However, we will be consulting with residents on all the options before making any decision.

The council owns land all over both villages, ownership of some areas dates back to fifty years, prior to registration with the Land Registry being mandatory. It has decided to regularise all such land holdings by registering them and starting with the allotment site.

We are aware of ongoing security issues with the allotment site. There have been several incidents of sheds being broken into, and tools stolen as well as damage to polytunnels etc. The Council reluctantly decided to stop up access to the site, making these only available to allotment tenants, to try to discourage such mindless behaviour. We know that residents had got used to cutting through the field, but it's not a public right of way and it as felt that we had to do something to protect our allotment tenants.

Still on the matter of security, we have been building up a pot of money to install CCTV cameras in both villages. We now have enough to proceed in Crawley Down, and are currently seeking supplier options to put to the council. Copthorne will follow shortly after.

The Localism Act introduced the concept of Assets of Community Value, whereby buildings or land considered to have significant community value are registered. When such buildings come up for sale, the community has first option to buy them. There are three registered ACV's in Worth- The Royal Oak Pub in Crawley Down, The Prince Albert in Copthorne, and the Burstow Garden Allotments just over the Copthorne border. ACV registration runs for five years, and all three listings are due to expire in September 2019. The clerk has applied for all three to be re-registered to ensure continuity.

Thanks for Support

I would like to thank our office staff for their hard work over the last year. Our Clerk Jennifer Nagy who continues to work hard ensuring that we are up to date with all legislative requirements, supported by the Assistant Clerk Sophia Vaughan.

In addition, our finance officer (Ellen Smith) manages all the Councils Finance matters and continues to do excellent work on producing all the necessary reports.

I have already mentioned the efforts of our newest member of staff, Tracy Cruickshank, who is helping with our two neighbourhood plans.

Our two groundsmen – John in Crawley Down and Shane in Copthorne – continue to do sterling work keeping all our land and play areas in excellent condition, whilst ensuring that both villages are kept clean and tidy.

The coming year

Our precept for the coming year is £275,000 an increase of just under 10%. We made the decision to take monies out of our reserves to support our budget, thus avoiding a higher increase. We are building up our earmarked reserves, that is pots of money for various projects such as CCTV, refurbishment of our play area and of course our ongoing work on both Neighbourhood Plans.

Out of the 24 towns and parishes in Mid Sussex, if no 1 is the most expensive Band D bill, Worth ranks at no 17, which is not bad for the largest parish in the area.

There is a quantity of 'Section 106 money' that the council are working with the clerk to see where this can be spent to best benefit the to villages. This money is allocated to defined areas and we welcome any suggestions as to how we can best use it.

We would also welcome suggestions for new projects we can work on for the benefit of both our villages.

We continue to engage with St Modwen's, the developer for the new estate of 500 homes to

the West of Copthorne, trying to ensure that building work is as least disruptive as possible to existing residents. We look forward to welcoming those new residents into our growing community.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for all their hard work and their support not only during the past year, but also during the four-year term of the Council. Local elections will take place on 2nd May, but not for Worth Parish, as each ward has exactly the right number of nominations for seats available. There will be some new faces, which we welcome. Whilst it is disappointing that we are not having a contested Election, I feel somewhat reassured that residents are happy enough with the way the local affairs have been managed over the past few years so as not to feel the need to try to change it.

3 Presentations from Groups and Organisations which have received a grant from Worth Parish Council in 2018/2019

Copthorne Community Speed Watch- £400

Paul Eatan, community volunteer thanked the Council for the grant which has enabled the purchase of a hand held radar and three high visibility jackets.

He explained how the handheld radar, which looks similar to a mobile phone had caused some confusion. When the police had been contacted by a member of the public concerned that the volunteers were photographing cars. Mr Eatan had to assure the police that it was not a mobile phone but rather the new hand held radar speed detector!

Mr Eatan said that already 205 vehicles had been reported for speeding in Copthorne this year and shockingly the highest speed recorded was 49MPH on Shipley Bridge lane.

The Copthorne Community Speed watch currently have 7/10 regular volunteers and are continuously working with the police to add more monitoring areas. Their aim is to have Copthorne widely known as a Speed watch Area. Their ethos is, if we can get the first car to slow down the rest will follow.

Crawley Down Residents Association- £500

Andrew Metcalfe spoke on behalf of the CDRA. He explained that they had only very recently applied for and received the grant, so it's early days.

The grant is needed for modernisation of the CDRA, they have purchased a portable card reader which will help boost income for the Association. They have also recently set up an Online Membership system which has been a resounding success.

They would like to use some of the grant money to further improve the CDRA website and purchase ground cable protectors for use at Village Fayres and events.

He acknowledged that the CDRA has gone through a tough patch which lead to Village events such as the Annual Summer Fayre being under threat. However, they reached out to the community and have now gained more volunteers.

Andrew thanked the council for the Grant of £500 saying he hoped the CDRA will now go from strength to strength.

Copthorne Village Hall - £500

Adele Ruddock said that she had been Chair of the Village Hall Committee for many years. She said the renovation of the CVH was a big project, starting with the stage area, which was constructed pre 1977 and has had many 'bolts on's' over the years. Once the project started, they realised there was much more to do than previously thought, and commercial builders were employed and got to work completing the job of the removing the dangerous fixtures and fittings in just three weeks.

Next a risk assessment was taken and it was found the curtains tracks and lighting would need to be completely removed and replaced. Mrs Ruddock explained that once the huge amount of metal work was removed from the ceiling they wondered how the wooden roof had been able to support it!

New curtain tracks are now needed to make the stage area usable for performances. This is costly as three are needed, at a cost of £700 to £800 each plus the curtains themselves, but Mrs Ruddock said that the CVH want to do things the right way ensuring use of the Village Hall for future generations.

The roof is now ready and prepared for the installation of the new lightweight carbon fibre light bars.

Mrs Ruddock thanked the Council for the grant money, acknowledging the renovations to the Village hall are extensive but she expressed that every small amount counts.

4Sight Vision - £320

Jessica Benson gave her apologies for not being able to attend. She said they were very grateful for the generous donations of £320 which they received in February. They will keep us updated over the coming six months to show the vital difference the grant money will make towards the project.

Copthorne WW1 - £500

Unable to attend

Crawley Down Camera Club - £500

Unable to attend

Copthorne Consort - £500

Ms P Glynn, membership Secretary gave her apologies for being unable to attend. She thanked the council for the grant of £500 saying they were able to buy sheet music and carol books. The choir were able to perform at five charity events with the music bought and were able to raise over £3000 for charity.

Copthorne Silver Band- £500

Gwyn Cheesmur Chairman sent his apologies for being unable to attend along with the following information.

As explained in our letter of application Copthorne Silver Band started last year in quite a bad situation, low in funds, reducing membership and with very low morale. Fortunately, the Band committee recognised the downward spiral before the situation became irredeemable and with the change in Musical Director in February last year the destiny of the band changed.

The appointment of a new professional Musical Director whilst immediately resolving our difficulties in player retention and morale created a new financial challenge.

With strict budgeting and the members contributing a three-fold increase in their subscriptions we were able to cover our running costs and the Musical Directors fees. There remained however no spare funds for equipment replacement and it was for this reason that we sought a grant towards much needed capital purchases.

The Parish Council's grant has enabled us to purchase 10 rehearsal music stands to replace very old broken stands plus a new Conductor's stand and a portable amplifier that will add greatly to the quality of our presentation at concerts and events during the coming year.

The total cost of these items was £481.73. The remaining £18 of the grant money has been designated as the start of our fund towards the band uniform jackets which were also included in our grant application letter. Unfortunately, the company which supplied the Band Jackets

almost 30 years ago no longer exists and matching materials has become a problem together with prices being quoted at £250.00 per jacket.

We are pleased to say that the Copthorne Silver Band has flourished in the past year with increased membership, increased demand for engagements and providing a more entertaining style of presentation. Additionally, the Band has raised, by bucket collections, funds for local charities including Homelessness, Cancer and Children's charities. We are particularly pleased with our programme of encouraging young brass players both by playing in schools and welcoming them at our practice evenings.

The generous grant from the Parish Council has assisted in enabling us to do this but possibly more importantly it has exhibited to the Band members (some of whom travel as much as 60 miles to weekly rehearsals and engagements) the local communities backing for music generally but also for this organisation which hopes to continue through its music as an ambassador for Copthorne throughout Sussex and neighbouring counties.

4 Public questions

The Chairman asked if any member of the public present had any questions.

Mr Mike Livesey Congratulated the Council on receiving the nominations for a full council.

He also asked if there was an update on the installation of CCTV in the Villages, particularly if any specific areas had yet to be chosen.

He wanted to bring to the attention of the council the possible development of Clayhall Lane in Tandridge.

The Chairman said she would pass his comments to the Clerk.

Mr Burberry also wanted to see if the council was aware of the Clayhall lane site and asked if an impact assessment was required.

Again, the Chairman said she would pass his comments to the Clerk.

Meeting closed at 19.57 hrs

Chairman: _____

Date: _____