

PARISH OF COCKING

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS

HELD ON 19 MARCH 2018 AT 7PM

AT THE VILLAGE HALL, BELL LANE, COCKING

PRESENT

Parish Councillors Imlach (Chairman in the Chair), Burgess, Craig and Miss Russell.
24 residents

IN ATTENDANCE

G Burt, Clerk to the Council

1. Presentation from PCSO Richard Moorey, from Chichester District Neighbourhood Policing Team on Scams and Rogue Traders.

PCSO Moorey gave an excellent overview of some of the current scams including courier fraud, computer fraud and investment fraud. Plus, door to door rouge traders, how to get rid of them and the input of trading standards. Unfortunately, many of the victims were often the lonely, elderly and vulnerable, and he gave tips on how to spot victims who might not otherwise come forward. At the end Richard gave out books about SCAMS along with door stickers which will put off any cold caller who comes knocking.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 25 April 2017, previously circulated were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Report from the Parish Council

The Chairman, Cllr Imlach presented the following report:

We have had a busy year dealing with many items relating to village life. Again this year we are indebted to our Parish Clerk Greg Burt who brings to the Council a wealth of knowledge relating to statutory requirements as he is a full time Clerk elsewhere and many thanks to him. Thanks go to another person who is not a villager but a District Councillor, Caroline Neville who attends most of our monthly meetings and nudges The Hyde Group to get things under way at the Croft and we hope the cottages on the right side as you enter The Croft will have their heating systems upgraded thanks to her.

During the last year we received the new housing rebate and put the money to extend the car park at the Village Hall to allow a better turning circle at the top of the entrance and allow turning room for emergency vehicles and people carriers. Also, money from this source is being put to purchase new planters for the hall patio replacing those that were vandalised. A litter bin is currently on order to go next to The Croft bus shelter. Instructions have been given to BT to remove the old telephone box that has become rather unsightly.

Current concerns are:-

- a) The state of Bell Lane which was to have pot holes eliminated by Balfour Beatty the other week but are still there. Also it is time WSCC looked at the general state of the road i.e. lack of kerbing and drainage.*

- b) *After a meeting with residents and a highway engineer -WSCC are doing a survey to see how traffic speed can be reduced leaving and entering the village at the Midhurst end.*
- c) *Application has been made to the authorities to move the bus stop at the Midhurst end of the village.*
- d) *We are becoming more involved this year in plotting the cycle path that links us with the Centurion Way and eventually ends up at Midhurst.*
- e) *Broadband is again a concern as it seems some homes are linked with fibre giving a much faster speed where others cannot get clear account of when they can be linked.*
- f) *Chasing WSCC when they can clear the footpath from The Croft bus shelter up to the Heyshot turn.*

That's just a few of the items currently in the system.

We are very lucky to have an almost full house of Councillors and it is a shame this year has ended with one short. Not only does the Council sits eleven times a year but there are at least fifteen other meetings such Pendean Gravel Committee—Pathwatch—and various CDC or WSCC forums which we try and attend. Compared to some villages we certainly are very active and have the luxury of having a Parish Clerk.

Finally two last thanks go to firstly Gill Buchanan who this year gave up her role as Chairperson of the Village Hall Management Committee. She was a Councillor at the time the project of building a new hall started and was an original member of the VHC. Thanks Gill and she has promised to continue to design our village events posters.

Welcome on board Peter Craig as new Chairman.

The other thanks go to a couple who serve our village so well and go out of their way to help people even get special items and take to their home. The two referred to are Paul and Linda. Many villages are envious that we still have a shop and Post Office but also such great persons.

4. Parish Council Accounts

The Clerk, G Burt, presented the following report:

Copies of the Annual Return for 2016-17 have been circulated. Whilst not very informative, these are the way the law states that local councils must set out their end-of-year financial information. However, to assist, I have on the reverse side shown the breakdown of these global figures. As you can see, the opening and closing balances are the same!

The reason the closing balance was quite high, was because the Council was holding grants to meet the cost of the Village Hall extension, now spent.

Whilst the precept increased in 15-16, there was no increase in the year 16-17 or in the year about to start.

The Council has a very small grants budget, so if a local group requires some help, please get in touch.

5. Village Hall Report

Cllr Craig, Chairman & Treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee (CVHMC) reported:

i. Accounts.

I attach a copy of the accounts for 2017. These have been reviewed by an independent examiner with no untoward findings.

Looking at the year as a whole, the total income was £12,791.98. This includes grants paid directly to CVH for the building of the extension. These were a grant of £2,000 from Chichester District Council and a grant from Igas Special Project Fund of £2,575. Expenditure for the year almost exactly balanced income at £12,071.76. A large part of the expenditure, some £4,215, was funding to the Parish Council which acted as bank and finance manager during the building of the extension. This enabled the CVH to maximise VAT recovery and reduce the overall build cost.

We started the year with a cash balance of £10,380.96 and ended the year with a cash balance of £11,101.18.

ii. Activities.

Overall activity levels were increased in 2017. In total there were 257 separate bookings for various activities in the Hall. Whilst there has been a decline in the number of childrens' parties, there has been an increase in camping activities in the Recreational Field and new groups of regular users. This is set to increase again in 2018 with the resumption of twice weekly yoga classes.

iii. Building repairs and additions.

The extension to the Hall was completed in 2017, which has allowed the chairs to be stored out of sight, which is an 7improvement. We have also installed a CCTV system 24 hours a day. This was in response to a spate of petty vandalism, which has now abated. Plans are in hand to decorate the Hall in 2018 and to install new electric radiators.

iv. The Committee.

Gill Buchanan resigned as Chair at the end of the year, to be replaced by Peter Craig in 2018. At the end of the year there were 8 committee members as required by the constitution

6. Questions from Electors

In response to questions, the Chairman reported that an informal service had been started in response to the need to assist some residents get to hospital appointments etc. A resident said he had offered his services but had not heard anything – Chairman to follow up.

The Chairman and Clerk gave an update on the ongoing campaign to try to slow traffic to the north of the village, which many residents supported. The Clerk advised that since the last Council meeting he had discussed the matter further with WSCC who appeared to rule out many of the measures suggested by the community; however the reduction from 60 to 50 or 40mph seemed to be the suggestion that might win the most favour at WSCC so the Clerk would submit an application accordingly. The Chairman added that the Community Speedwatch had been only partially successful, due the fact that the data collected had not shown a serious problem and also, motorists slowed down anyway when they saw the volunteers in their HV vests. He conceded that the place approved to undertake the monitoring was pointless. Residents once again asked for a missing speed camera sign to be replaced and also a ☐ S.I.D to be installed.

Residents also asked why some hedges did not appear to be cut often, to the detriment of the appearance of the village, and the Chairman explained that this was being actively considered by the Council.

The work of a volunteer litter picker was praised along with those residents who keep Bumblekite looking so nice.

Residents also commented on the ongoing saga of Broadband installation.

The meeting finished at 9.11pm