

PARISH OF COCKING

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS

14 APRIL 2022, 7PM

AT THE VILLAGE HALL, BELL LANE, COCKING

PRESENT

Parish Councillors Miss F Russell. (Chairman in the Chair), A Cornwell, D Imlach, Jane Elliott Renney and approximately 16 residents.

IN ATTENDANCE

G Burt, Clerk to the Council

P Craig, Chairman, Village Hall Committee

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Miss Frances Russell welcome everyone.

1. PCSO Angelika Morge

Said she was in the patch every day, although most of what they did was often not visible, such as paying home visits. They were very aware of what problems existed in the village, such as youths smoking weed and other related issues, as residents were very good at reporting. She emphasised that she could be contacted by e-mail to discuss some issues, but it was still best to report things via the website or ring 101, so they could be picked up by another officer in her absence. A current big problem was theft from gardens and sheds etc, so urged residents to keep everything locked and consider investing in security lights and CCTV etc.

Cllr D Imlach highlighted the vandalism at the church; whilst low level it was very upsetting. She would contact the vicar to see what could be done.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 15 April 2019, previously circulated were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Report from the Parish Council

The Chairman, Cllr Miss F Russell presented the following report:

Having had to cancel our last two meetings due to the pandemic it is good to be back face to face again.

Our annual meeting gives an opportunity for the Council to report to you on what has been achieved since we last met, it also provides you with the chance to ask questions and to meet and talk to your local Parish Councillors.

As a Parish Council we are responsible for looking after community buildings in the village – the village hall, our bus shelters and open spaces, the children’s playground and sports field. We are consulted on all local planning applications although the final decision is made by the Planning Authority. We liaise with West Sussex County Council, South Downs National Park and Chichester District Council and attend the relevant meetings of these organisations as well as others where the village has an interest.

The last three years have seen a lot of activity for the Council much of which is in our annual report (recently circulated to all households) so I won't list it all again but just a quick update that the speed limit on Bell Lane has now been implemented and new signs are in place.

It has been good to see the various organisations in the village coming together in an effort to improve community life. The Council has worked with others to support events and we would like to thank all the volunteers who have been involved. They are making a difference.

The village has sadly lost a number of well-known residents in the last three years. Significant for the Council was Peter O'Neill who was a councillor for many years and a former Chair of the Council. We also sadly said goodbye to Paul Henshaw and I would like to pay tribute to all the support he and Linda gave to the residents of the village.

We have welcomed Evie and Travis to the Post Office, Father Jonathan as Rector for the Parish of Cocking with West Lavington, Bepton and Heyshott; Moonlight Cottage has undergone a major refit and Flint Barn café has opened on the South Downs Way.

I would like to personally thank our councillors – David Imlach, Richard Marks, David Summerfield, Jean Jackson, Jane Elliott Renney and Andy Cornwell for their time and support. Thanks also to Greg our Parish Clerk, he is the only paid employee of the Council and we are extremely lucky to have such an experienced clerk to keep us on the straight and narrow. His role is vital to the proper conduct of the council's business, providing objective advice and support.

4. Parish Council Accounts

The Clerk, G Burt, advised that the last set of audited accounts had been circulated. The Council had not increased the level of precept for the last three years, remaining at £13,567 although the Council Tax per household varied due to fluctuations in the Council Tax base which was determined by the number of households. The change in the amount a Council Tax Payer of a typical Band D property would pay this coming year over the previous was 0.78% or 48pence. Even when compared to 2017-18 when the precept was £13,000, the increase since then was £1.69. Looking to the year ahead, new things the Council has included in the budget are £1,000 for an additional notice board at The Croft; additional support for the Firework Display and £750 towards the Jubilee celebrations, although as this is no longer needed, it will be put towards the Hearing Loop improvements at the hall. He was happy to take questions now or would welcome queries at any other time.

5. Village Hall Report

Cllr P Craig, Chairman & Treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee (CVHMC) reported that despite being closed for a good part of the last two years, the Hall's accounts were looking healthy, largely thanks to COVID-support from CDC/HMG and lottery grants received. Projects completed or in the pipeline included the car park extension, overhead light projector, sunscreens across the skylights, WIFI and new Hearing Loop. Some regular hirers had not returned, but new ones had filled the gaps. Now that the hall was fully open again, they were looking forward to a busy year of events, for all ages, including the busy Jubilee weekend and village highlight, the Firework display.

6. Questions from Electors

Residents asked questions about what was being done to tackle speeding and vehicle noise in the village. The Chairman said they had been successful in getting the speed limits on the A286 north to Midhurst reduced to 50mph and more recently to 30mph in Bell Lane. A request had been submitted for repeater signs through the village to remind motorists of the speed. Applications for

additional Speed Indicator type devices both north and south were being submitted. Local resident Cat Beaumont was trying to relaunch Community Speedwatch – all offers welcome. Residents had mixed views on whether Goodwood events increased or decreased speeds through the village.

Potholes – residents were asked to continue to report these to WSCC.

A resident thought that some of the hedgerows looked unkempt. It was pointed out that these were largely down to farmers and landowners, although there was a division in the village between those who wanted the village to be very neat and those who wanted it more rural. If they were causing an obstruction, again, they should be reported.

The meeting finished at 7.46pm