

Minutes of the Bilsington Annual Parish Meeting held at Bilsington Village Hall on Thursday 18th May 2017 at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors; S Hudson (Chairman), B Delmage (Vice Chairman), S Carrington, R Corbett and G Russell and 6 residents.

Apologies for absence: S Mytton (Hassocks), R Boutwood (Monument Trust), Borough Councillors W Howard and J Martin.

Report of the Ashford Borough Councillor (submitted by email)

As I am attending other meetings in the Borough tonight here is a summary of my work in the last year. Please publish as a record of my work although I have circulated to those on my database.

Key areas of concentration for residents of Saxon Shore and Bilsington that I have been focussing on in the last year.

- Ensuring greater local needs housing provision for the area
- Concentrating on ensuring a higher uptake of locals on affordable housing lists so that more local people can benefit from homes built in the area.
- Improvements to Broadband – there will be a new exchange in the village shortly, it was expected to be installed in March but hit snags with damage lineage and breaks in the links – it is now expected to be completed by the end of June.
- Enforcement – I have been pressing to ensure enforcement commitments made in the Parish and the Ward are kept and enforced. Much of this work takes time due to priorities leaning more at ABC on large enforcement issues but I am confident results will be seen in the very near future.
- Infrastructure – with the establishment of the Saxon Shore DIG – Development and infrastructure group – focus is on the needs to improve infrastructure going forward and there will be a full consultation with all residents when the local plan is out for consultation in July.
- Local plan – this will open all villages in the Borough to development and whilst this is to be welcomed, development needs to be controlled – I have been working behind the scenes at Council and with DIG to ensure the policies in the local plan protect the rural setting and provide for development that is manageable and appropriate for rural areas.

Report of the Kent County Councillor

Savings have been achieved by restructuring the County Council, entering in to commissioning contracts for services which have reduced overheads and still get value for money and which have not affected the delivery of front line services. All this includes balancing the budget for this financial year.

The levy from the public wrapped inside the 2 per cent increase on Council Tax for Social Care has helped and indeed another 24 million from Central Government has also helped but not completely covered the cost of care for the elderly.

Before you ask the money that was invested in Iceland has now been recovered not only by KCC but also the Kent and Medway fire and rescue service plus interest (over 1 million pounds)

I have been engaged as follows at County Council during the last year:

Chairman of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which involves the monitoring of improvement and future plans, and a direct contact with the Care Quality Commission. Commissioning Advisory Board, Planning Committee, Chairman of the General Purposes Fire Authority Committee, Sussex Community Rail Partnership Strategic Board, Joint Transportation Board, Ashford Chairman Youth Advisory Group and Local Children's Board to do with specialist children's services.

These have kept me pretty busy as well as constituency matters which are growing with the housing developments. Most of my enquiries deal with highways matters, apparent lack of infrastructure and no doubt there will be schools appeals to come to my attention. There are issues which concern me in that the pressure is now on our rural roads and infrastructure or lack of.

There are now regular discussions about traffic calming as a result of the very soon to start building at Chilmington Green. This includes the upgrading of the A28 between the tank roundabout and the Matalan roundabout. Work is also going on in design and finance seeking for an extension to the dual carriageway on the Great Chart bypass. In addition I am informed that the work on the junction 10A will commence next year. The JTB has been pressing Highways England for the Barry Road entrance to be redesigned with a roundabout. We await their agreement.

Among other things I have been pressing the NHS for a health centre in Chilmington Green with facilities for minor injuries, Xray and consultant clinics in order to reduce the need for patients having to visit the William Harvey.

My very best wishes to the Parish Council and thank you for your excellent voluntary support to the community.

Bilsington Ladies

We had a varied range of speakers during 2016 with 7 different subjects.

In March Charles Sell arrived with a bag of chemicals to ask "why don't you smell like I do?" Apparently everybody's nose smells the same thing differently.

In April the Edinburgh Woollen Mill gave a fashion show using some members as models.

In May the Air Ambulance were with us.

June saw a very successful outing to Penshurst Place. Even the weather behaved!

In July Ann Cattoor took us on the trail in America.

In September Rosemary Crippen gave a demonstration with beads, bags and embroidered books.

In October we saw Kent from the air with Andy Wood.

In November we had a presentation by Waitrose of Christmas Fayre – with tasters!

December saw our wonderful Christmas Lunch at the White Horse.

All in all a very happy and enjoyable year.

This year is not going so well! – numbers are down to a critical level. For various reasons we lost 7 local members and so we are having to seriously consider our options.

The Bilsington Monument

Sadly, our treasurer Terry Tarant passed away last year and Zena Hales has now taken over as treasurer. Terry was a long-standing trustee and crusader for the Bilsington Monument, putting in so much of his time and talents to ensure the monument remains as it stands today. We are very grateful for all his input and shall miss him greatly.

The monument itself is in good shape after the pointing and storm repairs and attracts many visitors.

Apart from any future maintenance our responsibilities and therefore our expenditure is the insurance of the monument. With this in mind there is always a need to ask for donations to cover the annual premium.

We are therefore considering installing securely a donation box at the monument which could help towards our fundraising, which also includes the sale of the Bilsington maps. These maps priced at £25.00 can be purchased by emailing bilsingtonmonument@gmail.com The general maintenance of the monument including the ground level appearance is maintained on a voluntary basis by the Trustees.

I am sure we all agree that we are very lucky to have such a wonderful obelisk in the village as a memorial to Sir William Richard Cosway.

Bilsington Cricket Club

The cricket club was originally formed in 1896 and now has 23 members playing. Over the past few months repairs have been made to the pavilion. The clubs roller is in need of a new engine to keep it working, County Councillor M Angell offered a grant payment towards this.

Bilsington Church

Charlotte Kerr has recently taken over as Church Warden Roger Martin has recently retired and is greatly missed, services are covered by Rod Whiteley and Martin Jones. The church fabric has recently been inspected and is in good order and insured. The church is always open and services have moved to a more family orientated feel. The church remains very popular for weddings as Odo's barn is ideal for receptions and the White Horse just over the road.

Fruit and Vegetable Show

The show was held on 13th August 2016 and was well attended, this year the show will either be on the 5th or 12th August, date to be confirmed schedules will be delivered throughout the village when finalised.

Hassock Group

Continue to meet on a Monday afternoon, the needlework now being undertaken by many beginners.

Parish Council Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone & many thanks for attending.

Parish Council Chairman's Report.

For the benefit of any new comers to this meeting or indeed new people in the village may I first introduce the Parish Council.

I am Simon Hudson and I live with my wife Vivienne in Bramley House, Bonnington Road and come this September will have lived in the village 10 years. Next we have the Vice Chairman Sarah Carrington who lives in Newhaven Ashford Road has now lived in the village for nearly 7 years, Bernard Delmage in Cross Cottage now for nearly 5 years, Gordon Russell who has owned and runs our local hostelry for 6 years also. Russel Corbet lives in Monument Terrace and has lived in the village longer than anyone can remember! Therefore between us we have over 60 years residency in Bilsington.

This is the end of our 2nd full year as a Parish Council and as explained last year without these new faces the Parish Council we would have lost our individual representation and been merged with either Aldington & Bonnington PC or Ruckinge PC. Therefore thank you to my fellow Parish Councillors for helping keep the Parish Council in existence.

We are helped in our role by the very experienced Parish Clerk – Peter Setterfield, who is also the Parish Clerk for our neighbouring Parish – Aldington & Bonnington. Peter ensures we abide by the ever changing Government regulation and laws, procedures and policies. - Thank you Peter.

We also have our Kent County Councillor Mike Angel – who helps and steers us on issues such as the highways, signage, pot holes and damaged roads etc. Mike has also generously donated towards our Speed Indicator Devices so a big thank you to Mike and also a big congratulations on his successful re-election as a Kent County Council Councillor. Thank you Mike.

We also have William Howard and Jane Martin. Will has attended a few meetings this year but unfortunately Jane does not attend our meetings now and hasn't done so for 18 months. Jane clearly prefers to communicate with local residents in whatever way she sees best. This is a disappointment to us as we feel that she is potentially failing us as a Parish Council and potentially the residents of the village.

As stated last year I believe Bilsington is a beautiful place to live, we are set on the Saxon Shore Way and we are nestled in some of the most stunning countryside in England.

Many of us moved here for this very reason and as a Parish Council we continue trying to preserve our village, yet at the same time recognise the demands and changes people demand for modern living. This is at the forefront of our decision making process when dealing with planning application.

We have dealt with the following planning applications

No 2 Monument Terrace – extension

Keepers Cottage – extension	BPC - Y ABC - Y
Romney Cottage – Extension	BPC -N ABC - tbc
Soiux =- conversion of outbuilding to holiday let	BPC -Y ABC -Y
Casa Mica – Ripley Scrap yard – Outline for 5 executive detached houses.	BPC Y ABC No
Cross Cottage Extension ABC - Y	BPC -Y
Hamilton Farm – airstrip ABC - Y	BPC -Y
Quince cottage extension.	BPC -Y ABC - Y
Cross Cottage – extension	BPC – Y ABC - Y

Of the planning applications we were in agreement with ABC planning department on all but 1 application at the time of writing.

This was Casa Amica – Ripleys Scrapyard which we thought was an excellent proposal as it would clean up an ugly eye sore and heavily contaminated land. Will Howard – one of local borough councillors also thought this was an excellent idea. However Jane Martin spoke at length on the matter and it was rejected by her fellow councillors.

As a Parish Council the method of dealing with planning application continues to work well. – All are discussed within the setting of a Parish Council meeting rather than as previously, an application doing a round robin in an envelope. If the majority of the council supports an application and one member objects this will be noted in the comments submitted to ABC. But we clearly object or approve plans.

The Parish Council's defibrillator which cost in excess of £700 has now been wired in and attached to the wall of the Village Hall and has proved a great success! By successful I mean that fortunately it has not been used. We must plan on running a reminder training course on its use soon.

The ongoing issues continue in the village

Litter – we do have two bins in the village – which Gordon has emptied, so thank you Gordon. But this doesn't stop people throwing litter out of their cars as the drive along our roads & lanes. I would like to thank Julian Filip who continues to pick up litter and can be seen cycling around with his bicycle trailer full of rubbish he's picked up. A big thank you to Julian.

Parking – we are still trying to progress the parking issues in the village and the most practical solution seems to be the idea of hard coring the verge of the Bonnington Road in the direction of Bonnington and cutting steps up the bank and hedge to give access to Cosway Cottages. This however involves ABC, KCC and Kent Highway and a bucket full of money. But we will keep it on our agenda.

Speeding – As you are all aware we raised the Parish Precept last year in order to raise funds for a Speed Indicator Device. The 2017 / 2018 Parish Precept that is itemised on veryones Council Tax Bill has now returned to its 2015/2016 level as promised.

We now have those funds – once again a big thanks to Mike Angel for his generous contribution.

To help keep costs down we decided to invite Ruckinge Parish Council to also partake and share a SID. This they readily agreed to but are having issues with finding an appropriate location as you enter Rucking from the west. They are at loggerheads with KCC on the matter which is delaying matters but hopefully these will be resolved soon. If they are not then BPC will go ahead on the project alone which would mean that we have the camera in a few months.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Village Hall Committee for all they hard work not only maintaining the village hall but also organising events – i.e. Quiz Night this Saturday! The next phase of improvements in recladding the hall which will create improve the look of both hall and therefore the village.

Gordon continues to run a vibrant and busy public house which creates a central focus for the certain villagers – myself very much included - So a thank you to Gordon, Lisa and their team at the White Horse.

Reverend Roger Martin retired at the beginning of the year but it would be remiss of me not to thank him and Church Parochial Council for their hard work at our local church – St Peters and St Pauls and also for the joint events we have held together along with the Village Hall Committee. The Lighting of the village Christmas Tree and Carol singing after along with Remembrance Sunday and the Queens Birthday Party held last summer. The reign of improved communication and working more closely with one another has certainly paid off.

Now to clubs and Societies.

We also have various clubs and groups in the village. For those that attending this evening – many thanks for your updates and reports.

However the following could not make it this evening

Village Hall Committee Hassocks Group

Bilsington Monument Trust

Yoga

Apologies for those I've forgotten.

I would like to thank every one of them, and all of you in attendance this evening for making our community a better and nicer place to live.

And finally if anyone has any questions or would like to learn more about the parish council please feel free to attend our regular meetings or contact us.

Any other business

A request was made for more information to be made available in the Village News.

The long outstanding issue of the portacabin on Wills Lane was raised an update will be requested from the Borough Council on this.

Following the meeting there was an informative talk on the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance.

DRAFT