



## **Minutes of the Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council**

**Wednesday 3 November 2021**

**7pm**

### **Present**

Cllrs Ken Peters (Vice Chairman), Graeme Acraman, Barry Barnes, Edna Bengler, Sandy Duck, Phillip Day, Craig Gale, Dave Homer, James Marchant, Roy Margetts, Caroline Beresford Pratt, Doug Waller and Sarah Wilson.

### **In attendance**

G Burt, Clerk to the Council

County Cllr Amanda Jupp

District Cllr Kate Rowbottom

District Cllr Nigel Jupp – late arrival.

Kevin Ridgeway, Viv Diggins, Keith Witt, Lion/Men's Shed

Approximately 35 Members of the Public

### **97/21 Chairman's Announcements.**

The Chairman commented that:

1. Cllrs wishing to speak should raise their hand and speak clearly and loudly, as the meeting was being broadcast via the internet.
2. Members of the public wishing to speak this evening, can only speak during the public question time and not during the actual agenda item. Speakers can only speak once and will be limited to 3 minutes.

### **98/21 Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Paul Berry and Garry Commins due to prior engagements. On the proposal of Cllr Ken Peters, seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson, **RESOLVED** that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.

### **99/21 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.**

None.

### **100/21 Presentation on *Billingshurst Men's Shed*.**

Viv Diggins explained that Billingshurst Lions were sponsoring the creation of the Men's Shed group in the village, referencing the paper included with the agenda. Keith Witt is the Chairman of Billingshurst Men's Shed group itself. They spoke of how it provided not just a great place for all sexes to get together and do repairs, DIY etc., but also many of the projects they took on were for the local community itself.

District Cllr Kate Rowbottom had personal experience of the benefits of Men's Shed in her own village and commended them highly.

They were currently working out of the URC hall, but this was only a temporary location and needed their own space in order to fulfill their potential. They had identified four possible sites owned by the Council that might be suitable to locate sheds they already had in store.

The Council agreed that the request be referred to the Property Committee for further consideration.

*Adjournment for*

**101/21 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).**

Martin Hawthorne, representing the developers for West of Billingshurst, gave a precis of his earlier e-mail to all Councillors. He disagreed that over and above planning obligation benefits would not be delivered. As landowner of Jubilee Fields, where many new facilities would be built, the Parish Council would be party to a binding agreement with the developer. West wanted to work with the Parish. The site is sustainable, has lots of community support and is very attractive.

Daryl Stone of the Billingshurst Sports and Recreation Association (BSRA), said it is the leaseholder of much of Jubilee Fields, and hosts many teams, plus supporters etc, all local people. The facilities have all reached capacity, and host many other activities in addition to sports. West has lots of positives. It was now or never! It would be a huge mistake not to grasp this opportunity.

Richard Cordy, of the Tennis Club said its facilities had also reached full capacity. The West development, by including a new indoor tennis facility along with a relocated club, would offer excellent facilities and by being run by a club, would be much more affordable than a David Lloyd type offering. It was a win-win situation for everyone. The new facilities would be sustainable, self-funding and offer huge health benefits to help tackle obesity etc. Few housing schemes offered such attractive benefits. The Neighbourhood Plan had been a good plan, so now support Newbridge Park.

Sandra O'Donnell represented the Save Little Daux Group which has 290 members. The (new) East of Billingshurst site is open countryside well used by local people. It is a great habitat for many wild animals and birds. Building on it would increase flooding. If built over more and more people would have to use the unmanned pedestrian railway crossing on the site. She wanted what was best for the whole community. Where will the school go? She opposed East and supported West.

Jenni Spice was concerned with the lack of primary school capacity in the growing village compared to other places such as Southwater. Billingshurst badly needs an additional primary school. The East site does not offer a new school. A site has been allocated off Henshaw Way on the current East site, but where is the school? The village has been fobbed off!

Lesley Wilding, of the Billingshurst Flood Action Group (BFAG) felt that the cumulative impact of all the additional housing to the East has not been considered. CCTV surveys have shown that extra capacity provided following the 1982 Flood Alleviation Scheme has now been used up. She stated that the number of homes likely to flood in the Upper River Arun Catchment Area is likely to increase. The Parish Council had supported the BFAG. All these extra homes to the East will send water into Parbrook and Pennybrook. Flooding can happen upstream as well as downstream!

Trevor Leonard said residents of the east of the village were beleaguered! He supported West. East would be far less accessible to the village from some parts. East will pour traffic onto East and High Streets.

Murray Hughes was concerned about the increase in traffic from the East, especially over the railway bridge. Also, the loss of open farmland, a major amenity. Network Rail will want to close the pedestrian crossing.

#### **102/21 Reports from:**

- a. County Councillor Mrs Amanda Jupp reported as per Appendix A.  
In addition, she is very supportive of the proposals for traffic calming in the centre of the village and has been involved in the discussions to date.
- b. District Cllr Kate Rowbottom reported that Horsham District Council (HDC) is on course to balance its budget for 2021-22, helped in part by improved car parking revenue. The *Water Neutrality* bombshell dropped by Natural England was impacting the progress of the Local Plan, but its full implications are not yet known.
- c. Council Representatives on Outside Bodies.  
None.

#### *Resume Meeting*

#### **103/21 Local Plan Working Party.**

##### To receive notes of meetings

On the proposal of Cllr Graeme Acraman, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the notes of the meetings held on 31 August and 26 October 2021 be received.

##### Recommendations of the meeting held on 26 October 2021

The Chairman of the Working Party, Cllr Graeme Acraman said the Working Party had looked at all the issues carefully and it had not been an easy matter to consider. Land at Adversane had been discounted, so it looked at just East and West. East would be contained in the existing village envelope. West would push the village envelope out beyond the natural settlement boundary and increase traffic into the village. The bypass will be a physical divide between the existing village and new village. There are only two safe pedestrian walkways into the village from the West site, over the A29 bridges. HDC has not yet formally decided which site to confirm, but we need to work with them to secure the best outcome. By supporting East, it was the intention to also work with education and

health providers to try to secure definite improvements, not just promises. West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) is sitting on a potential pot of money for a new school; what has it done with it? The Parish Council had not really engaged with the development of the current East of Billingshurst scheme and look what we got?

Cllr Ken Peters was not convinced East was best, but felt we had to take a decision.

Cllr Barry Barnes was persuaded by the benefit of all the extra new facilities that West would deliver.

Cllr Sarah Wilson favoured West. Dentists didn't take up the previous allocation of land on the current East development. Doctors are struggling to recruit; there is no point in building a new surgery if there are no doctors to staff it! Similarly schools; developers had given lots of S106 education funds to WSSCC; where has it all gone? These matters needed tying down. We keep getting lots of glossy brochures promising things. Felt we were likely to get East.

Cllr Doug Waller said HDC is highly likely to confirm East; if we support West we will get East. The Working Party had given careful thought to the issues and despite personal preferences, had tried to take a pragmatic approach.

Cllr Craig Gale said we will get something! Was concerned about the lack of engagement with developers of existing East site. What is our vision for the future of the village?

The Chairman of the meeting asked for a proposer for the recommendations as presented, but as none was forthcoming, the recommendations fell.

On the proposal of Cllr Ken Peters, seconded by Cllr Phillip Day, **RESOLVED** that the Council supports the development of West of Billingshurst (and not East of Billingshurst.)

[Note: This decision is against the advice of the Planning Consultant engaged by the Council and the Council's own officers.]

**104/21 To receive proposals for traffic calming measures in High Street and East Street and agree that they go to a public consultation prior to being forwarded to WSSCC under its *Community Highways Scheme*.**

The Council has been working with consultants to devise a scheme that will reduce and slow traffic in the East Street and High Street areas, following the completion of the Spine Road. Cllrs had viewed the initial proposals and consultants had detailed all the points raised, advising that many would need to be considered during further detailed design work. In order to move the project forward, the Council needs to submit it to WSSCC as highway authority. However, support from the community for such submissions is essential. Parish Councillors will have further opportunities to comments as the scheme progresses.

On the proposal of Cllr Ken Peters, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** to

- a. Support the scheme in principal;
- b. Widely publicise the proposals inviting support, possibly including an exhibition at the Billingshurst Centre.
- c. Submit the scheme to WSSCC under its Community Highways Scheme.

**105/21 To receive the External Audit Report for 2020-2011, consider any issues and refer to F&GP Committee if appropriate.**

On the proposal of Cllr Ken Peters seconded by Cllr Craig Gale, **RESOLVED** the External Audit Report for 2020-21 be received and referred to the F&GP for consideration of any matters raised.

**106/21 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 September 2021.**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2021, previously circulated were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Dave Homer, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.

**107/21 Matters Arising – that are not separate agenda items.**

None.

**108/21 To receive Minutes as approved by the following Committees:**

- a) On the proposal of Cllr Dave Homer seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meetings of 12 August, 2 and 23 September 2021 be received.
- b) On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale seconded by Cllr Phillip Day **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting of 28 July and 29 September 2021 be received.
- c) On the proposal of Cllr Graeme Acraman seconded by Cllr Barry Barnes **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Property Committee meeting of 16 June 2021 be received.

**109/21 To review appointments to committees etc.**

No changes.

**110/21 Neighbourhood Wardens - to receive Wardens' Report for August and September.**

NOTED. Cllrs commented on how busy the Wardens had been. Cllr Sandy Duck advised that she had recently spent a couple of hours with the Wardens whilst they patrolled and found it very interesting and would recommend it to all Cllrs.

**111/21 Any other matters for information only.**

District Cllr Nigel Jupp apologised for his late arrival. As WSCC Cabinet Member for Learning & Skills, he understood that it was the intention to put any funds earmarked for education from the original East of Billingshurst development, with funds from any future strategic allocation, to create a possibly 3-form entry new additional primary school.

**112/21 Date of Next Meeting – 5 January 2022.**

*Meeting finished at 8.30pm*

**Chairman**

**Date**