

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
BILLINGSHURST CENTRE
ON WEDNESDAY 11 MAY 2016 AT 7.30PM**

Those Present: Cllr. Mr P.M. Berry, Chairman of Billingshurst Parish Council, Parish Clerk B. Bell, Office Manager E. Berry, Mr Joe Lyons, Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Service.

Also Present: 16 Members of the public.

1. Guest Speaker: Mr Joe Lyons, Volunteer with Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance

Mr Lyons said the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance (KSS) provides accident and emergency cover. The air ambulance carries: doctor, paramedic, blood, ventilator and resuscitation equipment. 40% of incidents that they attend are road traffic collisions. Medical procedures are carried out at the roadside as the current helicopters are too small to do the procedures inside. 15% of incidents are cardiac.

The doctor is able to give anaesthetic and fit a breathing tube to control breathing. The helicopters carry four units of O negative blood as a universal donor, but it must be kept between and 2 and 4 degrees and it has a shelf life. They have developed a device to heat the blood to body temperature before it can be administered.

The crew train every week at the Benenden Hospital. They carry out 2,000 interventions every year, 4 or 5 during the day and 1 or 2 at night.

The tasking of jobs is done by dispatchers who are paramedics based at the South East Coast Ambulance (Secamb) central point and monitor 999 calls. The dispatcher offers the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) to Secamb or Secamb can request it. This is all part of the triage system. Secamb receive 2,000 calls per day. The crew start the helicopter whilst the doctor gets the details.

KSS have two Donald Douglas 902 helicopters and are the first air ambulance service to offer 24 hour cover. The helicopters fly at 100mph. Only one operates at night. They have limited range at night as there are very few re-fuelling points, so they can only attend one incident before they have to return to base to re-fuel. The helicopters have high rotors so you can walk under them safely and no tail rotor, it uses ducted fans to push air out of the back of the helicopter. In daytime, the helicopter needs twice its length to land and four times its length at night.

KSS is in the process of changing one of the Donald Douglas 902 helicopters to an Augusta Weston 169 helicopter that can fly at 200 mph and carries more fuel so it can do a second incident at night. It is also larger so that medical procedures can be carried out inside the helicopter.

KSS has two bases: Marden near Maidstone and Redhill. Night flying is from Redhill, and the new helicopter will be based there.

Patients are taken to hospitals in Southampton, Chichester, Brighton, Guildford and St Georges in London.

The doctor is on a six month contract, and they are usually Registrar level and funded by the NHS on secondment. The paramedics are funded by KSS. The service costs £7 million per annum and each intervention costs £2,500. KSS fundraises through schools, the Brighton marathon sponsorship, sports clubs, bequests, cake sales and direct giving.

Questions

- Mr Commins said it is an amazing service provided all voluntary so is saving the NHS money. Mr Lyons said the service is also a benefit to the NHS. The NHS pays for the doctors but they rotate with enhanced skills.
- Ms Kingston asked if a parent can accompany a child in the helicopter. Mr Lyons said there is no room for passengers.
- Mrs Rodwell asked how the helicopter lands at motorway accidents. Mr Lyons said the Police or Highways Agency stop the traffic in both directions.
- Mr Margetts said it is an amazing service and no-one wants to see it reduced. Mr Lyons replied that KSS do not want to become part of the NHS so there is no threat of the service being closed.
- Mrs Wilding asked about the cost of the new helicopter. Mr Lyons said it is on a lease agreement which includes fuel, pilot and maintenance. The helicopter requires maintenance every 50 hours. There is a spare helicopter if needed.
- The Chairman thanked Mr Lyons for his very informative presentation. Mr Lyons asked attendees to tell three people about the service and encouraged them to offer support for the service.

2. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council.

In May last year, the Council started a new 4-year term. There are 15 positions on Billingshurst Parish Council and as only 10 people came forward, there was an uncontested election; this was in fact the case with the majority of Parish Councils in the Horsham District. We started the Council term with many familiar faces on the Council but we have also welcomed new members: Ken Peters, Fiona Lockhart Andrew Pearson, Natalie Van de Braam and Joe Horwood on to the Council. Throughout the year, the Council has had a good mix of experienced and new Councillors of differing ages and backgrounds. Recently, Fiona Lockhart has resigned due to moving away, but Adam Du Lieu was co-opted on to the Council last week.

Previous Annual Reports have referred to the relationship between Billingshurst Parish Council and Billingshurst Community Partnership. The past year saw the Council withdraw from the Partnership. After the Council having made this difficult decision, my hope was always that such a separation may in fact have the effect of improving the relationship between the two groups. This may have in fact turned out to be the case as certainly things seem to have calmed down and it is very pleasing that even with the separation, it has been business as usual for the two groups individually but also for the projects that the two organisations are jointly involved in such as the Community Plan, Village Centre Supplementary Planning Document and more recently the Neighbourhood Plan.

Certainly, deciding to produce a Neighbourhood Plan was one of the key decisions made by the Council in recent months, and one of the most important decisions that the Council has made for a number of years. Neighbourhood Plans are not without controversy. They are expensive to produce and are, by and large, pro-development. However, having a Neighbourhood Plan in place should give the Billingshurst community more of an input in how the area develops in the future and will mean that the area will benefit from a higher level of the Community Infrastructure Levy relating to any development which does take place. Although Billingshurst Parish Council embarked upon the process later than some other areas, it seemed inconceivable to me that the Council could have decided whether to produce a Neighbourhood Plan without knowing first as much as possible about the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Another issue which has taken up a fair amount of the Council's time is that of possibly having a Community Warden in Billingshurst. Looking through minutes from the past year, it is easy to see that this was very much an evolving and fast moving project. Initially, the Council looked into entering into a cluster arrangement where a Community Warden would be shared between Billingshurst and Pulborough Parishes. Then, it started to look like it would be better for Billingshurst Parish Council to look to employ a Warden on its own. Funding was successfully obtained from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner but even with this, the project would still have involved an increase in precept. Although in monetary terms the increase would amount to a few pence per week, in percentage terms the increase was fairly significant. With little feedback from the community, in January this year the Council decided to proceed with the project; the timing of this decision was important due to the need to supply details of the Council's precept to Horsham District Council. As things progressed, concerns started to emerge that the project could end up being more of a burden in terms of financing and managing the project than was initially envisaged, so the Council took the difficult decision to withdraw from the process. Other options of employing a Community Warden may develop as time goes by so the Council could re-visit the idea in the future, hopefully when time-scales are not so tight.

The Parish Council continues to be frustrated with the number of new homes the area has had to accept and has submitted responses to a number of planning applications including large developments to the east of Billingshurst and in Marringdean Road.

The Parish Council has been involved in helping to guide the production of a Village Centre Supplementary Planning Document. This has been an evolving and growing project looking into where monies gained from the development of 475 homes to the east of Billingshurst would best be spent in the area. Certainly, one of the things the Parish Council lobbied for was that organisations looking to fund projects not directly linked to the High Street area should be considered for funding too. As such, the Council made Horsham District Council aware of a number of groups and projects seeking funding. It was pleasing to see that recently, after so long, the document finally went out to public consultation.

The Parish Council is responsible for a number of open spaces and buildings in the Parish. These include Jubilee Fields and the Sports Pavilion, Lower Station Road, Station Road Gardens and Clevelands Gardens. Maintaining and trying to improve facilities for its parishioners remains a high priority for the Parish Council but in difficult financial times, decisions have to be taken carefully.

The Parish Council is the Trustee of the Billingshurst Community and Conference Centre. The past year has been good for the Centre and it is nice to see it regularly used by such a variety of groups for a huge mixture of purposes. The Parish Council has successfully obtained funding in the past year for new carpeting throughout the Centre, new chairs and improvements to the Council Chamber. I am so grateful to the Centre Supervisor and her team who do an excellent job running the facility.

Cllr. Wilding continues to work tirelessly on the issue of flooding in the Parish and the Council has successfully obtained funding from WSCC's Operation Watershed project to help develop flood resilience in the Parish, there is more detail about this further on in this report.

In January this year, the Parish Council agreed to renew the contract for our Community Youth Worker for a further year. Recently, I contacted our Youth Worker, Ben Sheldon who explained that he has been working hard to raise the level of contact with young people over the past year. Ben currently has a total of 50 young people on his register, and while they don't see all of these people every week, they have a good core group who are always there. As well as this, Ben and his team have been working on organising some more trips as well, including trips to Brinsbury. Alongside the youth club, Ben has been working with the Weald School to support young people who would like to talk to someone who isn't a teacher, and he has been able to provide a listening ear to young people over the past two terms; in turn this has led Ben in being able to assist the young people in progressing in what ever way might be suitable for them.

As well as continuing to support the Community Youth Worker project, I am also very proud that during the past year the Council has also assisted Billingshurst Bowling Club, The Village Agent scheme, the Senior Citizens Lunch Club, Billingshurst Community Transport, Friends of Station Road Gardens and the Billingshurst Sports and Recreation Association to name a few.

The Parish Council continues to try its best to communicate with its community. The Council's web site contains a great deal of information and is regularly updated; the Clerk also tries to post updates on Facebook and Twitter as much as possible. The Council continues to have a monthly presence in the Village Tweet magazine. You may remember the electronic sign which was previously in Budgens. Sadly, when works were being done on the building prior to Sainsbury's opening, the contractors disposed of the sign. The Parish Office staff members have worked hard in the past few months trying to arrange a replacement so imagine their joy and relief when the new sign was recently delivered to the Parish Office. Further imagine how their hearts sank when it was discovered that the manufacturer had spelt Billingshurst incorrectly on the front of the sign! One of the many frustrations often experienced by the office staff but maybe in this case, you have to see the funny side. Sainsbury's initially said they would be happy for the sign to be placed in its original location but sadly, their views on this have recently changed. It may be that the sign is located at the Billingshurst Centre whilst we look into a possible more prominent location in the High Street.

I have rather felt like a part time Chairman at times in the past year, a year that has been very difficult for my family and me. What this has highlighted is that Billingshurst Parish Council has a good team. Councillors have worked together well and been very supportive and I think that Cllr. Wilding has done an excellent job serving as Vice Chairman. The Council and community should be proud of the Council's staff, in the Parish Office, Billingshurst Centre and Litter Wardens who have worked very hard in the past year, often working extra hours and rearranging their days off and annual leave to accommodate the Council's busy workload.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 11 March 2015.

The draft minutes having been circulated previously were taken as read and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that they be accepted and signed as a true record. The minutes were duly signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. Question and answer session from the Public.

- Mrs Rodwell asked what the Parish Council can do to encourage people to use Jubilee Fields. She asked if there is any progress on public toilets at Jubilee Fields and how often the pavilion is used. She would like to see the pavilion open one afternoon a week for tea. She said it is a shame that the Council has all that land and an ageing community; it would be a good place for them to walk. The path is rough under foot and not good for wheelchairs. She asked if it could be paved. Mrs Rodwell said the litter bins are often full and overflowing by the skate park. The Chairman said that the skate park is very popular and the bins become full very quickly after the Litter Wardens have emptied them. The Chairman said that the Parish Council has requested funding for public toilets through the Village Centre Supplementary Planning Document.
- Mrs Wilding said a bootcamp uses Jubilee Fields several mornings and evenings, and the Youth Club has 50 young people signed up.
- Mr Barnes said the junior football club would like to increase from 8 to 13 teams. He will ask for the Trim Trail surfacing to be added to the agenda for the Property Committee. Mr Commins said the Sports Association have a Charity Committee who raise funds through a fun run, open air cinema, charity fun day and car boot sale.
- Mrs Rodwell commented how nice Station Road Gardens look.
- Mr Jupp asked about the Parish Council accounts and the one off cost centre. The Clerk explained that this is a mixture of unbudgeted items including s106 funding. Mr Jupp asked for this to be itemised.
- Mr Longhurst said he likes to fly kites and asked where this can be done; the Clerk replied that she would need to check the bylaws. Mr Barnes said there is plenty of land along the bypass.
- Mrs Rodwell asked about the Parish Council's relationship with Billingshurst Community Partnership Limited. She said the Partnership was set up as they could access funding that the Parish Council could not. She asked for the role of Billingshurst Community Partnership Limited to be explained and if the Parish Council relies on them for funding. The Chairman said that the Parish Council has always been able to get s106 funding, but some organisations will not give to local authorities.
- Mrs Wilding congratulated the Chairman for taking on another year.

Meeting finished at 8.50pm