

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING

held on Monday 14th April 2003

in the War Memorial Hall, Alfriston, commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT:	Cllr J. Rackham	Chairman
	Cllr A. Banham	
	Cllr Mrs E. Foulkes	
	Cllr G. Knights	
	Cllr Ms D. Monteath-Wilson	
	Cllr S. Shing	East Sussex County Councillor
	Cllr Col. B. Hubbard	Wealden District Councillor
	Rev'd F. Fox-Wilson	
	15 parishioners	
	Mr P. Ayers	Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies to report.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 8th April 2002 had been published and circulated previously. They were taken as read, accepted as a true record, and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Flint wall

Cllr Rackham reported little progress with re-instatement of the flint wall on C39 north of the village, despite a great deal of time and effort by Parish Councillors. East Sussex County Council had confirmed that they would not be making funds available for the work in the foreseeable future. The Parish Council was seeking alternative sources of funding for the work, although the wall was privately owned. The cost of re-instatement of such a length of flint wall was recognised to be high, and the current state of the wall was unsightly in a tourism-oriented village. Councillors were exploring the possibility of heritage funding of some sort.

b) Traffic calming

The Alfriston Focus Group within the Tourism without Traffic project was exploring the possible introduction of a 20mph zone for the village.

A scheme for speed reduction around Frog Firle had been referred back to the County Council for further work, as the original was felt to be unsympathetic to the rural environment.

c) Traffic Warden

There was no funding for a Traffic Warden, and there was some evidence that the yellow lines were being flouted. The Clerk had asked for Police attention, and the Car Park Attendants were placing cones along the High Street at weekends to emphasise the waiting restrictions.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Rackham reported that the Parish Council had been represented at numerous and varied meetings throughout the year, including Wealden District's planning meetings, Flood Forums, Tourism without Traffic, the bye-laws, the Primary School, Alfriston Festival and many other

activities. The Golden Jubilee had provided the focus for activities in 2002, and all local groups had contributed to making the celebrations so successful.

Work was proceeding on the improvement of disabled access to the War Memorial Hall via the Church, and a contractor would be appointed soon.

A new roundabout for the Recreation Ground had been approved, and a contract placed.

Work on the creation of a South Downs National Park had come to a halt in view of the weight of objections to be considered. A Public Inquiry was likely.

It was possible now for members of the public to address meetings of Wealden's Planning sub-committee meetings. All planning applications were now available on the Internet.

A start had been made on regular liaison meetings with the Transport and Environment Dept. of East Sussex County Council, to avoid a repeat of the situation that arose following the erection of flooding signs.

Cllr Rackham drew attention to the close of the current Parish Council, which would hold its final meeting on 22nd April. A new Parish Council would take office from 1st May, with its first meeting on 19th May. He paid tribute to Cllr Mrs Foulkes, a Councillor for 9 years holding various portfolios, to Cllr Mrs Adcock who was now standing as a candidate for the District Council, and who had played a large part in the re-development of the new War Memorial Hall. He also thanked Cllr Burns, who had stood down for personal reasons a few months earlier, but who had performed useful work during his term as a Councillor. He also paid tribute to Mrs J. Dorsett, who had resigned as Clerk in February, and welcomed Mr P. Ayers as her replacement. Mr Ayers was well known in the Valley, had been Clerk to Cuckmere Valley Parish Council for 12 years, and ran the successful Cuckmere Community Bus, having been a founder member 27 years ago. He thanked both Cllr Shing and Cllr Col Hubbard for their unstinting efforts on behalf of the Parish.

He thanked parishioners for their support and encouragement. Public participation in the Parish was most important. He had not been able to stand for re-election, as he no longer lived or worked in the Parish, but had been enjoyed and been privileged to serve on the Parish Council, especially as Chairman for the last four years.

5. REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Col. Hubbard explained that he had been the District Councillor for the Alfriston ward since a by-election in 1993, following the untimely death of John Shelley. On the first occasion, he had been unopposed, but there had been an election on each subsequent occasion. He felt the experience of an election was a very worthwhile one, and urged parishioners to vote, no matter which candidate they favoured. He explained that a combination of ward boundary changes and age had led to his decision not to seek re-election, and thanked the Parish for the opportunity to be its Councillor over the past ten years.

The Chairman again thanked Cllr Col Hubbard for his efforts on behalf of the Parish and wished him well in his retirement.

6. REPORT BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Shing had provided regular reports at Parish Council meetings throughout the year, and confined himself to the principal issues. The waste management contract for the next 25 years had just been let to the Onyx Company at a cost of around £1 billion. He expected the incinerator to be built at Newhaven, despite public protests, which had led to his appearance on television.

He regretted that the County Council had sustained its objection to the creation of a South Downs National Park, allocating upto £50,000 for legal representation at the Public Inquiry. He felt that the money would be better spent on road repairs as only 5% of the population opposed the Park.

He had campaigned to retain mobile libraries, and helped the Parish over the Flood signs. He was campaigning for traffic calming measures, and safe routes to school in other parts of his Division. He supported the aims of the Tourism without Traffic project, and felt that the establishment of liaison meetings with officers from the Highways Dept was very useful.

Both he and Cllr Col Hubbard were congratulated for their efforts to secure the removal of roadside rubbish and litter, although it was recognised as being an on-going problem.

A discussion followed about the possible re-instatement of the flint wall in North Street. The impression given on the approach to a tourist-oriented village was most unfortunate, but as the wall was private property, East Sussex was not prepared to pay for its re-instatement. The cost of a replacement flint wall was likely to be prohibitive for the owner, and the Parish

Council were exploring other avenues to secure funding to replace the wall. If they were able to come forward with some money, Cllr Shing would approach the County officers again to see whether or not some assistance might be forthcoming.

7. THE STAR INN LION

Rev'd Fox-Wilson explained the background to this matter, and elaborated the history of the Lion, which was thought to have originated on a Dutch vessel sunk at the Battle of Beachy Head in 1690. Its whereabouts until 1850 were unclear, although it had spent a considerable period underwater. It first appeared outside the Star in an etching dated around 1850. There were known to be five such Lions in the UK, and 9 worldwide. The Alfriston Lion was considered by an expert to be the third most significant in Europe, and the most significant in the UK. He considered that it would be better not to re-instate the original outside the Star, but to produce a replica, and to house the original undercover where it could be displayed in the round, but away from central heating.

Wealden District Council had just granted listed building, which would allow the restoration work to proceed, and the new owners of the Star were keen to ascertain local views. They also wished to get on with the restoration job at an early date. A debate ensued ranging over ownership, insurance and responsibility for the original and replica Lions, who would be responsible for any costs incurred, where the original might be housed and the danger of further damage if the original were put back outside the Star Inn.

The matter was put to a vote in order to offer some informal guidance to the owners of the Star Inn. 13 were in favour of re-instatement of the original Lion outside the Star Inn, 4 favoured the use of a replica and three abstained on the grounds that further time was needed to reflect on the issues. The Rector would convey the results to the owners of the Star Inn for further consideration. The Clerk would also speak with them, and the matter would be placed on the Agenda of the April 22 meeting of the Parish Council.

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr Ian Wilson queried the existence of a contingency, or emergency plan for the Parish. The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators had the matter in hand.

Mr David Phillips raised the question of double yellow lines, stressing the importance of the narrow 2" primrose yellow lines, which had served the village for 40 years, only to be replaced in error by normal width and colour lines recently. The Parish Council had decided at its meeting in March not to press for the replacement of the lines, since, having examined a similar situation outside Lewes Station, they had formed the view that burning off the lines was more unsightly than allowing them to fade and then replacing with the correct lines at the next repaint. The Council had sought compensation from the County Council or its contractor, and a response was awaited. Mr Cookman asked whether the High Street was due to be resurfaced shortly, since this would lead to the need to repaint the lines.

9. MR JOHN RACKHAM

Cllr Knights praised the work of Mr Rackham who was standing down as a Parish Councillor, having moved away from the Parish. He drew particular attention to Mr Rackham's leadership and guidance of the Parish Council over the four years of his Chairmanship and wished him well for the future. These remarks were met with acclaim from everyone present. Mr Rackham thanked everyone for their kindness.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed: (Chairman)

Date: