

Summary Notes of the Maresfield Parish Annual Assembly held on Wednesday 10th May 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall Maresfield

Present: Cllr M Craddock (Chairman), Cllr D Watson, Cllr Dr P Handley, Cllr D Barlow, Cllr K Ogden, Cllr Mrs L Stevens-Smith, Cllr Ms G Hallin, Cllr A Strevens, DCllr M Lunn, DCllr P Roundell, CCllr Roy Galley, Clerk A Allen, Asst. Clerk C Arnold.

Guest Speaker: Jim Van den Bos Wealden District Council

Refreshments: Maresfield WI.

Approximately 45 members of public were in attendance including the following:

Mrs Gillian Allen, Mr Bert Keeys, Mr Roger Street, Mr Fred & Mrs Val Taylor, Mrs Sheila Cumming, Mr Barrie Sidwell & Mrs Patricia Sidwell, Mr Dick & Mrs Ann Thompson, Anne Seigne, Mr T Cottingham, Mr Robert & Mrs Geraldine Smith, Mr John & Mrs Alex Bury, Mrs D Bowley, Rev. Nick Cornell, Mrs Pat Palmer, Mrs Rosemary Shaw, Mrs Helen Rowland, Ms Pat Bowler.

Apologies for absence: Cllr Mrs L Reeves, Cllr R Taylor, DCllr T Illingworth, Mr W King, Major G & Mrs Allt, Mr & Mrs Sparrow, Mr John & Mrs Alex Bury, CCllr F. Whetstone and Mr Jim Elsworth.

Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking the guest speaker for attending and contributing to the Assembly.

The Chairman introduced the theme for the Assembly 'Effective Communication' – which is a two-way issue. He noted that WDC are good at communicating particularly planning and the related 'Alert system'. The Chairman noted that a newsletter is published in all 3 villages; however, electronic communication is becoming a better option; at least 80% of Parish are likely to have a PC and an e-mail address and if they are subscribing to Facebook or Twitter then we can communicate with them more effectively. An issue such as a controversial planning application is evidence that people take notice

Presentation by :-

Mr Van den Bos from Wealden District Council gave a very interesting PowerPoint presentation, covering the following areas:-

- Widening WDC responsibilities including flood resilience, Wealden Dementia Action Alliance and 'Wealden do Sussex Walks'.
- A 2017 population of WDC 68,500, in 2020 likely to increase to 70,500. 17.5% residents' activities limited by health problems or disability, 1,268 residents Blind or Partially-Sighted, 600 residents Deaf or Hard of Hearing. In 1% households, no one over 16 speaks English.
- My Wealden fly tipping and graffiti reporting.
- Web-based micro-news sites: *Uckfield News, Crowborough Life, Pevensey Bay Life, Eastbourne Buzz*.
- WDC Twitter: 6,288 followers, 588 following, content seen 1.2m times in 2016/17.
- All Council and Planning Committee meetings are **webcast** live

Following the presentations, the following items were discussed:-

- Whether there should be a 'Welcome Pack' for new residents. It was generally agreed that it is not always easy to identify newcomers, that information would have to be delivered and there was no easy process for doing so.
- Why the WDC 'My Alerts' system only shows planning applications within 400m; noted that this is a statutory duty and WDC is looking at increasing the area.
- The decrease in bus services was mentioned and whether there would be better communication from WDC of, for example, bus timetables.

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- It was mentioned that the Parish magazines are a useful information source.
- Clerk and Councillors should consider attending more 'drop in' functions and community group meetings to enhance Council's two-way communication around the Parish.

The Marjory Pegg 2017 Awards for Services to the Community – The Chairman delivered the following report and presentations:-

When Marjory Pegg left Maresfield in September 2003 for her new home in France, the Parish said goodbye to someone who had been enthusiastically involved in community life for over 30 years, including a number as Chairman of the Parish Council. It was decided that each year a salver would be presented in her honour to someone nominated by the residents of Maresfield Village, and in 2012 this was extended to the whole Parish as the 'Marjory Pegg Awards for Services to the Community'. Sadly, Marjory passed away in April 2014.

Many people help to build the fabric of village life in many different ways, by running local businesses, organising social clubs, serving on committees, giving their time to support local events and being a good neighbour and friend.

This year Mrs Jenny Lazenby from Fairwarp (posthumously) and Mrs Sheila Cumming from Maresfield jointly received the Marjory Pegg Salver.

Jenny was a true member of the community always happy to help and support wherever needed. She was a stalwart of Christ Church both as a sacristan and as a choir member. She also raised thousands of pounds for the Church organising the Jumble Sale, a Quiz Night and the Christmas Bazaar each year.

Jenny would always actively support any fundraising in the village especially with baking her delicious cakes to sell or be raffled, and by helping with the Village fete, Fairwarp QE2 Pavilion Appeal and Fairwarp Community Society.

She will be much missed and it is very good to honour her memory in this way.

Sheila is Chairman of the Maresfield Conservation Group and is always out and about, whether delivering the local Church magazine, being involved in the new children's play area (now completed), planting beautiful flowers in the newly sited flower beds at the beginning and the end of the village and also she is very involved in the running of the village hall, organizing the village clean up, helping at the village fete and arranging the mince pies for the annual lighting of the village Christmas Tree.

There are other good works that Sheila is involved in around the Village - and she still finds time for her own home and beautiful garden and being a grandparent – how does she fit it all in!

This year the following people were given a Community Award Certificate for selflessly giving their time in various ways:-

1. Mrs Pat Bowler – for working tirelessly as the Secretary of the village hall. She never stops working for the hall and is always cheerful and on-hand with help and encouragement for all.
2. Nutley 'Little Deers' Pre-School Team – The Nutley pre-school, Little Deers, nearly folded a couple of years ago. Since then the staff and Committee have pulled out all the stops to bring this vital resource back from the brink. This year they have received a good Ofsted report which is unbelievable in such a short time. The pre-school is key to the future of the village and we are pleased to recognise this team for all its hard work.
3. Mrs Pat Palmer - for all her hard work in organising the Maresfield Fete and the Christmas tree lighting event. Had she not stepped forward to manage and coordinate the organisation and administration required for these village events, they may have been lost to the village forever.

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4. Mrs Patricia Sidwell – for ten years until 2016, she worked tirelessly to ensure that the Christmas lights were put up on the Nutley War Memorial Hall. For three years during this period Patricia organised the Christmas festivities at the Memorial Hall which included a choir, music, food, a fairground and gifts for the children.

Public Questions & Answers Session

Mr Robert Smith stated he had tried to get some action on traffic speeding on the Straight Half Mile via the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP); he stated it was dangerous to walk along this road especially with children. CCllr Galley noted that the Straight Half Mile has a flashing speed sign as does Nutley along with pedestrian crossings and a Speed camera, but vehicles still speed there. In response, the Chairman noted that the Council has a Road Safety Committee but it is finding it difficult to progress this issue, the SSRP, Sussex Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner appear to be relatively ineffective in this area. The Chairman noted that a former Councillor campaigned for two years for the introduction of average speed cameras; but this resulted in a trial in a couple of the large towns, not in Nutley as hoped.

Mr Bert Keeys raised the issue of the 'large' management costs and structure of the Ashdown Forest Conservators. Mr Fred Taylor stated that it is a facility enjoyed by all and should a £1 addition to the Parish Council's precept be considered? Cllr Watson noted that the greenbelt was also for people who live in towns to enjoy the countryside and perhaps they should also be asked to contribute. Mrs G Allen stated that, as a Forest volunteer, she knows that people come from 'all over' to visit the Forest. DCllr Lunn raised the possibility of charging for car parking in the Forest, noting there are currently donation boxes in the car park.

The Chairman reported on a meeting with the Forest Conservators that he and Cllr Mrs Reeves had attended on the 27th April 2017. He noted that there was an estimated shortfall in the Conservators routine maintenance budget of £60k for each of the financial years 2018/19 & 2019/20 and that the possibility of Town and Parish Councils making contributions was being considered.

A straw poll conducted by the Chairman of those present at the Assembly gave a unanimous vote in favour of the Parish Council making a contribution of up to £5K.

Chairman's Summing-up

The Chairman rounded up the evening by thanking the guest speaker, County, District and Parish Councillors, the Clerk & Asst. Clerk and members of the community for attending and being part of this year's Annual Assembly and the WI for providing the refreshments.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

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Annual Report of Maresfield Parish

The Annual reports from the Parish Council and reports from Parish Groups were handed out at the meeting. In addition to the Parish Council, the following groups gave a report on their activities for the past year:-

- Ashdown Evergreens
- Fairwarp Echo
- Fairwarp Football Club
- Fairwarp Sunday Juniors Football Training Group
- Fairwarp QEII Field
- Fairwarp Stoolball Club
- Fairwarp Village Hall
- Fords Green Management Committee
- Nutley Pre-School
- Nutley Horticultural Society
- Nutley War Memorial Trust
- St James the Less, Nutley
- St Bartholomew's Church
- Maresfield Conservation Group
- Maresfield Village Hall
- Maresfield Village Meadows Trust
- Maresfield Historical Society
- North Wealden Community Transport Partnership
- Victim Support
- East Sussex County Council
- Wealden Citizens Advice