

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting (Assembly) for Salehurst & Robertsbridge, held Monday 25 April 2022, 8pm, Robertsbridge Hall, Station Road

Presiding: Cllr Nick Brown, Chairman of the Parish Council. Road.

Present: **Electors:** 63 **Press:** None

Parish Council: Cllr Gillian Branford; Cllr Nick Brown; Cllr Clive Cooke; Cllr Sean O'Hara; Cllr Roger Palamarczuk; Cllr David Todd; Karen Ripley, Clerk; Gill Colquhoun, Asst. Clerk.

Rother District Council: Cllr Sue Prochak

Apologies: Cllr Paul Redstone (ESCC)

Doors were opened to the public at 7.15 with opportunity to mingle, view local groups tables etc. The following groups and organisations had tables or displays:

Motor Enthusiasts Group; Little Gumboots; Cricket Club; Archaeological Society; Wine Club; St Mary's Church and Bellingers; Helping Hand; Rococo Choir; ESCC Footpath Group; Rob. Allotments & Gardening Assoc.; Bridgemen Choir; Rother Valley Railway.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. He thanked local organisations for their displays and the W.I. for once again kindly organising the refreshments for the evening.

The Chairman introduced Daryl Holter and Emma Phillips, our local PCSO's who gave a brief introduction and update on policing and crime in the area.

- 1. MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING 4 MARCH 2019** – the Chairman signed the Minutes of the last APM (none held in 2020 or 2021 due to Covid-19). He advised that copies are available on the Parish Council Website.
- 2. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL – CLLR NICK BROWN** gave a short review of the last two years – a strange period, but stressed that S&R had been a good place to be during the pandemic and lock-downs, with the whole community coming together to help and support each other. Joint /response working between Helping Hands and the PC, with support as always from the Darvell Community had been swift and effective. The Street Champion system worked incredibly well, supported by many volunteers and was a great asset to the community. The Clerks had quickly and efficiently set up operations from home, so the work of the Council continued fairly normally.

The Pandemic, and recently storm Eunice, had highlighted the requirement to formalise the Parish Emergency Plan and work has started on this (with Darvell and HH input). Forms were available by the door for folk to volunteer, offer help etc and the Chairman encouraged people to complete these.

Other things the PC have been doing include: signposts; dog bins; two new bridges in Bishops Meadow; a major bridge repair in the Pocket Park; resurfacing of the Cemetery entrance drive, with new gates and fencing and a new hardstanding inside the gate for a hearse; a new defib at the Recreation Ground; looked at volume and speed of traffic in the village and commissioned surveys - in fact average speed was below 30mph – but measures to tackle the issues are being investigated, including the provision of a Vehicle Activated Sign that can be used in various location for a few months at a time. The PC also fought and managed to prevent the introduction of parking meters in the High Street.

He reminded the meeting that all Members of the Parish Council are volunteers and receive no payment – they join because they care about the parish and residents, and do their best to maintain and improve our incredible village and community. He encouraged people to apply to stand when vacancies occur.

- 3. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR SUE PROCHAK** – Cllr Prochak explained that Salehurst & Robertsbridge is now a single Member ward, so she is the only Rother District Councillor representing S&R. Her full report is available on the PC website but she highlighted a few matters: the Community Grant Scheme; Jubilee Grants; Community lottery; the very effective Covid-19 joint response. And she praised and welcomed new initiatives like the Repair Café.

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q. Was Silverhill included in the traffic surveys?

A. No, they were done within the 30mph area; the A21 is Highways England responsibility and concerns should be addressed to them.

Q. Is it possible to reduce the speed in Bishops Lane.

A. Cllr Todd advised that unfortunately it does not meet the criteria – there have been no fatalities and there are insufficient dwellings. But the PC is trying to find solutions.

Q. A resident asked who would be responsible for dealing with the trees that have fallen in woods on the other side of the A21?

A. It is private land and the responsibility of the land owner, who will be contacted.

There was a break for refreshments, mingling, time to view local information and talk informally with electors / local elected Councillors.

5. REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS / ORGANISATIONS

Sixteen local groups gave brief verbal reports.

6. STREET CHAMPIONS – celebration and thanks from the Community - the Chairman expressed the thanks of the Parish Council and whole community to the fifty three people who volunteered to act as Street Champions during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Some had expressed that they didn't feel 'worthy' of the praise/certificate because they 'had not had to do very much', however the Chairman refuted that, explaining that it was about the 'stepping up' and being willing to help if and when needed – not how much they did or didn't actually have to do. Every one of them had played an important part, even if it was just reassurance to the residents in their patch that they had a direct line of help / support if needed. And to the response group knowing they had that those willing volunteers out there. Ten were present to receive a certificate of thanks.

7. NOTICES & INFORMATION FROM THE CLERKS – NONE

The Chairman rounded of the evening by suggesting that residents should consider joining the Parish Council – and that if they wanted to topple the regime, all nine seats come up for election next year, in May 2023 😊

He thanked the W.I. for the lovely refreshments, the Wine Club for the excellent choice of wine, his fellow Councillors and the Clerks for their work and support.

Meeting closed: 21:30