

HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

Monday 7 April 2025, 7pm
Heathfield Community Centre

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: Attry, Browne, Coffey, Collins, Deacon, Draper, Dunstall, Leney, Mayfield, Rivers, Snook (Chair), Stedman, Thomas and Whitehouse.

Also present: ESCC Cllr Bowdler and WDC Cllrs Collins & Gadd.

Representatives of the following organisations had stands at the event:

Youth Hub, Wealden Volunteering, Age Concern and Men's Shed, Churches Together, U3A, Guides, Heathfield and District Bonfire Society, Firs Surgery and Millennium Green

The Clerk was in attendance.

Approximately 62 members of the public were present.

25/01 Welcome by the Chair

The Chair, Cllr Gill Snook, welcomed everyone

25/02 Apologies for absence

The Clerk confirmed that apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Garnett, Hough and Stemp, ESCC Councillors Bennett, Cross and Chris Dowling, Lin Plant Chair of the Cross in Hand Amenities Association and Nus Ghani MP.

25/03 Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly for 2024

The minutes of the 2024 Annual Parish Assembly were approved and were signed by the Chair.

25/04 Annual report by the Chair of the Council – Councillor Gill Snook

The Chair introduced the Chairs of the Committees. She thanked Councillors and staff for their hard work and spoke about what the Council has achieved with regard to ideas put forward by residents in the Council's last strategic survey.

The Chair advised that ideally we would like to move the skatepark and asked that if anyone had land they would like to donate for a skatepark to contact the Parish Council.

25/05 Reports from Committee Chairs of what their Committee have been working on throughout the year:

a. Finance and General Purposes Committee - Cllr Mark Deacon;

Cllr Deacon spoke on the Committee's responsibilities, the grants that had been given, the expenditure and the comparison between this and the precept increase.

b. Leisure, Amenities and Burials Committee – Cllr John Rivers;

Cllr Rivers spoke on the Committee's responsibilities and expenditure. He thanked the Assistant Clerk and the Clerk for their work, Chris Davis at Agrifactors and volunteers including Heathfield and District Bonfire Society, Brighter Heathfield and Councillors whom he confirmed are also volunteers.

c. Planning and Highways Committee – Cllr Patrick Coffey;

Cllr Coffey spoke on the work the committee do and what they have achieved in the last 12 months. He advised of the volunteer groups we have worked with including the A267 safety action group. He highlighted Cllr Draper's work at the East Sussex Highways SLR (Strengthening Local Relationships) meetings.

Cllr Coffey advised that we have raised with ESCC regarding the uneven pavement in the High Street. He advised that 1 of our Cllrs is heavily involved in Speedwatch.

Cllr Coffey spoke about their challenges for 2025/26 and advised of a ruling regarding foul sewerage. He advised that the Parish Council have set up a devolution working party.

d. Community, Business and Development Committee - Cllr Gill Snook

Cllr Snook spoke on the committee's responsibilities and their achievements. She thanked Heathfield and District Bonfire Society for their work on the D Day celebrations.

She spoke on the work of the Youth Working Party.

The budget and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds were raised by Cllr Snook. She spoke on the committee's work for 2025/26.

25/06 Looking ahead

Cllr Snook spoke on the VE80 celebrations and the environment fair. She advised that the Council is working on a new strategic plan for 2026-29 and encouraged people to take a questionnaire home and return it to the office or to alternatively complete it online.

Cllr Snook spoke on devolution and advised that the Council are expecting that they will be required to do more. It is seen as an exciting opportunity

however, it will mean that the Council will need more money.

Cllr Snook highlighted the work being undertaken by All Saints Church and Heathfield and District Bonfire Society for the Remembrance Service and event at Cade Street on 8th May.

25/07 Opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of their Parish Council and to raise any matters of concern relating to the Parish.

Cllr Gadd (WDC) thanked the Parish Council for their welcome and support. He spoke on devolution and the impact this will have to his role. He spoke on double devolution and said that some things may be handed down to Parish Councils, he hopes that funding will follow. He would like the Parish Council to look into a community cinema. The Chair confirmed that people need to put what they want on the strategic plan questionnaire.

A member of the public queried a grant made to Waldron Church, however it was confirmed that this had been mis-read.

A member of the public asked about the hedging and the gate that had been installed at Theobalds Green allotments. Cllr Rivers confirmed that a grant had been obtained. A member of the public asked about justification of expenditure at the allotments, Cllr Rivers advised of the issue of workmen being covered in dog poo when they cut the grass. He confirmed that the picnic area was still available to members of the public.

A member of the public raised about how many 2-3 bedroom houses have been built in the last 12 months. Cllr Coffey confirmed that not as many of the smaller houses as they would like, which has also been raised in the Council's response to the local plan. Cllr Coffey confirmed that the Parish Council are supportive of smaller units and affordable housing.

Cllr Bowdler (ESCC) advised that he is supporting Broad Oak residents on their playing fields scheme, which has been put forward to the ESCC lead member for consideration. The youth hub is due to open the first week of July and it has been requested that the current hoardings be used to clad the outside pitch, at no extra cost.

A member of the public thanked the Parish Council for the new play area in Punnetts Town. He raised about the need to book to use the household waste site in future, which he said wasn't required and felt it would result in increased fly-tipping. The Chair confirmed that the Parish Council agreed with him and that 91.4% of those who responded to the consultation disagreed with a booking system, she asked Cllr Bowdler to respond. He confirmed that ESCC had to do the consultation and that he felt it didn't need a booking system. The Chair encouraged residents to write to ESCC.

A representative from FASCOH (Friends of All Saints' Church, Old Heathfield) advised that they had been working with the Parish Council and Heathfield and District Bonfire Society on the VE80 events. He has received notification from Balfour Beatty that they will be closing School Hill for work and he is now not sure whether to cancel their events. The Chair confirmed that the Parish Council are working hard to get the dates of the

work changed and asked the representative not to change anything at this stage.

A member of the public thanked the Parish Council and their staff for what they do on behalf of residents and for being welcoming and professional.

The Chair of the Council explained about the increase in the precept.

The meeting closed at 8:25pm

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