

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Pluckley Parish Meeting held on Monday 19 April 2004 at 8pm in Pluckley Village Hall

Present: Janet Gwillim in the chair, Russell Keep, Peter Campbell, James Ashby, Alan Davies, Simon Crookston, Cllr Andrew Wickham.

Parish residents: Paul Cornwell, Ann Cornwell, Jessamy Blanford, Jen Heathcote, Elizabeth Bloom, Karen Thomas, Cynthia Linzey, A I Selling, Emma Selling, O Weeden, E A Weeden, Cyril Hoad, Peter Walker, Don Luckhurst, Bruce MacDonald, Rosemary MacDonald, H Bowdery, Angela Bates, J Sims, Jim Buss, T D Webb, Kevin Parry, Rosemary Davies, Rosamond Rowan, Ivor Johnson, Eileen English, Alex Robinson, Leita Davies

Peter Rate of Dering Woodlanders

Clerk to the Council, Mrs Jackie Grebby

Apologies for absence were received from Ann Murray, Trevor Oliver, Sarah Dean, Paula Malpeli, KCC Cllr Richard King, Cllr Dr Robert Taylor.

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 7 April 2003, having been circulated, were approved (proposed Alan Davies, seconded Paul Cornwell) and signed by the chairman.

The minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 2 October 2003, having been circulated, were approved (proposed Russell Keep, seconded James Ashby) and signed by the chairman.

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report: Mrs Gwillim welcomed everyone to the meeting, saying that the past year had been particularly busy with a lot of major items occurring in the village.

After the public meeting about the Pluckley Brickworks and the Recycling plant the parish council had meeting with and ABC. The Environment Agency have not received an application for a licence to operate. A sub committee has been set up and meets on a Wednesday when there are items for discussion.

The speed management survey undertaken by ABC has been received and is on the agenda. There are also waiting restrictions suggestions at the station area.

The Wealden Wheels Transport Initiative which has been a joint venture between Charing, Egerton, Smarden, and Pluckley is now up and running. Parish councillor, Alan Davies, has put in the work for this project.

There were 49 planning applications during the year, of these seven were rejected by the PC, most of the planning applications were for alterations or extensions.

The Design Statement is now published and copies are on sale for £5. This has been adopted by ABC as supplementary planning guidance, to the Ashford Borough Council Local Plan.

The precept set for the year 2004-5 together with a breakdown is available for residents to inspect.

Pluckley Village Hog fair will take place on 3 July. A lot of hard committee work has gone into this, which will hopefully be the best ever.

Broadband: The village need Broadband, more villagers need to register – about 124 to date have registered and we need 150.

Wealden Wheels: Alan Davies gave a brief report on this initiative, saying that there were leaflets available. Anyone can start a group and after the basic subscription of £10 may hire the vehicle at 80p per mile. It was planned to use the vehicle for some regular runs around the villages and into Ashford, Headcorn, etc. as needed.

Cllr Andrew Wickham: In his first report as district representative, he thanked residents for their support and reported that Ashford Borough Council had one of the lowest rises in council tax in Kent, and would have been even lower if government money had not been diverted to the north of England. With regard to the development of Ashford, the borough has many 'brown field' sites that would take priority. A review of the Ashford ring road suggests that certain sections of it may be made into two-way, particularly on the Elwick Road section. It is proposed that with quality architecture in the town centre would make it a vibrant area for people to live. The borough council is totally committed to recycling, but not if it results in overspending. He commended the work of the highways department's speed management project, but

said that the implementation of their suggestions should be foremost what the local residents want. Finally, although ABC no longer make free collections of bulk waste from households, the Chart Leacon site is still free to all householders.

Pluckley Gardening Society: Jenny Heathcote, chairman, reported that membership was currently 140 and that spring and autumn shows and a plant sale were held every year. Members had travelled to Sutton Valence for flower arranging classes and a successful talk and visit to a lavender farm had taken place. Last summer a free trip to Hyde Hall was financed by a wine and wisdom evening. Other talks and co-ordinating visits are planned and 25 members were visiting Highgrove.

Friends of St Nicholas': Chairman, Elizabeth Bloom reported that the Friends had been set up to raise money for the repair of the church. There are members from all denominations and the total raised was £67,000, of which £46,000 has been spent. The balance is for urgent repairs. There was always room for more members and the annual meeting of the Friends would take place on 21 April.

Pluckley Senior Citizens' Club: Chairman Cyril Hoad, reported that the club met once a month on the first Monday, when there were speakers and entertainers. There were five outings a year and two theatre visits. There were currently 25 members and the minimum age was 50 years.

Royal British Legion – Pluckley and Little Chart Branch: Secretary Peter Walker said that this was an active group of 45 members. The president was Sir Robert Johnson and Lady Johnson was responsible for the successful annual Poppy Appeal. The branch organises the annual memorial service in St Nicholas' and Little Chart church and the two-minute silence. Alan Johnson is the new standard bearer. Membership is just £10 per annum, but one does not have to be ex-servicemen or women to join – there are associate members.

Pluckley Recreation Fund: Karen Thomas, secretary, reported that the fund stood at £550 and the committee had decided to donate this to the school to fund the proposed pond and new goal posts on the recreation ground.

TROT: Ros Rowan reported that the toll ride was currently 26 miles and included 17½ miles of toll ride plus Hothfield Common and Dering Woods. There were 140 members, 72 of whom live within 15 miles hacking distance. All riders greatly appreciated those car drivers who kindly slow down when passing them. The sponsored ride has a new committee so it will be run again this year in August.

Pond Warden: Ros Rowan as the new pond warden reported that she had undertaken some training and was keen to share her new found knowledge. She requested that anyone who thought they may have crested newts in their pond to contact her.

Dering Woods: Peter Rate the group organiser reported that the Woodland Trust manages 304 acres on Dering Wood since 1997. Currently they are beset by vandals some of whom have wrecked the main car park with a digger and lowloader. The gate is being replaced with a steel swing opener to stop high vehicles and fly tipping and new notice boards will be going up soon. Changes are being made to the tracks and there will be new red and blue paths and a review of the wetter paths. A working group usually of 8 to 10 people meet on the first Sunday of each month, 10am in the main car park. Anyone is welcome to join them.

Pluckley Village Hall Management Committee: Annual Report: during the last year thanks to Ann Murray a £7,000 grant from Brett Environment Trust and £2,500 from Ashford Borough Council had been received to help with the improvements project. Other funding had come from a very successful fireworks night, thanks to Peter Russell, Judy Pool and friends, and from the parish council. The money had been spent on a disabled ramp, new doors and windows, resealing the floor and a complete redecoration, both inside and out. There were still more items needing attention, including background heating.

The committee consisted of Jackie Grebby, Judy Pool, Cyril Hoad, Michael Barton, Rosemary Davies – all of whom were prepared to stand for re-election – and two members of the parish council. All were re-elected unanimously.

Hills and Other Unknown Donors Charity: the accounts had been prepared and were available for inspection. £300 had been distributed at Christmas and the income for 2003 was £396.

Pluckley Speed Management Scheme: The proposals from Kent Highways Department to implement a 40mph speed limit from Glebe Cottages on Forge Hill to just beyond Lambden Road, from the top of Station Road to the village hall, in Lambden Road, and in the station area was discussed at length. Some residents objecting to the 'dragons' teeth' markings and the coloured roads. It was commented that over the past 30 years only a 'handful' of serious accidents had occurred and these may not have been prevented by speed limits. There would be a problem enforcing any speed limits as there would have to be

both speed cameras and regular checks. Other residents were not in favour of any speed limits at all. A suggestion that if everyone parked on both side of the roads then traffic would automatically be slowed down without the need for speed limits. Another suggestion was that a by-pass is built. It was agreed that the proposed road markings would 'urbanise' the village. It was asked whether it was legal for the parish council to contribute towards the cost of speed management. The clerk advised that parish council did have those powers.

The proposal was put that the parish would like an additional 40mph speed limit in the village but with minimum signage. Voting 22 in favour, 6 against. The proposal was carried.

The proposal was put to the parish that 'direction signs should be erected at the Fir Toll incorporating the word "slow" together with Give Way signs' Carried unanimously.

Street Junction alterations – proposed that the plans submitted by Babbie be accepted – carried unanimously.

The question was put that the parish council accept donations towards funding the speed management scheme. This was defeated unanimously.

The question was put that the parish council raise the precept for the next financial year to help pay for funding the speed management scheme. This was defeated unanimously.

Station Parking: it was suggested that more parking at the station was needed. If parking was restricted then traffic would speed up. Rather than yellow lines, bollards would prevent vehicles parking on the verges. No waiting signs would not work as people just abandon their cars without a care – they can afford the parking tickets. People would just park further away from the station. Start a campaign to report all cars that cause an obstruction to the police. Would residents at the station without their own parking get a parking permit?

The clerk advised that the parish council had written to all residents within the station area and any decision was dependent upon a majority reply. She had been in several talks with Kent Highways over the situation and, while the preferred parish council solution was to have no waiting restricted to just one hour per day, Highways had finally replied that this was not possible. The council was prepared to go back to them again if necessary.

Any other business:

Jessamy Blanford gave a vote of thanks to the parish council for the work they did for the parish.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:40pm.