

FELBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month (except January and August)
at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday, 7th April 2016 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall

Present: Mrs. Bridget Huntington (Vice Chairman) Mrs Linda Hainge
Mr Ian McBryde Mr Brian Apps
Mrs Joan Harwood Ms. Georgina Chapman
Mrs Patricia Slatter (in attendance)

The Vice-Chairman introduced herself and welcomed twelve people to the meeting including Parish Councillors.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Mr. Jeremy Clarke (Chairman) Mr Ken Harwood (District Councillor), Michael Sydney (County Councillor), Carol Apps, Lynda and John Railton, Marion Wynn and Tony Leppard.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 9th April 2015 were noted having been signed previously.

3. **MATTERS ARISING** - None

4. **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Vice Chairman Bridget Huntingdon passed on Chairman Jeremy Clarke's apologies for his absence caused by the necessity for him to attend a Planning Meeting at the Tandridge District Council offices in Oxted.

Following on from last year's excellent presentation by Community First Responders and Cllr Michael Sydney's generous offer of funding, a defibrillator has now been installed outside the Village Hall. The instructions are on the cabinet, and specify that you must call 999 to get the code to open the cabinet. Whilst we hope that it won't be required it is good to know that the facility is available to all residents and visitors to the village.

FPC are continuing to review and implement items from the Community Survey. The Community Café was put on a back burner whilst the future of the empty shop in Crawley Down Road was being determined, as Chetan who runs the Village Stores had expressed an interest in opening that as a Café. Now that opportunity is not being progressed, we will investigate alternatives, including an option at the Village Hall.

We have investigated a number of options for a public accessible toilet at the Village Hall Grounds. Unfortunately the cost of running public toilets is high, hence why so many Councils are closing them. However, we will be trialling a temporary facility this summer to see how much benefit it provides.

The Community Survey also identified the need for additional seating near the children's play area at the Village Hall and there were also requests for covered seating. We combined these and you may have now seen that there is a new covered shelter next to the play area and skateboard ramp. Fortunately we were able to secure a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner to minimise the cost of this project to the electorate.

The Transparency Code came into effect this year and marks a major change in the way that all Parish Councils make their information available to the Public. The code required us to have a dedicated website where all of our agendas and minutes can be found within specified timelines. Pat our Clerk has worked very hard with the Web Designers to produce a compliant website for the Parish Council. You will also find all of our financial information and budget updates as they take place during the year. Now we have completed the mandatory elements of the site, we can now add other items that our Community want to see on the Parish Council web pages. The address is www.felbridge-pc.org.uk, please let us know what else you would like to see on the site.

The condition of our roads is still very poor in some places, with regular areas being repaired and breaking up shortly afterwards. We continue to press Surrey Highways who are responsible for our roads to improve the situation. We review a list of the reported defects monthly with our County Councillor who takes our concerns back to Surrey Highways. You will find the current Highway defects lists on the new Parish Council website.

As in previous years, we have had a number of significant planning applications that have raised local concerns. Mid Sussex District Council has approved two applications totalling over 50 dwellings coming out onto Copthorne Road, just before the Star junction and on Crawley Down Road opposite the village green. However, Tandridge District Council have to approve the entrance and access to the site before work can commence and we have made thorough representations to them to try to prevent the negative impact that these developments would have upon us if they progressed.

We continue to be vigilant in protecting Felbridge as much as is possible and managed to secure an emergency tree preservation order to protect all remaining trees at Little Eden when a mature beech tree was felled.

Unfortunately we were unable to secure such protection for the Site next to Acacia Cottage on Crawley Down road, which, was cleared of all vegetation. Both Mid Sussex and Tandridge Council Tree Officers were informed but neither considered the trees worthy of protection. There is a planning appeal being considered for this site and the circumstances of the site clearance has been explained to the Planning Inspector. Sadly, even if the appeal is dismissed, nothing be done to bring back the mature trees in our or our children's lifetime.

The Parish Council has given financial support over the last year to St Catherine's Hospice, Hedgecourt Scout group (for tents), Surrey Wildlife Group and The Village Hall towards a new patio at the rear of the building. This is in daily use by the playgroup when they are running and no doubt will benefit many other users of the village hall.

Finally I wish to thank all of our Councillors who give their time voluntarily to your Parish Council. I also want to thank Pat Slatter who became our clerk during the past year. She was helped and trained by Ros White our outgoing clerk and has stepped up to the new requirements of the transparency code and ensured that we are A compliant Council in that respect. I would like to add to Jeremy's comments that although Pat has only been in her post a short time she has very quickly become a knowledgeable and indispensable member of the council as Ros was before her. I would also like to mention Brian, our Responsible Finance Officer who does a wonderful job and has the Auditors coming in for their yearly visit on Monday. Thank you Brian.

The Vice-Chairman recommended the report for adoption. This was proposed by Ian McBryde and seconded by Brian Apps.

5. TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

Parish Councillor Ian McBryde introduced himself and said that he would provide an overview on the Tandridge District Council Local Plan and how it would affect Felbridge residents.

The Local Plan is a document produced by Tandridge District Council covering the whole district. This is not to be confused with the Neighbourhood Plans which cover local area or Parishes only. The current local plan was adopted in 2008. The Local Plan will set out the vision for the district for the next 20 years and provide a framework for the future improvement, development and local protection of the district and the Green Belt.

The Local Plan will have objectives, identified during the development of the plan and shaped by: the issues facing the district, national planning policy, neighbourhood plans, evidence from a range of assessments and community and other feedback gathered through formal consultations.

Why do we need a Local Plan? Firstly, the Local Plan allows local people to have a say on setting local planning policies. Secondly, this gives us some control over how our area grows and develops in future and how we protect it. Without a Local Plan, future development would be decided solely in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Plan is created by Tandridge District Council in consultation with interested parties, and follows a process laid out in national planning policy. It involves several stages including: reviewing existing national, sub-national, county, sub-region and local strategies – for example the National Planning Policy Framework, the Strategic Economic Plan (Coast to Capital Growth Deal), Surrey Rural Strategy, East Surrey Housing Strategy etc; setting a vision for the district for the next 20 years; developing a strategy to deliver the vision and objectives before finally submitting the detailed Local Plan to government for inspection.

The initial public consultation on the Council's draft Local Plan took place from 18 December 2015 to 26 February 2016. The document was called '**Our local plan – issues and approaches**'. These approaches considered future housing, employment, business and leisure needs. For the avoidance of doubt and to put minds at rest, the first phase consultation:

- Does not change current planning rules.
- Does not change the boundaries of our towns and villages.
- Does not change the protection of the Green Belt or put the Green Belt at additional risk.
- Does not set where new building will take place nor how much there will be.

The Issues and Approaches document did not take account of technical assessments such as the Green Belt Assessment, Transport Modelling, Infrastructure Baseline Study, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment but all of these will be considered in the first draft. There have been about 2,500 responses, some web based and some emails and other correspondence. I have heard that it may take 5 months to collate all the comments. A broad summary of responses was: opposition to the level of housing deemed to be required in the District (however, there was a general acceptance that more homes were needed); a view that it was not appropriate for the District to accommodate growth from London; a need to protect the rural nature of the District, including opposition to any approach that would result in the release of Green Belt land and / or loss of open space; concerns over the impact of development on infrastructure, specifically schools, roads and GP surgeries (views had also been expressed that, where development took place, infrastructure would need to be provided in advance); opposition to the development of certain sites which were identified within the consultation document and opposition to the potential location of Gypsy and Traveller sites;

There has been some criticism in the way that the initial consultation was carried out. The document was extremely complicated and there was a lot of cross references to other documents and strategies. In addition the period included Xmas!

The planned timeline for developing this plan is: Summer 2016 - updating of draft Local Plan; Autumn/Winter 2016 - second formal public consultation on the revised draft Local Plan; Summer 2017 examination by the government's independent Planning Inspectorate: Winter 2017 - Adoption of the Local Plan.

Ian McBryde then went on to say a few words about some of the current planning applications in the village. In general FPC are highly challenging on any application which creates further traffic, or incursion into the Green Belt or the countryside area in Mid Sussex.

17 Copthorne Road – had previously received permission from MSDC and TDC, but due to time constraints the developer has requested dispense with a pre-condition of the grant of planning consent to start on site BEFORE dealing with the alterations to the A264,. This had been turned down on highway safety grounds - the access way **must** not be constructed before realignment works as this would lead to inadequate visibility.

11a Crawley Down Road –MSDC have given consent, but TDC are dealing with this tonight. The Planning Committee has been recommended to grant consent for the access to the potential 32 homes. The Chairman is speaking against the application on the grounds of: traffic, development outside the built up area, impact on the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest and lack of SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) provision, amongst other things.

Mr. McBryde then answered some general questions from members of the public regarding how and where villagers can find out about planning applications and decision made. He replied that all planning decisions were covered in the minutes of the planning and Parish Council minutes. Minutes will continue to be posted on the noticeboard at the Village Hall but from the end of March were also available online on the Parish Council's new website. Minutes will be posted online within seven days of each Parish Council meeting.

Vice- Chairman Bridget Huntingdon thanked everyone for attending. The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 7.55pm.

15th April 2016

Copies sent to:- all Parish Councillors, District Councillor, County Councillor, EG Courier and Observer, Felbridge School, Surrey Police, Felbridge School Governors.