

## **Minutes from Annual Parish Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7pm Partridge Green Village Hall**

Speakers: Cllr Reynolds (Chair), Amy Hurn (Weald to Waves), Mike Green (PG Swift Project)

Councillors in attendance:

- District Councillors Lynn Lambert and Joanne Knowles
- County Councillor Sarah Payne
- Parish Councillors Rachel Richards, Nick Hare, Nick Hirst, Justin Reynolds (Chair), David Green, Jack Masters, Tony Yeowell, Olivia Izzard, Suzie Hamblin-Boone

26 members of the public attended

### **1) Talk from Weald to Waves – Amy Hurn**

Amy gave an informative talk on the Gardens and Greenspaces element of the Weald to Waves project, and encouraged all residents to sign their garden up to help increase biodiversity at [www.wealdtowaves.co.uk](http://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk). Partridge Green is in a strategic position between the Knepp and Shermanbury estates and our gardens really can make a difference by providing a wildlife corridor to help a variety of species make the journey between the two.

### **2) Update on Swift project – Mike Green**

Mike gave an update on the project with a total of 19 double swift boxes plus several single and even a triple box to encourage swifts to nest in the area. They are sadly declining, with their population two-thirds less than there were in the 1990s. Anyone interested in the project can contact Mike or Richard who can look at the potential for more boxes next year if there is funding available. This year we will watch and wait to see if they arrive! Visit [Swiftmapper.org.uk](http://Swiftmapper.org.uk) and [Sos.org.uk](http://Sos.org.uk) for further information.

### **3) Chairman's summary**

A warm welcome to everyone and thank you very much for coming.

Thank you to the Councillors for their time and commitment to the voluntary role serving the community. Lots has happened since our last Annual Parish Meeting.

#### **• New council clerk appointment and changes to our meeting schedule**

After a spell of two temporary clerks, we are delighted to have appointed a new, permanent clerk at the end of last year, Julia Shorrocks. Julia is an experienced clerk and we are already feeling the benefit of that having passed our audit with flying colours. Julia is in the office Weds, Thurs and Fri mornings.

We have made some changes to our meeting schedule to make the most of councillors' and the clerk's time and avoid duplicating issues across different committee meetings. Planning remains on 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month but our finance, open spaces and full council meetings are now held consecutively on the same night, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month – all meetings are in the village hall side room at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome to any or all of these.

#### **• Planning issues**

Our planning committee were busy assessing the proposed developments in the village, including hosting 21 members of the public at our meeting in December who were interested in plans for land on Bines Road. We also attended the Horsham draft Local Plan meeting in January. All the current planning issues are available on our website, as are the minutes of our meetings where you can view our recommendations. We do not have permissive powers but we are a key consultee so it's important we represent the views of the parish. The local plan has been rejected by the Inspector and all the details are on the HDC website.

#### **• KGV Playing Fields (the park)**

Plans to develop a multi-use gaming area (or MUGA) in KGV are in train, with potential designs being assessed. This would provide a much-needed sports facility for the wet winter months. Any proposal will need to go through the planning process but we know there is support for a MUGA following the petition submitted to the council in 2023.

Because the KGV playing fields are so water-logged during the winter, they are in effect unusable for any kinds of sporting event - including matches for our own football team who, after having successfully rebooted this year, find themselves unable to host home matches due to the pitch conditions. We are currently working with a local drainage company to look at options to make the playing fields more usable for everyone and hope to have some work done this spring/summer. If this window closes too soon we will finish in the autumn. In addition we have just approved a tender to resurface the entrance to the playing fields as it is currently in a terrible state and makes parking difficult. This work will also be completed before the summer.

- **Bus campaign**

Many of you will have been at the public meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October with James O'Neill, the Commercial Director of Stagecoach South East, and David Crockford, Transport Manager for West Sussex County Council, which around 150 people attended.

Unfortunately, the meeting didn't result in an agreement from Stagecoach to relook at the timetable which was hugely disappointing for everyone and despite support from our MP and District and County Councillors we are no further forward in improving the no17 service. The best thing we can do is use it – if we don't use it we will lose it! Thank you to everyone who has replied to our recent survey about various options, which we have shared with Stagecoach.

Conversations are continuing and we are certainly not giving up. We are delighted that Olivia Izzard has recently re-joined the council to take up the campaign and work with those that can help us to provide a sustainable transport service.

- **Vehicle activated display signs (VADS)**

Our VADS finally have their own posts and are in position along Church Road as you enter the village both from the north and south. We have not kept the camera at the entrance to the village by the KGV playing fields as the pinch point there has slowed the traffic down as it was designed to do.

- **Consultation on changes to council structures - devolution**

Councils in West Sussex are setting out options for how local authorities in the county can be organised in the future. The government wants to create a single tier of councils in places where there are currently two (or three if you include Parish Councils!).

There are several options on the table for government to consider, and the Parish Council has submitted our response to the current consultation where we have expressed concerns about the lack of accountability in the proposed structure. We will keep you updated via our website. This time next year there will probably be Mayoral elections.

- **Railway carriage, West Grinstead station**

The people who have responded to WSCC's offer to take on the disused railway carriage were in attendance and would like to talk to anyone with CIO experience – the bidders are here and happy to talk to anyone about it afterwards or via correspondence.

- **Climate emergency**

We continue to attend the Horsham Climate Network meetings and are currently working with them on plans to help individuals to price up the various retrofitting options for their home, and develop an action plan, within their budget, to make homes more energy-efficient. This will help the entire district to lower the carbon emissions as we move closer to the goal of net-zero. Please come along and find out more about our work on climate change at the Repair Café 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month 2-4pm.

- **Village Hall**

We have recently set up a new Village Hall Steering Group, comprising 4 parish councillors, 4 village hall CIO committee members and 2 independent member of the parish. They will be

looking at next steps following the successful consultation which saw overwhelming support for the option to progress a new hall at KGV playing fields. We have a long way to go but are hopeful that by the end of this year we will have an application in for planning permission. Many moving parts are involved, though! Budget is around £4m.

- **Forward look**

Looking ahead to the next few months, we have some great events planned:

- **8 May:** we will celebrate 80 years since VE Day 1945. We have commissioned a beacon specifically for the event, and hope everyone will join us at 6.30pm at Myers Wood to light it and remember this auspicious occasion.
- **21/22 June:** the return of the Open Gardens, a wonderful event that brings in visitors to our lovely village to appreciate the hard work of our keen gardeners. We are still looking for gardens to add to the event, so please get in contact with us at [clerk@westgrinstead-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westgrinstead-pc.gov.uk) if you are interested – we would love more people to take part.

#### **4) Questions from the public**

**How often does the dog bin at the end of the village hall lane get emptied?**

- We are aware it has been a problem; this week it has been overflowing. We have a village tidier who empties it every week but we will ask him to look at this again.

**Could we have another soil bin at the end of South St/Finches Close so that people walking back from the fields have somewhere to put it?**

- The District Council feel that PG has enough dog bins. It is unlikely that we would get agreement for further bin. Anti-social behaviour should be reported to the police.

**Concern about the footpath which crosses the Downs Link to Sussex Farm. There is nothing on that track to warn people that this is a crossing for pedestrians.**

- Noted, we can talk to the County Ranger.

**Pinch points – lots of hooting going on!**

- We have asked for double yellow lines to stop people parking by the bollard on the south side of the road, so that people can see clearly the oncoming traffic. We will follow this up.
- It was acknowledged that as many people like the various traffic control methods in place as hate them, and whatever is in place would never please everyone.

**Can we consider a speed camera? To impose fines?**

- Parish Council cannot control this but we can have traffic monitors. However residents doing this in other villages have shared their experience of being subject to abuse.
- Any volunteers who want to set something like this up, please do so.

**Would just like to say thank you to all the parish councillors who work for the village.**

- 5) **The meeting ended with drinks, nibbles and informal conversation on the points raised this evening.**