

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of BEECH

Held in the Village Hall on Monday, 25th MARCH 2019 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor David Woodroffe, Chairman
Councillor Ruth Duffin
Councillor Graham Webb
Councillor Daniel Gordon
Hampshire County Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee

Louisa Thomson, Clerk to the Council

OPEN MEETING -The Chairman welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies were received from East Hampshire District Councillor Tony Costigan, Parish Councillors David Fazakerley and Ian Hardy.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2018, copies of which had previously been circulated, **were proposed as a true record by Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee, Seconded by Councillor David Woodroffe and agreed and signed by Chairman David Woodroffe.**

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Copies of the Chairman's report were made available to all present and would appear in full in the next Beech Newsletter. Copy below:-

Beech Parish Council

Annual Report 2018/2019

As we approach the end of the council's year, I have pleasure in providing a summary of the matters addressed over the past twelve months.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

The plan is out for its first public consultation, during the last 12 months a Landscape Character Assessment was carried out to provide further supporting evidence for the plan.

Highways

Last November council approved the traffic calming scheme proposed by Hampshire Highways, the scheme has been added to their schedule of works.

In June the council responded to Hampshire County Council's street lighting survey.

We continue to monitor and inform HCC on road maintenance issues that arise from time to time such as potholes.

Development

In the past year the council has considered 17 planning and tree preservation order applications; these included:

Extensions to existing properties, new developments and the pruning of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Each application is considered in detail and the merits or detriments of each development assessed.

The loss of mature trees remains of particular concern to the Parish Council, and the ability of applicants of new developments to clearly demonstrate that all surface water run-off will be retained and disposed of on site.

The council have made comments on applications to this effect.

Council has also commented on East Hampshire District Council's draft local plan.

Footpaths, Bridleways, Community and Environment

We continue to monitor the state and accessibility of the footpaths and bridleways serving the village. Beech PC has continued to fund clearance and maintenance work on the footpath leading down to the A339. Where necessary we encourage those responsible to undertake maintenance and clearance of footpaths.

The council has purchased and had installed a defibrillator unit that has been positioned adjacent to the entrance to the village hall. The unit has been registered with the emergency services and appears on the national database. Training is being arranged for later in the year.

Finance

We are pleased to confirm that the Council's reserves remain safe and regular external and internal audit checks are undertaken to ensure correct financial procedures are followed.

Representatives

We thank our EHDC District Councillor, Tony Costigan, and Mark Kemp Gee our Hampshire County Councillor for their work in keeping Beech Parish Council up to date with what is happening at District and County Council levels and for all the lobbying they have done on our behalf.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Beech Parish Councillors and our Parish Clerk for their hard work and support.

QUESTIONS ON REPORT – There were no questions.

REPORT FROM HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARK KEMP-GEE

This time last year I talked briefly about finance. As we now know County Council Tax is up 3% for the municipal year, EHDC's share is unchanged but the police share has gone up by 13%, making 20% over the last 2 years and we are promised 130 more front line police!

As we know, 2019/20 marks the end of Hampshire's RSG from central government – it was some £500 million in 2010. So apart from odd specific grants engendered to do the government's bidding or help where we are most severely stretched like adult and children's social care and roads, of course, Hampshire is becoming mostly self-financing. Approximately 5% of our total tax is raised and spent locally compared to 50% in the USA, Canada and France. So we sent 95% of taxes up to London and get virtually nothing back apart from the education budget. No wonder, with Central Government in a state of total sclerosis on all matters apart from, or should I say, including Brexit, the demand for massively increased devolution for Hampshire becomes stronger by the day. Our GDP is greater than Wales, which is now collecting all central and local taxes from this April onwards, like Scotland. Also, interestingly, IHT collected from the GU postcode is now greater than Wales and Northern Ireland combined! As it is, our schools are some of the best in England, with 92% of school children getting first choice placements despite numbers going up by around 8% per annum. Meanwhile we have the second lowest council tax in England. Our mantra at County is efficiency and pragmatism and I think without being complacent, we continue in that vein despite immense financial pressures.

Also we are substantial investors in infrastructure such as new roads, broadband and new expanded schools in particular. We are also new taking responsibility for certain housebuilding projects such as Manydown in Basingstoke. Our capital projects programme currently stand at over £800 million.

Beech matters:

I'm afraid we have made no progress with the police on speed cameras, but traffic calming measures, on Medstead Road seem to have improved matters and I look forward to their further implementation.

Thanks to the Parish Council Chairman David Woodroofe at the end of his term.

I am pleased to answer any questions.

MATTERS TO BE REFERRED TO PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of the public raised matters in the Beech Neighbourhood Plan regarding starter / smaller homes and affordable housing for younger people possibly on Snode Hill which will not affect the traffic and road safety on Medstead Road and Kings Hill.

Questioned what was the objective of the Neighbourhood Plan as in December 2018 and January 2019 EHDC made no housing allocation to Beech.

The EHDC Local Plan Brickkiln Lane and Basingstoke Road development was raised with a request that the Parish Council make robust objection to the proposal.

The matter of a 20mph speed limit for the center of the village was also raised.

The Parish Council Chairman responded that the Beech Neighbourhood Plan was in draft stage, so far over 160 comments from the public had been received and these would be taken into account when compiling the final version.

CLOSE OF MEETING -There being no further questions from the Public, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and formally closed the meeting at 8pm.

Signed:.....
Graham Webb
Chairman Beech Parish Council
Date: 23rd March 2020