

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT
BEECHWOOD HALL ON Wednesday 19th May 2021**

Present: Cllr.Tamsyn d'Arienzo (Chair)

In attendance:

Mrs N Kinch – Clerk to the Parish Council

5 members of Hamsey PC No members of the public Cllr Isabelle Linington -LDC

Cllr Matthew Milligan – County

Meeting commenced at 6.40pm.

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr Kate McBrown HPC and MP Maria Caulfield

2. Welcome and overview by the chair of the Parish Council.

Parish Council chair, Cllr.Tamsyn d'Arienzo welcomed all attendees to the meeting and sent congratulations to Cllr Milligan on his recent victory and appointment as East Sussex County Councillor.

Chair had asked all Councillor's to write a few words as a report on how they felt their time on the Council had been over the last term and for suggestions of any improvements or support they would like to see in place for them in order for them to be as effective as possible in their role this term on the council. (*Reports attached*).

Once the reports had been read, Cllr Croft lead by saying how grateful we are as a Parish Council to have such a wonderful Chair to offer support and guidance to everybody and how her community spirit and drive for improvements for everyone is so clearly seen in all that she does and achieves.

3. Minutes of the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting were agreed and signed as a true record

4. There were no matters arising from the 2019 meeting.

5. Report from the Parish Council as Sole Trustee of Beechwood Hall

Chair and Cllr Henry spoke about Beechwood Hall in their reports (attached)

6. The Lewes District Councillor gave her report

Cllr Linington too to the floor to tell all how this last year has been a very strange and unusual one, with the pandemic and restrictions everyone has had to adapt. Technology and online meetings have been the saving grace for many Councils and Parish Councils enabling things to run as smoothly as possible. All have been astounded by the community response and help offered especially in the local Parishes of Barcombe, Chailey and Hamsey, whereby Covid – responder Voluntary Groups have been set up to help those in need. Big thanks go to LDC for getting the much needed grants filtered down from Central Government and out to businesses in order to keep them afloat. The Portal is still running on the LDC website so businesses can continue to receive the funds they are eligible for as the pandemic continues. Cllr Linington stated that LDC are there to help anyone struggling or in need, with lots of help and support available. Planning has been a difficult issue with many controversial applications. A small success recently was had by Barcombe Parish, as a planning application had been refused as not suitable even though it was in the Lewes local Plan. This shall most likely go to appeal but it shows common sense can prevail. Optimism is the key and to keep positive.

Chair thanked Cllr Linington for her unending support to our Parish community and for attending our meetings so diligently. Chair stated that LDC have been very fast and efficient in dealing with any issues we may have experienced and the grants for Beechwood Hall have been gratefully received.

Cllr Milligan introduced himself to all attendees and is keen to work alongside the Parish Council. Chair expressed her thanks on behalf of the Parish Council for his support.

7. The clerk/financial officer to the council gave the financial report

Financial Report for End of Year 2021 for Hamsey Parish Council

Balance per bank statement as at 31 st March 2021	£
Unity Trust Account	£35,672.82
Less any unpresented cheques:	£ 759.48
Net Balances as at 31 st March 2021 of Unity Account	£34,913.34

The net balances reconcile to the receipts and payments accounts for the year as follows:

Opening balance 1 st April 2020	
Business Accounts	
Unity Trust Account	£27,562.74
Co-op Account	£5,282.83
Total of Accounts	£32,845.57
Add: Receipts in the Year	£31,206.92
Less: Payments in the Year	£25,002.37
Closing balance as of 31 st March 2021	£35,672.82

8. Questions from the floor

There were no questions

The meeting closed at 7pm

Mrs N Kinch, Clerk to Hamsey Parish Council
Beechwood Hall and Rural Park, Beechwood Lane, Cooksbridge, East Sussex
BN7 3QG
Tel: 07928 405071 Email: clerk@hamsey.net

Annual Parish Meeting reports from Councillors and Chair

Cllr Kate McBrown

Last year was a funny year as most of the time we spent it in lockdown but we were managed to get through it somehow. I manned the phone for the Covid responders and got some shopping for one resident in the village. I look forward to working with the residents of malthouse way to install a new play area for the children.

Chair:

Kate has been fantastic this year in manning the hall phone which doubled up during hall closure as the COVID volunteer line. Most of the calls we received were from volunteers offering to help where needed, which spoke volumes about our community. Kate was invaluable during this time liaising with all generations. Kate has been busy planning the

return of the parish children's Christmas party, and Kate's guidance for Father Christmas's sleigh last December was so helpful. Kate will pull her sleeves up and help with anything, and her ability to adapt and change roles with business needs this year has been a blessing to us.

Cllr Sue Fleming

Walking down the busy A275 between The Rainbow and Hamsey school with my young grandchildren I wanted to see what could be done about widening the path to make it safer for everyone. By September, I had joined Hamsey Parish Council, with responsibility for footpaths! With the help of Natalie, our clerk, who knew all the right people to talk to, the path was cut back as one of the first jobs undertaken by the council after lockdown. This got me interested in the bigger problem of cycle lanes and alternatives to car travel. I intend to continue to press for a cycle path from Chailey - Cooksbridge station and from Offham church into Lewes along the Old Coach Road byeway, avoiding the dangerous Offham bends. In January & February we began gathering together as an Environment Group, now called Sustainable Hamsey with about 30 members of the community interested in Biodiversity, Transport, Energy and Clean air. We will soon be able to meet in person and get cracking on new ideas - everyone welcome.

Although zoom was frustrating, in some ways it was easier to get involved with meetings hosted by a wide range of local organisations eg. South Downs National Park, 3VA, Lewes District Council and Lewes Climate Hub. Our rural area faces huge challenges from a main road running through; intensive, industrial farming practices and high dependency on oil to heat our homes.

Learning more about zero carbon in this time I now see it is an important starting point in understanding Climate Change and I will continue to see how best to raise awareness of where we are now and how we get towards a zero carbon footprint.

Chair:

Sue's energy and spirit are incredible! Sue has hit the ground running, taking on new responsibilities, connecting with people in the know and inspiring people far and wide that change may not be out of reach after all.

Cllr Christine Perkins

A feeling that the humble pedestrian young and old was getting overlooked within the village and the country as a whole encouraged my interest in joining the PC when asked to stand. Thankful for the work done to improve the local railway service, Since joining the PC at a meeting of the CSP i was now able to raise the issue of safe access for pedestrians, with no path on the down side of the line, no gritting of the down wood sloping entrance. Raise with Highways the condition of the paths in Chandlers mead, and again areas with no path, and no gritting in icy weather. The dream of a grit bin for Chandlers mead goes on.! With the increased awareness of the need to reduce Car use, as an environmental issue , I hope to help encourage more use of our public transport ensuring that it is safe for all villagers to access the services available and fight to keep and improve the services we have.. One of the plus sides of COVID and the lock down has I hoped to educate some into how easy it is to do without the car, and walk . The irony has been with all my aims is a personal lack of mobility the last year , which has made the online meetings and access to other meetings and training a bonus.

Chair:

Chris has got stuck straight into causes close to her heart and home. Chris has made a start on the laborious task of extracting improvements from the Highways department. Chris always often a considered viewpoint with a valuable new perception. I'm looking forward to seeing how things progress.

Cllr Carolyn Henry

I joined the Hamsey Parish council just after the first lockdown had started and have only known a socially distant way of working. Despite being remote, the sense of community spirit and motivation to represent the people of Hamsey as well as improve the services in our community has been very strong. This is why I wanted to move to this area, to be part of a community who support each other.

I have been involved with the Beechwood Hall and Rural Park work, including undertaking a survey of the community, setting up the Beechwood Hall Working Group, becoming the safeguarding trustee, supporting a marketing review to increase revenue post Covid and supporting the new initiatives planned.

I have also been involved with the Cooksbridge Rail Partnership, supporting activities that the very motivated and active members are currently undertaking to make the station and rail services to ensure they are up to standards.

Now that I am beginning to understand the breadth and depth of the work that the Parish Council does, I am looking forward to contributing further in the coming year.

Chair:

Carrie's professionalism, skills and training have been invaluable to HPC on many fronts since she joined. Many improvements and activities could not have happened without Carolyn's focus and drive which she bestows on her team with good grace and humour despite being so busy in other areas.

Cllr Caroline Croft

I was happy to join the Council in late 2020 as pulling together as a community and looking after each other seems more important than ever after everything we've been through recently. My first action was to look at rural internet connectivity with so many of us isolating or working from home. Together with a small group of residents we tried to get super-fast broadband to the remaining parts of the parish where the internet is so slow. Although there were technical and bureaucratic obstacles which meant we couldn't make progress as fast as we wanted, we're hoping the push will help us make significant improvements this year. My other main activity has been working with Cllr Sue Fleming in setting up the Hamsey Parish Working Group "Sustainable Hamsey". We were really pleased to have so many enthusiastic, committed and knowledgeable people signing up to the group. There have been several meetings looking at biodiversity, transport and energy use in the parish and we have built connections with other environmental projects and networks in Lewes District. Our group is supporting a very positive project at Hamsey Old Church to increase biodiversity through re-management of the churchyard. Many people volunteered to help at our action day at the church in March, removing substantial amounts of plastic, wire, old wreaths and displaced chalk to create a baseline situation for improved habitat.

I am looking forward to being able to meet in person as a Council and building on the progress we have made so far this year.

Chair:

We were so pleased when Caroline agreed to joining the council not long after being presented with a well-deserved Community Enhancement Award for her work on Patina for the benefit of Hamsey school children. Caroline is a pleasure to work with and it has been a joy to watch the recorded Sustainable Hamsey Environment meetings with Sue and Caroline working so well together and to hear about their excellent progress with Hamsey Old Graveyard among other projects.

Cllr Jim Redwood

I was co-opted onto the Parish Council at the meeting on 11th March, with planning as my main interest. Following a career in town planning, I was invited to consider co-option to help particularly with planning matters. I have enjoyed my first 3 months or so as a councillor, though there is so much to do - a great many e-mails, and a huge variety of issues to consider. There are many pressures on parish councillors that I had not expected. I have greatly appreciated Tamsyn's help, and Natalie's untiring support. It has been interesting to brush off

the cobwebs of my planning knowledge, though also somewhat frustrating to find that the erosion of local input and accountability to local communities is accelerating at an alarming speed. We are currently facing a barrage of development, within our parish, and in Lewes District more generally. The first document I was asked to comment on was the submissions on the 'call for sites' to Lewes DC, which, depressingly, invited landowners everywhere to consider offering their land up for housing. All the sites suggested are unacceptable, in varying degrees, and most are downright audacious in proposing housing in the middle of nowhere - hardly good planning! We also face a huge proposal in East Chiltington, one of our smallest neighbours, and a truly rural parish, with proposals from Eton college for 3,000 houses - again in the middle of nowhere. I have also drafted comments on a major development in Plumpton where the principle of development is contrary to their neighbourhood plan, but where developers are being encouraged to undermine the parish's plans in favour of housing. We opposed this in solidarity with Plumpton Parish Council on the grounds that we are under the same threat of our own neighbourhood plan being sidelined, and our influence on planning in our parish being undermined. I have also been involved in some enforcement issues and comments on applications for tree removal and access, and in preliminary discussions with a landowner on mixed use development proposals. I have also met with the developers for the Old Hamsey Brickworks site on their plans to remove conditions relating to building the business units. I hope that, despite the frustration, it is possible to provide some meaningful input into the plans for the area we live in, and cherish.

Chair:

Jim has been invaluable to Hamsey Parish Council already by applying his planning wisdom and professional approach to HPC planning matters. Jim's healthy dose of scepticism is serving us well in tying down developer obligations, and he is a great person to have on the team.

Chair:

Natalie has done an incredible job in her new role as Parish Clerk since joining at the beginning of COVID, of all times! Natalie has worked tirelessly to learn all about the clerk role, all with the added responsibility on top of steering Beechwood Hall through lockdown and scouring government guidance daily. Natalie has mastered many new skills and taken to the role better than any of us could have hoped for. By working well over her contracted hours, Natalie has gone above and beyond in her duties as Clerk and her role as co-worker. Council is very grateful to Natalie for all she does. 'Councillors were unanimous in expressing thanks and appreciation for the clerk's work over the year, noting her dedication and assiduousness in carrying out her function, often working well beyond remunerated requirements.

I believe we are the only parish in the district to have lowered our precepts (council tax) for 2 years running. Frugal expenditure and new homes have allowed us to manage council finances so that we are in a position to take forward some community led projects next year, potentially including improvements to the Phone Books area opposite Cooksbridge Station. We have a very active council, full of talented, committed individuals who give a great deal of their time and expertise, as well as support. It is a real pleasure to work with this team, and together we look forward to making the most of what opportunities we have for parish improvements over the coming year. I would like to extend particular thanks on behalf of Beechwood Hall & Rural Park to Lewes District Council for their support during the difficult lockdown period when we had to close the hall for an extended period. With restrictions lifting, we are looking forward to welcoming back hirers for classes and events. We expect the hall to become busy with rescheduled events soon, so if you would like to book a

community event, please get in touch at the earliest opportunity. *Cllr Tamsyn d'Arienzo – Chair*

Signed..... Chair Date.....

