



The Steypning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steypning
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**MEETING OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 20th MARCH 2023 AT 7.30PM
IN THE STEYNING CENTRE**

Cllrs Present: Cllrs Norcross {Chairman}, Hanson, G. Sullivan, Goldsmith, S. Alexander, I. Alexander, Bell
and County Councillor Linehan

Speaker: Mrs Katy Bourne, OBE

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Deputy Clerk: Hazel Roxby

Members of the Public: 35

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

1. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Young, Lloyd, Northam, Trundle, Parsons and District Cllr Bob Platt.
Cllrs Rudkin and Campbell absent

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 21th MARCH 2022

Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S. Alexander that the draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 21st of March 2022 be agreed as a true and fair record. **Agreed 21 For, 1 Abstained**

4. MATTERS ARISING

None

5. PRESENTATION BY Katy Bourne, OBE - Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner

Theme - 'How to tackle antisocial behaviour in Steypning', and to discuss how the Police, the Parish Council and the residents of Steypning can work together towards ensuring the current issues are dealt with successfully.

Here are some bullet points from the presentation which includes a summary of some of the questions and answers which Katy took during the course of the discussion. The video of this presentation can be found via the following link -<https://youtu.be/1QJ5uoCpXYE>, and specifically heard between minutes 03:25 and 1:26:20.

- *Katy talked initially about a report being published the next day {21st March} concerning the Met. Police, which will highlight the current difficulties faced by the institution.*
- *There was sympathy for residents who had been experiencing antisocial behaviour issues in Steypning, but she was assured about the fact that there was work ongoing to tackle the issues.*
- *The most important point was that residents needed to keep reporting issues as they happened because police response is 'evidence led'.*
- *Katy talked about her experiences with the retail business not reporting crime – indeed 5 years ago she was involved with a study and found that less than 8% of crime was being reported from High Street businesses. – Due to retail managers believing there was no point doing so anymore.*

- *Antisocial behaviour {ASB} is difficult to define, but Katy believes the reluctance to report it is spilling out into the wider community, with now the perpetrators are emboldened to continue to commit acts because there is nothing done when they do so, because it's not being reported.*
- *Katy asked to hear people's experiences.*
- *Cllr Ian Alexander talked about the recent council meetings whereby when antisocial behaviour was being reported to councillors, they had asked residents to keep reporting it, and residents had responded by saying they keep doing so, but then the police will say that the evidence shows that this is not the case. He also suggested the 101 police non-emergency service did not work. Katy said that it did and that waiting times were on average 6½ minutes.*
- *The High Street Bus Shelter was discussed, as it was a current focal point of unrest. Measures to lessen the impact of ASB, such as Shutter installation have been discussed at length at council meetings but have not been agreed because of it being a detraction to the conservation area, and it was also felt that to shut out ASB from the Bus Shelter would simply move the issue elsewhere. Light and noise deterrent devices had also been discussed, but currently and more probably a CCTV installation was being proposed – Katy said that she would like to assist with this idea (perhaps with grant assistance), and the Clerk was invited to discuss this situation in more depth with her following the meeting. She highlighted as part of the process it was important to consider completing a 'Privacy Impact Survey'.*
- *There was confirmation that the Police would likely not be involved either in installation nor surveillance of any CCTV system that was to be installed.*
- *There were further instances of difficulties in reporting issues from residents, and Katy presented a new development for High Street commercial operators called a 'disc reporting system', which is like a 'What's App group' for those who are frequently the recipients of crime issues, except that the police are part of the group, and that CCTV footage is possibly accessible through it. – It allows the police to receive reports instantaneously.*
- *It was felt there needed to be a joined-up approach, including PCSO's, Wardens, High Street retail managers with intelligence gathering increasing, and leading to 'Target hardening'.*
- *'One Touch' reporting was suggested for retail managers – this system reduces reporting times down from 30 minutes to nearer 2. This is being trialled by 22 Co-Op stores across Sussex. 300 crimes in a year were reported from one shop in Shoreham now using this system.*
- *2000 incidents reported to the police across Sussex every day, with about 300 being crime related.*
- *Katy had been discussing the governments national plan to deal with ASB and had suggested to them that she would like to do some reparative justice work in Sussex. With Youth offenders being asked to complete repairs (to things that they might have been damaged by them) in the community.*
- *Cllr Simon Alexander described a situation where in the last two weeks the police reporting system had worked very well – He and his partner had reported probable drug deals in progress in Fletchers Croft car park and within 58 minutes had received a text from the police saying that the boy concerned had been stopped and his drugs confiscated. The following week, after a council meeting, he witnessed the same individual being apprehended by the police in the car park, after they had made a follow up visit.*
- *Parents and guardians have a role to play, but often they are not aware of issues. Finding a way of getting the intelligence together so that parents can be informed is a good way of dealing with the issue.*
- *Residents spoke in support of the youth and the council's youth service and referred to the need to provide additional facilities for the Steyning Youth and noted that some projects that had been agreed including by public referendum to proceed, such as a skateboard park installation, had been stopped by public protests in the past.*
- *Katy wondered how much of a say residents and councillors had at the district's community safety partnership forums where all the 'players' come together to discuss these issues, and she wondered how it was working for Steyning – there needs to be the right people round the table including the education providers – and she mentioned the re-boot scheme.*

- *There were representations suggesting that installing shutters, and shutting down the High Street at night was the 'wrong message and was caving in to the yobs'. Rather that it would seem reasonable to see more of a police presence as Steyning seemed to rarely see any police other than those officers in cars who seemed to pass through the High Street on their way to and from the police station. One resident informed of situations whereby it seemed known within a certain age group that Steyning was an easy place to trade drugs as the police had forgotten about small towns, as they were too busy in the cities. He urged that residents' taxes be spent on a police deterrent rather than what ended up being a system of delayed response.*
- *Katy explained part of her job was to relay the comments and suggestions of residents across the district to her superiors to commit to the sorts of changes she has been advocating in the last few years.*
- *Katy concluded by outlining some of the statistics involved with policing currently, and the difficulty prioritising the resources. There being approx. 5,500 police and admin support staff to look after the regions 1.7 million inhabitants. – On an average day across the county the police will receive 2,312 contacts with 789 '999' calls. There will be approx. 1300 incident logs created but only about 300 relate to an actual crime. 32 missing person reports. 6 reports of rape.*
- *Majority of crime is perpetrated in large urban areas. Only have drug dealing where there's a market, and the 'county-lines' whereby young children are recruited (and abused) to do the work of the London 'drug lords' has been a huge problem. The workload on officers is currently phenomenal. However, it is understood that visible policing and 'neighbourhood beats' do matter, and Katy is determined to continue to get this message across.*

6. THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman – Cllr Norcross thanked Katy Bourne for her presentation, and then after a short four-minute recess to allow some residents and Katy to leave, proceeded to present her annual Steyning Parish Council Report for the year 2022/23. The Full text of the statement is appended to these minutes and can be accessed via the link <https://youtu.be/1QJ5uoCpXYE>, and can be heard between minutes 1:27:00 and 1:37:30. Here are a few notable points of interest:-

- *Local groups have been supported by funding from the Council. This has contributed towards food and drink festival, 'Tree guards' for recognition award winning commemorative tree planting, 'Jubilee bench' installation, 'Flowers with planters' and support for those combating isolation and loneliness.*
- *The Festive lights in the High Street have been a great success and a new design is chosen each year, to bring variety, and indeed council has already agreed next seasons display.*
- *F&GP Committee agreed a strategic plan together with its first annual action plan with only 4 of its 14 proposed projects still to be completed.*
- *Neighbourhood plan has been brought into legal force following a successful referendum*
- *PPG monitor installed at Steyning Centre, commemorative bench and trees installed and allotment water service enhancement schemes among the targets achieved.*
- *Diligent financial management meant that Council weathered the issues imposed by the pandemic and was still able to restrict a precept rise to 2% to support residents during the current 'cost of living' crisis.*
- *New 3-year contracts for Grass cutting and Street Cleaning agreed*
- *New one year extension to Youth Service contract provision agreed*
- *Have undertaken a huge scope of essential tree works including at Memorial playing fields, Rublees allotments, Cripps Lane, Abbey Road, Canada Gardens and Godstalls Lane.*
- *Abbey Road re-wilding scheme is receiving plaudits from the Sussex wildlife Trust – with thanks to its group of volunteers*
- *High Street Bus shelter improvements*
- *The Planning committee has appraised 91 planning applications this year – its advisory comments aligning well with HDC planning decisions with a 85% mutual agreement rating*

- Council in collaboration with Steyning Greening has drawn up a 'green checklist' to aid in assessing the environmental impact of planning applications
- Premises committee has overseen several improvements at the Steyning Centre including an updated sate of the art audio-visual system and dishwasher for the kitchen
- Bookings at the Steyning Centre have bounced back well after the pandemic
- HDC decided to commission a review of SPC following high levels of Code of Conduct submissions – with the conclusion being that, in the main, the Council was functioning well and effectively, but there were concerns around the behaviour and attitudes of some councillors
- The Council has signed the Society of Local Councils Clerks sponsored Civility and Respect pledge
- It is working hard to complete actions set out in a mutually agreed implementation plan
- The Chair extended thanks to John F, Hazel, Tessa, John G, Matthew, Steve and John C and the Wardens Michael and Paul, with special thanks going to Paul Conroy who after more than 20 years working for our parish and sister parishes was to retire in a few weeks
– Applause followed

7. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIR (in summary)**

Q – A lady asked about the electronic information screens sited at each of the three Steyning car parks – wondering why one has been out of order for a very long time and wondered if anybody used them.

A – *The Clerk explained they were not the property of the Parish, but of Horsham District Council, and that the out of order machine was now to be fixed, and that the hope was (working with the Steyning and District Partnership) that the information would become more relevant to the parish residents and visitors with content being provided not just by HDC officers.*

Q – Over the four-year period of the current council, what would you say are the three most outstanding achievements?

A – *The Chair, said personally she felt the biggest achievement was to have completed the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan, on a smaller scale things like getting an enhanced water supply engineered and installed at the Allotments, affective maintenance contract management like tree works, grass cutting and street cleaning, and that she felt very privileged to have been voted into the position of Chairman of the Council for the last two and a half years.*

Q – A Resident added he felt it was a welcoming council, and he wanted it to remain that way, and that hopefully all the problems of the past fade away after the upcoming election.

A – *The Chair said that a council with disagreements was not necessarily a bad thing, in fact it was healthy, and it has been possible to run well and efficiently as a council despite disagreements – it was about going with the majority decisions.*

Q – You mentioned earlier about the Code of Conduct {Civility and Respect} pledge. Are there any existing councillors putting their name forward who should have signed it before being considered? – And who are they?

A – *My view is yes, but that's for the public to decide. In terms of who they are – that can be determined by reading previous full council minutes.*

Q – Are the people who have signed been listed on the web site?

A – *No, because the Civility and Respect pledge is undertaken by the Council as a corporate body, not individual councillors. Those councillors who had not been in attendance at the meeting when it was unanimously agreed were asked at a subsequent meeting to pledge their support, and some declined to take it at that point {At the last Full Council Meeting}.*

Q – With the elections coming up, one thing that concerns me given the changes that need to be made and the past that needs to be left behind, is that we are going to need to see more than 15 people standing for election, otherwise there is a real danger that the same core of 8/9/10 people are left standing once again, and the sort of ambitions that there are could be frustrated once again.

A – If people don't stand you can't make them.

Q – I just wonder if we are doing enough to encourage people to stand?

A – We have tried very hard at Council {inc. promotional leaflets}, and me personally, to advocate people consider it. It is certainly important that new people come in and bring with them new ways of working. We can have disagreements and deal with them like adults, and then accept democratically agreed decisions.

Q – Part of the issue is that it's a generation thing? Three councillors under the age of 40 left inside 12 months after the beginning of the last council.

A – We did indeed have younger councillors last time that left unfortunately. One had to leave to study at university.

Q – Are the recycling bins your responsibility in Fletchers Croft car park because they are often overflowing?

A – No, they are HDC's responsibility, and that of the bin providers – which is highlighted on the bins themselves – they can be contacted if they overflow.

8. **RESPONSES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON PARISH MATTERS** - None received

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 18th March 2024**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.29pm, and refreshments were served for all.

Signed Date 18th March 2024

Chairman

A Recording of this meeting can be found using the following link:

<https://youtu.be/1QJ5uoCpXYE>,