

# PARISH OF WEST DEAN

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY OF WEST DEAN HELD AT THE WEST DEAN CENTRE WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019 AT 7.00pm

### PRESENT

Parish Councillors: P Hiett (Chair), A Moore, B Gayler, P Dunford, B Evans, J Richmond, A Grant, H Acton, M Costley and S Francis

District Councillors: R Leppington and D Wheeler

Panel Speakers: Carolyn Black (Canopy), B Watkins (GCC Highways) and N Gardner and C Knapman (CAB)

D Kent (Clerk)

4 Parish residents

There were apologies from Councillor C Smith

**I INTRODUCTIONS:** The Chairman welcomed councillors and guest speakers to the meeting.

**2 MINUTES OF THE LAST ASSEMBLY** Approved. There were no matters arising.

**3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Received.

He added his thanks to the Clerks and to Councillors and their partners who invested much time in their unpaid role.

Matters arising included:

1) Poor bus services, especially in Parkend.

2) Poor mobile phone signal, especially in Parkend

These matters to be referred to GCC Councillor R Boyles

3) Traffic and speeding

Various options were proposed. It was clear that with limited police resources enforcement of any speed restriction could not be relied upon.

Volunteer speed watch sessions could be organised, and Councillor B Gayler offered his support.

Councillor J Richmond presented information on his speed camera county wide survey.

The Chairman advised of the work of the District Council Community Safety Partnership.

### 4 PUBLIC SESSION

The damaged bench at the Cenotaph, Bream, was raised as an item. The Council would repair this as part of its asset maintenance process, and if the plaque which had been removed from the bench could be found or reconstructed it would be restored.

In respect of sheep fouling, the Chairman advised that this was an issue that the District Council were investigating, as District Councils had greater powers to deal with this issue than Parish Councils.

In response to a proposal that sheep grids be installed on roads in Whitecroft, B Watkins advised that this was not easy to arrange as utility services ran cables and pipes under the road. It was advised that West Dean Parish Council now requires in its observations to planning applications that sheep grids are laid at the entrance to new developments at critical areas in the parish.

## 5 QUESTION TIME

### i) N Gardner and C Knapman (CAB)

The role of CAB in conducting campaigns to improve social policies and to provide advice and support to members of the public was presented. With the cuts to government funding from around 70-80% to 30%, more grant-seeking and other fundraising activities were required. The level of demand on CAB resources was exacerbated by the increasing demand on services from statutory bodies, which were themselves feeling the effects of government cuts.

A description of the issues that service users were bringing to CAB, including employment, disability, debt, Universal Credit, the use of bailiffs in seizing property, social isolation in rural areas, loss of bus and post office services, vulnerability to IT scams, lack of IT skills and poor on-line network and mobile phone signal availability.

It was noted that West Dean Parish Council is a generous funding provider to CAB.

Cab plans for the future included providing regular reports on a quarterly basis to parish and town councils, outreach to local areas in Bream, Yorkley and possibly Parkend, seeking additional funding from the District Council

### ii) C Black (Canopy, formerly Creative Canopy)

The role and purpose of Canopy was explained. It was formed in 2016 as a Forest organisation to encourage artists and participation in the arts, to bring artists together, to seek greater funding for the arts in rural communities, to encourage cultural tourism to the area and to make local events happen.

A successful inaugural event was held at the West Dean Centre including many different forms of art in 2017, and subsequently a grant was received from Arts Council England, held by West Dean Parish Council, to recruit a Project Manager and hold some events.

Canopy would continue to provide operational advice and seek funding for artists and arts events for such events as the proposed use of West Dean Parish Council's 14 former telephone kiosks for imaginative series of events.

### iii) B Watkins (Local Manager, GCC Highways)

The role and responsibilities of the local highway manager were explained, including strategic planning, local issues, maintenance, development and communicating with local councils, and dealing with complaints and requests. Related matters such as speeding, parking and other traffic management issues, traffic signals and street lighting were also within the job role.

He explained the highways inspection policy, whereby all roads were inspected at least annually, with primary routes inspected monthly.

In response to a question about the need for a proper footpath to connect Whitemead Park to the nearby village of Parkend, he advised that the matter would be considered.

In response to a question about the future of the Lydney to Parkend Multi Use Track, it was advised that West Dean Parish Council had taken up this issue and the cooperation of Dean Forest Railway was being sought to consider running the proposed track alongside the rail track, with of course appropriate safety considerations.

The panel speakers were thanked for their contribution to this Annual Parish Assembly.

6. There were no further public questions, and the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

