

## **MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR EAST PECKHAM HELD IN THE CURRAN HALL ON MONDAY 07 APRIL 2008 AT 19.30 HOURS**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Bearman, Crawford (Chairman), Crowley, Gardner, Gress, Ireland, Mrs. Macdonald, Poole (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. Relf, Shead & Street, Mrs. K Bell (Parish Clerk), Borough Councillors Mrs Holland and Rogers, Mr. N Wheeler (2007/08 High Sheriff of Kent), Mr M Westwood (General Manager, The Hop Farm County Park), Ms C Curtis (Medway Valley Countryside Partnership), PCSO Holly Wilkes, 45 residents

**APOLOGIES:** Received from 4 residents

The Chairman of the PC, Councillor Peter Crawford opened the meeting. He welcomed all present and introduced the Parish Councillors and the guest speakers.

### **1. MINUTES OF THE 2007 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY**

Copies of the Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 02 April 2007 were circulated within the 2007/08 Annual Report. They were confirmed as a true record and signed by PC's Chairman.

### **2. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **Item 4 - The Hop Farm**

It was reported that the number of holiday lodges had been significantly reduced. The Hop Farms General Manager was present and would provide information on plans and future for the Hop Farm later in the meeting.

#### **Item 5 - Speeding in Old Road**

It was reported that the police had carried out a speed data survey, which revealed that generally the perception of speed was greater than the reality and that there was not a significant problem. The PC would continue to campaign for a village wide 30 mph speed limit.

#### **Item 5 - Works at Addlestead Road**

It was reported that TMBC carried out a planning investigation, which concluded that the works taking place at that time did not breach planning regulations.

#### **Item 5 - Syngenta Site at Yalding**

It was reported that the PC was advised as a neighbouring PC and not as statutory consultee. It was noted that the PC had yet to be advised on the outcome of the planning application.

### **3. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Cllr. Crawford presented the Annual Report, which had been distributed to all households. Attention was drawn to specific items within the report including the reasoning behind carrying out the Sports Hall repairs during 2007/08, the installation of CCTV, dog fouling, the role of PROW, success in the 2007 Village of the Year Competition, projects for 2008/09 which included the resurfacing of the Sports Hall Car Park and the renovation of the Village War Memorial. Attention was also drawn to the Chairman's report and the reports from the Emergency Planning Group, the East Peckham Playing Field Company, the Youth Panel, the Community and Police Working Group and the Village Tree Warden. Cllr. Crawford informed those present that the PC would continue to work with TMBC, KCC, KHS and other agencies and government bodies in the hope they would respond and meet the demands of the village.

### **4. PRESENTATION OF THE BILLY CAN AWARDS**

Mrs Joan Boyle was invited to present the 2008 Billy Can Shields, which were awarded, to Mr & Mrs Sales and Mrs Margaret Townsend. Both recipients were delighted to receive their awards and made short acceptance speeches.

## 5. GUEST SPEAKERS

### **Mr Nigel Wheeler, Former High Sheriff of Kent**

Mr Wheeler was introduced to the meeting. He proceeded to provide an entertaining overview on the appointment of a high sheriff past and present and a resume of his year, which included attending over 400 events within the county. Mr Wheeler explained that his role was mainly ceremonial but that during his year he had taken a specific interest in the probation service and it had been an enormous privilege to have the county at his disposal. It was noted that there was a photo of Mr Wheeler in his full regalia on the PCs website [www.eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk).

### **THE HOP FARM COUNTRY PARK**

Mr Martin Westwood the General Manager was introduced to the meeting. Mr Westwood drew attention to the following:

- He hoped to improve the dialogue between the PC and the Hop Farm and following on from his attendance at a PC meeting in February he undertook to attend regular meetings and would remain in constant contact with the Clerk.
- In response to objections from residents, TMBC, MBC and TWBC and after taking legal advice the recent license application was withdrawn.
- Major events taking place during 2008, which included the annual War & Peace Show and a music concert, would be held on 06.07.08 with Neil Young as the headline act. The Hop Farm hoped to hold further similar events in the future.
- Changes being made at the Hop Farm which included renovation works and the introduction of new attractions such as the children's driving school.
- Research was taking place, which would clarify the strategy to be adopted over the next few years including the market to which the Hop Farm should be targeting. The long-term aim of the Hop Farm was to provide an attraction, which would be a credit to the area.
- It was hoped to increase the number of visitors visiting the attraction and to increase the hospitality, corporation and wedding side of the business.
- Work was ongoing to improve and rectify past errors of judgement which caused annoyance and disturbances to local residents this would include direction speakers being used to reduce the noise impact of events on residents and there would be no firework display to announce the start of the War and Peace Show.
- The residents 50% reduction on the cost of a Hop Farm Gold Card had been reintroduced.

### **MEDWAY VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP (MVCP)**

Ms Charlotte Curtis from the MVCP was introduced to the meeting. Ms Curtis drew attention to the following:

- The Riverside Communities Project which would see East Peckham benefiting from a sculptured bench to be installed in the older children's play area, an interpretation board to be installed in the centre of the village and a way marker. There would also be five circular walks one of which would focus on East Peckham and would start from the village centre.
- Regular events available to residents free of charge which included, photography courses, art workshops, bat and moth evenings and nature trails
- The recently published Heritage and Wildlife Spotter Guides, which focussed on things to see on the River Medway.

### **POLICE REPRESENTATIVE**

PCSO Holly Wilkes was introduced to the meeting. PCSO Wilkes drew attention to the following:

- Crime statistics for East Peckham were low when compared to the surrounding area.
- The number of anti social behavioural reports was reducing.
- The Village was effective in liaising with all police agencies helped in part by the very effective Community and Police working Group
- The police were aware that the dog bin in Westwood Road had been stolen.

- The Police were aware of The Harp and the venue was being monitored. It was noted that The Harp was licensed to hold adult entertainment consisting of erotic dancers and strippers behind curtains and locked doors. Attempts were being made to reduce the obstruction of vehicles outside the venue and some parking tickets had been issued.

Cllr Crawford thanked all the guest speakers for attending the meeting and for providing interesting talks.

## 5. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

The following questions were put to the meeting:

### a. Pedestrian Crossing

A resident asked if a pedestrian crossing could be provided in the centre of the village. The resident was informed that the request had been referred to KHS who unfortunately could not see a justification for a pedestrian crossing.

### b. Hale Street – Highways Issues

A resident expressed her concerns regarding the approach to Brookside roundabout and the Hale Street traffic calming features. It was also noted that repairs were required to the roundabout following a recent accident. The resident was informed that highways matters were the responsibility of KHS and that both matters were the subject of constant dialogue between the PC and KHS. The PC would continue to work hard to bring about the highway improvements, which the village deserved, and residents expected.

### c. Resurfacing of the Sports Hall Car Park

Some residents questioned the resurfacing of the Sports Hall and asked whether it was entirely necessary. The residents were informed that the current surfacing was nearing the end of its useful life and if the work was not carried out the cost to the PC and the EPPFC would end up being more costly in patching and remedial repairs than the resurfacing works which had been estimated to cost in the region of £13,000 - £14,000 and that the car park resurfacing works were an extension to the repair works which had been carried out during 2007/08. It was hoped that with grant assistance the resurfacing costs would be considerably less on the public purse. The opinion was expressed by some residents that the EPPFC ought to focus on providing more activities for the younger members of the community than on the car park. The residents were advised that when funding permitted more equipment would be provided.

### d. Parish Precept

Some residents questioned the increase in the Parish Precept. The residents were informed that any increase was regrettable but that the PC received no government grant and the precept represented a small portion of the overall council tax bill. It was noted that the increase for 2008/09 was necessary to meet the costs of the village expenditure which included PWLB loan repayments in respect of the sports hall repairs, the renovation of the village war memorial, increased litter clearing and the resurfacing of the sports hall car park.

### e. Litter

A resident expressed her concern at the volume of litter in the village especially along Hale Street. The resident was informed that the PC shared her concern and was in constant dialogue with TMBC and KHS. It was noted that the PC had increased the litter-clearing budget for 2008/09 so that specific problem areas could be targeted and a volunteer litter warden did patrol on a frequent basis the lower end of Hale Street towards the Red Fort Indian Restaurant.

**f. Village Youth Panel**

A resident congratulated the PC on the creation of the Village Youth Panel led by Councillors Mrs Macdonald and Mrs Relf.

**g. Playing Fields – Alcohol Free Zone**

A resident questioned how the playing fields were to be made an alcohol free zone and was informed that the PC was in the process of liaising with the police and it was likely that a byelaw would be introduced.

h. A resident stated that East Peckham was lucky and fortunate to have people in the village such as the Parish Councillors who worked hard to improve the quality of life for all residents.

**6. Close of meeting**

Before closing the meeting Cllr. Crawford hoped that everyone would stay for tea and coffee and proceeded to thank the following:

- David and Stuart Boyle for providing the sound system
- Mr and Mrs. Buckland for coordinating the village poppy appeal
- The volunteer litter clearers
- The children of the village who participated in the annual Bash the Trash event
- The Clerk
- The Parish Councillors
- The guest speakers
- The 45 parishioners who had attended the meeting
- James Bridgwater-Court for assisting the Parish Council in providing teas and coffees

There being no additional business, the meeting concluded at 21.15 hours.