

BODIAM PARISH ASSEMBLY 2022

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The Minutes of the Parish Assembly held in the Wharf Tea Room, Bodiam Castle, on Thursday, 12th May 2022 at 6.30 p.m.

Please note these are draft minutes until formally approved at the next Parish Assembly meeting.

Present:

For Bodiam Parish Council: Councillors: - (Chairman) Linda Stevens, Barbara Napper, Graham Peters, Michael Weddle, Darren Page

For RDC: Cllr T Ganley

For ESCC: Cllr P Redstone

In attendance: Clerk Christine Burgess. Guest speakers and members of the public

Apologies: Bodiam C of E Primary School and PTA

Councillor Stevens took the Chair and opened the meeting by thanking the National Trust for hosting the meeting. The Councillors and Clerk were introduced and members of the public and guests welcomed. The public were invited to help themselves to refreshments.

ESCC Cllr Paul Redstone

Cllr Redstone has been a County Councillor since May last year and deals with subjects such as Highways, Education and Adult Social Care. Unfortunately Cllr Redstone has to leave the meeting early as he has to attend a meeting in Northiam but he regularly attends the Parish meetings and contact details are on the East Sussex County Council website.

National Trust: Karen Stafford.

Karen took up the position of General Manager October 2018 along with Batemans and Monks House in Lewes. The Castle has managed to keep the grounds open for the last 2 years and over the last 12 months Bodiam Castle has welcomed 128 thousand visitors. Karen has kindly written a report for herself and Lucy which can be read on the website.

National Trust Ranger: Lucy

Bodiam Castle is nationally significant for the bats that roost here and the volunteers from the National Monitoring bat programme run by the Conservation trust believe it is the largest known Daubenton's bat maternity roost in the UK. Please see full report on the website.

Claremont School: Ed Dickie

Two years ago, the Parish Assembly was due to be held at Claremont School, but of course Covid happened and it never took place. Claremont would very much like to be more connected to the local community.

Claremont School started 11 years ago, with 38 pupils, they now have over 300, a Sixth Form and two newly refurbished boarding houses one at Battle and one in St Leonards. They are

academically a non-selective co-ed school, and last year they were named Independent School of the year for performing arts.

Over the last two and bit years only one year group missed a week at school. When the school was unable to open, the lessons were carried out on line. Last year the pupils put on a production of Guys and Dolls. This summer the school will be doing a production of Romeo and Juliet.

Over the last 10 years there has been quite a few building developments but this has finished and there are no more major developments planned. They plan to maintain the trees around the perimeter and may consider adding to them, to screen the lighting for neighbouring houses. Students pay £2 for Mufti Day not to wear their school uniform, £1 goes towards the planting of one tree, Mr Dickie suggested that maybe some could be planted in their own grounds as part of the Queens green Jubilee celebrations.

The school are also looking to do a community swim at some stage and are looking for a qualified Lifeguard.

Bodiam Pre School, Mel Porter:

Based In the Parish Rooms they care for a maximum of 15 children. There is a team of 4 permanent staff plus a student on work placement to look after the children. The Pre School has continued to open through covid, caring for the children of key workers and trying to keep things as normal as possible. There are 20 children on the roll, 9 of which will be leaving to start school in September of which 6 will be going across the road to Bodiam C of E School.

Bodiam Church of England School, Patrick Stevens, Governor:

At the last Parish Assembly, the report was read out by 2 of the pupils, unfortunately they were unable to attend this year and so the report was kindly read out by one of the School Governors, Mr Patrick Stevens.

After two years of disruption, the school are happy to be back to normal, with everybody back in school, learning and making new memories. Full report can be read on our Website.

St Giles Church: Priest in Charge Canon Christopher Irvine

St Giles is a Parish Church for the whole community, and welcomes enquiries for Christening, Weddings and Funerals (or hatch, match and despatch as It's known in the trade).

Looking back over the last 2 years, when so much has happened, Canon Christopher stated that at the heart of St Giles there is a small but very gifted and energetic worshipping community. It has shrunk over the last 2 years, understandably, but they do now need to grow.

The Parish Church roof has now been repaired and is now water tight, the stone has been repaired and conserved.

Canon Christopher ended by reminding us that the Church is here to serve the Community, the whole Parish and would like to have a closer relationship with the village and encouraged the schools and the National Trust to make use of the Church as much as possible.

Parker and Ashcombe Trust: Cllr Peters

The Trust was founded in 1888, to provide housing for single ladies from Bodiam and the surrounding area. The Trust owns 2 properties in the village, the Alms flats, which comprise of four, one bed flats to provide the means for independent living, and the Rectory Cottage, the rental of which contributes significantly to the running costs of the overall estate. The trust also owns and maintains a small garden, the Parish Room where the Bodiam Pre School and the Parish Council meet, an Ice House, for which the

Trust were very fortunate to receive a bequest from Dora Church to help with the restoration. The Trust have just completed a complete refurbishment on one of the flats and will be ready for letting fairly soon.

Notice was given earlier this year by the Trust to apply to update the charity's objectives. These originally limited the occupants of the flats to: "Poor single women or widows of good character, who are resident in the Parish at the time of application". The charity wished to revise the objectives to offer accommodation to all genders from the Parish and within a 6-mile radius of the Parish. Applicants would still be required to be single and at or approaching retirement age, with priority given to applications from suitable Parish residents. Cllr Peters encouraged the community to come forward with formal comments on the change of constitution.

Cllr Peters thanked Shane Steed who had stood down earlier in the year for all her hard work, Pippa Deeley has now taken over the role of Secretary. Thanks were given to all of the Trustees of the Trust for all their hard work.

Queens Green Canopy, Cllr Graham Peters:

If anyone is interested in taking part, please contact Cllr Peters who will point them in the right direction. The Council will be taken part and will notify of arrangements nearer the time

Parish Council Report: Councillor Linda Stevens, Chairman

The Chairman reported that monthly meetings are held on the third Monday of the month and that the Council are now back in the Parish Room after meeting over zoom during Covid. Members of the Public are all very welcome.

Meetings include a report from our County Councillor and our District Councillor, planning applications, on which the Council comment but the decision is made by Rother District Council Planning Dept. The Council also report difficulties on the footpaths in the Village to ESCC or to the Landowners if appropriate.

The Notice Board has now been repaired and is back on the Village Green.

The Council has responsibility for the Recreation Ground and the Pavilion. The Pavilion is not in constant use and the council would be interested in any ideas that residents may have for the future.

Storm Eunice hit the south east mid February causing chaos and in light of this the Council will look at the resilience plan for Bodiam in the coming months. It was created quite a few years ago and consequently the information has become out of date and needs reviewing.

The main expenditure for the Council is the Maintenance of the Recreation Ground and Pavilion, (Grass Cutting and utility services). Also, the Clerks wages.

Celebrations for the Queens Jubilee in early June, will be held on the Recreation Ground together with a flower festival in the Church.

Thanks were given to our Auditor Mr Terry Barratt.

TO REPORT A POTHOLE TO ESCC

eastsussexhighways.com/report-a-problem/pothole, click report a roads problem and then Click potholes. (Google will also pick it up from report a pothole)

There are limited finances available for potholes and as a result they have to fit certain criteria to be filled.

Which is:

deeper than 40mm but less than 60mm to repaired in 28 days

60 mm less than 100mm 5 days

Greater than 100 mm and deeper than 300mm 2 hours

School Car parking

There are grants available, as there is now a possibility of non-matched public funding to help with a layby for cars to park safely and drop children off for school. For the school to access this the school may need some Village support.

Footpaths

ESCC have a website for reporting highway and footpath problems. The Council will follow up on complaints.

Close of Meeting

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting. Attendees were invited to remain for refreshments.