



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of Hadlow Down Parish Council
held at St Mark's School, Hadlow Down
at 7pm on Wednesday 12th February 2014.
*Note – this a draft copy to be agreed and amended, if
necessary, at the next Council Meeting.*

Present: Councillors Sandra Richards (SR) (Chair), Clare Emsden (CE), Graham Terry (GT), Damon Wellman (DW), Roy Galley (RG) (ESCC) and the Clerk Helen Simpson-Wells.

273. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - a member of the public advised that the gullies are blocked again between Civers and Five Chimneys Lane. The Chair confirmed that members of the public would be able to ask questions and make comments during agenda item 276.

274. APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE – apologies received from Cllr. Nathan James (NJ). Cllr. Michael Lunn (ML) had not been available to send his apologies.

275. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – SR declared a personal interest in the drainage near Five Chimneys Lane.

276. HIGHWAYS ITEMS:

Roger Williams (RW), Head of Highways at ESCC had been sent a list of questions raised by members of the public and the Parish Council and went through his response to these. He confirmed that they had put a bid to the Department of Transport for £3 million to deal with problems caused by the excess rain.

i. **WILDERNESS LANE** – RW had checked the new drainage pipe which he said was working effectively, Highways will continue to monitor it and if it is insufficient they will put in another 6" pipe. It was highlighted to him that not all of the potholes were filled in, he will get the Highways Steward to investigate.

The cost of the work was £6679 and the road closure £1485.

They aimed to build up the damaged verge in order that it had some structure. RW will get the Highways Steward to check if any work was done to the eroded verge outside Hardly Beacon.

RW confirmed that they are putting together a ditching programme and will ditch Wilderness Lane and sort out the grips. They have received increased funding for 2014/15 for ditching.

Concern was expressed over contractors self-certifying work. A 10% check is done on self-certified work and audits are undertaken. RW confirmed that the failure rate from utility companies' work has greatly reduced and they are investing to reduce this further.

Concern was raised over the amount of time taken to do the work in Wilderness Lane, RW confirmed that it was a priced job so the price wouldn't be dependent on the time taken to do the work.

It was suggested that temporary bollards could have been put on the verge to protect it as the work that has been done has quickly been damaged. Water surface covers have been buried in the verge. RW advised that he would get the Highways Steward to check the area between Nurney Cottage and Annes Cottage and get the 3 potholes mended.

ii. **DRAINAGE ISSUES** – RW advised that where gullies haven't been cleared correctly, the contractor has to go back to the site at their own cost to rectify the problem. Every gully has to be cleared every 2 years and some are done more regularly. The A272 gullies are now done on a 3 month cycle, it was undertaken in November and was due to be done in January but wasn't. They have to prioritise all the areas. The Clerk confirmed that she'd had to push to get the work done in November. ESCC have issued an improvement notice to Kiers for gully clearance.

It has been identified that the drainage pipe between Nashes and Woodland Farms was broken in 3

places at the time of the water companies' work. Highways hope to replace the pipe soon and will recharge the water company for the work. RW will check if the investigation into the drainage problems went as far as Woodlands Farm.

RW confirmed that the debris from inside the gully is removed and what is on top of the gully is put behind it. The contractor has been instructed to ensure that this is done correctly.

Concern had been raised about an internal report following the 1st January 2014 car accident. RW went through the criteria for assessing an area. He apologized that this had been assessed incorrectly and that the drainage work was delayed as they already had roadworks in Buxted, however that work was overnight and shouldn't have therefore caused a problem for work to also be undertaken on drainage in Hadlow Down. They are awaiting the police report on the accidents and will act upon it.

RW confirmed that it costs them £6 per metre to do ditching work when they leave the risings on site and £11.31 per metre when the risings are taken away. Landowners have a duty to maintain their water courses.

RW advised that they will do further investigation regarding the drainage near Woodlands Farm and will fix the problem. He will confirm the date to the resident when the work will be done.

Concern was raised over gullies that have been missed and have grassed over. RW to investigate about the blocked gully on Waghorns Lane at the junction of Brick Kiln Lane and the 5 gullies where grass has grown over them in Waghorns Lane. These have already been reported by the Clerk. RW will send the Clerk a map of the gullies with their co-ordinates and details of when work has been undertaken on them. It was suggested that a similar map be given to all Councils.

RW was advised that the gullies between Five Chimneys Lane and Nashes Farm are getting blocked every few weeks. RW advised that they will be changing the gullies to the normal slotted ones which should help with drainage, he will confirm the date for this with the Clerk. They have £3.5 million to spend on drainage next year and are aware of the issues on the A272 and will deal with them.

- iii. **HASTINGFORD LANE** – RW confirmed that the section of road from the junction with Five Chimneys Lane to Hastingford Farm will be overlaid with HRA on 27th May 2014. The Clerk asked for confirmation that this wouldn't later be cancelled and RW confirmed that it wouldn't be. Cabinet have also given Highways department £10 million to spend on unclassified roads.

Concerns were raised over a section of the edge of the carriageway that has eroded and that when a complaint was made about the potholes last year they weren't considered 'bad enough'. RW advised that they are changing the way potholes are classified and the timescale to get them mended, they will be receiving additional funding and will action potholes from 1st April 2014 within 28 days. RW confirmed that the pothole in Wilderness Lane was being redone and that the gang who originally did the work will no longer be working for Highways department.

- iv. **GENERAL HIGHWAYS CONCERNS** – RW confirmed that rural lanes are inspected annually and major roads monthly and they have to prioritise all work.

68,000 pothole repairs were undertaken last year. If the pothole reoccurs it should be reported to Highways in order that the contractor can re-do it at their own cost. Pothole repairs are guaranteed for 1 year.

Kiers have produced an improvement plan and have 3 months to improve the standard of their work, if this doesn't happen ESCC can employ another contractor. Kier's contract expires in 2015 when companies will be invited to tender for the new contract. Subcontractors' contracts are constantly updated. ESCC review their policies and are currently looking at a severe weather policy.

Concern was raised over the height of manhole covers after repairs or resurfacing work. RW confirmed that work is guaranteed for 1 year and the resurfacing for 10 years. The problems with the A267 at Five Ashes were highlighted, RW confirmed that the water problems there could not have been foreseen and that the contractor would be re-doing the surface at their own cost.

It was highlighted that when ditches are cleared the debris is often placed next to the ditch but then gets washed straight back into the ditch. RW advised that he is negotiating a new rate with the contractor for where the debris needs to be removed.

RW advised that his staff work very hard and are often working in difficult circumstances.

Concern was expressed by the Parish Council over the number of large vehicles using Hastingford and School Lanes. They had written to Coppards but had received no response.

RW felt that self-certification of work is on the whole successful, there is however some areas where

he has concerns and he will be addressing these. Where necessary they can increase the % of work being checked. RW was thanked for attending the meeting and all the work he had done in preparation for it.

277. PRESENTATION ON COMMUNITY SELF-SERVE BY ROGER WILLIAMS – RW went through the scheme and the

options available to the Parish Council. He confirmed that they will still cut the vegetation around signs and will clean or repair specific signs if they are in a poor condition. The Parish Council can create a Local Delivery Company or employ a local contractor to undertake grass cutting, ditching and possibly pothole fixing, although RW had some safety concerns over this, the PC would receive funding from ESCC. The Clerk expressed concern as to whether funding would be withdrawn in the future, RW advised that there were no plans to withdraw the funding. He advised that the provision of free materials wouldn't be considered until they were aware of the take-up from councils. Contractors would need to have public liability insurance and the Parish Council would have a duty of care. RW confirmed that he wouldn't want anyone working on the A272 who wasn't an ESCC employee. ESCC could fund match the siding of footways and the Parish Council could specify how they want it done. If the cleaning of signs is very important to the Parish Council they can raise this with Highways.

The Parish Council will discuss the options at their next meeting and decide whether they will complete an expression of interest for any of these.

278. PLANNING APPLICATION:

- i. **WD/2014/0158/F – STONEHURST CONSTRUCTION, STONEHURST FARM, STONEHURST LANE TN20 6LL** – Conversion of existing redundant outbuilding into ancillary accommodation – The Parish Council support the application (4/0).

The meeting closed at 9:05pm