



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7th December 2017 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr B Greenwell (Acting Chair), Cllr D Clarke, Cllr S Fuller, Cllr I Haydock, Cllr P Hill, Cllr A Hookham, and Cllr P Seeley

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.479 - C.483); District Cllr J Wilton (Items C.471 - C.474); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There was one member of the public present.

PUBLIC SESSION

Community Watch - Mrs Joan Colin (Watch Co-ordinator) stated that the Watch would like to invite the village to a presentation on keeping safe against scams. The session would be led by Elaine Bowdery, of the East Sussex Against Scams Partnership (of which EDF is a Charter member). The Watch hoped to stage this event in partnership with the Residents' Association and the parish council. The council was requested to pay for the hall booking, and both bodies were requested to give their support to the marketing of the event. The Acting Chair stated that the council would give sympathetic consideration to this request at its next meeting.

The Acting Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting

C.471 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr T Bryant, Cllr M Keller

C.472 Declarations of Interests: - None.

C.473 Approval of the Minutes: - The minutes of the parish council meeting held on 2nd November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.474 REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

District Cllr J Wilton reported that the Boundary Commission proposals for revising parliamentary constituency boundaries had been discussed at a recent meeting of full council, and an amendment had been moved requesting the transfer of EDF from the Lewes constituency to Eastbourne, to level up a slight discrepancy in numbers. Cllr Wilton had opposed the amendment, but it had been passed. He had since written to the Boundary Commission to support their current proposal, against the proposed amendment.

In discussion, the parish council objected to the fact that there had been no notice or consultation over the amendment, and that the purely arithmetical reasoning did not

justify partnering the parish with an urban borough, instead of the rural parishes stretching from East Dean to Lewes, as had been the case for the past 17 years. An objection should be sent to the Boundary Commission. **ACTION: KL.**

RESOLVED – That the report of the District Councillor be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.475 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS

The council considered report 4 on progress since the November meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Mowing contract – members supported the proposal that tenders be invited for the next three year period, notwithstanding that financial support from ESCC for verge cutting might be withdrawn after 2018. It was noted that both the Gilbert Estate and the East Dean Greensward Company wanted the village greens in their ownership to be included in the specification, as before. It was agreed that one final review of the cutting schedule should be undertaken before the tender documents were issued. **ACTION: SF to circulate the documents to PS and PH; KL to issue the documents as soon as possible thereafter.**
- b) Southern Gas donation of £1,000 – members agreed to formally accept this donation as a contribution to the play area upgrade. An offer of free labour from Southern Gas's contractor (D J Utilities) should also be accepted. It was noted that some users of the play area with push chairs had requested a level track to access the site. It was agreed that the laying of a hoggin track should be considered when the contractor was back in the village. **ACTION: MK to respond to Southern Gas.**
- c) Went Way railings – a quotation of £280 had been received for removing old paint from the metal railing and concrete posts, and repainting. It was agreed that this should be accepted. **ACTION: KL.**
- d) Notice boards – a quotation of £650 had been received for renovating all four notice boards. A budget for replacement had been set aside at the February council meeting, but current advice was that the boards were hardwood, and could be saved. It was agreed that the boards at the Village Hall and Friston should be done first at a cost of £130 each. **ACTION: PH**
- e) War Memorial railings – an application for grant aid for refurbishment would now be sent to the Heritage Lottery Fund. **ACTION: BG**

RESOLVED – That the Progress report be noted and action taken as discussed

C.476 DOWNLANDS WAY COVENANTS

The council considered Report 5 outlining the background to the present situation and proposing that the covenants be wound up. The covenants had originally been attached to the persons using the shop units, rather than the actual units, and had been designed to reimburse the council for the purchase of the parking area in 1997. That had been achieved, and now the covenants had begun to fail through the units changing hands. If covenants were to continue they would have to be set up afresh in

a more costly exercise, though the end yield to the council would be only £435pa (and the council was obliged to collect VAT on the payments). The Hon. Solicitor would be willing to handle the winding up of the covenants on a *pro bono* basis. It was agreed that the covenants should be terminated. **ACTION: KL to notify the Hon. Solicitor**

RESOLVED – That the Downlands Way covenants be wound up and the Hon. Solicitor be requested to act for the council

C.477 PAVILION FEES

The council considered Report 6, proposing that the pavilion be recognised as a 'community asset' and that hire fees be adjusted accordingly. In discussion the majority of members agreed to these proposals. The hire fees for individual private hire should be reduced to £25 for a typical half day hire in 2018; this would cover costs. The Cricket Club was currently charged £550 for the season, equating to about £22 per fixture, but had given notice that the number of fixtures would be substantially increased in 2018. It was agreed that a new fee of £700 should be agreed for 2018. It was noted that in 2017 the council had paid over £200 for additional cuts to the outfield, and that this was expected to continue in 2018.

RESOLVED - That the pavilion be regarded as a 'community asset', and hire fees be set accordingly for 2018, as discussed.

C.478 BUDGET 2018/19 (SECOND PASS)

The council reviewed the figures provided and noted several revisions: East Sussex County Council would phase out their contribution to verge cutting from 2019 onwards; a sum of £600 should be set aside for replacement office equipment in 2018; and the projected level of reserves at the end of the 2018/19 financial year would be 40% of the new precept rather than the 50% of recent budgets. The budget would be finalised in January 2018.

RESOLVED - That the updated draft reserve figures be approved (40% of precept)

C.479 SOCIAL MEDIA

The council considered Report 8 by Cllr Hookham. In discussion a majority of members supported the initiative of setting up a council Facebook page. To minimise the spread of personal contact information, each councillor would be allocated a new email address dedicated to council business and linked to the website, prior to the Facebook launch. Cllr Hookham would be the council's Facebook administrator, and Cllr Fuller would continue as webmaster. All would be welcome to contribute pictures and information about events, etc. for posting. New policies relating to Social Media and Data Protection should be considered at the February meeting. **ACTION: AH/BG/SF/KL**

RESOLVED - That the council should launch a Facebook page

C.480 RAMPION (SUSSEX COMMUNITY FOUNDATION)

The council considered making an application for a grant from this new fund for the play area upgrade. Michelle Gray of Wealden District Council had kindly agreed to act as the referee required by Rampion. Cllr Greenwell had drafted an application.

RESOLVED – That an application be submitted for a play area grant from the Rampion Sussex Community Foundation

C.481 PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The council considered Report 10, the Schedule of Payments and Receipts for December 2017 [*Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website*]. Three further invoices had been received (two from Wealden District Council, for dog bin emptying; and a conference fee); and one from Cllr Hill (refund for wine at the Village Christmas lunch). The schedule included £22,905 plus VAT for the purchase of the Kanope equipment for the play area. All payments were approved. The VAT reclaim would be submitted as soon as possible.

RESOLVED - That the Payments totalling £29,146.49 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments online

C.482 URGENT ITEMS: - None**C.483 REPORTS:**

- a) County Councillor – Cllr S Shing reported on the following matters: (i) the county council would need to reduce its budget by a further £21 million in 2018/19, and this lay behind the proposal to close some libraries; (ii) Cllr Shing had objected to the recent phone mast application, as requested by the parish, but to no avail; (iii) the design stage for the new Exceat Bridge was in progress and the whole project was expected to take 2-3 years. In discussion, members expressed concern that Wealden District Council had proposed to the Boundary Commission that the parish be transferred from the Lewes constituency to the Eastbourne constituency. The parish council would oppose the amendment.
- b) Chair of the council –
 - i. The Chair had held an informal meeting with Mr Davies Gilbert to discuss Play Area fencing, cricket club storage, Best Kept Village signs and mowing.
 - ii. The Chair and Vice Chair had attended an Emergency Resilience Conference and noted a shift of emphasis from ‘emergency response’ to ‘emergency resilience’. A Working Group would be convened in the New Year to update the council’s Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan.

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- c) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 21 November 2018.
 - d) Finance - the Lead Member reported that the balance in hand at the end of November was £62,974.
 - e) Rights of Way and Highways:
 - i. The Lead Member reported that bark chips had been laid on some paths, and more would be done on 9th December. All volunteers would be welcome.
 - ii. Footpath 8 – a new fingerpost had been installed by ESCC but might need to be shifted as it appeared to be on a privately owned section of verge, rather than in the twitten.
 - iii. Squeeze gate – the posts had rotted and the whole gate was in danger of falling over. It was agreed that Rustic Garden should be invited to quote for replacing the posts.
 - iv. Friston Pond – it had been suggested that netting should be placed over Friston Pond. Members agreed that no further action was necessary.
 - v. Diseased elms – in the summer ESCC had marked a number of elms in the Twitten (Footpath 25) for felling. No work had been done and a reminder should be sent **ACTION: KL**
 - f) Recreation ground – the Lead Member reported that he was doing regular inspections. A broken gate spring had been repaired.
 - g) Village Events:
 - i. Community Watch safety event – members noted the request made in the Public Session for the council to support this event
 - ii. Village Fete 2018 – this would be held on Saturday 23rd June
 - iii. Bonfire 2018 – Cllr Haydock would bring forward a motion in January for the council to rescind its decision not to hold a bonfire event in 2018, and to begin preparations for such an event.
 - iv. Christmas Tree – it was agreed that in 2018 the council should consider providing a village Christmas Tree
 - h) General Data Protection Regulation – the clerk reported that the Sussex Association of Local Councils had advised that parish clerks should not be appointed as Data Protection officers, although the Society of Local Council Clerks disagreed. The work of auditing files in the parish office was under way and 10 years' worth of minutes had been deposited in the County Record Office. In discussion, members agreed to keep a watching brief on the GDPR debate, and in the meantime to continue to minimise its own record holding

RESOLVED – That the above reports (a) – (h) be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.484 CORRESPONDENCE

The council considered report 13 by the Clerk, and the following matters were noted:

- a) Phone mast – the Acting Chair reported that the Parish Conference had been informed that the legislation which had allowed landowners to charge large fees for the installation of phone masts on their land had been overturned. ESCC might not receive a fee for permitting the installation of the East Dean mast on the highway verge. **ACTION: KL to check and respond**

RESOLVED – That the Correspondence report be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.485 Date of next meeting – Thursday 4th January 2018 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.44 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

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