



Minutes of an informal meeting of councillors held remotely on the Zoom platform on Thursday 4th November 2021, commencing at 6.30 pm

Under regulations in force at the time, a formal Parish Council meeting could only be held with councillors and members of the public physically present. This remote meeting, therefore, had to be deemed “informal” meaning that no decisions could be made.

Councillors present: Cllr T Bryant (Acting Chair), Cllr P Hill, Cllr M Keller, and Cllr H Milligan

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.468 – C.471); District Cllr M Lunn (Items C.468 – C.472); K Larkin (Parish Clerk); D Picknell (Admin Officer)

PCSOs Sophie Cole and Scott McCallum were in attendance. There were no members of the public present.

Public Session

PCSO Cole raised the following points:

- Wildlife crime at Crowlink car park – patrols were in progress as unlawful activity had been reported. A site meeting would be held on 10th November. Local residents and the Eco-care Group of the Residents’ Association had been notified.
- Police attendance at Village Market – there would be a stall at the next weekly market with a focus on combatting burglaries and scams.
- Camper van in Upper Street – councillors reported that a van had been parked for six weeks and appeared to be abandoned. It occupied a space needed by visitors to local businesses. **ACTION: DP to send details to PCSO McCallum**
- Platinum Jubilee Street Party – advice was requested on the procedure for temporary street closure and safe hosting of such an event. **ACTION: PCSOs to make enquiries and report back.**

Councillors thanked the PCSOs for attending. The Acting Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting.

C.468 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr P Seeley, Cllr S Thorogood, Cllr G Fowler, and Cllr C Lees

C.469 Declarations of Interests: - Cllr Bryant – police patrol meeting at Crowlink (in the vicinity of his property)

C.470 Minutes: - The minutes of the council meeting held on 7th October 2021 should be amended in Item C.458(a) giving approval for wicket covers to be used at the recreation ground: the words ‘dismantled and’ should be deleted (i.e. the frame of the

cover would remain on site); the minutes were then recommended as a correct record for signature by the Chair at the December meeting.

C.471 Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr S Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) Downs View Lane bus stop – the county council's Passenger Transport Team were ready to approve the reinstatement of the damaged stop in a new and safer location east of Downs View Lane, but this might be dependent on the parish council meeting the cost. An update would be provided at the next meeting. **ACTION: SS**
- b) Drainage at the Upper Street/A259 junction – in recent heavy rain the lack of drainage at this junction had contributed to a flood further down the hill. The surface contours should be corrected and the gulley pots emptied. **ACTION: SS to request urgent action.**

Members thanked Cllr Shing for his report.

C.472 Report of the District Councillor

District Cllr Lunn reported on the following matters:

- a) Wealden Local Plan – the district council's draft recommendations as to housing option sites should be announced before Christmas and followed by a public consultation. The parish was strongly advised to respond to this consultation, as the site choices made were likely to be in the adjacent Low Weald area due to greater restrictions on development in other parts of the district, and could thus impact on the Cuckmere river (with increased potential for flash flooding), and impose extra burdens on local infrastructure (not only roads but also schools, surgeries and other public facilities). Cllr Lunn, Cllr Galley (Portfolio Holder) and Maria Caulfield MP had been lobbying Michael Gove (Secretary of State) on the basis that the housing numbers being imposed on the district were not sustainable.
- b) 'Water neutral' requirement for new developments – councillors requested information on this new requirement proposed by Natural England **ACTION: ML to make enquiries and report back.** Cllr Lunn advised that consultants had been employed by the District to do modelling of the effects of increased development on the Pevensey Levels and the Cuckmere, and on the effects of South East Water's proposal to extend the reservoir at Arlington.
- c) Funding for Exceat Bridge – the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had approved government funding for the new bridge. However, the project was on hold whilst amendments to the plans were negotiated between Highways and the SDNPA.
- d) Planning White Paper and COP26 – the delayed White Paper would now include input on climate change from the conference, with requirements that would cascade down. The cost implications might then be challenged e.g. by developers.

- e) Electric Vehicle charging points – members noted that Wealden had a commitment to providing charge points in their car parks. **ACTION: ML to provide an update**
- f) Street cleaning in Upper Street – members requested that more frequent cleaning be done around the village and along the A259. [Gulley pots also required emptying but this was the responsibility of the county council]. **ACTION: ML to pursue this request.**

Members thanked Cllr Lunn for his report.

C.473 Business in Progress

Members considered Report 6:

- a) Neighbourhood Plan – members noted the recommendation of the Planning Committee that the Village Design Statement be reviewed as a matter of urgency and submitted to the SDNPA with a strong request that it be adopted as a supplementary planning document to give it regulatory status in its updated form. There was strong support and members agreed that council should be asked to ratify the proposal at the next formal meeting [Wednesday 1st December 2021]. **ACTION: KL to add it to the December agenda**
- b) Parish council by-election – the clerk reported that a decision on ordering poll cards had had to be made prior to the meeting and would need to be justified as Emergency Expenditure under the Financial Regulations at the next available formal meeting of council. If the election were not contested the cards would not be required.
- c) Footpath 26a/27 (Birling Manor to the Downs) – members noted with concern that currently the access to the official public right of way was blocked, following a successful planning application to divert the path away from the drive of Birling Manor [SDNP/18/04796]. However, the diversion had remained informal with the actual right of way now blocked by a hedge. Members agreed this must be closely monitored lest the right of way be lost **ACTION: KL to contact ESCC Rights of Way again.**

Members took note of the other progress made since the October meeting.

C.474 Risk Management Strategy

Members noted Report 7 and requested that it be deferred to the December meeting.

ACTION: KL to add it to the December agenda

C.475 Preliminary Consideration of Budget and Precept

Members took note of Report 8 and 8a monitoring the budget for the first half of the financial year 2021/22 and projecting an outturn similar to that of the previous financial year. Members also took note of the first draft of the budget for 2022/23 (Report 8b), based on the assumption that the precept would not be raised and that expenditure would be financed almost entirely from the precept rather than from capital grants. The 2022/23 draft would be reviewed at the December meeting and provision made for a sinking fund to cover substantial periodic maintenance costs

(e.g. resurfacing the tennis court, £1,200). **ACTION: KL to add to the December agenda.**

C.476 Greensward Renaturing Project

Members noted Reports 9 and 9a and requested that these be deferred to the December meeting. **ACTION: KL to add to the December agenda**

C.477 Council Grant Scheme

Members took note of Report 10 regarding an application from the Short Mat Bowls Club to defray the cost of buying some new equipment and supplementing entry fees. Members requested further information on the cost of the proposed equipment but expressed reluctance to subsidise hall hire charges. Consideration was deferred to the December meeting. **ACTION: KL to obtain figures and add the item to the December agenda**

C.478 Payments and Receipts

The council took note of Report 11, the schedule of payments for November 2021 and receipts for October 2021. *[Note: the complete Schedule is appended to these Minutes]*. Members requested that the Cricket Club be invoiced direct for the 8 extra cuts to the outfield done at their request during the season. **ACTION: KL to advise accordingly.** The payments totalling £8,601.66 would not be deferred to December.

C.479 Reports:

- a) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 19 October 2021. The Chair of Planning invited members to think what resources would be required for the proposed updating of the Village Design Statement and to bring proposals to the next council meeting. A consultant might be needed to advise on the impact of the series of Technical Advice Notes issued by the Planning Authority subsequent to the adoption of the Local Plan.
- b) Finance – the council took note of the Budget Monitoring Report for Q.2, Month 7, 2021/22. The bank balance at the end of October had been £98,521.84.
- c) Highways and Rights of Way – members took note of the draft minutes of the Strengthening Local Relationships meeting held on 14 October 2021.
- d) Recreation Ground – it was reported that a bench in the play area had a broken slat. The Lead Member had been notified and would inspect it and advise on repairs.
- e) Platinum Jubilee – the Lead Member updated councillors on the proposed entertainments for the joint council/Cricket Club event on 2 June 2022 and requested ideas to fill the early evening between the ending of sports and the lighting of the fire beacon. The National Trust had been requested to permit the lighting of a fire beacon at the Red Barn and this was under active consideration, including consultation with Natural England. The event would need to be insured and carefully organised for public safety. The Chair of Planning agreed to check whether a planning application would be needed for the installation of a permanent village sign adjacent to the recreation ground.

ACTION: TB. The restrictive covenant enjoyed by the Gilbert Estate over certain activities on the recreation ground was not thought to be applicable, but the Hon. Solicitor would be consulted **ACTION: MK.** The clerk was requested to check the criteria for allocating a small amount of grant funding to a local school for an art project supporting the event. **ACTION: KL.**

C.480 Correspondence

Members took note of Report 14 on Correspondence received since the October meeting, and the following items were discussed:

- a) Friston Forest Management Plan 2021 – 2031 – the council had been notified of this draft Plan prepared by Forestry England with little time for consultation. A copy had been sent to the Residents' Association and a copy would be placed on the council website for anyone to comment.
- b) Flint wall in the shopping precinct – information had been received that this item was not listed but had been part of the farmyard wall of the original Gore Farm. A decision would be made at the December meeting as to whether it should be demolished to make way for one or two parking or electric vehicle charging bays **ACTION: KL to add to the December agenda.**
- c) Removal of three willow bushes at Friston Pond – this proposal from a resident would be considered by councillors in discussion with the Pond contractor **ACTION: PH**
- d) Call for CIL projects – the South Downs National Park Authority had signalled the opening of applications for the coming year, and members were invited to consider suitable infrastructure projects to apply for (e.g. a pavement from Old Willingdon Road to Windmill Lane; a permanent village sign on the Birling Gap Road). **ACTION: all members**

C.481 Officer Annual Appraisals

These were held over to the next formal meeting **ACTION: KL to add to the December agenda.**

C.482 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 1st December or Thursday 2nd December 2021 at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall of the Village Hall. *[Note by the clerk: the meeting will be on **Wednesday 1st December** as the village hall will be in use as a polling station on 2nd December].*

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.48 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....