



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7 April 2022 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr P Seeley (Chair), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr G Fowler, Cllr P Hill, Cllr M Keller, Cllr C Lees, and Cllr S Thorogood

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Item C.548); District Cllr Lunn (Item C.545) K Larkin (Parish Clerk), and D Picknell (Admin Officer)

There was one member of the public present

C.539 Acceptance of apologies for absence: Cllr M Bustard, Cllr H Milligan

C.540 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.541 Minutes

The minutes of the council meeting held on 3 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.542 Report of Maria Caulfield MP

The council took note of a written report from Maria Caulfield MP on general constituency matters.

C.543 Business in Progress

The council received and took note of Report 7 on progress made since the meeting on 3 March 2022. A draft licence for the hire of the recreation ground and pavilion by the Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company on Thursday 30 June 2022 was approved for signature by the Chair.

RESOLVED - That the draft licence be approved and signed by the Chair

Members also considered making a donation for the benefit of Ukraine. There was support for making such a donation to an appropriate locally based charity. A decision would be deferred pending the outcome of the current public meeting on Local Help for Ukraine.

RESOLVED – That the Progress report be noted

C.544 Council Insurance

This item was deferred to the council meeting on 5 May 2022.

C.545 Report of the District Councillor

District Cllr M Lunn reported on the following matters:

- Electric Vehicle Charging Points – the council's letter in support of the inclusion of the village car park in Phase 1 of Wealden's rollout had been considered. A feasibility study had shown that the car park did not have sufficient electrical capacity to support the high speed connections required, so would not be in Phase 1, but it had been noted as a priority area and could hope to be included in Phase 2. When the work was done, low level lighting (compliant with the Dark Skies policy) would be installed at the same time. There was no time frame for this.
- Wealden's Local Plan – the lobbying done against the method of calculation of future housing numbers had been heard sympathetically by the Secretary of State but due to pressure of other parliamentary business a review could be indefinitely delayed. In contrast Wealden's Local Plan must be delivered in a timely manner, and housing targets remained too high and must be concentrated in the Low Weald due to restrictions in other parts of the District.
- Waste collection – Wealden's contract with Biffa appeared to be running well, but in some neighbouring districts strikes were either current or threatened.
- South Downs National Park Authority – work was progressing on the new visitor centre at Seven Sisters. There was an ongoing policy discussion on local objectives, particularly on treading the line between maintaining a working landscape (e.g. supporting farming and tourism and maintaining the Cuckmere Estuary as a popular resource), and supporting re-naturing.
- Exceat Bridge – members asked why work was not proceeding on this project (it was noted that this question fell within the remit of the county councillor).

RESOLVED - That the report of the District Councillor be noted.

C.546 Council accountancy software purchase

This item was deferred to the council meeting on 5 May 2022.

C.547 Annual Village Meeting 2022

The council took note of Report 10 on responses from village organisations. The majority had not had a normal year on which to report, due to Covid, but would attend and participate in some other way. The draft agenda was approved subject to necessary updates prior to publication.

RESOLVED - That the draft agenda for the Annual Village Meeting be approved

C.548 Report of the County Councillor

County Councillor S Shing reported on the following matters:

- C40 Jevington Road closure – a final decision was awaited
- Upper Street flooding – further work would require the road to be fully closed in the evening and this would need to be approved by Highways England.
- Downs View Lane bus stop - the work to reinstate the stop was still pending.
- A22 improvements – funding had now been approved for the improvement of five junctions between Hailsham and Stone Cross
- Funding for local road schemes – funds had been approved for Alfriston among others

- Exceat Bridge – construction was being delayed whilst ways of mitigating the environmental impact of the scheme were considered. Members requested Cllr Shing to make further enquiries **ACTION: SS**
- Resurfacing at the Upper Street/A259 junction - members thanked East Sussex Highways for these recent improvement works.

RESOLVED - That the report of the County Councillor be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.549 Village Design Statement/Neighbourhood Plan

Village Design Statement: - The Chair of Planning reported that he and the Admin Officer had gone through the Village Design Statement and updated the factual content including Local Plan policy references. Further updates would be required following the publication of the 2021 census figures in the summer, as it was known that the population profile of the village had become younger. The VDS also contained a number of statements made by the council in 2014 which should now be reviewed. There had been little progress in sourcing consultancy, but the Chair of Planning had the technical ability to do the drafting in-house provided that two councillors could join him to steer the project. Cllr Fowler kindly agreed to do this. It was hoped that another councillor could be appointed at the May council meeting. The Admin Officer would continue to be allocated to the project.

Neighbourhood Plan [Previous reference: Council Minutes 7 October 2021, item C.458 (b)]: the Chair of Planning and the Chair of Council had met the new Chair of the Residents' Association to consider a way forward. It was agreed that a fresh Steering Group would need to be assembled, and the Residents' Association would assist with this. Councillors agreed that the original Terms of Reference should be reviewed. The Steering Group should report to council through its minutes which would be taken by the Admin Officer. The Group might choose to appoint Working Parties to research particular topics but the Admin Officer would not be expected to cover Working Party meetings.

Members were also concerned that public expectations of the benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan should be realistic. In particular, the following should be understood:

- A Neighbourhood Plan must be about land usage i.e. development
- A Housing Needs Survey is required and must be independently assessed, and accompanied by a Call for Sites
- If new housing or other developments are approved, they can be made subject to fresh planning conditions set out in the Neighbourhood Plan (and consistent with the Local Plan), e.g. to promote environmentally friendly actions
- However, the same conditions can NOT be applied retrospectively to existing properties and/or extensions

Members were therefore unanimous that a definitive brief must be laid out prior to the relaunch of a Steering Group. **ACTION: KL to request this from the SDNPA.** Further discussion was deferred to the May council meeting when it was hoped that a

brief might be available. This should also clarify the funding requirement. Members also agreed that a Chair for the Steering Group should be appointed from within the council. The Chair of Planning would not be available to do this.

C.550 Requests for Resources

The council considered Report 12 as follows:

- a) East Dean in Bloom – it was agreed that up to £150 should be given to the Residents' Association to do planting in the shopping precinct in the Jubilee colours. Members thanked the RA for undertaking this work.
- b) Interpretation Boards – the Residents' Association had requested a grant of £500 to part-fund the provision of interpretation boards on the wildflower strip on the western boundary of the recreation ground (i.e. behind the pavilion). The strip had yet to develop and members agreed to wait and see how it evolved, for review in the autumn.

RESOLVED - That a grant of up to £150 should be paid to the Residents' Association for planning at the shopping precinct

C.551 Local Council Award Scheme

The council took note of Report 13 regarding progress with their application for an LCAS Foundation Award. It was noted that a new post-Covid action plan would need to be drawn up, and this would be a topic for public discussion at the Annual Village Meeting on 20 May 2022. The council would also need a formal training policy for members and officers. **ACTION: KL to put this on the May council agenda.**

C.552 National Association of Local Councils

The Chair invited the council to respond to a consultation by NALC on the service requirements of smaller councils (i.e. those with an electorate under 6,000). The topics proposed by NALC for consideration were all endorsed and it was agreed that the Chair should respond to NALC in support of their proposals.

C.553 Payments and Receipts

The council took note of Report 15 containing the schedule of payments for April 2022 and receipts in March 2022. The following additional payments were approved: £50 to the Community Watch; £431 for the repair of three road signs on the Downlands Estate; £650.85 for M.O.T surfacing and wood chips to stabilise the public access to Hobbs Eares; and £100.98 for planting the hanging baskets for the new season. Two items were amended: (i) the grant of £300 for the Residents' Association as a contribution to the purchase of two marquees was raised to £500; (ii) the grant of £100 promised as a contribution to the Jubilee Children's Art Project would not be required as the cost would be covered by part of an Arts Council grant secured on behalf of the RA. *[Note: the complete Payments Schedule is appended to these Minutes].*

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £8,472.76 be approved

C.554 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – (i) Workplace Pensions: the council's triennial re-registration would be required this summer and details of two pension schemes would be provided for council to consider at a future meeting. Ongoing budgetary provision must be made if required; (ii) East Sussex Women of the Year 2022: the clerk had been invited to this event; (iii) Defibrillators: a new cabinet had been installed at the top of Micheldene Road with sponsorship from SE Water which was much appreciated. One further site was needed to serve Friston. Training would then be provided in the use of defibrillators.
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 15 March 2022. A resident had complained that security lights were being used indiscriminately despite there being a Dark Skies planning policy. Members sympathised, but noted that unless a property or extension was subject to an actual planning condition limiting their use, nothing could be done. The policy could only be applied to new builds/extensions. Serious over-use could be reported to Environmental Health at Wealden District Council, but the bar for them to take action was set very high.
- c) Finance – the council took note of the draft Final Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2022 (Report 17(c)). The closing balance was £63,454 [£66,422 in 2020/21].
- d) Traffic Management Working Group – Eastbourne Borough Council was consulting on a proposal to make a new Public Spaces Protection Order to combat anti-social driving on the Beachy Head/ Birling Gap Road. The parish council would support this, and raise the matter at the next liaison meeting with East Sussex Highways on 28 April 2022
- e) Rights of Way and Highways – (i) Street name signs – three signs had been repaired on the Downlands Estate; (ii) Footpath 8 (The Ridgeway to Old Willingdon Road) – a new fence had been installed to improve accessibility; (iii) Footpath 17 (Warren Lane to the Greensward) – the fallen fence had been replaced; (iv) Two further properties would be contacted to remove obstructions to rights of way; (v) Signage at the Jevington/Crowlink crossover – ESCC's Principal Traffic and Safety officer would visit the site following the liaison meeting on 28 April 2022.(vi) Jevington Road closure – members noted a proposal that the gas main works be postponed until October and halted over December and Christmas.
- f) Tree Warden – two Holm oaks had been planted at the recreation ground on 11 March 2022, the 70th day of the 70th year of Her Majesty's reign
- g) Recreation Ground – (i) Storage of marquees – by mutual agreement of the parish council, the Residents' Association and the Cricket Club, an external store at the pavilion would be altered to provide storage. Cllr Fowler would kindly undertake the work and a fibreglass roof would kindly be donated by a Club member. Other materials/labour would cost approx. £200. Members agreed in principle that the council should cover the cost. (ii) Pavilion Electrical Condition Report - an updated report would be commissioned at a

cost of approx. £250. This would ensure the high demand for power over the Jubilee could be safely provided.

- h) Environment – (i) the South Downs National Park Authority had not accepted Friston Pond under their call for Nature sites, but only because the Pond was already recognised as an existing habitat for local wildlife. (ii) Friston Pond maintenance – a round of maintenance for the new season would be undertaken by Mr Warner.
- i) Platinum Jubilee Events – the Lead Member proposed that the £100 grant not now required for the children's art project [See item C.553 above] should be donated to the RA to cover the cost of insurance for the Jubilee Pond Dipping event, if required. This was agreed. Sheppards Café had kindly agreed to run the bar for the council's evening event on Thursday 2 June. A hog roast and BBQ had also been organised. No music licence would be required: this was a special dispensation for local Jubilee events. A local Builder had very kindly agreed to sponsor the installation of the fire beacon on Went Hill. All necessary consents were being obtained, and Natural England had classified the event as *de minimis* requiring no further conditions. A flyer listing all the events would be inserted in the May parish magazine (the council would pay for this and had agreed a budget). It was hoped to organise a practice session to erect a marquee.
- j) Cuckmere Buses – the council took note of the agenda for the next stakeholders' meeting on 13th April 2022 and the minutes of the last meeting on 22 November 2022. Members recorded their thanks to Stewart Fuller for being the parish's representative on CCB.

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

C.555 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 18 on Correspondence received since the March meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity loss – the points raised by residents were noted, but with the reservation that most lay outside of the remit of the parish council, and were either within the remit of the local planning authority or not subject to control.
- b) By-Elections – the council reviewed the points raised and considered that the only one outstanding was the proposal that the council should have a member dedicated to Community Engagement. Members agreed that all councillors were equally engaged with the community, and all contact details were publicly available on the council website,

RESOLVED - That the Correspondence report be noted

C.556 Dates of next meetings:

- a) **Annual Parish Council Meeting Thursday 5th May 2022 at 6.30 pm, followed directly by the ordinary May parish council meeting**
- b) **Annual Village Meeting Friday 20th May 2022**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.22 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

APPENDIX

PAYEE	DETAILS	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL	REF.NO	DATE	NOTES
P Seeley	Refund mileage for SDNPA visit	53.10	-	53.10	1790	07/03/2022	Paid
Business Stream	Pavilion supply	4.29	-	4.29	D/D	16/03/2022	Paid
M Keller	Refund Ukrainian Flag	17.98	-	17.98	1791	18/03/2022	Paid
3xCouncillors	Councillor allowances 2021/22 (2 of 2)	250.50	-	250.50	1792/93/94	28/03/2022	Paid
R Franklin	Cleaning bus shelters - February 2022	50.00	-	50.00	1795	22/03/2022	Paid
P Seeley	Purchase of holm oaks for Jubilee	112.17	22.43	134.60	1796	07/04/2022	
Tansleys Printers	Walking maps reprint x3	300.00	-	300.00	1797	07/04/2022	
Community Watch	Support grant	50.00	-	50.00	1798	07/04/2022	
P Seeley	Replacement of shop precinct signage	70.00	14.00	84.00	1799	07/04/2022	Paid
RA	Contribution to purchase of marquees	500.00	-	500.00	1800	07/04/2022	
HMRC	PAYE/NICS March 2022	350.35	-	350.35	1801	07/04/2022	
Rustic Garden	Spreading bark chips on ROWs	1,220.00	244.00	1,464.00	1802	07/04/2022	
Grants (Eastbourne) Ltd	Grounds maintenance - March 2022	923.00	184.60	1,107.60	1803	07/04/2022	
K Larkin	Office costs - March 2022	38.78	-	38.78	1804	07/04/2022	
D Picknell	Office costs - March 2022	83.99	10.00	93.99	1805	07/04/2022	
Village Hall Trust	Hall hires - March 2022	38.00	-	38.00	1806	07/04/2022	
K Larkin/D Picknell	Net Salaries (aggregated) - April 2022	1,652.67	-	1,652.67	1807/1808	28/04/2022	
Cuckmere Buses	Support grant Jan - March 2022	657.90	-	657.90	1809	07/04/2022	
WDC	Dog/litter bins Jan - March 2022	260.00	52.00	312.00	D/D	28/04/2022	
Rustic Gardens	Spreading wood chips at Hobbs Eares	650.85	130.17	781.02	1810	07/04/2022	
P Hill	Refund plants/compost for baskets	100.98	-	100.98	1811	07/04/2022	
Rustic gardens	Repair 3 road signs	359.20	71.80	431.00	1812	07/04/2022	
TOTALS		7,743.76	729.00	8,472.76			
RECEIPTS							
Barclays	Bank interest	0.36	-	0.36	BGC	07/03/2022	
TOTALS		0.36		0.36			