



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 07 December 2023 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 7.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr P Seeley (Chair), Cllr T Bryant (Vice Chair), Cllr M Bustard, Cllr G Fowler, Cllr C Lees and Cllr P Hill

In attendance: District Cllr D Greaves (item C.861 - 866); S Adeniji (Parish Clerk)

There were no members of the public present

Public Session

Nothing raised

The Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting

C.861 Acceptance of apologies for absence: Cllr H Milligan, Cllr D White, Cllr G Street and Cllr S Shing.

C.862 Declarations of Interests: - None.

C.863 Minutes of the parish council meeting held on 2 November 2023 –. The minutes of the parish council meeting held on 02 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.864 Report of the Member of Parliament

The council took note of a written report from Maria Caulfield MP on general constituency matters. Cllr Hill advised that at a previous meeting with Maria Caulfield MP, she promised to contact Vodaphone regarding telecommunications masks in the Village but we have not heard back from Vodaphone. The Chairman suggested that the Parish Clerk send a reminder to the MP. **ACTION: SA to write to MC.**

C.865 Report of the County Councillor

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Councillor Cllr Shing sent his apology as the full council meeting of ESCC scheduled for November has been cancelled there was nothing to report.

RESOLVED - That this be noted.

C.866 Report of the District Councillor

Wealden District Council (WDC) Cllr Greaves reported on the following matters:

- a) Changes for Postal and Proxy Voters; A result of the Elections Act 2022 new regulations require electors wishing to vote by post to have to reapply

every 3 years. If a voter holds a postal vote before 31st October 2023 that facility will expire on 31st January 2026. Proxy voting has also changed with the maximum number of people for whom one can act as a proxy will be 2

- b) WDC is 'looking' at its policy regarding parking enforcement. WDC is one of the few authorities in the country not to have a Civil Parking Enforcement scheme. At present parking enforcement is the responsibility of Sussex Police but they do not view this as a policing priority. In other areas of East Sussex ESCC deals with on-street parking enforcement – and has 'pay and display' systems in place. This may well impact the village car park should the Alliance see fit to change things in this respect.
- c) Wealden councillors have passed a motion to investigate river damage in Wealden's rivers and waterways. The concern is with river damage and preservation and for silt run-off in developments close to rivers – and to work with the Environment Agency (EA) to reduce silt run-off into rivers. The council want to demand more of the EA in order to protect waterways. 30% of the rivers and water bodies in the WDC area are in poor or bad condition. Only Arlington Reservoir is rated 'good' by the EA.
- d) There are fewer empty homes (i.e. empty for more than 6 months) within WDC despite the total rising in England. (There were 572 in October down from 641 the year before).
- e) Hailsham Leisure Pool has been closed for the whole of December for essential maintenance

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

C.867 Update from the meeting of 2nd November 2023

None as most of the items are on the agenda.

C.868 Second Pass of the draft Budget and Precept for 2024/25

The council considered the second draft of the budget and precept for 2024/25. It was noted that members' concerns have been taken into consideration in the final draft. Members welcomed the allocation of £6,000 and £2,000 respectively for both the Friston Pond Maintenance and the shopping precinct.

RESOLVED – To approve the budget and precept for 2024/25, with a precept of £73,500 and the sum of £6655.15 election underspend in the 2023/24 budget be transferred to the Election Reserves.

C.869 SDNP/23/04238/FUL Change of use of Black Robin Farm Beachy Head Road

The council discussed report 9 regarding the change of use of Black Robin Farm to a cultural and education centre with business studios, refectory and event space; including the erection of a new gallery building in place of the lambing barn (due to be relocated), the erection of a refectory building in place of the covered yard building (due to be relocated), the erection of an education building in place of the cow shed; the internal reconfiguration of the flint barn to form a welcome space and visitor shop; erection of a prep kitchen and learning kitchen in place of the west parlour; the erection of a boot room and covered walkway; the internal reconfiguration of the farmhouse and its ancillary flats to form business studios; internal alterations and recladding of the

general storage barn to form events space; recladding of the holiday cottages and change of use to ancillary staff accommodation and facilities; new pedestrian access and works to the existing vehicular access, associated infrastructure, vehicle parking, and landscaping; and landscape enhancements.

Members noted that the planning application has been called in by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) as the proposal has a significant impact on the purposes of the Park and on the Parish. The Chairman noted that the application has been discussed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and it was agreed that the Parish Council should make a formal submission to the SDNPA. Members were also concerned that so few people were aware of the application. It was agreed that the response from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be used as the basis for the council's objections. **ACTION: SA to write to SDNPA.**

RESOLVED – That the parish council sends a formal response to the SDNPA outlining its objections to the planning application

C.870 Parish Council Banking Arrangements

The Chairman explained that the parish council is in a dispute with its bankers Barclays Bank, as according to Barclays the parish council is classified as a charity and not a parish council. This confusion has led to Barclays threatening to close the parish council's bank account. The Deputy Clerk has spent hours on the phone with Barclays trying to resolve this issue but to no avail.

RESOLVED – That the Chairman and Parish Clerk arrange a meeting with the local branch of Barclays Bank i.e. the Eastbourne Branch to discuss this issue.

C.871 Risk Management Strategy 2024

The council took note of Report 11 and considered the updated Risk Management Strategy. It was noted that there were minor changes to reflect the creation of the Deputy Clerk's position. The Chairman noted that one of the risks highlighted in the plan was that the Pavilion Caretaker would retire at the end of the season.

RESOLVED – To approve the Risk Management Strategy and agree on a procedure for a quarterly Councillor Audit.

C.872 Application for a License to Use the Recreation Ground

The council took note of Report 12 and considered the application by the Rude Mechanical Theatre Company for a license to use the Recreation Ground on the 26th of June 2024. Members noted that a contribution of £50 should be made to a charity for the use of the ground.

RESOLVED – To grant a license to the Rude Mechanical Theatre Company to use the Recreation Ground on the 26th of June 2024 subject to them making a £50 donation to a local charity.

C.873 Payments and Receipts

The council took note of Report 13 listing the payments to be made in December 2023, and noting receipts for November 2023. *[Note: the complete Payments Schedule is appended to these Minutes].*

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £4,412.18 be approved. In addition, payments for the notice board for £957.60 and the Sussex Tree Surgery for £300 were approved

C.874 Business In Progress

The council received and took note of Report 14 on progress made since the meeting on 02 November 2023. The following items were discussed:

a) Request to spend £250 on removing the last tree at the Grange

Members considered a request to spend £250 + VAT on removing the last tree at the Grange.

RESOLVED – That the Parish Council pays for the removal of the last tree at the Grange.

b) Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2023-24

Members took note of the agreement on rates of pay agreed by the Joint Council for Local Government Services from 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The council agreed to implement the new pay rates for its staff.

RESOLVED – That the Parish Council adopt the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2023-24 backdated to 1st April 2023 for the Deputy Clerk and 1st June for the Clerk.

c) Grant Opportunities For Friston Pond

Members discussed the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) ReNature Grant Funding opportunity and decided to make an application for funding for improvements to Friston Pond.

RESOLVED – To apply for the SDNPA ReNature Grant.

d) Updated Pricing from Rialtas

The updated pricing from Rialtas was noted.

e) Report by the Clerk on Progress made since the last meeting

Members took note of the report by the Clerk on progress made since the last meetings. It was reported that the broken garden fence in the Ridgeway has been mended. The parish council is waiting to hear back from the Climpson Brothers on when they will be able to start the lopping of trees on Michel Dene Road.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Parish Council Cllr Seeley and the Parish Clerk visited the property in Hillside as requested by the resident. The resident has been very cooperative and has arranged for their Arborist to trim the hedge on Monday 18 December.

RESOLVED – To note the report.

C.875 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – The Chair reported that he attended the ESALC AGM together with Cllr Fowler. There were presentations on planning and Highways.

The Chairman reported that Wealden District Council will commence the installation of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points at the Horsefields Car Park on Monday 11th December 2023.

The Chairman gave feedback on a meeting he and Cllr Hill had with the National Trust to discuss Birling Gap, Farrar Hall and Hobbs Ears. The NT is in the process of demolishing Birling Gap and moving the shop inland, as a result of this two permanent members of staff (Rangers) are moving to Farrar Hall which is being completely refurbished. The National Trust has issued a new license for Hobb Ears effective from January 2024. The National Trust Rangers will attend the annual meeting of the parish in April.

The parish council does not own Farrar Hall.

- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on the 21st of November 2023. Cllr Fowler drew members' attention to the opening of The Long View.
- c) Finance – the council took note that the bank balance at the end of November 2023 was £104,795. The Council noted the Budget Monitoring Report and Bank Reconciliation Statement for November 2023.
- d) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Cllr Bustard reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have agreed on a vision statement which will be submitted to the parish council for formal approval.
- e) Rights of Way and Highways: Cllr Lees reported that the minutes of the SLR meeting still have not been received nor have the parish council had any response to its enquiries. **ACTION: SA to chase ESCC highways for Minutes of the SLR meeting.** The footpath from Sussex Gardens to Downsview Lane has also been reported to ESCC Highways. This footpath is tarmac and concrete.

Cllr Hill has been in contact with Cllr Shing about the drainage on the A259, Cllr Shing has been sent photographs showing that the manhole is blocked. Cllr Bryant suggested that this may be the responsibility of the landowner.

- f) Tree Warden: Footpath 25 has an overhanging dead limb at the top near Friston Church and this has been included in the scope of work to be done by the Climpson Brothers. It was agreed that the instruction to Climpson Brothers on works in Michel Dene Road is to include the hedge. **ACTION: SA to instruct Climpsons to include the hedge in the scope of works to be carried out in Michel Dene.**
- g) Recreation Ground: - Cllr Fowler will turn off the water for the winter.
- h) Defibrillators: - The Defibrillator by the village hall has been used twice by the Grange. It was noted that as the Grange is a care home, it should have a defibrillator. Cllr Seeley and Cllr Hill have sent an email to the owner about this but have yet to receive a reply.
Nothing else to report on defibrillators as they are all up and running and two sets of pads will be replaced in January.
- i) Downlands Estate Management Group:- The Resident Association has decided that they would not contribute to the falling of the trees on Micheal Dene Road so the Roads Company has agreed to increase their contribution to 50%. The Roads Company have written asking for the meeting to be held every six months. The Road Company are considering putting a levy on

extensions and new porches on the private estate, this will go towards the upkeep of the road.

C.876 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 17 on correspondence received since the November meeting.

C.877 Date of next meeting: - Thursday 4th January 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

ANNEX

Payments - November 2023
Receipts - October 2023

PAYEE	DETAILS	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL	REF.NO	DATE APPROVED	NOTES
Parkers Wholesale	Garden Ready Plants	27.98	4.99	32.97	3040		Paid by DD
Rustic Gardens	Installation of bollards	414.00	82.80	496.80	3041		Paid from CIL
Franklin	Bus Shelter Cleaning Oct	60.00		60.00	3042		PAID
Cllr Seeley	Payment For Bugler	50.00		50.00	3043		PAID
Christmas Lunch	Christmas Lunch Drinks	140.49		140.49	3044		PAID
EDF Energy	Energy for Pavillion	165.60	7.89	173.49	3045		PAID
S. Adeniji/K Larkin	November	1,749.14		1,749.14	3046/3047		PAID
Franklin	Bus Shelter Cleaning Nov	60.00		60.00	3048		
Janet Smith	Pavilion Cleaning Aug - Oct	209.00		209.00	3049		
East Dean Village Hall	Booking for Nov	40.00		40.00	3050		
Cllr Hill	Plastic Sheets for Bus Shelter	246.72	49.34	296.06	3051		
HMRC	PAYE/NICS - October 2023	433.32		433.32	3052		
K Larkin	Office Cost & Mileage	38.78		38.78	3053		
ESCC	Pension contributions - September 2023	568.44		568.44	3054		
S Adeniji	Office Cost & Expenses	50.04		50.04	3055		
Cllr Bustard	Expenses for AECOM meeting	13.65		13.65	3056		
S. Adeniji/K Larkin	December Salary to be confirmed via email	-		-	3057/3058		Amount will be authorised by Chairman & Deputy
Notice Boards Online	Notice Board	798.00	159.60	957.60	3059		
Sussex Tree Surgery	Removing tree at The Grange	250.00	50.00	300.00	3060		
TOTAL		5,315.16	354.62	5,669.78			

RECEIPTS

TOTAL - -