

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 7.30 pm**

**Councillors present:** Cllr J Greenway, Cllr P Hill, Cllr P Seeley (Chair), Cllr T Larkin, Cllr G Fowler, Cllr N Baker, and Cllr D White.

**In attendance:** District Cllr D Greaves, Cllr Shing, and Clerk & RFO Fiona Chalk.

Public Session: There were no members of the public present.

Minute No.	Item	Action responsibility
1061	<b>Acceptance of apologies for absence:</b> Apologies were received from Cllr Bryant and Cllr Bustard	
1062	<b>Declarations of Interest:</b> None.	
1063	<b>Approval of minutes on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> <b>Resolved:</b> The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair	Clerk to publish
1064	<b>Report of the Member of Parliament</b> No report was received. Meeting dates have been requested and reports will be submitted next year.	
1065	<b>Report of the County Councillor</b> Cllr Shing presented his report, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayfield Fire Station proposed closure</li> <li>• County Council await their budget allocation from Central government, expected 20<sup>th</sup> December. £65m deficit for ESCC, if no extra funding is received. A 5% increase on Council Tax is permitted, so likely to be the implemented rise.</li> <li>• £4.4m increase in ESCC costs due to NI increases set out in the recent government budget</li> <li>• ESCC Highway committee seeking funding for 20 mph implementation</li> <li>• Cllrs advised that a subsequent meeting was held with the Highway Steward and RoW team. Awaiting a meeting with drainage personnel. Additionally, a meeting is awaited with Anthony Becvar to discuss Ash Dieback.</li> </ul>	Clerk to follow up.
1066	<b>Report of the District Councillor</b> Cllr Greaves presented his report, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Sports Infrastructure Fund</a> available through WDC</li> <li>• Hailsham Swimming Pool has been renovated and re-opened</li> <li>• Wealden Community Sports Hub work has commenced</li> <li>• Desilting in Alfriston has commenced</li> <li>• <a href="#">Household Support Fund</a> by DWP for Wealden – financial assistance programme for essential needs for residents</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car Park level in top village hall car park has dropped, so cars are grounding over the paved area on to the gravel. WDC are the owners so will need to action this.</li> </ul>	Cllr Greaves/ Clerk to follow up.
1067	<p><b>Update on Actions from last meeting</b></p> <p>CC use of village hall bin – there is no recycling option, so they are not going forward with this until a recycling option is available. VH could consider a recycling bin</p> <p>Refurbishment of the changing rooms at Pavilion. Paint work is poor in the toilet, as is the floor in the kitchen. There is a need for rodent control. £900 is required to make it acceptable condition in the short-term.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Council resolved to approve this spend</b></p> <p>Downs View Lane – contractor appointed.</p> <p>Cricket Club – will produce a costed plan for taking forward the Cricket Club for planning.</p> <p>Asset List – is being updated.</p> <p>Peakdean Lane &amp; Jevington Road – quote for bollards being sought.</p> <p>Wicksteed recreation ground playground repairs. New quote received and Clerk has confirmed to go ahead. Date of works required.</p>	<p>Cllr Seeley to seek VH views</p> <p>Cllr Fowler to action</p> <p>Cllr Greenway to follow up</p> <p>Cllr Seeley to follow up</p> <p>Cllr White/ Clerk Cllr Seeley to action</p> <p>Clerk to follow up</p>
1068	<p><b>Second pass of the Budget and Precept for 25/26</b></p> <p>The Clerk presented a number of finance options, together with a list of proposed projects submitted by Councillors. It was agreed to proceed with all the proposals included, with the Cricket Pavilion to be considered separately. In view of inclusion of said projects, the likely increase in the Precept will require a 5% increase on the average Band D property - WDC to confirm the current Band D rate. A final budget figure with Precept request, will be presented to the January meeting.</p> <p>The Council proposed to invite members of the Cricket Club to the next meeting. This will allow the Council to consider the whole project - Pavilion and facility upgrades, as well as grant funding requirements. It was noted that the Council is keen to move forward on the upgrade of the Pavilion and associated resources.</p> <p>The Council noted a bequest in the sum £25-£30k from a local resident, following her passing. The Council agreed to set this money aside for potential Pavilion funds.</p>	<p>Clerk to update budget proposal</p> <p>Cllr Seeley / Clerk</p>
1069	<p><b>Allowances &amp; Expenses Policy</b></p> <p>It was noted that Councillors have an allowance paid each year. Those Councillors who wish to take advantage of this allowance were asked to advise the Clerk.</p> <p>Results of Independent Remuneration Panel proposals on councillor allowances were noted – the Panel being established by Wealden District Council under Regulation 27 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003</p>	All Cllrs to advise the Clerk.

	<b>Resolved:</b> Approve the Allowances & Expenses policy, subject to inclusion of reference to accessibility claims, and adopt the allowances agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel - Town and Parish Councillor Allowances for 2025/26 - £194 per councillor and £482 for the Chair.	
1070	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan Update</b>  An email from SDNP states that due to their own Reg18 consultation in Feb/March and then the elections in May, the Neighbourhood Plan will not be considered until after May. The final document for submission will come to the PC March meeting. This will also allow incorporation of National and Local Policy changes expected in January 2025.  It was noted that this delay will have implications for the financing of the Plan, as the current grant has to be spent and reported on within this financial year. Some of the grant was for consultant work at the time of examination, as well as for referendum costs. The Parish Council will likely have to make up the shortfall.  Accessibility issues are to be included in the Plan, with Cllr Baker contributing.</p> <p>The Council <b>resolved</b> to consider the Plan for approval at the March meeting.</p>	<p>Clerk to discuss with grant organisation</p> <p>All</p>
1071	<p><b>Proposal for 20mph Road Traffic Order</b>  The 20mph has been requested by residents and taken several years to come to fruition. It will cover Upper Street, Lower Street &amp; Went Way, and all the roads on the Private Estate.  A road traffic order application will be completed, decisions have to be taken on where to site the signs and the roundels in accordance with strict measurement limits, and permission sought from residents. The paperwork can then be submitted to ESCC. The Roads Company are involved and will consider contributing financially – potentially 50% of £5400  Letters will be sent to the owners of the verges where the 20mph signs are to be sited. The Roads Company will implement the roundels on the road.  The costs are as follows:  £5400 for the road traffic order  £1800 for roundels on the road  £3000 for signs and posts</p> <p>The Council <b>resolved</b> to apply for a Road Traffic Order.</p>	<p>Clerk to action</p>
1072	<p><b>Application for license to use the Recreation Ground</b>  The Council <b>resolved</b> to approve the license and request a contribution.</p>	<p>Clerk to action</p>
1073	<p><b>Payments &amp; Receipts</b>  The Parish Council <b>resolved</b> to approve all payments listed (attached to these minutes)</p>	<p>Clerk to make payments</p>
1074	<p><b>Business in Progress Report</b>  The Clerk highlighted current issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Laptops are old and need to be replaced.</li> <li>2. The NALC clerk's pay has been agreed for 24/25 and a small back pay sum is recommended, as is adoption of the new salary scale rates.</li> </ol>	

	<p><b>3.</b> The suggestion that the Parish Council considers moving to a Gov.uk domain, to improve security and professionalism.</p> <p>The Council <b>resolved</b> to purchase a new laptop for the Clerk up to a sum of £1000; to pay the recommended backpay and accept the new salary scale rate; and for the Clerk to further investigate the options and costs of moving to a .gov.uk domain.</p>	Clerk to action
1075	<p><b>Urgent Items not on the agenda</b> APC meeting date can no longer be 1<sup>st</sup> May due to elections. The Council <b>resolved</b> to hold the APC meeting on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, subject to hall availability.</p>	Clerk to confirm date
1076	<p><b>Reports:</b> a) <u>Chair of the Council</u> No further matters to discuss</p>	
	<p>b) <u>Planning Committee</u> No matters to discuss from committee. The matter of foundations having been dug out at the site on Gilberts Drive, behind Little Beeches and Maryland was considered in the light of no application being resubmitted.</p>	Clerk to contact SDNP
	<p>c) <u>Finance</u> The bank reconciliation was presented. The Chair signed the bank reconciliation.</p>	
	<p>d) <u>Rights of Way &amp; Highways</u>  It was noted that the triangle at the Link use to be mown.  The Council <b>resolved</b> to add this land to the Grants (Eastbourne) grass mowing contract.  Councillors considered vandal proof 6x3 solid wood benches. At a cost of £700 + VAT. It was noted that this new design would be robust enough for the heavy bus stop usage.  The Council <b>resolved</b> to replace 2 benches – Downs View Lane and Southside Bus Stop</p>	<p>Cllr Hill / Clerk to make amendment</p> <p>Clerk to action</p>
	<p>e) <u>Tree Warden</u> 12 Michel Dene – footpath next to this property has trees overhanging. It was agreed that the PC needs to find out ownership of the trees and footpath, from the RoW team. If necessary, the PC will add strimming to the mowing contract.</p>	Cllr Hill to action
	<p>f) <u>Recreation Ground</u> No further matters to discuss</p>	
	<p>g) <u>Downlands Estate Management Group (RC/RA/PC)</u> No further matters to discuss</p>	
1077	<p><b>Correspondence Report</b> Councillors were asked to note the consultation to remove the Telephone kiosk at the Seven Sisters Country Park.</p>	Cllrs to feedback to the Clerk
1078	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January at <b>6.30 pm</b> in the small village hall</p>	All

PAYEE	DETAILS	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL	REF.NO
Alison Eardley Consulting	ED&F Neighbourhood Plan	3120.00	624.00	3744.00	3230
Wealden District Assoc. of Local Councils	Annual Subscription	27.93		27.93	3231
EDF Parish Magazine	Grant	250.00		250.00	3232
ESCC Pension	Clerk Pension	465.68		465.68	3233
Village Hall	Hire November	84.00		84.00	3234
Cllr	Allowance	188.00		188.00	3235
Cllr	Allowance	188.00		188.00	3236
Cllr Seeley	Village Hall Xmas Dinner sponsorship	155.37		155.37	3237
HMRC	PAYE & NI	288.72		288.72	3238
Clerk	Salary and allowance	1574.26		1574.26	3239
Graham Street	Bus Cleaning	60.00		60.00	3240
WDC	Bin emptying quarterly charge	£286.00	57.20	343.20	3241
Grants Eastbourne	Grass mowing	£680.00	136.00	816.00	3242
EDF	Cricket Pavilion	£66.18	3.31	69.49	3243
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,712.96</b>	<b>686.20</b>	<b>8,254.65</b>	