

Date: 04 November 2021

Title: Report Item 6 – Business in Progress

By: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

Purpose: To provide an update on progress since the October meeting

Recommendation: a) **Neighbourhood Plan:** To approve 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.
b) To note a report by the Clerk on progress made since the October meeting

a) The following matter is for consideration:

Neighbourhood Plan: To approve 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.

This request arises from the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 19th October 2021 (circulated separately). At that meeting, which had been asked by the council to consider the future of Neighbourhood Planning in the parish, the committee noted that there was no one currently willing to lead on such a project. In discussion in the Public Session, it was suggested that the Residents' Association be invited to consider leading the project, and an RA committee member present agreed to consult with them and to ascertain how many members could be recruited with relevant expertise. It was noted that if the project were to proceed in this way, the Steering Group Terms of Reference would need to be modified and the SDNPA consulted for their approval.

b) The following are matters of report:

- Councillor vacancy – ten residents have requested that the current vacancy on the council be filled by election rather than co-option. Accordingly, Notices of Election were posted in the parish on 28th October, and candidates have until 4.00 pm on Friday 5th November to declare their willingness to stand. If the election is contested, polling will take place on Thursday 2nd December, when the village hall will be opened as a polling station. In that event, the parish council meeting scheduled for 2nd December will be moved to Wednesday 1st December. The parish council has requested that in the event of a contested election, polling cards be sent to every household. This is an extra expense, but no other elections are taking place on the same day and residents may otherwise remain unaware that a by-election is taking place.

- Use of wicket covers at the recreation ground – the Cricket Club has been informed of the council's decision to allow this.
- Bank mandate – the clerk/RFO has yet to contact Barclays about adding the Vice Chair to the mandate
- Council grant scheme – the three grants approved at the last meeting have been added to the payments schedule for this meeting. There is one more grant to be considered (Item 11 on the agenda). Village organisations will then be notified of the closure of the scheme for the rest of this financial year.
- Platinum Jubilee celebrations – materials for the blacksmith have been ordered at a cost of £655.80 plus VAT. The National Trust has been asked for permission to site a fire beacon temporarily at the Red Barn
- Climate and Ecology Bill – Maria Caulfield MP has been notified of the council's decision to support the Climate and Ecology Bill, and NALC has been notified of the parish's support for its proposed amendments to the Environment Bill. The full publication of the council's decision (in the Eastbourne Herald etc.) has yet to be completed.
- Flint wall in the Downlands precinct – as query has been raised as to whether the wall which was used as the back wall of the bin bay is historic, and enquiries are ongoing. It may be that it is too good to be demolished.

Matters still outstanding from earlier meetings:

- Post Office – Maria Caulfield MP has advised that it is the Sheppards Café that is of interest to host a new sub-post office. The parish council has asked to know about the set-up and working criteria, as the Hikers Rest may also be a possibility.
- Footpath 5 (Friston Forest) – the concerns raised by a resident, plus recommended improvements to the signage, have been referred to the ESCC Rights of Way team. A response is still awaited. This was raised again at the Strengthening Local Relationships meeting on 14 October 2021.
- Footpath 26a at Birling Manor – This too has been referred to ESCC Rights of Way and was discussed at SLR on 14 October. It was pointed out that the official right of way is in fact currently obstructed and this should be rectified if it is not to be lost.
- Tree safety survey and insurance – an enquiry has been sent to the Highway Land Information team at county hall regarding the ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the trees at Friston Green which stand on the highway verge. A response is still awaited.
- Remembrance Sunday – Martin Bunce of the Eastbourne Silver Band will play the reveille and last post; the parish council is requested to pay £30 for this service.