

**Date:** 01 December 2021

**Title:** Report Item 6 – Business in Progress

**By:** K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

**Purpose:** To provide an update on progress since the informal November meeting

**Recommendations:**

- a) To note a report by the Clerk on progress made since the informal November meeting
- b) To ratify the proposal that the Village Design Statement be reviewed as a matter of urgency and submitted to the SDNPA for adoption as a supplementary planning document in its updated form [Item C.473 (a) 04 November 2021].
- c) To consider the proposal that the flint wall in the Downlands Way precinct (formerly part of the bin bay) be demolished to make way for parking/EV charging bays
- d) To consider infrastructure projects potentially suitable for a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding application

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The following matters are for consideration:

- a) To note a report by the Clerk on progress made since the informal meeting held on 04 November 2021
- b) To ratify the proposal that the Village Design Statement be reviewed as a matter of urgency and submitted to the SDNPA for adoption as a supplementary planning document in its updated form [Item C.473 (a) 04 November 2021].
- c) To consider the proposal that the flint wall in the Downlands Way precinct (formerly part of the bin bay) be demolished to make way for parking/EV charging bays. Since this matter was publicised in the minutes of the informal November meeting, a resident has objected that ‘any one parked in the disabled car park and possibly the one or two next to it would not be able to easily get to the spaces and reverse out’. Secondly, a query has been raised as to what is to happen to the shop bins, which are now permanently on view. Thirdly, the ownership of the wall is not clear from the deeds of the car park. It might be the property of the parish council, but is not specifically mentioned, and the deed would require interpretation.
- d) To consider infrastructure projects potentially suitable for a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding application. The following have been proposed:
  - The new village sign
  - Installation of a pavement from Old Willingdon Road to Windmill Lane
  - Upgrade of the play area with equipment for older children

The following are matters of report:

- e) Saving phone boxes - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-59219078> says that Ofcom will not allow BT to decommission a phone box if it meets certain needs criteria, including if it is at an accident or suicide blackspot and if the location is not served by ALL FOUR mobile networks. The council is recommended to make a formal approach to BT and Ofcom to check that the boxes at Birling Gap and Gilberts Drive are protected and maintained in working order.
- f) Council insurance policy - WPS Council Guard will be rebranding to James Hallam Council Guard with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The rebrand marks the final stage of the integration programme following the acquisition of WPS by Seventeen Group in 2019 of which James Hallam is the Broking subsidiary. The council's insurance is unaffected, and is being handled by the same team as before the rebrand. The council's current three year deal with this provider comes to an end in May 2022 and it is recommended that fresh quotes be obtained for consideration.
- g) Footpath 26a/27 – the lack of action over the potential loss of the right of way accessed adjacent to the entrance to Birling Manor was raised again at the SLR meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October, and an update is awaited from ESCC Rights of Way.
- h) Bank mandate – the clerk/RFO has yet to add the Vice Chair to the mandate
- i) Village car park – following a request from the parish council, Wealden District Council has ordered tree works to raise some low-growing crowns that were obstructing parking spaces. This is much appreciated.
- j) The Environment Act 2021 – this has received the Royal Assent and is now law. Schedule 13 to the Act contains a future provision (yet to be triggered by the Secretary of State) which will eventually require the biodiversity value of any development site to be increased by at least 10% when the development is complete.

Matters still outstanding from earlier meetings:

- 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.
- 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.