

Date: 03 February 2022

Title: Report Item 13 – Correspondence

By: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

Purpose: To report on correspondence received since the council meeting on 06 January 2022

Recommendations: To note the report

Note: more items may be added to this schedule prior to the council meeting on 03 February 2022; a copy of the final version can be obtained by emailing the Clerk: clerk@edfparishcouncil.org.uk

The following items of correspondence have been received:

- **Elections and co-options** – at the council meeting held on 6 January 2022, the council took note of a written submission from Mr P Williamson and Mr R Coomber, objecting to the article published by the council in the January edition of the parish magazine, entitled ‘Democracy at Work?’. The complainants said: ‘we object to the apparent stance being taken towards local voters, who activated their legal right to ensure two elections were held in 2021 to fill vacancies on the council’. The council was requested to add the topic to the Correspondence report for the February council meeting, and this was agreed. Subsequently a second letter has been received from Mrs L d’Urso, who says: ‘Without public spending on election administration, elections in this country would either not be held, or their integrity open to question. Election administration serves a vital democratic function. It has a cost, but one I would contend is well worth paying. The question should never be, what price democracy; but rather what is the cost of losing democracy?’. *[Note by the Clerk: Over the last 20 years, general parish elections have been held five times (2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019). The next one will be in May 2023. The parish council always budgets for these. It is only by-elections to fill casual vacancies that have been a rarity, with no budget set aside for them, though two were in fact called in 2021. The council has put budgetary provision in place for by-elections in the future.]*
- **Passing place in Downs View Lane** – in June 2021 the parish council was contacted by a resident concerned that a passing place in the narrow Downs View Lane was in danger of being lost by absorption into the rear gardens of two properties in Sussex Gardens, and the matter was referred to the Roads Company. The company has entered into correspondence with the residents concerned, and

the ownership of the strip has been researched. The upshot is that everyone agrees the ownership of the strip is not known, and a resident who has installed a wooden border over part of it to protect a new hedge is willing to remove it; but equally there is no evidence that it is a formally designated passing place, as it has no tarmac surface and Downs View Lane remains unadopted by East Sussex Highways. It has simply been used informally as a passing place for many years, and has proved useful as such. In these circumstances, the Roads Company has concluded that it does not have authority to resolve the situation. The parish council is now requested to intervene with a solution. Councillors have received the full correspondence.

- **UK Ultra Ltd** – this organisation has notified the parish council that it will be holding another of its annual running events in the parish on Sunday, May 29th and will again have one of their aid stations at the Village Hall in East Dean from 12pm to 9pm. The route will be exactly the same as last year, where runners will come through St Mary the Virgin Church and down the grass into the village/hall before exiting again via Went Way back up onto the Downs, all on public rights of way. The runners will also be told not to cross the village green, but instead to follow the path around to the hall. A Marshall will be there to enforce this. There will be around 200 runners in total that should be very spread out by the time they reach East Dean. This should mean only a few runners entering the village at a time and no congestion. The organisers will put up a few directional arrows.
- **Overhanging shrubs** – a complaint has been received that a property in Lower Street needs to cut back shrubs which are overhanging the footway.
- **Tree overhanging Footpath 22** – a complaint from a resident that a tree overhanging this path does not look safe has been referred to the county council, who have inspected the site and responded that they do not think there is a public safety issue and that no further action will be taken at this time.