



East Dean & Friston P a r i s h C o u n c i l

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held remotely on the Zoom platform on Thursday 1st October 2020, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr M Keller (Chair), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr P Hill, Cllr P Seeley, and Cllr D Wild

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.275 – C.278); District Cllr Lunn (Items C.278 – C.279; and K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There were three members of the public present.

Public Session - None

C.275 a) Acceptance of apologies for absence: - P Williamson (Tree Warden); and D Picknell (Admin Officer)

b) Resignation of a councillor: - Cllr Beatrice Wheatley had tendered her resignation to pursue her future career. Members recorded their thanks for her work and wished her well for the future. Cllr Keller would take over Communications (not including social media).

C.276 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.277 Minutes: - The minutes of the council meeting held remotely on 6th August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair

C.278 Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) ESCC Budget 2021/22 – no reduction in services was proposed for the next financial year
- b) East Dean Surgery – following correspondence with the Clinical Commissioning Group it had been confirmed that the local surgery would close. Thereafter patients must go to Alfriston or Seaford. Cllr Shing queried the fact that Alfriston had a smaller population than East Dean and Friston but apparently had a larger number of patients registered.
- c) Police Community Support Officers – numbers were planned to increase from 15 to 20 in the coming year
- d) Exceat Bridge – the South Downs National Park Authority had responded positively to the statutory consultation, as had residents.
- e) Dredging the Cuckmere – the Environment Agency had finally agreed to clear the shingle to reduce flood risk in the next five year period.

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- f) Maintenance of Footpath 25 – the ESCC Rights of Way team would try to resurface the lower half of this path from Upper Street to Friston Church before the end of the financial year.
 - g) Request for temporary traffic lights at Exceat Bridge – the Bridge was currently subject to heavy traffic avoiding the roadworks at Polegate and causing long queues. Cllr Shing agreed to press for temporary lights to be set up **ACTION: SS**. It was suggested that the contractors should finance this as a very small part of the cost of their Polegate contract.

RESOLVED - That the report of the County Councillor be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.279 Report of the District Councillor

District Cllr Lunn reported on the following matters:

- a) National Planning Consultations – Wealden District Council had serious concerns that the government's proposed new formula for calculating housing targets was fundamentally flawed. WDC would make strong representations for local housing needs to be determined by local councils. Districts across the country were unanimous on this. WDC was also concerned that although it had no Local Plan and no five year land supply it had in fact approved many planning applications for new housing which were not being built, introducing a further distortion. The Leader of the council and Maria Caulfield MP were in agreement that new infrastructure must precede extra housing. Parishes were encouraged to make representations to the SDNPA, to Wealden and to their MP to stress the need for infrastructure to come first. The parish council would also need to monitor the effects of the proposed national planning policy changes on Neighbourhood Planning, which could be seriously compromised
- b) Seven Sisters Country Park – the SDNPA was ready to invest £1 million of CIL money into upgrading the buildings at Cuckmere Haven to provide a visitor centre and offices which would give the SDNPA a much needed local presence and possibly also provide a local hub for other agencies such as the Forestry Commission, the National Trust and the Environment Agency. The Chair stated that the parish council had commented on the planning application and supported Cuckmere Valley parish council in pressing for adequate parking to be provided, plus a safe crossing point on the A259. The transfer from ESCC to the SDNPA was now awaiting approval by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and by DEFRA.

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

C.280 Report of the Tree Warden

The council took note of Report 6 by the Tree Warden, and the following points were discussed:

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- a) Request for TPO designations – members did not support the suggested applications for TPOs on certain mature trees. The trees were not under threat nor were there safety issues.
 - b) Trees at the junction of Went Lane and Micheldene Road – members agreed that the ownership of the verges on which these trees stood should be established: a Land Registry search would be done **ACTION: TB.** The trees were not obstructing the road and no current safety issues were apparent.
 - c) Requests for information – (i) maintenance programme for rights of way: it was noted that the council did not have and did not need any maintenance programme for rights of way. Hedges alongside rights of way were the responsibility of adjoining landowners, and the surfaces of rights of way were the responsibility of East Sussex County Council. (ii) Map of trees on the Greensward – the clerk had located a map hand drawn by a former councillor, and sent copies to the Greensward Company (landowner) and the Residents' Association (agents for the company) notifying them of the Warden's request for a copy. (iii) Planning condition on Downsview Lane verge – no information had been found.
 - d) Request for foundation membership of the Arboricultural Association – this request had been deferred pending consideration of a complaint. There was no provision for the annual subscription in the 2020/21 budget. Provision could be considered in the 2021/22 budget.

RESOLVED - That the report of the Tree Warden be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.281 Business in Progress

The council took note of Report 7 by the Clerk on progress made since the August meeting. The following points were discussed:

- a) Play area maintenance – members noted the findings of the Wicksteed safety inspection and agreed that the recommended repairs should be ordered from Wicksteed; the oiling of the barrel roll and the provision of new self-closures for the two gates should be added to the list **ACTION: KL.** Subsequently a bolt had come loose on the climbing wall of the Kanope unit which had been taped off with a 'do not use' notice. The supplier (Proludic) should be requested to supply a new bolt **ACTION: KL.** A quotation had been obtained for the repair of the damaged fence (£320) **ACTION: PH to order the work.** The insurers had advised that an extensive safety notice should be affixed giving updated information on Covid-secure use of the play area, including any limitations on numbers entering or using particular pieces of equipment. **ACTION: DW to inspect and draft.** All children should be accompanied by an adult to encourage compliance.
- b) Sanitising the play area – the insurance implications of government advice that points touched frequently should be sanitised 'frequently' (a term not defined) remained unclear. Social distancing and hand sanitising could not be monitored. However, members agreed to do a three month trial of the application of an anti-viral spray (Zoono) to the play equipment; this was said to last for 30 days and could be applied by the mowing contractor at a cost of

£100 plus VAT per month for a minimum of three months, to be met from the emergency budget. The work could begin in October (subject to supply of the chemical) and the timing of further applications judged on the basis of usage of the play area over the winter. **ACTION: KL to notify contractor.** The 2021/22 budget could include ongoing provision if required.

- c) Alterations to scorer's hut to house new roller – Cllr Wild had attended a meeting on site with representatives of the Gilbert Estate and the Cricket Club. The new equipment was needed to protect the community's investment in the new cricket square and all parties supported this aim. The Estate would consider a 'licence of alteration', though it was noted that the changes proposed to the hut were mostly internal and planning permission was not required. The council had received the financial contributions promised from all parties including the Gilbert Estate, the Cricket Club and the Residents' Association, and recorded its thanks for this community effort.
- d) Friston Build-Out – members were delighted with the completion of this project which was the culmination of four years' work and had been carried out to a high standard by East Sussex County Council. Special thanks were given to Cllr Hill and Cllr Seeley who had carried it forward.
- e) Felling of diseased elms – ESCC had ordered their contractor to fell the diseased elms in the Twitten.
- f) Licence of The Tiger Inn – residents remained concerned over the location and use of the picnic tables on the green, particularly with Remembrance Sunday coming up **ACTION: KL to contact the licensee.**
- g) Signing session – a socially distanced session should be arranged for the signing of the ESCC mowing agreement and various council minutes **ACTION: KL/MK/PS**
- h) Footpath 24 across The Horsefield – all outstanding works were complete.
- i) Annual Audit – the External Auditor had signed off the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year 2019/20 with no issues raised. The statutory public notices had been posted on noticeboards and on the website.

RESOLVED - That the Progress Report be noted and action taken as discussed

C.282 Member Code of Conduct and Council Complaints Procedure

The council took note of Report 8 and the following were discussed:

- a) Member Code of Conduct – it was agreed that an explanatory note should be added to the Member Code of Conduct (a standard document) to clarify that an alleged breach of the code by a member should be referred to the Monitoring Officer of the District Council for adjudication.
- b) Communications and Complaints policy – it was agreed that the revised draft of the current policy should be adopted, subject to the removal of contact addresses and the inclusion of links to addresses on the website, for ease of updating in future. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED – That the Member Code of Conduct be amended as proposed in Appendix A of the report

RESOLVED - That the Communications and Complaints policy be revised as proposed in Appendix B of the Report (with contact information as discussed)

C.283 Risk Management Strategy

The council considered Report 8 reviewing the current strategy and recommending updates. The recommendations were generally approved and should be actioned by the clerk **ACTION: KL**, subject to the following additional points:

- a) Financial Controls (para 3.2) – in the absence of a current Lead Member, a member who was neither the Chair nor a bank signatory must be appointed under Financial Regulation 2.2 to check financial transactions **ACTION: PH to undertake periodic checks of the accounts.**
- b) Security Arrangements (para 5) – the council currently had no cyber insurance, the previous policy having been withdrawn from the market. To obtain a replacement policy, each councillor would need to answer a questionnaire on security arrangements for their personal devices **ACTION: KL to circulate the questionnaire to all members.**
- c) Risk of Personal Injury (para 7) – the pavilion was now closed for the winter, but prior to its re-opening in 2021 the council should obtain a QR code. A QR code might also be needed for the play area **ACTION: KL to provide as required.**

RESOLVED - That the Risk Management Strategy be updated and implemented as proposed in the report, with additions as discussed

RESOLVED - That Cllr Hill be appointed to check financial transactions on a regular basis in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2

C.284 Traffic Management

The council took note of Report 10 from the Chair of the Traffic Management Working Group, and endorsed the actions taken so far. The council would make full use of existing Crackdown and Speedwatch powers; promote their use; and gather relevant data; whilst a separate group convened by the Gilbert Estate would press for a higher level review of the operational framework, using the data, with the two dovetailing together.

Speedwatch had begun: a meeting had been held with the Sussex Police who would supply the necessary equipment free of charge for six months, plus signage and training. Members agreed that this should be publicised in the parish magazine and on the website with an appeal for volunteers; residents who had already expressed an interest would be contacted **ACTION: PS/DP.** After six months the council would review Speedwatch to see if the purchase of equipment was justified.

Traffic and speed monitoring: this essential data could be gathered by ESCC who recommended using four locations on two occasions (e.g. May Bank Holiday etc.). The cost to the parish would be up to £1,950 (Eastbourne Borough Council could be asked to contribute) and provision for this could be made in the budget for 2021/22 if required. However, the TMWG would first make enquiries as to the availability of any

non-personal data gathered by the ANPR cameras placed on the approaches to Beachy Head. **ACTION: PS/DP.**

The council requested monthly updates from the Traffic Management Working Group

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the actions it proposed be endorsed.

C.285 Parish Council Grants

a) Cuckmere Buses - the council considered a request from the Cuckmere Buses to receive the council's support grant for the period when full service on route 41 serving this parish had been suspended due to Covid-19. It was noted that such support should come from the normal budgetary allowance for the Cuckmere Bus rather than from the donations scheme. Members supported this request, recognising that the company would have fixed costs which must be met whether or not services could run. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED - That a grant of £500 be paid to Cuckmere Buses forthwith

b) Bowling Club – the Club had been undertaking works to the green and it was agreed that support should be given. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED -That a grant of £500 be paid to the Bowling Club forthwith

c) Parish Magazine – the Magazine had requested support to offset financial loss caused by Covid-19. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED –That a grant of £500 be paid to the Parish Magazine forthwith

C.286 Maintenance Work at Friston Pond

The council considered Report 12. The Pond had become overgrown during the summer of high temperatures and low water levels, and urgent action was required to clear the excess before the autumn. Only one contractor had been prepared to quote and it was agreed that the quote of £2,500 (£700 in excess of budget) should be accepted **ACTION: PH to order and monitor the time taken to ensure best value** The £700 excess should be paid from reserves unless a suitable virement could be made **ACTION: KL to investigate.** Members thanked Cllr Hill for organising the work.

RESOLVED – That maintenance work be done at Friston Pond at a projected cost of £2,500 to include clearance of debris.

C.287 Remembrance Sunday 2020

The Chair invited members to consider arrangements for this annual event, which had been taken over by the parish council following the disbanding of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. The government had classified remembrance events as 'religious' and not subject to the rule of six, so the ceremony could be held out of doors subject to social distancing. There would be no singing. An RBL wreath would be laid. It was agreed that the event should take place (Sunday 8th November)

and notice be given in the parish magazine (subject to changing restrictions).
ACTION: PH to liaise with the Rector; KL to notify the MP, Residents' Association, district councillor and coastguard, and book a cornet player.

C.288 Rampion 2: Community Project Liaison Group Invitation

The council noted that the proposed extension to the current Rampion windfarm would be west of Shoreham and declined to appoint a representative to participate in Community Project Liaison Group meetings.

C.289 Payments and Receipts

The council considered Report 16 - the Schedule of Payments for September and October 2020 and receipts for August and September 2020. It was noted that Cllr Hill had been able to update Walking Map 2 and reprints of all three maps had been obtained within budget. The invoice from PKF Littlejohn (External Auditor) in the sum of £360 was added to the Schedule. *[Note: the complete Schedule is appended to these Minutes]*. The list included the invoice for moving the cricket square.

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £22,531.11 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments

C.290 Urgent Items

The Chair reported that a quotation had been obtained for the rebuilding of the East Dean bus shelter (south side), in the sum of £3,500. However, there was no budget for this in the current year. A report should be brought to the November meeting
ACTION: KL.

C.291 Reports:

- a) Planning Committee – the council took note of the minutes of the remote committee meeting held on 18 August 2020, and of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 15 September 2020. The council would respond to the government consultations on planning policy and Cllr Hill was gathering responses from members.
- b) Finance – the council took note of the Budget Monitoring Report 18c for the period ended 30 September 2020. The bank balance was currently £93,337.79 (including the second and final instalment of precept for the year).
- c) Rights of Way and Highways – (i) Footpath 8 was still obstructed on one side and this should now be reported to ESCC for enforcement **ACTION: KL.** (ii) A hedge overhanging the carriageway on Hillside required cutting back **ACTION: KL to contact householder.** (iii) Next county liaison (SLR) meeting – this should be deferred to the spring when the normal six monthly schedule should resume. In the meantime county should be asked to provide a general update in writing **ACTION: KL.**
- d) Wealden Reopening High Streets Safely Fund – a central government fund had been shared nationally and WDC was consulting on how it should be spent locally (e.g. on advertising; hand sanitisers etc.). The Vice Chair had responded and the outcome was awaited.

RESOLVED - That the above reports a) – d) be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.292 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 19 on correspondence received since the August meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Maintenance of pavement in Downlands Way precinct – following a report of an accident the pavement had been inspected but no defects were apparent.
- b) Footpath 21 – work had been done to clear this path but in the process bark chips had been dislodged. Remedial work was thought to have been done
ACTION: PS to check.
- c) Dog fouling - the Chair would look at the free resources offered by Keep Britain Tidy, but there was support for using Wealden posters because of their local immediacy.
- d) Fish and chip van – a request had been received for permission to bring a van to the village on a regular basis. The council could consider granting a licence to use the precinct car park after the shops closed, provided the van did not park on any pavement. Alternatively WDC could consider a licence to use the village car park. **ACTION: KL to contact the enquirer**
- e) Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company – permission was requested to use the recreation ground for a performance (subject to Covid-19 restrictions) on Wednesday 9th June 2020. Members agreed this in principle, subject to the fixture dates needed by the Cricket Club. **ACTION: KL to check**

RESOLVED - That the correspondence report be noted and action taken as discussed

C.293 Meeting Dates 2021

The council considered the proposed Timetable of Meetings for 2021. It was noted that the Annual Parish Council Meeting would either be held remotely on 6th May 2021 or (if in person) on 13th May 2021, due to the booking of the Village Hall for use as a polling station on 6th May 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Timetable of Meetings for 2021 be approved.

Under Standing Order 3(d) the public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, by reason of its confidential nature. The parish clerk also left the meeting

C.294 Clerk's Annual Appraisal

Councillors considered a confidential appraisal prepared by the Chair, following a substantial telephone interview with the Clerk. All members agreed that the Clerk had performed her duties over the past year exceptionally well, especially considering the stresses that she had been under for a number of reasons. It was agreed that all additional hours worked (about 16) would be paid in full, unless the Clerk preferred to take some time off in lieu instead. The chair then reported that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services had agreed new pay scales to be implemented from 1st April 2020. These new scales provided the opportunity to

promote the Clerk to a higher salary grade (grade 21), resulting in a salary increase of £491.40 before tax. Councillors were unanimous in agreeing to this increase, backdated to 1st April, and expressed their thanks to the Clerk for all the hard work she had put in over the past year. *(The above minute written by the Chair)*

RESOLVED - That the clerk's salary be raised from national scale point 20 to scale point 21 with effect from 1st April 2020.

C.295 Date of next meeting: Thursday 5th November 2020 at 6.30 pm by remote means.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.16 pm

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....