



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 29th June 2021 in the Main Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 7.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr M Keller (Chair), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr G Fowler, Cllr C Lees, Cllr P Seeley, and Cllr S Thorogood

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.414 – C.417); K Larkin (Parish Clerk); D Picknell (Admin Officer)

There were no members of the public present.

C.414 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr P Hill, Cllr H Milligan, Cllr D Wild

C.415 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.416 Minutes

- a) The minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held remotely on 6th May 2021, as corrected at the informal meeting held on 3rd June 2021, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.
- b) The minutes of the informal meeting held on 3rd June 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C.417 Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) Traffic at Birling Gap – the county council had released accident data from the last five years, but the record was by no means the worst in the county and the recommendation was still that the parish should co-operate with other authorities such as the South Downs National Park Authority to implement a Community Match funded management scheme. The Chair objected that verge parking which did not show up in the data had become a very serious problem. Parked cars obstructed the verges on both sides of the Birling Gap Road, obliterating any safe space for pedestrians to walk on, and forcing them into the middle of a narrowed track. The Chair also reported anecdotal evidence of an emergency vehicle having difficulty attending an incident at the National Trust centre on the Bank Holiday weekend because of the road congestion caused by parked vehicles. The parish council strongly recommended roping off at least the verge on the west side, using the technique routinely deployed by Eastbourne Borough Council for the Airbourne event. East Sussex Highways as the owners of the verge would be asked for permission to put this physical barrier in place just for the summer season, given that parking on the verge would remain technically legal and therefore not subject to enforcement action. The National Trust would be

invited to support this initiative. Cllr Shing objected that if barriers were installed, the problem of excessive parked vehicles would be shifted elsewhere, though there was no obvious destination for it. Nevertheless, he would support the request from the parish for temporary barriers to be installed. **ACTION: PS to contact the Principal Traffic and Safety Officer.**

- b) Seven Sisters Country Park – the transfer of ownership to the South Downs National Park Authority would now be complete, if on schedule.
- c) Flooding of Downs View Lane – the highway maintenance team had undertaken remedial work, but this had not yet been tested in flooding conditions.

Members thanked the County Councillor for his report.

RESOLVED - That the report of the county councillor be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.418 Report of Maria Caulfield MP

The council took note of a written report from Maria Caulfield MP, and the following points were noted:

- a) Wealden Local Plan – the update was noted, though East Dean came under a different planning authority (the SDNPA).
- b) Traffic Safety – members agreed to take up the recommendation that a member of the ESCC Road Safety Team be invited to attend the next council meeting **ACTION: PS/DP to contact Rupert Clubb**
- c) Post Office – there was a postmaster keen to set up a service in the village if there were suitable premises. Members agreed to ask the MP about the individual's requirements in order to assist. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED – That the report of the Member of Parliament be noted and action taken as discussed

C.419 Business in Progress

The council noted Report 6 on progress since the informal meeting on 3 June 2021, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Hire of the pavilion – a request had been received for an evening hire for band practice, with the possibility of a regular booking thereafter. It was agreed that a one-off hire should be trialled and monitored, within agreed hours.

RESOLVED - That a one-off hire be approved for band practice as discussed

- b) Hand-over of defibrillator to Beachy Head Chaplaincy – this had been completed. The equipment would be stored at the chaplaincy base at Beachy Head.

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- c) Ownership of trees at Micheldene Road/A259 junction – the landowner of the trees on the left hand side entering Micheldene Road had made contact and confirmed that routine maintenance was in hand.
 - d) Signing the footpath from Upper Street to Friston Church (FP25) – East Sussex Highways were preparing a mock-up of a suitable sign which could be installed if the parish council paid for it.
 - e) Parking signs for the Downlands Way shops – members took note of Report 6c by the Chair and agreed that new signage should be provided to inform the public that the parking spaces were only for the use of shop customers and staff and should not be used residentially or overnight. It was agreed that four metal-faced signs should be installed (two in each half of the precinct). The quoted cost was £35.70 plus VAT for three signs 300mm x 400mm; four signs should cost approx. £50 plus VAT. **ACTION: KL to place an order**

RESOLVED – That four parking signs be purchased and installed in the shopping precinct at a total cost of approx. £50 plus VAT

- f) Bin area at Downlands Way – a resident had enquired who was responsible for the fenced bin area behind the shops, as it was no longer serviced and had become a fly-tip. The area was not council property and was thought to be privately owned. Councillors would take the matter up with the landowner
ACTION: CL/TB
- g) Extractor fan at the Downlands Way café – a resident had enquired whether the café was suitably equipped. Wealden’s Environmental Health team should deal with such matters.

RESOLVED – That the Progress report be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.420 Hybrid Meetings

The council took note of Report 7 which proposed the amendment of Standing Orders to govern future hybridised (combination of physical and remote) meetings. This would enable the council to keep the benefit of remote access which made it easier for office holders including the Member of Parliament to attend, as well as members of the public. It would remain a statutory requirement for councillors to be present in person; if attending remotely they would in effect do so as members of the public. The cost of the necessary equipment (wide angle camera, tripod, microphone and extension leads) would be about £95. In addition, the council would need to maintain its Zoom subscription, and this should become annual (£120pa) in order to achieve a small saving over the current monthly subscription (£12 per month). The Admin Officer would continue as ‘gatekeeper’ on Zoom. Members thanked Mrs Picknell for her efficient operation of this system.

Cllr Keller proposed and Cllr Seeley seconded the motion: **‘That Standing Orders be amended as proposed in Appendix A of the report to permit remote access to future meetings’**. RESOLVED - The motion was put to the meeting and declared carried unanimously

RESOLVED - To approve the purchase of a wide-angle camera and ancillary equipment for the meeting room at a cost of approx £100; and to subscribe to Zoom on an annual basis with immediate effect. **ACTION: MK to purchase the necessary equipment**

C.421 Cladding the Cricket Pavilion

The council considered Report 8 by Cllr Fowler on recommended repair and maintenance. It was noted that the cost of the works, conservatively estimated at £2,850, would exceed the £500 budgeted for routine maintenance of the pavilion in 2021/22, but that the balance could be taken from the revenue budget allowed for capital projects, and/or from reserves. It was established that if the work were done in stages to remain within budget for the current year it could cost more overall. Members therefore agreed that all the recommended works should be carried out in this financial year. Two quotes should be obtained for the work: Cllr Fowler kindly agreed to supply one, and Cllr Bryant would obtain another, for consideration at a future meeting. Members thanked Cllr Fowler for his report.

RESOLVED – To approve the recommended works in principle, subject to consideration of quotes at a future meeting

C.422 Council Donations 2021-22

The Chair invited members to propose locally based charities to receive a minimum donation of £500 plus the proceeds of any events that could be held during the year. The following were proposed:

- Beachy Head Chaplaincy
- Air Ambulance (Surrey, Sussex and Kent)
- Wildlife Rescue Ambulance Service
- Warming up the Homeless (a charity doing outreach work in Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings)

A majority of members opted to support the Beachy Head Chaplaincy in its current circumstances, but to keep the other candidates on record for future years. **ACTION: KL to notify the Chaplaincy**

RESOLVED - To choose the Beachy Head Chaplaincy as the council's Charity of the Year 2021/22

The Chair then invited members to approve the continuation of the council grant scheme for local organisations in 2021-22. There was a budget of £2,000 for this purpose. Members agreed, noting that some village organisations might have difficulty starting up again after the lockdowns. The grant scheme would be publicised in the parish magazine, on the website, and in emails sent to each of the village organisations **ACTION: MK/KL.**

RESOLVED - That the council grant scheme should be re-launched in 2021/22

C.423 Community Consultations

- a) **Rampion 2 Community Consultation** – the council took note of the Statement of Community Consultation available on the website www.Rampion2.com . The current proposals (and Rampion 3 and 4 which were thought to be under preliminary consideration) could eventually lead to the array of offshore turbines extending eastwards, beyond Newhaven. However, the council would not respond to the consultation at this stage. In the long term, the development of wind-generation could not be resisted.
- b) **Southern Water Drought Consultation** – the council took note of the report https://www.southernwater.co.uk/media/4797/droughtplan2021_nontechsummary.pdf. However, Southern Water was not responsible for the water supply in the parish, only for waste water services. No response would be sent.

C.424 Payments and Receipts

The council took note of Report 11, the schedule of payments for July 2021 and receipts for June 2021. Two additional invoices were noted, for cleaning bus shelters in the months of April and May at a total cost of £100. Members recorded their thanks to the resident (Mr R. Franklin) who had carried out this valuable service for many years. *[Note: the complete Schedule is appended to these Minutes].*

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £3,494.45 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments

C.425 Urgent Items for discussion but not decision

The Chair reported that the ROMPA Stoolball Club had requested to use the recreation ground (but not the pavilion) regularly for matches without formal hire. The field was normally available for public use unless subject to a formal hire, and members agreed the stoolball club could therefore come without a formal agreement, but would be taking the chance that they might not be able to play. They should notify their dates to the council in advance if they wished to avoid this. The matter would be subject to review. **ACTION: DW/DP to notify the stoolball club**

C.426 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – (i) The Platinum Jubilee 2022: the Residents' Association and the Village Hall Trust were both keen to join in an event to mark the Jubilee. A joint planning meeting (PC, RA, VHT) would be set up in the autumn. (ii) Appointments of Chair and Vice Chair: Cllr Keller and Cllr Seeley gave advance notice of their intention to step down as Chair and Vice Chair now that physical meetings had resumed, and the statutory round of annual appointments had recommenced following the lockdowns. An Extraordinary parish council meeting would be summoned on Tuesday 20th July immediately after the Planning Committee meeting already scheduled, to enable fresh appointments to be made.
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the informal remote committee meeting held on 15 June 2021

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- c) Finance – the council took note of the corrected Budget Monitoring Report for Month 2, 2021/22 (Report Item 13(c)), and had a preview of the figures for Month 3. The bank balance at the end of June was £83,792.58.
- d) Traffic Management Working Group – (i) Speed Watch training had been completed by a team of six including three volunteers, and the PCSO would put up signs around the village in the coming weeks giving notice of the exercise. The police reported that 11,000 advisory letters per month were issued to offenders, only 10% of whom were statistically likely to reoffend. These would be visited by the police. After a third offence, the driver could be fined or the vehicle impounded. The cost of the measuring device to be purchased by the council would be less than the £500 originally expected, and could be paid for out of CIL funds [*Note: the parish council currently has £329 of CIL funding available for use*]. All would be welcome to join a Speed Watch session and training would be provided. (ii) Speed reactive signs – East Sussex Highways had indicated that they would like to quote for providing as well as installing the signs, and their quote was awaited. (iii) Traffic Data: the council took note of Report 13d providing an overview of traffic data recently collected by East Sussex Highways, and amplified by data from the ANPR camera over the past five years. The data showed that local traffic problems were more to do with volume than speed, and confirmed that the Beachy Head Road was a leisure facility where traffic volumes typically doubled over weekends, and that steps must be taken to ensure that traffic could move along it, unhindered, at all times. Further analysis was in progress and should provide leverage for a request for traffic management from East Sussex Highways. Members noted that excessive noise was also a problem reported both on the Birling Gap Road and at Crowlink. Members reaffirmed the decision taken earlier in the meeting with the support of Cllr Shing (Item C.417(a)) to press Highways for permission to install rope barriers on the Birling Gap verge.
- e) Rights of Way – a quote was awaited from Wealden for moving two dog bins to new locations; a new bin would be provided in Upper Street at the entrance to the Twitten (Footpath 25) at a cost of £200 and should be installed by the parish council. A final report on costs would be brought to a future meeting.
- f) Recreation Ground – the council took note of a report from Cllr Milligan on the state of the tennis net (Report Item 13(f)). It was agreed that the net did not need replacing but that users should be advised to de-tension the net after use. **ACTION: KL to request HM to supply suitable wording.** A sinking fund should be included in next year's budget for the future re-surfacing of the court. Members thanked Cllr Milligan for her report.
- g) Environment – (i) the hanging basket brackets in the precinct had been replaced, and the baskets planted up by the Residents' Association. The council thanked the Association and offered to reimburse them for the flowers. (ii) Hedge in Lower Street: this had not yet been cut back but was in full bloom and should be trimmed after flowering.

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

C.427 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 14 on Correspondence received since 3rd June:

- a) Footpath 5 (Friston Forest) – members noted the concerns raised by a resident and agreed that these should be reported to the county Rights of Way team with parish council support.
- b) Footpath 33b (The Link to Jevington) – this had been strimmed.
- c) Highway verge strimming – the county council’s contractors had done the verges on the A259
- d) Real time bus signs – a resident had requested these, but the bus company had previously shown no interest in installing digital information in the parish, and there was an argument that the environment was too rural for the type of equipment needed. There was now a mobile phone app that passengers could use instead. Members agreed not to pursue this request.
- e) PCSO visit to Birling Gap – the visit to meet residents and learn about their concerns would take place on Thursday 1st July at 5.30 pm at Birling Gap. All would be welcome to attend: the Chair would be there.
- f) Passing place in Downs View Lane – a resident had reported that a passing place near the junction of the Lane with the A259 was in danger of being lost. Members agreed that this should be reported to the Roads Company
ACTION: KL to contact the Company.

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

C.428 Date of next meeting:

- a) **Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday 20th July 2021 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall immediately after the scheduled Planning Committee meeting**
- b) **Ordinary parish council meeting - Thursday 5th August 2021 at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall of the Village Hall**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.43 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....