

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7 October 2021 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

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

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.456 – C.457); K Larkin (Parish Clerk); D Picknell (Admin Officer)

There was one member of the public present.

Public Session

Location of Dog Bin in Upper Street – a statement was read out from a resident of Upper Street objecting to the placement of a dog waste bin in the location selected by the parish council, and to the fact that certain households likely to be affected had not been consulted. Alternatives were suggested for consideration. In response, it was noted that some consultation had in fact been undertaken, though it had proved insufficient. The bin had been removed and would not be put back in the same location. The Chair gave assurance that full consultation with residents as well as with relevant authorities would be carried out in similar situations in future.

The Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting.

C.450 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - District Cllr M Lunn

C.451 Declarations of Interests: - Cllr Bryant - car parking at Crowlink (in the vicinity of his property); Cllr Milligan - Cricket Club grant (Club member).

C.452 Resignation: - the Chair formally recorded the resignation of Cllr D Wild who had moved out of the parish.

C.453 Minutes: - The minutes of the council meeting held on 5th August 2021 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair

C.454 Report of the District Councillor

District Cllr M Lunn reported in writing on the following matters:

- a) Cuckmere Estuary – the Environment Agency had agreed that certain works could be carried out by the local Water Levels Management Board.
- b) Wealden Local Plan – The options for housing should be made public by the end of October which would lead to a public consultation. The parish council was encouraged to engage with this as the outcome could have implications for East Dean and surrounding areas. **ACTION: Planning Committee**

- c) Seven Sisters Country Park – the South Downs National Park Authority had placed additional staff on the car park during busy periods.
- d) Sussex Police – Cllr Lunn had had a very useful online meeting with Sussex Police regarding Birling Gap road and speeding traffic.

RESOLVED – That the report of the District Councillor be noted and action taken as discussed.

C.455 Report from Maria Caulfield MP

The council received and took note of a written report from Maria Caulfield MP on constituency matters. A question was raised about progress on the Exceat Bridge project, in particular whether the necessary funding was now in place.

C.456 Business in Progress

The council considered Report 6 on progress since the council meeting on 5 August 2021, and the **maintenance of Friston Pond** was discussed. The Vice Chair reported that Mr Warner of Pondcare had kindly offered to maintain the Pond, and had begun by removing the overgrowth on a voluntary basis and by agreement with councillors. Ecologically sound methods would always be used. Council was requested to approve expenditure of up to £250 (within budget for 2021/22) for the hire of a small skip and a petrol strimmer. Council was also requested to make provision for an ongoing annual maintenance contract in the budget for future years. Members agreed and recorded their thanks to Mr Warner.

RESOLVED – That expenditure of up to £250 be approved for the hire of equipment needed for current Pond maintenance, and that future budgetary provision be made for an ongoing maintenance contract

The Chair varied the order of business to enable County Cllr Shing to present his report. Business in Progress continues in C.458 below

C.457 Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) Downs View Lane bus stop – Brighton & Hove buses were willing to reinstate the missing stop sign but had not done so due to the concerns raised by the ESCC Road Safety Team. Both sides accepted the use of the stop on a ‘hail and ride’ basis but councillors agreed this was unsatisfactory. Cllr Shing would pursue his enquiries and report further to the SLR meeting on 14th October.
- b) Improvements to the A22 and A2290 – the Highways consultation had now closed and the results would be studied by the Lead Member for Transport.
- c) Traffic in Alfriston – a public consultation would soon be launched
- d) County Council Budget 2022/23 – currently there was no information as to how much the county could expect to receive from central government in 2022/23. However, it was likely that council tax would need to go up.
- e) Cycle race – parish councillors complained about the poor organisation of a cycle race recently held on public roads in the parish. Cllr Shing stated that

East Sussex Highways had not been consulted about this. He would check whether the organisers had consulted Eastbourne Borough Council.

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

C.458 Business in Progress (resumed from C.456 above))

The council returned to consideration of Report 6:

- a) Use of wicket covers at the recreation ground – [see *minute C.441 (d), from the informal meeting held on 3rd June 2021*]. There was no further objection to the use of wicket covers provided they were green and unobtrusive, and could be dismantled and stored over the winter.

RESOLVED - That the use of wicket covers at the recreation ground be approved.

- b) Neighbourhood Plan – there were two problems to be resolved if this project was to continue. One was the availability of Steering Group members and in particular someone to chair the group. The Chair of Planning advised that he would not do this, but that the group did not have to be chaired by a councillor. It would simply report to council. Secondly the government's intentions over planning remained unclear, though the South Downs National Park Authority had expressed a clear preference for a plan covering the basics of planning, land use and development control, such as they had powers to support and to enforce. The parish had originally envisaged a more holistic approach, covering speed management, creation of new paths, conservation, and care for ecology. The SDNPA should be challenged to clarify this discrepancy, and their response could then be brought to a future Planning Committee meeting for discussion. Members of the Steering Group should be invited to attend the meeting to express their views and to indicate whether or not they wished to carry on if the scope of the Plan were scaled down. The Chair of Planning advised that one essential component would be a local housing needs survey, and if need were identified over and above that stated in the current SDNPA Local Plan (valid until 2033) that would have implications for the parish. The council should also clarify whether some overflow housing from Wealden (which did not have a five year land supply or a Local Plan) could be drawn down into the parish regardless of local needs. Finally it was noted that some matters originally intended to be covered in a Neighbourhood Plan were now being progressed by other means (e.g. the Traffic Management Working Group and the Residents' Association's Eco-care group). **ACTION: DP to consult SDNPA; Planning Committee to recommend policy in consultation with NPSG members.**

RESOLVED – To request the SDNPA to clarify the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, and to invite all members of the Steering Group to a meeting of the Planning Committee to discuss the way forward

- c) Bank signatories – members reviewed the council’s banking mandate and agreed that the Vice Chair (Cllr Thorogood) should be added to it. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED – That Cllr Thorogood be added to the Barclays bank mandate

The council received and took note of the further items in the Progress report.

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

C.459 Council Grant Scheme

The council considered Report 7 detailing three grant applications, received from the Cricket Club, the Parish Magazine and the Bowling Club. It was noted that in total the sums requested could exceed the amount remaining in the donations budget. It was proposed that as in previous years any unclaimed councillor allowances be vired into the donations budget, and that if this were done, each of the three organisations could receive £500. The motion was put to the meeting and declared carried. It was then agreed that the council grant scheme should be closed for the remainder of the year (with the exception of one village club which had already expressed an interest in applying) **ACTION: KL to notify clubs and societies**

RESOLVED - That any unclaimed councillor allowances in 2021/22 should be vired to the Donations budget

RESOLVED – That a grant of £500 be paid to the Cricket Club

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

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

C.460 Council Involvement in the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations 2022

The council considered Report 8 from Cllr Keller in his capacity as the council’s representative on the parish’s Jubilee Planning group. The notes of a group meeting held on 7 September 2021 were also received. There was support for the proposal that the parish council in partnership with the Cricket Club should sponsor activities at the recreation ground on 2 June 2022, culminating in the lighting of a fire beacon. The lighting of beacons at 9.00pm local time would be organised nationally and across the Commonwealth. A preliminary estimate of the cost for mounting the event was £300 to include a small firework display, plus the greater cost of providing a fire beacon. It was further proposed that the beacon should be made permanent and incorporated into a new village sign to mark the point of entry into the village from the south. A local blacksmith had kindly offered to make a fire basket at cost, to be incorporated into a village sign (approx. £750 plus VAT for the ironwork, to which should be added the cost of fixings and installation). This would be an unbudgeted item which might need to be paid for from reserves in the current year and recouped in 2022/23 if necessary. In discussion there was support for all these proposals in principle. However, it was noted that at the time of lighting the beacon should be on high ground and ideally within sight of other signal fires. It was suggested that the National Trust should be asked for permission to site it temporarily at the Red Barn. Subsequently it should be taken down, cleaned and powder coated and incorporated into the permanent village sign. Cllr Fowler as Lead for the recreation ground and a

member of the Cricket Club agreed to liaise with the Club over the detailed arrangements and to attend future planning group meetings. It was noted that a decision had yet to be made as to whether the Village Fete should become part of the Jubilee celebrations or remain as a free-standing event.

RESOLVED – To approve the recommended council sponsored activities at the recreation ground on 2 June 2022 culminating in the lighting of a fire beacon

RESOLVED – To give outline approval to the expenditure required to erect a permanent beacon and village sign at the recreation ground (approx £1,000 plus VAT), to be drawn from reserves if required in the current financial year

C.461 Climate and Ecology; Environment; and Renewable Energy

The council considered Report 9 concerning three matters, as follows:

- a) Request from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Alliance for support for their Private Members' Bill – members agreed to support this initiative with the following actions:
- Declaring an ecological emergency
 - Declaring support for the Climate and Ecology Bill
 - Notifying the Eastbourne Herald of the council's decision
 - Writing an open letter to Maria Caulfield MP requesting her support
 - Notifying the Alliance of the council's support.

ACTION: KL

- b) Request from NALC for support for its proposed amendments to the Environment Bill – members agreed to support the proposed amendments requesting the insertion of two new clauses numbered 101(7) and 101(8) in the government's Environment Bill which would ensure that the Bill factored in the need for parish councils to be consulted by responsible authorities when Local Nature Recovery Strategies affecting their areas were being framed. No further response would be sent to the NALC consultation. **ACTION: KL**
- c) Request from the SDNPA for guidance from parishes on the content they would like to see in a future Community Based Renewable Energy Technical Advice Note – members agreed that this request be referred to the Planning Committee for consideration. **ACTION: Planning Committee**

RESOLVED - That the report be noted and actions taken as discussed

C.462 Electric car charging points

The council considered Report 10. It was unanimously agreed that the parish should be added to East Sussex County Council's list of parishes interested in inclusion in a county-wide strategy for the provision of electric vehicle charging points. The possibility of taking action independently was also discussed. The council could then apply for funding from the government's 'On Street Residential Charge point scheme' for the installation of EV charge points. The parish council would need to contribute 25% of the cost, and the installation would need to be on land owned by the council.

The total cost would depend on local conditions such as the availability of three phase power for fast charging. It might be possible for charge-point hosts to collect fee revenue. Members agreed to investigate further and to invite the Village Hall Trust to do the same. Cllr Bryant offered to lead on this matter, and this was agreed.

RESOLVED – To authorise Cllr Bryant to investigate the possibility of hosting electric vehicle charging on council land

C.463 Payments and Receipts

The council took note of Report 11, the schedule of payments for September and October 2021 and receipts for August and September 2021. *[Note: the complete Schedule is appended to these Minutes]*. An additional payment of £258.60 for cleaning the pavilion (July to September inclusive) was also noted and approved.

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £8,473.24 (including those already made in August) be approved

C.464 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – (i) Budget 2022/23: members were requested to put in bids to the clerk as soon as possible for preliminary consideration in November **ACTION: all councillors**; (ii) Defibrillators – Cllr Hill would now lead on this matter. A new cabinet had been installed outside Shepherds Café to house the defibrillator from inside the village shop, and improve access to it. South East Water had very kindly agreed to install a further defibrillator on their property at the top of Micheldene Road, at no charge. The council would need to buy fresh batteries (within the ring-fenced budget). Training in the use of the defibrillators would be offered to all comers after the installation. The parish would then be well covered except for the Friston area, where no suitable location had yet been found.
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the minutes of the committee meeting held on 17 August 2021, and the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 21 September 2021. The SDNPA had agreed to follow up two new enforcement issues.
- c) Finance – the council took note of the Budget Monitoring Report for Q.2, Month 6, 2021/22. The bank balance at the end of September had been £102,343.41. Expenditure was within or slightly below budget, but no further income was expected and some larger bills would arrive in the second half of the year, including purchase of materials for the fire beacon.
- d) Traffic Management Working Group – (i) the speed signs were awaiting installation. The residents of adjacent properties would be consulted before work began **ACTION: PS/HM**; (ii) more volunteers were needed for Speedwatch **ACTION: MK to put information on the website**
- e) Highways and Rights of Way - (i) the bin area in Downlands Way had been cleared and the fence removed. If the wall were also removed it could create two new parking spaces. This would be investigated. (ii) Rights of Way – a number of requests had been received for paths to be cleared and hedges trimmed, and these were in hand. Some paths were not signed, and this

should be rectified if possible; (iii) the fingerpost on the A259/Gilberts Drive junction was in need of repair. The council had oak timber in store and a repair would be organised **ACTION: PS/CL**. (iv) County liaison meeting – members were reminded of the forthcoming session on 14 October 2021.

- f) Recreation Ground – the pavilion would be closed for the winter on 1 November, and the water turned off. Work on the cladding would begin on 8 November. The Lead Member would also liaise with the Cricket Club over practical matters e.g. storage over the winter.

Standing Orders were suspended to enable the Chair of the Residents' Association's Eco-care Group to comment on the next item. Mrs d'Urso introduced two status reports from the Group on the wildflower strip project, prepared in August and October 2021. The RA considered it important to have clear ecological objectives, and would welcome the decisions made earlier in the meeting on climate and ecology. Work was in progress on the design of an interpretation board for the wildflower strip. The SDNPA had been invited to support this as a project done in lockdown with an educational and amenity aspect. It was hoped to involve children in the drafting of the board display. Standing orders were re-imposed.

- g) Environment – members took note of the two reports from the RA and thanked the RA for its work on this initiative, supporting its aims and aspirations. It was suggested that a call be put in the Parish Magazine for any resident with the relevant skills to help in designing an interpretation board, as this would otherwise constitute a major part of the cost **ACTION: MK**

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

C.465 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 14 on Correspondence received since the August meeting:

- a) Wildlife Crime – *Cllr Bryant declared an interest as a resident of Crowlink.* Members noted that a complaint had arisen due to the lack of protection for the badger sett at Crowlink. It was suggested that the SDNPA be informed. A request for vigilance could also be sent to the Residents' Association **ACTION: DP**
- b) Request for dog bin in Elven Lane – the Chair would visit the enquirer to find out whether there was a suitable location for a bin in the Lane **ACTION: PS**
- c) Councillor allowances – the Independent Remuneration Panel would welcome comments from individual councillors to inform its annual review.

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

C.467 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting – Thursday 4th November 2021 at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall of the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....