



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 3 February 2022 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

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

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.511-C.514), District Cllr M Lunn (Items C.511-C.515); and K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There was one member of the public present

C.511 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr T Bryant, Cllr H Milligan

C.512 Declarations of Interests: - None.

C.513 Minutes

The minutes of the council meeting held on 6 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.514 Report of the County Councillor

Members noted that County Cllr Shing had been unable to access the January meeting on Zoom due to an administrative error on the published agenda. He reported on the following matters.

- a) County Council Budget 2022/23 – this would shortly be finalised and the recommended increases were 1.99% for core services plus 2.5% for adult social care, amounting to an extra £1.33 per week on the average Band D property. A coalition of Independent and Liberal Democrat members was campaigning for alternatives.
- b) Repairs at A259/Upper Street junction – the Highway Steward had identified four potholes which should be repaired by the end of February. Wealden's street sweeping team had cleared up but the drainage gully remained blocked and the persistent drainage problems would be investigated again.
- c) Bollards on Gilberts Drive verge – the county would not pay for the installation of bollards to protect the verge but the parish council could apply to the highway authority for a licence to do it themselves.
- d) Exceat Bridge – Cllr Shing did not agree with the District Councillor's interpretation of the causes for the delay in obtaining planning permission, but would investigate and report further.
- e) Closures of the C40 Jevington Road – the road would be closed on 25 February for one day whilst potholes were repaired. Several months of closure would be required whilst SGN carried out essential work to replace the gas main. This would take 24 weeks if done in summer and 31 weeks if

done in winter. The county had requested SGN to bring forward the start date by one month to minimise the inevitable disruption.

Members thanked Cllr Shing for his report.

RESOLVED – That the report of the County Councillor be noted.

C.515 Report of the District Councillor

District Cllr M Lunn reported on the following matters:

- a) Street cleaning at A259 /Upper Street junction – Cllr Lunn asked whether there was any improvement to the flooding in this area since Wealden’s team had swept the street of debris. Members responded that the clearance was welcome but had not tackled the root cause of the flooding problem.
- b) Electric vehicle charging points and car park lighting – Cllr Lunn had requested the inclusion of East Dean village car park in the first phase of installations in the District. The Portfolio Holder (Cllr Galley) was in the process of tendering for a contractor, following which a budget should be set for the work. The parish council had also requested the installation of low level lighting in the car park for safety reasons (subject to the SDNPA’s Dark Skies policy) and it would be most economical if this could be installed at the same time, even if by a separate contractor. Members agreed to write to Cllr Lunn and to the Portfolio Holder in support of these proposals **ACTION: TB/KL**
- c) Wealden Local Plan – the next government white paper on Planning would show whether the housing formula used to calculate extra provision in the District would be amended or not. It should be published by the end of March. The consequences of no change would be damaging for the district.
- d) Dredging the Cuckmere Estuary – at a recent meeting with the Environment Agency there had been greater cooperation and willingness to be proactive, though currently there was no shingle to move. Members commended the negotiations undertaken on behalf of the local community.
- e) Hybrid Meetings – the National Association of Local Councils continued to lobby the government to legalise fully hybrid council meetings. Parishes were invited to let Wealden know whether they would support this, just as an option.

In discussion, parish councillors explained that the problem of flooding at the A259/Upper Street junction was caused by the gullies being in the wrong place, so that street cleaning alone would not resolve it. The county council was investigating. A plan and photos would be sent to Cllr Lunn **ACTION: PH.**

Members thanked Cllr Lunn for his report.

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

C.516 Report of Maria Caulfield MP

Members took note of a written report from Maria Caulfield, and in particular of the fact that a crossing point on the A259 between East Dean and Friston had been identified as a potential site for improvement in the A259 South Coast Corridor Study, and that Ms Caulfield would support this project. This was welcome, and members asked to know the exact location of the crossing point in question.

C.517 Business in Progress

The council received and took note of Report 6 on progress made since the meeting on 6 January 2022. The following were discussed:

- a) Risk Management Strategy – members reviewed the Risk Management Strategy, updated as discussed in December 2021

RESOLVED - That the updated Risk Management Strategy be approved

- b) Pavilion hire with music – members considered a request for a private hire of the pavilion with music in the early evening of 4th July 2022

RESOLVED - That the hire be approved

- c) Cricket Club Hire Agreement 2022 – members considered an update of the Agreement for 2022 to include a 4% increase in the season's hire fee.

RESOLVED - That the Hire Agreement be approved as amended, and signed by the Chair

- d) 4% increase in charges for private hire of the pavilion in 2022 – members considered this general increase, which was approved. Hirers would continue to pay an additional £10 cleaning charge

RESOLVED – That the fees for private hires of the pavilion in 2022 be increased by 4%.

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

C.518 Emergency Plan

The council reviewed the Emergency Plan (Report 7). Several administrative updates were noted. Members agreed that the confidential Appendix containing contact details of residents who could be called upon to offer specific types of help in an emergency should be shortened e.g. the list of 4x4 drivers was no longer necessary. All remaining contacts must be kept confidential in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations. The insurance position of contacts such as First Aiders should be checked and clarified **ACTION: KL.** Subject to these points the Plan was approved for re-publication and should be reviewed no later than 2025.

RESOLVED - That the Emergency Plan as updated be approved and re-published

C.519 Water Resources South East

The council took note of a consultation on the emerging Regional Plan for South East England. This was agreed to be of interest, though with little direct impact on the parish.

C.520 National Association of Local Councils

The Chair drew attention to an open letter from the Chair of NALC to all parish and town councils. The following points were discussed:

- a) Focus on good governance – the Chair proposed that the council should participate in the Local Council Award Scheme to demonstrate its fundamental intention to deliver good governance. Members agreed.
ACTION: KL/DP/PS
- b) Civility and Respect project – NALC had expressed concern at the rise of bullying, having an impact on councils, councillors, clerks and staff. At the same time the East Sussex Association of Local Councils reported an increase in complaints against councillors alleging bullying. The Chair encouraged all members to take advantage of the courses on good governance run by ESALC. A training budget was always made available. Members agreed.

C.521 Payments and Receipts

The council took note of Report 10 containing the schedule of payments for February 2022. There were no receipts in January 2022. *[Note: the complete Schedule is appended to these Minutes]*. Members noted in particular the recharge of £3,036.04 from Wealden District Council for the December 2021 by-election. This was less than expected as other by-elections had been held in the District on the same day.

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £5,678.39 be approved

C.522 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – the council welcomed the news that Mrs Lesley d’Urso had been appointed Chair of the Residents’ Association
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 18 January 2022
- c) Finance – the council took note of the Budget Monitoring report for the period ended 31 January 2022. The bank balance at the end of January was £71,831.11. It still appeared that the council would be underspent at the end of the financial year.
- d) Traffic Management Working Group – the Chair had complained to East Sussex Highways about the continued delay in the installation of the speed reactive signs which the parish had paid for. The Chair reported that the equipment was now on order and would be installed in the two agreed locations on Gilberts Drive as soon as it was delivered. It was proposed to install signs at two more locations on the A259 in the next financial year. Cllr Thorogood advised that Speedwatch should be rebooted for the new season

and a call for volunteers had been placed in the Parish Magazine. Existing volunteers would be contacted **ACTION: ST/DP**

- e) Rights of Way and Highways – the Lead Member reported on the following matters: (i) Clearing footpaths: several live queries were in train; (ii) Signage at the Jevington/Crowlink crossover: East Sussex Highways had sent a negative response to the parish's request for two-way signage. Members agreed that improved signage was a parish priority which the council would be willing to finance or match fund. The Lead Member would request dates for a site meeting in the next month **ACTION: CL**; (iii) Walking Maps: fresh supplies of printed maps were needed and this would involve some modifications to the routes. It was agreed that local businesses dealing with tourists should be invited to sponsor the printing in return for small adverts to be included in the leaflets **ACTION: PH**; (iv) Parking issues on Gilberts Drive: East Sussex Highways would not pay for the installation of bollards but could be asked to grant a licence for the parish to install them either at its own expense or by match funding. Cllr Shing would send details **ACTION: PH to investigate**; (v) Ownership of the wide grass verge outside The Fridays: an issue had arisen over residents parking on this verge, which was owned by Wealden District Council (except for a 1 metre strip adjacent to the highway) **ACTION: KL to supply information to ST**
- f) Recreation Ground – the Lead Member had supplied costings for work to be done on the first ten of the public seats (£380 incl. VAT) and the pavilion door (£205 incl. VAT) [Council Minutes, 6th January 2022, Item C.508(f)]. Members agreed that this work should be undertaken as soon as possible to prevent further deterioration. In discussion it was noted that two marquees had been ordered by the Residents' Association for parish use and a request had been made that they be stored in the cricket pavilion. There was concern that additional storage space would be needed and that the marquees could be too heavy for the loft space. The council had agreed to make a contribution towards the cost in the next financial year.
- g) Environment – the Lead Member reported on the following matters: (i) he had met the new Chair of the Residents' Association to find out about the RA's environmental interests and to cooperate with them. The project to install an interpretation board would be revived; (ii) the Lead Member had also arranged to meet the convenor of the group 'A More Climate Friendly Parish' as a similar initiative; (iii) All members were invited to let the Lead Member know of any environmental information and/or activity of interest to them **ACTION: all members**
- h) Platinum Jubilee Events – the Lead Member reported on the planning meeting held on 1st February 2022 and on the emerging programme of events for the Jubilee Bank Holiday and the preceding half term holiday. In particular: (i) Art Sessions: a resident would organise sessions for local children and requested a grant of £100 for the purchase of materials. Members supported this idea which would be formally approved in the next financial year; (ii) Pond Dipping: the council was requested to investigate the insurance implications of this event proposed to be held at Friston Pond, though organised independently of the council. All children taking part would be accompanied by an adult. Members agreed the organiser should prepare

a Risk Assessment and the clerk should find out about insurance **ACTION: KL**; (iii) Beacon event at the recreation ground: Cllr Fowler would liaise with the Cricket Club over catering and events during the day but the Club would not provide a bar. The parish council would be primarily responsible for organising catering and events in the evening, culminating in the lighting of the beacon (now put back to 9.45pm nationwide). The Eastbourne Scottish Pipers Band would be among a variety of musicians performing and would play the official anthem written for the Platinum Jubilee. Mr John Dann would be the Honorary Village Crier for the day. The cost of providing the evening programme was expected to be £500 in excess of the sum agreed by the council in October 2021; members agreed in principle that this could be found from the budget for 2022/23. No more additional expenses were anticipated. The first publicity would appear in the next parish Magazine, with an update in April, and a four page colour insert programme would appear in May. The council had allocated £200 for the printing. Members agreed to investigate the possibility of inviting bucket donations, e.g. for the council's Charity of the Year **ACTION: KL to investigate**. Members thanked Cllr Keller, Cllr Fowler and Cllr Thorogood for their work on bringing this programme together.

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

C.523 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 13 on Correspondence received since the January meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) By-elections – the council had now received two additional letters from residents all supporting the principle that residents should be able to call for by-elections and that budgetary provision should be made for them. The Chair would respond positively to them both, and had similarly arranged to meet the two signatories of the original letter (received at the January meeting). In response to specific criticisms, members noted that the parish council had no control over the choice of dates for by-elections which were set by the District Council; and that the parish council had posted all election notices in a timely manner using all the resources available to it. Most small notice boards around the village were the property of the Village Hall Trust where priority was necessarily given to advertising events at the hall. Members objected to the mistaken allegation that an uncontested election was no different from a co-option.
- b) Downs View Lane passing place – members noted the possible willingness of one resident to remove the wooden boards currently blocking the informal passing place, and agreed that the council should make a fresh approach to the Roads Company supporting the retention of the present passing place, or alternatively the creation of a new passing place on the opposite verge. A further attempt would be made to establish ownership, which might have lapsed to the Crown. **ACTION: CL/KL**
- c) Old Willingdon Road footway – Cllr Hill had obtained costings for installing a footway from the Old Willingdon Road round into the Jevington Road (east side): £25,000 - £30,000. An application for CIL funding would be put together

for consideration by the South Downs National Park Authority but would be dependent on match funding. **ACTION: PH/KL**

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

C.524 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting – Thursday 3 March 2022 at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall of the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.17 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....