



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 3 March 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 C Lees, Cllr H Milligan, and Cllr S Thorogood

**In attendance:** County Cllr S Shing (Items C.525 – C.529)  
K Larkin (Parish Clerk), and D Picknell (Admin Officer)

*There were no members of the public present, but the council took note of a statement from Mr P Williamson and Mr R Coomber on the topic of Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss, which would be discussed at the April meeting under Correspondence.*

**C.525 Acceptance of apologies for absence:** Cllr T Bryant and Cllr M Keller

**C.526 Declarations of Interests:** - None

**C.527 Minutes**

The minutes of the council meeting held on 3 February 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**C.528 Report of Maria Caulfield MP**

The council took note of a written report from Maria Caulfield MP. Proposals for improving the crossing points on the A259 in the parish were still in their formative stages, and members agreed to request that improvements be made both at Friston Green and near the junction with Gilberts Drive. **ACTION: KL to respond to the MP.**

**C.529 Report of the County Councillor**

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) County Council Budget 2022/23 – this had been finalised with a 1.99% increase for core services plus 2.5% for adult social care, amounting to an extra £1.33 per week on the average Band D property.
- b) A259 South Coast Corridor Study – Cllr Shing had attended a recent stakeholder meeting and given support to the improvement of the local crossing points as well as a reduction of the speed limit through the village and on the Birling Gap Road.
- c) Jevington Road closure for renewal of gas main – a stakeholder meeting would be held on 4 March to respond to many protests from residents and local businesses (the Chair of the parish council would attend). Cllr Shing had contacted SGN Utilities to discuss various alternatives to the prolonged closure proposals but without success.
- d) Repairs at A259/Upper Street junction – councillors thanked East Sussex Highways for the repair of four potholes, but the drainage gully remained

blocked and the persistent problem that surface run-off did not reach the drainage gulleys still needed to be addressed. This should be on the agenda for the next SLR (county liaison) meeting **ACTION: KL**.

Members thanked Cllr Shing for his report.

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

### **C.530 Business in Progress**

The council received and took note of Report 7 on progress made since the meeting on 3 February 2022. Members discussed the renewal of the sign board on the A259 directing visitors to the shops and Sheppards Café, and agreed that this should be done. The cost would be £70. **ACTION: PS**

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

### **C.531 Annual Village Meeting**

The council took note of Report 8 recommending a structure and timetable for the Annual Village Meeting 2022 (Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022), following the pattern established before the pandemic. Invitations to participate should be sent to all the main village organisations and the village clubs and societies as soon as possible, and a Residents' Alert circulated. There would be no set theme: this would be a collaborative meeting aiming to re-open the full communication of normal times and find out about residents' priorities and concerns. General notices and invitations would be published via the Residents' Alerts email register and the council website and notice boards **ACTION: KL/MK/DP**. An agenda would be considered at the April meeting in the light of the responses.

### **C.532 Local Council Award Scheme**

The council took note of an oral report from the clerk on the requirements of the scheme. It was agreed that the council should register to apply for a Foundation award not later than the end of April, and would then need to supply all the information required by NALC within 12 months. This would best be done following the resumption of Annual Village Meetings in May 2022 and the formulation of a fresh post-lockdown action plan. There would be a registration fee of £50 and an accreditation fee of £80. If the council were to apply for the next level Quality award within 12 months of receiving the Foundation award, reduced fees would be payable for the second accreditation.

RESOLVED - That the council should register with NALC prior to the Annual Village Meeting 2022

### **C.533 Council Officers**

The council took note that staff time should be allocated to the revision of the Village Design Statement and agreed that this item should be deferred until April when the Chair of Planning could be present. At the same time the council would consider quotations received from any planning consultants willing to work on the revision and

augmentation of the current VDS. In the meantime the Admin Officer would update the references in the current Village Design Statement to numbered policies in the current SDNPA Local Plan, as some of those numbers had been updated.

Secondly the council took note that a 1.75% increment to the national salary scales for council staff had been offered on behalf of the employers with effect from 1 April 2021 but did not have union approval. The advice from the East Sussex Association of Local Councils was that the 1.75% should be paid forthwith and adjusted in future if a higher level were agreed in further negotiations.

RESOLVED - That the Clerk and Admin Officer should each have a 1.75% pay increase backdated to 1 April 2021.

#### **C.534 Levelling Up the UK: White Paper NALC Summary and Commentary**

The council took note of the government White Paper and the Summary and Commentary by the National Association of Local Councils, and considered local implications. These were found to be limited to support for the shopping precincts in Eastbourne and Newhaven. East Sussex as a whole would receive little from the Levelling Up policy.

#### **C.535 Payments and Receipts**

The council took note of Report 12 containing the schedule of payments for March 2022 and receipts in February 2022. *[Note: the complete Schedule is appended to these Minutes]*. A payment of £585 for works to the pavilion and maintenance work done on 10 memorial seats (previously authorised) was also approved.

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £2,701.55 be approved

The council noted a request from the Community Watch for a grant of £50 and this was approved in principle. Members would welcome a meeting with the new Convener of the group to discuss its future plans. The grant should then be paid in the 2022/23 financial year. **ACTION: KL to respond to the Convener.**

Platinum Jubilee: members confirmed that a grant of £100 would be paid to support a children's Art Project. This would be done at the start of the 2022/23 financial year. **ACTION: KL to respond to the project leader.**

#### **C.536 Reports:**

- a) Chair of the Council – (i) the Chair invited members' views on sending a donation to the government relief fund for Ukraine. At present it was not clear whether public money could only be spent in the UK. Members would canvass opinion and a decision would be made in April **ACTION: KL/all members;** (ii) Plant a Tree for the Jubilee – members agreed that two trees e.g. Holm oaks should be purchased for planting on the prescribed day, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March, at the recreation ground. The cost should not exceed £200. This had not previously been authorised due to short notice nationally, but would be within budget for 2022/23.

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- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 15 February 2022. The Chair of the council reported that he and the Chair of Planning and the Admin Officer had visited the SDNPA offices in Midhurst to raise concerns about planning Enforcement. The meeting had been constructive but challenging. Ten local enforcement issues had been notified to the planning authority but there had been no action on nine. However, the cases were not closed. The planning authority had asked for all discussion of such issues to be oral and would only involve the parish council when the council was the first complainant. Members agreed to a trial period. If unsuccessful, the local MP would be asked to intervene.
- c) Finance – the council took note of the Budget Monitoring report for the period ended 28 February 2022. The bank balance at the end of February was £66,794.04. The closing balance at the end of the financial year should be approx. £63,500 (about £1,000 less than in the previous year)
- d) Traffic Management Working Group – members considered winding up Speedwatch, for which there was currently very little volunteer support. However, it was agreed to keep it going for the coming tourist season. There was a renewed problem of noisy driving in unsocial hours which should be reported to the police **ACTION: DP.**
- e) Rights of Way and Highways – the Lead Member reported on the following matters: (i) The cost of replacing three road name signs on the Downlands Estate using plastic 8cm poles with a life of 25 years would be £431. This was approved in principle, for ratification at the April meeting; (ii) Footpath 8 (The Ridgeway to Old Willingdon Road) – the obtruding hedges had been cut back, (iii) Footpaths 21/22 (Elven Close to Downs View Lane) - the path had been blocked by fallen trees in Storm Eunice, which would be cleared by the county council; (iv) Footpath 17 (Peakdean Close to Warren Lane) - a sagging fence was being dealt with by the landowner; (v) Signage at Jevington Road/A259 crossover – a site meeting with East Sussex Highways had been requested, on the basis that if they would not finance improved signage the parish council could be asked to pay. A response was awaited; (vi) Closure of the Jevington Road – following a very large number of complaints, SGN Utilities would be hosting a Teams meeting on 4 March with stakeholders. Councillors would attend. The Chair would also complain to SGN and ESCC that the work appeared not to have been planned in the best way. A second closure was actually proposed for resurfacing after completion of the gas main renewal; (vii) Vandalism of bus shelter – windows had been broken and the PCSO should be notified **ACTION: KL.** It was agreed that the windows should be replaced as an urgent repair, and a notice placed in the shelter to advise users that their actions were under observation **ACTION: PH;** (viii) Bollards to protect verge on Gilberts Drive – it was agreed that Cllr Hill should obtain quotes and apply to East Sussex Highways for a licence to place the bollards on highway land **ACTION: PH;** (ix) Sandbags left in Gilberts Drive – UK Power Networks should be requested to retrieve these **ACTION: PH;** (x) Bark chips laid at entrance to Hobbs Eares – this spot had become impassable and informal action had been taken to make it passable.

- f) Tree Warden – (i) cherry tree branches had been trimmed in Downs View Lane to maintain a passing place near the junction with the A259; (ii) Greensward trees – the Warden would inspect these with the landowners to give lay advice; (iii) Replacing fences with hedges – this was a desirable option, supported by the Village Design Statement, but landowners could not be required to do it and this should be generally understood; (iv) Storm damage – there had been some losses in Storm Eunice, on Friston Hill and in Gilberts Drive.
- g) Recreation Ground – (i) the Lead Member and the Chair would liaise over moving the two marquees recently bought by the Residents' Association which were currently filling the main room. An alternative must be found; (ii) Repairs to pavilion and maintenance of memorial seats – the works previously planned and approved had now been completed. Members thanked Cllr Fowler for this work; (iii) Play area – gorse bushes in The Drove were growing over into the play area and could be a safety hazard. It was agreed that the mowing contractor should be requested to cut them back **ACTION: KL**; (iv) Dog walkers – the problems reported by a resident had not been seen to recur.
- h) Environment – (i) the Lead Member had met the Environment lead of the Residents' Association to discuss the project to install an interpretation board at a cost of approx. £1,000. The RA would apply for a grant which the parish council might match fund; (ii) The RA had requested that this season's planting in the shopping precinct be done in the Jubilee colours, and this was agreed; (iii) Land survey – the parish council would not finance a land survey as there was no power to oblige landowners to substitute hedges for fences, or otherwise direct them as to what to do on their own properties; (iv) No mow areas on the Greensward – the council's contractor was requested to leave certain areas unmown **ACTION: KL to obtain details and contact the contractor.**
- i) Platinum Jubilee Events – the programme was well advanced. The council still needed to find a licensee to run a bar at the recreation ground.
- j) Defibrillators – the Chair reported that the cabinet for the unit to be installed at the top of Micheldene Road was now on order as the power installation was complete. This had been done by South East Water, free of charge, and was much appreciated. Training would be offered in the use of the defibrillator, and councillors would be welcome to participate.

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

### **C.537 Correspondence**

The council took note of Report 15 on Correspondence received since the February meeting.

RESOLVED - That the Correspondence report be noted

**C.538 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting – Thursday 7 April 2022 at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall of the Village Hall.**

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*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.28 pm.*

Signed..... (Chair)

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