



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

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 2 February 2023 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm**

**Councillors present:** Cllr P Seeley (Chair), 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 (Item C.701); District Cllr M Lunn (Items C.698-C.699); K Larkin (Parish Clerk), D Picknell (Admin Officer)

*There was one member of the public present*

## **Public Session**

Mr S Worsfold raised the following matters:

- The red telephone kiosk on the A259, East Dean, required re-painting. Councillors responded that the kiosk had been scheduled for 'rationalisation' (i.e. removal) but that BT had been persuaded to keep it for emergency purposes. A request would be made for it to be repainted.
- The drains on Friston Hill were not functioning properly. Councillors responded that the drains had only recently been dug through to the adjacent fields, but the council was aware that debris was still running down the hill. The issue was being actively pursued with East Sussex Highways.
- Friston Pond maintenance should be done before the end of February to avoid disrupting the life cycle of wildlife. Councillors responded that an offer of maintenance was available and was awaiting the better weather for work to commence.
- The Downlands Way precinct still needed to be cleared of weeds and debris. A regular maintenance schedule should ideally be put in place. Cllr Lees kindly agreed to contact Rustic Gardens.
- Non-progression of business – it was claimed that some actions were not followed up or not reported on. Councillors responded that there were a number of live issues that did not progress because they depended on action by other authorities.

The Chair thanked Mr Worsfold for his contribution.

*The Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting.*

**C.695 Acceptance of apologies for absence:** Cllr T Bryant and Cllr M Bustard

**C.696 Declarations of Interests:** - None

**C.697 Minutes** – the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 5 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### C.698 Report of the Member of Parliament

The Chair reported that Maria Caulfield MP had attended a video conference with Cllr Lees, Cllr Thorogood and himself on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023, to discuss key issues related to speeding and to the management of the un-adopted roads on the Downlands Estate [*A record of the meeting is appended to these minutes in Annex A*]. The meeting had been helpful and it had been agreed that regular video conferences could be held, e.g. at quarterly intervals.

All parishes were requested to respond to the current National Planning Policy consultation and to consider a response. The Chair of Planning had advised that although the Secretary of State had now agreed not to impose quotas on future housing numbers, the lack of sufficient provision for new or upgraded infrastructure (e.g. to cope adequately with sewage) remained a serious problem locally and should be commented on by all those involved. It was agreed that the Planning Committee should formulate a response at their February meeting **ACTION: DP to add this to the Committee's February agenda.**

### C.699 Report of the District Councillor

District Cllr M Lunn reported on the following matters:

- Consultation on National Planning Policy – Cllr Lunn strongly supported the proposal to submit a comment strengthening infrastructure requirements as a condition of new development. Southern Water had recently attended a meeting with Wealden District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and it had been agreed that the utility company should be a pre-application stakeholder in future planning applications, to flag up the need for fresh infrastructure provision. A consortium of twenty district and borough councils in the region was supporting this initiative. There had been massive underinvestment in sewage treatment over many years, a problem now made worse by the increase in flash flooding due to climate change.
- Outstanding highway matters – Cllr Lunn was pursuing four matters, namely (1) improved signage for Cophall Lane; (2) use of the wide grass verge outside The Fridays by some residents for parking; (3) the parish's request for Wealden to impose a Public Spaces Protection Order on the roads to Birling Gap; and (4) recurrent deposits of debris on the A259, Upper Street and Lower Street.
- The Cuckmere Estuary – some sluices were not working, and until this was corrected there could be a conflict of interest between allowing excess floodwater to escape from upstream, whilst not flooding downstream. It had been suggested that there should be a freeze on the precept paid by Landowners to the drainage board as a penalty until all sluices were operational.
- Council Tax 2023/24 – a 3% increase was predicted in the tax to be levied by Wealden District Council, i.e. a below inflation increase.

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

### C.700 Business in Progress

The council received and took note of Report 7 on progress made since the meeting on 5 January 2023. The following items were actioned:

a) Warm Spaces

RESOLVED - To approve donations of £150 each to the Parochial Church Council and the Village Hall Trust to defray the cost of providing Warm Spaces in the community until the end of March 2023

b) Bollards in Gilberts Drive at the junction with the A259 – Cllr Hill advised that the fee to dig up the verge adjacent to the tarmac was being investigated by East Sussex Highways and should be less than the £404 estimated. The licence check would include information on any underground facilities. Four good quality bollards (sourced to match existing bollards as far as possible) would cost approx. £95 each. The parish could use its own contractor, subject to appropriate insurance. At the same time the opportunity could be taken to let water through to East Dean Pond.

RESOLVED – That a budget of up to £404 be approved to obtain the relevant licence

c) Emergency and Resilience Plan Template

RESOLVED – That a template be purchased from the East Sussex Association of Local Councils at a cost of £120

d) Provision of bike racks in the village car park – Wealden District Council had very kindly offered to install a four-place bike rack at their own expense, at a spot to be agreed, provided that the parish council would obtain prior consent from the Gilbert Estate. Members agreed to take up this welcome offer  
**ACTION: KL to seek the consent of the Gilbert Estate.**

e) State of the Jevington Road – East Sussex Highways had filled some potholes and also dug out the drain to Friston Pond, following the flood which had made the junction with the A259 dangerous.

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

### C.701 Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr S Shing reported on the following matters:

a) C40 Jevington Road – the resurfacing work was unlikely to be done before 2024, on the basis that the final phase of the gas main works was not expected to be completed until the end of November 2023. Councillors queried this, as the gas main works appeared to have completed ahead of schedule. Cllr Shing agreed to ask again at the next county council meeting. Members also advised that the gully which should drain the A259 junction into Friston Pond must be kept clear to avoid further problems at the junction.

- b) Council Tax 2023/24 – the county council’s share of the tax would increase by 4.99%, of which 2% would be in respect of Adult Social Care.
- c) Friston Hill drainage – members advised that the problem of debris washing down the hill into Upper Street had still not been resolved despite the recent effort to dig out the drains into the adjoining fields **ACTION: SS to raise this with Highways again.**

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

#### **C.702 Risk Management Strategy**

The council took note of the current strategy, as reviewed in February 2022. It was agreed that no further changes were required, beyond minor updates **ACTION: KL**

#### **C.703 Re-registration of the village hall site as an Asset of Community Value**

The council considered Report 9 recommending that an application be made to Wealden District Council to re-register the village hall site as an Asset of Community Value. It was noted that there was a discrepancy in the plans of the site, such that a triangle of land south of the entrance gate appeared to have been registered to the Gilbert Estate retrospectively. The application would seek to include this triangle, as in the original registration, following the advice given by the Hon. Solicitor at the time of the last re-registration in 2018.

RESOLVED - That an application be made to Wealden District Council to re-register the whole of the village hall site as an Asset of Community Value.

#### **C.704 Carbon Impact Report**

The council took note of the Carbon Impact report prepared for the parish from the Centre for Sustainable Energy: The report covered two main ways of calculating carbon impact, namely:

- household consumption - capturing all the emissions produced as a result of all the activities local residents engage in, regardless of where geographically the emissions occur, i.e. the production of the food they eat, the manufacture of their clothes and household items, the generation of fuel for heating, travel, etc.. On this measure, the parish has significantly higher consumption than the Wealden average.
- territorial footprint – capturing all the emissions directly produced in the parish i.e. if there were a factory in the parish, its emissions would count towards the territorial footprint, regardless of where the products were actually consumed. On this measure, the parish has a relatively low footprint.

In discussion it was agreed that although the evidence was based on hard data, its interpretation and use would not be straightforward. For example, emissions from personal transport in the parish were relatively high, but this was inevitable due to the location of the parish in a rural area, and one which attracted tourists. The council was already subsidising a local bus service and promoting other green transportation. Members were unanimous that the council’s priority must be to keep its own house in order by making improvements within its powers. It did not have

power, and would not wish to dictate to residents what they should consume in their own homes. Each household must make its own decisions. However, the report was publicly available as a resource for those who wished to use the data to guide their personal decision making.

RESOLVED - That the Carbon Impact report for the parish be noted, and that regard be had to its data in framing future resolutions of the council

#### **C.705 Payments and Receipts**

The council took note of Report 11 containing the schedule of payments for February 2023 and the schedule of receipts for January 2023. An additional payment of £284 to the Residents' Association was approved as a 50% contribution to the cost of gritting roads in the parish [*Note: the complete Payments Schedule is appended to these Minutes in Annex B*].

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £4,218.96 be approved

#### **C.706 Reports**

- a) Chair of the Council – the Chair reminded members of the date of the Annual Village Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Invitations should now be sent out. The Meeting could be used for hustings, as previously agreed, in the run up to the May parish elections. Information about the elections had been published in the parish magazine, in notices and on the website. The next round of publicity would include key dates.
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 17 January 2023
- c) Finance – the council took note of the Budget Monitoring Report for Month 10, 2022/23 (Report Item 13c). The balance at the end of January 2023 was £81,665.38.
- d) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Cllr Lees on behalf of the Chair of the Group reported that a meeting had been held on 9<sup>th</sup> January, with an information session from an experienced consultant. The next meeting (20<sup>th</sup> February) would consider suspending further activity on preparation of a Plan pending the following actions: (i) clarification of the intentions of the SDNPA for the revision of their Local Plan; (ii) analysis of planning decisions, to see if the parish should adjust its approach where its views were not supported by the SDNPA, the findings to be linked to a review and updating of the Village Design Statement; (iii) depending on the SDNPA's intentions for the revision of its Local Plan, possibly undertaking a housing needs survey; and (iv) finding a local parish that was adamant that an NP was needed, and also identifying a parish that had decided not to do one, in both cases to understand why, to assist EDF with its own decision on whether or not an NP was needed and what it could do.
- e) Rights of Way and Highways – the Lead Member drew attention to matters already raised under Business in Progress [paragraphs C.700 (b), (d) and (e)]. In addition, he reported that bark chippings were being laid in the twittens, to keep them open during the wet weather. It was also reported that

the Walking Maps should be reprinted for the new season, and that a budget of £200 was available for this **ACTION: PH to order further supplies from Tansleys**

- f) Tree Warden – The Warden reported that the saplings awaiting planting would be dug in at the recreation ground in mid-February and a report sent to the SDNPA (the donor).
- g) Recreation Ground – the Lead Member reported on the following matters: (i) work on the irrigation system had been slowed by the weather, but should be complete by mid to late February, and the access ramp would be completed after that, followed by the fencing of the irrigation system. The ramp had deliberately been made too narrow to be used by a vehicle. Mr J Davies Gilbert had kindly offered to supply water from his underground tanks, and the Lead Member would make further enquiries; however, it was unlikely to be practical to bring water to the site; (ii) the lock and handle to the main door on the pavilion required maintenance and some minor costs would be incurred. It was agreed that the repairs should be carried out; (iii) the Cricket Club had enquired whether solar panels could be installed on the roof of the pavilion, but this might not be feasible owing to the timber shingle construction of the roof; (iv) the Club had also asked whether a satellite dish could be installed on the pavilion. There were no known objections but information should first be obtained as to licence requirements etc.; (v) the post for the new village sign would be delivered on 8<sup>th</sup> February, and help would be required to manage the delivery and installation. Councillors would assist with this. The artist had very kindly undertaken to do a complete job of preparing and installing the actual sign, and would provide an invoice for materials, donating his own input.
- h) Defibrillators – the Lead Member reported that following the success of the training session held in December, another session would be held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 6.30 pm in the small hall.
- i) Downlands Estate Management – the Chair reported the sad news that the Secretary/Director of the Roads Company had passed away. Members of the Company's committee would now attend meetings of the joint Working Group, the next being on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 after Planning.
- j) Cuckmere Buses – the council took note of the minutes of the AGM held on 29 November 2022, with the accompanying Financial Report and the Managing Director's report.

RESOLVED - That the above Reports (a) to (j) be noted and action taken as discussed

### **C.707 Correspondence**

The council took note of a report by the clerk on correspondence received since the January meeting, and the following matters were discussed:

- **Maintenance of a triangle of grass between Micheldene Road and The Link** – the council's mowing contractor should be asked to quote for including this triangle in his schedule **ACTION: KL**

- **Wildlife Verge corridors through the parish** – it was agreed that the proposal to create such corridors through the parish, including the so-called ‘urban’ or 30 mph central zone, should be further researched and maps brought to the March meeting for consideration. Thereafter the topic should be brought to the Annual Village Meeting for decision. No change would take place before 2024 when there would be a new parish mowing contract. The Clerk advised that an offer had just been received from East Sussex Highways to do reduced ‘rural’ cuts in 2023, i.e. beyond the 30 mph zone. The council would consider this too on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.
- **Speed Signs** – the council had the topic of speeding in hand [see paragraph C.698 above and Annex A to these Minutes]. Members agreed that the speed signs in Gilberts Drive were having an effect, and indeed residents had commented favourably on them.
- **Energy Plan** – see paragraph C.704 above
- **Wind Turbine** – no further action would be taken. The extension to the Rampion windfarm currently proposed would give a considerable boost to the local production of green energy.
- **Church notice board in the Downlands Way precinct** – the council had no objection to the proposal by the Parochial Church Council to take down the green sign in the shopping precinct regarding the planting, and to replace it with a church notice board.
- **Celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III** – the council would have no objection to the Residents’ Association organising an event. His Majesty had proposed that his coronation could best be celebrated by volunteering.
- **Village Fete** – the council would take a stall as usual, and would make a donation of £275 to support the Residents’ Association who would organise the event.

RESOLVED - That the Correspondence report be noted

#### **C.708 Council Officers**

The council took note that the Administrative Officer had tendered her resignation and would leave on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. It was also noted that the Parish Clerk/RFO intended to resign and to seek lighter duties. It was agreed that a report should be brought to the March meeting to enable the future of both roles to be considered

**ACTION: PS/ST/KL**

#### **C.709 Date of next meeting: Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at 6.30 pm**

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.21 pm.*

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

## ANNEX A

**Note of video meeting held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 6pm between Maria Caulfield MP, Cllr Chris Lees, Cllr Simon Thorogood and Cllr Seeley.**

Key issues were discussed and key points / next steps given below.

**1. Public Spaces Protection Order.**

PC outlined case for extension of PSPO extension for the length of road – Gilberts Drive from A259 through to the Eastbourne Boundary beyond Birling Gap. Maria Caulfield 100% on board and will assist PC in this case. We informed Maria that the Clerk was awaiting feed back from Wealden. Once we have received this correspondence I will update her.

**2. Reduction of Speed Limit on A259** from 40mph to 30mph between Friston Pond and the Eastbourne Boundary with East Dean. Maria Caulfield suggested that the PC should include this in the 20mph proposals below. We should also write to SDNP (Vanessa Rowlands) and seek their backing as they are aligned with traffic speed reduction in the National Park and should support our cause. Maria Caulfield will support this initiative.**3. Item 2 above and reduction to 20mph** for Upper Street, Lower Street, Went Way and all roads on the Downlands Estate to be discussed with ESCC Highways and PC to fund surveys and in due course look at matching funding for this work. Maria Caulfield informed us that both Alfriston and Westmeston Parishes have recently secured speed reductions together with matched funding. PC to contact both and see if there are lessons learnt that we may benefit from. Contact chairs of both councils in first instance.**4. Estate roads being used when Friston Hill closed.** PC used example of 17<sup>th</sup> January when road was closed due to overturned car. (Since this meeting PC has gathered road was closed during our call with Maria Caulfield). Maria unaware of the status of roads on the estate but will assist with dialogue with ESCC Highways regarding use of the estate roads, whether restrictions can be put in place and / or financial payment made to the Roads Co for use of the roads when Friston Hill is closed.**5. PC raised the issue of Wealdens stance on assisting with raising the Roads Co levy.** Maria Caulfield cannot understand why Wealden cannot raise a separate levy for those properties affected by the private road network. Maria made some very valid points regarding how Wealden can instigate part payments / no payments down to specific addresses so believes this is perfectly workable. PC to share correspondence with Maria Caulfield.

Paul Seeley

30<sup>th</sup> January 2023.



## ANNEX B

PAYEE	DETAILS	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL	REF.NO	DATE	NOTES
R Franklin	Cleaning bus shelters Sept to Dec 2022	240.00	-	240.00	1964	11/01/2023	Paid
Parish Magazine	Support grant	250.00	-	250.00	1965	13/01/2023	Paid
A Eardley	NP training session	400.00	80.00	480.00	1966	17/01/2023	Paid
HMRC	PAYE/NICS - January 2023	285.59	-	285.59	1967	02/02/2023	
Village Hall Trust	Hall hires - January 2023	57.00	-	57.00	1968	02/02/2023	
EDF Energy	Pavilion supply	62.93	3.15	66.08	1969	02/02/2023	Based on an over-estimate
K Larkin	Office/mileage - Jan 2023	38.78	-	38.78	1970	02/02/2023	
D Picknell	Office/stationery - Jan 2023	28.60	-	28.60	1971	02/02/2023	
LGPS	Pension contributions - January 2023	528.91	-	528.91	1972	02/02/2023	
East Dean PCC	Warm Spaces donation	150.00	-	150.00	1973	02/02/2023	
Village Hall Trust	Warm Spaces donation	150.00	-	150.00	1974	02/02/2023	
Residents' Association	Road gritting donation	284.00	-	284.00	1975	02/02/2023	
K Larkin/D Picknell	Net salaries - February 2023 (aggregated)	1,660.00	-	1,660.00	1976/1977	28/02/2023	Estimated - pension contributions to be adjusted
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4,135.81</b>	<b>83.15</b>	<b>4,218.96</b>			
<b>RECEIPTS</b>							
EDF Cricket Club	2022 season hire + water charges	884.17	-	884.17	BGC	16/01/2023	
HMRC	VAT refund Q.3 2022/23	846.22	-	846.22	BGC	20/01/2023	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,730.39</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,730.39</b>			