



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 18 May 2023 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing immediately after the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7.04 pm

Councillors present: Cllr P Seeley (Chair), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr M Bustard, Cllr G Fowler, Cllr P Hill, Cllr H Milligan and Cllr G Street

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (item C.763); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There were two members of the public present

Public Session

Information on the Local Environment: Mr J Timberlake, a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, and also lead of the Environment Group of the Residents' Association, spoke about the work already being done on behalf of the NPSG in gathering background information on the environment. With council support, a detailed document on the parishes' biodiversity had been obtained from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, and was now being analysed by Mr Timberlake, adding in local observations and findings, and would result in determining the most important areas for conservation and possible interventions – species, habitats, wildlife corridors, etc. Draft results suitable for consultation with residents should be ready in a few months.

The proposal from Climate Friends for an external consultancy (Wild Business) to look at mapping and assessing the current network of green spaces and identify nature recovery opportunities had an approx. 70-80% overlap with what was already being done. The main points of difference would be:

- Wild Business would assess other costs and benefits (i.e. economic, health, carbon sequestration) of nature conservation strategies
- WB would provide artists impressions of nature recovery schemes
- But there would be no place for any consultation with residents, or incorporation of local knowledge.

Mr Timberlake stated that full consultation with residents would, in his professional experience in conservation, be an essential step in order to undertake acceptable and successful nature conservation. This view was supported by the Residents' Association. It would give the community 'ownership' of recommendations and resulting interventions, and it would be a step that would be undertaken in the neighbourhood planning process.

Consequently, it was argued, any council funding allocated to Neighbourhood Planning or environmental issues would be better used for consultation with residents or in

implementation of conservation/nature-improvement recommendations, than for the mapping exercise proposed by Climate Friends.

Survey of Wildlife Verges: However, Mr Timberlake added that there was a second smaller proposal to the council from Climate Friends - to obtain a local consultant (Laurie Jackson) to survey the main parish road verges to help maintain their recent designation as wildlife verges. This, in his opinion, would be a very worthwhile use of council funds and would add to the Neighbourhood Plan process. It would also have the full support of the Residents' Association.

The Chair thanked Mr Timberlake for his contribution and confirmed that it would be fully taken into account when the funding requests from Climate Friends were discussed, which would be at a future council meeting.

Proposal to move two parking spaces outside Sheppards Café: Two residents made statements opposing the changes discussed at the council meeting on 6 April 2023 [Minute C.733]. The following objections were raised:

- Both residents were agreed that the parking spaces were already narrow and difficult for people to get out and back into their cars. The size of the space did matter, and should not be reduced.
- At some times of day all spaces are taken up by people shopping, and there is overflow onto the streets and pavements. Any reduction in the number of spaces would cause even more congestion and compromise safety. Both residents agreed that congestion was already a significant issue.
- Equal access for all residents should be maintained for the shops. The current disabled space was difficult to park in, though good in having a ramp up to the pavement. Tables should not be placed in such a way as to make it more difficult for anyone with mobility issues or a child's buggy to get around. The shops and amenities were vital in the village and should be accessible to all.

The Chair in response confirmed that these comments would be fully taken into account when the proposed changes to the parking spaces were discussed, which would be at a future council meeting. [See also Item C.767e below]

The Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting

C.756 Acceptance of apologies for absence: Cllr C Lees, Cllr D White

C.757 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.758 Minutes – the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 6 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.759 Report of the Member of Parliament

The council took note of a written report from Maria Caulfield MP on general constituency matters.

C.760 Report of the County Councillor

The council took note of a written report from County Cllr S Shing on general ward matters.

C.761 Report of the District Councillor

The council took note that District Cllr Grieves had sent a written report analysing the results of the recent District elections and the imminent transition to a new administration.

C.762 Clerk's Report

The council took note of Report 7 providing an update from the parish office on work done in April/May 2023. The following items were discussed

- a) Google Analytics – it was noted that this free service for monitoring traffic on the council's website would be closing and that from 1 July 2023 it would be replaced by GA4. The council's web providers could enable the council website to continue with GA4 at a cost of £40. This was agreed **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED - To request Vision ICT to enable the council's website for GA4 at a cost of £40

- b) Memorial bench request for Mr Neil Gamble – it was agreed that Cllr Fowler should look for a suitable spot for a memorial bench, probably on the play area side of the pavilion. It was noted that if a donation were made to the council to cover the cost of the bench the council would order and own the bench and become responsible for it. **ACTION: GF**
- c) Arrangements for council stall at Village Fete – the council would not take a stall at this year's Fete but would donate £275 to the Residents' Association towards the cost of mounting the event. This was budgeted expenditure. In future years the council and the RA should liaise over their grant giving policies **ACTION: KL**
- d) The council took note of the draft Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting 2023 and requested that they be brought to the meeting on 6th July 2023 for further consideration **ACTION: KL**
- e) Requests for Eco-funding – it was agreed that the two proposals from Climate Friends (deferred from the 18 May council meeting at the request of the Friends) should be on the agenda for the council meeting on 6 July 2023. In the meantime the clerk should provide an update for Mr Williamson **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED – That the Clerk's report be noted and action taken as discussed

C.763 Report of the County Councillor

The Chair welcomed County Cllr Shing to the meeting. Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

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- a) The repairs to the Jevington Road would be done in July following completion of the gas main works
 - b) Gulley maintenance that had previously been ordered for the junction of the C40 and the A259, and the junction of Upper Street and the A259, would need to be re-ordered following the change of the contractor used by the Highways department.
 - c) Strengthening Local Relationships – these local liaison meetings could recommence following the recent change of contractor and Cllr Shing would arrange for the parish clerk to have up to date contact details
 - d) The Downsview Lane bund – the bund which had been built to prevent run-off from the highway flowing down onto residential properties was not high enough, and needed to be built up. Cllr Shing would report this to Highways.
 - e) Pothole on A259 – a councillor reported that a pothole had appeared in a dangerous location on the A259. Details of the location would be supplied for a report to Highways **ACTION: PH**

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

C.764 Council Insurance

The council took note of Report 8 containing a quotation from Zurich Municipal; and preliminary information just received from James Hallam regarding the renewal of the council's current Ansvar policy. Members agreed that the council should accept the quotation from Zurich in the sum of £1,507.49 for a long term agreement (three years).

RESOLVED – To accept the quotation from Zurich Municipal for the council's insurance 2023/24, commencing on 1 June 2023.

C.765 Parish Member Appointments to the South Downs National Park Authority 2023

The council considered Report 9 and agreed to nominate Cllr T Bryant as a candidate for election as a councillor representative to sit on the SDNP Board. Cllr Bryant accepted the nomination.

RESOLVED - That Cllr T Bryant be nominated for election to the South Downs National Park Board

C.766 Payments and Receipts

The council took note of Report 10 listing the payments for May 2023 and receipts in April/May 2023. *[Note: the complete Payments Schedule is appended to these Minutes].*

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £6,354.24 be approved

C.767 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – the Chair reported that the new Village Sign had yet to be installed. It was proposed that Mr M Keller who had worked on this project as a councillor, and was now bringing it to completion, should be invited to

unveil it on behalf of the council. This was agreed. Mr Levett had inspected the site and would quote for the work. It was noted that the council had just received £9,470.72 in Community Infrastructure Levy funding, part of which could be used to complete this infrastructure project.

- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 18 April 2023
- c) Finance – the council took note that the bank balance at the end of April 2023 was £110,408.05, the first instalment of the precept having been received. The next Budget Monitoring Report would be brought to the council meeting on 1 June 2023
- d) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – the Chair of the Steering Group reported that there had been no feedback following the Annual Village Meeting 2023. However, there had been strong support for using a Neighbourhood Plan to update the Village Design Statement as a first step, to be followed by biodiversity guidelines appended to the main Plan as a second stage. A planning consultant had provided an itemised quotation for guiding the Group through the process, and that quotation would be on the agenda for the council meeting on 1 June 2023. Most of the cost could be covered by government grants, and the consultant would assist the council in applying for these grants. It had not yet been possible to fill the vacant seat on the Steering Group: the only offer received unfortunately could not be taken up due to timing issues, and a fresh appeal for volunteers would be put in the Parish Magazine **ACTION: KL**
- e) Rights of Way and Highways – Cllr Lees had provided a written report on the state of the Rights of Way and actions undertaken or required to keep a number of paths open and well maintained **ACTION: KL to send hedge letter regarding Footpath 18, The Brow to Peakdean Lane.** Cllr Lees also reported that he had notified East Sussex County Council of the maintenance now required to the leaning bridleway/footpath sign in Downsview Lane. In addition, Cllr Hill reported on the following matters:
 - o Parking and outdoor seating in the shopping precinct – Cllr Hill, Cllr Lees and Cllr Seeley had visited the site of the proposed outdoor seating area and had concluded that the project could be feasible. The two bays used for seating would be replaced at 90 degrees to the current spaces, nearer to the highway, and in that position they could be made wider, with yellow hatched areas to the side. New drop kerbs would be provided to improve disabled access to the pavements, and there would be no reduction in the number of parking spaces. The next step would be to obtain quotations for the work, and to consider who should pay: the parish council might be requested to provide up to 50% of the cost of the work, plus the cost of re-lining all the parking bays, as the lines had become worn. Cllr Hill, Cllr Lees and Cllr Fowler would report on the next steps, and the Hon. Solicitor should be invited to advise on a suitable lease with terms and conditions e.g. as to rent and rent reviews. A report should be brought to a future meeting for decision **ACTION: PH/CL/GF/KL;**
 - o Bollards at the junction of Gilberts Drive and the A259 – Cllr Hill had been sourcing supplies of suitable bollards to protect the verge from

- random parking and would bring a proposal to a future meeting with costings **ACTION: PH**
- o Council Noticeboard – the second notice board in the shopping precinct needed to be replaced. In addition, a request had been received from a resident for a notice board to be reinstated south of the A259, near the Village Hall. **ACTION: CL to obtain quotes.**
 - f) Recreation Ground – Cllr Fowler reported that the new sprinkler system was now operational and that the Cricket Club expressed their thanks to the council for their support in that project. No work had been done to stabilise the vehicle entrance to the recreation ground, as it had recovered in the recent drier weather. However, its condition would be monitored.
 - g) Downlands Estate Management Group – the Chair reported that Wealden District Council had been requested to raise money for the Roads Company alongside the precept, but had replied that having taken legal advice they would not be able to raise a levy on the Council Tax for this type of situation. Members agreed that a Freedom of Information request should be made to see the legal advice obtained. **ACTION: KL**
 - h) Defibrillators – Cllr Hill reported that all the defibrillators were operational, and one had been used. The next renewal of pads would be due in January 2024.

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

C.768 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 13 on correspondence received since the April meeting. A resident had requested the replacement of the East Dean bus shelter window. This was not approved, due to the repeated vandalism of the shelter windows. **ACTION: KL to respond to the resident with explanation.**

RESOLVED – That the Correspondence Report be noted

The Chair noted that the following item of business should be discussed privately by reason of its confidential nature. A member of the public left the room.

C.769. Appointment of Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

The council considered the draft contract for the appointment of Mr Samuel Adeniji as Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer with effect from 1 June 2023. The draft was approved for signature. **ACTION: TB to sign on behalf of the council; KL to discuss computer equipment with Mr Adeniji**

RESOLVED – To approve the contract for the appointment of Mr Samuel Adeniji as Parish Clerk/RFO with effect from 1 June 2023

The council also considered the draft contract for the appointment of Katrina Larkin as Deputy Clerk with effect from 1 June 2023. It was noted that no probationary period should be required. Subject to that amendment, the contract was approved.

RESOLVED – To approve the contract for the appointment of Katrina Larkin as Deputy Clerk with effect from 1 June 2023

C.770 Date of next meeting: - Thursday 1 June 2023 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.18 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

ANNEX

PAYEE	DETAILS	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL	REF.NO	DATE	NOTES
EDF Residents' Associatio	Donation - Coronation Village Lunch	250.00	-	250.00	2018	17/04/2023	Paid
Climpson Bros	Tree surgery at Friston Pond	150.00	30.00	180.00	2019	20/04/2023	Paid
Tansleys Printers Ltd	Annual village Report	124.00	-	124.00	2020	25/04/2023	Paid
P Martin-Smith	Refund village sign costs	31.58	-	31.58	2021	25/04/2023	Paid
Information Commissione	Data Protection registration 2023/24	35.00	-	35.00	D/D	10/05/2023	Paid
East Sussex Pension Fund	Pension contributions - April 2023	284.54	-	284.54	2022	17/05/2023	Paid
HMRC	PAYE/NICS - April 2023	258.78	-	258.78	2023	18/05/2023	
ESALC Ltd	ESALC/NALC subscriptions 2023/24	531.33	-	531.33	2024	18/05/2023	
Grants (Eastbourne) Ltd	Grounds mtce April 2023	1,043.00	208.60	1,251.60	2025	18/05/2023	
Rialtas Business Solutions	MTD for VAT fee 2023/24	86.24	17.25	103.49	2026	18/05/2023	
Rialtas Business Solutions	Alpha software fee 2023/24	145.62	29.12	174.74	2027	18/05/2023	
Village Hall Trust	Hall hires - April 2023	163.00	-	163.00	2028	18/05/2023	
R Franklin	Cleaning bus shelters - April 2023	60.00	-	60.00	2029	18/05/2023	
J Timberlake	Refund Biodiversity data for NPSG	100.00	20.00	120.00	2030	18/05/2023	
K Larkin	Office costs - April 2023	26.00	-	26.00	2031	18/05/2023	
SLCC	Planning training	60.00	12.00	72.00	2032	18/05/2023	
P Hill	Refund: Letters for road sign; defib pads for village hall; hanging Baskets	258.26	-	258.26	2033	18/05/2023	
G Fowler	Remake and make good Signpost	760.85	-	760.85	2034	18/05/2023	
G Fowler	Works to pavilion kitchen floor	178.70	-	178.70	2035	18/05/2023	
Wealden DC	Village Hall rent	375.00	-	375.00	D/D	25/05/2023	
EDFRA	Donation - Village Fete	275.00	-	275.00	2036	18/05/2023	
K Larkin	Net salary - May 2023	840.37	-	840.37	2037	28/05/2023	
TOTAL		6,037.27	316.97	6,354.24			
RECEIPTS							
SDNPA	CIL payment	9,470.72	-	9,470.72	BGC	23/04/2023	
HMRC	VAT refund	800.28	-	800.28	BGC	24/04/2023	
WDC	Precept (1 of 2)	34,000.00	-	34,000.00	BGC	24/04/2023	
Costain Ltd	Refund of feasibility survey fee	600.00	-	600.00	BGC	28/04/2023	
TOTAL		44,871.00	-	44,871.00			