



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 06 July 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 T Bryant (Vice Chair), Cllr M Bustard, Cllr G Fowler and Cllr P Hill

**In attendance:** County Cllr S Shing (item C.788 - 789); District Cllr D Greaves (item C.788 - 789), S Adeniji (Parish Clerk)

*There were four members of the public present*

### **Public Session**

Planning Application: Mr Jonathan Greenway spoke about planning application SDNP/23/02508/HOUS. He urged the Parish council to object to this application as the loft conversion will overlook his garden. He was advised to make formal representation to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and to attend the meeting of the Parish Council Planning Committee when the item comes up for discussion.

Climate Friends Group: Mr P Williamson from the Climate Friends Group spoke in support of agenda item 791. He handed out a leaflet explaining what climate friends are about. He stated that the group now has over 60 members. The group is concerned about climate change and biodiversity loss in the parish. In February an email was sent with two proposals for funding, one was for a mapping project which will come up with recommendations as to what could be done, at the right time and in the right way to address climate change and biodiversity loss in the parish. The proposal includes a request to the Parish Council for a contribution of up to £4,500 towards the mapping project.

The second proposal was for the Parish Council to commission a qualified ecologist i.e., Laurie Jackson to survey the verges to assess their appropriateness for designation as wildlife verges. The Council can opt for either a survey costing £350 or one costing £450.

Mr Williamson added that the work of the Resident Association (RA) Environmental group headed by Mr Timberlake is a data collection survey, the mapping project is more than just a data collection survey. He has made contact with the RA group but has received no response. According to him, the data collected by the RA will give a baseline to see how things change over time, should the mapping project be funded. Mr Williamson maintained that the assertion by the RA that 70 – 80% of the amount of work in the project brief overlaps the biodiversity research offered and carried out by the RA is completely wrong, however, his group are prepared to work with the RA but have no response to their approaches to them..

Mrs Williamson spoke to reiterate that for the group i.e. Climate Friends to have attracted a grant of £3,000 from the SDNPA to help take forward the mapping idea is a great

achievement and should be recognised as such by the Parish Council. She explained that the mapping project does not conflict with the work done by other groups within the Parish e.g. the Resident Association.

Cllr Bryant asked the group to clarify why they made an application to the SNDPA for a grant on behalf of the Parish Council without its approval. Mr Williamson explained that the group had been working with the SDNPA, the SDNPA indicated that they were prepared to earmark a grant of up to £3,000 towards a mapping survey similar to the one carried out in Kingston upon Lewes. As Climate Friends had no bank account at the time, the group could not have received the grant, hence the group thought the Parish Council could be used as a vehicle to receive the money. Mr Williamson asserts that this was communicated to the Parish Council at the time. Mr Williamson assured members that the Climate Friends group is now an unincorporated association with a constitution and a bank account.

After a series of questions about the structure of the organisation and engagement of the Consultant, the Chair thanked Mr & Mrs Williamson for their contribution and confirmed that their comments would be taken into account when the item is discussed later in the meeting.

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

**C.784 Acceptance of apologies for absence:** Cllr C Lees, Cllr D White Cllr H Milligan and Cllr G Street

**C.785 Declarations of Interests:** - None

**C.786 Minutes** – the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 1 June 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**C.787 Report of the Member of Parliament**

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

**C.788 Report of the County Councillor**

County Cllr Shing apologised for missing the last meeting as he arrived late. Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) The resurfacing work on the C40 has been delayed at the request of local businesses and farmers. This has been delayed until September 2023.
- b) Access to the old Willingdon Road has been raised with ESCC Highways.
- c) Cllr Shing confirmed that he has received no response to his query regarding the drainage/overflow on the A259/C40. This will be chased up.

The Council thanked Cllr Shing for his work in raising and fixing the potholes.

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

**C.789 Report of the District Councillor**

The council took note of a written report from District Cllr Greaves. Cllr Greaves spoke to report on update within Wealden District Council, he also informed members that the waste collection dispute has been resolved.

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

**C.790 Charity of the year**

The Chair opened by stating that Cllr White has suggested the Citizen Advice Bureau (Eastbourne) branch as the charity of the year. However, Members felt that local charities should be considered as beneficiaries of the charity of the year.

RESOLVED – That the Beachy Head Chaplaincy and the RNLI were chosen as the Charities of the Year.

**C.791 Request for Eco-funding**

The Council took note of Report 8 which outlined the request to commission an ecological survey of specified verges in the parish at a cost of £425 and match funding a possible grant of £3,000 from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) for a mapping exercise to underpin a nature recovery strategy in the parish (total cost £6,250 plus VAT).

Cllr Bustard suggested that if the Council is minded to agree to fund these projects the work should be commissioned by the council or the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group and not the Climate Friends group. Cllr Bustard highlighted the need for Climate Friends, the Resident Association (environmental group) and the Parish Council to work together before committing to the mapping survey. Cllr Bryant drew attention to the submission by Mr J Timberlake that there is a 70/80% overlap between the biodiversity research carried out by the RA (environmental group) and the mapping exercise. He felt that by working together this difference of opinion can be discussed and resolved. He added that there was no disagreement between the RA (environmental group) and the Climate Friends on the need for the survey of the verges.

Cllr Fowler wanted to know about the experiences of other Councils, to which the Chair replied that from discussions with Kingston Parish Council, they would not have been able to carry out the project without full funding from the SDNPA. As this is a substantial sum, it was felt that after a dialogue with the RA (environmental group), the Climate Friends group and the Parish Council the Council may be able to go back to the SDNPA for increased funding.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact the survey of verges has to be done and the application submitted to ESCC by 31 August 2023. Laurie Jackson is only available from early to mid-August.

Ecological survey of verges:

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk will request from Laurie Jackson an amended quotation for the ecological survey of specified verges to include the Old Willingdon Road, whilst keeping in Downsvie Lane and Footpath 33b.

**ACTION: SA to contact Laurie Jackson.**

RESOLVED – That once the quotation has been received, to instruct Laurie Jackson to commission an ecological survey of specified verges to assess their appropriateness for designation as wildlife verges. The Parish Council will submit the application via Laurie Jackson.

Mapping Exercise

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk will write to the RA, its chair Lesley Durso, Mr Timberlake, and Mr Williamson to convene a meeting with Cllr Bustard and Cllr Seeley to resolve the differing views and agree on how to proceed. Once this has been resolved, the request to fund a mapping exercise will be brought back to the August Council meeting for consideration.

**ACTION: SA to write to RA, Climate Friends.**

**C.792 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2023/24**

The council took note of Report 9 containing a quotation from Mulberry & Co Zurich Municipal.

RESOLVED – To appoint Mulberry & Co Ltd as the Internal Auditor for 2023/24 and that the appointment should be for 3 years.

**C.793 Reviewing Council Policies**

The council took note of Report 10 containing a spreadsheet to keep track of council policies and their review dates.

RESOLVED – To adopt the policy spreadsheet and the review frequency and review date as highlighted in the spreadsheet.

**C.794 Parish Action Plan**

The council took note of Report 12 which contains the latest draft of the Parish Action Plan. The Chair explained that at the August meeting, members would be asked to start thinking of what they would like to achieve in the next 12 – 18 months. This can then be brought back to the October meeting for the Parish Action Plan to be finalised and signed off in November.

RESOLVED – To defer the adoption of the Parish Action Plan until November.

**C.795 Sheppard's Village Stores and Sheppards Café**

The council considered the response from the Parish Solicitor, the Chair explained that there had been opposition from one or two Shopkeepers in the precinct. A suggested alternative is for the Sheppard's Store owner to approach the Vets and

ask to use their pavement when they are shut. However, Cllr Bryant thought that many of the issues raised by the Solicitor are rights of way issues which he is willing to follow up on and investigate further. Members agreed not to make a decision until Cllr Bryant has explored the right-of-way issues. **ACTION: TB to check Rights of Way**

RESOLVED – To defer a decision until the August meeting.

#### **C.796 D-Day 80 – 6th June 2024**

The council took note of Report 14 which contained an invitation to take part in events commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings on 6th June 2024 and lighting a beacon at 9.15 pm on 6th June 2024.

Members agreed that the Parish Council should take the lead on this, an event can be organised with the Cricket Club. Cllr Fowler suggested creating a sub-committee to oversee the planning of the event.

RESOLVED – That the Parish Council takes the lead in organising this event and John Dann (Town Cryer for the Jubilee) should be invited to take part in organising the event.

#### **C.797 Purchase a replacement Ukraine Flag**

The council considered a request to purchase a replacement Ukraine Flag to replace the existing flag which has been weather damaged.

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk purchases a replacement flag and gives it to the Flagman Cliff Hirschfield. **ACTION: SA to purchase a replacement Flag of Ukraine**

#### **C.798 Payments and Receipts**

The council took note of Report 16 listing the payments for July 2023 and receipts in Jun 2023. *[Note: the complete Payments Schedule is appended to these Minutes].*

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £7,402.52 be approved.

#### **C.799 Business in Progress**

The council took note of Report 17, a report by the Clerk on progress made since the 1st of June meeting.

- a) **Bench at Michel Dene Road** – The Council considered a request by the Resident's Association to site a bench at the top of Michel Dene Road.

RESOLVED – That the Council has no objection to a request made by the Resident's Association to site a bench at the top of Michel Dene Road at their own risk. Although the Parish Council mows the triangle, it does not own the land. **ACTION: SA to write to RA confirming no objection.**

- b) Raising money for the Roads Company – The response from Wealden District Council (WDC) was discussed and felt to be negative. The Deputy Clerk in her

email to members asserted that the London Borough of Merton has been able to do something similar.

RESOLVED – That the Council write to the London Borough of Merton to find out how they have been able to do this and find out more about how this has been structured. The Parish Council would then be able to ask WDC to review their decision.

- c) Bollards at the junction of Gilberts Drive and the A259 – Following the confirmation by the SDNPA that CIL funds can be used to purchase bollards, Cllr Bustard is working on a detailed proposal which will be brought back to the Council at a later date.
- d) Strengthening Local Relationship (SLR) – Parish Clerk to contact Cllr Lees for dates. **ACTION: SA to contact CL.**

### C.800 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – No report from the Chair.
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2023
- c) Finance – the council took note that the bank balance at the end of June 2023 was £98,759.35. The Council noted the Budget Monitoring Report for June 2023
- d) The annual report for Cuckmere buses for 2022 was noted.
- e) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – the Chair of the Steering Group reported that the next meeting of the Steering Group will be held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> of July. The meeting will be preceded at 4.00 pm by a tour of the village, starting from Downs House, and the actual meeting will start at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall
- f) Rights of Way and Highways: The footpath from Hillside through to A259 is in an inappropriate condition and not accessible. This needs to be brought to the SLR meeting in October. **ACTION: SA to put on SLR agenda**  
There is a major issue with Footpath 25 from Friston to Upper Street, the top half is dealt with by Rights of Way and the lower half is dealt with by ESCC Highways and they are slow in cutting. It was agreed that the Parish Council should ask Chris Haffenden to get his cut. **ACTION: Cllr Bustard to instruct CH.**
- g) Tree Warden: Cllr Bustard said an email was received stating that there were two dead Elm trees in the Parish. The trees are not dead, they have suffered from drought, but they will come back to life. **ACTION: Cllr Bustard to respond to the Email.**
- h) Recreation Ground: - Cllr Grant stated that the Village sign has gone up. The previous Chair of the Council Mr Keller will be approached to unveil the sign. **ACTION: Cllr Fowler to approach Mr Keller.**
- i) Defibrillators: - The defibrillators are all up and running, new pads have been added where needed.

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j) Downlands Estate Management Group:- Nothing to report.

**C.801 Correspondence**

The council took note of Report 20 on correspondence received since the June meeting. A resident has raised the issue of weeds around the shopping precinct. The Chair stated that both he and Cllr Lees will get the weeds removed. **ACTION: PS and CL to clear weeds at the shopping precinct.**

RESOLVED – That the Correspondence Report be noted **ACTION: SA to respond to the resident.**

**C.802 Date of next meeting: - Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2023** at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.55 pm.*

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

## ANNEX

PAYEE	DETAILS	Payments - July 2023			REF.NO	DATE APPROVED	NOTES
		SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL			
		Receipts - June 2023					
EDF Energy Ltd	Pavilion supply 25Jan-03Jun	18.36	-	18.36	2048	27/06/2023	PAID - Estimated reading VAT calculated at 5% of £160.34 = £8.02 but invoice offset by £150 Alternative Fuel payment
Wealden DC	Bin Emptying Q.1 - 2023/24	275.00	55.00	330.00	D/D	28/06/2023	Paid
HMRC	PAYE/NICS - June 2023	291.12	-	291.12	2049	06/07/2023	
East Sussex Pension Fund	Contributions - June 2023	568.44	-	568.44	2050	06/07/2023	
R Franklin	Cleaning bus shelters - June 2023	60.00	-	60.00	2051	06/07/2023	
K Larkin	Office costs etc - June 2023	51.56	-	51.56	2052	06/07/2023	
Bishopp & Levett	Installation of village sign	2,495.00	499.00	2,994.00	2053	06/07/2023	
Grants (Eastbourne) Ltd	Grounds mtce - June 2023	998.00	199.60	1,197.60	2054	06/07/2023	
S Adeniji	Office costs etc - June 2023	tbc	-	tbc		06/07/2023	
S Adeniji/K Larkin	Net salaries - July 2023 (aggregated)	1,891.44	-	1,891.44		28/07/2023	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6,648.92</b>	<b>753.60</b>	<b>7,402.52</b>			
<b>RECEIPTS</b>							
Barclays Bank	Bank interest	29.97	-	29.97	BGC	05/06/2023	
Barclays Bank	Bank interest	8.60	-	8.60	BGC	05/06/2023	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>38.57</b>		<b>38.57</b>			