

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 1st February 2018 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr M Keller (Chair), Cllr T Bryant (Items C.503 – C.513), Cllr S Fuller, Cllr I Haydock, Cllr P Hill, Cllr A Hookham, and Cllr P Seeley

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.506 – C.507); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

C.500 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr D Clarke, Cllr B Greenwell; and District Cllr J Wilton

C.501 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.502 Approval of the Minutes: - A correction was made to the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 4th January 2018: Mr Jolyon Fyfield 'had died on 29th December 2017'. The minutes were then confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.503 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS

The council considered report 4 on progress since the January meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Play Project – Southern Gas Networks were ready to pay their grant of £1,000, and had requested a site meeting on 8th February to discuss the free labour to be undertaken by their contractor. **ACTION: MK/PH to attend.** The council reaffirmed its intention to provide a new access track to the play area.
- b) War Memorial railings – Cllr Keller had provided heritage information to enable Cllr Greenwell to put in an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- c) Bonfire – discussions about a possible 2018 event were ongoing and a report would be brought to council in March
- d) The squeeze gate – this had been repaired. It was noted that any new gate across a public right of way required planning permission, and consent would usually only be given where the reason for the installation was the control of livestock.
- e) Diseased elms – no felling had yet been done. When the contractor was on site, ESCC would also pollard the healthy trees on the verge of the A259, since the weight of ivy might otherwise cause one to fall on the highway; works might be deferred to the next financial year.
- f) Hedges – Footpath 19 at the Peak Dean Lane end still required attention to the hedge of No.48 (the responsibility of the landlord's agent); and to

substantial tree roots growing in the path outside No.50 (the responsibility of ESCC rather than the adjacent landowner). **ACTION: KL**

- g) Footpath 8 sign – this would be re-instated. It was noted that some properties on the Estate were bound by covenants to permit necessary signage on their verges.
- h) Tree Warden – there had been three expressions of interest. It was agreed that an appointment should be made at the March meeting from those candidates who were willing for their names to be put forward. No further applications would be accepted. **ACTION: KL**
- i) Best Kept Village plaques – Cllr Keller and Cllr Seeley would inspect the plaques to assess the work required to make good the flint wall following their removal. **ACTION: MK/PS**
- j) Brown tourist sign – a reminder should be sent to ESCC Highways regarding the repair and replacement of the sign. **ACTION: KL**
- k) Cricket Club – the Club should send the sketch of their proposed storage extension at the pavilion to the council in the first instance. If acceptable to the council, the plans would be passed to the Gilbert Estate for their consent under the restrictive covenant. The Estate had queried the terms of the Club's proposed Hire Agreement for 2018 as not a great return for the tax payer, and as restricting the opportunities for other potential users of the cricket ground. The council reaffirmed its policy of treating the pavilion and recreation ground as social not commercial assets. A parish council should not in fact use taxpayers' money to operate at a profit. The terms of the Club's Hire Agreement had already been agreed by the council for 2018. **ACTION: KL to liaise with the Club**
- l) Friston bus shelter – the repair of the window was in hand
- m) Downlands Way covenants – the covenant payers should be contacted with the information that the covenants would be lifted and that the Hon. Solicitor would formalise the new arrangement. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED – That the Progress report be noted and action taken as discussed

C.504 MOWING CONTRACT

The council considered Report 5 regarding the choice of a mowing contractor for 2018, 2019 and 2020. After careful consideration of several strong candidates, it was agreed that the contract should be re-awarded to Grants of Eastbourne.

RESOLVED - That the mowing contract for 2018, 2019 and 2020 be re-awarded to Grants of Eastbourne, subject to the continuing approval of ESCC for Grants to mow the highway verges.

C.505 SOCIAL MEDIA

The council considered Report 6 by the Lead Member proposing a draft Social Media policy for adoption by the council. Members welcomed the draft as concise and effective and endorsed the bespoke clause 6 specifying that anything said only on the Facebook page would not necessarily be considered as formal correspondence with the council and would not therefore be considered at a council meeting. However, the Facebook page would have a link to a council email address to enable

users to have easy access to more formal communication. It was agreed that the page should be formally launched at the Annual Village Meeting. In the meantime Cllr Hookham would prepare a list of other organisations the council might wish to follow on Facebook, and the page would be available for members to view and use. Progress would be reviewed at the March meeting. Members thanks Cllr Hookham for her report.

RESOLVED - That the Social Media policy be adopted as drafted, with immediate effect.

C.506 PARISH EMERGENCY RESILIENCE PLAN REVISION

Members considered Report 6 by the Chair, and agreed that further work should be carried out on the revision of the Plan in specific areas, to adapt it to the current definition of an emergency, as follows:

- Risk Assessment – Cllr Greenwell would carry out a fresh assessment to produce a matrix of risks classified according to the severity and likelihood of various emergency scenarios
- Communications – Cllr Hookham and Cllr Fuller would consider the most effective range of means
- Resources – the Village Hall Trust would be asked to confirm that the Hall could be used as an emergency base and evacuation centre (unless rendered unusable). An appeal would be published in the parish magazine and in *Rendezvous* for residents to declare their willingness to offer the use of assets such as heavy lifting gear, chain saws, generators; or their skills (e.g. for medical emergencies). All information would be kept confidential. The parish council's insurance policy provided cover for volunteers working on behalf of the council. Cllr Keller would also contact the National Trust to request that their Birling Gap premises be listed as an emergency reception centre in the event that no more central location could be used
- Contacts – the clerk would update the contact list in the confidential Appendix 4 of the existing Plan
- Vulnerable Residents – Cllr Hill would seek to prepare a list of residents who might require special care in the event of an emergency. This list must remain solely in paper form because of its exceptional sensitivity
- Emergency Resource Pack – Cllr Keller would suggest a list of contents and liaise with the Village Hall Trust over the storage of the pack.
- Cost implications – As well as the cost of setting up an emergency resource pack, it was agreed that the parish council should underwrite any immediate costs incurred during an emergency (e.g. for supplying food and drink) up to a limit of £500. These costs to be recovered from other organisations where applicable.

The aim would be to complete the review before the Annual Village Meeting in April 2018. On completion, a copy of the Plan should be sent to the Fire Officer.

C.507 REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

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- a) Temporary traffic lights for Airbourne 2018 – full agreement had been reached that temporary lights would be provided at Exceat again, and Eastbourne Borough Council would meet the cost. Members thanked Cllr Shing for this welcome outcome.
 - b) New bridge at Exceat – preliminary work should begin in 2018, though construction was unlikely to commence so soon.
 - c) ESCC budget 2018/19 – the proposal before the county council was that its share of the council tax should be increased by the maximum 6%
 - d) Recycling of 'non-household' waste – the Chair drew attention to the proposal that county recycling sites make a charge to householders for accepting non-household waste, including asbestos. This could cause a public health risk if householders then became tempted to dispose of asbestos in ordinary bins or through fly tipping. The intention was to cut costs, but this proposal could rebound. Cllr Shing advised that the parish council should respond to the current consultation, making clear its concerns.

RESOLVED - That the report of the county Councillor be noted

C.508 ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 2018

The council considered Report 8 containing the draft programme and schedule of preparations for the AVM 2018. Topics for discussion would include the use of Social Media; the revision of the Emergency Plan; the play area upgrade; the parish council's new grant scheme for local organisations; Bonfire; and any topics requested by residents or clubs and societies in the coming weeks (deadline 28 February). Copies of the Annual Report would be distributed but need not be debated (except by request). There would be no outside speaker. The agenda would be reviewed in March.

RESOLVED – That the draft programme and schedule of preparations be approved as amended

C.509 REGISTRATION OF VILLAGE HALL SITE AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The council considered Report 9 requesting approval of an application to renew the registration of the village hall site as an asset of community value. It was agreed that an application should be submitted to Wealden District Council as keepers of the register. The Hon. Solicitor should be requested to write to Wealden regarding the apparent discrepancy between the plan attached to the lease of the village hall site from Wealden to the parish council (as custodian trustee), and relevant Land Registry title plans. **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED - That an application be made to Wealden District Council for renewal of the registration of the village site as an asset of community value for a further 5 years

C.510 PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The council considered Report 10, the Schedule of Payments and Receipts for February 2018 [Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website].

RESOLVED - That the Payments totalling £1,431.03 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments online

C.511 URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported on the following items:

- a) Guide dogs in the Village Hall – it was noted that following a change in regulations, the village hall would need to admit all kinds of ‘assistance dogs’.
- b) Post Office – a number of reports had been received that essential supplies for the village post office were sometimes delayed, and there had been problems with the computer system. Other small post offices had similar experiences. It was agreed that the parish council should write to the Post Office and to Maria Caulfield MP. The District Councillor would also be requested to raise the matter through Wealden District Council.
- c) Parish council representation on Village Hall Trust – it was noted that currently the council had no appointee on the VHT, and it was agreed that in future the Chair should be a trustee, *ex officio*. All trustees must act in the interests of the trust whilst engaged in Trust business. **ACTION: KL to notify the Trustees**
- d) Visit by Maria Caulfield MP – the MP would be visiting the parish on 23rd February, 3.00 – 4.00 pm in the village hall, to discuss Brexit.

C.512 REPORTS:

- a) Chair of the council:
 - i. The National Association of Local Councils was conducting a census online to find out about diversity in council membership. This should be completed on an individual basis and was voluntary.
 - ii. Recreation ground – the Chair and Cllr Seeley had met Mr Davies-Gilbert at his request to discuss the proposed replacement play equipment. It was confirmed that the parish council had sought advice from the planning authority about the play project and did not need permission to replace worn equipment. The new equipment would be the same height as the old, and within permitted limits. The council had also established from the planning authority that, if desired, it would be entitled to raise the height of the fence alongside The Drove, because the path was classified as a private path not a public right of way. The council did not agree that the restrictive covenants over the recreation ground held by the Estate extended to matters such as these. The Estate had raised the question of an ‘unmaintained hedge’ along the southern boundary. This is, in fact, part of the Biodiversity Strip, planted with Lottery funding in 2008, and that in 2013 the Estate had planted a similar hedge along the northern boundary of The Drove, which had briefly been considered as an alternative

biodiversity strip. This was the origin of the present double hedge along the north side of The Drove.

- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 16 January 2018.
- c) Finance - the Lead Member reported that the balance in hand at the end of December was £42,469.59
- d) Rights of Way and Highways:
 - i. The Lead Member reported that the builders working in Windmill Lane and The Ridgeway had confirmed that they would reinstate the verges on completion in 16 weeks' time.
 - ii. Destruction of verge at north end of Gilberts Drive – increasing numbers of cars were routinely left here. It was noted that residents of the Bishopstone area of Seaford could no longer access the 12, or 12X bus services into Eastbourne and were driving into East Dean to pick up the service there. Yellow lines or bollards would need to be considered. **ACTION: KL to add to SLR agenda**
 - iii. Entrance to Hobbs Eares – Cllr Hill had reported to the National Trust that the entrance from Upper Street had become a quagmire. The Trust had agreed to put down hardcore as this was part of a public right of way.
 - iv. Parking on pavement opposite the flats in Downlands Way – some complaints had been received but this was not a matter in which the council could intervene.
- e) Recreation ground – preliminary arrangements should be made with Proludic for the installation of the new equipment. **ACTION: SF**
- f) Village Events – the council confirmed that a donation of £250 would be paid to the Residents' Association for the Village Fete 2018. The council would also book a stall. Cllr Hookham kindly volunteered to run it. **ACTION: AH**
- g) General Data Protection Regulation - it still was not known whether the new legislation coming into effect on 28 May 2018 would or would not extend to parish councils. The Information Commissioner had now issued advice stating that parish clerks could be Data Protection Officers, if required. The ICO had also set up a helpline for small businesses, charities and other organisations: phone 0303 123 1113, option 4. The parish council would in any event supply all councillors with email addresses linked to the website. Those linked to the current website had been trialled and found unsuitable. **ACTION: SF/KL**

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

C.513 CORRESPONDENCE

The council considered report 13 by the Clerk, and the following matters were noted:

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- a) East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service - all residents were invited to respond to the survey on response times: www.esfrs.org/irmp (closes 05 March).
 - b) ESCC Recycling Site review – the parish council would respond to the consultation (see Item C.507d above) and would encourage residents to do so.

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

C.514 Date of next meeting – Thursday 1st March 2018 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.03 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

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