



# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 7.05 pm**

**Councillors present:** Cllr M Keller (Chair), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr K Godden, Cllr B Greenwell, Cllr P Hill, and Cllr P Seeley

**In attendance:** County Cllr S Shing (Item C.564): and K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

*There was one member of the public present.*

## **Public Session**

### Role of the Tree Warden

Mr Peter Williamson (Tree Warden) requested further information about how the council saw the role of Tree Warden generally, and more specific information about (a) the exact location and species of all trees in the parish protected by Tree Preservation Orders; (b) the identification of other trees the council had responsibility towards; and (c) the Biodiversity strip at the recreation ground, and its management.

Regarding the role of the Warden, members confirmed that the council would want to formally pursue any breaches of TPOs in the parish that were reported to them, but also hoped that the Warden would take on the informal role of monitoring the state of trees on public land, and informing the council of any problems, or opportunities for new planting.

Regarding background information, it was agreed that the council should have a map of all the trees for which it was responsible, either on its own land or on highway land, plus trees on parcels of land on the Downlands Estate now dealt with by the Treasury Solicitor. The council might occasionally undertake remedial work on the latter on grounds of public safety. The clerk was instructed to prepare a map using information from the planning authority, and also to send the Warden further information about the Biodiversity Strip. **ACTION: KL.** It was also confirmed that the council had a budget for training and would be willing to send the Warden on any appropriate course during the year.

### Trees at the entrance to Micheldene Road

The Warden reported that he had carried out an informal inspection and saw no current safety issues, though he had asked Climpsons to confirm that the trees were not diseased. They did not appear to be subject to TPOs. They had been cut back in recent years and seemed to have recovered well. The council took note.

*The Chair thanked the Tree Warden for his report. The Chair then closed the Public Session and opened the meeting*

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**C.560 Acceptance of apologies for absence:** - Cllr D Clarke, Cllr A Hookham; and District Cllr Wilton

**C.561 Declarations of Interests:** - None

**C.562 Approval of the Minutes:** - The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**C.563 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS**

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

- a) Play Area upgrade – the installation of the Kanope equipment was complete and the contractors had also undertaken a repair to an existing wet-pour safety surface. The council was requested to sign a Certificate of Acceptance and agreed to do so with the proviso that the new turf might not take and might need to be redone. (**ACTION: BG**). DJ Utilities had not yet set a date for constructing the new path. The play area needed re-fencing and this was included in the budget for 2018/19.
- b) Pavilion leakage – the ladies’ toilets had flooded and a new ballcock should be fitted. Cllr Greenwell kindly agreed to do this **ACTION: BG**
- c) Repair to memorial bench – bench No.2 on the recreation ground (in memory of Rupert Taylor) was broken and needed a new seat plank. It was agreed that Rustic Gardens should be invited to quote **ACTION: BG**
- d) Biodiversity strip – the council’s mowing contractor had quoted £150 for strimming the strip as an annual addition to the contract, to be carried out in September. This was accepted. **ACTION: KL to implement the amendment**
- e) Highway Drainage – Barwells had requested the council to sign their standard Terms of Business in connection with the granting of the easement at the recreation ground. It was agreed that the Chair should sign on behalf of the council.
- f) Plaques – the remaining post should be removed. Cllr Seeley kindly undertook to do this **ACTION:PS**. The plaque memorialising the Beachy Head Woman had been recently installed and should be re-mounted in a public place. **ACTION: council to consider at a future meeting**
- g) ANPR camera – the pole had been shortened and the contractor had filled the trenches in the verge and re-seeded them. The pole was still ugly but no further action could be taken.
- h) Bollards at Gore Farm Close – the Fire Officer had confirmed that if a gate were installed in place of the bollards, with a sacrificial padlock, the route would be usable by the fire brigade, but that it was most unlikely ever to be used. It had also been established that the land ownerships were complex including part privately owned land and some unregistered land; the way certainly could not be opened to general traffic. **ACTION: KL to consult landowners.**
- i) Social housing at The Fridays – the Planning Committee should consider Wealden District Council’s response to the Freedom of Information request.

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- j) Hedge letter - no action had been taken to trim the hedge alongside Footpath 32. The relevant householders should be advised that the council had a right to organise the work and recoup the cost from them. **ACTION: KL**
  - k) War Memorial – no further action to be taken in regard to obtaining a grant towards the remaining work (refurbishment of railings)
  - l) Squeeze gate – no further action required.

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

#### **C.564 REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) County Music Service - there would be a consultation on a proposal to withdraw this service. The annual saving would be £188,000 but the loss in value to the county's young musicians would be much greater.
- b) Exceat Bridge – Cllr Shing had been appointed to Team Exceat.
- c) Dutch Elm Disease – councillors reported that the diseased elms on Friston Hill still had not been felled, even though the new financial year had begun, and that it was now too late to prevent the disease spreading for another year. A formal complaint should be made to the Tree Officer. **ACTION: PH/KL to send copies of relevant correspondence to SS**

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

#### **C.565 ANNUAL AUDIT 2018**

Members considered Report 5, setting out the information to be submitted to the External Auditor (PKF Littlejohn LLP) for the Annual Audit and Return 2018. It was noted that the Internal Auditor had not raised any concerns.

RESOLVED - That the council's Final Accounts 2017/18 be approved

RESOLVED - That the effectiveness of the council's Internal Audit regime between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 be confirmed

RESOLVED - That the Annual Governance Statements 2018 be approved

RESOLVED – That the Annual Accounting Statements 2018, with supporting end of year bank reconciliation and Explanation of Variances, be approved

RESOLVED – That the period from Monday 4 June to Friday 13 July 2018 be confirmed and approved for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the Unaudited Annual Return

#### **C.566 INSURANCE**

Members considered Report 6 by the Lead Member for Finance on the choice of an insurance provider for the coming year (01 June 2018 – 31 May 2019). The report compared quotations from three potential providers all offering similar cover specifically for the council sector, with an analysis of the differences and their significance. It was recommended that the quotation from Royal Sun Alliance be

accepted as offering similar cover to the current provider but at a lower cost. The amount of Personal Accident cover was lower but could be doubled for an additional premium and still be within budget, leaving additional budgetary provision for Key Person and Cyber Crime cover, which this provider intended to introduce in the near future. It was noted that although the Internal Auditor had advised that these new covers should be considered, they were not yet readily available.

It was agreed that the quotation from RSA be accepted with increased Personal Accident cover, and RSA be advised that the parish would be interested in Key Person and Cyber Crime cover. Members also considered whether additional cover should be sought for GDPR but agreed that the level of risk was too low for this to be necessary. The council's insurance cover would be monitored and reviewed during the year.

RESOLVED – That the quotation from Royal Sun Alliance be accepted with increased Personal Accident cover for a total premium of £1,118.89 for the year from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

#### **C.567 EMERGENCY PLAN**

The council took note of a few points arising from the Annual Village Meeting 2018:

- Community Watch – the revision of the Plan should now include reference to this organisation
- Less than half those present at the meeting had been aware of the existence of the current Plan
- An appeal had been put out for volunteers to let their names be put on a confidential list of people with 4x4 vehicles, chain saws etc.

The Chair advised that the revision of the Plan would be on the June agenda.

#### **C.568 DOG SHOW LICENCE**

The council considered a temporary licence for the holding of a local Dog Show on the recreation ground on the morning of Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The question was raised whether a fee of at least £1 should be charged to make the licence binding. Members agreed that the licence could be approved subject to confirmation that the organisers had obtained event insurance. A decision was deferred to the June meeting.

#### **C.569 PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS**

The council considered Report 9 the Schedule of Payments for May 2018 and Receipts for April 2018. *[Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website].*

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £4,656.57 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments online.

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**C.570 REPORTS:**

- a) Chair of the Council – the Chair thanked all those who had helped with the arrangements for the Annual Village Meeting
- b) Planning Committee - the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 17 April 2018.
- c) Finance – the bank balance at the end of April was £70,592.17. This included the first of two instalments of the precept, plus a large VAT refund.
- d) Rights of Way and Highways – the Lead Member raised the following points:
  - Village clean – on further investigation this was not felt to be necessary this year
  - Spreading wood chips – a pile was available at the Pond but many potential volunteers were away. It was agreed that Rustic Gardens should be invited to quote (e.g. for 2 people to work for one day). Cllr Seeley and Cllr Hill would decide which paths should take priority.  
**ACTION: PS/PH.** The cost should be added to the budget in future years.
  - Road closure on the Downlands Estate – the partial closure of Micheldene Road had been put back to July and only half the carriageway would be closed at a time.
- e) Recreation Ground – the Lead Member reported that the Cricket Club would be willing to do some internal decoration at the pavilion at the end of the season if the council would provide all the materials. It was agreed that this kind offer should be reconsidered at the end of the season. **ACTION: KL**
- f) Village Events – it was noted that there had been a favourable response at the Annual Village Meeting to the proposal to hold a fireworks event on 1<sup>st</sup> December. A full report would be brought to the June council meeting. In the meantime the organisers requested that a letter be sent to the Gilbert Estate by 1<sup>st</sup> June confirming that event insurance would be in place and adequate stewarding provided if the event went ahead. This was agreed as the event had already been approved in principle. **ACTION: PS to draft a letter**
- g) Parish Council grant scheme – it was noted that applications had been received from a number of village organisations and would be considered in June.
- h) General Data Protection Regulation – the council took note of Report 11j providing an update on the council's preparations for compliance with the new regulation which would come into force on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. It was also noted that the government had tabled an amendment to the legislation to exempt parish councils from the requirement to appoint a Data Protection Officer, due to the low sensitivity of the types of personal information routinely processed in parishes. The Information Commissioner had issued a statement recognising that most parishes would not have completed their preparations by 25<sup>th</sup> May, but requiring them 'to demonstrate that they are committed to making progress towards embedding the right processes and procedures'. Members were concerned that the parish council should soon launch a new website which would provide all councilors with dedicated email addresses for council business. It was noted that Cllr Hookham had prepared a report and

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recommendations on the acquisition of a new website, which would be brought to the June meeting for approval. On 15<sup>th</sup> May a seminar session would be held in the Small Hall at 7.30 pm to assist village clubs and societies in their preparations for GDPR.

RESOLVED – That the above reports (a) – (h) be noted

**C.571 CORRESPONDENCE**

The council considered report 12 by the Clerk, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Verge cutting – it was agreed that the council should monitor the state of the verges in the current year before deciding whether to increase their contribution to offset cutbacks by the county council. If any increase were proposed, it should be brought to the Annual Village Meeting for prior approval.
- b) National Planning Policy Framework – the concerns raised by a resident about the impact of proposed changes on Local Wildlife Sites were noted and referred to the Planning Committee for further consideration. **ACTION: Planning Committee**

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

**C.572 Date of next meeting – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall**

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.26 pm.*

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....