



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 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, Cllr N Day, Cllr L d'Urso, Cllr K Godden, Cllr P Hill, Cllr A Hookham, and Cllr P Seeley

**In attendance:** County Cllr S Shing (Items C.612-C.613); District Cllr J Wilton (items C.608-611); P Williamson (Tree Warden – Public Session); and K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

*There was one member of the public present.*

### **Public Session**

Improved accessibility to Footpath 24 - Mr S Worsfold requested the council to consider making the path across the Horsefield more accessible by adjusting the steps over the low wall near the A259 end. The SDNPA policy was to improve accessibility to public rights of way. An adjacent hedge was overhanging the path and should also be trimmed. The Chair stated that the parish council could act to keep paths safe and free of obstructions, and would consider this request, but could not provide full wheelchair accessibility.

Report of the Tree Warden - Mr P Williamson (Tree Warden) reported on the following matters:

- Works were proposed to a beech tree at Little Lane Cottage protected by a TPO, and due process was being followed.
- Dutch Elm Disease – three more mature trees and one small tree were infected at a property in Went Way; one in the vicinity of the Bowling Club; and possibly two more at the entrance to the waterworks at Friston. The council agreed to report all these to East Sussex County Council (**ACTION: KL**). The ten disease resistant elms planted by the parish to replenish stocks were all thriving.
- Grass fire alert – members thanked the Tree Warden for raising the alert about the recent grass fire near Old Willingdon Road. This had then been circulated to those on the Parish Council email list.

The council thanked the Tree Warden for his report.

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

**C.608 Acceptance of apologies for absence:** - Cllr B Greenwell

**C.609 Declarations of Interests:** - None

**C.610 Approval of the Minutes:** - The minutes of the parish council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**C.611 REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

District Cllr J Wilton reported on the following matters:

- a) Planning applications – Cllr Wilton had declined to comment on a recent planning application as planning was not within his remit.
- b) Rock on verges – a letter in the Eastbourne Herald by an East Dean resident (27 July 2018) had claimed that householders must not place rocks on verges. However, the judgement referred to in the letter did not apply on the Downlands Estate where verges were not owned by the highway authority.
- c) Housing development – Cllr Wilton requested to be informed of any new plans. The Chair of Planning stated that currently there were none.
- d) Emptying of bins – Cllr Wilton requested feedback from members. It was confirmed that collection schedules were still disrupted for bins of all types. There were no refunds for those who had paid for extra garden waste bins. The advice remained to ring 443322.

RESOLVED - That the report of the District Councillor be noted

**C.612 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS**

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

- a) Emergency Plan – the Chair recommended a secure document safe for purchase at £50, to be located in the village hall for emergency resource storage. Agreed - **ACTION: MK**. The revised Plan should be circulated to all councillors **ACTION: KL**.
- b) Fireworks at Christmas – Cllr Hill and Cllr Seeley had continued negotiations with the Gilbert Estate. Frontier Fireworks had advised that the Horsefield would be a suitable firing site, if the footpath across it were temporarily closed, and if the car park were used for spectators (with the approval of Wealden District Council as landowner). The upper part of the vicarage field could also be a firing site if the lower part were opened for spectators. Members agreed it would not be feasible to use the Greensward either for firing or for car parking. Limited parking could be permitted at the recreation ground. Stewarding and car parking remained the key organisational issues. **ACTION: PH to draft a proposal to put to the Gilbert Estate.**
- c) Parking pressure at the Fridays – the contractors should be finished by mid-September.

*The Chair varied the order of business to enable the County Councillor to report*

**C.613 REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) Budget cuts – the current annual budget of £370 million must be reduced by £46 million by 2022. This followed eight years of austerity and cuts. Residents were now beginning to protest.

- b) Temporary traffic lights at Exceat Bridge – these had been approved again for the Eastbourne Air Show 2018.
- c) Community Match funding – ESCC had concerns that the scheme was not value for money, but the Friston build-out project was technically still 'live'.
- d) Dutch Elm Disease – members advised that a long delay in felling diseased trees due to lack of funds had resulted in the spread of the disease. Cllr Shing agreed that this was false economy.

Members thanked the County Councillor for his report.

RESOLVED - That the report of the County Councillor be noted

#### **C.614 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS (resumed)**

The following further points were discussed:

- a) Easement for soakaway– the developers had proposed an amendment to the draft easement clarifying the attached plan. The new manhole was proud of the ground surface, the infilling having sunk. Further filling would be needed before turfing. **ACTION: PH/BG**
- b) Highways – Cllr Hill had met the Highway Steward for a walk around and had secured the clearance of the Micheldene Road/A259 gully pot.
- c) Speedwatch – this would be advertised in the parish magazine in September.

RESOLVED – That the Progress report (C.612 and C.614 above) be noted and action taken as discussed

#### **C.615 BUDGET UPDATE QUARTER 1**

The Lead Member for Finance explained key points from Report 5, following on from the July discussion (Minute C.602), as follows:

- a) The key revenue variation between budget and projected outturn for 2018/19 was a projected surplus of £853 instead of the original forecast loss of £9,772. The play area project had been forecast to draw on reserves temporarily, but an increase in the precept had compensated for that, and a lottery grant had also been secured.
- b) For reporting purposes major projects (capital income as well as capital expenditure) had been separated from day to day council expenditure and income. Capital spending was not spread evenly through the year. More work was needed on these projects, as none was currently progressing.
- c) Members took note of the impact on reserves from projected savings in day to day operational costs of £3,889
- d) Members also took note of the impact on reserves from the additional capital receipt from an easement fee of £3,000 received in the quarter.
- e) An unbudgeted sum of £500 would be needed to complete the War Memorial refurbishment (repainting the railings), and it was agreed that this should be drawn from reserves.

Members thanked the Lead Member for his report.

RESOLVED – That the above items (a) - (e) be noted

#### **C.616 RISK ASSESSMENT**

The council considered a new Risk Management Strategy prepared by Cllr Greenwell. The Strategy was welcomed in its entirety. The following minor amendments were proposed:

- 1.2,3 – there is only one committee (Planning) and its Terms of Reference should be reviewed by full council
- 2.2 Budget monitoring – to be undertaken in July, October, January and at Final Accounts
- 2.3 Audit – action should not be restricted to elected members
- 3.3 Financial transactions – action should not be restricted to elected members.
- 11 Emergency Plan Risk Prioritisation – the likelihood and impact of a major fire should be reassessed in the light of recent experience.

These suggestions would be referred back to Cllr Greenwell for comment, and the Strategy tabled for adoption at the October meeting.

#### **C.617 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

The council considered Report 7 by the Chair and Clerk. In the long run the appointment of an administrative assistant would be cost neutral (though there would be start-up costs), and the assistant would not receive a travel allowance for attending meetings in the parish. The Chair of Planning approved of the proposal to allocate planning work to the assistant. However, if the parish council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, the amount of work involved in planning would significantly increase from a basic five-hour week (probably to a maximum of 10 hours per week for 2-2.5 years). It was therefore agreed to postpone drawing up the Job Description until a decision had been made on Neighbourhood Planning. [See Item C.618 below].

#### **C.618 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

The council considered a briefing document by the Chair of Planning. The parish had previously considered preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) in April 2016, but had decided against it as NPs were then entirely concerned with the control of housing. There had been a substantial shift as communities had found NPs to be a practical tool and planning authorities had found them to be a vital element in local planning. The resourcing of NPs had also improved. East Dean and Friston could use an NP to coordinate its planning authority (SDNPA), housing authority (WDC) and highway authority (ESCC), identifying local issues that might not be picked up by all three e.g. the need for a 30 mph speed limit. A housing needs survey would still be a key element. The designated area of the NP would follow the parish boundary, though the hamlet of Jevington could join in. A Steering Group of 10-12 members would be needed, plus clerk, and should include diverse representation from the community. Cllr Bryant would be willing to lead it. It was agreed that a further report should be brought to the October meeting, covering the budgetary implications **ACTION:**

**TB/KG/KL**. The Neighbourhood Planning ‘road map’ recommended by the SDNPA would be circulated to members **ACTION: KL**

RESOLVED – That the Chair of Planning and Lead Member for Finance be invited to bring forward a budget for preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan

#### **C.619 RECREATION GROUND**

The council took note of the 2018 RoSPA play area safety report. The main improvements recommended were new fencing (the existing fence still met minimum standards) and a soft-closing gate. DJ Utilities would be requested to do this work instead of a new path **ACTION: BG**. Additional trees should be planted to fill in gaps in the existing line alongside The Drove, but no action would be taken until the new development at The Fridays was complete.

#### **C.620 DISEASED ELMS**

The council took note of two diseased elms on council land at Friston Green, and two on private properties, which would be eligible for PC grant aid. A further case had been reported near No.9 The Fridays. ESCC had been notified. There was provision in the budget for grants where appropriate. The stock of old elms had almost gone. [See also the report on the Tree Warden in the Public Session].

#### **C.621 NHS HEALTH CHECK CLINIC**

A travelling NHS Health Check clinic had invited the parish council to make a room available for a day to offer their free services to the community. Members agreed to offer the Small Hall if a suitable day were available **ACTION: KL**. The visit would then be advertised and details sent to the Residents’ Association.

RESOLVED – That the Small Hall should if possible be made available for a one day visit by the NHS Health Check clinic

#### **C.622 PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS**

The council considered Report 12 the Schedule of Payments for August 2018 and Receipts for July 2018. [Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website]. Members recorded their thanks to Mr Ron Franklin for his prompt action in cleaning the bus shelters after a recent vandalism incident and also to Cllr. Hill for replacing the damaged window.

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £3,698.48 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments

#### **C.623 URGENT MATTERS**

Members continued to be concerned at the closure of the local post office. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the central Post Office pointing out the importance of the PO service for the local community (copy to Maria Caulfield MP). Councillors would also visit the local branch. **ACTION: PS/MK**

#### **C.624 REPORTS:**

- a) Chair of the Council:

- 
- (i) Chairs' Networking Day on 12 July 2018 - Improvements to the Sussex Police 101 service had been discussed with the Police and Crime Commissioner.
  - (ii) Parishes could notify the air ambulance service of locations where a helicopter could land (e.g. The Horsefield). Locations should also be listed in the Emergency Plan **ACTION: KL**.
  - (iii) Speedwatch – volunteers would need to be trained to use equipment which could be loaned for six months. Those caught speeding would not be fined but would be pursued and could be reported to the DVLA for further checks. An appeal would be put in the parish magazine. Bikers were using the Beachy Head Road for races at weekends and this would be reported to Operation Crackdown **(ACTION: KL)**
  - (iv) SDNPA Planning Protocol – would be circulated to all members as background information **(ACTION: KL)**.
- b) Planning Committee - members took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018
- c) Finance – the bank balance at the end of July was £49,483.84. A sum of £35 repayable by the Information Commissioner's Office was still awaited.
- d) Rights of Way – the Lead Member had met a group of residents researching the history of The Drove and hoping to demonstrate that it had once been a right of way, in which case it should always be a right of way. It was argued that the parish council's presentation of evidence to East Sussex County Council had not gone back far enough, and that The Drove had not been gated in the 1850s. It was agreed that research should continue and a report brought to a future council meeting.
- e) Council website – the new website was nearing completion. Vision ICT needed some further documentation **(ACTION: KL to supply this)**. The web host was ready to transfer the domain name to the new site when required. It was agreed that two councillors plus the clerk should be trained to manage the new website. Cllr d'Urso would take on the Lead role in Communications, as Cllr Hookham was about to depart. The council thanked Cllr Hookham most warmly for her work in improving and updating communications.

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

#### **C.625 CORRESPONDENCE**

The council considered report 15 by the Clerk, and noted further correspondence complaining about noise. A follow-up letter would be circulated to members for comment **(ACTION: PH/PS)**; it would be sent by the Chair on behalf of the council.

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

**C.626 Date of next meeting – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018** at 6.30 pm in the Small Hall

---

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.19 pm.*

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....