

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 3rd January 2019 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr M Keller (Chair), Cllr N Day, Cllr L d'Urso (Items C.679-C.688), Cllr K Godden, Cllr P Hill and Cllr P Seeley

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Item C.686); District Cllr J Wilton (Items C.679-C.682); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There were four members of the public present.

Public Session

The Cricket Club – representatives of the Cricket Club had met the new Lead Member for the Recreation Ground to discuss current projects. Mr Geoff Johnson who had been closely involved with the consultations on the development at The Fridays and had supplied qualified advice, strongly supported the Club's request for a grant of £5,000 towards the moving of the cricket square, and suggested that the council should also cover any shortfall in the funding of the project.

The Club had received over 70 letters of support in response to notices placed in local shops and businesses, including support from the Residents' Association and Maria Caulfield MP.

The Chair thanked the contributors and closed the Public Session

C.679 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: - Cllr T Bryant and Mr P Williamson (Tree Warden)

C.680 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS: - None

C.681 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: - The minutes of the parish council meeting held on 6th December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.682 REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

District Cllr J Wilton reported on the following matters:

- a) Downlands Way pavement – the parish council should take action to prevent vehicles parking on the pavement owned by them on the south side of Downlands Way. Heavy lorries would typically park on the pavement opposite the shops, and up to six cars opposite the flats, making the pavement unusable. The Chair advised that only the portion of pavement opposite the shopping precinct belonged to the council.

- b) Moving the cricket square – Cllr Wilton would support a grant application to Wealden District Council
- c) District Council elections in May 2019 – the Conservative candidate for the new South Downs ward (comprising EDF, Long Man, Cuckmere Valley and Alfriston) had been named.
- d) Landscaping at the new Fridays development – new grass had been laid alongside part of the Gilberts Drive frontage. The whole frontage should be included.
- e) Council tax 2019/20 – there would be a new additional opt-in charge of £50 pa for each brown bin from April 2019.

In discussion, members noted that WDC proposed to increase council tax by 2.7% in 2019/20 and queried whether this would trigger a referendum (costing £300,000). Cllr Wilton agreed to make enquiries. Members were critical of the lack of detail in the WDC Budget consultation documents.

RESOLVED - That the report of the District Councillor be noted

C.683 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS

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

- a) Gladiator Events – a licence for temporary use of the recreation ground for parking would not be required. The event would not take place.
- b) Digitization of the pavilion – the Cricket Club would liaise with the Lead Member over the placing of new equipment
- c) Cuckmere Bus route 41 – passenger figures were low and it was agreed that the Lead Member for Finance should look into the working of the supported bus scheme and report back.
- d) Free water from cafes etc. – the Gilbert Estate should be requested to encourage the managers of suitable local businesses to participate in the voluntary scheme just launched by Wealden District Council **ACTION: KL**
- e) Parish council lending – it was confirmed that a parish council could lend money, though this would normally be for a social purpose and without any interest being charged
- f) Emergency safe – a complete copy of the Emergency Plan with confidential contact directory was in the safe. A Union flag was still required as a back-up **ACTION: KL**
- g) Grant application for all-weather cricket pitch – the advice from the SDNPA was that provision of an all-weather pitch would technically be eligible for a grant from the Communities Fund but unlikely to receive one due to demand far exceeding funds raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy. The council would nevertheless make an application in the interest of protecting community assets **ACTION: KL**

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

C.684 MOVING THE CRICKET SQUARE

Members noted the background to the current situation as outlined in the Public Session. It was also noted that ball-stop nets (previously discussed as an alternative to moving the cricket square) were actually the more expensive and less practical option and might not get planning permission due to their proximity to the new houses: this option was not worth pursuing. Members queried the terms on which the Gilbert Estate might contribute to moving the cricket square, and asked why only two quotes had been obtained.

Standing Orders were suspended to enable Club representatives to clarify that the Estate was willing to match any grant from the council up to £5,000. The work would be highly specialised and therefore Wealden District Council had agreed that two quotes would suffice for a grant application from their Community Fund. Standing Orders were re-imposed.

Members were concerned that there could be a shortfall on the scheme, and that a grant of £5,000 from the parish council could be seen as out of scale with the normal grant scheme for village clubs and societies. However, the grant would help to gear in four times that amount for an asset belonging to the community. It was also noted that the council's ability to reclaim VAT on purchases of council equipment should if possible be used to assist the project. The Budget Working Group should consider how best to dovetail a grant of £5,000 for the project; the VAT requirements; the current grant scheme; and the Budget for 2019/20 (to be approved at an Extraordinary PC Meeting on 22 January) **ACTION: BWG.**

The Chair moved the motion that the council should approve in principle a donation of up to £5,000 towards the cost of moving the cricket square, subject to the Cricket Club succeeding in raising enough money to complete the project.

RESOLVED - The motion was put to the meeting and declared carried unanimously

C.685 APPOINTMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The council considered Report 5 recommending the appointment of Mrs Stephanie Mills as an Administrative Assistant with effect from 1st February 2019, on NALC terms and conditions. Mrs Mills would work 5 hours per week, rising to 10 hours during the period of preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, and be remunerated at NALC Scale Point 14. She would be supplied with office equipment including a PAYG smart phone and an email address linked to the council's website at a total cost of approx. £500 inclusive of VAT (within budget for 2018/19).

RESOLVED – That Mrs Stephanie Mills be appointed as an Administrative Assistant with effect from 1st February 2019

C.686 REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

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- a) Friston build-out – the parish would soon be contacted regarding the next stage of the project. The county council would be responsible for delivery of the scheme as the build-out would be highway property, but the parish would be involved in the design process, beginning with a site meeting.
 - b) ESCC Budget 2019/20 – final proposals would be considered by the Cabinet on 5th February. Cllr Shing would send the parish a link to the Budget report.

RESOLVED – That the report of the County Councillor be noted

C.687 DOWNLANDS PRECINCT MAINTENANCE

The council noted the advice of the Hon. Solicitor that the parish council did in fact own the portion of pavement in the Downlands Way shopping precinct on the opposite side of the road to the parking bays. This was a problem area where vehicles often parked on the pavement due to demand for parking places exceeding supply, hindering pedestrians and the owners of adjacent properties whose rear gates were obstructed. The pavement was also fragile and utilities ran underneath. It was agreed that the council should write to the residents of nos. 1-4 Wayside to clarify the ownership and request permission to put signs on their rear boundary fences discouraging parking (**ACTION: KL**). The effect of the signage and its implications for future management would be reviewed.

RESOLVED - That the council's ownership of the pavement on the south side of the Downlands shopping precinct be noted and action taken as discussed

C.688 THE DROVE

The council received an oral report from the Lead Member for Rights of Way on the progress of research being undertaken by a resident on the history and use of The Drove, to assess the potential for making a historic claim to the existence of a public right of way. Members agreed that alternative options should also be pursued, and that the Chair should contact the Gilbert Estate to scope the prospects. **ACTION: MK**

C.689 WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL 2019/20 BUDGET AND 2019 TO 2023 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

The council took note of the consultation on Wealden's next Budget and medium term financial strategy. The Lead Member for Finance advised that the District was getting towards a balanced budget but had a lot of risk exposure, including outsourcing of services and concerns over the tax base. Council tax could now be increased by £5 or up to 3% without a referendum, so that Wealden's proposed increase of 2.7% would not require a referendum. Members considered whether the parish should also apply a 2.7% increase, but preferred to link the budget directly to expenditure. No response would be sent to the consultation.

RESOLVED - That the consultation on the District Council's Budget 2019/20 and medium terms financial strategy be noted

C.690 PARISH REMUNERATION REPORT 2019/20

The council took note of the report and recommendations of the Independent Review Panel 2019/20. If the parish council paid all the recommended allowances following the May 2019 elections, the maximum total cost would be £1,585 pa. EDF parish councillors had never taken allowances and current members had no wish to do so in future. Nevertheless, the Budget Working Group should make provision in the 2019/20 budget, and if not claimed the money could be reallocated e.g. to the grants programme.

RESOLVED - That the report and recommendations of the Independent Review Panel on Parish Remuneration 2019/20 be noted

C.691 PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The council considered Report 11 the Schedule of Payments for January 2019 and Receipts for December 2018. *[Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website].*

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £2,064.10 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments

C.692 URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that he had received a response from the National Trust to his second letter regarding the Crowlink Corner planning application. The Trust expected to maintain its objections to the application in its current form, and to preserve the tree numbered T1 on the plans.

C.693 REPORTS

The following items were discussed:

- a) Chair of the Council – the Chair would be away in February/March 2019
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 18th December 2018. Members expressed concern that work was being undertaken at a certain property in advance of planning permission being granted, though the works in question might not require permission. **ACTION: KL to notify the Chair of Planning**
- c) Finance – the balance in hand at the end of December 2018 was £62,877.99. Members were reminded that an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting should be held on Tuesday 22nd January 2019 to finalise the Budget for 2019/20.
- d) Rights of Way and Highways - the Lead Member reported that the grass verge on the SE side of Downsview Lane belonging to Eastbourne Borough Council would no longer be cut by them. A policy decision had been made not to cut verges on private estate roads. Nevertheless the verge would need maintenance to keep the road clear and the junction safe. [Cllr Day declared an interest as a resident of the Lane]. It was agreed that the council should investigate the cost of taking over the maintenance. **ACTION: PH to contact a possible contractor.**
- e) Recreation Ground – the Lead Member reported on the following matters:

- Rec boundary wall – this had been cleared of vegetation along a 1m strip
- Play area fence – still sturdy but the netting should be pegged back at the base with kickboards to prevent dogs getting underneath. It should then last another year. **ACTION: ND to obtain quote**
- Play area gate – needs a new spring for self-closing **ACTION: ND to obtain quote**
- Replacement equipment – the old slide and the swings should be considered for replacement. The swing frame was beginning to rust.
- Pavilion repairs – there had been significant water ingress, some plumbing related but some due to a leaking roof, particularly in the kitchen area where the ceiling must be replaced. A panel of wall must also be replaced. There was £2,000 in the current budget and £500 provisionally allocated next year. **ACTION: ND to obtain quotes and report to the next meeting.** The Cricket Club had kindly offered to re-decorate following the repairs.

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

C.694 CORRESPONDENCE: - None

C.695 Date of next meeting: Thursday 7th February 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

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