



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing immediately after the Annual Parish Council Meeting**

**Councillors present:** Cllr M Keller (Chair), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr L d'Urso, Cllr K Godden, Cllr P Hill and Cllr B Wheatley

**In attendance:** District Cllr M Lunn (Items C.26 – C.27); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

*There was one member of the public present.*

**C.24 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** - Cllr N Day; Cllr P Seeley; County Cllr S Shing; P Williamson (Tree Warden)

**C.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:** - None

**C.26 BUSINESS IN PROGRESS**

The council noted Report 3 on progress since the April meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Friston build-out – County Cllr Shing should be advised that there was still no progress **ACTION: KL**
- b) Verge in Downsview Lane – East Sussex Highways should be requested to back up a notice to Eastbourne Borough Council by the parish that if they did not clear the verge within 28 days the parish would be entitled to have the work done by their own contractor and attempt to recover the cost (approx. £300). **ACTION: KL**
- c) Downlands Way Notices – if the supplier continued to be unable to carry out the work ordered then a refund would be claimed **ACTION: PH**
- d) Village car park registration as an Asset of Community Value - Wealden District Council had approved the re-registration of the car park, including the complete visibility splay, for a further five years.
- e) Displaced litter bin – actually not yet moved back **ACTION: PH/PS**
- f) Play area fence – it was recommended that the fence be replaced with metal posts, for durability, to a height of 2m all round including gates. The first quote had come in at £3,950 (budget: £1,000). Further quotes would be obtained **ACTION: PH/ND**
- g) Village Fete – Cllr Wheatley kindly volunteered to run the council's stall at the Village Fete 2019
- h) Insurance – due to the resignation of the administrative assistant, key worker cover had again become an issue, albeit a temporary one.
- i) Birling Gap Road – East Sussex Highways was looking into the provision of a 'pedestrians in road' sign but members noted that a better solution to the

safety hazard (if feasible) would be to purchase an additional strip of land to enable a footway to be installed.

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

### **C.27 REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

District Cllr M Lunn, newly elected to the enlarged South Downs Ward, was welcomed to the meeting and reported on the following matters:

- a) Waste contract – Biffa would take over from Kier in July and crews would transfer to the new contractor. This should keep disruption to a minimum. Green bins would be emptied on an opt-in system at a cost of £50pa to keep council tax as low as possible. Parish councillors objected that householders already paid for other services they did not necessarily receive, e.g. street lighting. The new charge could give rise to fly tipping. Cllr Lunn asked to be advised of any such incidents.
- b) Low level lighting in the village car park – Cllr Lunn was aware of this issue and would report in due course
- c) Policing – a matter of general concern in the District was the lack of enforcement of parking restrictions. WDC policy was not to decriminalise parking (which would make it a matter for the District to enforce) but would look at alternative ways of improving enforcement.
- d) Membership of the South Downs National Park Authority Board – Cllr Lunn had been nominated as Wealden's representative on the Board and would serve on its policy and scrutiny committee. However, he would also intervene in planning matters in exceptional cases. The parish's Chair of Planning stated that there had been some inconsistency in planning decisions and a lack of enforcement. The parish had asked for a liaison meeting which the SDNPA had not yet arranged. Liaison was essential as the Authority's offices were at the far end of the National Park and planning officers had very extensive delegated powers. Cllr Lunn took note.
- e) Exceat Bridge – the scheme to replace the Bridge was proceeding slowly. East Dean might also be affected by current proposals to ease traffic passing through Alfriston.

Members thanked Cllr Lunn for his report.

RESOLVED – That the report of the District Councillor be noted

### **C.28 DRAFT FINAL ACCOUNTS 2018/19**

The Lead Member reported that it had been possible to put £26,000 back into reserves at the end of the year due to a combination of good management and some windfalls. The closing balance of £57,168 was close to the predicted level. The Internal Audit had taken place on 13 May and no issues had been raised. The full draft Annual Return would be brought to the June meeting for approval.

RESOLVED – That the draft final accounts 2018/19 be noted

### **C.29 DELIVERY OF CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The council considered Report 5 recommending that an Officer or Member be appointed to take lead responsibility for the delivery of each of the capital projects included within the Council Budget for 2019/20. The following were appointed:

- Refurbishment of War Memorial – Cllr Hill
- Friston Build-out contribution to ESCC – Cllr Godden and Cllr Seeley
- Refurbishment of bus shelters – Cllr Seeley and Cllr Hill
- EDF Cricket (capital contribution to wicket) - Cllr Keller
- New fencing at recreation ground – Cllr Hill
- Major refurbishment of pavilion – Cllr Day
- Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Bryant

RESOLVED - That the above lead members be appointed and reports on all projects be sent to the Lead Member for Finance

### **C.30 WORKPLACE PENSION RE-ENROLMENT**

The council took note that it had a duty to reassess officer eligibility and complete a declaration of re-compliance to the Pensions Regulator by September 2019. No officer was currently eligible for a workplace pension.

### **C.31 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

The Chair confirmed that Mrs Stephanie Mills had resigned on grounds of ill health. The clerk had agreed to take back routine planning matters, and Mrs Jane Tatum had agreed to do the admin for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group on a temporary contract of up to 5 hours per week, pending a formal decision by the council as to a permanent arrangement. Members recorded their thanks to Mrs Mills for her work, and their regrets that her time with the council had been short.

### **C.32 USE OF THE RECREATION GROUND FOR SPECIAL EVENTS**

The council considered the following, items (a) and b) having previously been approved in principle:

- a) Licence for the Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company visit (12 June 2019)
- b) Licence for a Dog Show (9 June 2019)
- c) Cricket Fun Day event (9 June 2019) – the council considered Report 8(c) and agreed that the proposed event would fall within the terms of the Club's existing seasonal Hire Agreement, provided that all litter was removed after the event. The council would lend the Club the new litter picking equipment obtained by Cllr d'Urso **ACTION: LD.** It was noted that a temporary event licence and event insurance had been obtained by the Club.

RESOLVED – That the licence for the Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company performance on 12 June 2019 be approved

RESOLVED - That the licence for Dog Show on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be approved

RESOLVED – That no objection be raised to the proposed Cricket Fun Day

**C.33 RECREATION GROUND – STORAGE OF NETS**

The council considered Report 9 regarding a request by the Cricket Club to store practice nets on the recreation ground. Members objected that the council had been presented with a *fait accompli*, and stated that this should not happen again. However, it was agreed that the proposed use was appropriate for the purposes of the recreation ground and that the club should be supported in its successful efforts to encourage a youth team. Planning permission would not be required.

RESOLVED - That the Cricket Club be permitted to store practice nets at the rear of the recreation ground during the 2019 summer season.

**C.34 VILLAGE HALL HIRE**

Members noted that a supplementary Hire Agreement should be signed for each booking of the village hall outside the regular pattern of council meetings. This would apply to hires of the Village Hall on 17 May 2019 (Annual Village Meeting) and 20 May 2019 (SDNPA meeting). The Chair as the council's nominated representative on the Board of Trustees (*ex officio*) stated that as the Hall was now 20 years old and had run at a loss in 2018 it had become necessary to revise the fees and fee structure. However, some councillors stated they had received complaints that fee increases had resulted in prices going up at such events as the monthly Coffee morning which provided a service to the community.

RESOLVED - That the supplementary Hall Hire Agreement for 17 and 20 May 2019 be signed by the Chair

**C.35 POST OFFICE MEETING**

The council considered Report 11 proposing the setting up of a meeting to consider the future of the local post office. The Chair stated that although there were prospective operators interested in running a local post office either as part of the Barn Stores, or as a separate business within the Store, negotiations with Post Office Counters had stalled owing to the insistence of the PO that the post office should be open all day. In rural areas it was often uneconomical to keep a store open all day. Maria Caulfield MP had been trying to get the standard contract altered to permit part-time post offices, but the prospects were not good. Members agreed that there was currently no action the council could take, and that it could not support one local business more than another.

**C.36 PARISH MEMBER APPOINTMENTS TO THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Each parish within the National Park was invited to nominate a councillor to stand for election as a Parish Member of the Board for the next four years. Two Parish Members would be elected to serve in East Sussex. The Chair of Planning was willing to stand for nomination in the East Sussex constituency.

RESOLVED - That Councillor Bryant be nominated as the parish council's candidate for election as a Parish Member of the SDNPA for the East Sussex constituency

### C.37 PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The council considered Report 13 - the Schedule of Payments for May 2019 and receipts for April 2019. *[Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website]*. It was noted that councillors ordering items on behalf of the council should where possible obtain invoices naming the council as the customer to enable VAT to be reclaimed. **ACTION: KL to check that no potential VAT reclaims had been overlooked. ACTION: KG to source a temporary contact for Mrs Tatum's Neighbourhood Plan work.**

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £7,708.78 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments

### C.38 REPORTS

The following items were discussed:

- a) County Councillor – Cllr Shing had sent a written report covering the year's events in the whole of his electoral division. The council took note.
- b) Chair of the Council – the Chair invited all councillors to help with setting up the Hall for the Annual Village Meeting on 17 May 2019
- c) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019
- d) Neighbourhood Planning – the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019 had been prepared and would be circulated shortly. The SDNPA had approved the area of the parish as the designated area for the Plan, and a meeting between councillors and Chris Paterson (SDNPA Communities Lead) would be held on 20 May 2019 to take matters forward.
- e) Finance – the balance at the end of April 2019 was £82,113.02 (including the first of two instalments of precept for 2019/20).
- f) Rights of Way and Highways – (i) the council took note of the minutes of the County Liaison Meeting held on 16 April 2019. Some dissatisfaction was expressed with the lack of action arising from these meetings. (ii) Blocked drain at Friston Pond – it was proposed to replace the pipe which drained the Crowlink verge into the Pond with an open gully which could easily be swept clear. It was agreed that a quotation should be obtained for this work. (iii) Broken Memorial bench – the Huggons bench at the Pond had collapsed and was beyond repair. It was agreed that the council should advertise for a sponsor for a new bench. **ACTION: PH to draft a suitable notice; TB to remove the old bench.** (iv) Hanging baskets at East Dean bus stops – members volunteered for a weekly watering rota to be overseen by Cllr Hill.
- g) Recreation Ground – (i) Entrance to the recreation ground – the Cricket Club had complained that the un-turfed ground over the new soakaway was a safety hazard for which they would accept no liability if an accident occurred. **ACTION: MK to write to the Gilbert Estate.** (ii) Extra cuts of the outfield – the club had requested extra cuts as in 2018. **ACTION: KL to obtain a quote per cut from the contractor.** (iii) Bonfire – the Cricket club had requested permission to run a bonfire event on the recreation ground. In discussion it was agreed that this should not proceed, owing to the serious difficulties

encountered by councillors with long experience of such events. **ACTION: KL to notify the Club.**

- h) Fund Raising – (i) the Lead Member reported that the application for CIL funding towards moving the cricket square would be decided upon by the SDNPA in September. (ii) Five kit bags of litter-picking equipment had now been purchased with grant funding and some money remained for ash pans and brushes. Storage would be required e.g. at the pavilion. A report should be made to Wealden on the use of the grant money, and Cllr d’Urso would organise a suitable session tidying the shopping precinct. Dates would be circulated **ACTION: LD.** (iii) The Residents’ Association had offered £500 towards the provision of planters in the shopping precinct, and in June the council would be invited to match this offer through its grant scheme. (iv) Play area fence – the Lead Member was searching for possible grants towards the renewal of the play area fence.
- i) Cuckmere Buses – members took note of the updates on passenger figures and overall costs supplied by the bus company. There was some concern that the local bus service 41 averaged 6 users per week and it was agreed that usage should be kept under review.

#### **C.39 CORRESPONDENCE**

The council took note of Report 16 on correspondence received since the April meeting. It was noted that the resident who had played the Last Post on Remembrance Sunday for many years had given notice that he wished to stand down. It was agreed that a new trumpet player should be sought either through the British Legion or perhaps from a local school. **ACTION: KL**

**C.40 Date of next meeting: Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.**

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.12 pm.*

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....