

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4 July 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 T Bryant, Cllr N Day, Cllr L d'Urso, Cllr P Hill, Cllr P Seeley, Cllr J Walker and Cllr B Wheatley

In attendance: County Cllr S Shing (Items C.60e – C.62); District Cllr M Lunn (Items C.60d – C.67e); K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There was one member of the public present.

C.57 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr K Godden; P Williamson (Tree Warden)

C.58 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.59 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C.60 Business in Progress

The council noted Report 7 on progress since the June meeting, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Safety in Birling Gap Road – a response was awaited from East Sussex Highways regarding signage on the blind bend. The reduction of the 13X bus service in the summer months might be contributing to the number of walkers.
ACTION: PH to check.
- b) Licence to install bollards on Gilberts Drive verge – members took note of the high cost and decided to take no further action.
- c) Request bus stop at Downsview Lane – a response was awaited from East Sussex Highways on the feasibility of moving the stop to a safer location. Meantime the bus was stopping on request.
- d) Replacement of squeeze gate – a resident had very kindly offered to do carpentry work at cost, and two residents had offered donations of £10 each. Cllr Walker offered further assistance **ACTION: JW**
- e) Litter bins – the East Dean bus stop bin had been moved back to its proper location. The tulip bin at Friston Pond which was no longer on Wealden's collecting schedule would be removed and this would be organised by the parish council **ACTION: TB/PH**
- f) Entrance to the recreation ground – the developer's contractor had re-levelled the site.

- g) Administrative assistant – two applications had been received so far and interviews would be held before the end of July.
- h) Council grant scheme – all the organisations who had received grants had acknowledged them with thanks.
- i) Digital land ownership mapping – referred to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for recommendations. **ACTION: NPSG**
- j) Tree surgery on Crown land – the council stood by its recent decision not to intervene.
- k) Fallen tree on the Greensward – this should be reported to the Greensward Company and/or the Residents' Association as their agents **ACTION: PS**
- l) Letter to estate agents – under revision **ACTION: TB**
- m) Trumpet player – no new player had yet been found. Further enquiries would be made **ACTION: KL**
- n) South Coast Classic cycle race – the Chair had met the race director at their request and explained the potential hazard in Gilberts Drive.

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

C.61 Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr Shing reported on the following matters:

- a) Seven Sisters Country Park – the transfer of the freehold to the SDNPA had been approved, with £1.4 million of investment envisaged in the bid, and an ambition for a further £7 million to be invested in improvements. Cllr Shing objected that none of this investment was guaranteed and that the SSCP was a valuable asset which ESCC could have kept and ought to have kept. The area attracted more visitors than any other in the county, and the car park produced an income of £35,000. Opinion on the parish council was divided, the main concern being a potential conflict of interest for the SDNPA as the planning authority if future planning permissions were required. ESCC was requested to consider this and reserve rights over planning.
- b) Exceat Bridge – the Chair noted the commencement of test borings at Exceat Bridge with temporary traffic controls which had proved very disruptive and had begun with no advance warning. Cllr Shing had not been forewarned of this either and would seek further information, particularly on the implications for Airbourne and for access by emergency vehicles. **ACTION: SS**

RESOLVED – That the report of the County Councillor be noted

C.62 Report of the District Councillor

District Cllr M Lunn reported on the following matters:

- a) Opting in for green waste collection – two residents had complained about the difficulty of opting in for residents without internet, as Wealden would not take cheques and some residents could not do telephone payments. Any resident still experiencing difficulty could contact Cllr Lunn.
- b) Lights in the car park – Cllr Bob Standley (WDC Leader and Governance & Finance Portfolio Holder) had been consulted and noted that in principle

lighting could be supplied if done in compliance with the SDNPA's Dark Skies policy, and if there were budgetary provision (not in place at present). Officers would send a report for the parish to consider. The cost was not yet known.

- c) Fly tipping – this had increased over the summer and an incident had been reported in the parish and swiftly cleared.
- d) Birling Gap safety awareness – Wealden had placed warnings on social media and their website and would be grateful if the parish could reinforce the message locally.
- e) Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board – Cllr Lunn had been appointed as Wealden's representative. The Board was currently concerned to dredge the shingle which was preventing the sluices in the Cuckmere from working properly, and giving rise to severe flooding concern. The cost was £60,000 and financial help was being sought from central government, owing to the situation of the hamlet of West Dean.
- f) South Downs National Park Authority – Cllr Lunn had been appointed as Wealden's representative. He supported the transfer of the Seven Sisters Country Park from ESCC to the SDNPA, as the latter would be in a better position to apply for grants towards improvements. He took note of the concern raised by the parish about the future accountability of the SDNPA in planning matters, but also supported the parish's request for the SDNPA to have a base locally.
- g) Planning enforcement issues – the cases noted by the parish Planning Committee as giving cause for concern had been raised with SDNPA officers, and responses were awaited.
- h) Complaints about removal of phone box – three residents had complained about the decommissioning notice posted by BT in the East Dean kiosk on 12 June. The parish council wished to see the East Dean box retained for safety reasons due to the poor mobile coverage in the parish.
- i) East Dean Post Office closure – Cllr Lunn regretted the closure and would oppose it at any available opportunity, but there was no immediate prospect of a change.
- j) Exceat Bridge – work on the site of the new bridge was under way and could run for six weeks. Cllr Lunn had been lobbied from both sides. It was noted that Cllr Shing would raise the problems caused with Highways.

RESOLVED – That the report of the District Councillor be noted.

C.63 Standing Orders

The council considered Report 8 and approved the draft amendment to SO3e with the addition of 'the Hon. Solicitor' to the list of those non-members who had permission to speak at meetings when the council was in closed session.

RESOLVED – that the following sentence be added to Standing Order 3e:

'The county councillor, the district councillor, the planning authority representative for the parish, the Hon. Solicitor and/or the council's appointed Tree Warden may address the council in closed session on matters within their remit'.

C.64 Accessibility Regulations for Council Website

Members considered Report 9 and noted that the council's website already met the WCAG 2.1AA standard required by the new regulations, but that the council must prepare and publish an Accessibility Statement no later than September 2020. Cllr d'Urso kindly agreed to do preparatory work on the Accessibility Statement. **ACTION: LD**

C.65 Decommissioning of East Dean phone box

Members considered Report 10. It was noted that the Birling Gap phone box had recently been refurbished and was presumably not being decommissioned as it was needed for safety reasons **ACTION: MK to check.** However, similar safety considerations applied to the East Dean kiosk due to the very poor mobile phone coverage in the village. In theory an emergency call could be made using any mobile network, but in many locations no network was available. Signs on the Friston bus stop and at the recreation ground both gave information about the East Dean kiosk for use in emergencies. It was agreed that these points should be made to the SDNPA which had been nominated by BT as the local authority to whom representations should be made **ACTION: ML.** Public opinion should be canvassed and any update sent to the SDNPA. If the kiosk were decommissioned, the parish would consider adopting it.

RESOLVED – To notify the SDNPA of the council's opposition to the decommissioning of the East Dean phone box on safety grounds

C.66 Payments and Receipts

The council considered Report 11 - the Schedule of Payments for July 2019 and receipts for June 2019. *[Note: the complete Schedule is published on the council website].* Members agreed that extra cuts of the outfield at the recreation ground should be requested in advance. **ACTION: KL to contact the contractor.**

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £5,647.63 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments

C.67 Reports

The following items were discussed:

- a) Chair of the Council – the Chair requested an update on arrangements for the stalls at the Village Fete, being organised by Cllr Wheatley and Cllr Bryant (NPSG). All arrangements were in hand. The RA should be requested to give the two stalls adjacent pitches **ACTION: PS.**
- b) Planning Committee – (i) The council took note of the draft minutes of the committee meeting held on 18 June 2019. Cllr Godden had sent a Freedom of Information request to the SDNPA Director of Planning regarding the resourcing of enforcement. District Cllr Lunn was following up outstanding enforcement cases. The new Chair of the SDNPA Planning Committee would also be contacted once appointed **ACTION MK/KL** The appeal on the provision of a crossover and driveway at No.1 The Fridays had been

- successful. (ii) SDNPA East Sussex Parishes representative – Cllr Vanessa Rowlands had been elected and would be coming to the next committee meeting to meet with councillors.
- c) Neighbourhood Planning – the next meeting would be held on 16 July. A spreadsheet was in preparation setting out the timetable and schedule of reporting for the Group's work. Consultations in the community had begun, and presentations made to local groups and clubs.
- d) The Group would need more space on the website **ACTION: LD**
- e) Finance – the balance at the end of June 2019 was £70,418.73
- f) Rights of Way and Highways – (i) members took note of the ESCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan review which would pass through further rounds of consultation prior to any changes being made. (ii) Verge in Downsvie Lane – the verge had been strimmed to a width of 1m but the hedge left untouched. This had apparently been done by ESCC, who were entitled to complain to Eastbourne Borough Council as the landowners. It was agreed that the parish council should organise the hedge cutting (**ACTION: PH to contact Mr Ellis**). (iii) Strimming of rights of way – a complaint had been received about the state of Footpath 7 (the continuation of Old Willingdon Road), and the continuation of Downsvie Lane across the parish boundary. Eastbourne Borough Council had been informed about the latter. It was agreed that all paths should be briefly surveyed and the council's mowing contractor requested to do any necessary additional work **ACTION: PH/PS**. (iv) Picnic tables on the village green – the new manager of The Tiger should be informed of the statutory restrictions **ACTION: KL**.
- g) Recreation Ground – (i) the RoSPA safety inspection carried out in June had raised concerns about the safety of the main swing and the state of the basket-ball supports. It was agreed that these should be removed at least temporarily **ACTION: PS/PH**. Other recommended maintenance works should be carried out by the relevant suppliers **ACTION: ND/KL**. (ii) Fencing of the play area – one more quote was required. Cllr Hill had this in hand. The cost was likely to be in excess of £4,000. It was agreed that the bid for a grant from the Big Lottery Fund should be increased to cover not only the fence but also an upgrade of the older equipment such as the main swing **ACTION: LD**. A budget for replacement of some items should be considered for the 2020-21 financial year **ACTION: KG**. (iii) Cricket Club Fun Day – this had been well supported.
- h) Fund Raising: East Dean in Bloom – members were requested to help with the remaining clearance work. The project had been well received by residents and shop owners, and pledges of financial support and practical help were continuing to come in. The amount spent to date was £733.63 (with £100 of discounts) and money was available for one more planter and some winter baskets. The surgery had been asked to remove an abandoned filing cabinet from the precinct. A question was raised about the ownership of the pavement outside the entrance to the Barn Stores **ACTION: KL to check**. There were a number of different types of notice board around the precinct which would benefit from a more consistent look e.g. with metal frames such as recently purchased by the Village Hall Trust. The council's own boards

needed replacing **ACTION: MK to ask the VHT for their supplier.** Members thanked Cllr d’Urso for her work on this successful project.

- i) Interpretative signage – members received a report of Cllr d’Urso’s meeting with the SDNPA Ranger and Interpretation officer on the improvement of signage on matters of visitor interest in the parish. The officers had agreed that signage would be valuable, especially if it took in Cuckmere Valley and Birling Gap. The SDNPA could prepare a base map of the village in the context of the Park, on which other types of information could be superimposed. The first sign would cost approx. £2,000 with subsequent uses of the same base map being cheaper. The project might be supported from the Community Infrastructure Levy to a maximum of 50% subject to match funding and planning permission. Local landowners might be invited to contribute. However, it was noted that the information boards at Friston Pond had been prepared relatively cheaply. Members agreed that a full report with costings should be brought to the council for decision in October **ACTION: LD.**
- j) East Sussex Fire and Rescue Annual Plan 2019-20 V.4a – the council took note.

C.68 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 14 on correspondence received since the June meeting, and the following matters were discussed:

- a) Trees on Crown land – the possibility of compulsory purchase to protect the environment was noted but members did not wish to pursue it.
- b) Replacement of memorial bench – two families had expressed an interest in donating a new bench and discussions were ongoing **ACTION: PH to contact one family.** The council hoped to make a decision in August.
- c) Walking Map 2 – this map still contained reference to The Drove and could not be used in its present form.
- d) Strimming of Footpath 7 (continuation of Old Willingdon Road) – this path might be the property of South East Water who should be strimming the sides **ACTION: TB to check/KL to contact S E Water**

C.69 Date of next meeting: Thursday 1st August 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....