



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held remotely on the Zoom platform on Thursday 7th May 2020, 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 (items C.212 – C.221), Cllr P Seeley, Cllr B Wheatley and Cllr D Wild

In attendance: K Larkin (Parish Clerk); D Picknell (Admin Officer)

There were no members of the public present.

Cllr K Godden moved a motion under SO10 to defer item 16 (Arboricultural Consultation and Tree Warden Actions) to the next council meeting on 4th June 2020. The motion was put to the meeting and carried by five votes to three (the Chair abstaining).

C.212 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - P Williamson (Tree Warden)

C.213 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.214 Minutes: - The minutes of the informal council meeting held on 5th March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

C.215 Amendment of Standing Orders

The council considered an addition to Standing Order 3a to state that: 'The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 permit the holding of remote meetings in virtual locations including internet locations, web addresses or conference calls, until 7th May 2021 (subject to review), provided that every member of the authority can be heard by every other member and by the public. All members, clerk and other staff, and any members of the public will be in attendance for the purposes of the 2020 Regulations if they are in remote attendance'.

RESOLVED – That the above amendment be made with immediate effect.

C.216 Business in Progress

The council took note of a report by the Clerk on progress made since the informal April meeting. The following points were discussed:

- a) Annual Governance and Accountability Return – the Lead Member confirmed that the accounts had been finalised and information supplied to the Internal Auditor as required
- b) Annual Report by the Chair – this general report on the previous year's activities would still be produced in the absence of an Annual Village Meeting

- c) Annual Parish Council Meeting – the requirement for an annual review of the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair had been waived for 2020 but could take place at any other council meeting during the year if desired
- d) Meetings on the Zoom platform – it was noted that more than three councillors could host such meetings if required
- e) Cyber-crime insurance replacement policy – no progress but in hand
ACTION: KL
- f) County Liaison (Strengthening Local Relationships) Meeting – no progress but in hand. The meeting scheduled for 10 April 2020 could not be held but a virtual meeting would be requested. **ACTION: KL**
- g) Use of precept for road maintenance – no progress currently expected, but Cllr Godden would review on a quarterly basis. **ACTION: KG**
- h) Cricket Club request to waive the season's hire fee – the Lead Member supported this request from the Club. The water had not been turned back on, and Business Stream had waived the standing charge for the duration of the closure, but must be informed when it was turned back on. Members agreed that if the club did play any matches towards the end of the season they should simply pay the daily rate for pavilion hire. Members also agreed to instruct the mowing contractor to do basic cuts of the cricket square as well as the outfield, but no extra cuts until further notice.

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

RESOLVED – That the Cricket Club's pavilion hire fee for 2020 be waived

C.217 Neighbourhood Plan

The Chair of the Steering Group stated that he would report at the June council meeting. Working Groups had been formed but were not meeting. The June report would review the Aims and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan generally, particularly in the light of the presentation by the SDNPA representatives at the parish Planning Committee meeting held on 17 March 2020.

C.218 Procurement of Works/Supplies for Projects

The council considered Report 9 by the Lead Member and the following items were discussed:

- a) Interpretation Boards – three quotes had been obtained covering art work, construction, delivery and fixing per board. All were around £3,500 but an application for grant funding up to a maximum of £2,000 (not to exceed 50% of the total cost) could be made to the South Downs National Park Authority. Actual funding was currently on hold. The artwork would cost around £2,000 and it was noted that if the council owned the copyright, further boards could be made at a lower cost, and the artwork used for other purposes. This was expected, but would be checked. In addition, a request had been made to the Village Hall Trustees for permission to fix one board to the wall of the Hall, so no structure would be required and installation costs would be minimal. A decision was awaited but might be delayed due to the lockdown.

RESOLVED – To approve in principle the provision of one interpretation board, subject to a grant being obtained from the SDNPA or another source, and subject to necessary permissions being obtained

- b) Wildflower strip on Recreation Ground – the proposal was to plant a 35m trial strip on the western boundary of the field (behind the bonfire site), with a rope or tape barrier to protect the site until the planting was established. Three quotes had been obtained. The overall cost would be approx. £250. The Cricket Club had requested that the new strip be low maintenance e.g. including yellow rattle to suppress the grass. Members noted this request which would be borne in mind subject to the advice of the Woodland Trust. (**ACTION: KL to notify the Club**). Planting would be done in the autumn.

RESOLVED – To approve the purchase of seed and equipment to create a trial wildflower strip at the Recreation Ground, at a cost of approx £250

- c) Planting of hedgerow tree species to complete biodiversity strip – A successful bid had also been placed with the Woodland Trust for a tree pack consisting of hedgerow species, which could be used to fill the gap in the existing Biodiversity Strip, as previously agreed. Delivery and planting would take place this November weather permitting. Members took note and congratulated Cllr d'Urso for obtaining a hedgerow tree pack at no cost to the council.

RESOLVED – That this report be noted

- d) Total outlay – members took note that the maximum spend required of the council for all the above items would be £2,610 and the minimum £1,812, not taking into account monies already allocated for projects in the budget for 2020/21.

RESOLVED - That this report be noted

C.219 Charity of the Year

The council considered Report 10 setting out the options for the choice of Charity of the Year 2020/21. In addition, the Lead Member reported that the JPK Project (Charity of the Year 2019/20) had been unable to complete the project supported by the council's donation, due to the collapse in fund raising activities caused by the Covid-19 lockdown; it was therefore suggested that the council make a supplementary donation to that project, in addition to supporting a new charity. In discussion, members strongly supported the bid from Care for the Carers, particularly as the percentage of carers known to be required in the village was relatively high, and the charity was both local and serving an unprecedented need. It was noted that some residents had in the past objected to the use of council funds to make donations, and that a sum equivalent to unclaimed councillor allowances had been allocated to the donations budget to meet this objection, but the increased demand could be over budget. However, it was argued that the cause of supporting local carers could hardly be bettered at the present time, and that Care for the Carers should be the Charity of the Year 2020/21. In addition, the £250 that would have been paid towards the setting up of the Village Fete (now cancelled) should be paid to the JPK Project as a supplementary donation. Members thanked Cllr Wheatley for her report.

RESOLVED - That the charity Care for the Carers be chosen as the Charity of the Year 2020/21

RESOLVED – That a supplementary donation of £250 be paid to the JPK Project forthwith.

C.220 New Dog Bin

The council considered Report 11 on the options for providing a new dog bin at the Upper Street entrance to the Twitten (Footpath 25). There was discussion as to how well used a dog bin would be in this location: some members of the public were reluctant to walk far to reach one, and this was a long path. Bags could now be disposed of in any litter bin but were often discarded on the spot. It was suggested that if a bin were provided at the Twitten there would be an equally good case for providing one at the entrance to Downs View Lane. Members requested costings for the purchase of a bin by the parish council as opposed to paying £500 for supply and installation of a bin by Wealden District Council **ACTION: KL**. The matter would be reviewed in June.

C.221 Payments and Receipts

The council considered Report 12 - the Schedule of Payments for May 2020 and receipts for April 2020. *[Note: the complete Schedule is appended to these Minutes]*. It was noted that an additional payment of £587 should be made for the emergency work done to prevent the overflow of Friston Pond, and this was agreed.

Cllr Seeley reported that three new defibrillator pads would be required in the next month at a total cost of £123 plus VAT. The pads had a limited life, and there should be two in each unit at all times. Two more would be required when eventually a defibrillator was handed over to the Beachy Head Chaplaincy. Members agreed that these should all be purchased from the ring-fenced defibrillator fund. Cllr Seeley would place the orders and prepare a cash flow forecast for the next two years, for consideration at a future meeting **ACTION: PS**. Members thanked Cllr Seeley for his work on this project.

RESOLVED – That the payments totalling £4,523.24 be approved and the clerk be authorised to make the payments

Cllr Hill left the meeting to ring the church bells in support of the NHS

C.222 Reports:

- a) Chair of the Council – the chair thanked the clerk and the admin officer for their work during the lockdown
- b) Planning Committee – the council took note of the draft minutes of the remote committee meeting held on 21 April 2020. The Chair of the Committee thanked the admin officer for her work during the lockdown. The South Downs National Park Authority's Planning Committee would not be meeting in May and more cases were being determined under delegated powers, but this did not directly affect East Dean and Friston.

- c) Finance – the council took note of the Budget Monitoring report for the period ended 30 April 2020 (Report 14). The first instalment of the precept had been received (£30,622.50), so the accounts were cash positive. There were no significant variations from the budget as yet.
- d) Rights of Way and Highways – arrangements should be made to set up the next Strengthening Local Relationships meeting using Zoom **ACTION: KL/PS**
- e) Recreation Ground – see item c.216(h) above
- f) Fund Raising - see item C.218 above. The Lead Member reported that funds were available to support work related to the pandemic. All members were invited to send in creative ideas. A further announcement on the extension or partial release of the lockdown was expected from the government on 10th May. **ACTION: all members.**

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

C.223 Correspondence

The council took note of Report 15 on correspondence received, and the following points were discussed:

- a) Request for notice on public right of way – there was concern that if notices were put on one path there could be pressure to put them on all paths through the Estate. This particular path from Downs View Lane to Sussex Gardens was short and straight, so that social distancing should be feasible.
- b) Moving the cricket square – it was agreed that the Lead Member for the Recreation Ground should be put in touch with the new President of the Cricket Club **ACTION: KL/ND**
- c) Support for the village hall – a government relief fund had been set up to make grants of £10,000 to qualifying organisations. The Village Hall Trust should qualify and an application had been made to Wealden District Council. At present therefore the parish council did not need to contribute.
- d) Advice on public health issues – members noted an offer of advice from a qualified resident but noted that all parishes were required to abide by government advice and not to deviate from it. The offer would therefore be declined.

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

C.224 Date of next meeting: Thursday 4th June 2020 at 6.30 pm by remote means

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.59 pm

Signed.....(Chair)

Date.....