

**Date:** 03 June 2021

**Title:** Report Item 7 – Business in Progress

**By:** K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

**Purpose:**

- a) To provide an update on progress since the May meeting
- b) To propose a one-off pavilion hire under delegated power
- c) To report on items coming up for future consideration

**Recommendation:**

- a) To note the progress report
- b) To agree that a one-off pavilion hire can be authorised under ordinary delegated power
- c) To give preliminary consideration to future items of business

---

**a) Reports from the clerk on actions since the May meeting:**

- **AGAR 2021** – all documents have been submitted to the External Auditor and the notice regarding the exercise of Public Rights has been published on the council website and the noticeboard as required.
- **Online banking mandate** – there has been no progress as yet: the mandate cannot be changed online at present, and the phone number given as an alternative is constantly engaged. Many councils will be changing their mandates following their APCMs.
- **Council Guard insurance renewal** – this has gone through.
- **Gift of defibrillator** – the handover is now scheduled to take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, with the Chair and Vice Chair and two former Responders attending on behalf of the council.
- **Repairs at the play area** – Wicksteed has been asked to quote for labour, the parts having been received and paid for.
- **Tree safety survey and insurance** – Climpsons have been asked to provide a quotation for the works that may be required at Friston Green, for consideration at a future meeting. A response is awaited.
- **Removal of TV mast** – the old mast at the top of The Link has now gone, and the site has been made good. The contractor apologises for the delay which was due to logistical issues as well as Covid restrictions.
- **Roll-out of 5G** – a response has been sent to the NALC consultation, emphasising that where the upgrade is deemed necessary for technical reasons, it must be done, not set aside for commercial convenience.
- **Signing the footpath from Upper Street to Friston Church** – ESCC Highways and Rights of Way have both been asked to advise, and ROW have passed the matter to Traffic and Safety as the sign would be on the street/main highway [Case Number 00580733]
- **All-weather table tennis** - a response has been sent to the resident explaining why this proposal cannot proceed.
- **Information on council assets** – summary information with plans has been supplied to all councillors.

## **b) One-off pavilion hire:**

- In normal times the clerk is able to issue hire agreements for one-off hires of the pavilion on standard terms without consulting the council, simply checking whether the proposed hire would conflict with existing arrangements by the Cricket Club and/or the pavilion caretaker. A request has come in from a resident who is interested in hiring the pavilion for band rehearsals, and would like a one-off hire to check feasibility. The band has 5-6 members. There seems to be no problem with authorising a one-off hire, but if the trial session works for the band they might want a regular weekly booking, probably from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm on a weekday. They would be willing to proceed on a month by month basis. They would also want permission to park vehicles on the field, outside the boundary of the cricket field. With the future prospects in mind, do councillors have any objection to a one-off hire?

## **c) Future items of business:**

- **Arrangements for future face to face/hybrid meetings** – the Chair has drafted a paper on possible arrangements for hybrid meetings which should be incorporated in Standing Orders if they are deemed both valid and workable. A copy of the document has been sent to the East Sussex Association of Local Councils, and passed up by them to the National Association for legal advice. A copy has also been sent to the informal Wealden Clerks' forum to gauge their reactions. A copy is appended to this report (Annex A). The Chair states: "Technically, I don't see any great problem. We would need to purchase a wide angle stand-alone webcam and tripod, also possibly a separate microphone. These would be plugged into a laptop connected to zoom so that all councillors present could be seen. The laptop would be connected to the video projector so that councillors could also see any remote contributors. Debbie could continue to act as host/gatekeeper either in person or remotely. If this proposal was adopted at the 29th June meeting, then the arrangement could be tried out at the July 20th Planning Meeting and, if successful, adopted at the 5th August PC meeting. These meetings and all subsequent ones could therefore be held in the small hall."
- **Request for waiver of pavilion hire fee** – the council has agreed that Micheldene W.I. can hire the pavilion on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The W.I. requests that the normal hire fee of £25 plus VAT be waived as this is a charitable event: July 5<sup>th</sup> is National Frontline Workers Day, a celebration of the NHS, and the W.I. will be raising funds for the Friends of Eastbourne. During the lockdown the W.I. has done a great deal of charitable work and disbursed over £2,000 of aid to local worthwhile causes. It did not apply for grant aid from the parish council in 2020/21 to defray its own costs.
- **Relocation of dog bins** – members will recall that provisionally it has been agreed locally that the following three bins should be moved: (1) from the recreation ground on Gilbert's Drive; (2) from the Village Hall car park; and (3) from Crowlink lane adjacent to Friston Pond. Wealden District Council have been asked to confirm the suitability or otherwise of the following three new locations: (1) Footpath No 33b at end of The Link; (2) Upper Street footpath No25; and (3) Old Willingdon Road on the opposite side of the road to Footpath No8. Wealden has responded with some queries about the type, number and location of bins, and Cllr Seeley is dealing with these queries. He will report further at the meeting. In addition, ESCC Rights of Way have been asked to advise whether the bins in the new locations could be mounted on existing street furniture (signposts/bollards) which are ROW property. A response is awaited, but it is expected that for two of the locations a licence may

be required from ESCC Rights of Way for siting the bins, just as would be needed on the highway. The third location is on a verge at the entrance to Bridleway 33 and probably belongs to the parish council.

- **Police Community Support Action Group** – at present there is an arrangement whereby smaller parishes are clustered with larger towns to pass any policing concerns or queries up the line (EDF is clustered with Polegate). Some smaller areas have been lobbying to have direct access, which has generally been refused over concerns that meetings would become too long with too many people attending. However, it is now agreed that the next meeting will pilot direct representation. However only ONE representative from each parish will be able to attend, this should either be a councillor or the clerk. The meetings are usually about two hours and the next one will be on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021 starting at 10.00 am. The clerk of Polegate will need to know, by the end of August, who will be attending. The meeting is not intended to be too detailed; crime statistics are often discussed and some of the information is confidential and should not be shared publicly. At present meetings are held on Zoom and this is likely to continue.
- **New Police Community Support Officer** – there is welcome news that Scott McCallum will shortly take over as PCSO for this parish. He is based at Hailsham police station as part of the Wealden Community Policing Team, C Section. He is keen to find out about local issues and make contacts in the area, and has been invited to attend a future council meeting.
- **South Coast Challenge** – advance notice has been received that this annual walking challenge will take place on 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and the route will pass across the parish following the South Downs Way. Full information is on the website: <https://www.southcoastchallenge.com/>

## **Possible arrangements for Hybrid (physical and remote) council meetings**

Hybrid Parish Council meetings are ones that take place in a normal setting with councillors physically present but which are simultaneously made available on a suitable remote conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom) to enable remote observation and participation. The need for hybrid meetings arises due to the advisory limitations on numbers gathering indoors, for avoidance of infection, and would be based on the size of the room where meetings take place. The below considerations would need to be incorporated in Standing Orders for hybrid meetings to be permitted.

1. Hybrid meetings shall only take place in premises that have facilities for internet connection of sufficient quality as to permit the live streaming of sound and vision.
2. The Chair of the meeting, whether Council Chair, Vice-chair or another councillor appointed as acting chair, must be physically present throughout the meeting.
3. Should technical problems interrupt the live streaming during the meeting then the Chair shall decide whether to continue as a physical meeting only or abandon the meeting.
4. Under Mandatory Standing Orders, Councillors are normally expected to attend meetings physically and would be required to do so for at least 50% of the meetings in a year, with any councillor unable or unwilling to do so being asked to step down. Should a councillor be unable to attend a particular meeting physically then they could offer an apology for absence or opt to attend the meeting remotely. If the latter, then they would be entitled to speak during the meeting but not to vote on any resolution. Quorum number rules would apply only to councillors physically present.
5. Non-voting statutory attendees, such as local MP, County and District councillors and lay advisors, may attend meetings physically or remotely.
6. Council officers should attend the meeting physically if possible, but may attend remotely, provided they are able to carry out their duties effectively by such means.
7. Members of the public who wish to make representations during the public session may do so physically or remotely by requesting the right to attend no later than 24 hours before the meeting. The text of their submission should also be submitted by this deadline. Physical attendance will only be agreed if the maximum safe limit for the room is not exceeded.
8. Should the number of councillors, officers and statutory attendees physically attending be predicted, at any time before the start of the meeting, to total the maximum safe limit for the room in which the meeting is being held, then no further members of the public will be able to attend physically. Physical attendance by members of the public shall be on a “first come, first served” basis. There will be no limit on the number of members of the public attending remotely.
9. The agenda for the meeting must contain details of how members of the public may obtain remote access to the meeting, either as observers or (subject to the conditions in 7 above) to participate in the public session.
10. The council shall possess adequate equipment and operating licences to permit the live streaming of sound and vision of the meeting, ensuring that all councillors may be seen and heard clearly by remote participants and observers. Designated councillors, and/or officers shall be given sufficient training to set up and operate the equipment.