

Date: 07 October 2021

Title: Report Item 6 – Business in Progress

By: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

Purpose: To provide an update on progress since the meeting held on 05 August 2021

Recommendation:

- a) To note the progress report
- b) To consider a regular maintenance contract for Friston Pond
- c) To approve the storage of wicket covers on the recreation ground
- d) Neighbourhood Plan – to review conditions for recommending this project
- e) To approve the addition of the Vice Chair to the list of bank signatories

The following are matters for decision:

- **Friston Pond maintenance** – a resident with relevant experience has offered to do pond maintenance at a cost of £250 for an initial clearance, starting in October 2021. There is a budget of £750 for pond maintenance in 2021/22 (none yet spent). The contractor would thereafter do regular maintenance work at the pond. Council is requested to consider the arrangement and the initial expenditure of £250.
- **Wicket covers and sight screens** – *[previous reference Minute C.441 (d), from the informal meeting held on 3rd June 2021.]* The Cricket Club has received conditional approval for a full grant for the wicket covers, which can therefore be provided without sponsorship logos. The Club would like to have “welcome to EDFCC” and their tiger logo on the covers. Their aim is ‘to carry on and communicate our warm community welcome, this has worked tremendously this year with quite a few residents attending our fun day for cricket tea. Also the purpose of the covers is to maximise availability of the wicket which means we’ll cancel less games due to bad weather and that makes us more attractive to members and potential members. Also the colour of the covers can be green or white’. The project to provide sight screens is on hold until next year. Council is requested to approve the use of wicket covers.
- **Neighbourhood Plan** – *[previous reference Minute C.440, from the council meeting on 5th August 2021.]* The parish council undertook to review the remit and membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in October 2021 or when national planning policy proposals had been clarified. Central government has now indicated that planning controls will not be compulsorily lifted to facilitate increased house building.
- **Bank signatories** – following the change of Chair and Vice Chair in August 2021, council may wish to review the banking mandate to include the Vice Chair.

The following are matters of report:

- **Conclusion of External Audit 2020/21** – the clerk/RFO is pleased to report that the Annual Audit 2021/22 which included an Intermediate Level Review has been concluded with a certificate from the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn, stating that ‘in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.’ There are no other matters they wish to draw to the attention of the parish council. The notice of conclusion of audit was published in the prescribed manner on 16 August 2021.
- Bin area in Downlands Way Precinct – this has now been cleared out and opened up. A note of thanks to councillors has come from a resident.
- Speed limit reduction - the following link sets out East Sussex County Council’s criteria for setting speed limits: <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/road-safety/antisocial-driving/speeding>. This alternative link comes from a Department of Transport Circular: <http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2013-0106/DfTCircular01-2013SettingLocalSpeedLimits.pdf>
- Parking on the verges of the Birling Gap Road – councillors have been in correspondence with East Sussex Highways about the possibility of roping off the west side verge, but a response is still awaited. Overgrowth on the verges was also reported during the summer and the Steward was sent to investigate but reported no serious problem. The verge is scheduled to be strimmed on 12th October as a matter of course.
- Management of the Cuckmere Estuary – the council has lobbied the Environment Agency in support of the local Water Board’s application to manage the estuary. Technically this means that the EA should designate the Cuckmere as an ‘ordinary watercourse’ under local management rather than as a ‘main river’ under EA management. The practical effect of the change would be to allow proactive management of river levels and shingle build-up by the local Water Board, instead of waiting for action by the EA which can only be triggered by an actual risk to life and property. The contact has been acknowledged and passed to the local Solent and South Downs area team under enquiry reference 210927/keh08.
- Mobile phone coverage – Maria Caulfield has received a copy of the technical report prepared for Telefonika and has agreed to pursue the matter of installing an additional mast, but has commented that at the time when the mast proposal was ‘live’ there was opposition from some residents.
- Appointments – external bodies have been advised of the changes of councillor representatives agreed at the August council meeting. The current internal auditor (Peter J Consultants) has been invited to do one more year and has agreed to do so
- Village Chippy – the proprietors have received confirmation by email that their change of day to Wednesdays (alternate weeks) is agreed by the council. There have been no further reports of altercations.
- Donations have been paid to Wealden Citizens Advice, Cuckmere Buses and the Beachy Head Chaplaincy Team, as directed at the August council meeting, and each has responded with thanks.
- The SDNPA has been notified of the use of 2020/21 CIL money for Speedwatch equipment
- An appreciative message has been sent to the National Trust about the redecoration of the Farrar Hall and has been forwarded to the Trust’s lead ranger who manages the Countryside for the Eastern side of the South Downs.
- There were no collections from the relocated dog bin at The Link in the first month, or the second, until recent days. Wealden did advise their contractors, Biffa, of the new

arrangements on 23 July and have since chased it up. A problem is now also being reported at the second relocated bin at the junction of Old Willingdon Road and Footpath 8. The parish should not pay for the period when there was no service. Biffa is said to be affected by the shortage of HGV drivers. The new bin in Upper Street will be affixed shortly and Wealden will then be advised that collections should commence.

- Post Office – Maria Caulfield MP has advised that it is the Shepherds Café that is of interest to host a new sub-post office.
- Footpath 5 (Friston Forest) – the concerns raised by a resident, plus recommended improvements to the signage, have been referred to the ESCC Rights of Way team. A response is still awaited. This will go on the next Strengthening Local Relationships agenda
- Footpath 26a at Birling Manor – This too has been referred to ESCC Rights of Way and will go on the next SLR agenda
- Tree safety survey and insurance – an enquiry has been sent to the Highway Land Information team at county hall regarding the ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the trees at Friston Green which stand on the highway verge. A response is awaited.
- Remembrance Sunday – Martin Bunce of the Eastbourne Silver Band will play the reveille and last post; the parish council is requested to pay £30 for this service.
- Overgrowth on highway footway – during the summer a resident reported that the pavement from Downs View Lane to Gore Farm Close was obstructed by vegetation. A councillor has since visited the site and has reported that no further action is now required.