



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD

on 21st July 2020 at 7.00pm
via Zoom

1. Present

Councillors John Gillies (JG: Chairman), Nikki Terry (NT), Sue Carroll (SC), Sarah Last (SL), Lesley Prosser (LP), and Richard Sellick (RS). District Councillor William Meyer (WM) and Alison Stevens (AS) were also in attendance. There were no members of the public present.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Smart and the reasons for his absence were approved by the Full Council.

Apologies for absence were also received from County Councillor Sarah Osborne.

2. Public Questions

There were no questions from any members of the public.

3. Updates from the County and District Councillors

County Councillor Osborne sent a written report in which she said;

'Cabinet this month reported that the unprecedented uncertainty of Government funding of Local Authorities is having a significant impact on ESCC, leaving it unable at this point to set budgets going forward. Sustainable funding is vital if the County Council is to deliver the critical services the residents of East Sussex need. There is further uncertainty about the potential impact of the end of the transition phase of Brexit on the economy, the council's responsibilities and their access to goods and services.

- The long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the economy are yet to be fully understood, but the number of people in East Sussex claiming Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit and seeking work more than doubled between March and May 2020; 68% of businesses in East Sussex are furloughing staff; and 30% have accessed loans, grants and or business rates relief.
- At a national level, Government funding that ESCC will receive between 2021/22–2023/24 is yet to be confirmed. The Spending Review (SR) 2019 was for a single year only. Additionally, the Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Retention reform have been delayed until at least 2021/22.
- At a local level, the impact of the pandemic and economic downturn on income collection rates for Council Tax, growth on the Council Tax base and the levels of Business Rates have yet to be understood and modelled out.
- The delay in the Business Rates Retention reform and the impact of business failure arising from the economic downturn has the potential to significantly reduce income in 2021/22 onwards.
- ESCC expenditure to be incurred and projected lost income from coronavirus is £17m greater than the funding they have received.

- There are no unallocated reserves that can be used to meet ongoing pressures in 2021/22 and beyond, therefore, it is essential that the Government's future financial settlement recognises the burden falling on local authorities as a consequence of COVID-19, as the pressures are exceptional and beyond what could reasonably be planned for.

District Councillor Meyer reported:

- The Iford Farm Estate consolidation (planning application) had been rejected by the South Downs National Park Authority on a 7 to 1 vote at the Planning Committee held on June 11th. Councillor Meyer said he was encouraged by the quality of the debate at Committee, the conduct of the Chairman and the way fellow Members had clearly done their research beforehand and attended the meeting with open minds. The application was finally rejected on two grounds. First and foremost, the primary duty to protect and uphold the South Downs landscape. The second reason related to the fact that no plan was put forward by the applicant for the many redundant buildings that would have become available if the application were to have been granted as recommended by Officers. Normally, many of these buildings would be demolished and not left to be repurposed at some future date for an as yet undecided use.
- The decision means that Egrets Way cannot, at least for the time being, be completed along the stretch of land (1.5 miles) belonging to Iford Estate. This section of the proposed cycle route had been tied to the application by Planning Officers prior to the Planning Committee. There is the standard right of Appeal.
- Concerns had been raised about the safety of spreading treated sewage sludge on local agricultural land in and around Swanborough Farm. Rodmell Parish Council understands the proposal had subsequently been dropped.
- Since so many Ouse Valley residents want to see a safer C7 for all road users, work is now ongoing (lead by Wendy Brewer and POLO) to fundraise for a traffic management consultant. This would form part of a wider process, aimed at reinvigorating the C7 action group, that had formerly been very active in progressing this project.
- The SDNPA may well be supportive of such a project as the C7 is seen as a strategic country road and as a gateway to the South Downs National Park.
- In the light of the Village Hall's failure to obtain refurbishment funding from Veolia, he would find out what funds, if any, the District Council and the SDNP have to help village halls.

District Councillor Meyer then left the meeting.

The meeting was then opened.

4. Disclosures of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest on any items on this agenda nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19th May 2020

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 19th May 2020, were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

6. Planning

The following planning application had been rejected by the South Downs National Park;

SDNP/19/03768/FUL - Iford Farm The Street Iford BN7 3EU - Consolidation of Iford Estate Farming Operations to include the construction of agricultural buildings (for housing of livestock, grain handling and storage), a silage clamp and new access road from Piddinghoe Road.

This had been discussed in more detail under minute 3.

7. Maintenance Reviews

- 7.1: To consider the higher risk works recommended in the Annual Play Park Report – The Play Park had been closed during the lockdown in accordance with the Government's initial recommendations on social distancing rules. Before it was re-opened, Councillors Sellick and Gillies would carry out a risk assessment of the higher risk items and it will also incorporate the latest Covid-19 recommendations, as appropriate. The Clerk would circulate some suggestions for signage wording to councillors in the meantime.
- 7.2: Hedge cutting at the Dicklands – Councillors asked the Clerk to ask the contractors who will be tidying the hedge at the Dicklands to cut it in September after the bird nesting season
- 7.3: Defibrillator Report – SECAmb had replaced the defibrillator at the pub with a new one. Councillor Terry will continue to monitor it and report back when the pads and/or battery needs replacing.

8. Clerk's and Councillor's Reports

8.1: Legal Matters

- General update on the school and playground progress – there was nothing new to report on this occasion.

8.2: Other updates

- Website and Email Problems: Councillors resolved to investigate restructuring the website by separating out the Parish Council section. There would also be an Accessibility Statement asking anyone experiencing any difficulties to contact the Clerk to send the information in a different format. This would allow the Parish Council to assess whether it needs to precept for a new website.
- Joint action with Monk's House: County Councillor Osborne said she has chased up the County Council about the repairs needed at the Street but unfortunately the Highway Steward claimed it did not meet the criteria for being repaired. She said she pushed and pushed but to no avail but she will take pictures and try again. Councillors asked the Clerk to ask ESCC what the criteria were. Councillor Gillies to send her photographs to forward.
- Tree Warden –nothing new to report on this occasion.
- Countryside, agriculture and allotments – The Parish Council was asked if it would encourage residents to share their gardens with others who wish to cultivate them. The Parish Council had potential liability issues and referred the matter to the Rodmell Horticultural Society for their members to consider.
- Repairs to the flint wall between the car park and Martens Field – The District Council was 'trying to find a suitable contractor, one of which will be out shortly to see if the wall repair is something they can do'. The Clerk would continue to chase the District Council for progress reports.
- Sports Field, Mowing and Hedge Trimming – Mr Barnard would continue to cut the grass at the Sports Field. The Cricket Club was due to start playing soon and will be asked to submit a Risk Assessment which takes into account the Covid-19 regulations.
- Play Equipment – to update on the current situation regarding the Covid-19 Regulations – This was covered under 7.1.
- Communication with Northease Residents – Councillor Carroll said a resident at Northease had asked her to raise the need for a mirror at the dangerous junction of Whiteway Lane and the C7. The Clerk said permission would be needed from the County Council. She would ask and let councillors know what it says.
- Village Hall Committee – The Village Hall was open again with bookings from September. The Parish Council would review its position on meeting in person then.
- Recent repairs to C7 surface and C7 Campaign update – Councillor Gillies circulated the following statement before the meeting;

'Highways have told me that there will be two more days of surface dressing works this week. They say;

"We will be commencing works on Wednesday 22nd July night working on the section from Valley Road junction in Newhaven to Southease village, and on Thursday 23rd July night, we will be working on the section from Southease village to the Abergavenny Arms pub and then the section from Whiteway Cottage to the entrance to Northease Farm.

Just to warn you that there will be some loose aggregate on the road following the surface dressing works, as the road cannot be swept until 24 hours after it has been laid; this is to allow the dressing to 'bed in' under the action of the traffic. During this period, we need motorists to stick to the advisory 20 mph speed limit. It will then receive another two sweeps to remove the loose aggregate before it is lined and the new road studs are installed; these works will also need to be carried out under a road closure at night and these are currently programmed for 15th & 17th August"

He hopes to provide another update on the 22nd July. He has also asked contractors to make sure asphalt does not end up in the drains again.

- The possibility of extending the footpath between Northease and Rodmell – Councillor Carroll was to meet Mr Robinson again and would let Councillors know the outcome.

9. Brief Report from the Clerk and/or Councillors

The POLO meeting raised safety concerns about the spreading of sewage sludge on local agricultural land. This was covered earlier on in the meeting.

10. Finance Report

Councillors resolved;

10.1: To approve the accounts for this financial year – the accounts to the 25th June 2020 were received and approved by all.

10.2: The following payments were approved;

		<u>£:</u>
Lewes District Council	Dog Bin Emptying	93.60
A Stevens	May Salary	245.70
A Stevens	June Salary	245.70
HMRC	PAYE	468.00

10.3: Councillors resolved to use the General Power of Competence to award Pauline Burnaby-Davis a £25 gift voucher for looking after the Pavilion; Dame Kiri Te Kanawa a £25 gift voucher for emptying the Mill Lane dog bin, Marcus Brown a £25 gift voucher for cutting the grass at the Dicklands and Jo Mortimer a £25 gift voucher for setting up and running the library.

They also agreed to send some flowers to Lucie Sargent for everything she has done for the parish during the Coronavirus Crisis.

11. Consultations

Councillors decided they would respond to the Draft East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan individually as residents.

12. The next Full Council Meeting is planned for Tuesday 15th September 2020, items for the agenda to the Clerk by Friday 4th September 2020.

There was no further business and this meeting closed at 8.15pm.