



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD

on 17th January 2023 at 8.00pm
at Rodmell Village Hall

1. Present

Councillors John Gillies (JG: Chairman), Lesley Prosser (LP), Sue Carroll (SC), Claire Dishington (CD), David Smart (DS) and Nikki Terry (NT).

Mr Chris Kirk from Northease School, Mrs Lindy Smart from Northease School, District Councillor William Meyer and Alison Stevens (Parish Clerk). There were no members of the public present. [Shouldn't we list Lindy as a member of the public? I think she was there as David's wife rather than an official school representative]

2. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

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

3. Public Questions

There were no questions from any members of the public.

4. Updates from the County Councillor and District Councillor

District Councillor Meyer;

- i. Said he will not be at the Parish Council's next meeting because it falls within purdah.
- ii. Confirmed he has looked into how election charges are calculated and is satisfied they have been well thought through and properly costed.
- iii. Announced he will be standing for re-election in May.
- iv. Said that changes are being made at the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) as a result of the reduction in funding.
- v. Encouraged councillors to put themselves forward to represent their Councils at the SDNP.
- vi. Would like there to be more of a 'soft border' for larger developments.
- vii. Confirmed Lewes District Council has yet to decide what its precept for the new financial year will be.

There was no report from the County Councillor on this occasion.

5. Disclosures of Interests

Councillors Smart and Carroll declared an interest in the planning application for Northease Farm (SDNP/22/05392/FUL). They left the room for and did not take part in the vote.

6. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 15th November 2022

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 15th November 2022, were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting was suspended at this point so that councillors could ask the applicant questions.

Would seem more logical for all this to go under the actual planning item?

In answer to Councillor's questions Mr Kirk confirmed;

- The classroom in the application is used by both the senior and middle school.
- Class sizes are small because the children using them have special educational needs.
- They initially planned to have a permanent structure but a combination of bad management and a poor Ofsted Inspection led to falling student numbers and a subsequent reduction in funding.
- Mistakes have been made in the past. Planning permission expired and was not reapplied for.
- Pupils attend from East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton.
- If this application is refused, some of the children will be accommodated in the main school but **some** will have to leave.
- There are blank spaces in the timetable because teachers use the room for lesson planning and holding one to one sessions **then?**
- The portacabin is well hidden and blends in when seen from the Downs because it has a dark roof. The South Downs National Park Authority disagrees and feels the building is unsuitable.
- The portacabin has passed all its safety checks.
- Children are no longer dropped off or collected by minibus because the County Council dictates how they travel to and from the school. The planned overflow car park should help ease congestion at drop off and pick up times.

7. Planning

7.1: Planning Applications – SDNP/22/05392/FUL - Northease Manor School Newhaven Road Northease East Sussex BN7 3EY - Retention of an existing classroom unit and creation of overflow car parking area – Rodmell Parish Council resolved that it has no objections to this application but councillors agreed they would like to see a long term plan in place. **[I assume that this will be made known to the planners?]**

The meeting was then re-opened.

7.2: The National Planning Policy Framework Consultation – Changes have been made to the National Planning Policy Framework. Councillors resolved to respond to the consultation as individuals.

8. Maintenance Reviews

8.1: Defibrillator Report – Councillor Prosser checked the battery and found it to be sound.

8.2: Maintenance Works Play Park/Pavilion – Councillors resolved to continue with the existing arrangements for the 2023 mowing season. The Clerk will let the contractor know.

9. Clerk's and Councillor's Reports

9.1: Legal Matters - The new owner of the former school has confirmed they will release a press statement **in due course** on what its future use will be.

At the last meeting Councillor Smart reported there was chain link fencing lying on the floor in the playground. Councillor Dishington will ask the owner of the Old School House to remove it.

9.2: Other updates

- Website and Email Problems – The website is now eight years old and work has begun to upgrade it.
- Tree Warden – The Parish Council has received three applications for tree works since its last meeting, namely SDNP/22/0444/TPO, SDNP/22/05317/TCA and SDNP/22/05514TCA. Each application was carefully considered by Councillor Smart who said that as the works have been recommended by an expert there was no need

for the Parish Council to comment any further. Details of each application can be found on the SDNPA website.

- Countryside, agriculture and allotments – Councillor Smart asked the Clerk to send out the latest allotment agreements to the allotment holders. He will then arrange for their cheques to go to the landowner. There is to be no change in the rent charged. He also reported that the agricultural pump at the river is broken and is contributing to the flooding at the Brooks. A temporary pump has been installed. He also asked the Clerk to write to a householder and ask them to stop their gardener blowing leaves out from their property because they are blocking the drains.
- Repairs to the Street – There was nothing new to report.
- Sports Field, mowing and hedge trimming – The Parish Council has received two quotes for a new gate at the entrance to The Croft but a volunteer [it was stated to be South Farm, so shouldn't we acknowledge this?] has offered to do the work for nothing. The Parish Council would like to thank them for their kind offer which they agreed to accept. It was also resolved to continue with the grass cutting arrangements and pay the resident [I don't think it was a resident, but David will confirm] who cuts the grass for any strimming that arises when he does so.
- Communication with Northease residents – Councillor Carroll said she was very pleased to see a large turnout at the pub to celebrate the opening of the new permissive path.
- Safer C7 Report – Councillor Carroll reported that the Project has submitted several applications for grant funding. Some of their applications were refused because the organisations they applied to don't award money for roads. Feedback from the National Lottery recommended the Project should try crowdfunding first because it would prove community interest. It was noted that Piddinghoe Parish Council has commissioned a separate study and it is now out for consultation. Its Chairman is going to attend the next Safer C7 Meeting.
- Progress on the Permissive Footpath – It was resolved to host an opening ceremony at the Abergavenny Arms to celebrate the opening of the path. The Parish Council also agreed to contribute £120 towards the refreshments.
- Egrets Way –
 - i. Riverside Park to Piddinghoe (Phase 5) - Contractors are back on site to complete the path but the top-surfacing will need to be done in dry weather. Work is expected to be finished soon and open for use; adding another 1.7km to the Egrets Way route. It is hoped to have an opening event later in the year.
 - ii. Rodmell to Ham Lane (Phase 6) – There are plans to resolve the collapsed drain issue. Work is expected to resume in early April.

10. Brief Report from the Clerk and/or Councillors

- Update from the latest POLO Meeting – There has not been a POLO Meeting since the last Rodmell Parish Council Meeting.
- Update on the latest meeting of the Lewes District Association of Local Councils (LDALC) – The meeting was to take place on 28th November but it was postponed.
- Village Hall Committee Meeting –The minutes of the latest Village Hall Committee Meeting will be circulated upon receipt. Councillor Dishington agreed to take up an issue with the booking system.

11. Finance Report

Councillors resolved;

11.1: To approve the accounts to the 05th January 2023.

11.2: To approve the following payments;

		£:
Lewes DC	Dog Bin Emptying	93.60
National Trust	Wayleave	1.00
A Stevens	November Salary	613.75
A Stevens	December Salary	369.08
HMRC	PAYE	292.80

12. South East Water Consultation – Councillor Carroll agreed to draft a reply which she will circulate to all the councillors for their comments before submission.
13. The next Full Council Meeting is planned for Tuesday 21st March 2023, items for the agenda need to be with the Clerk by Friday 10th March 2023.

IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM ON THIS AGENDA, THE PRESS AND PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE NEXT ITEM UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT.

14. Recruitment of a new Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

It was resolved to appoint the existing Clerk to handle the recruitment process ie; help with drafting the vacancy, receiving applications, identifying suitable candidates, arranging interviews on the Council's behalf, providing interview questions, checking references of the successful candidate and then drafting the contract of employment. The vacancy will be advertised on the ESALC website. The interview panel will consist of Councillors Dishington, Carroll and the existing Clerk.

There was no further business and the meeting finished at 9.55pm.