

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING

Minutes of Wadhurst Parish Council Full Council meeting held on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at The Pavilion, Sparrows Green Recreation Ground, South View Road, Wadhurst, TN5 6TW.

Present: Cllr Gadd (Chair), Cllr C Moore, Cllr P Moore, Cllr Smith, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Griffin, Cllr Crawford and Cllr Bullock. Also present: ESCC Cllr Standley and Claudine Feltham (Clerk)

Member of public present: PCSO Andrew Ratcliffe

MINUTES

1. To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Edwards, Cllr Shairp and WDC Cllr Howell

2. To receive declarations of personal, prejudicial and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda and updates to members' register of interests.

Cllr Gadd declared an interest in respect of agenda item 10.7 as a Trustee of Wadhurst Institute Hall and Field (WIHF) CIO.

Cllr Anderson declared an interest in respect of agenda item 10.4 as owner of Weald Heritage Ltd.

3. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes.

PCSO Ratcliffe provided the parish council with an update, and confirmed that he is again the point of contact for Sussex Police for Wadhurst (Frant and Mayfield).

Wealden is quite a rural area, so he went to work in another area for 3 months, to broaden skills in other areas of policing

PCSO advised members that there is a new safeguarding team at Uplands Academy, and he has been working with them to deal with any anti-social behaviour in the community. He attends Safeguarding meetings with them, engaging with those who maybe involved in anti-social behaviour.

Overall crime levels are very low in this area of the district. However, recently there have been thefts of vans (with tools stored in the back), 4 vehicles have been stolen from areas surrounding Wadhurst.

Cyber-crime has gone down a little and this may be due to increased awareness.

DISC is an operation for sharing information within businesses in the area. There has been a trial in Heathfield and Hailsham. PCSO Ratcliffe will liaise with Wadhurst businesses about this.

Cllr Gadd: a couple of years ago I went around with a different PCSO's looking at area of issues, for example the football pavilion behind Commemoration Hall, and also the issue of access obstruction into Blacksmiths Lane. This continues to be constant obstruction, however, East Sussex Highways will not put a no parking sign there, so the issue remains.

PCSO Ratcliffe advised that they have been directed to do more foot patrol, when time permits, and will go around this area more, and will keep an eye on the anti-social behaviours.

Cllr Gadd advised that outside Primary School there was also issue with parents parking right on the bend, which is dangerous, and requested that this is also monitored.

4. County Councillor and District Councillor reports.

Cllr Standley advised members that 8261 potholes have been repaired since January 2023, and there are now only 500 on register to be dealt with.

With regards to the letter from Hadlow Down re East Sussex Highways (ESH), Cllr Standley was unsure that this was in the best interest of councils working together, particularly the wording and threats made.

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*Cllr Griffin had hoped to speak with WDC Cllr Howell about this issue of the non-compliance of planning consent for the Waters Reach development and the wild flower meadow, which is still not there. It is 2.5 years since Cllr Griffin raised this issue with WDC Cllr Howell and 4 years since the houses were occupied, and this is just not acceptable. **Action:** ESCC Cllr Standley will speak with WDC Cllr Howell on this matter.*

Resolved: *Cllr Griffin proposed that we write to Rydon Homes (developer) and the original owners who sold the land to Rydon, to advise them of this non-compliance. This was seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval. **Action:** Clerk to liaise with Cllr Griffin for content of the letter.*

Cllr Griffin queried why the building control aspect of planning applications doesn't include the other items (like hedges etc), rather than just the building. Cllr Gadd queried what options are available to Wealden District Council (WDC) when a developer doesn't adhere to conditions? Cllr Standley advised that WDC could possibly take them to court for more major issues, or during the process of building could apply for a stop order through the courts, but this would not be used for minor issues.

Cllr C Moore wanted to find out the outcome re the meeting with Cllr Standley and MPs regarding Bewl Water development plans.

Cllr Standley advised that he had written to the MPs who had an interest in Bewl Water and requested a meeting with them, Bewl Water owners and a representative from Southern Water. They advised that they were looking at possible sites for a new centre.

Cllr P Moore queried why this would happen when the existing building was already in use, and there had been a huge petition (over 70,000 signatures) against the development, and felt this was such a failure by the planning department, for this site within the AONB. Cllr Standley and Cllr Howell did both get the planning applications to WDC committee to have them refused, but one has now been approved upon appeal by the Planning Inspectorate.

Cllr P Moore enquired if there was anything more that could be done for the planning application on the Bistro. Cllr Standley suggested that this would go to WDC Planning Committee.

The representative from Southern Water did not comment too much either way, but agreed to a further meeting in 6 months-time.

Cllr Standley queried why the parish council had applied for Assets of Community Value for Sparrows Green Pavilion and recreation ground. Cllr C Moore confirmed that there was no intention to do anything with the facilities at all, but wished for the asset to be registered for future security. This was along with a number of other sites in the parish identified through the Neighbourhood Plan.

*Fees and charges around licences connected to Kings Coronation will now not be charged, after the Clerk raised this with Cllr Standley and Cllr Dowling. **Action:** Cllr Standley will ask the revised decision to be circulated to parish council clerks.*

5. To consider, and approve if appropriate, which agenda items are sufficiently confidential as to warrant exclusion of members of the press and public under the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960.

Resolved: *As proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr C Moore and reached unanimous approval, members agreed to deal with agenda items 10.10 and 10.17 as private and confidential*

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6. To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 2nd February 2023 as a true record.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval, the minutes were approved as a true record.

7. To determine matters arising from the meeting on 2nd February 2023 for updating and noting.
None

8. Chair's Announcements

None

Members agreed to move agenda item 10.11 to this point of the agenda whilst Cllr Standley was present. (Correspondence from Hadlow Down Parish Council with regards to the issues with East Sussex Highways - ESH).

Members discussed the issues surrounding ESH, agreeing that the service being provided by ESH was really not good enough, with poor quality work, issues around policies that do not fit with the area – particularly the AONB. Policies change without liaising with the parishes, items/materials suggested are not suitable for the rural setting, the Clerk wastes a great deal of her time chasing ESH and without getting satisfactory answers. SLR meetings are generally a waste of time.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval, members agree with collective support to Hadlow Down Parish Council, but did not agree with the wording they used within their letter (i.e., misconduct in public office), but would support the idea of working together to help improve the situation. **Action:** Clerk to write to Hadlow Down. **Action:** Clerk to send ESH correspondence re no SLR meetings to Cllr Standley.

9. Finance items for decision and allocation of resources

Member agreed to take items 9.1 to 9.4 together.

9.1 To approve the updated February 2023 payment list

9.2 To approve the payment lists for March 2023

9.3 To note the bank reconciliations for February 2023

9.4 To note the following RBS reports: Income and Expenditure, Ear Marked Reserves, Cash and Investment Reconciliation & Trial balance.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval, items 9.1 to 9.4 were approved.

(Note: Clerk error in numbering sequence)

9.10 To approve for the new bus shelter and replacement lamp column expenditure to come from the CIL funds and for the Clerk/RFO to include these costs on the CIL return to WDC at the end of the financial year – Cllr C Moore

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval, members agreed for the new bus shelter and replacement lamp columns expenditure to come from CIL funds, and for these to be included within the CIL return to WDC at the end of the financial year.

Action: Clerk to collate details of CIL income, expenditure and expiry dates for the next full council meeting. **Action:** Clerk to add the boarding removal from outside Bellerby's development to the next planning agenda.

9.11 To increase the budget for Focus – Cllr Smith

Cllr Smith advised that the person dealing with Focus had been poorly recently and had apologised for missing the parish council articles.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr P Moore and reached unanimous approval, members agreed to increase the annual budget to £680 which would allow for 2 pages full colour.

9.12 To consider using Flagstone as a platform for opening additional bank accounts.

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Cllr Griffin queried why we cannot approach NS& I. Cllr C Moore explained that she had already asked them and they do not allow this for parish councils. District and County Councils can deposit with the Treasury, but parishes cannot, which leaves us exposed.

Cllr P Moore expressed that he still had some concerns, although had made checked with the Financial Service Compensation Scheme (FSCS) and the system was fine.

Cllr Griffin explained he had liaised with a colleague with knowledge in the area who also agreed that Flagstone was fine to use.

Members then discussed whether we should go ahead, or make further Bellary's enquiries.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Griffin, seconded by Cllr Crawford, with two in favour and the majority abstaining, the motion was carried for Flagstone to be used. Action:* Clerk to contact Flagstone to seek advice on the next steps.

10. Items for decision and allocation of resources if necessary

10.1 To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 28th January and 11th February 2023.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval, the planning committee minutes of 28th January and 11th February 2023 were both approved.*

10.2 Request for Cllr Howell to arrange a meeting with Wealden Planning and Rydon Homes at Waters Reach – Cllr Griffin.

Dealt with at agenda item 4.

10.3 Pavilion sewage pumps and control panel; to consider the quotes received and decide upon a contractor – Clerk

The Clerk advised members that she had approached 4 companies to quote for the works, including the current supplier, Moody Sewage, and a recommended supplier called CSG.

The Clerk had difficulty in obtaining product specifications from Moody Sewage.

Cllr Anderson advised that CSG were a large company, third party accredited and had provided a more competitive quote.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Anderson, seconded by Cllr P Moore and reached unanimous approval, CSG to be advised of our notification to proceed with them for the work, subject to receiving satisfactory Health & Safety documents. Action:* Clerk to advise CSG and then liaise with Cllr Anderson re the H & S aspects.

10.4 Pavilion alterations – Cllr Gadd

Update: *The Clerk asked WDC planning if permission was required to change the green wooden door to a glass door – and they have confirmed this is not required.*

Discussions are ongoing with the Building Control Officer at WDC, and some additional drawing may be required.

10.5 Consideration of revised quote for the Pavilion fire alarm system upgrade – Cllr Anderson
Current system is not suitable.

Cllr Anderson has been liaising with Spy Alarms (our current provider) re upgrading the system to something more up to date and suitable for the Pavilion.

They have suggested an L4 system which would cost £4795. Cllr Anderson needs to speak with them further about some of the materials they are proposing, to ensure it is in keeping with the current materials. Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Anderson, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval, the L4 system by Spy Alarms would be ordered. Action:* Cllr Anderson to liaise directly with Spy Alarms.

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10.6 Jardin d'Aubers lease from ESFR (if received in time) – Cllr Griffin

The lease had not been received by the Clerk.

The Clerk has repeatedly chased ESFR for the draft lease. Cllr Gadd confirmed that we cannot spend any more money on this area until the new lease is in place.

The Clerk did have correspondence from Mr Savage of ESFR, and he suggested that the liability remain with us as the old lease was still in place. The Clerk responded to him immediately saying that this was not the case, as the lease had expired some time ago, and that she had advised his colleagues that the parish council could not be liable for an area which they had no current lease on, neither could we spend any parish council funds on an area that was not under a lease.

Action: Clerk to request the Berry & Lamberts solicitors write to ESFR to remind them that the parish council are not liable for the area until the new lease is in place.

Cllr Griffin had previously written an article for Focus, which he will amend. Action: Cllr Griffin to send this to Cllr Smith for Focus, and to the Clerk for the parish council website.

Members suggested that a notice in put up in the board to advise parishioners why we are unable to maintain the area at present.

Action: Cllr Griffin to enquire with SE Environmental as to when the first JKW treatment is scheduled for.

Cllr Smith took over as Chair for agenda item 10.7

10.7 Commemoration Hall toilets refurbishment – to consider quotes received and decide upon a contractor – Cllr Griffin.

Cllr Griffin updated members after liaising and obtaining quotes from four companies that he was now in receipt of a quote detailing suitable works and within the budget. The pre-qualification questionnaire had been obtained and was deemed appropriate by Cllr Anderson. Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Griffin, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval, it was agreed for JBH Refurbishments be offered the work (subject to site specific RAMS) at a price of £19,598. Action: Cllr Griffin to liaise directly with WIHF for the arrangements. Action: Clerk to advise JBH our intention to proceed subject to the receipt of site-specific RAMS and method statements.

10.8 Cycle racks for outside of The White Hart

10.8.1 To approve a budget from the High Street Improvements EMR – Cllr P Moore

10.8.2 To consider the quotes obtained and decide upon a contractor – Cllr P Moore

Cllr P Moore explained that he had not received the full quote in time for the meeting, but would like to request a budget of up to £1600 for the racks and £700 for the installation, and to use S106 High Street Improvements funds for this project, or alternatively CIL funds. Resolved: this was approved, as proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval.

10.9 The Kings Coronation;

10.9.1 Update on the plans for the event taking place 7th May 2023 – Cllr C Moore

Cllr C Moore advised that the Wadhurst Warriors are progressing with the arrangements.

10.9.2 To agree a budget and supplier for a beacon shield to mark the King's coronation – Cllr C Moore

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached majority approval, members agreed a budget of up to £1500, and to use the same supplier as who made the beacon.

10.10 St Georges Hall update – Cllr Gadd/Cllr C Moore

Update: Enquiries continue

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10.11 Correspondence from Hadlow Down Parish Council with regards to the issues with East Sussex Highways
Dealt with after agenda number 8.

10.12 Consideration for some form of memorial plaque for the recently passed benefactor to the parish – Cllr C Moore
*Cllr C Moore advised that a kind benefactor to the parish had recently passed away and though that it would be a good idea for the parish council to do something in his memory. Exact ideas to be confirmed. **Action:** Clerk to contact his relative to check that this would be ok with them.*

10.13 Consideration for a replacement bus shelter for outside of The Greyhound (rather than the intended refurbishment work) – Cllr Griffin
*Cllr Griffin commented that he was so impressed with the new bus shelter at the train station, that it would be good to have something similar replace the bus shelter at the Greyhound. Cllr Anderson advised that he had spoken with the contractor who advised he had actually worked on the original Greyhound shelter when he was at school! He will take a look at the existing shelter and make some recommendations. Cllr P Moore added that any new materials used would need to be in keeping for the conservation area. **Action:** Clerk to contact the contractor as will need a design and quote for these works.*

10.14 Change of wheelie bin at Pavilion to 'paladin' bin

*The Clerk had obtained prices from Biffa and circulated them prior to the meeting. Cllr Anderson had thought that possibly a lockable skip would be a more efficient and economical option, and the materials could be recycled. This would be used by the Caretaker of the Pavilion and the Lengthsman. **Action:** Cllr Anderson to obtain quotes from Omni Skips. **Action:** Clerk to add to the next full council agenda.*

*Cllr Anderson also advised that the yellow lines in the carpark needed to be re painted. **Action:** Clerk to ask the Caretaker to carry out this work.*

10.15 Community Resilience Plan – Clerk

*The Clerk updated members that the format of the plan, previously agreed, had been altered, but we could still purchase the template from Dee Thornton. Members agreed to this. **Action:** Clerk to make contact and place order.*

10.16 Purchase of buildings – Cllr Gadd

Deferred

Clerk left the meeting for agenda item 10.17 and the Chair took notes.

10.17 HR matters – Cllr Gadd

The Clerk returned to the meeting and resumed with minute taking.

11. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Update: The NPSG are finalising the documents to be submitted to WDC, which will be done via the Clerk.

12. Items for noting

12.1 Defibrillator for centre of village - update from the Clerk

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The Clerk advised that there was an issue with the Commemoration Hall fuse board and so installation was delayed, but would be re arranged asap.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr C Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval, £100 could be spent on the addition of an online awareness session (as well as the in-person session). **Action:** Clerk to advise CHT and book the in-person awareness session for 30th March 2023, if possible. **Action:** Clerk to confirm booking with Commemoration Hall for 30th March 2023.*
Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval, a budget of £150 be set for posters to be made and installed by Signs of Style, promoting the training sessions. **Action:** Clerk to contact Signs of Style*

12.2 Due to the May elections and the Kings Coronation, there will not be a parish assembly this year.

Noted

12.3 To note the updated document: Meetings Dates 2023

Noted

13. Correspondence list.

Noted

14. Urgent issues at the discretion of the Chair for noting or inclusion on future agenda

Cllr Griffin advised members that he had met with a member of the Round Oak Allotment Association to discuss ongoing issues. They have started to lay the hedge, but there is a lot of work to be done.

*It would appear that there are vacant plots. **Action:** Clerk to write to them to offer advertising for them on our website and Facebook pages.*

*The housing development at Old Station Road has caused a loss of parking spaces for the allotment holders, who used to park there and then walk into the allotments. A solution could be if the allotment holders parked in the recreation ground car park, and then accessed the allotments down the side of the our field (on foot). It would need a hard/dry surface so that wheelbarrows could be used to transport materials. **Action:** add to next full council agenda for further consideration.*

Meeting closed at 2140 hours