



Northiam Parish Council

Parish Office, Village Club, Main Street
Northiam, East Sussex TN31 6LP

Telephone: 01797 253990

Email: clerk@northiamvillage.co.uk

www.northiamvillage.co.uk

Minutes of a Zoom Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.00pm on Thursday, 14 January 2021

- 1) **APOLOGIES:** were received from and accepted from Debbie Pratt, Penny Farmer and Dean Johnson. The Chairman reported that Ray Harrington-Lowe remained unwell in hospital and Mrs Valerie Ades, Beckley Parish Council's Clerk, was standing in for him to take the minutes.
- 2) **PRESENT:** Councillors Pete Sargent, Chairman (PS), Robert Maltby (RM), Tony Biggs (TB), Jacqueline Harding (JH), Sue Schlesinger (SS), District Councillor M. Mooney (MM) and County Councillor Ms A Davies (AD) and one member of the public.
- 3) **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None declared
- 4) **ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS** - To consider such other items as the Chairman decides are urgent and due notice of which has been given to the Clerk by 9:00am on the day of the meeting: **Two planning applications requiring comments before February's meeting were added and consideration of O'Connor's quote for groundworks was added to item 13 Finance.**
- 5) **REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** - **Maximum of 15 mins.** The Chairman of the Conservation Society reported they were in the final stages of registering the Community Interest Company for St Francis Fields (SFF) as a legal body. The fence on the orchard at SFF is in place. The fruit trees are not ready to be dug up and re-planted. Discussions followed about various possibilities for the 2nd part of the orchard site at SFF; apple trees to make cider and a wild flower area were also under consideration. Members agreed in principle with the Conservation Society's ideas.
- 6) **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10 December 2020.** Page 2 '*Beads Lane*' was changed to '*Beales Lane*' then the minutes were approved, adopted and signed
- 7) **REPORTS BY PARISH, COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:** (Reports ESCC and RDC councillors had been circulated and are attached).

PS reported the zip wire was damaged and suggested just the seat be repaired. There was a request from a resident to scatter ashes on SFF. It would be legal, but it must be where there are no animals nearby. Trees on SFF are overhanging the layby on Main Street and must be cut back. The Xmas tree display was very successful, but the lights require replacing for next year as they became badly damaged in the winds. There are damp problems at the bungalows on SFF.

RM asked if the access to the public at SFF could be made better. PS said this would improve when weather conditions improved. There are drainage problems by the school and he asked if money could be used to rectify this. PS said the £60/80K in the bank was given as security for any sewer/drainage problems at High Meadow, which was built about 20 years ago, and this money could not be spent elsewhere, but he would check the files for the wording. He would ask Highways to check the drains by the school. It was also noted drains at Hayes Platt on Main Street, opposite the DIY shop, were blocked.

JH had attended the RALC meeting when speeding was discussed and this is ongoing. Sue Prochak from Robertsbridge had expressed her disappointment at the lack of GP's registering to give the Covid-19 vaccinations. Etchingham is the nearest hub for Northiam residents to attend. **AD** said GP's must be part of the network to administer the vaccination; Northiam is not, but if the Oxford vaccination was available Northiam could start vaccinating immediately. The problem is the Oxford one is not available around here.

AD, reporting on Covid-19, said Rother's figures are going down. However, East Sussex had reported a major incident due to the number of cases it was dealing with.

PS reported Ray Harrington-Lowe's infection is now under control and he will be returning to surgery for, hopefully, his final operation on 15 January.

PS.

8) **PLANNING:**

- a. **RR/2020/2409/P** Highbury House, Mill Lane, Northiam TN31 6JU. Timber orangery to rear to replace existing. Members unanimously **supported the application (5.0)**.
- b. **RR/2020/2281/P - Adams Lane** - temporary permission for 3 shepherd's huts. **Provided all services were in place members unanimously supported the application (5.0)**.
- c. **RR/2020/2338/P** - Construction of house adjacent to 'The Hunts' Coppards Lane. Members noted the proposed building would be outside of the development boundary and they **asked for the application to be 'called-in' if planners were mindful to approve it.**

MM.

9) **ALL PLANNING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS:**

10) **OTHER PLANNING MATTERS:**

11) **VILLAGE MATTERS**

- a. **Memorial Bench request.** To go in the Playing Field in memory of Nancy Wood - Approved.
- b. **Housing needs survey.** This is required to prove a need. PS said Tom Warder at AIRS will give advice on how to do a survey or he will do one for us. Members agreed in principal and PS will find out for how long a survey lasts.
- c. **Pub Survey.** This also requires a survey to prove there is a need for a pub in the village. RDC must make it clear there is a need for a pub or for the premises to be used as a community centre. **PS** said the housing and pub surveys should be done at the same time. **Members agreed.**
- d. **Tree Survey.** Francesca Nowne and her husband are tree surgeons and consultants and have quoted £5k to survey the village's trees = approximately £50 a tree.

PS.

Defer to February.

8.08pm - *JH offered her apologies and left the meeting.*

12) **CORRESPONDENCE OTHER THAN THAT ALREADY CIRCULATED:** PS said everything received had been circulated.

13) **FINANCE:**

- a. **Confirmation of temporary RFO.** Members **unanimously agreed (3.0)** that PS should continue these duties. He said he would not sign cheques whilst in the post.
- b. **Budget & Precept for 2021-2022.** The figure of £95k was **unanimously agreed (4.0)**.
- c. **Consideration of O'Conner's quote for grass cutting 2021.** PS said the quote was £9365 for 2021, against £9,181.92 last year. With the Covid-19 restrictions **members unanimously agreed to renew the contract with O'Connor's (3.0).**

14) **FINANCE, OTHER MATTERS:**

15) **CHEQUES FOR SIGNATURE:**

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

See next page for ESCC and RDC councillors reports

ESCC Report for Parish Councils - January 2021

I want to wish everyone the best possible 2021. Let us hope that times will be better for all, and that at some future time, we will be on top of this pandemic. It has been a horrifying experience but I give congratulations and thanks to all our local people who have rallied to help others. The village "help support" teams have been amazing. The Hub established in Bexhill will continue to support the community.

We are now in tier 4 and the local NHS Trust (ESHT) is busy. The number of cases per week in East Sussex is now over 1000 (1019 in week leading up to 10th December) . Hastings has rocketed to 397 per 100,000 population, while Lewes has dropped to 75 per 100,000 population.

ESCC Help and Advice webpage **Coronavirus-help and support**

The Covid-19 vaccination roll-out has started in Sussex, being led by West Sussex. Hospital sites include Conquest, Brighton and Worthing. Each vaccination service is being supported by one, or several GP practices. Centres working so far include, Crawley, Horsham (Christ's Hospital), and Horsham, Eastbourne, Angmering, Storrington, Uckfield, Haywards Heath, Pulborough, Brighton, Lewes ,and one in Bexhill, nothing for Battle and Rye and villages, although I have asked the question of our Director of Public Health (apparently something is starting at Etchingham village hall). These initial vaccinations are for hospital staff, key workers, care home staff and clients, and over 80 year olds. When you are contacted please respond immediately.

School arrangements : primary schools in Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden are due to reopen as normal., Hastings and Rother will not open apart from children of key workers, and vulnerable children. Secondary: years 11 and 13 to return on January 4th, years 7-10 and 12 to return on 18th January. All special school children to return to school.

Our Chief Inspector of Police is Sarah Godley. She is the policing commander for East Sussex and is responsible for local policing in Hastings and Rother districts. She leads the local Neighbourhood Policing Team, consisting of police officers and PCSOs. Sarah is also an accredited Tactical Firearms Commander and the force lead for Suicide Prevention. Inspector Jonathan Hartley has been replaced by Inspector Jay Mendis, our Neighbourhood Sargeants are Simon Barden and Brett Whitewith. PCs Paul Fielder, Jason Kemp, Dan Turk, Nadia Foy, and Ed Booth are our police constables, PC Charlotte Williams is our Neighbourhood Youth Officer, and our PCSOs are Emma Phillips and Daryl Holter.

Residents can benefit from the **Warm Home Check Service**. This is a free service, providing telephone advice on keeping homes warm and reducing energy costs. There is financial support available for heating and help with minor improvements to insulation and boiler repairs.

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/keepwarm - text WARM to 81400 or call 03444 111 444

ESCC has been given the go-ahead by DEFRA and the MHCLG to transfer the Seven Sisters Country Park site to the South Downs National Park Authority.

UK Youth Parliament's (UKYP) 2021 campaign has chosen plastic pollution as their major topic. "Make your mark" is the largest youth consultation in Europe, where young people aged 11-18 across the UK are able to vote on issues that matter to them. James Jenkins from Eastbourne put forward and spoke on "Stop plastic pollution" at their conference last August. This topic won on the ballot. Congratulations James!

An urgent Sussex operation on Christmas Eve at Newhaven port helped truckers get back to mainland Europe. Teams of volunteers from the NHS worked late into the night and early morning to help drivers

An urgent get Covid tested to allow them to board ferries to Dieppe. The urgent testing operation was scrambled by **the Sussex Resilience Forum**, a consortium of emergency services, NHS, local authorities and partners working with Newhaven port and ferry operator DFDS.

ESCC Highways Emergency Team are available to deal with emergency calls throughout the year. Three members of staff are on call 365 days of the year monitoring emergency calls from the public and police between 4pm and 8am. To report an emergency on the roads, call 0345 60 80 193 and ask for the emergency highways team.

A new kerbside collection service has been introduced in Hastings, Rother and Wealden. Unwanted **small electrical items** should be put in a plastic carrier bag and placed on top of the recycling bin on collection day. These or components of these will be reused or recycled (not batteries please!) Small electrical items are one of the fastest growing waste streams in the UK.

Improvements are being made to the way vulnerable women dealing with drug and alcohol dependency, homelessness, mental health issues, and domestic violence access support services. The changes follow an independent review by the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board, after a Safeguarding Adults Review into a woman's death. The full report and SAB response can be viewed at;

<https://www.eastsussexab.org.uk/documents/adult-c-sar-published-december-2020-2/>

Angharad Davies East Sussex County Councillor Northern Rother

Northern Rother District Councillors' Report January 2021

The parish of Bexhill-on-Sea and a Parish (Town) Council will be created with effect from 1 April 2021. Set-up costs of the establishment of the Council will be paid by Rother District Council ie. Rother, not just Bexhill, taxpayers. An interim Parish (Town) Council administrator will be appointed for up to seven months with effect from 1 January 2021.

The Joint Waste Partnership has been run by Rother District Council as the Administering Authority since the inception of the Partnership in 2011. With the departure of Dr. Tony Leonard RDC no longer has the expertise required to perform this role which will now be carried out by Wealden District Council. As a result, RDC will lose £45,000 administration financial contribution towards accommodation, ICT and associated support costs as well as losing the prestige of being the Administering Authority of the Partnership.

Draft Revenue Budget 2021/2022

The Revenue Budget is on the Cabinet Agenda on 11th of January with a recommendation to Overview & Scrutiny Committee setting the maximum increase without the requirement to hold a referendum of £4.94 to £189.04 with a potential yield for the year based on properties at Band D, of £7.109m.

The Council no longer receives any Revenue Support Grant and is wholly reliant on revenue from Business Rates, Council Tax Specific grants, charges for services and income generation in meeting its net budget.

The financial risks are great with additional increases arising in Homelessness which for 2020/21 was overspent by £430k with a further provision having to be made of £299k in 2021/22.

Covid 19 Impact: Support afforded to Commercial tenants and expected voids in the uncertain future, whilst not provided for in the Budget will have to be kept under constant review.

Leisure, Swimming and Cultural Services: Support already extended to these services already has had to be underpinned by a further commitment for 2021/22

The draft Budget for 2021/22 utilises £2.9m of reserves in order to support revenue expenditure. The total earmarked reserves by the end of March 2022 is estimated to be £7.1m including the General Fund balance. Over the 5-year financial forecast these are predicted to fall to a minimum of £3.2m.

A radio-controlled car racing track is proposed at St. Mary's Recreation Ground, Sidley for exclusive use by 1066 Racing, an off-road radio-controlled car racing club founded in 2013. The track would be developed on small, under-used part of the Recreation Ground and the club hopes to have the scheme up and running this Spring.

District Councillors Tony Ganly and Martin Mooney

--- oOo ---