

**Ordinary General Meeting of the Parish Council to be held in the Village Hall, Northiam at 7.00pm, Thursday 9 June 2022**

**Members of the Public and Press are welcome and encouraged to attend.**

**The first 15 minutes of the meeting are set aside for questions from members of the public.**

**MINUTES**

**Date: 9th June 2022**

**ATTENDEES:** Sue Schlesinger (Chair) Tony Biggs (Vice-Chair), Robert Maltby, Penny Farmer, Jon Streatfield, Dean Johnson, Anthony Wontner-Smith, Tony Wadie, Ben Dallimore

Nicola Ideson - Clerk

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

No apologies of absence were received

1. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Maximum of 15 minutes)**

Several members of the public complained about overgrown hedges and verges. As this is not an item on the agenda the details are not minuted. The clerk has noted the complaints and will contact the relevant parties responsible for the up keep of the areas.

Carolyn Pearce asked when the parish is office open. SS said that due to rising fuel costs the clerk may not be in the office as much as first anticipated. SS also reminded the meeting that she had, in the past, started a weekly councillor’s surgery but nobody came.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received

1. **MINUTES** **OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th May were approved as a true record and signed by the chairman

1. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
2. No 2 St Francis Fields bungalows.

TB has arranged for contractors to quote for the condensation/damp issue in bungalow number 2 and is expecting to have 3 quotes before the next meeting.

1. S106 monies – Indemnity Deed. The Clerk has received notification of the intended funds to be paid to NPC, this is due to be received shortly.
2. Storm Eunice insurance – All items that were claimed for through the insurance company have been approved. TB asked that the clerk let him know when the money comes through.
3. Playground insurance update- The Annual playground inspection showed that the zip wire needed attention. The zip wire chair needs to come down ASAP to prevent people from using it, as is unsure whether the Council’s insurance cover will be valid after the unsatisfactory findings from the inspection. A volunteer offered to remove the chair from off of the zip wire.
4. **ITEMS CARRIED FORWARD FROM LAST MEETING**
5. To approve the Asset Register of Council Property. – Asset register documentation needs to be completed. The partially completed documents have been mislaid. The clerk to provide new asset register templates to Cllr. Maltby.
6. To review, approve & adopt amendments to Standing Orders. Amendments are in progress. Deferred to the next meeting.
7. To review, approve & adopt Financial Regulations. Model financial regs need to be tailored to NPC and figures updating accordingly. Deferred to the next meeting.

1. **REPORTS BY COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**
2. District Councillor Martin Mooney (Appendix 2)
3. District Councillor Tony Ganly – in addition to the District Councillor report (Appendix 2) Cllr Ganly informed the meeting that RDC has set 13 targets for the year of which only 3 have been met. Targets for planning, recycling, housing and “additional income” are among those that have not been met.
4. RDC has employed Capita to help reduce the backlog of planning applications however some of the Capita officers are not local to the area and so are unable to conduct site inspections. RDC received S106/CIL monies from the Marks and Spencer development at Glyne Gap. These funds were earmarked to spend on a new leisure centre. A time limit is in place to use these funds and if the funds are not spent soon RDC would have to pay them back. To avoid this eventuality the money has been spent on a skate park in Sidley.
5. County Councillor Paul Redstone (Appendix 3) in addition to the item in Cllr Redstone’s report Cllr Redstone reported the bus service 294, that takes children to Homewood School, which was going to be cancelled on the 24th June has been extended to the end of the school year.
6. **SFF COMMITTEE MEETING on 26th MAY – A report**

Great Crested Newts - At the last SFF Committee meeting it was agreed to initiate further steps towards the organisation of constructing a great new pond for Great Crested Newts. Possible locations include field 13 or 14 that are situated the other side of Beales Lane.

BD was concerned that this may affect people’s planning permission applications. Sarah Giles (SG) said that planning permission from surrounding residents will not be compromised due to the remoteness of the pond.

It was agreed to invite the organisers to attend a site visit to enable them to conduct a survey and to explain more about the project. This would provide an opportunity for questions to be asked.

CCTV installation at the stables- The tenant has already installed CCTV themselves to view the stables, the Council would like to extend coverage to the council owned fields.

JS- said that 3 quotes should be obtained before purchasing any CCTV equipment.

PF – thought that a proper CCTV system with an ethernet connection should be installed and that her brother’s company would be willing to come down and assess what would be required.

SS – said that this type of system was unnecessary and that a wireless system, the same as the tenant has already installed, would be sufficient.

PS – said that she was not confident that the type of system would work.

The Clerk offered to source 3 companies to come and visit the site, assess what was required and provide an estimate.

TB- Passed this over to the CIC committee as this is the party that manages the SFF.

Jacky Broad (JB) – said that the CIC had received recent correspondence from the Rural Police advising not to put in any CCTV for at least 2-3 weeks, due to an undisclosed reason. The CIC are willing to research CCTV systems and costs as the CIC are already going to look into CCTV for the ‘Hub’ and report back with a recommendation to full council.

TW- Mentioned that he still had privacy concerns affecting passersby.

VAT Query - PF – Voiced that she was concerned that the Parish Council may have committed VAT fraud.

This refers to the original lease agreement that was drawn up for the stables where the tenant had contributed to half the fees. The tenant’s contribution has now been reimbursed in full to the Council. As the Council reclaimed the VAT on the legal fees PF thought that the tenant should have been charged VAT and not just the net amount of their contribution.

The Clerk advised that the parish council is unable to charge VAT and can only reclaim it. This was verified by District Cllr Ganly

The bungalow sheds have been received and one has been erected.

1. **FINANCES**
2. **Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) to the external auditor for the year ended 31st March 2022.**

All papers having been circulated; the Council is asked to approve by resolution:

1. **Annual Governance Statement** to review the system of internal controls and authorise for signature by the Chairman and Responsible Finance Officer.

The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed.

1. **Accounting Statements** - the preparation including the statement of accounts, bank reconciliation, explanation of variances, summary of receipts and payments signed by the Responsible Finance Officer to be approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Accounting Statements were read out by the Chair and agreed without any queries. The accounting statements were approved and signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

1. To receive & approve the payment report for June 2022 (appendix 4)
2. To receive the most recent bank reconciliation and financial report (appendix 5)
3. To approve the time-sheet of the previous Clerk for the period 09-31/05/22
4. To approve the time-sheet of the new clerk 16/05/22-03/06/22

It was resolved to approve all payments in accordance with the budget.

1. **VILLAGE MATTERS**
2. Correspondence

Securing of the Playing Field – After a suspected break in TB said that there was a necessity to purchase robust padlocks, safety chains and locks. This is an urgent matter and cannot wait until agreement at the next meeting. Volunteers have let the Council borrow padlocks to secure the field for now but it would be unfair to allow peoples personal property to be used in this manner for that long. TB said that he had researched 2 systems both requiring access with specialist keys where duplicates are unable to be reproduced at usual key cutting shops. The options will be circulated via email to be decided upon.

In accordance with the current Financial Regulations para 4.1) revenue purchases of under £500 can be authorised jointly by the Clerk and the Chair.

Due to the use of the field, it is not practical to install any heavier security measures.

The council agreed to move forward with this as a matter of urgency.

Playground Slide – The engineers have notified the council that the replacement slide will be installed on the 17th June.

1. Councillors’ Reports.

TB- Thanked Debbie Pratt who has donated £500 to the old cemetery; Trevor Gilbert for alerting the council so quickly to the recent break in at the playing fields and letting the council borrow his padlocks; The villagers for clearing up after the visitors so quickly.

The money held in escrow received from Beezer Homes in 1990 to cover any future sewer problems arising from the development, is moving to a different bank account as the present one is closing

After receiving the results of the independent investigation conducted by Nicholas Bennett SS asked if any Councillors had completed social media training, none had done so as yet. JS was specifically advised to enrol with some new councillor training JS expressed no intention of completing any training as he is in dispute with the decision.

The Jubilee celebrations and the beacon lighting went well. The Council thanked PF for organising the event,

PF wanted to say a big thank you to all the volunteers and that the event only used 2/3 of the available funds.

SS said that the apple orchard looked very nice.

SG announced that £500 was donated by the CIC towards the VE day celebrations, as the VE day celebrations were cancelled the money was forwarded to the Jubilee fund. TB asked what was the £500 donation from the CIC spent on? PF said she was unaware of the donation as she took over the project from Jaqui Harding, but would endeavour to find out.

1. **PLANNING:**

**New Applications/Amendments to current applications:**

1. RR/2022/1100/P – Crockers Barn, Crockers Lane, Northiam TN31 6PY

*Proposal: Conversion of the Agricultural Storage Barn from Agricultural Use to C3 Residential Annex Use*

This is a re-application exhibiting alterations that were asked to be made by the planning officer; There has been no objections from neighbours; Comments were expressed saying that the proposed plans will tidy up and improve a deteriorating building.

The Council agreed to recommend approval to RDC.

1. RR/2022/1097/P – Ghyllside, land adjacent to Station Road, Northiam TN31 6QD

*Proposal:* *Demolition of existing residential garage to provide a detached residential dwelling.*

Two previous refused applications.

1 The proposed development by reason of its size, scale, design, position and extent of car parking covering the front garden would result in an incongruous development that would erode the spaciousness of the locality and have an unacceptable impact on the street scene, detrimental to the character, layout and visual amenity of the area. This combined with the loss of existing garden space and inadequate provision of outdoor amenity space for the future occupiers of the house would result in a cramped development out of character with and detrimental to the amenity of the local and future occupiers. As such the proposed development would be contrary to policies OSS4 and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and policies DEN2 of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (2019) and paragraphs 70 and 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 The proposed dwelling by reason of its close proximity to the nieghbouring residential property of Ghyllside and Corner Croft combined with its proposed height and bulk would result in an unnieghbourly development that would introduce an unacceptable sense of enclosure and loss of privacy, contrary to policy OSS4(ii) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

And what makes this even more inappropriate is the new proposed dwelling appears to be even more substantial than the previous applications.

The council resolved to recommend refusal of the application

TB abstained

1. RR/2022/1037/P (& associated listed building consent application RR/2022/1030/L) – Morley Cottage, Beckley Road, Northiam TN31 6JB

*Proposal: Conversion including replacement extension to curtilage listed outbuilding to create a holiday let unit.*

The Council approved the proposal, but commented that that there should be a caveat to ensure that the maximum stay per client is only up to 60 days.

The Council resolved to recommend approval to RDC.

1. RR/2022/997/L – Frewen College, Rye Road, Northiam TN31 6NL

*Proposal: Creation of new door openings in the principle south front rooms and supporting service range of Brickwall House. The removal of modern partitions in the upper floors and the repairs to garden steps*

The council resolved to recommend approval to RDC.

(v) RR/2022/1105/TN - **Information Only**

*Primroses, Station Road, Northiam TN31 6QJ*

*Install 1 x 10m wooden pole (8.2m above ground).*

***All appeals, enforcements and decision notices have been previously circulated to Councillors.***

The meeting closed at 8.30

Chair Signature……………………………………………………………………………………..