

**Meeting of the SFF Committee to be held in the Jenkins Room, Northiam**

**at 5.30pm, Thursday 30th June 2022**

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

**There will be an opportunity for questions from members of the public.**

**MINUTES**

**Date: 30th June 2022**

**ATTENDEES:** PC members – Sue Schlesinger, Tony Wadie, Ben Dallimore. CIC members Jonathan Strong, David Green, Jacky Broad

Nicola Ideson – Parish Clerk

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: TONY BIGGS; SARAH GILES** Apologies were received from two members these were accepted.Ben Dallimore attended on behalf of Tony Biggs and David Green on behalf of Sarah Giles
2. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Maximum of 15 minutes)**

Cllr Jon Streatfeild was present but is not permitted to ask questions as a member of the public as he is a Councillor.

His conduct relating to his public criticism of the way Northiam Parish Council was managing the current and future use of the SFF has been found by external investigation to have breached Northiam Parish Council’s Code of Conduct.

Carolyn Pearce (CP) - when this was first talked about; the community should be more involved as it was first described. (CP) expressed that she thought the orchard was not being maintained properly and weed killer was being sprayed on what is now a conservation area. (CP) wants the CIC to put any plans or ideas the CIC may have on the notice boards, as she is unfamiliar with using the Council’s website, along with any little jobs they intend to do to keep the public up to date. The SFF Committee agreed and thought this was something they would be able to do. (JB) said that many plans have been delayed while the Council await the change of use planning permission. (TW) asked (CP) do you get many residents approaching you with questions and queries? (SS) We have asked for volunteers. (CP) said it would be nice to be able to comment on any SFF Committee plans. (CP) then went on to ask about how the remuneration for the possible Greater Crested Newt pond would be spent? (BD) said that comparing with other similar projects that his research showed that the grant would need to be used to maintain the new ponds. (SS) said that she didn’t think this was the case and that the land would be leased by the organisation in a similar way the bungalows and stables are. (JVS) confirmed this and said that the funds would not be a grant and would be available for the CIC to invest in the site. The organisation involved would pay a licence fee under a 5-year rolling management agreement. Payment for the use of the land and it would also be responsible for the upkeep of the pond. (JB) advised that it may be better to wait and see if the ground is deemed appropriate first from the ground investigation. Once that has been verified the SFF Committee will then see what is proposed in the draft contract (DG) thought that keeping the public informed and updated on the situation via the Parish Magazine and the Noticeboards would be a good idea.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SFF COMMITTEE MEETING ON 26.5.22**

The meetings of the previous meeting held on the 26th May were signed and approved as a true record of the meeting.

1. **UTILITY CHARGES – AN UPDATE FROM CIC ON SEWAGE CHARGES AND NPC ON RECOVERIES FROM STABLE’S TENANT**

(JB) announced that there has been a reimbursement of £957.41 from the waste water charge, a refund of £660.76 will be sent by cheque from Business Stream. This is the amount left over after the next payment installment of £356.65 has been taken out. (JB) thinks there may be a few more pennies to comeback from a previous period and she will do some more investigating.

It was requested that a bill be raised for the stables tenant for the water and electricity usage. The original bill has not been paid this is because it is wrong, after receipt of the waste water refund the amount can now be reduced to needs to be reduced to £310.08 for water and £152 for electric. The Clerk to write to the tenant, apologising for the delay and pass on a revised bill. The Clerk was also asked to find out if the tenant would prefer her bills to be quarterly.

1. The Chairman advised that item 6 would be moved to the end of the meeting, excluding members of the public, as item 6 is considered to be a confidential or sensitive item.
2. **TO REPORT CIC’S PROPOSALS FOR HAY AND GRAZING**

(JB) said that after having no response via Facebook in relation to the hay that has been produced in fields 11, 12, 13, 14 and now requires harvesting, the CIC will now place an advert in The Wealden Advertiser. If there is still no response the CIC are intending to find a contractor and pay for mowing the grass itself.

1. **TO REPORT ON GREATER CRESTED NEWT POND FOLLOWING MEETING 28th JUNE at 14.00**

(JVS) advised that the contact from the organisation is coming back tomorrow to do an investigation. But initial findings suggest that field 14 the preferred location to establish whether there is any blue clay, which makes itis easier to puddle and to create a captive reserve. Due to the condition of the hard ground a digger may be necessary use to expose the lower levels of earth. The earth will be replaced once samples have been taken. The Newt organisation is now interested in having 2 ponds at the SFF site. This will provide a better habitat for the newts and the site would receive an additional £250 per annum bringing the possible annual income up to £1875.   
Once the contract has been prepared it will be forwarded to the CIC to review and then presented to the Parish Council for approval and signature. The inspector has said that the site looks encouraging. The CIC will explore creating a permissive footpath so that walkers can reach the pond.

1. **DISCUSSION ON SITE BOUNDARY INCURSIONS.**

This issue has been looked at again and further incursions have been discovered, although not desperately urgent, as it takes 20 years for people to acquire any ownership rights by prescription. The CIC feels it is time to draw to the attention of the neighbours that the CIC are aware of the incursions. The Clerk to write a letter informing residents that the Parish Council will be looking into the boundaries, and there may some activity close to their properties while measurements are collected. (CP) said that we may have missed the opportunity to remedy this with land encroaching from ‘Pond House’ as the fence was moved a very long time ago. (JVS) Stated that we can only go back to when the Parish Council bought the site, not when it was owned by the Blue Cross. The CIC to look into exact boundary lines. (BD) suggested google earth (JVS) said he has access to the Parish Online mapping system,

1. **FUTURE CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NPC AND CIC**

(TW) asked why hasn’t this been progressed (SS) replied and said that this needs a lot of discussion and probably its own meeting. (TW) said things can’t be progressed until this agreement is in place. (JVS) said that until the Council have the GPC and a permitted ‘Change of Use’ to business use the land can only be for recreational use. Originally the PC intended to lease the entire site to the CIC but it was decided not to go down that route for whatever reason. JB stated that this did not happen due to funding issues. The CIC have no available funds, when the change of use has come through there will be grants that the CIC can apply for.

1. **UPDATE – NPC’S PROVISION OF SHEDS FOR BUNGALOWS**

TW informed the meeting that one shed had been erected.

1. **BURIAL GROUND**

The intended area to be used as a burial ground needs surveying to find out if its suitable. (JB) 3 quotes are required to be sourced for the survey. The CIC have received 1 quote so far and there are 2 to follow. Quotes will be passed on to the PC for decision.

The SFF committee need to decide what type of burials will be used, coffins or ashes only. As this is an extension to the current cemetery it was agreed that it is probably best to offer burials of coffins and interment of ashes if ground conditions permit. The Clerk to provide the CIC with a copy of the Donsmead S106 Agreement to check what are the provisions, what is the money obliged to be used for and what are NPC obliged to provide.

1. **CIC’S PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO HUB**

**12.1 W/Cs** There is only one toilet at the hub and it is currently broken A team are fixing it and the CIC are proposing two more cubicles to be installed as a temporary provision. The CIC will make sure that the materials used for the temporary cubicles would be able to be re-used when refurbishing the hub.

**12.2 TEMPORARY PROVISION OF CANOPY OVER HUB YARD**

Installation of a free-standing canopy over part of the hub is being investigated. If support were to be needed from the surrounding structures, permission would be sought from NPC

1. **TO REPORT INVITATION FROM ESCC FOR SFF CIC TO ATTEND RECEPTION ON 9th JULY 2022**

The CIC had received an invitation to send a representative to this reception. It was suggested that organisations and people doing voluntary work should attend this reception, Steve and Debbie Pratt have been asked to go in recognition of Steve’s huge commitment to the SFF. The PC has also received an invitation and suggested that the Lollipop lady Pat Brabon goes.

1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 28th JULY 2022**

Meeting Closed at 7pm