

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held Monday 3rd June 2024

7pm, Renshaw Room, Wivelsfield Village Hall

Agenda Item	Description	Resolved
Present:	Parish Councillors H Martin (Chair), D Cumberland (Vice-Chair), C Broad, I Haffenden, R Morris and N Turner, plus L Gander (Clerk).	
1	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from Councillors Keeley and Silverman (who were on holiday) and S Morris, who was unwell.	Apologies accepted.
2	Declarations of Members' Interests a <u>To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda</u> - Cllr Haffenden declared a pecuniary interest in item agenda item 5d. b To receive (and grant if appropriate) written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests	Cllr Haffenden declared an interest. None noted.
3	Public Forum No members of the public had attended the meeting, so the public forum was not needed.	
4	To Approve the Minutes of: a The Parish Council meeting held 20 th May 2024	Item deferred to next meeting.
5	Planning Matters The Council considered the new applications below: a <u>LW/24/0345 - Bramba Cottage, South Road</u> - Demolition of shed and addition of single storey rear extension to existing outbuilding. b <u>LW/24/0355 - The Old Wheel Cottage, Eastern Road</u> - Front/side single storey ground floor extension with single storey first floor extension to rear and fenestration alterations. (NB this property lies in Westmeston Parish, but was included on the agenda given that much of Eastern Road is in Wivelsfield and development may affect Wivelsfield properties) c <u>LW/24/0359 - 56 Orchard Close</u> - Erection of double carport . Tree Works Application for Consideration d <u>TW/24/0054/TPO - 17 Charlwood Road</u> - T1- Oak - Overall crown reduction by 2metres and removal of two low limbs over the road. T2 - Oak - Remove dead wood and stem suckers. T3 - Oak - 2m crown reduction on the roadside. T4 - Oak - overall crown reduction by 2m T5 - Oak - 1.5 metre crown reduction over the swimming pool and remove deadwood. T6 - Oak - Overall crown reduction of 2m.	To support the application. To support the application. To support the application.

		<p>Having declared an interest, Councillor Haffenden left the room for this item. Following some discussion, the Council resolved to submit a neutral response, deferring to the Tree Officer’s professional judgement. The Clerk was however also asked to submit comments to the effect that, whilst the Council recognises that any branches overhanging the road or otherwise deemed dangerous should be removed, it has reservations about reducing the crown of mature trees for the sake of it.</p>	<p>To submit a neutral response, with comments as detailed.</p>
	e	<p>Notices of Planning Approval Received (To note for information only) <u>LW/24/0193/CD - Land Opposite South Cottage, South Road</u> - Discharge of Condition 13 (Archaeological Investigation) in relation to LW/21/0754 allowed at appeal.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
	f	<p><u>LW/24/0159 - More House Farm, Ditchling Road</u> - Proposed barn extension for cattle housing.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
	g	<p>Notification of Planning Appeal (for information only) <u>APP/P1425/D/24/3343284 – Clearview (The Barn), Nursery Lane</u> - householder appeal against Lewes District Council’s refusal of Re-submission of LW/23/0648 - Erection of detached two bay, hipped roof carport, removal of existing external timber staircase to side elevation with window replacing first floor entrance. The appeal will be conducted on the basis of written representations, but, as a householder appeal, the Parish Council has no right to further comment.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
	h	<p>Other Planning Matters <u>To note what was discussed at a meeting with the Chief Executive of Lewes District Council, in respect of the Council’s concerns about planning processes</u> – members present at the meeting had outlined the Parish Council and wider community’s concerns, including: mistakes made by planning officers in reports, inconsistencies in the treatment of different applications, failures in communication and lack of responsiveness to emails and enquiries, lack of notification of applications and appeals, weak grounds being given for refusals and poor enforcement. The Chief Exec had put his hands up and said that the planning department could have done better, but that what was key was to learn from this moving forwards. They are actively recruiting for more staff and have a new Head of Development Management who is reviewing how things are done, for example, by seeking improvements to the planning website and using a focus group of several planning officers to review bigger or more contentious planning applications to pool knowledge. The Head of Development Management had undertaken to respond to emails in a timely manner and to provide a summary of the actions that LDC is taking to improve performance within planning.</p>	<p>The Clerk to chase the summary that the Head of Development Management had agreed to provide.</p>
	i	<p><u>Section 62A Town Planning Designation</u> – Lewes District Council has been put under special measures, meaning that for any developments of ten units or more, developers can now choose to go straight to the Planning Inspectorate to have applications determined, bypassing the locally based planning officers and democratically elected Planning Committee.</p>	
6	a	<p>Financial Matters <u>To note the report from the year end internal audit</u> – the internal audit report had been completed and had no points to carry forward.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
	b	<p><u>To review the effectiveness of internal audit</u> – the Council was happy with the effectiveness of internal audit, who provide a clear and comprehensive audit</p>	<p>Happy with the effectiveness of internal audit.</p>

	plan and detailed reports each year, which address all areas on the Annual Return.	
c	<u>To resolve to continue to use Mulberry and Co for internal audit services for the forthcoming year</u> – the Council resolved to continue using Mulberry and Co, which now has a specialist local council arm – Mulberry Local Authority Services – which will carry out audits, as well as offering training opportunities during the year.	To use Mulberry Local Authority Services for internal audits.
d	<u>To review and sign the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024</u> – the financial statements for the 2023-24 financial year were approved and signed by the Chair. It was noted that it would be helpful to know what is expected in CIL receipts this year, as, once the community consultation results are known, the Council would like to start putting together a long-term plan. The Clerk had already submitted a request about this to LDC, but would follow up.	Items 6d-6f were each agreed & signed in turn.
e	To review, approve and sign Section 1 of the Annual Return - the Annual Governance statement.	
f	To review, approve and sign Section 2 of the Annual Return – Accounting Statements.	
g	To note the forthcoming publication of a Notice of Electors’ Rights.	Noted.
h	<u>To approve this month’s payments</u> – the Council approved payment of eleven items, totalling £7,355.35.	Payments approved.
i	<u>Request from Wivelsfield Village Hall’s Management Committee to consider providing CIL funding for the extension and improvement of the outdoor area to the rear of the Hall</u> – the Management Committee had withdrawn this item from the agenda as it is progressing with some improvements using Hall funds.	
j	<u>To consider providing funding to cover the Monday Group’s repair costs for the bridge between Wivelsfield recreation ground and Green Park Corner</u> – it was agreed to provide funding for the bridge to be repaired.	Council agreed to cover costs of bridge repair.
k	<u>To consider looking into the cost of updating the children’s play area, to include the installation of all-weather surfacing around the equipment</u> – it had been noted that the clay soil means that much of the play area gets extremely muddy in wet weather and it would be beneficial to have all-weather surfacing around the equipment. At the same time, it would be good to update one or two items of equipment. It was suggested that the Clerk talk informally to a couple of companies, to try to establish a likely ball-park figure for this, to get some idea of how much money is likely to be required and therefore within what timescale this might be feasible.	Clerk to contact play companies to obtain informal idea of rough cost of installing all-weather surfacing.
l	<u>Confirmation of the Lewes District Council’s acceptance of the Lewes Parish Remuneration Panel’s recommendations on councillor allowances</u> – the Remuneration Panel’s recommendations had been accepted by LDC.	
m	<u>In light of 6l above, to confirm the rate at which members’ allowances will be paid to elected members of the Parish Council from April 2024</u> – the Council resolved to make basic allowances available to elected members at the upper rate of £750 per year, in accordance with the recommendations of the Remuneration Panel.	Resolved to offer basic allowances at upper rate.
n	<u>To review and adopt (as appropriate) the council’s policy on members’ allowances</u> – it was agreed to adopt the updated policy on councillors’ allowances.	Agreed.
o	<u>To review and adopt a new policy on Travel and Expenses</u> - the Council agreed to adopt this policy, which allows all members, and staff, to claim travel and certain other expenses incurred in the course of their duties.	Agreed.
p	<u>To approve repairs to Lighting column D, Downsview Drive, at a cost of £861.30</u>	Agreed.
q	<u>To note repairs undertaken to the surface of Church Lane car park, pending drainage works later in the year.</u> The Council noted and ratified the repairs that	Noted and agreed.

		had been undertaken at the car park, which had been completed for safety until further work can be done.	
7	a	Review of Policies & Procedures To consider establishing a working group to review the Council's policies and procedures – it was agreed that, rather than forming a working group for this, the policies could be looked over by a couple of councillors, with any recommendations for updates/changes being brought to the Council.	
8	a	Clerk's Report Action list – noted.	Noted.
	b	<u>To agree terms of reference for the working group assigned to consider a communications policy</u> – the terms of reference as provided, were agreed. The Communications Working Group have met once and aim to have some recommendations to bring to the next meeting.	Terms of reference agreed.
	c	<u>Progress with organising a community information day</u> – it was agreed to seek a bouncy castle that could be supplied with a member of staff if possible. The Council will seek volunteers to serve refreshments. Posters, Facebook posts and the website will advertise the event.	Planning ongoing.
	d	<u>To consider introducing civic awards</u> – it was agreed that, rather than have a formal civic awards policy, the Chair's fund could be used as and when appropriate, to acknowledge the contribution of particular individuals to the wider community.	Chair's fund to be used informally when appropriate.
	e	<u>To agree how to distribute hedgehog holes & whether to make a charge for them</u> – it was agreed to offer these for free, starting by having them at the Community Info Event on 13 th July.	To be provided free of charge.
	f	<u>To discuss whether to submit a request for a Community Governance Review to Lewes District Council, to increase the number of Council seats for the Parish Council</u> – it was agreed to request this.	To request a review.
	g	<u>To consider how to progress with creating an over-arching, umbrella community organisation to bring together representatives of different groups for networking, sharing of information and joint ventures, to include looking at developing:</u>	No such organisation to be pursued at present.
	i	A living history project	
	ii	Welcome packs	
	iii	Eco group	
		It was felt that the idea of another group/organisation should be put on the back burner for now. The Church is progressing with producing welcome packs and there is some interest from within the community for forming an eco group.	
9	a	Reports from Parish Councillors <u>To discuss (& agree if appropriate) the Draft agreement between the Parish Council and Village Hall</u> – the Council wished for the wording of footnote 2 to be altered so that it does not read that the PC takes responsibility for the trees. The Parish Council is willing to cover the cost of maintaining trees at the recreation ground under its powers to provide – or contribute towards the provision of - recreational facilities, but it is the Management Committee that has responsibility for the recreation ground. As such, the Parish Council would like a written statement from the Committee, confirming that, as owner of the recreation ground, it has public liability insurance cover in place to cover it. Otherwise, it was largely in agreement with the document, as presented, but would like clarification on the above before signing. It was noted that, owing to the Council's wish to have a clear agreement in place, the tree work identified within the latest tree inspection had not yet been	The Council to request a change to the wording as detailed & seek confirmation of the Hall's insurance cover. Tree works contractor to be authorised to

	b	carried out. To avoid further delay, it was agreed to instruct the contractor to undertake the work. <u>To discuss and agree the Public Toilet Arrangements document</u> – the Clerk explained that the Management Committee proposed to make just the accessible toilet available to users of the recreation ground, in order to reserve use of the male/female toilets for hirers of the Renshaw Room. The document was agreed and the toilet’s use and cleaning schedule will be reviewed three months after being opened to the public.	do the work identified. Document agreed.
10		Reports from District & County Councillors, MP & PCSO No reports had been received.	
11	a b c d e	Correspondence – to review the items below plus any others arriving between the publication of the agenda and the meeting <u>Enquiry from Silvertime Legal about giving a talk in Wivelsfield</u> – the correspondence was noted, but the council did not wish risk being seen as promoting an individual company. Information about the London to Brighton Bike Ride and associated road closures <u>Acknowledgement from East Sussex County Council of the Parish Council’s letter about road safety concerns on the B2112</u> – the Council’s letter had been passed to the Development Control Team to review. Request to support a campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries. <u>Flooding at Woods Ground</u> – a resident had notified the council of recent flooding at Woods Ground, Eastern Road. The Clerk had followed up with East Sussex Highways and been informed that drainage works are planned for Eastern Road in July.	No wish to follow up. Noted. Noted. Noted.
12		Items for Noting or Inclusion on Next Agenda None noted.	
13	a	Date of Next Meeting Parish Council Meeting – 1 st July 2024	

Accounts Approved for Payment at the Meeting of 3rd June 2024

Payee	Expenditure	Value	Total	Payment Type	Voucher Ref
		£	£		
General Expenditure					
Salaries	June 24 Salary run		2576.75	Bank transfer	969
East Sussex Pension Fund	Pension contributions June 24		909.24	Bank transfer	970
HMRC	Quarter 1 PAYE & NI contributions		2,958.73	Bank transfer	971
Lewes District Council	Car park & pavilion bin emptying May 24		38.40	Bank transfer	972
Sage UK Ltd	April 24 Sage 50 Accounts subscription		92.40	DD	973

Payee	Expenditure	Value	Total	Payment Type	Voucher Ref
Tetrabyte	IT support & Office 365 licences – June 24		158.03	DD	974
Tetrabyte	Additional two-year warranty for laptop		119.23	Bank transfer	975
Alun Gedrych	Temporary repairs to the Church Lane car park surface		237.60	Bank transfer	976
Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd	Year end internal audit		195.00	Bank Transfer	977
Kelly Engineering	Repair of surface at children's play area		50.00	Bank transfer	978
Adobe Systems	Adobe Acrobat subscription June 24		19.97	DD	979
Total General Expenditure			7,355.35		

All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the Clerk, as RFO.