

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held 4th March 2024

7pm, Renshaw Room, 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 & S Morris. L Gander (Clerk) and six members of the public.	
1	<p>Apologies for Absence District Councillor Zoe Nicholson had sent her apologies.</p>	
2	<p>Co-option of New Councillor The Council unanimously resolved to co-opt Noel Silverman to fill one of the two remaining vacant seats on the Council. The Chair thanked Mr Silverman for putting himself forward. Mr Silverman signed a declaration of acceptance of office and took his place at the Council table.</p>	To co-opt Noel Silverman.
3	<p>Declarations of Members' Interests <u>To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda</u> - Councillor S Morris declared a personal interest in item 7e in relation to the grant application from Wivelsfield Films. Councillor Cumberland similarly declared a personal interest in item 7e, owing to the grant application from the Community Club.</p> <p>b To receive (and grant if appropriate) written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests</p>	Interests noted.
4	<p>Public Forum Several members of the public had attended to make the Council aware of, and raise concerns about, an upcoming planning appeal for Manor Nursery (Lewes District Council planning reference LW/23/0114). Whilst the Appeal case had been opened on 20th February, neither the Parish Council or the majority of Theobalds Road residents had received notification of the Appeal and no site notice had been displayed.</p> <p>The Parish Council encouraged residents to write to Lewes District Council (LDC) to raise their concerns and to request an extension to the submission deadline for comments on the Appeal.</p> <p>Residents also advised that the Slugwash Gardens application and the Case Officer Report that had been prepared in support of it, was being cited by the appellant in the Manor Nursery appeal, as justification for this appeal to be allowed. It was noted however that, since the Officer's Report on the Slugwash Lane site had been pulled owing to errors and omissions, the basis</p>	

		<p>of the appellant's comments were fundamentally flawed. It is apparent that the two cases have been treated inconsistently by the Case Officer at LDC.</p> <p>Continuing issues were also raised about ongoing building work at Lakedene, Theobalds Road, where there have been repeated breaches of the Construction Management Plan and Drainage Plan. The Clerk to follow up with LDC's enforcement team.</p> <p>The applicant for Multan Farm (agenda item 6m), was present to tell the Council a little more about the application and explained the rationale behind it. They advised that, in order for the farm to make money, it was necessary to diversify, as they were keen to keep it as a farm, rather than sell to the developers that have approached them.</p> <p>Finally, the co-ordinator of the Speed Watch group highlighted the interesting data that had been collected from the temporary speed indicator device on Green Road. Over half a million vehicles had passed it in its first twelve weeks of operation, (an average of just under six thousand per day)! It was noted that this information may be useful to pass to Highways, or to cite within responses to planning applications.</p>	Clerk to follow up with LDC's Enforcement Team.
5	a b	<p>To Approve the Minutes of:</p> <p>The Parish Council meeting held 15th January 2024</p> <p>The Parish Council meeting held 5th February 2024</p>	To approve both sets of minutes, which were signed by the Chair.
6	a b c d e f g	<p>Planning Matters</p> <p>New applications considered at the meeting</p> <p><u>LW/24/0054 - 2 Strood Cottages, North Common Road</u> - Removal of existing patio and replacement with single storey extension at rear elevation.</p> <p><u>LW/24/0106 - 11 Coppards Close</u> - Removal of existing detached garage, single storey side extension.</p> <p>Tree Works Application for Consideration</p> <p><u>TW/24/0020/TPO - 11 Cowslip View</u> - G1 - Oak X 2 - Reduction of 1no large Oak by up to 2.5 m blending into upper a crown on south side, and lateral reduction of up to 2m of 1no. smaller Oak blending into upper crown.</p> <p>Additional Tree Works Application Received Since Publication of the Agenda</p> <p><u>TW/24/0022/TPO - Watermead, North Common Road</u> - T1 - Lime - Crown reduction by 4-5 metres with appropriate crown reshaping. The Council resolved to submit a neutral comment, but noted that the report which recommended the work did not appear to be available to view. As such, the Council would like to be assured that this has been seen and properly checked prior to any decision being taken by the Case Officer.</p> <p>Notices of Planning Approval Received (To note for information only)</p> <p><u>LW/23/0762 - 8 Blackmores</u> - Replace rear conservatory with single storey extension.</p> <p><u>LW/23/0756 - Farm View, South Road</u> - Erection of single storey rear extension and alterations to fenestration.</p> <p><u>LW/23/0736 - Cads, Valebridge Road</u> - Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two storey dwelling house.</p>	<p>To support the application.</p> <p>To support the application.</p> <p>To submit a neutral comment.</p> <p>To submit a neutral comment, with request about the report.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

h	<p>Notice of Refusal (for information only) <u>LW/23/0792 - Clearview (The Barn), Nursery Lane</u> - 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</p>	Noted.
i	<p>Other Planning Matters <u>To note the content of a meeting held between the Parish Council and Cala Homes on 20th February, regarding the site for 96 homes off Ditchling Road</u> - The Council noted that a meeting had taken place with Cala homes, in which it had requested follow ups to questions that had been asked previously. It was agreed that the Clerk will prepare an Executive Summary of the meeting for public information. It was further agreed to add an item to the next agenda to discuss having a short policy on communication to the community, since there is no agreed stance when it comes to feeding back from meetings that may be of public interest, or responding to comments relating to the Council and its activities on social media.</p>	The Clerk to prepare an Executive Summary of the meeting. Item on communication to be added to next month's agenda.
j	<p><u>To review and consider the responses and information received from Cala Homes, following the above meeting</u> – the responses received from Cala were considered weak and disappointing, but not unexpected in that. The Council was unimpressed to see the way in which Cala's Statement of Community Involvement makes it sound as though they consulted thoroughly with the community. As such, the Parish Council will ensure that its response to the upcoming planning application makes clear how poor the consultation process/public exhibition was and that it came across as very much a tick box exercise rather than any meaningful attempt on behalf of the developer to engage with and learn from the community.</p>	Council to give feedback on the weaknesses of Cala's public consultation when submitting comments to the reserved matters application.
k	<p><u>To discuss an enquiry from Lewes District Council (LDC) as to whether the Parish Council wishes to start a review process for its Neighbourhood Plan</u> – as this enquiry was to enable LDC to gauge the level of resources it will need to put in place to support local councils wishing to review their neighbourhood plans, the Parish Council said yes.</p>	To say yes to a review.
l	<p><u>Update on application LW/23/0532 – Slugwash Lane, following its removal from consideration at Lewes District Council's January planning committee</u> – District Councillor Zoe Nicholson had advised that the Planning Department is still waiting to hear back from East Sussex Highways on the pavement/highway/verge matter and from their independent heritage consultants, on the Listed Building matter. As such the application will not be going to the March Planning Committee, but possibly the April one.</p>	Noted.
m	<p><u>To consider making a response to planning application LW/23/0451 – Multan Farm, Theobalds Road, which is still awaiting determination</u> - it had been noticed that, as this planning application was consulted upon while the clerk was off sick last year, the Council had not been made aware of or commented on the application. The Clerk had recently emailed to ask the Case Officer if it was still possible to submit comments, but had not received a response. As such, the Council felt it was not currently in a position to comment, but might consider doing so if the Case Officer confirmed that comments would still be accepted.</p>	Awaiting response from Case Officer.
n	<p><u>Concerns about surface water run off and drainage issues from Lakedene, Theobalds Road</u> – please see notes for the Public Forum session, in which this had been discussed.</p>	See notes from Public Forum.

	o	<u>To note any response received from Lewes District Council to concerns raised about the administration of various planning applications</u> - the Council was still awaiting a response to the various issues raised.	
7	a	Financial Matters <u>To approve this month's payments</u> - the Council ratified payments of the Adobe Acrobat subscription for the period December 2023-February 2024, and approved fifteen new payments totalling £22,405.57. (Please see Appendix A for details).	Payments approved.
	b	<u>To consider alternative savings accounts</u> - it was agreed to move £65k to the best (ideally fixed rate) savings account available.	To move £65k to higher interest savings. Approved.
	c	<u>To ratify approval of having a replacement of a lighting column and lantern in Farncombe Close, at a cost of £2000.05</u>	
	d	<u>To discuss the possibility of switching suppliers for our street lighting maintenance and energy contracts</u> - awaiting information from East Sussex Highways, so item deferred to next meeting.	Deferred to next meeting.
	e	<u>To review grant applications submitted from local groups and decide on the allocation of grants</u> - the Council had received eight grant applications, for which decisions made were as follows: Grant Applications Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £500 for Wivelsfield Tea Club¹ • £500 for Wivelsfield Films¹ • £500 for the Monday Group² • £2500 for churchyard maintenance at Wivelsfield Parish Church³ • £813.68 to Wivelsfield Village Hall as matched funding (but to come from CIL funds, not the grants budget)⁴ • £1650 to Wivelsfield School PTA for outdoor play equipment (to come from S137 expenditure, rather than the grants budget)⁵ Grant Applications Refused: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1200 for Wivelsfield Wellness - since these events have been breaking even and the organiser's aim was for a grant to cover costs so that practitioners could earn from the takings of the events, the Council felt uncomfortable about supporting it, particularly since costs were high relative to the numbers of people attending and benefitting from the event. As the Council is however supportive of having events in the community for people to attend, it was agreed to invite the organiser along to the Annual Parish Meeting, for them to publicise the events, since increasing footfall will help to cover their costs. 	The Council approved six of the eight grant applications received, four of which will come from the grants budget, one from CIL and one from S137 expenditure.

¹ Local Govt Act 1972 - s145 (1)(a)

² Highways Act 1980 s43 (1)

³ Local Govt Act 1972 - s214

⁴ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19 (3)

⁵ Local Government Act 1972 - 137(4)(a)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2500 for the Church Clock – the Council resolved not to support this application for a number of reasons, which included that the clock is very much a part of the church building and it is believed that there will be grant funding sources specific to this kind of thing and it was a very significant sum being asked for on top of the money the Council already contributes for maintenance of the churchyard. 	
8	<p>a <u>Action list</u> – noted.</p> <p>b <u>Preparation for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 1 May</u> – Councillors to contribute ideas for which organisations to invite.</p> <p>c <u>To consider whether there are matters to discuss with Highways which would warrant holding a Strengthening Local Relationships meeting. To propose dates if appropriate</u> - the Chair asked members to read through the information provided by Highways and compile a list of things for the Council to discuss with them.</p> <p>d <u>To note the content of the 'East Sussex Highways Inspection Manual' and the approach taken to manage assets such as the road network</u></p> <p>e <u>To discuss the future of the Wivelsfield News magazine</u> – the publishers of the Wivelsfield News had written to say that they are no longer able to provide the publication free of charge, as revenue generation from adverts is not covering costs. As such, the Parish Council can either choose to fund an advert-free magazine (at a cost of £1385 per issue), or will need to consider alternative options. The Clerk to check if they will provide a last magazine under the current arrangements, since this decision has been so sudden, and to add this matter to next month's agenda to consider in more detail.</p> <p>f <u>Update on the Antye Field Asset of Community Value application</u> – the decision upon this from Lewes District Council has been delayed and should be received by 11th March.</p>		<p>Cllrs to circulate ideas.</p> <p>Cllrs to circulate suggested content for meeting agenda with Highways. Noted.</p> <p>To be added to next agenda for further consideration.</p>
9	<p>a <u>To discuss potential community benefit activities and any further information gleaned on the ideas previously suggested</u> - It was agreed that, in order to progress the project to develop parish information boards, the Vice-Chair would set up a working group to agree and collate information to be included.</p> <p>b <u>Update on discussions with Village Hall Management Committee</u> – a draft memorandum of understanding is currently with the Management Committee and the Council is awaiting feedback.</p>		<p>Vice-Chair to head up a working group to devise content for information boards.</p>
10		Reports from District & County Councillors, MP & PCSO Reports had been received from our MP and District and County Councillors.	Noted.
11		Items to be taken to the Next Lewes District Association of Local Councils Meeting None noted. Awaiting minutes of the last meeting.	
12	a	Correspondence <u>To note complaints received about the street light in Farncombe Close</u> – the Council acknowledged the complaints received from two residents regarding the amount of time for which a street light in Farncombe Close has not been working. It understood that Highways have now installed a new lantern temporarily in order to restore light, prior to undertaking the full column replacement agreed at item 7c.	Complaints acknowledged.

	b	<u>Email from Ditchling Parish Council re seeking section 106 funds for traffic mitigation measures</u> - noted.	Noted.
	c	<u>Information about the 'London to Brighton Challenge 2024' - Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th May 2024</u> , which passes through Wivelsfield Green. Noted.	Noted.
		Additional Correspondence Received Since Publication of the Agenda	
	d	<u>Further information about EV chargers</u> - to add to another agenda.	Add to April agenda.
	e	<u>Request for a community litter pick</u> - it was agreed to arrange a litter pick to coincide with the Great Big Green Week in June.	Arrange litter pick for June.
	f	<u>Responses to the Council's queries about making allowances available for co-opted members</u> - Advice received had indicated that, whilst co-opted members cannot receive the basic allowance, Councils can cover some expenses for co-opted members eg mileage to training courses and events. This item to be added to a future agenda to consider updating the Council's policy on allowances.	Council to consider updating its policy on Members' Allowances.
	g	<u>Data from the temporary speed indicator device</u> - the Community Speed Watch co-ordinator had supplied some very interesting data from the temporary SID. Of particular interest was the sheer volume of vehicles (approximately 6000) travelling along Green Road daily. The Council asked if the Speed Watch Co-ordinator could please submit something about this as an article for the Wivelsfield News.	
13		Items for Noting or Inclusion on Next Agenda Only those items noted above.	
14	a	Date of Next Meeting Monday 8 th April 2024	

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Accounts Approved for Payment at the Meeting of 4th March 2024

Items Paid Previously for Ratification

Payee	Expenditure	Value	Total	Payment Type	Voucher Ref
General Expenditure		£	£		
Adobe Acrobat	December 2023 subscription		19.97		911
Adobe Acrobat	January 2024 subscription		19.97		912
Adobe Acrobat	February 2024 subscription		19.97		913
Total Expenditure			59.91		

New Items Approved for Payment

Payee	Expenditure	Value	Total	Payment Type	Voucher Ref
		£	£		
General Expenditure					
Salaries	March 24		2484.44	Online	914
East Sussex Pension Fund	Pension contributions March 24		890.80	Online	915
HMRC	Quarter 4 PAYE & NI Contributions		3159.43	Online	916
Members' Allowances	For the period 1 Oct 23 – 31 March 24		586.70	Online	917
Lewes District Council	Car park & pavilion bin emptying February 24		38.40	Online	918
Lewes District Council	Charters Gate Way dog bin emptying March 24		93.60	Online	919
Lewes District Council	Outdoor Gym & Play Area Inspection March 24		36.00	Online	920
Sage UK Ltd	March 24 Sage 50 Accounts subscription		92.40	DD	921
Tetrabyte	IT support & Office 365 licences – March		152.15	DD	922
Public Works Loans Board	Half yearly repayment of loan for Hall Improvement Project		7546.46	DD	923
ESALC	N Turner attendance at new councillor training – 6 Feb 24		48.00	Online	924
ESALC	Clerk planning training – 27 Feb 24		48.00	Online	925
East Sussex County Council	Street lighting maintenance and energy charge 2023-24		7,208.22	Online	926
Adobe Systems	Monthly Adobe Acrobat subscription		19.97	DD	927
Carola Godman Irvine	Peppercorn rent for use of Church Lane car park		1.00	Online	928
Total General Expenditure			22,405.57		