



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Monday 20th March 2023 at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Ros Day (RD), Sonia Plato (SP), Geoff Thomas (GT), Lynda Roller (LR), Jill Mitcheson (JM)

In attendance: Cllr Gary Curtis (RDC) and Cllr Kathryn Field (ESCC) and Gilly Lowe, Parish Clerk

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**1. Public Questions**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr John Goddard.

**3. Declaration of Interests**

Received from:

Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee

Cllr Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Plato – Youth Club & Crowhurst Environment Group

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the parish council held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 as a true and correct record.

**5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

5.1 Sandrock Hill Parking Feasibility Study – the clerk provided an update from East Sussex Highways who had made a site visit and hoped to finalise the report by 14<sup>th</sup> April. Cllr Roller confirmed that some members of the public had been surveyed.

5.2 Horticultural Bench – the clerk confirmed that the interested parties had all been consulted, and the benches were now in their correct locations. GT confirmed that the VH Management Committee had agreed to make some repairs and bolt the bench in place, and the Horticultural Society had agreed to reposition the planters.

5.3 Timbers for bench repair – members approved (retrospectively) the payment of the Woodside Joiners invoice for £161.70 to purchase the timber slats. The clerk will liaise regarding delivery & the handyman.

5.4 Clock at the Pavilion – The handyman had not provided any further information to date from the manufacturer about reset instructions.

- 5.5 Community Map – SP had met with Audrey Koop to write the text for the map which is now more or less finished. She has found someone to make a bespoke wooden frame, but as a temporary measure, a printed version will be displayed on the noticeboard at the station by the end of the month to secure funding agreed from the Community Rail Partnership.
- 5.6 Broken bollard light – the bulb had been replaced, and the light is now working.
- 5.7 Youth Hut floodlight – Tracy Hoad had sent a request to disconnect or remove the floodlight as it affects the sensor for the bollard lights. Members agreed and the clerk will liaise with the Youth Club about removal or disconnection.
- 5.8 Meeting with the owner of the pond behind the Rec path – a 3-way meeting took place on 4<sup>th</sup> March. JG had reported previously that various measures had been agreed upon which should alleviate some of the issues which cause the path to flood. RD suggested having a look at clearing some debris which has accumulated in the ditch which would further help the water flow away.

## **6. Representations from District & County Councillors**

- 6.1 Cllr Curtis then provided an update from Rother District Council including details of monies received from the Levelling Up Fund - £17m for the De La Warr pavilion renovations and £2m for Sidley Community Hall. Staff who are union members at RDC have voted in favour of strike action, but not all employees are union members so it remains to be seen how much disruption it will cause. The Normanhurst Estate planning application probably won't come before the planning committee until after the May elections – there are already numerous objections on the website. Finally, the outsourcing to an external agency for the enforcement of fly-tipping has failed to deliver on the environmental objective. SP reported that the bags from the litter pick carried out at the weekend had already been collected and wanted to thank Andrew Mead at Rother for this efficiency.
- 6.2 Cllr Kathryn Field said that the maximum council tax increases had been applied and support was continuing for families hosting Ukrainian refugees. There were various children's activities planned for the Easter holidays, which will be publicised in local libraries and other public spaces.

## **7. Financial Matters**

- 7.1 The financial report to 28<sup>th</sup> February had been circulated and was approved by members.
- 7.2 The payments report for March was considered and approved.
- 7.3 The bank reconciliation to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chairman.
- 7.4 The clerk confirmed the date for the internal audit as 20<sup>th</sup> April.

## **8. Recreation Ground**

- 8.1 JG had carried out the monthly inspection and reported that the medical kit in the de-fib has elements which are now out of date. The bottom step of the toddler slide needs attention, and 3 caps are missing on the bolts on the climbing wall. RD will check the size and the clerk will report these items to the handyman. SP suggested contacting Lee Oldridge to help with sourcing parts for the de-fib.
- 8.2 The clerk provided an update from the handyman who has almost completed the tasks on the list originally provided. He is currently working in Crowhurst one day a month.
- 8.3 The clerk needs to liaise with JG about a specification for permanent repairs to the path, and then get some quotes from contractors.

8.4 The clerk said that the cricket club has agreed to the croquet club's request to use the outfield area for croquet lawns, and the clerk is now in the process of agreeing hire terms. The fixtures for stoolball, cricket and football are up to date on the calendar.

There had been requests to hire the Rec from various groups which the clerk had previously circulated. After a brief discussion, members agreed to the requests and asked the clerk to confirm terms and conditions.

## 9. Dark Skies Update

SP reported that the final event of the dark skies – the nighttime walk was a great success. It was fully booked with 27 people on the waiting list. It catered for all ages and was very informative and emphasised the necessity of dark skies protection. Once the official review has taken place with the HWAONB, they hope to be able to run some of the events again later in the year.

## 10. Annual Parish Assembly

The clerk confirmed that invitations had been sent via email to all the various clubs & societies based on the previous year's attendees, and some RSVPs already confirmed. SP suggested asking Lee Oldridge for a 1<sup>st</sup> Aid introductory talk. Members agreed to the production of 10 publicity boards, based on costs provided by the clerk. The clerk will follow up with arrangements.

## 11. Community Award

The clerk had previously circulated nominations received from members of the public and after discussing the contenders, they agreed on the recipient. The clerk will organise the trophy and engraving ready for presentation at the Parish Assembly.

## 12. Town & Country Planning

### i) RR/2023/236/P – The Coach House, Royal Oak Lane

*Proposal: Demolition of two existing single storey rear extensions to replace with a larger single and double storey extension to create additional living space; internal alterations*

LR and JM visited the applicant and recommended support as he had taken pre-application advice, the proposed materials are in keeping, it won't overlook other properties and is unobtrusive. All members agreed and the clerk was asked to submit the following comments online:

*Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application but requests that the following conditions are included:*

*1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32.(v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.*

*2. Any new hard standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).*

### ii) RR/2023/330/P – Oakwell House, Forewood Lane, Crowhurst

*Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension with flat roof and 3 roof lights*

RD had visited the applicant who had previously had permission granted but had re-applied as there were a few minor alterations to the original plans. RD suggested supporting the application with conditions regarding external lighting and porous hard standing. All members agreed and the clerk was asked to submit the following comments online:

*Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application and request that the following conditions are included:*

*1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32.(v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan . Rooflights should also avoid causing light pollution.*

2. Any new hard standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).

iii) RR/2023/331/P – Oakwell House, Forewood Lane, Crowhurst

*Proposal: Erection of a self-contained annexe in garden*

This application is from the same applicant (see comments above which also apply). All members agreed to submit the following comments:

*Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application and request that the following conditions are included:*

*1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32.(v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan . Rooflights should also avoid causing light pollution.*

*2. Any new hard standing for car parking or a path to the annexe to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).*

### **13. Warm Space & Supporting Vulnerable Residents**

13.1 LR reported that the warm space initiative had sadly come to an end a bit earlier than anticipated. The availability of the venue was an issue. However, she recommended that the council run it again next year starting earlier in the winter (after the clocks change at the end of October?) and to look at using the village hall, which as a non-commercial space would allow for grant application and sponsorship / donations from local businesses. Other members agreed that it had been a worthwhile scheme and GT will provide a calculation for hire charges of the village hall and check best availability for dates/days of the week.

13.2 Supporting Vulnerable Residents – RD asked how a list of vulnerable residents can be put together without breaking GDPR rules. Discussion followed about leafleting, use of the RVA register and having a form available at the Parish Assembly. JM said there needs to be a clear definition of the parish council's responsibilities to residents and RD felt it was largely practical help for those who lived alone or didn't have online access in the event of an emergency.

### **14. Emergency & Resilience Planning**

See previous item. Everyone contacted to date had agreed to remain as contacts. RD & GT are updating the list.

### **15. Elections 2023**

The clerk had previously circulated emails from Rother with details and links to nomination papers and guidance. She reiterated that completed forms must be delivered in person to Bexhill between the specified dates – 27<sup>th</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> April. There were no questions from any councillors regarding the process, but the clerk asked them to refer to Rother's electoral office if any clarification was needed.

### **16. Councillor Updates on External Bodies**

16.1 Village Hall Management Committee – GT reported that bookings are back up to pre-covid levels, and there will be an increase of 5% in hire fees. The energy assessment required for the environmental grant had been carried out.

16.2 Policing Meeting – LR reported that Steve O'Connell from Sussex Safer Roads had attended the most recent meeting and talked about Community Speedwatch and Project EDWARD which aims to educate on road safety and is taking place between 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May. Other matters raised included fly-tipping, which is best reported online using 'Fix My Street' and noisy motorbikes. The patrol plan priorities need updating and after some discussion these were agreed to be vandalism, wildlife crime and dangerous driving. LR will relay the information.

16.3 Combe Valley CIC – GT missed the meeting but will circulate the minutes when they are ready.

**17. Clerk’s Report**

17.1 The football club had asked if they could store the U9’s goalposts in the container belonging to the cricket club, who had in turn repeated their suggestion that the parish council buy the container for general use by other clubs. Councillors were not keen as it would require insurance and maintenance. SP is also not keen for regular use of the area over the winter months as a lot of work has been carried out to improve it for the youth club to use. The clerk will liaise with the cricket & football clubs to find an alternative solution.

17.2 The investment account held at NS & I cannot be registered for online or telephone banking and with a balance of approximately £1200, the clerk suggested it be closed and the balance transferred to the Co-op deposit account. RD and SP signed a letter requesting confirming mandated signatories to begin the process.

**18. Review of Council Policy**

The clerk had previously circulated a Training & Development Policy and Dignity at Work Policy as components of the Civility & Respect pledge. Members approved the policies, and the clerk will make the necessary updates to the website.

**19. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items**

GT asked about the bus improvement plan as he had read that £20-£50k would be made available for a new bus shelter at Crowhurst station. Cllr Field suggested contacting Neil McGuire at ESCC who is responsible for the £41m bus improvement plan. SP commented that children waiting for the school bus don’t have any shelter. She also asked about the Battle Community Bus and if that could visit Crowhurst.

Parish Assembly

Vulnerability Register

Broadband

Green Space & Open Spaces email – SP had forwarded it to the NP Review group but asked the clerk to circulate it to all members also.

**20. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed by

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Date: