



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (Chairman) (GT), Sonia Plato (SP), Lynda Roller (LR), Jill Mitcheson (JM) and John Goddard (JG).

County Councillor present: Cllr Kathryn Field (KF)

In attendance: 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 District Cllr Chas Pearce.

### 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 Annual Meeting of the parish council held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 as a true and correct record.

### 5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

5.1 Emergency Plan – LR has taken over from Ros Day as the contact point for the Crowhurst Support Group and the clerk is updating the necessary emails & telephone numbers published. The Resilience Plan is also finalised and the clerk will arrange for it to be published on the website and in the Crowhurst News. GT mentioned that it may be required given the current weather situation and water shortages.

5.2 Highways – An SLR meeting has been arranged for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August at 11am. Items for the agenda will include the erroneous road closure signs, drainage & potholes and the Sandrock Hill feasibility study (see Item 5.4 below)

5.3 Community Map – SP updated that they have sourced the oak planks for Ben Wood to make the frame. The project is still progressing.

5.4 Feasibility Study, Sandrock Hill – The clerk had previously circulated the report from Highways which declared that it would not support the creation of a formal parking area due to the impact on visibility through the bend. Even though this is a situation that would occur at present, ESCC would not support any measure that formally introduces this risk to the public highway. The options available would be to seek alternative locations for formal parking and / or introduce measures to prevent parking on the verges. There was a lengthy discussion amongst members about the cost and the fact that visibility issues are already present with the informal parking and use by delivery drivers that occurs. They concluded that the clerk should apply for the previously discussed licence to install bollards and arrange for a consultation with residents to discuss possible options.

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

6.1 There was no report from Rother District Council in Cllr Pearce's absence.

6.2 Cllr Kathryn Field reported that the new on-demand Flexibus scheme has had good reports (see Item 12). Balfour Beatty, the new contractors for Highways, have made a good start and are using the West Sussex pothole menders.

## **7. Town & Country Planning**

RR/2023/850/P – Badgers End, Beardsell Lane, Crowhurst

After a brief discussion, councillors decided to await information from the case officer and to visit the applicant and defer further discussion until the July meeting which is still within the time frame to submit comments.

## **8. Financial Matters**

8.1 The financial report to 31<sup>st</sup> May had been circulated and was approved by members.

8.2 The payments report for June, which included a recent updated version as the clerk had been away, was considered and approved.

8.3 The bank reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chairman.

8.4 The clerk confirmed publication of the AGAR forms and submission to the external auditor. The notice of public rights began today and runs through to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July.

## **9. Recreation Ground**

9.1 JM had carried out the monthly inspection. She reported the following items that required attention: the car park has a few potholes, the walkway on the playframe has wobbly bolts and the whole frame moves when children are using it, woodchips are needed under the swings, there are a lot of thistles & other weeds especially in the toddler area. LR and SP offered to clear them. The clerk will report the other items to the handyman. JM asked if the verge & hedge should have been cut as visibility when leaving the car park is hindered, but SP reported that it is left uncut because there are glow-worms.

In the Pavilion, she noted that items needed PAT testing which the clerk confirmed has been arranged for 30<sup>th</sup> June. The Pavilion caretaker has been away on holiday so not quite as clean as it usually is, but not terrible. GT reminded members of the plans to upgrade the Recreation Ground, and suggested revisiting funding ideas in September.

9.2 SP confirmed that the youth club has found an alternative location for the fireworks.

- 9.3 Following the recent Rec User group meeting, notes had been circulated to all councillors. SP noted from the report the suggestion to locate the new pre-fab Pavilion building on the tennis court, and felt that it should go to a village-wide consultation as the tennis club had been running for a number of years and the court was still used by a number of people at different times of the week. JM agreed but said that the tennis court needs a refurb, and this led back to the discussion about a 3–5 year plan for improvements at the Rec and the playground. SP said that there were several grants available to improve the court and facilities. GT read from the ‘wish-list’ that had been compiled from the previous year’s Annual Assembly. Councillors agreed to make a site visit together to consider the best location for the new pre-fab Pavilion offered by the football club.
- 9.4 The current location and state of the noticeboard at the entrance to the Rec car park was discussed and a new position at the corner of the playground where the path begins was agreed. The clerk will ask the handyman to quote for new concrete footings, refurbishment and a prop to hold open the window (or make it a side-opening).
- 9.5 The clerk updated members that the newly donated de-fib for the Pavilion is due to be installed at the end of the month.
- 9.6 Members approved the monthly inspection list, updated to include all current councillors. The clerk needs to provide more blank inspection sheets.

#### **10. Warmer Crowhurst**

SP reported that the group is meeting the next morning to discuss July dates to consult with Swainham Lane residents and hold a public meeting in the Village Hall following the publication of the application online, which has now been submitted to Rother. Energise Sussex will attend the parish council meeting in July to provide an update. GT suggested residents should be told to contact the clerk with comments for the PC to consider, and the PC should attend the public meeting.

GT took the opportunity to update on Rother’s VH Energy Project. He had recently attended a meeting to provide an update on the distribution of £400k - £500k of CIL money being made available to village halls and other community spaces to improve or provide energy efficiencies such as double glazing, air source & ground source heat pumps and insulation. In the associated survey that had been carried out, Crowhurst’s VH came up very highly for an Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP). However, they then explained how Rother could help organisations bid for money as there is not going to be enough for all hoped-for projects. The Youth Hut is also part of the Project.

#### **11. Lead Responsibilities**

A list of councillor’s lead areas of responsibility had previously been circulated and all members agreed to it. SP mentioned that the Traffic Working Group had not met for some time.

#### **12. Flexibus**

LR had trialled the new on-demand bus service provided by East Sussex County Council and found it to be a brilliant service - easy to use, brand new buses and she was taken to her chosen destination and collected from it without a problem. It is basically like a taxi service. There is a misconception that it is for people who have no other means of transport or are on low income. She urged everyone to spread the word otherwise it may not get used. The clerk will send a summary to include in the Crowhurst News.

#### **13. Parish Council Newsletter**

The clerk reported the print costs to produce approximately 350 A4 double-sided colour newsletters. However, using the Royal Mail Door Drop was prohibitive as they can’t reduce the

size of the print run sufficiently. The clerk was asked to enquire if the Crowhurst News deliverers would be willing, for a fee, to deliver to all households twice a year as they had with the election leaflet. GT suggested each councillor provide a news item in early September with a view to distributing it in April & October.

#### **14. Warm Spaces**

LR had emailed the pub about running sessions there as before and was awaiting a response. In the meantime, she felt it prudent to consider the Village Hall as an alternative venue as previously discussed. Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) can help with applications for funding. SP also suggested approaching The Ford Trust, and GT suggested asking the Fayre C'ttee, and Broadstock organisers.

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

- 15.1 Village Hall Management Committee – GT nothing to report – further minor improvements such as curtains etc. are probably waiting for the school holidays.
- 15.2 Policing Meeting – LR reported the overall disappointment at the ending of the regular Teams meeting due to a reorganization of areas. Sam Kemp is the new point of contact. The clerk was asked to contact him and perhaps arrange a meeting. The May report was the last to be issued, and GT said it was a concern to see that farm building break-ins may be on the rise. Steve O'Connell has been busy with CSW issues and the National Seatbelt Operation which is underway until 25<sup>th</sup> June. This is to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the compulsory wearing of seatbelts.
- 15.3 Combe Valley CIC – Nothing to report. SP said that the sub-group had met whilst she was away, and she will circulate the minutes once received.

#### **16. Clerk's Report**

The clerk checked who is attending Rother's Energy Champion Training – LR & SP.

ESALC are potentially offering advanced Planning Training on 18<sup>th</sup> July – JG & JM would like to attend.

News of a planned 80th D-Day anniversary in 2024 – the clerk was asked to share the information with St George's Church PCC.

#### **17. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items**

SP said that the Sussex Lund grant application is now open and if anyone has any ideas, to let her know.

Clerk to write to Rother Planning department about referring to Crowhurst's NP policies.

Check with Wildlife Crime team – Julie Pearce-Martin – about tree felling at Allenswood.

#### **18. Date of Next Meeting:**

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

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed by: .....

Date:.....