



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 17th July 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/District Councillors present: Cllr Chas Pearce

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Parish Clerk, 3 members of the public

1. Public Questions

SP had received an email from Beckie West, regarding Plough Lane, to say that it was very overgrown, and slippery with vegetation. A guest had slipped and broken her arm. The clerk was asked to report this to Highways & the Rights of Way team.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from County Cllr Kathryn Field.

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 19th June 2023 as a true and correct record.

5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

5.1 Emergency Plan – This is now with the clerk to publicise in the next edition of the Crowhurst News and on the website.

5.2 Highways – Agenda items were confirmed for the SLR meeting on August 8th, to include road closures, potholes & drains and Plough Lane (see item 1). Attendees will be Cllrs Thomas, Plato & Roller. The clerk will confirm the agenda with Highways.

5.3 Community Map – SP showed the meeting an AO size print of the map, 30 of which have been produced and will be sold for £15 each to raise funds for a second large display map in the village. The school and Youth Club will also receive one from the donations received from Bruce Cripps and Nicola Stell's Gunpowder Walk booklet. GT proposed thanks to everyone involved in making it

happen – Audrey Koop, Emily Johns, John Cole, Ben Wood, Andy Pope and his predecessor Catherine Simmons and SP for their efforts.

- 5.4 Bollards on Sandrock Hill – The clerk has submitted the licence application to install bollards on Sandrock Hill. Nothing further to report to date.
- 5.5 Pavilion de-fib – this has now been installed, and the donation monies received. The clerk has added it to the insurance schedule and will include it on the register with The Circuit. This de-fib should be checked with the others in the weekly/monthly inspections for any issues.

6. Representations from District & County Councillors

- 6.1 District Councillor Chas Pearce reported the following: at a recent board meeting of the Battle Sports Centre, a deficit of £5,000 was reported due to the current closure of Claverham School which will hopefully be re-gained when it opens in September; the traveller site at Bexhill is a situation worth watching; the government is imposing separate waste recycling instead of multi recycling, which means that Rother will require 20 more vehicles and more staff at a cost of £3m; there was an interesting site meeting at the Normanhurst Estate and a presentation by the applicants; Rother DC has a maintenance team available which now includes an electrician too; there is a shortage of staff, so there won't be any lifeguards on Bexhill beach this summer and also the sports centre is short-staffed. GT asked if any training is given to students to fill these roles over the summer. CP said that Bexhill College offer appropriate courses and they are hoping to employ a current student. He commended the Flexibus scheme, although SP mentioned that it hadn't turned up for two users who had booked by phone instead of using the app. CP asked the clerk to let County Councillor Field know to provide feedback.
- 6.2 In Cllr Kathryn Field's absence she sent the following item to be reported: the County Council has taken £5.6m from reserves to spend on roads. The majority will be spent on resilience, which is preventative but just over £1m is to be used for fixing potholes.

7. Town & Country Planning

- 7.1 RR/2023/1238/P – Fordlands, Crowhurst Road, Crowhurst TN33 9BT
Proposal: Proposed erection of ancillary building to provide garages, storage and gym, together with new parking area (as approved under APP/U1430/D/19/3235396)
The council had missed this notification and therefore was unable to make any comments.
- 7.2 RR/2023/850/P –Badgers End, Beardsell Lane, Crowhurst
Proposal: Retention of a mobile home for a further 2 years.
SP & LR had visited the applicants and after some discussion, the clerk was asked to submit the following comments online:
Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application given the condition that the extension is for a further 2 years, and specifically for these family members. Their current situation means that they have access issues with stairs etc. and need to live in the mobile home. The original application in 2006 to have a mobile home on site was for previous members of the same family, and this has been extended on several occasions.

8. Financial Matters

- 8.1 The financial report to 30th June had been circulated and was approved by members.
- 8.2 The payments report for July was considered and approved,
- 8.3 The bank reconciliation to 30th June 2023 together with a supporting bank statement had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chairman.

8.4 The clerk confirmed that the annual VAT reclaim (£2,285.81 for 2022/'23) had been submitted and will be credited to the account in the coming weeks.

9. Recreation Ground

9.1 JG had carried out the monthly inspection and reported that no new issues had arisen. He suggested that the contractor should cut the hedges at the entrance of the car park. District Cllr Chas Pierce informed the meeting that this had always been carried out by Highways in the past. JG asked if the new de-fib should be included in a regular check, and the clerk confirmed that this and the one installed at the VH should be. She will ask Nicola Stell (NS) to include it in her weekly check, and the clerk will check the one at the VH when the meeting takes place. JG said that there was an accumulation of items in the Pavilion – wheelbarrows, cans etc. No one appears to be claiming them, so the clerk will alert all users to clear their belongings or arrange for their disposal. More bollard lights have been broken. The clerk confirmed that she had spoken to the police who offered to include the Rec in their regular patrol. GT also asked the clerk to look into CCTV, and to put up appropriate signs to let users know cameras were installed. SP & LR had removed the thistles from the playground. De-fib cover in the phone box is being taken off – the clerk will ask NS to report any further findings to see if it is a regular event.

9.2 Members approved the request for the Croquet Club's Social Evening and BBQ on 18th August, drawing attention to the T's & C's in the agreement regarding bonfires etc.

9.3 The location of the pre-fab Pavilion suggested by councillors following a site visit had been deemed too close to the pitch by the Football club. GT asked the clerk to arrange another site visit with members of the football club and councillors.

9.4 CCTV – see item 9.1

9.5 The clerk confirmed that the Annual Playground Inspection will take place in September (no specific date is given).

GT then added that he had received a couple of emails about the current state of the tennis court. SP said that in the past there had been offers of fundraising by the Tennis Club committee, but nothing had come of it. SP is happy to explore possible grant funding as there are funding opportunities for sports and community provision. Several people are offering to fund raise, and GT asked about the possibility of it being a MUGA? SP said some leadership is required to organise fund-raising in the first instance. The clerk will obtain some quotes for re-surfacing.

10. Warmer Crowhurst

Members of Energise Sussex Coast (ESC) provided feedback from the previous day's Public Meeting about the proposed solar farm. Richard Watson (RW) summarized that this was the third public consultation, and re-capped on the original purpose and the steps taken to date. The planning application has been submitted to Rother, (although it isn't yet validated as two more reports are required). It will then come to the parish council for comments.

The public meeting had been useful, and some residents are still concerned, but many solutions are being offered to mitigate those concerns, particularly about the visual impact. The National Grid is in such a state that it will take 7 years to connect which will allow time for planting to mature. GT proposed a separate planning meeting to discuss the application. SP said it should take place after the site visit by councillors & residents using visuals which was suggested at the public meeting yesterday. This had been generally agreed and approved after lengthy discussions. RDC said that they didn't think the application would be validated and ready for comments until late September/early October and CP confirmed the planning department has a current backlog and there will be time for a visuals meeting. The council agreed to a dedicated meeting, also allowing time to talk to residents and honouring commitments made. SP confirmed that the Warmer Crowhurst Project Group would meet with Swainham Lane residents in September to do this and could include councillors if felt appropriate.

11. Neighbourhood Plan Review

The chairman moved this item to later in the agenda as Chris Davidson's arrival was delayed.

12. Youth Club lease

SP reported that the youth club are applying for a grant to raise money to include disabled toilets and other access and need to show at least 10 years left on the lease. They are therefore requesting a lease extension of 20 years and will again pay the peppercorn rent amounting to £40 in advance. They also request the inclusion of the previously agreed amendment to the start time of 8am for use as the pre-school needs to start setting up before the children arrive. All members agreed on both the lease extension and the amendment. The clerk will write a new lease for signing.

13. RALC Meeting

LR & GT attended the quarterly RALC meeting earlier in the day. There was a great deal about potholes, and there was good attendance from councillors, but it was disappointing that speakers from Highways, the police & Rother DC sent apologies.

14. Warm Spaces

LR said that the programme is moving forward. The Village Hall is booked from 11.30am-4pm on a Sunday starting from 5th November to 31st March and using the Youth Club for 4 Sundays when the VH isn't available. LR is checking insurance and has been working out costs. Rental comes to £720, approximately £100 for reading materials and ingredients for homemade soup of £580 making a total £1,399.50 + insurance costs. A grant application was turned down by Timpson's, but LR is approaching Tesco's, Sainsbury's & Jempson's. She would like to thank Brian Basham for a £150 donation. Other residents have offered to fundraise within the village and join a steering group. The RVA (Rother Voluntary Action) will give advice on the grant applications. GT felt it was imperative to set up a steering group with volunteers and suggested an ad in the Crowhurst News. LR said it should also ask for people with expertise e.g teaching crochet and Energise Sussex Coast's offer for free energy advice. GT proposed a £500 grant from the parish council to match fund other funding and all members agreed.

15. NP Review

GT thanked Chris Davidson (CD) for coming. CD gave a summary of what had been achieved to date & the review process. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan had been made in 2019 with 91% of resident votes in favour of the Plan. One of the achievements had been the creation of the Environment Group and the inclusion of the Biodiversity Audit. He then highlighted the specific reasons for the review and the progress to date. The NP Monitoring and Review working group were finalising drafts of policies (including references to the PC's Climate & Ecological Emergency Resolution and Dark Skies Policy), making necessary updates, finalising the Draft Design Plan, and will consult with residents on proposed changes; the revised draft plan then goes to a formal consultation. They have been actively working since the beginning of the year on it, but there is an issue with funding from Locality, who provide government funds for NPs. Funds are required for the consultation & associated costs (architect's fees and print production etc.) There has been very little information from Locality about when & how to apply. CD asked members if they are happy with what's been done so far and the proposed plans. He also said that SP was the only parish council representative on the working group since Ros Day was no longer a councillor and asked for another nomination to join the group. GT thanked CD again for his very comprehensive summary and confirmed that there was unanimous support of the work done so far. GT proposed funding of £750 for match funding & volunteered to join the working group. All members agreed. CP offered to see what he can find out at RDC.

16. Councillor Updates on External Bodies

- 16.1 Village Hall Management Committee –GT said they are still waiting for further news from the VH Energy Project, hopefully coming in August.
- 16.2 Policing Meeting –LR said that with the changes to area coverage the clerk was going to arrange a meeting with the new PCSO. In the meantime, anything to report goes through 101 or 999.
- 16.3 Combe Valley CIC – Nothing to report.

17. Clerk’s Report

The clerk reminded councillors to set up their new .gov.uk email addresses and she will then publicise as necessary for use. An enquiry had been made of the Crowhurst News editor if the deliverers would be willing to deliver a bi-annual parish council newsletter and this will be discussed at their next committee meeting on 24th August. The Dog Control Consultation by Rother was concerning dog waste bins rather than notification, which was already plentiful at the Recreation Ground.

18. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

Future agenda – dark skies festival

19. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council, the AGM, will take place on **Monday 18th September at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.43pm

Signed by

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Date: