

Crowhurst

PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 16th October 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), Sue Laimbeer (SL) and John Goddard (JG).

District/County Councillors present: Cllr Kathryn Field, ESCC (KF) and Cllr Chas Pearce, RDC (CP)
 In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Parish Clerk and no members of the public.

1.	<p>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</p> <p>The clerk read from two items of correspondence received from residents in properties near to the Recreation Ground regarding noise and unacceptable language during football matches. The Chairman deferred any discussion to Item 9.</p>
2.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
3.	<p>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:</p> <p>Received from:</p> <p>Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee Cllr Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group Cllr Plato – Youth Club & Crowhurst Environment Group Cllr Laimbeer – Annual Fayre Committee, Horticultural Group & Crowhurst Environment Group</p>
4.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:</p> <p>The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 18th September 2023 as a true & correct record.</p>
5.	<p>MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED IN THIS AGENDA:</p> <p>5.1 Bollards on Sandrock Hill – Having chased Highways, the clerk was informed that the application is being processed by the licensing department.</p> <p>5.2 Highways – The clerk circulated the notes from the SLR meeting in August and has actioned a request for further safety measures on Sandrock Hill to combat speeding. She also followed up on blocked drains and road closure signs alerting residents via the village email circulation.</p> <p>5.3 Community Map – The clerk has provided interim evidence of the project and photographs of the current map display to Rother DC to secure the payment of the grant funds agreed. This should be paid within the next 10 days or so. The chestnut frame & display stand are currently being made, and once complete, there will be an unveiling ceremony to which Cllr Chas Pearce will be invited. Ben Wood is making the frame, and the final location needs to be confirmed with Andy Pope from Community Rail Partnership.</p> <p>5.4 Tree Safety Survey – The survey report has been circulated and the associated works quoted for by Foxhills Tree Services. The clerk needs to obtain quotes from at least two other contractors before a decision can be made about carrying out the works.</p>

<p>6.</p>	<p>REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS:</p> <p>Cllr Pearce reported that the Rother Community Grants opened for applications on 1st October. He also encouraged groups to play the Rother Lottery which has a £25k prize and supports the Community Grant Scheme. Two controversial decisions were recently taken by Rother - the temporary closure of public toilets throughout the district and card only payments for parking. Parking machines will no longer take cash, but there will be Paypoints in nearby retail premises. There is a major problem of homelessness, particularly in Hastings. Rother has bought a lot of temporary accommodation which should save money in the long term. GT asked about the results of the recent dog control consultation, and CP reported there had been no change.</p> <p>Cllr Field reported from a recent meeting looking at Q1 out-turn figures. Projections to the end of the year, are for overspending by £2m in adult social care, and by £15m in children’s services. The main reason for this is that many foster carers have retired or stopped fostering post-pandemic and the council is now having to use agencies which is costly. £22m is spent on school transport, mostly taxis. Another big spend, is IT security, but it is proving to be very good and has stopped multiple cybercrime attempts.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING:</p> <p>To consider the following new Planning Applications and provide comments to Rother District Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. RR/2023/1973/P – The Oaks, Station Road, Crowhurst TN33 9DB <p><i>Proposal: Proposed detached outbuilding to be used as a gym.</i></p> <p>After a brief discussion, councillors felt that there was no reason not to support this application as there will be no impact on neighbours or other views. The following comments were approved for submission online: <i>Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application with the following conditions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32 (v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.</i> 2. <i>Any new hard-standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).</i> <p>SP raised the fact that Rother still don’t refer to the NP in their comments and asked the clerk to write to them again.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The financial report to 30th September 2023 together with a summary report of receipts & payments that had been previously circulated was approved. ii. The payments report for September 2023 was considered and approved for payment. iii. The bank reconciliation to 30th September together with a copy of the supporting bank statement had been circulated and was approved and signed by the Chairman. iv. An increase in the task-based price for cleaning & maintenance of the Pavilion and Recreation Ground was considered having not been increased since August 2018. There is an increase in the associated tasks such as checking de-fibs, and emptying more bins, and it was agreed to increase the rate per task to £12 from £10, & to £6 from £5, which is more in line with the minimum wage. This will apply from October 2023.
<p>9.</p>	<p>RECREATION GROUND:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. LR didn’t have the folder to carry out the inspection. SP & JG reported that the lights had been damaged again and a nitrous oxide cannister found in the car park. More dog waste has been found also. GT asked the district & county councillors for the best way to enforce the no dogs’ rule on the Rec? KF suggested the clerk contact Deborah Keneally who liaises with the external agency. ii. CCTV policy – members approved the drafted policy, and the clerk will forward it to pre-school & youth club for information and organise appropriate signage before installation. iii. The Annual Inspection of the playground was carried out and the report’s only significant finding was regarding the wooden fencing and the base of the timbers of the main play frame which will need replacing once rotted through. JM has found a list of groups who can help with accessing grants. JM & LR to report further at the next meeting.

	<p>iv. The handyman had been unwell and hadn't completed the barrier gate post or kitchen cupboard door. There is also a shower fixing that needs replacing, and the rocker bike needs painting in more muted colours. The clerk will follow up.</p> <p>v. Nick Stell has agreed to clear the grass cutting in the ditch and cut back the hedge along the footpath and will do it on his return after 3rd November.</p> <p>vi. The council approved the Youth Club's previously submitted request to hold a Hallowe'en Event on the 1st November. It is a fundraiser for the youth club and is open to the whole village. SP further added that the Environment Group will be holding a Bat event on 29th November which will include a visit from a representative from the bat hospital and star gazing.</p> <p>GT came back to the two letters from residents about inappropriate language and noise from the Recreation Ground when in use by the football club. The clerk has invited the football team to brainstorm about parking but hasn't heard back from them yet. SP also suggested contacting the PCSO's about parking and behaviour on a Saturday. GT suggested contacting Highways about obstructive parking and trying to get advice about how to enforce safe parking. JG confirmed that there could be 26 parking spaces if the car park was re-surfaced & properly marked out for parking (see item 11).</p>
10.	<p>TENNIS COURT REFURB/MUGA FACILITY</p> <p>SP & JG had met with a second contractor to provide a quote for re-surfacing, new fencing and MUGA use. SP has spoken to tennis club members who are keen to help with funding applications. The Rother Community Grant application requires consultation, and SP has drawn up a questionnaire which was previously circulated to councillors. The cost to print them as flyers for insertion into the Crowhurst News and to distribute around the village is approximately £75. Members approved this and the clerk will liaise with SP about production. It will also be advertised on the village website and noticeboards.</p>
11.	<p>CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS</p> <p>JG had met with a contractor for car park resurfacing and marking, and the clerk had asked for an alternative quote using porous material to help with surface water run-off. She will also arrange a meeting with Believ about EV charging points. SP suggested asking the Environment Agency about the most environmentally friendly surface for nearby water courses.</p>
12.	<p>PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER</p> <p>The clerk reported that over half of the Crowhurst News deliverers had agreed to distributing a bi-annual newsletter. GT suggested waiting for the NP review consultation to run its course as this was going to involve house-to-house deliveries and leafleting, and the proposed timetable for a newsletter is therefore more likely to be January & June. This would allow time to include info on the budget and other plans and members agreed with his suggestion.</p>
13.	<p>WARM SPACES</p> <p>LR confirmed that the event had been well advertised with posters in church, chapel, pub, Sainsbury's, Tesco's, Timpson's and using the village email. They need to register as a business because they are providing catering and are planning a trial run. There were two kind offers to donate microwave ovens (which will require PAT testing). GT to confirm use of cupboard, inventory of what's available in the VH and about possible PAT test. LR wanted to thank JM for her help and support, and GT thanked LR for all her hard work also. LR also confirmed that she's organised a 1st Aid talk and the NP review group will also hold an information session (see next item).</p>
14.	<p>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW</p> <p>SP & GT met with the NP Review group last week. A Comment form and leaflet will be delivered to each house and there will be 3 public events taking place in the VH at weekends, and one weekday evening. The consultation is starting mid-November and will be finished by the end of January and will lead to a review of the Design Guide and Climate & Ecological Resolution which will enable appropriate updates e.g renewables, vehicle charging points etc.</p>

15.	<p>COUNCILLOR UPDATES ON EXTERNAL BODIES (IF ANY):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Village Hall Management Committee (Cllr. Thomas) – GT reported that there is an EGM on Thursday as the results of Rother’s VH Energy Project have been quite successful and there is an offer to pay for double glazing, decarbonised heating, cavity wall insulation and roof insulation at an approximate cost of £20k. SP mentioned that the Youth Club is also getting a grant for wall and roof insulation. ii. Policing meeting (Cllr. Mrs. Roller) – LR said that she still misses the regular Teams meetings, but PCSO’s are planning to attend the Warm Space events. A quad bike was stolen in Brightling on 13th October and there was advice given about Hallowe’en. The clerk confirmed that the date for the ESALC/police Focus Group is Tuesday 28th November 10am-12pm. LR to confirm if she can attend. iii. Combe Valley Countryside Park CIC (Cllr. Thomas) – the next meeting is 25th October. iv. RALC meeting – GT and LR attended the recent RALC meeting. The main points: Rother doesn’t have enough pitches for gypsy & traveller sites; Parish Online is excellent and the clerk was asked to share the login details; Etchingham & Battle councils have put in a bid for the former station master quarters at their respective stations for community hubs; Energise South Coast attended the meeting, and the discussion came round to solar farms - there was a suggestion of including it at the ESALC AGM in November – will wait to hear; the Highways representative was good and spoke about jet patching and the fact that Balfour Beatty are trying to look at a bigger picture when making repairs; the ongoing difficulties in the enforcement department were also mentioned.
16.	<p>CLERK’S REPORT & INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. ESALC AGM – 14th November at 2pm. Cllr Thomas may attend. ii. Areas of Lead Responsibilities – to be discussed at the next informal meeting. iii. Grass Cutting Options for 2024 – likely to remain with self-delivery, but for approval at the November meeting. iv. Review of polling districts & polling places – poor access, dark & damp, limited parking. Used to be the VH. Christian Healing Centre? v. HW AONB Man Plan consultation – SP suggested asking the NP Group to respond on behalf of the parish council. vi. JG to attend the Highways Winter maintenance event – 9th November Hastings - 12-3pm <i>**This was subsequently cancelled on 17th October**</i>
17.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To note that the next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 20th November 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.</p>

Meeting closed at 9.18pm

Signed.....

Date.....