

# Crowhurst

## PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 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).

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Parish Clerk and 1 member of the public.

1.	<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</b>          No questions.</p>
2.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>          Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Chas Pearce, RDC and Cllr Kathryn Field, ESCC.</p>
3.	<p><b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:</b>          Received from:          Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee          Cllr Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group          Cllr Plato – Youth Club &amp; Crowhurst Environment Group          Cllr Laimbeer – Annual Fayre Committee, Horticultural Group &amp; Crowhurst Environment Group</p>
4.	<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:</b>          The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a true &amp; correct record.</p>
5.	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED IN THIS AGENDA:</b></p> <p>5.1 Bollards Licence on Sandrock Hill – The response from Highways was that a larger area of the verge would require bollards in order to prevent vehicles accessing between or behind bollards. They also suggested a public consultation which may then help with a funding application. GT suggested deferring this matter to the next meeting.</p> <p>5.2 Road Safety Signage on Sandrock Hill – Highways have confirmed that they will investigate further in the new year, but any agreed works would now take place in the new financial year, so not before April 2024.</p> <p>5.3 Community Map – Andy Pope is having difficulty pinning down Network Rail to install the map. Ben Wood has finished the frame and is providing photos and dimensions etc. to Andy to hopefully, move this along.</p> <p>5.4 Tree Safety Survey – After difficulty in obtaining a 3<sup>rd</sup> quote for the tree works and checking with the insurance company about some suggested works, the clerk recommended going ahead with Andrew Hills of Foxhills Tree Services. JG said that the priority is the work to trees around the pre-school. SP &amp; JG will inspect and liaise with Andrew Hills. The clerk will forward his details to JG.</p> <p>5.5 Car Park EV Chargers – the report from Believ following an initial meeting has provided information regarding EV chargers at the Village Hall but is still waiting to hear from UKPN about the car park at the Recreation Ground. GT confirmed that the parish council is the landlord of the VH car park but didn't</p>

	<p>understand why an NDA needs to be signed to proceed any further. He asked if they have worked with other PC's and if the clerk can do some research. SP suggested asking Trevor Leggo of ESALC.</p> <p>5.6 Emergency Plan – The clerk has arranged a get-together for wardens taking place on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm in the Village Hall.</p> <p>5.7 Tennis Court/MUGA – The grant application has been submitted and some further information that Rother requested has also been supplied. Total project costs are approximately £35,000 and the grant available is for a maximum of 50%. Reserves will be used, and other sources of funding sought for the remaining costs. SP will set up the fundraising group meeting in the new year.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS:</b> No reports available in the district &amp; county councillors' absences.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING:</b> To consider the following new Planning Applications and provide comments to Rother District Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. RR/2023/1778/P – Oakleigh, 6 Woodland Way, Crowhurst TN33 9AP <i>Proposal: Erection of detached dwelling with associated facilities.</i></li> <li>ii. RR/2023/2440/P – Oakleigh, 6 Woodland Way, Crowhurst TN33 9AP <i>Proposal: Erection of dwelling as an alternative to that approved under RR/2022/1538/P.</i></li> </ul> <p>The two applications were dealt with together as they are located at the same address and from the same applicant. After discussing the matter, the council agreed to submit the following comments: <i>Crowhurst Parish Council neither supports nor objects to this application, but states for the record that if Rother DC are minded granting permission, they expect the district council and building inspectors to enforce all conditions that were imposed when granting the previous permission and any further conditions that are imposed. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan also details that there should be no or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32 (v), and any new hard-standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see policy CE5).</i></p> <p>Other planning applications were dealt with using delegated authority and will be reported on at the next meeting.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The financial report to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 together with a summary report of receipts &amp; payments that had previously been circulated was approved.</li> <li>ii. The payments report for November 2023 was considered and approved for payment.</li> <li>iii. The bank reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> November together with a copy of the supporting bank statement had been circulated and was approved and signed by the Chairman.</li> <li>iv. The second draft of the 2024/'25 budget proposals had been circulated. Rother had also confirmed that the tax base had increased by 6.3 to 378.26. The clerk had provided a Reserves statement, and in order to keep building reserves, a precept amount of £35,217.71 for 2024/'25 was proposed, an increase of 6.71% in line with September's CPI inflation figure. Final approval is required at the January meeting in order to submit the precept request form. GT asked a question about PWLB funding and thought it may be suitable for the car park refurb project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>RECREATION GROUND:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. GT had carried out the monthly inspection, and there wasn't much change from the previous month. The 5<sup>th</sup> hanging bar on the monkey bars is loose and the Pavilion is in a bit of a mess with various items left lying around. There are two punch marks in the far corner of the changing room. SP suggested a 'Please do not touch the timer switch' sign be displayed, and JG mentioned the last post of the knee frame nearest the</li> </ul>

	<p>car park is rotten and needs removing. There is a pile of filled sandbags which will rot if they are left. The clerk was asked to mention them to the Flood Warden and then get them removed in mid-January.</p> <p>ii. CCTV policy - The clerk needs to get 2 sets of 12 AA batteries and a charging pack before the camera can be installed.</p> <p>iii. The clerk provided an update from the handyman who has fixed the barrier post, the kitchen cupboard door, the shower hose guide, the climbing wall footholds &amp; hand pegs and drilled holes for the table legs and secured them. The rocker bike painting will have to wait until spring. The clerk had given him a few new jobs that had come to light including removal of the concrete in the picnic area, some wobbly bollard lights, putty in the Pavilion glazed doors, a possible leak from the men's cistern and the rear Pavilion door sills. Additionally, there is a loose hanging bar on the monkey bars, two dents in the changing room wall and a rotten knee post.</p> <p>iv. The pre-school had made a request to extend the shelter for the outdoor art area. GT was happy to support the request and other members approved. However, the clerk was asked to mention the planned tree works to the pre-school manager.</p> <p>v. Members of the parish council had met with the Football Club to discuss parking and other issues. The meeting notes had been circulated.</p> <p>vi. The next meeting of the Rec User Group has been arranged for Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall. SP asked to include fundraising on the agenda.</p>
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>RECENT FLOODING</b></p> <p>The clerk provided an update from Tracy Hoad after a recent site meeting with Dean Morrison. He had taken photos of some of the gardens in Sandrock Crescent and Sandrock Hill and the ditch running behind the gardens. It was a good time for a visit as it was a very wet day, the Powdermill was high, the ditch behind the properties was full and the recreation ground was flooded. He advised the next step for him was to look at the previous work that the Environment Agency had done ten years ago and see how he could move this project forward. He seems very optimistic that he could do something to alleviate the problems as he has recently done something very similar in Sissinghurst. TH will keep the council updated.</p>
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>TREES ON CHAPEL HILL</b></p> <p>i. TPO tree felling – John Feltwell had provided updates since the last meeting, and Rother DC have now admitted that they made a mistake. Members agreed to adopt the following motion:  <i>The parish council deplore RDC's decision to permit any new building within any TPO, within any part of the AONB and within any Section 41 NERC woodland, all of which Rother seek to conserve as shown as maps on their website. This is the case for the TPO/AONB/S41 NERC habitat land adjacent to Sabon Gari on Chapel Hill – all now gone. Crowhurst only has 4 TPO's and now has lost one from Rother giving planning permission for houses. The only worst scenario is Rother permitting development within any of the three SSSI's which we would also deplore. As Rother signed up to the Climate Emergency in 2019, which contained an obligation to protect biodiversity, we would like to register our disappointment of their shortcomings.</i></p> <p>GT asked about the complaints procedure at Rother District Council and if it can be used to make a complaint against the council as a whole, not an individual. The clerk will investigate. LR also mentioned that Rother's historic lack of enforcement makes the parish council in turn look pointless. SP asked the clerk to refer to the CAVAT value of the felled tree when the clerk writes to Rother DC and informs them of the adopted motion.</p> <p>ii. SP and the clerk had met with a representative from UKPN to examine the trees overhanging Powdermill Bank and Chapel Hill that have ash die back and require felling. He confirmed that a 3<sup>rd</sup> party shutdown can be organised online and is free of charge. He also suggested that Highways would need to arrange a road closure which could take several weeks to organise. The clerk will confirm these facts to the landowner and forward his email with associated plans.</p>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>WARM SPACES</b></p> <p>LR reported that the last session for 2023 had finished with Festive Fayre on 10<sup>th</sup> December. Sessions will start again on 7<sup>th</sup> January. They decided not to use the Youth Hut on the last Sunday of the month as the</p>

	<p>logistics had proved difficult. Plans for the new year include a first aid talk, a crochet 'school' and a talk about bats. LR thanked everyone who has given up their time so far. JM &amp; LR need to meet with Rother's Food Hygiene inspector – the clerk will make the necessary arrangements. Numbers have fluctuated, and turnout seems to be weather dependent. LR wondered if a Saturday would have been more popular but unfortunately the VH isn't available. A register is kept &amp; attendance monitored.</p>
<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p><b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW</b>  GT, SP &amp; the clerk met remotely with Graham Maunders from Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) and Graeme Quinnell, RDC to discuss setting up a Community Land Trust (CLT). GT said that it was a useful meeting and confirmed that CLT's can take on different structures and can offer a mix of housing. The Neighbourhood Plan Group are waiting to hear from Network Rail about site CH3. SP also said that Icklesham is a local example of a successful CLT and has built houses which are now lived in, so it will be useful to have a meeting with them and hear about their experience.</p>
<p><b>14.</b></p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR UPDATES ON EXTERNAL BODIES (IF ANY):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Village Hall Management Committee (Cllr. Thomas) – Some minor repairs are being carried out, and they are currently looking into replacing fan heaters with infra-red panels.</li> <li>ii. Policing meeting (Cllr. Mrs. Roller) – LR attended the Focus Group on 28<sup>th</sup> Nov. which was largely about rural crime. Although individual issues seem trivial, reporting everything enables a wider picture to be built. Community Wardens are being successfully trialled in West Sussex but are costly at £70k/year. The main aim is to move back to community policing and change behaviour rather than make arrests as prisons are full. SP mentioned that stolen bikes are being stored under some railway arches and are available to school groups or for other community purposes. Members had various suggestions and SP will follow up with Andy Pope of Network Rail. LR also mentioned a bath that has been fly-tipped and asked the clerk to report it online*. All members are now receiving Sussex Alerts updates individually.  <i>*The matter appeared to have been reported online already.</i></li> <li>iii. Combe Valley Countryside Park CIC – GT is being shown around new additions to the Discovery Centre in January. SP reported that at the recent meeting of The Combe Valley Sub-Group, they were still awaiting the removal of the carp in the attenuation pond to be organized by Groundwork who administer the park on behalf of the CIC.</li> </ul>
<p><b>15.</b></p>	<p><b>CLERK'S REPORT &amp; INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Rother's Annual Parish Conference – reports circulated.</li> <li>ii. New chair / councillor training – 18<sup>th</sup> January &amp; 6<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm via Zoom – no councillors to attend.</li> <li>iii. Planning Development &amp; Enforcement Training presentation from 12<sup>th</sup> December – SL reported that it was generally about not having enough staff to be effective. The planning application is being re-written to make it easier.</li> <li>iv. Christmas Greetings &amp; end of season newsletter from the Croquet Club – previously circulated. Clerk to send them a grant application form.</li> <li>v. RSR will be servicing the sewage treatment plant on 8<sup>th</sup> January.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16.</b></p>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING:</b>  To note that the next ordinary meeting of the Council will be held on <b>Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall</b>. An additional planning meeting will be held on <b>Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30pm</b>.</p>

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed.....

Date.....