

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall

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

County/district councillors: Cllr Kathryn Field, ESCC and Cllr Chas Pearce, RDC

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Deputy Parish Clerk and 2 members of the public

*Proceedings were recorded to support the clerk in making the minutes. The recording will be deleted when the minutes are ratified.*

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### 1. Public Questions

A member of the public reported that a large tree bough had fallen on to the verge on Chapel Hill, near to the Chapel. Cllr Pearce undertook to notify ESCC Highways. The clerk reported it to the emergency number that evening, and the bough has now been removed. A question was also asked about the ancillary accommodation Court Lodge, which is possibly being used as an AirBNB. The chairman said that the clerk would check the details of the planning permission when it was granted and report back.

A resident from Station Road said that bonfires were frequently being lit on sunny days and were causing a nuisance. Cllr Field suggested that she approach Environmental Health and make a report on their website.

Both members of the public then left the meeting.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Laimbeer

### 3. Declaration of Interests

Received from:

Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee

Cllr Plato – Youth Club & Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Lynda Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group

### 4. Adoption of Minutes

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the parish council held on 20<sup>th</sup> May and the additional meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June as true and correct records.

### 5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

5.1 Sandbags – These have now been removed from the car park at the Recreation Ground.

5.2 Emergency Warden meeting – The clerk is in the process of setting up the WhatsApp group and other actions.

5.3 EV Charging points – There has been no further action since the last meeting.

- 5.4 CIL Monies – All correctly allocated CIL monies have now been received except for the levy under legal enforcement which will follow in due course.
- 5.5 Dog Waste Bins - CP will raise the request for a contribution towards a dog waste bin from Combe Valley Countryside Park at the next meeting held being held on the 25th of June

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

Cllr Chas Pearce, RDC reported that things had been very quiet. The Big Green event held at Combe Valley Countryside Park on 10<sup>th</sup> June was well supported and very informative.

Cllr Kathryn Field, ESCC reported that similarly things were very quiet, although there was a lot of work going on behind the scenes with regards to the budget, and there was concern about the Social Care Cap.

## **7. Financial Matters**

- 7.1 The financial report to 31<sup>st</sup> May had been circulated and was approved by members.
- 7.2 The payments report for June was considered and approved.
- 7.3 The bank reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chair.
- 7.4 The 50% downpayment for the tennis court clearance by TPMR Ltd was approved retrospectively.
- 7.5 It was confirmed that the AGAR statements have been sent to the external auditor and notice of public rights publicised as required, on the website and on the notice board.
- 7.6 Banking mandates were signed to add Councillor Ashrafi and the deputy clerk as new signatories.

## **8. Recreation Ground**

- 8.1 KA had carried out the monthly inspection. KA will continue to do the inspection in June and July.
- 8.2 Paul Smith, the handyman, is unable to start work on his list of repairs until late July/early August. Despite the delay, agreement was given by the PC for him to continue with the current list. It was agreed that the clerk would investigate alternative contractors.
- 8.3 The Councillors gave retrospective formal approval of the Croqueteers banner. The Croquet Club had also made a request for a new storage container, as the existing container is rusty and leaks, causing damage to their equipment. JG confirmed that it is in a bad state. It was thought that a like for like replacement might be a good idea although the removal and installation could cause disruption around the youth club. GT and JG will look at prices for a replacement. GT suggested that the matter be put on the agenda for the next Rec Users Group meeting. It was suggested that a few of the Rec Users should be contacted in advance of the meeting to see what is needed. SP to action with the clerk.
- 8.4 Grass cutting around the tennis court by the grounds' maintenance contractor has been reinstated. This is restricted to one pass of the mower, avoiding the walnut tree with guard and other trees including rare black poplar. The rest of the area is to be left as before.
- 8.5 Retrospective approval was given to pay Nick Stell £30 for cutting the hedge alongside the path.

## **9. Tennis Court/Muga Project**

SP reported that there had been a successful meeting of volunteers to set up the Community Group to help run and promote use of the facility. There had been a request to include pickleball markings, a sport which is growing in popularity, and members approved the addition of this and the necessary equipment (£535 + VAT for the markings and approximately £300 for equipment). There will be two launch events with demonstrations and refreshments to promote the finished court – one on 4th August and another in September. Members approved a budget of up to £100 per event. The old fencing has been removed, and the court cleaning and subsequent new markings are scheduled to take place in the coming weeks. Approval was given to purchase the equipment and lockable storage which is required for insurance purposes.

#### **10. Neighbourhood Plan Review**

GT reported from the meeting with the NP Review Group that whilst the recent presentation on Rother's Local Plan 2020-2040 had not caused a great deal of concern, it had raised a lot of questions.

The CLT meeting had been postponed as there were several apologies. It will be rearranged in September. The purpose of the meeting had been to get more people involved but there does not seem to be a great deal of interest currently.

Finally, there will be little progress regarding the site at Station Road until after the general election on 4th July although Huw Merriman, MP says that he is continuing to exert pressure.

GT asked for the Cinderbrook footpath diversion to be added to the July agenda.

#### **11. Coronation Community Orchard Grant Application**

SP updated on the grant application for the Coronation Orchard discussed previously. It is proving difficult to find suppliers of Sussex varieties, and two quotes are required. However, SP has identified suitable locations in the Millenium Garden, Muriel's Meadow and the picnic area for approximately 12 new fruit trees – they must be planted on land which will be used by the community for 10 years. SP will also include benches which can form part of the application and the plan is to plant the trees over the autumn/winter if the grant application is successful. The clerk will submit the final details before the end of June.

SP also mentioned that the silver birch in the picnic area looks unhealthy and may need to be replaced with a fruit tree.

#### **12. Asset register and Risk Assessment**

An updated copy of the Asset Register and Risk Assessment had been circulated to members previously, and this was approved.

#### **13. Grant request**

A grant request had been received from the new Community organisation 'Space for Yew'. After a brief discussion, councillors decided that they would like to invite the applicant to a meeting to ask for more details in person. The clerk will make the necessary arrangements.

#### **14. Winter Warmer plans for 2024/2025.**

The Winter Warmer group met recently and LR was happy to report that that it will take place again from November to the end of February next year. It will be renamed Sunday Social, to emphasise the social nature of the group. There is sufficient funding to begin with and local organisations will be approached for additional funding if necessary. JM has agreed to design flyers and posters to distribute through the village and the local post lady will put these through all village letter boxes.

#### **15. Annual Fayre Report.**

Cllr Pearce commented that it was a good event which was enjoyed by all. Several residents had mentioned that they would like more arena events as these were much appreciated and added to the atmosphere on the day.

#### **16. Counsellor updates on external bodies (if any).**

There were none.

#### **17. Clerk's Report and information for councillors.**

It was agreed that the Cllrs would like the SLR meeting arranged for September 17<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 am to go ahead as planned, in person. Matters for discussion to include overhanging foliage, which is obscuring traffic signs, plus the potholes by Upper Wiltings Farm.

Combe Valley Countryside Park are holding a Stakeholders Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June. Cllrs Pearce and Plato will be attending.

KA will be attending New Councillor training on 20<sup>th</sup> June at 7:00PM.

It was noted that Chris Newton's daughter was very grateful for the approval of his memorial bench. The repair of the bollard lights is to be added to the July agenda. It was agreed that additional quotes for groundworks to stabilise the bollard lights requested from Johnny French and other contractors should be reported at the next meeting.

SP reported that the launch of the Community Map at the railway station will take place on 11th July. There will be 12 people attending a tea party at the Christian Healing Centre. Cllr Pearce will be attending, plus four representatives from Network Rail. The cost is £10 per head. Network Rail are contributing £40 and PC approved payment of the remaining costs of £80.

JG agreed to open the barrier at 1pm on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June for a private hire party.

Formal approval was given to pay Tony Barham £10 + carriage for a replacement bulb for the Pavillion de-fib.

The Clerk advised that she will be on holiday from 27<sup>th</sup> June- 8<sup>th</sup> July. The Deputy Clerk will be away from 30<sup>th</sup> July-7<sup>th</sup> August.

JM reported that she noticed that the refuse bins in Catsfield have a 20mph sticker which she felt was a good idea. GT suggested that perhaps this was something the school could become involved in. KA reported that there was a near miss in the village between a child and a car. GT advised that the NP contains plans to create a carpark/turn around area. GT suggested that KA might like to involve other interested people to form a traffic safety group. Cllr Field suggested that perhaps this could be brought up at the SLR meeting in September.

GT would like to add lights for CCTV cameras to be added to the July agenda.

A request was made by GT for the Clerk to write to Sam Kemp to find out if the surveillance at the Rec and Saturday night patrols have been taking place.

A request had been received from Stephen Greenfield on behalf of one of the football coaches to run a summer football academy from 29<sup>th</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024. The Cllrs agreed to this based on a preferential rate of £180 for 5 days from 9am to 3pm. GT requested the Clerk writes to advise that the car park must be managed with a car marshall and to suggest that car sharing takes place where possible. They must also not infringe on the Croquetteers.

**18. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Signed by..... Date .....