

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 14th October 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Geoff Thomas (Chair) (GF), Sonia Plato (Vice Chair) (SP), Lynda Roller (LR), John Goddard (JG), Sue Laimbeer (SL)

District/ County Councillors Chas Pearce (CP) RDC, & Kathryn Field (KF) ESCC

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Deputy Parish Clerk and 3 members of the public

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

1. Public Questions

Will Kemp asked a question about the damage to the roots of the 1066 Yew tree in the Churchyard caused by recent works at Court Lodge Garages. The Chair (GT) advised him that the matter was in hand and would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

Cllr Thomas (GT) was asked to give an update on parking issues at the Recreation Ground. Mr. Kemp reported that there had been particularly bad parking issues at the Rec and in the surrounding area on the previous Saturday, due to two youth teams and an adult team playing matches during the day. GT reported that this had been discussed at a recent meeting with ESCC Highways, and that a meeting will be taking place with the football club to investigate ways to alleviate the problem.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr Koorosh Ashrafi

3. Declaration of Interests

Received from:

Cllr Geoff Thomas – Village Hall Committee

Cllr Plato – Youth Club & Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Lynda Roller – Crowhurst Environment Group & Sunday Social

Cllr Sue Laimbeer– Crowhurst Environment Group, Annual Fayre Committee and Strolling Group

4. Councillor Vacancy

A casual vacancy has occurred, due to the resignation of Cllr Jill Mitcheson. The deadline for electors to request a by-election is 17th October.

5. Adoption of Minutes

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the parish council held on 16th September 2024.

6. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

6.1 Signs prohibiting motorized vehicles on the Recreation Ground – this has been deferred until a new car park barrier/gate has been installed.

6.2 Cinderbrook Footpath diversion – Chris Davidson and Matthew Harper will be meeting later in the month and an update will be made at the November meeting.

- 6.3 EV Charging points – The Clerk provided feedback from the Webinar she had attended. Cllr Kathryn Field ESCC reported that EV Charging Points are being installed in Battle at no cost to the Council.
- 6.4 Station Car Park Flowerbed – The meeting to clear and replant the flowerbed adjacent to the Community Map did not go ahead due to unavailability of volunteers on the day. Selwyn Whitehead has since begun the process of clearing the bed, and a date will be set for the next working party.
- 6.5 Additional Storage at Village Hall - The Chair (GT) advised that he will discuss this further once the alterations to the roof and installation of solar panels have been completed.

7. Representations from District and County Councillors

Cllr Field reported that ESCC is facing a shortfall of £55 million next year, with an expected budget gap of £83.6 million over the three years to 2027/28. The council is facing a very difficult financial outlook, and significant savings will need to be found in adult social care.

Cllr Pearce reported that there was a hiatus over the Community Grant, with the question being withdrawn from Cabinet, but it is likely to arise again in the near future. The development of 130 affordable homes has been secured with confirmation of a £8.45 million government grant. The money will help RDC deliver the remaining infrastructure necessary for the 200-home development at the Blackfriars site in Battle. This funding will take the total grant to just over £17 million.

8. Town & Country Planning

8.1 RR/2024/1550/P – Upper Wilting Farm, The Granary, Crowhurst Road, Crowhurst.

Proposal: Change of use from C3 (dwelling house) to C2 (Children's home).

Crowhurst Parish Council agreed on the following comments which the deputy clerk will submit online:

Crowhurst Parish Council is generally supportive of the application. Although the applicant feels that the existing garage /driveway would provide adequate off-street parking for the single childcare worker that would be on site at any one time, the Council does have concerns regarding parking and access should a change necessitate additional staffing. We hope that parking and access would be monitored to ensure no difficulties arise later.

Any changes should take account of Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guide. The opportunity should also be taken to ensure compliance with our Dark Skies Policy.

8.2 RR/2024/1479/P – Landscape Studios, Royal Oak Lane, Crowhurst

Proposal: Replacement dwelling and outbuilding and associated works.

Crowhurst Parish Council agreed on the following comments which the deputy clerk will submit online:

Crowhurst Parish Council supports this application. If permission is granted, the following conditions are requested:

- 1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32 (v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.*
- 2. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide is followed regarding building style and materials used.*
- 3. Any new hard standing is made of a porous material to limit run-off (see policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).*
- 4. All foul water should be discharged into mains drainage.*

9. Financial Matters

- 9.1 The financial report to 30th September had been circulated and was approved by members.
- 9.2 The payments report for October 2024 was considered and approved.
- 9.3 The bank reconciliation to 30th September 2024 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chair (GT).
- 9.4 A refund of £75 to HY Running Club was approved.
- 9.5 After a brief discussion, members agreed that it was not appropriate to give a grant of £500 to the Kent and East Sussex Air Ambulance, given the limited funds of the Parish Council.

10. Recreation Ground

- 10.1 The monthly update was not available as Cllr Ashrafi was absent from the meeting.
- 10.2 The progress made by the Helping Hands handyman was noted, and approval was given to pay his first invoice of £374.23.
- 10.3 The deputy clerk gave a brief report from the recent Rec Users Meeting held on 19th September 2024. The meeting was attended by SL, KA and JG from the parish council and representatives from the Croqueteers, the Cricket Club and the Strolling Group. Nicola Stell, Pavillion caretaker, was also present and gave an update.

11. Crowhurst Community MUGA

- 11.1 The security of the MUGA had been discussed at the last meeting and members agreed to investigate the installation of a night-vision CCTV camera. KA had undertaken to explore what was available but was not at the meeting to give an update.
- 11.2 JG reported that the creation of a French drain around the perimeter of the court will require around 3 to 4 tonnes of shingle and will cost approximately £2000 to complete. Members gave approval for the clerk to use delegated authority to make payments.
- 11.3 The Asguard storage shed has been delivered and will be installed on the concrete base to the left of the MUGA. Once the area is cleared, sleepers will be laid to raise the shed off the ground to protect it from flooding. There will be labour and material costs associated with the installation.
Susie Edwards and Ros Day will produce a sign to put on the Notice Board in the Rec car park and on the MUGA fencing, giving details of the timetable and booking instructions. A relaunch event 'Spring into Spring' is planned for 12th April 2025.

12. Neighbourhood Plan Review

The NP Monitoring and Review group have submitted the reviewed Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Review documents for its Reg 16 Consultation. RDC will decide whether the Review needs to be referred to an examiner or a referendum held. However, as no significant changes have been made, this is not expected. The Reg 16 consultation will then be carried out by RDC with residents asked to submit comments directly to RDC. The Chair (GT) acknowledged the considerable work the group had undertaken and thanked them for all that they had done, and for getting the documents submitted on time.

13. Crowhurst Environmental Group Grant Application

Item deferred to the next meeting as insufficient number of councillors to approve grant.

14. Wildlife Verge Application

Retrospective approval was given for a 2-year licence (£60.81) for the new Wildlife Verge.

15. Pavillion/Rec Refurbishment Project

An update was made from the recent meeting of the Recreation Ground Working Group attended by Cllr SL, Cllr SP, District Cllr Chas Pearce, Selwyn Whitehead and Tillmann Lenz. TL is drawing up

plans and will put forward some proposals for the redevelopment of the Pavillion to the next meeting of the group. SP and SL are designing a Rec Survey document for the village consultation process. A deadline of March 2025 was set for having detailed plans ready for submitting a grant application to the Rother Community Grants Scheme and other funding bodies.

16. Dog Waste Bin

The clerk has received a quote from a Hasting's based company who can provide a dog bin, and a collection service. However, their weekly collection costs are significantly higher than Rother have quoted via Biffa. These will be checked, and the clerk will make a further report to the parish council. Cllr Pearce RDC will speak to Ben Coles about the cost of the dog waste bin at the next meeting of the Combe Valley CIC.

17. Sunday Social Update

Cllr Roller reported that an informal meeting took place recently to finalise plans for the first of this year's Sunday Social events which will take place on Sunday, 3rd November 2024. Tesco and Sainsburys supermarkets have confirmed that they will be supporting the initiative, but there is still no confirmation from the other supermarkets contacted. A comprehensive series of talks has been planned and the group is delighted to be working in collaboration with Dark Skies and Warmer Crowhurst. Posters have been displayed in prominent places around the village and flyers have gone out to all households in Crowhurst.

18. Verge/Grass Cutting

Members agreed to maintain the current choices and schedule for grass cutting and the clerk will confirm this with East Sussex Highways when requested.

19. Heritage and Natural Asset Register

The works being carried out at Court Lodge Garages were discussed and agreement reached to apply for a TPO for the trees in St George's churchyard. Cllr Pearce RDC will contact Dan Bevan, Enforcement, to reiterate our concerns.

20. Highways Update

A meeting was held with members of the ESCC Highways team who visited us in Crowhurst on 10th October. Cllr Plato and Cllr Laimbeer were joined by Cllr Field ESCC, Steve Royston, our volunteer drains monitor, and the deputy clerk. The Lead Highway Steward and Steve Royston inspected the drains and gullies, reporting those that need clearing. Potholes, overhanging trees, and poor parking were also discussed, and action taken where necessary. The next meeting will take place in March 2025. SP reported that a resident had asked that the PC contact Network Rail regarding the blocked drains on Station Road, which were adding to a potential flood hazard.

21. Warmer Crowhurst

SP reported that the recent Insulation Meeting was poorly attended and needed further advertising. The Warmer Crowhurst Working Group (a PC Working Group under the Crowhurst Climate Emergency Working Group) is partnering with Energise Sussex Coast who offer grants, a surveyor and trusted installer on hand. There will be a follow up session plus a visit to a Sunday Social event and during December's Saturday market. Villagers are encouraged to attend these events as there are some very good grants available.

22. Planting of Daffodils in memory of John and Katie Spall

Representatives from the WI were not present at the meeting. Cllr Roller will ask the WI to send details of their plans to the clerk to discuss at the November meeting.

23. Councillor Updates on External Bodies (if any)

The Chair, Cllr Geoff Thomas, advised members that there is a meeting of the Combe Valley CIC next week. He also updated the meeting on works to be carried out at the Village Hall during half term week, when alterations will be made to the roof and solar panels installed.

24. Clerk’s Report & Information for Councillors:

- 24.1 Several updates had been received from Tracy Hoad, Crowhurst Flood Warden, who will be attending the November meeting to give a report to the parish council.
- 24.2 John O’Conner has submitted a quote for cutting the hedges back from the car park entrance (£216 incl VAT).
- 24.3 Rother Council Plan consultation is closing for public comments on 21st October 2024.
- 24.4 A new Highway Steward has been appointed. His name is Malcolm Ellison.
- 24.5 Chris Page is the new Section Manager Off Track for Network Rail at Crowhurst Station. He will be meeting with the deputy clerk and Cllr Laimbeer on the 22nd October to discuss drainage, overgrown foliage, verges and the empty grit bins in Station Road.
- 24.6 Members were encouraged to provide information for the Contacts List in the Crowhurst News. The deadline is 21st October 2024.
- 24.7 An email had been received from Nicola Stell regarding the recent request from the Crowhurst Community MUGA to look at the possibility of moving a litter bin nearer to the MUGA. The clerk/deputy clerk were asked to liaise with Nicola to discuss.
- 24.8 Councillors reported that they occasionally referred to the monthly Rother Members’ Bulletins. These may cease to exist, and feedback had been requested.
- 24.9 Katie Cesar, Director of Space for Yew, attended the meeting to answer questions from councillors. Following a short discussion, members agreed that they were in favour of supporting the development of a nature-based provision in the village and they agreed to instruct the clerk to write a letter of support.

Dates to note	ESALC/WSALC AGM and Conference 4 th November, AMEX Stadium 10.00am
	Rother’s Annual Parish Conference 11 th November at Brede Village Hall
	ESALC Chair’s Forum Tuesday, 22 nd October 7pm
	ESALC Clerks Forum Tuesday, 22 nd October 10.00am

25. Date of the Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Monday, 18th November 2024** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Signed by.....