



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of Hadlow Down Parish Council
Held in Hadlow Down Village Hall, Hadlow Down
at 7pm on Tuesday 7th March 2023

Present: Councillors: Michael Lunn (ML) Chair, Ben Floyd (BF), Rachel Lewis (RL), David Munday (DM), Damon Wellman (DW), Peter Weston (PW).

In attendance: Cllr. Phil Dixon (WDC), Cllr. Bob Standley (ESCC), Samantha Weatherill (Clerk) and three members of the public.

303. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

One member of the public (MOP) commented on the loss of the Clerk which was an increasingly responsible job. They also commented on the volume and quality of road works that had taken place last week and the poor state of the road left after the work had been done. They were aware of the huge cost in terms of transporting plant and felt that ES Highways only doing a small part of the job was totally inefficient and extremely expensive. The part of the road outside Canters End had been repaired within the last year but had already broken up and that part of road was terrible. They offered to help with the Big Village Picnic if required. Another MOP agreed with the comments about the poor state of the roads and said that the top of Wheelers Lane was really bad whereas the top of School Lane which was not that bad had been repaired which did not make sense. They added that the roadworks were not carried out during the day as well as the night despite the signs saying that they would be. Also, there had been two more power cut this week and they asked the PC to invite a representative from UKPN to attend a meeting to clarify why these power cuts were happening. Another MOP raised the issue of the blocked gulleys on Five Chimneys Lane that they had repeatedly reported to ES Highways only to get told that they had been inspected and were clear when there was no mistaking that they were blocked. The MOP would forward this information to Cllr. Standley for him to investigate.

304. APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE – were accepted from Cllr. Blyfield.

305. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – DM declared a pecuniary interest in item 312 ii.

306. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS held on 7th February were agreed and signed as a true record (previously circulated).

307. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

- i. **Cllr Standley** would continue to investigate whether the Waste Wood bridleway could be scheduled for urgent repair work as this was a major strategic bridleway as it was now on the shortlist for consideration in March. **Carry Forward.**
- ii. **Cllr Standley** would check whether the patching due to take place in February by ES Highways was still happening. **Done**
- iii. **Cllr Dixon** would give an update on three issues at Wilderness Wood (WW): the creation of a second dwelling and associated Council Tax which may require licensing; the extension of time periods on rent of lodges from 28 days to 11 months which was being considered by Wealden DC; putting a roof on an existing building to move weddings indoors in order to reduce noise from outdoor events which would require a separate planning application. He would also seek clarification about what counts as events. *Cllr Dixon updated: re the creation of a second dwelling this would have to be an HMO and they would have to put in a planning application for a change of use; a planning application had been submitted for a variation of condition for the change from 28 days to 11 months for the rent of the lodges; they were required to put in a new noise management plan, and, Enforcement have asked for a planning application for the new play equipment that has been installed. Action: The Clerk would write an email to Wealden DC Planning, cc Cllr Dixon to ask to be notified of any planning/variation to conditions regarding Wilderness Wood.*
- iv. **Cllr Standley** would look into the issue with the system not being able to deal with the reporting of the same pot holes multiple times. This would be a new report but DW explained that it was not possible to re-report it so soon after it has failed as the system automatically says it is has been done. **Carry Forward.**
- v. **Clerks report:** *update passed to councillors prior to the meeting and posted on the village website.*
 - a. The Clerk had invited a representative from South East Water to come to the Annual Parish Assembly and Steve Andrew, Head of Central Operations would be attending.
 - b. The Clerk had submitted the PC's comments on the appeal application WD/2022/1719/FA – THE ROBINS, STONEHURST LANE, HADLOW DOWN TN20 6LL.

- c. The Clerk had re-reported the leak at the junction with Five Chimneys Lane and School Lane to SE Water who had sent through an auto-mated response saying that the work was complete and also to ES Highways at the Strengthening Local Relationships meeting.
- d. The Clerk had informed those receiving an annual grant from the PC of the outcome of their requests and been asked to pass on sincere thanks to the PC for their continued support.
- e. The Clerk had submitted an article to the Parish Magazine to advertise the upcoming elections.
- f. The Clerk had submitted an article to the Parish Magazine to advertise the Annual Parish Assembly on 14th March.
- g. The Clerk had moved £2,000 to Election EMR as the bill would not be received until the new financial year, as agreed at the 7th February PC meeting.

The Chair brought forward items 310, 311 and 312.

310. HIGHWAYS:

- i. Speed Indicator Signs:
 - a. Update on progress re new SID location – the NAL socket installation was scheduled to take place on 8th March. PW was hopeful that the pole could be put into this new location at the weekend with the existing SID so that speed data could be collected by the time of the Annual Parish Assembly.
 - b. Options for the purchase of an additional SID; PW briefed the PC on costs and options for an additional SID. The PC voted to purchase another SWARCO SID as per PW's recommendation and agreed that the cost of this would be met entirely from the community fundraising gift.

The Chair brought forward items 312i

312. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- i. From St Mark's School – correspondence from St Mark's School had been received requesting that the PC accept a gift of money for speed initiatives direct from them as they cannot make a donation to a private individual. The PC voted and agreed that this generous gift would be accepted. The PC was very grateful to the parents of children at St Marks school for their generosity. **Action: The clerk** would write to the School to confirm details for payment and the money would be added to the ringfenced Speed Initiatives Reserve.

310. HIGHWAYS:

- c. Management of speed initiatives funding. The PC voted unanimously 6/0 that the SID licenses for the 3rd pole costing £464.80 would be met from CIL reserves.
- ii. ESCC Highways – update on letter sent to other PCs & TCs. DW had attended a meeting with one of the focus groups yesterday and had also been invited to a couple of PC meetings to answer questions. There is support for action as suggested in the letter but the question from everyone is funding. It was agreed that the responses would be reviewed collectively once more had been received to see if there was sufficient support and then the PC would have a further debate.
- iii. School Lane sign – this had been replaced and installed.

311. HOW TO ATTRACT VOLUNTEERS TO VILLAGE COMMITTEES – the 'Together We Can' Project:

The Chair explained that following the last meeting the PC had received a lot of correspondence following the resignation of the co-ordinator. The Chair asked all councillors of their opinions regarding the project leading to a proposal from BF, seconded by DW, that the residual money should be returned to the National Lottery. The PC voted 5/0 that, as there was no one available to take forward the whole project, the Clerk would write to the National Lottery to explain what has happened and to pay back the residual of the money that had not already been spent. Should the National Lottery request that the total original grant be returned the issue would be discussed at the next PC meeting and a decision about where to take the money from agreed then.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders

A MOP pointed out that there were grants available for The King's Coronation that would be unrestricted so anyone could apply should other MOP's be interested in organising an event.

The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders

312. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- ii. From Playing Field Committee – dealt with under item 311.

Peter Weston left the meeting.

308. PLANNING:

i. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS:**

- a. **WD/2023/0503/LB – HASTINGFORD HOUSE, HASTINGFORD LANE, HADLOW DOWN, UCKFIELD, TN22 4DY** – proposed internal and external alterations.
The PC voted unanimously 6/0 to support this application as it was for sympathetic internal alterations to make it more practical.
- b. **WD/2023/0175/F – CROWPITS HOUSE, WILDERNESS LANE, HADLOW DOWN, TN22 4HB** – proposed detached garage. Amended description.
This had already been considered at the 7th February PC meeting and comments had been submitted to Wealden DC after that which would remain. There were no changes to the application other than that the description of 'Carport' had been changed to 'Detached garage'.

- i. **APPROVED PLANNING APPLICATIONS:**
 - a. **WD/2022/2825/F – CHESNUTS, WILDERNESS LANE, HADLOW DOWN, TN22 4HT** – erection of an oak frame car port to south side of property and an oak frame porch to the front entrance; single-storey rear side extensions on both sides with veranda infill between; associated internal alterations.
 - b. **WD/2022/3283/F – MILL VIEW FARM, MAIN ROAD, HADLOW DOWN, TN22 4HS** – single storey extensions to north and east elevations for sensory room; bedroom and en-suite for live-in carer and rebuild conservatory as a playroom with associated internal alterations; rebuild south elevation extension as a garden room with balcony over, including alterations to south facing dormer at first floor level for balcony access; new porch extension to west elevation kitchen; new garage building.
- ii. **WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS:**
 - a. **WD/2022/2327/F – STONEHURST, STONEHURST LANE, HADLOW DOWN, TN20 6LL** – proposed internal reconfiguration, alterations to windows and new windows. Proposed loft conversion including raising of front ridge to match rear ridge with valley infill. Dormers to front and rear elevations of roof.
- 309. REPORTS FROM CLLR.BOB STANDLEY, ESCC & CLLR PHIL DIXON** - *written reports had been submitted and had been published on the village website.*
Cllr Dixon said that this would be his last PC meeting and the PC thanked him for his contributions over the last four years.
- 313. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS (COUNCIL MATTERS AND OUTSIDE BODIES)** - *written reports had been submitted and had been published on the village website.*
DW had made ES Highways aware of the poor quality of the road repairs carried out recently and also supplied photographs of the cats eyes that ES Highways had removed, in order to carry out repairs, that they had thrown into the hedge. ML added that the SLR meeting had been quite positive, however, since then things had been no better. DW added that he had cleared some rubbish from the burial ground.
RL had resigned from the Hadlow Down Community Centre and Hadlow Down Village Hall committees so ML or DW would attend any meetings if necessary before the election when councillor responsibilities would be re-aligned.
DM added that there were problems with the gulleys in Hastingford Lane.
BF had taken receipt of a new pipe to go under the tree swing to cover the ditch up at the playing field and a new hedge to encourage wildlife had been planted from the path leading from the parking area up to the football pitch.
ML had spoken to Trevor Leggo at the East Sussex Association of Local Council's Chairman's forum at which the issue of the challenge in recruiting clerks had been discussed and also the issues being experienced in some parishes where they were struggling to function.
- 314. PLAY AREA UPGRADE PROJECT** – The PC voted unanimously 5/0 to defer the upgrade until January next year as it made sense due to: significant money needed to be raised and in time to fit the timing of commissioning the work to take place early Autumn; there may be a new clerk/no clerk; there may be work taking place at the play area in order to fix drainage issues.
- 315. BOUNDARY AND DRAINAGE ISSUES AT BOTTOM OF PLAYING FIELD** – **Actions:** BF had written a draft of the bunds which he would send to ML. ML would write a specification for the work. **Carry Forward**
- 316. BURIAL GROUND:**
 - i. Update on clearing the extension to the burial ground. BF would be doing this. **Carry Forward**
 - ii. Request for additional inscription on existing memorial – this was approved.
- 317. REQUEST FROM ESCC TO TAKE PART IN TRIAL TO REDUCE RURAL CUTTING SERVICES** – the decision to not take part in this trial was ratified.
- 318. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** – it was agreed that the cost of food and drink would be met by the remainder of this financial year's `Chairman's Expenses' and next financial year's `Chairman's Expenses' to a maximum of £100. The cost of the advertising boards would be taken from `Contingencies'.
- 319. GRIEVANCE & DISCIPLINARY POLICY** was approved.
- 320. RISK ASSESSMENTS**
 - i. Fingerpost Survey – the final work had been done and the invoice for this would be paid with April payments.
 - ii. March Quarterly Risk Assessment – BF would do this.
 - iii. Annual Financial Risk Assessment was agreed.
 - iv. SID Risk Assessment was approved.
 - v. Annual Review of Risk Assessments Sheets were agreed.
- 321. CLERKS MATTERS:**
 - i. Clerks hours for February were agreed.
- 322. BANK RECONCILIATIONS:** - February's reconciliations were agreed and signed.
- 323. OTHER FINANCE MATTERS:**
 - i. Financial Regulations were approved;
 - ii. Scheme of Delegation were approved;
 - iii. Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit was agreed;

- iv. Reserves Movements – the following movements were agreed: £960 to IT EMR; £500 to Tree Work EMR; £1,730 to Fingerpost EMR; remainder of approximately £6,500 to Unallocated Reserves. Election expenses were likely to cost up to £3,100 and these would be met from Unallocated Reserves when the bill was received sometime after the May elections. £464.80 for SID licenses for 3rd pole would be met from CIL reserve.
 - v. The following payments were ratified: Information Commissioner’s Office for GDPR data protection fee £40; ES Highways for SID additional pole licenses £464.80; Income from Dignity Funerals for interment New £775; BT for telephone & broadband quarterly charges paid by DD £91.59+ £18.31 VAT.
- 324. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT** – were agreed and ML & RL would authorise.
- i. Samantha Weatherill - £920 salary paid by SO
 - ii. Samantha Weatherill salary & expenses - £234.79 (UT ref: 519272930)
 - iii. ES Pension Fund - £326.28 (UT ref: 748994489)
 - iv. Lucy McConachie Play area inspection February - £40 (UT ref: 372069389)
 - v. HD Village Hall for hire of room - £220 (UT ref: 130581216)
 - vi. GACC annual subscription - £10 (UT ref: 467806213)
 - vii. Friends of the Keep annual subscription - £30 (UT ref: 261606812)
 - viii. SWARCO 12 month silver warranty for SID - £169.95 + £33.99 (UT ref: 816855456) to be paid from CIL
 - ix. Unity Trust Bank quarterly charges paid by DD - £18
- 325. CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 Section 17** – nothing raised.
- 326. DEFIBRILLATOR BATTERY** – had been checked on 7th March.
- 327. ITEMS TO GO ON NEXT AGENDA** -none.
- The following item was discussed in a closed session:
- 328. CLERK’S REPLACEMENT** – a discussion was held and agreement made on the recruitment and package for a new Clerk.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9 pm.