



RODMELL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13th November 2019 at 8.00pm in Rodmell Village Hall

Present: Councillors: John Gillies – Chair (JG), Sue Carroll (SC), Sarah Last (SL), Lesley Prosser (LP), Richard Sellick (RS), David Smart (DS) and Nikki Terri (NT) and Alison Stevens (AS: Clerk). There was one member of the public in attendance.

District Councillor William Meyer was also in attendance.

Item No:		Action
1	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u></p> <p>No apologies for absence were received. There were no requests to consider any dispensations.</p> <p><u>Public Questions.</u></p> <p>There were no questions from the public.</p>	
2	<p><u>District and County Reports.</u></p> <p>There was no report from the County Councillor on this occasion.</p> <p>District Councillor Meyer said Lewes District Council;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has agreed to part fund the stretch of Egrets Way from Piddinghoe to Newhaven. The Council has agreed to donate £250,000, the SDNPA is going to be considering donating a further £113,000. • has declared a Climate Emergency and suggested one way it could help would be to insulate its housing stock. • is a lot more supportive of Community Land Trusts now. 	
3	<p><u>Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 3rd September 2019.</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 3rd September 2019 were approved by all and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.</p>	

	<p>Councillors also noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a new Code of Conduct which they will consider adopting in May at the AGM. • The dates of the Parish Council Meetings for 2020/21 have changed. Meetings will now be held on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21st January 2020 17th March 2020 24th April 2020 (Parish Assembly) 19th May 2020 (AGM) 21st July 2020 15th September 2020 17th November 2020 19th January 2021 	
4	<p><u>Planning</u></p> <p>4.1 There were no planning applications for consideration at this meeting.</p> <p>4.2 Councillor Carroll raised a planning issue in agricultural areas. The issue was that changes of use and commercial developments are taking place ‘below the radar’ in terms of public scrutiny. Changing farming methods, a loss of EU subsidies and financial pressures have all led to a need for farmers to diversify. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 allows certain building works and changes of use without the need to apply for planning permission and it includes circumstances in which farm buildings can be converted to other uses, subject to an application for prior approval (where the considerations for the local planning authority are far more limited than they would be for a full planning application). The system is so complex and non-specific that planning officers are unable to generalise about what does and does not apply, farmers seem to take a chance or do not think there is a need to do anything. The system is admitted by the SDNP to be reactive and the planning authorities are only aware a development if someone complains. Action is only taken if someone reports it. She said a better system is needed but the SDNP does not seem to recognise this. Councillor Carroll suggested;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gathering some case studies and presenting them to those responsible for planning to show them the system is not working. • Planning Officers could openly visit some farms to compare what is happening there with permissions and the regulations. • Farmers need to be reminded that prior approval is needed and need to be clearer about where approval and scrutiny are required. 	SC

	<p>Councillors agreed the problem was the system and not individual farmers and resolved that Councillor Carroll should raise the issue at the POLO Meeting in December because it is an issue that affects most other parishes. District Councillor Meyer said he will also raise the issue with the SDNPA in Midhurst.</p>	
5	<p><u>Maintenance Reviews</u></p> <p>5.1 The Dicklands - At the last meeting Councillors resolved that the Clerk would draft a letter to Dicklands residents and Lewes District Council to set out some possible courses of action and ask them if they had any further suggestions. The responses received were disappointing in number and showed no unanimity, and Councillors did not feel they had any real mandate to take further action. They therefore resolved that the Clerk would write to each resident again and let them know that the matter had been discussed and to remind them to park considerately.</p> <p>5.2 Sports Field – Councillors considered two prices to cut the hedge in the Sports Field and resolved to accept the price from Barcombe Landscapes. The Clerk would notify Barcombe Landscapes.</p> <p>5.3 Councillors considered the Annual Play Park Report and resolved to get a second opinion. The Clerk would seek a price from a suitably qualified specialist firm in the meantime.</p>	
6	<p><u>Clerk’s Report and/or Councillor’s Reports</u></p> <p>6.1 Legal Matters</p> <p>Three potential buyers, of which the Co-operative was one, had submitted bids to buy the school. An offer understood to have been from a private bidder had been accepted but the final outcome was as yet unclear.</p> <p>Councillor Terry reported there were some branches overhanging the playground and had obtained two prices for the work. The prices were similar, and as access would need to be provided by a third party Councillors agreed she should accept the price from the firm she felt would be the most reliable in timekeeping. A copy of the successful contractor’s public liability insurance was requested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Emergency Plan – Councillors suggested some changes to the Plan. Councillor Carroll said she would email contact details of the farmer and some first aiders/medical professionals who she thought might agree to be included. Councillor Gillies agreed to write to them 	

for permission.

6.2 Other Updates

Website and Council Emails – Councillor Gillies made Councillors aware of the new Accessibility Regulations in that Parish Council websites must now be easily accessible by all. He had been looking into the work and costs involved, both of which could be substantial. The Clerk said she will raise the matter at the next Smaller Councils' Committee Meeting to see if there was any possibility of funding becoming available from Central Government.

- The Clerk said she would chase County Councillor Osborne for an update on the state of The Street again. There was nothing new to report from the Tree Warden on this occasion.

Countryside, agriculture and allotments – Councillor Smart confirmed there were still allotment vacancies and that they were available to residents in Northease too.

- Repairs to flint wall between the car park and Martens Field – The wall is damaged outside number 11 Martens Field and numbers 5 and 6. The Clerk has contacted Clarion Estates, the owners of the wall outside number 11. They had erected chestnut paling and plan to take no further action. She contacted Lewes District Council who seem to own the wall outside numbers 5 and 6. They have agreed to carry out a site visit and report back.
- Sports Field, Mowing and Hedge Trimming – This was covered earlier on in the meeting.
- Communication with Northease residents – Councillor Carroll said she would advertise the allotment vacancies in Northease and also offered to act as a conduit between residents and ESCC whilst the patching work on the C7 takes place. Work is due to start on 14th November. Councillors asked if she could find out if the work is taking place at weekends. Highways had stated that the next three weeks were for patching work, and that full resurfacing work, which would be much quicker, was expected to take place in the New Year.
- Councillor Carroll also said there was currently a gap in the footpath between Rodmell and Northease (where it joins the onwards footpath to Lewes.) At the moment, anyone trying to walk from Rodmell and Southease, northwards to Lewes, is forced to walk along the edge of the C7 which is hazardous, especially for anyone with children, a dog, or a disability. She said that it could perhaps be remedied by negotiating a permissive pathway

	<p>with the relevant landowner, along the route already used informally by many people and installing stiles or gates through the barbed wire and fences. She asked if this could be put forward as a potential funding bid from CIL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors said the footpath has been considered before but the landowner had refused permission. • Councillors resolved that she should meet the Rights of Way Officer and see if they have any ideas. The Clerk would ask Highways to cut the verge and hedge there in the meantime so residents could at least walk on the verge. • Village Hall Committee – The Harvest Supper held on Friday 4th October raised £50 more than last year. The Village Hall Committee has plans to widen the disabled access to the hall. <p>Councillor Gillies asked the Clerk to ascertain if it was possible for The Village Hall, the Parish Council and possibly the Good Neighbour Scheme to save money by combining insurers.</p>																	
7	<p><u>Brief Report from the Clerk and/or Councillors on external contacts and meetings attended since the last Parish Council Meeting.</u></p> <p>The Clerk attended the NALC AGM in Milton Keynes and the SSALC Clerk’s Training at East Grinstead but had nothing new to report.</p>																	
8	<p><u>Finance Report</u></p> <p>8.1 – Councillors resolved to accept the accounts to 30th September 2019.</p> <p>8.2 – The following invoices were approved for payment;</p> <table data-bbox="300 1568 1150 1859"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: right;">£</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The Play Inspection Company - Play Park Inspection</td> <td style="text-align: right;">78.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business Stream Cricket Pavilion - Water</td> <td style="text-align: right;">62.31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alison Stevens Salary - September</td> <td style="text-align: right;">301.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alison Stevens Salary – October</td> <td style="text-align: right;">312.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC - PAYE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">153.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Martin Mullally - Bus Shelter repairs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1445.41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lewes District Council - Elections and bin emptying</td> <td style="text-align: right;">305.45</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>8.3 – Councillor Prosser kindly offered to check the defibrillator each month and let the Clerk know its status. Councillors accepted the offer therefore negating the need for a more formal service agreement.</p>		£	The Play Inspection Company - Play Park Inspection	78.00	Business Stream Cricket Pavilion - Water	62.31	Alison Stevens Salary - September	301.60	Alison Stevens Salary – October	312.00	HMRC - PAYE	153.40	Martin Mullally - Bus Shelter repairs	1445.41	Lewes District Council - Elections and bin emptying	305.45	
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	<p>8.4 – Verge Cutting arrangements - Councillors resolved to accept Option 2 which was offered by ESCC and agreed to fund an additional four cuts a year.</p> <p>8.5 – Councillors considered the precept for 2020-21. They analysed the figures distributed by the Clerk and provisionally agreed the precept for 2020-2021 should be in the region of £15000. This would enable the Parish Council to meet the costs of the Accessibility Regulations, meet the shortfall caused by the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant, meet rising costs and cover the decrease in the use of the Recreation Ground.</p> <p>They also resolved to contribute 3 per cent towards the Clerk’s pension scheme at a cost of approximately £11 per month.</p> <p>The final Precept would be confirmed at the January meeting, or earlier by EGM if necessary.</p>	
9	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>Councillors considered the proposals to increase council tax for empty homes and unfurnished homes in the Lewes district and agreed that a formal response was not necessary.</p>	
10	<p>The meeting closed at 9.50pm.</p> <p>The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 21st January 2020. Please send any items for the agenda to the Clerk by Monday 6th January 2020, thank you.</p>	