ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

[www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk)

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**Minutes of Alfriston Parish Council (APC) Public Meeting held remotely**

**via Zoom on Tuesday 30th June 2020 at 19:00**

**Present:**

Cllr Watkins [Chair] Cllr Daw

Cllr Beechey [Vice Chair] Cllr Savage

Cllr Cooper Cllr Adcock

**In attendance:**

Victoria Rutt - Parish Clerk

Approximately 14 members of the public

1. **Welcome from Chair**

Cllr Watkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through a few housekeeping rules. As the meeting is being held via Zoom everyone was asked to please ensure they are on mute at all times and to only take themselves off mute when it is their turn to talk. This makes sure there is no background noise so everyone can hear and aids the Clerk in minute taking.

During the open discussion, attendees were asked to raise their hand when they wished to talk and each person would be heard one by one.

Mr Stephen Rabagiliati takes part in this meeting tonight not as a Councillor as he has declared an interest; he will not take part in discussions or any decisions as a Councillor.

Cllr Watkins went on to explain that at the beginning of June, a Councillor saw a piece on Countryfile about how many councils across the country are, as a temporary measure whilst social distancing remains in place, banning vehicles from their high streets. The rationale behind this is that businesses on the high street can take over pavement space and pedestrians utilise the road space. Roads remain open to cyclists, equestrians and access for residents, deliveries etc. This is being seen as particularly beneficial to pubs, restaurants and cafes, all of which will struggle once allowed to open, whilst social distancing measures remain, but is equally applicable to any shop. Councillors decided to look into this initiative further and sought views from the local businesses via Alfriston Cuckmere Connect. It was a balanced response.

APC have since spoken to ESCC about the processes that need to be followed and it was agreed that a public meeting should be held to discuss what the village think about the process before proceeding any further. That led to this evening’s meeting.

1. **Open discussion on possible proposals for village centre to assist businesses to trade whilst Covid social distancing guidance and regulations remain in force**

Cllr Watkins opened the meeting up for discussion.

Mr Stephen Rabagliati from The Apiary

If this would happen it would need to be an equal benefit to all the businesses in the village and closing the High Street following the recent water works and lockdown would affect a number of businesses. Supports the idea of finding a solution but not closing the road.

Cllr Nick Beechey

Cllr Beechey said the proposal is to help businesses that are small and need the space in order to allow for social distancing. Also need to facilitate pedestrian movement around the village given the narrow pavements. Need ideas on how to address these issues and move forward.

Cllr Sylvia Daw [also lives on the High Street]

Cllr Daw stated that closing the High Street would not work especially following the recent water works which caused a lot of knock on effects in the village and would happen again. We do not want to send the traffic via the school again.

Cllr Nick Beechey

The Agenda item is not ‘to close the High Street’ but to consider all the options available to assist businesses with social distancing.

Mr James Dopson from Deans Place Hotel

Closing the High Street to through traffic would mean that the business would not survive.

Cllr Nick Beechey

APC are asking businesses if they have any ideas on how the Parish Council could help. The meeting is not just about closing the High Street, that was just an initial proposal. Need to find a way to manage the High Street whilst social distancing it still in place and give people the confidence that they can visit Alfriston safely.

Mrs Hannah Parkinson [resident]

Mrs Parkinson spoke about the use of pedestrian bays along the High Street.

Cllr Ray Savage

Anything that would benefit the village would receive his support. Could possibly look at closing the Square? We should not stop the traffic coming through the High Street.

Mrs Judy Byrne [resident]

Could the High Street just be closed for 2 hours at a certain time of each day?

Cllr Nick Beechey

East Sussex County Council [ESCC] have said to find out what the village want and then APC/ESCC can look into the detail. Not sure if timings would be agreed. It is recognised that we need to flip the priority and make the High Street more pedestrian friendly.

Mr Michael Clinch from Deans Place

Any traffic closures fill us with dread following the impact of the water works closure and the flooding. It is admirable that the Parish Council want to be creative and help but a road closure would not.

Mrs Cate Couch from The George

Any form of signage / road closure signs would have a negative affect on our business as this was found when the signs went up in early December for the water works commencing in January. People do not read the signs properly, they just see the word closed. She agreed with no road closure as this would be no help at all. Something is needed to slow traffic down and help with pedestrian access.

Cllr Caroline Adcock

Suggested that we start putting the cones back outside The Star Inn again during the day which will assist traffic flow and pedestrian access through the High Street. It would be desirable to have the cones out permanently for the time being, not having them brought in during the evening.

Cllr Val Cooper

Agrees with the signage issues that were caused recently. Traffic need to flow through the Village. Would like to see something on the Square or the Tye, planters outside The Star Inn would be nice instead of the cones.

Cllr Sylvia Daw

Confirmed will start to put the cones out during the day which is currently allowed.

Mr Adrian Butcher [resident]

Need to reduce the speed of the traffic through the village. A pedestrian safe haven throughout the High Street is needed. Could the traffic be forced to stop either side of the village to slow the traffic flow down?

Mrs Anne Shaw [resident]

Why is the Tye not being used? Could close Tye Road and businesses set up tables along there.

Cllr Nick Beechey

There are byelaws on the Tye that prevent the Tye being used for commercial purposes, however APC can consider any requests for ideas on how the Tye could be used. However, anyone making a request should ensure that all businesses in the village can be involved if they wish to be.

*Clerk mentioned a concern about litter on the Tye, this is going to be an agenda item for the July APC meeting.*

Mr James Dopson from Deans Place Hotel

It would be great to enable people to use the Tye and bins could just be installed. Could have a market stall type of event or a Sunday market.

Ms Lisa Thompson from Smugglers

We would not want the road to be closed. Litter is a problem between the Village Stores and the Smugglers as the bins in the centre are always overflowing. Using the Tye would benefit everyone but Smugglers would not use it due to the nature of their business. Could put flags and banners out again in the centre of the village.

Mr Stephen Rabagliati from The Apiary

Using the Tye would be an excellent focal point. Not suggesting every day of the week but frequently and would have to be for local businesses only.

Cllr Caroline Adcock

Visitors could park in the Willows car park and walk to the Tye along the footpath to riverbank. There is a stile to climb but could see if this could be changed to a kissing gate for ease. Like Mrs Parkinson and Mr Butcher ideas, need something in place soon.

Mrs Anne Shaw [resident]

Would not like the above suggestion to be encouraged as we need visitors to walk down the High Street to see the businesses.

Mr Adrian Butcher [resident]

Could the Market Square be closed and West Street, that would assist in people queuing for the shops and still be able to walk around the queues at a social distance.

Cllr Ray Savage

I support anything that takes place on the Tye. Would take organisation but that would fall to the businesses. Could possibly do every couple of weeks on a Sunday?

Mrs Cate Couch from The George

Closure of Market Square would be very good. Businesses have had to do large risk assessments and this would help Smugglers to enable social distancing.

Ms Lisa Thompson from Smugglers

Would the Market Square be closed in a ‘L’ shape?

Mrs Lucinda Dopson from Deans Place

Has real concerns about any sort of ‘road closed’ signs going up as people do not read signs properly and will just see closed and not come into the Village.

Cllr Nick Beechey

Please do not get fixated on the negitivty of ‘road closed’ signs; signs could state pedestrian zone instead. It may be the case that businesses need to apply for permits in order to use outside space for their business.

Mrs Hannah Parkinson [resident]

If the Square is closed, this could have a knock-on effect of those in North Street. Need to be aware of any unintentional affects to other places in the village.

Mr Stephen Rabagliati from The Apiary

It would be disproportionate to close the Square to help the businesses there; what about the businesses the other end of the High Street. Thinks the Tye would be the best location.

Mr Adrian Butcher [resident]

Some ideas will help some businesses, and some will help others. Will be hard to be equal to everyone. Need to create a pleasant and safe atmosphere in the village.

Ms Lisa Thompson from Smugglers

Could we do a bit of everything? Close the Square, use the Tye and introduce pedestrian bays?

Cllr Sylvia Daw

The Clergy House are still in consultation about re opening. Anything we could do to use the Tye and promote visitors to the village would be helpful.

1. **Councillors to consider open discussion and agree next steps**

Cllr Watkins closed the meeting so Councillors could consider the above options.

Starting with using the Tye, all Councillors agreed that it was a good idea and businesses could apply for use to the Parish Council where all requests will be discussed in full and considered. Any request should look to be inclusive of all village businesses who wish to participate.

Considering the remaining options which would need to have permission from ESCC:

* Close the Square and have it for pedestrian use
* Planters at Weavers Lane and Willows Car Park to show pedestrian priority zone
* Strategically placed planters along High Street

Cllr Caroline Adcock

Very happy with the suggestions and proposals. Could suggest widening the pavement in the Square instead of closing it. Would like to see the cones outside Star Inn start immediately.

Cllr Sylvia Daw

Very happy with the proposals. Suggested that the planters could be sponsored by businesses so could have small plaques on the planters.

Cllr Ray Savage

Support everything suggested, be good to create build outs to slow the traffic down.

Cllr Val Cooper

Agree with all the suggestions

Cllr Nick Beechey

All agreed and they should be put to ESCC as soon as possible for consideration.

Cllr Watkins confirmed that something would be drafted and sent to ESCC the following day.

1. **Public Questions**

Mrs Katie Salmon said that litter bins keep being talked about but where would you put them? You can’t put them down the High Street as no room. Mrs Salmon also expressed her thanks to Cllr Sylvia Daw as she has seen her numerous times clearing litter from the Tye. Clerk confirmed that litter bins is on the agenda for the July APC meeting.

Mr Stephen Rabagliati suggested a one-way pedestrian system around the village, could do paint markings on the pavement. Cllr Watkins pointed out that residents may follow it but unlikely that visitors would do so.

**MEETING ENDS 20:10**

**The following day on Wednesday 1st July, the below email was sent to ESCC:**

Dear Karl

Thank you for your email response.

APC held a meeting yesterday evening. A number of residents and business owners attended, and APC has already canvassed the views of business owners on the issue to be discussed.

The meeting identified the real need to assist businesses in the village to recover from what was already a difficult start to the year before the Covid pandemic struck. The priority is to encourage as many people as possible to visit the village and use its shops, restaurants, cafes and pubs.

The particular issues that APC believes need addressing urgently are the creation of a means whereby those businesses whose premises are very small can utilise some of the space outside their premises in order to be Covid secure, and perhaps more significantly creating a practical solution to enable pedestrians to maintain social distancing given our narrow pavements. The latter issue is felt to be particularly important in order to engender confidence in visitors and residents that they can move freely and safely around the centre of the village.

The meeting determined that there was no desire to close the High Street to through traffic. However, there was a consensus that measures need to be put in place to make the High Street a much more pedestrian oriented space.

To that end APC urge the County Council to expedite the implementation of the proposals submitted by the Parish Council at the meeting held at County Hall on 25th October 2019.

Particular factors that last night’s meeting felt would bring immediate gains, and which APC hope are achievable in the short term are:

Village gateways/build-outs (at the Willows and High Street/Weavers Lane junction, accompanied by some form of signage indicating that drivers are entering a pedestrian priority zone, and giving priority to those vehicles leaving the village. As a first measure such build-outs could be sturdy planters.

Numerous, strategically placed, sizeable planters along the High Street and North Street that would aim to slow vehicles and to give protection to pedestrians by allowing them to move safely off the pavements as and when necessary.

Full pedestrianisation of the west and north sides of Market Square (Village shop to Waterloo Gallery). The only possible vehicular exceptions: emergency vehicles when necessary, deliveries to the village shop and Smugglers, the bin lorry and Cuckmere Community Bus, which now picks up in the Square before routing via West Street to pick up on the Broadway. A more moderate alternative would be to narrow the road and widen the pavements in this area, whilst still allowing traffic flow

The reintroduction of physical enforcement of the parking restriction outside the Star (where previously bollards have been put out). APC would like to see planters used along here rather than bollards, and recognise that would entail the imposition of double yellow lines along this stretch.

APC would also urge ESCC to implement a 20mph speed restriction as soon as is possible. Ideally this would be reinforced by as many as is possible of the traffic calming measures that were included in the proposals submitted to ESCC at our last meeting.

APC sincerely hopes that ESCC can help the village by taking advantage of the new legislation to achieve all of the above, in order to assist our businesses and community to bounce back.

APC would welcome dialogue with the County to see what can be achieved in a short time frame.