ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC), held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 18th March 2024 at 19.15.

**Present:**

Cllr D Monteath-Wilson (Chair) Cllr S Rabagliati

Cllr J Watkins (Vice-Chair) Cllr N Parkinson

Cllr S Daw Cllr J Spring

**In attendance:**

Mrs Suzanna Dry – Parish Clerk

There were 11 members of the public present.

**176. Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**177**. **Public Questions**

Jilly Byford reported a dangerous style on Steven Carr’s land at France Hill. Clerk was asked to advise Cllr Harris, so that this could be reported. Action 1. Jilly Byford also reported that a man had been seen cutting back a tree at the sub power station. Wealden District Cllr, David Greaves, advised Jilly Byford she could report this to the Wealden District Council Tree Officer.

Adrian Butcher asked what was happening with the damaged drain cover on The Glebe land. Clerk replied that the water company had confirmed this was nothing to do with them and so AEG had been asked and kindly agreed, to source and replace the cover. David Lewis from AEG replied to say this was on their to do list and now that they are less busy with the flooding having receded, AEG will pick this up.

**178. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Adrian Harris, who is currently away.

**179. Update from Maria Caulfield**

In the absence of Maria Caulfield the Clerk read out a summary of her report, which was attached to the Agenda.

**180. Update from Cllr Stephen Shing – East Sussex County Council (ESCC)**

Cllr Shing read his report to the meeting. Cllr Shing’s report this month was very short as there is no ESCC council meeting this month. Transport money for Alfriston was approved, Ian Johnson in Highways will be retiring after 20 years, ESCC now looking at next year’s budget **.** Cllr Rabagliati asked if the funding which has been approved for transport in Alfriston is for this financial year, Cllr Shing confirmed that it is although all work is one year behind with the contractor. Cllr Watkins asked Cllr Shing to pass on APC’s good wishes to Ian Johnson at Highways on his retirement.

**181. Update from Cllr Greaves – Wealden District Council (WDC)**

Cllr Greaves read his report to the meeting, full details of which are appended to the minutes. (**Appendix A).** Cllr Parkinson confirmed he had attended the recent Wealden Parish Conference, where many councils spoke of problems with parking regulations and enforcement. Wealden Council advised this was being considered and Cllr Parkinson asked Cllr Greaves for an update on the process in due course.

The Chair asked Cllr Greaves as there were going to be changes to the dates of bin collections, whether this would also mean a change in the frequency of collections. Cllr Greaves confirmed that collection frequency would remain the same.

**182. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Watkins declared an interest as she is a member of AEG. Cllr Daw declared an interest as she is a Churchwarden. Cllr Daw declared an interest in the Patient Participation Group.

**183. Minutes**

Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Watkins seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting held on 19th February 2024 were a true and accurate record. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Chair duly sign the minutes as an accurate record.

**184. To approve the Statement of Finances: March 2024**

Cllr. Watkins proposed that the Statement of Finances for March 2024 be approved. Seconded by Cllr Daw. **RESOLVED** that Cllr Watkins sign the invoices for payment. **(Appendix B).**

**185. Civility & Respect Pledge**

Clerk confirmed that APC were now signed up to the pledge and the Chair signed the certificate. Following the Clerk’s report Cllr Watkins proposed and Cllr Spring seconded a motion that the template provided for a Dignity at Work Policy was adopted. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Dignity at Work policy be adopted. Clerk to put on the website and send a copy to each councillor. Action 2. It was agreed that the Clerk would give Councillors dates to attend the initial on-line training course, at a cost of £16.00 per person. Action 3.

**186. Annual Parish Assembly – Monday 22nd April 2024**

To decide on a speaker to be invited to the Annual Parish Assembly on 22nd April. The Chair suggested to Cllrs that APC invite Richard Brown, a local farmer, who has been working with other farmers and the Pevensey Levels Board for many years. Cllr Spring agreed Richard Brown would have the best insight into the issue of flooding. It was unanimously agreed that APC would invite Richard Brown to speak at the Annual Parish Assembly on 22nd April and if he is unable to attend for him to suggest a suitable alternative speaker. Clerk to contact Richard Brown. Action 4.

**187. Wealden Draft Local Plan Consultation**

Cllr Parkinson confirmed he would attend the consultation on 4th May to be held in Horam. Any other councillors wishing to attend one of the consultation dates, to let the Clerk know.

**188. External Events on APC Land**

Further to the Clerk’s report (Appendix E on the Agenda) to discuss and clarify APC’s legal and insurance obligations. The Clerk appraised Cllrs that when giving permission for external events, APC need to show due diligence in requesting copies of public liability insurance and risk assessments from the organisers. This is not only a requirement of the Health & Safety Act 1974 but also a mandatory requirement by APC’s insurers. This also applies to permission given to the use of A boards. Clerk recommended APC consider purchasing their own A board, which would be covered by APC public liability insurance and APC would carry out the risk assessment, therefore making it easier for community groups\charities to use. Cllr Parkinson proposed and Cllr Daw seconded a motion for APC to purchase an A board. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that APC purchase an A board. Clerk to look into costs. Action 5. Cllr Daw offered to store the A board.

Cllr Spring suggested APC put together a generic risk assessment that could be used to help organisers do their own event risk assessment. Cllr Spring and Clerk to draw this up. Action 6.

**189. APC Mobile Phone**

To discuss and agree on the Clerk’s recommendation (Appendix F on the Agenda) to update the APC mobile phone contract to include more data usage per month, at an additional cost of £1.17 per month. This will enable e-mails to be viewed and sent via the mobile phone, without causing any additional charges. It was unanimously **AGREED** to upgrade the contract. Clerk to contact O2 and make the change. Action 7.

**190. Update on Coffeehouse Conversations**

Cllr Daw advised the next coffeehouse conversation has been booked for 20th April at the OCC and will cover the Recreation Ground, Playground and Allotments. Cllr Daw to advertise this, including an advert in Cuckmere News. Action 8. It was later agreed that Cllr Spring would share this meeting and take the opportunity to ask the community for suggestions on APC objectives going forwards. Cllr Daw and Cllr Spring to liaise. The Chair asked Cllrs to agree on the topic for the next coffeehouse conversation, it was **AGREED** this would be Highways.

**191. To set a date for a Confidential Personnel Meeting.**

It was unanimously **AGREED** that a confidential personnel meeting be held to discuss completion of the Clerk’s probationary period and review hours. The personnel meeting will include all Cllrs. The Chair wanted to show her appreciation to the Clerk for her work undertaken to date.

**192. Report on Highways & Twittens – Cllr Rabagliati**

Cllr Rabagliati made his report to the meeting, as follows:

**Flooding**

The impact of the flooding has been significant recently and I’d like to start by thanking the AEG for everything they have done for the village during this time, including assisting with the distribution of bottled water during the SE Water emergency.

The flooding resulted the recently updated East Sussex Highways Emergency Traffic Management Plan to be brought into play.  Once again there were significant instances of drivers ignoring the closure signs causing serious issues along Winton Street with extensive delays and the inability of emergency vehicles to get through.  There were the usual instances of ‘not so smart’ drivers getting stuck in flood waters.  I understand that a number of incidents have been reported to the police.

AEG have published helpful videos on Facebook recently, explaining why the closures are in place and the implications to drivers if they ignore the closure signage.

AEG also put out, on behalf of the APC, the ‘Business as Usual’ signs at the agreed locations.  The ESH plan specifies its own ‘Business as Usual’ signs at Sutton Corner and Drusillas’ roundabout but, unfortunately, these were not deployed on this occasion by ESH.  This resulted in less than effective signage.

With the benefit of recent observations on how the plan worked in practice, I have requested a meeting with East Sussex Highways and AEG to review the plan in order to discuss and improve its overall effectiveness.  I will press for this to take place soon.

**Sluice valves**

Wealden District Council have acknowledged our request to investigate the broken and missing valves in Willows Coach Park, and have committed to investigate once water levels permit.  We should follow up on this to learn what the investigation shows.

**High Street patching**

The rescheduled patching was postponed for a second time, and we are now awaiting notification of a new date.  We also await the completion of the pavement works along West Street.

**High Street Plan**

I have once again chased East Sussex Highways for status on the implementation of the 20mph scheme and gateways.  We have, this week, finally received a reply to our year-old requests for information on the signage options for the new village gateways.  In order to revitalise efforts on the High Street Plan and to share and discuss with the village the way forward regarding the proposed resurfacing of the High Street, I’d like to suggest that we make this the subject of a ‘Coffee House Meeting’ - this was **AGREED** at Agenda Item no. 190.

**Illegal parking**

I was pleased to see in Cllr Parkinson’s report on the Wealden Parish that note was taken of multiple parishes complaining about blatant illegal parking and the lack of enforcement.  Might I ask that Councillor Greaves once again relay our concerns to Wealden on this matter?

It seems that weekend parking along on the High Street is causing increased frustration and congestion, and I would propose that we reinstate placing the cones along the single yellow line section at weekend. Cllr Daw was happy to help Cllr Rabagliati with this.

**Speedwatch**

While I have been away, Speedwatch has been ably administered by Hannah Parkinson, to whom I extend my sincere thanks.  The recorded speed record along Whiteway this month was 67mph, believe it or not.  We have a busy schedule in March and I will shortly be sending out requests for April availability.  One member of the team has retired this month and we have a new member awaiting final training.  If any one is interested in joining this worthwhile effort. Please do get in touch through myself or the clerk.

**193. Report on Allotments and Recreation Ground - Cllr Daw**

Cllr Daw’s report was attached to the Agenda (Appendix G). Cllr Daw added to her report as follows:

Playground – Cllr Daw expressed her thanks to everyone who came to help with cutting back the vegetation in the playground and will put this in the diary for the first Saturday in March each year. The owners of Wytham Cottage next to the playground, have asked APC to look at the ivy that is on APC’s side of the fence. Cllr Daw has inspected this and will ask David Larkin to cut any remaining ivy, however some ivy is growing from Wytham Cottage side too. The Clerk was asked to reply to Wytham Cottage. Action 9.

Allotments - Biffa advised that they couldn’t empty the wheelie bins again today as cars were parked in front of the bins. Cllr Daw will put a sign up asking people not to park in front of the bins. Action 10.

Recreation Ground - Cllr Daw reported there has been incidents of children running over the cricket pitch and asked that parents keep children off this section of the recreation ground. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would contact the school and ask that parents are made aware.

D Day Celebrations - Cllr Daw will provide an update at the next meeting.

**194. Report on Public Transport – Cllr Harris**

In Cllr Harris’ absence his report was attached to the Agenda (Appendix H) and the Clerk read this out.

**195. Report on Rights of Way and Countryside – Cllr Harris.**

In Cllr Harris’ made his report was attached to the Agenda (Appendix I) and the Clerk read this out.

**196. Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Spring**

Cllr Spring’s report was attached to the Agenda (Appendix J). Cllr Spring suggested that APC decide on 3/5 objectives as goals to be working towards. Also Cllr responsible for each portfolio to choose 2/3 specific priorities for their portfolio. This document can then be reviewed annually and used like a Parish Plan light. Next steps would be to engage with the community to identify ideas for the council’s top priorities. Cllr Spring will share the next coffeehouse conversation with Cllr Daw in order to ask the community for their input. Cllr Spring to also engage with local community groups. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Spring would report back at the next meeting and Cllrs to report back on their portfolio specific objectives.

**197. Report on Tye – Cllr Parkinson**

Cllr Parkinson’s report was attached to the Agenda (Appendix K). Cllr Parkinson gave an update on his report and asked the council to approve an e-mail be sent out listing plants requested for the village garden and for the grass cutting to be changed to stop short of the trees on the grassland border with the Clergy House track and strimmed between the Spur Road and the tree line. This was **AGREED**. Cllr Parkinson and the Clerk to action. Action 11.

Tye Road Repairs – APC had received one quote for the repairs, in spite of 3 quotes being requested and followed up, only one from Hailsham Roadways had been received. Cllr Parkinson circulated his report to Cllrs, unfortunately the information was received too late to go out with the Agenda, and is attached with the minutes **(Appendix C).** The report detailed three options.

Cllr Parkinson proposed and the Chair seconded Option 3. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that APC accept Hailsham Roadways quote for the edge reconstruction at a cost of £23,305.79 (+vat) and use village resources to fix the potholes. The Clerk was asked to confirm to Hailsham Roadways and ask for a warranty of workmanship Action 12. To write to utility groups to ascertain the location of buried services Action 13. And to confirm with SDNP that the plant size and operation is acceptable. Action 14.

**198. Report from Planning Committee**

198.1 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting:

**SDNP/23/05422/LIS** Saddlers House, High St, Alfriston, BN26 5SZ. Internal alterations to create staff accommodation, minor modifications to the previously approved rear terrace – creation of a new opening in the flint wall to the southern side of the terrace. (Revised proposal). No Objection.

 **SNDP/23/05421/FUL** As above. No Objection.

**SDNP/24/00871/CND** Timbers, Sloe Lane, Alfriston, East Sussex, BN26 5UU. Removal or variation of condition of SDNP/21/04438/HOUS – garage roof height. Object.

198.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision on from SDNPA

**SDNP/24/00084/TPO** Trees west of Smugglers Close, Alfriston. To reduce back to 20/30% for good tree management. Approved.

**SDNP/23/03986/FUL** Kings Ride Farm, Kings Ride, Alfriston, BN26 5US. Awaiting decision of SDNPA committee meeting on 15th February. On going.

 198.3 Enforcement updates - None received

**199. Reports from Outside bodies**

* 1. **Heartstart**

Cllr Watkins reported that the cricket pavilion defibrillator is being looked into, currently waiting to be wired up.

**199.2** **Alfriston Emergency Group**

Steve Woodgate advised that AEG have been very busy with getting flood water out and bringing bottled water into the village. This did bring out a great sense of community spirit. AEG do not close the roads, it is East Sussex Highways that decide when the road will be closed and when it will re-open. AEG are currently waiting to have a meeting with ESH and Cllr Rabagliati with regard to the Emergency Plan. Abuse of personnel and drivers refusing to take heed of signs is being reported by AEG. Hopefully looking forward to quieter times.

* 1. **Flood Forum**

No report

* 1. **Neighbourhood Watch**

No report

* 1. **Twinning Committee**

Wendy Little’s report was attached to the Agenda (Appendix L) and summarised by the Clerk.

* 1. **St Andrew’s Church**

Cllr Daw reported that the handrail is back from the blacksmiths and being fitted in the next couple of weeks. Thanks to fundraisers for this. Very pleased to announce the new Musical Director is in fact David Olsen.

**199.7 Clergy House**

Holly Jones’ report was attached to the Agenda (Appendix N) and summarised by the Clerk.

**199.8 Cuckmere Buses**

No report

**199.9 Alfriston War Memorial Hall**

No report

**199.10 Speedwatch**

Cllr Rabagliatti reported that this had been ably administered by Hannah Parkinson in his absence. Busy schedule for March, one member of the team has dropped out. Anyone interested in joining please speak to Cllr Rabagliati or the Clerk.

**199.11 Events**

No report

1. **Correspondence – Asking for permission from the Council**

Permission for A Boards on Market Square - The Clerk reported that East Sussex Highways have written to APC to advise that Market Square is in fact owned by Highways and not APC as previously thought. This means that as APC are not the landowners, we do not have authority to give permission for A board use. All requests will need to be sent to East Sussex Highways via their website. It was **AGREED** that APC will apply to ESH for a generic licence to use our own A board. The Clerk was asked to liaise with Highways. Action 15 .

Request from Nicky Vassell for an A board on Market Square from 26th -28th July for the CVHS Annual Flower and Produce Show. It was **AGREED** for the Clerk to advise Nicky Vassell that APC would be happy for the CVHS to use the new APC A board, once it has been purchased and a licence is given from East Sussex Highways. Action 16.

**201 Public Questions**

The meeting was adjourned at 20:45 by the Chair before Public Questions commenced.

**202 Date of next meeting**

Monday 22nd April 2024 in the AWMH at 19:15.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 9.10pm.

**Appendices, as referred to in the minutes, attached below.**

**Appendix A Cllr Greaves Update**

**Report – Alfriston PC - Monday 18th March 2024**

1. **Council Tax**

The WDC element of the Council Tax increase was approved on 21st February at 2.99% for 2024/25 (the maximum permitted and the same as last year). The Council receives 9% of Council Tax collected…………. this pays for refuse and recycling collections, planning, street cleaning, environmental protection, and ‘free car parking’ (a strange statement by the Council ………. possibly a precursor to the introduction of parking charges across WDC ??)

The remainder of the Council Tax Bill is shared to pay for a wide range of services provided by ESCC (Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services and local town and Parish Councils etc)

At the time of this meeting Council Tax Bills have arrived so tax payers will now be aware of the full impact of overall increases for 2024/25.

1. **Business Support Programmes**

Two programmes providing support and training to local businesses are available in East Sussex.

Called ‘Ready to Grow’ and ‘Big Ambitions’ there is £447k available within East Sussex.

The ‘Ready to Grow’ programme is for early stage business owners who have been trading for less than 3 years. There are workshops and masterclasses, one-to-one support and networking opportunities.

The ‘Big Ambitions’ programme provides up to 18 hours of expertise to businesses who are growing and likely to need to employ extra staff in the next 6 to 12 months and includes one-to-one action planning and specialist support.

The programmes are being managed by ESCC on behalf of local authorities. Delivery is through a business support company called Digital Islands and the programmes will run until March 2025

The first event will start on Weds 20th March in Lewes

The free Content Event is an opportunity for early-stage businesses in the Lewes district to access expert marketing advice. Visit [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ready-to-grow-free-content-event-lewes-tickets-840221293507](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ready-to-grow-free-content-event-lewes-tickets-840221293507) to find out more and book a free place.

More information about the ‘Ready To Grow’ and ‘Big Ambitions’ programmes and how to sign up can be found online at: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/support/organisations](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/support/organisations).

1. **Keep Britain Tidy**

Residents in Wealden are being encouraged to help celebrate the platinum anniversary of Keep Britain Tidy by supporting the annual Great British Spring Clean campaign which runs from 15th to 31st March and is calling for residents across Wealden to pick one bag, or more, of litter from streets, parks, beauty spots and beaches.

In partnership with Biffa, Wealden council is supporting groups from around the district in their litter picking efforts through the supplying of equipment to the collection of the bags of litter.

The request is to mark the 70th year by committing to (for example) picking up 70 items, 70 bags, or spending 70 minutes in the great outdoors litter-picking.

For anyone wishing to get involved there are links to the website: [www.keepbritaintidy.org/gbspringclean](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/gbspringclean%E2%80%AF) and by using the hashtags #GBSpringClean #BigBagChallenge.

1. **Possible changes to Rubbish and Recycling Collection days**

To improve the efficiency of rubbish and recycling collection there may be some changes to collection schedules after April 15th . This will not affect the garden waste collection service which will continue as usual. I stress that not all collections are changing - those who are affected will receive a letter and an updated collection calendar.

Further information is available on: [www.wealden.gov.uk/collection-schedule-changes](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/collection-schedule-changes) .

1. **Fly Tipping Intervention Grant**

The Council have been awarded £20,000 to fund an engagement project to ensure that residents are well informed about the use of unlicenced waste carriers. We should see information coming through in this respect in due course.

David Greaves

18th March 2024

**Appendix B - March Finance Report**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Alfriston Parish Council Finance Report 7th March 2024** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | *Authority is sought to make the following payments:-* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **188** | BACS | Suzanna Dry - March Salary | £1,777.56 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | *Total:* | **£1,777.56** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | *Authority is sought to make the following payments made since last meeting:-* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **171** | CARD | HP Instant Ink - Printer Cartridge | £9.99 |  |
| **172** | DD | Castle Water - Allotments | £131.36 |  |
| **173** | BACS | Castle Water - Cricket Pavilion | £18.13 |  |
| **174** | BACS | SLCC Enterprises - New Clerk Series Webinar | £30.00 |  |
| **175** | BACS | SLCC Enterprises - New Clerk Series Webinar (Vat) | £6.00 |  |
| **176** | BACS | ESALC - Finance Training Online | £48.00 |  |
| **177** | DD | Campaign to Protect - Countryside Charity Membership | £60.00 |  |
| **178** | BACS | Tansleys Printers - Tye signs | £108.00 |  |
| **179** | BACS | Hobbs CiLCA Qualification Training Programme | £330.00 |  |
| **180** | BACS | Business Stream - Waste Water - Pavilion | £48.28 |  |
| **181** | BACS | ESALC - New Clerks Training | £90.00 |  |
| **182** | DD | 02 Mobile Phone |   |   | £14.08 |  |
| **183** | BACS | Bank Charges |   |   |   | £20.00 |  |
| **184** | BACS | iNTERBIZ - Payroll Services |   | £24.00 |  |
| **185** | BACS | Biffa - Allotment Wheelie Bins |   | £117.35 |  |
| **186** | BACS | SLCC (Society for Local Council Clerks) Membership | £244.00 |  |
| **187** | BACS | Wealden District Council - Q1 Bins (Dog & Litter bins) | £660.00 |  |
|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Total: | **£1,959.19** |  |
|  |  | **Summary of Bank Balances 7th March 2024** |   |  |  |  |
|  |  | Business Current Account |  | £6,431.66 |  |
|  |  | Business Savings Account |  | £39,656.68 |  |
|  |  | **TOTAL** |  |  |  |  | **£46,088.34** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **RESERVE INFORMATION**  |  |
| ***Project***  | ***Opening balance*** | ***Budget 23/24*** |  ***Expenditure***  |  ***Closing Balance***  |  |
| General Reserves | £17,140.00 |   |   | £17,140.00 |  |
| Tye Rd surface | £15,000.00 | add £5,000 |   | £20,000.00 |  |
| Playground | £263.07 | add £500 |   | £763.07 |  |
| NDP | £500.00 |   |   | £500.00 |  |
| High St Traffic Plan  | £5,000.00 | add £5,000 |   | £10,000.00 |  |
| Election costs  | £500.00 | add £500 | -£2,932.91 | £0.00 |  |
| Christmas Tree  | £233.39 | Rec'd £72 | -£305.39 | £0.00 |  |
| CIL money  | £762.07 |   |   | £762.07 |  |
| **TOTAL**  | **£39,398.53** | **add £11,000** |  | **£49,165.14** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Signed by: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Suzanna Dry - Clerk & RFO |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Councillor who checked the invoices for the above payments: …............................... |

**Appendix C - Report on Tye Repairs & Quote Received**

Appendix C is a pdf file and is attached as a separate document.