ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL Alfriston War Memorial Hall

Mrs Suzanna Dry CiLCA Old School House

Tel: 07936 904743 The Tye, Alfriston, BN26 5TL

E-mail: [clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk) 28th February 2025

**Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC), held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 17th February 2025 at 7.15pm**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Present:**

Cllr D Monteath-Wilson (Chair) Cllr J Watkins (Vice Chair)

Cllr S Daw Cllr J Spring

Cllr Parkinson

**In attendance:**

Mrs Suzanna Dry – Parish Clerk & RFO

There were approximately 7 members of the public present.

**185. Chairman’s Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and mentioned the sad news that ex-Councillor, Dr June Goodfield, had passed away on 13th February.

The Chair announced that Agenda Item Nos. 206-208 regarding the Cllr Vacancy, have had to be postponed to the March meeting. This is due to APC not having access to its mail for 3 weeks in January\February. As a result, an application for the vacancy sent within the deadline was not received until yesterday. The Chair confirmed there were now two applicants, who will both be considered at the March meeting. The Clerk was asked to send a request to the AWMH for an outside post box for APC mail . Action Point 1.

**186. Public Questions**

Diana Kelly mentioned correspondence she had sent in to APC, the Clerk confirmed this would be discussed under Agenda Item No. 204.

**187. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Harris.

**188. Update from MP**

There was no report received from the MP’s office this month. However the Clerk has been in correspondence with James MacCleary’s office as he does wish to attend an APC meeting in person. This will depend on dates when parliament is sitting.

**189. Update from Cllr Stephen Shing – East Sussex County Council**

Cllr Shing presented his report to the meeting a copy is attached to the minutes. (Appendix A).

The Chair asked Cllr Shing about the late notice for Dene’s Car Park being closed for works. Cllr Shing will take this up with Highways.

**190. Update from Cllr David Greaves - Wealden District Council**

Cllr Greaves presented his report to the meeting, a copy is attached to the minutes. (Appendix B).

Cllr Greaves agreed with Cllr Shing that there should be no increase in WDC’s council tax for next year, due to a Unitary Council for East and West Sussex being formed and will be raising this at the next meeting of WDC.

Cllr Greaves advised if there is a problem with cars not being moved during the closure of Dene’s Car Park, members of the public can contact Wealden District Council Car Park Team. Cllr Greaves reported the issue to WDC Car Park Team immediately after the meeting and copied in APC, copy attached (Appendix C).

**191. Declaration of interest**

Cllr Daw declared an interest as she is a Church Warden, trustee of Children with Cancer, the Women’s Institute and a member of the Patient Participation Group. Cllr Watkins declared an interest in AEG & Heartstart, Cllr Parkinson declared an interest in the allotments.

**192. Minutes**

Cllr Spring proposed and Cllr Watkins seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting held on 20th January 2025, were a true and accurate record. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Chair duly sign the minutes as an accurate record.

**193. Finance**

To approve the Statement of Finances for February 2025 as attached to the Agenda**.** Cllr Parkinson proposed & Cllr Daw seconded a motion these be approved. This was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

**194. To Approve APC Publication Scheme**

The proposed Publication Scheme and Clerk’s Report was attached to the Agenda. Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Watkins seconded a motion that the Publication Scheme be adopted. This was unanimously **RESOLVED.**

**195. To Agree that APC can re-instate the General Power of Competence.**

Now that the Clerk holds the CiLCA Qualification and is therefore a Qualified Clerk AND two thirds of Cllrs were elected (as opposed to co-opted) APC meet the criteria to re-instate the Power of Competence. This was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

**196. Report on Highways & Twittens – Cllr Vacancy**

As there is currently a vacancy for this portfolio there is no report.

The Clerk confirmed that the potholes on the High Street, one outside The George and one outside The Wingrove have been reported to Highways. The Clerk was asked to contact Highways and explain the damage this is causing to a Grade I listed building and ask for it to be prioritised. Action Point 2. Cllr Spring commented that any member of the public can report pot holes to ESCC Highways on-line.

**197. Report on Allotments & Recreation Ground – Cllr Daw.**

Allotments – Leases have gone out and been signed for several new allotment holders. The Clerk aadvised renewals for existing allotment holders will be sent out shortly. The Clerk confirmed that the water needs to be turned on on 1st March. Cllr Daw will arrange for this to be done. Action Point 3.

Playground – Cllr Daw reported all seems well and she is keeping an eye on the magnifying post that has a split in the post. This has not increased in size. Cllr Daw has not heard from the Friends of Alfriston Allotment group and asked if they are still going to please let her know.

Cricket Club - Cllr Daw will advise the Cricket Club of funding available through the Wealden District Council Sports Infrastructure Programme (details in Cllr Greaves report). Action Point 4. The Cricket Club have offered the Pavilion as a place of refuge in the Alfriston Emergency Plan.

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

Cllr Harris had given his apologies and advised there was nothing to report under Public Transport.

**199. Report on Environment & Countryside – Cllr Harris**

As Cllr Harris had given his apologies, his report was read out at the meeting as below:

I propose to include in this and future reports a brief summary of the weather for the previous month, along the following lines:

January – total rainfall was 114mm, compared with 71mm last year and a 10 year average of 106mm

Highest and lowest temperatures were 11.3c and -5.0c compared with 11.5c and -6.0c last year.

There were no flooding events reported.

I have received no reports of blocked footpaths over the past month, but have noticed and reported two incidents of footpaths impeded by blocked trees.

**200. Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Parkinson**

Cllr Parkinson’s report was attached as Appendix C on the Agenda.

Full Emergency Response Plan – the full plan is for use in an extreme emergency in the village, it is currently being developed and a draft will be circulated, hopefully in time for the next meeting. Cllrs **AGREED** for APC to hold a list of vulnerable people. The Clerk was asked to notify the village via the mailing list and on our website that anyone who would like to be put on the list, should write in or e-mail the Clerk giving their details and their consent to be included on the list which may be shared with AEG in an emergency. Villagers will need to renew their consent yearly. Action Point 5. The Chair asked Cllr Parkinson to put together a notice for the Clerk to send out and to also send this to the Cuckmere News. Action Point 6.

Alert System for Potential Emergency - The Chair thanked Cllr Parkinson for putting this document together. Cllr Parkinson proposed and Cllr Spring seconded the motion that the Alert System for Potential Emergency be adopted (see appendix C on the Agenda). This was unanimously **AGREED**.

Traffic Proposals - Further to Cllr Parkinson’s report attached to the Agenda, ESCC Highways have now responded to confirm there is not an appropriate position for the village sign within the 20mph limit. Highways suggest that if APC wish we could pursue a village sign with the Road Safety Dept. Cllrs **AGREED** to take this up with Road Safety. Village Gatepost - Highways have now confirmed the wording we can have is :- “Welcome to Alfriston, Medieval Village, Narrow streets”. Cllr Spring proposed and Cllr Daw seconded a motion to accept this signage on the gateposts. This was unanimously **AGREED**. Cllr Parkinson will relay APC’s decision to Highways. Action Point 7. Work is expected to commence in April this year.

Village Website - Cllr Parkinson reported that the village website domain is currently being funded by Nathan Pope as well as the system that powers it. The Clerk confirmed APC do not own or pay for the website and do not have any input or control over it. Cllr Parkinson will communicate this to Nathan and suggest that any offers of help are signposted to Nathan for discussion. Action Point 8. Cllrs **AGREED**.

**201. Report on Tye – Cllr Spring**

Cllr Spring confirmed the drain cover has now been repaired on The Glebe. The Clerk will let the Grass Contractor know before cutting commences in the Spring. Action Point 9.

Will organise a clean up of The Tye over next few weeks, including cutting back vegetation on The Tye Rd. Cllr Parkinson will give Cllr Spring contact details for The Tye Gardening Group. Action Point 10.

Remaining Pot Holes - Now the weather is improving, Cllr Spring will arrange for these to be repaired.

Sustainability Event on The Tye - Mathew Jackson is the organiser and is looking at holding this in the late summer. Cllr Spring will meet with Mathew Jackson and report back at the next meeting with a definite date. Action Point 11.

Cllr Spring had received a request for A Boards on The Tye outside the OCC and AWMH for a wedding reception on 29th March. Cllr Spring was asked to forward this correspondence on to the Clerk. Action Point 12.

**202. Report from Planning Committee – Cllr Watkins**

202.1 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting:

**Ref No: SDNP/25/00041/HOUS** – Downside, North Rd, Alfriston - No Objection

**Ref No: SDNP/24/05279/HOUS** – Friston Way, 8 Deans Rd, Alfriston - No Objection.

202.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA

**Ref. No: SDNP/24/02440/FUL –** Former Allotment Site, North St., Alfriston - Refused

Erection of 5 houses together with revisions to access and parking.

202.3 Enforcement updates from SDNPA - None

**203. Reports from Outside Bodies**

203.1 Heartstart - Cllr Watkins confirmed the Defib Familiarisation Session is being held on 11th March in the AWMH. Please let Cllr Watkins know if you wish to come along. If there is enough demand a 2nd session will be arranged. The Chair thanked Heartstart for organising this.

203.2 Alfriston Emergency Group - No report.

203.3 Flood Forum - Nothing to report.

203.4 Neighbourhood Watch - No report.

203.5 Twinning Committee - report sent out with the Agenda and read out at the meeting.

203.6 St Andrew’s Church - The church is celebrating the 950th year of moving into the Diocese of Chichester, there are leaflets on this in the church. On 9th March there is a concert in the church by Onyx Brass, there are a few tickets left. Sunday services continue to be very well attended.

203.7 Clergy House - No report.

203.8 Alfriston War Memorial Hall - Nothing to report.

203.9 Speedwatch - The Chair explained that Stephen Rabagliati is moving back into the village and will be resurrecting Speedwatch on his return, with the help of current volunteers.

203.10 Events - Cllr Daw has asked the band that played at the AWMH recently if they will come and play for the D Day Celebrations on 4th May.

The Chair advised that all Cllrs had been invited to The Alfriston Hotel on Sunday 23rd February to a ‘new look tour’ of the hotel. This is an invitation only event with other groups also invited. Cllrs will let the Clerk know if they can attend. The Clerk was asked to respond to The Alfriston on behalf of APC. Action Point 13.

**204. Correspondence to The Clerk – Asking for permission from the council.**

A Board Request - Cllr Watkins asked to advertise the Defib Familiarisation session a week before the 11th March. Cllrs all **AGREED.**

Rope Walk - Cllrs had received a copy of the correspondence sent in from Diana Kelly with regard to parking in Rope Walk. This included an e-mail from SGN Gas stating that Rope Walk is not suitable for vehicles and should not be used by vehicles in the interest of gas safety. APC thanked Diana Kelly for sending this information in. Copies attached (Appendix D).

**205. Public Questions**

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm and opened the floor to public questions.

**206. Date of next meeting –** The next meeting will be held on Monday 17th March 2025 in the AWMH at 7:15pm.

Please see Appendices attached below and\or on the website

**Appendix A - Cllr Shing ESCC Report**

Awaiting report from Cllr Shing – this will be circulated once received.

**Appendix B - Cllr Greaves WDC Report**

**Report – Alfriston PC - Monday 17th February 2025**

1. **A new kiosk selling refreshments will be built on the Cuckoo Trail.**

Permission for the Horam Hub was granted by Wealden District Council’s councillors at a planning committee meeting recently and relates to a site at the disused railway platform of the former Horam Railway Station, which now forms part of the Cuckoo Trail.

The new kiosk is to be built as part of several improvement projects outlined in the Cuckoo Trail Masterplan, a plan recently developed in consultation with communities, local partners and stakeholders and evidenced through user research.

The application was for the erection of a brick-built ‘kiosk building’ with zinc roof over, incorporating an overhanging canopy, public toilets and a commercial space for light refreshments to be sold.

The design has taken cues from traditional railway buildings, such as those which might have been found at the location historically.. The design has been carefully thought out to keep with the Victorian character.

The works to the Horam Hub area will commence in the next few weeks. The council will keep the trail open during the works although there will be limited times when the trail will be closed and a diversion will be put in place.

The kiosk and other improvement projects along the Cuckoo Trail are funded through the Councils allocation of the UK Governments Shared Prosperity Funding.   The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is part of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda which gives local authorities the opportunity to improve pride of place and increase life chances by investing in communities, supporting local businesses and people. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

1. **Rural Business Grants Programme**

Wealden District Council have been delivering a rural business grants programme over the last year with an allocation from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.   Over £567,000 has been awarded to businesses through the scheme.

The Rural Business Grants Programme (RBGP) was available to small and medium sized businesses in Wealden, businesses were able to apply for a grant of up to 50% of the cost of capital projects.  Grants were available from £2,500 up to £35,000 with the business needing to match the grant awarded.

Projects could include farm diversification projects outside of agriculture, property adaptions, creation and expansion of rural leisure and tourism businesses, new equipment, machinery and commercial vehicles.  All projects need to be completed by 31 March 2025.

The total funding of £567,054 has supported 31 businesses, which has supported overall project costs of over £1.2 million in the District.

The projects that have been delivered or are to be delivered in South Downs Ward are detailed below:

* Alfriston Woodland Cabins – holiday let business with 2 woodland cabins and 2 shepherds huts. The business applied for a grant of £15,000 to purchase an additional shepherds hut to increase capacity for staying visitors.  The business was turning away visitors due to lack of capacity.  The project has now been delivered and bookings are being made in the shepherds hut. The grant will help with increased business growth and increased productivity.

* Rathfinny Wine Estate – wine producer – Rathfinny applied for a grant of £18,847 to purchase 20 e-bikes for their visitors.  10 to be located at the Flint Barns for staying visitors and 10 at the tasting room for day visitors to use to explore the local area and visit other attractions.  Rathfinny are committed to reaching net-zero by 2030 and are keen to encourage visitors to use sustainable travel during their visit.  The project has been delivered and will support job creation, increased business growth and increased productivity and net zero.

1. **Sussex Police Rural Crime Team (Information)**

Since its inception in 2020, Sussex Police’s rural crime team (RCT) has worked to make positive inroads with the rural community across the county, seeking to provide a reassuring presence and dedicated point of contact.

The RCT has two units, one based in Heathfield, East Sussex and the other in Midhurst, West Sussex. Although based in these locations, each respective unit can be sent anywhere in Sussex. There is always RCT officers working between 8am-midnight.  The East Sussex unit currently has one Police Sergeant, six Constables and a few PCSOs.

Covering the whole county is a huge job for the rural crime team, most of their work takes the form of investigating rural crime reports and supporting their Police colleagues (e.g. response or neighbourhood policing). The RCT have a wealth of knowledge on specific countryside legislation that enables crimes to be dealt with effectively and robustly. The team also carry out pro-active engagement by attending country and agricultural shows to offer support and advice to the rural community.

The main message to remember is, not every crime in a rural area is a rural crime.

The main areas of business for Sussex Police’s rural crime team are:

**Agriculture**

* The most common crime is livestock worrying
* Support farmers after break-ins/theft of machinery and fuel, advise on future security of property
* Investigate damage caused by inappropriate use of quad bikes/off-road vehicles
* Support farms and countryside businesses when there are instances of activism or protests on their land (e.g. animal rights)

**Wildlife**

* Illegal hare coursing
* Poaching
* Crimes against protected species

**Heritage**

* Damage to the actual fabric of a listed or historic building (recent examples: Bronze Age burrows damaged, and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery being disturbed)
* Illegal metal detecting

**Equine**

* Thefts from working stables or equine centres
* Theft of horses themselves
* Instances of animal cruelty are dealt with in partnership with the RSPCA

RCT also supports agencies such as the Environment Agency and Local Authorities with environmental crimes such as instances of fly-tipping, illegal waste carriers and contamination of land or water courses.

There is a dedicated neighbourhood watch style tool called DISC that is available to countryside-based businesses only. It allows information sharing of suspicious activity and the reporting of incidents (much like the DISC system used for retail crime).

Rural crimes should be reported via the usual channels, either by calling 101 or online. Call 999 in an emergency. Crime reports for the attention of the RCT will be triaged on arrival and dealt with by officers as appropriate.

To send supplementary information to the RCT in support of a crime report, you can use the following email address: [ruralcrime.team@sussex.police.uk](mailto:ruralcrime.team@sussex.police.uk) **This email should not be used to report a crime.**

1. **Sports Infrastructure funding available to improve outdoor sports facilities**

Applications are invited for the Sports Infrastructure Fund programme recently launched by Wealden District Council to enhance and provide outdoor sports pitches and facilities throughout the district.

The council has committed £200,000 per year over a three-year period, to organisations via a grant funding programme, to support the delivery of recommendations in Wealden’s Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy. These recommendations have been agreed with sport governing bodies and Sport England. Funding can be used to improve amenities and pitches throughout the district.

Match funding is being made available from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money and will help enhance the quality, accessibility and protection of community-use sports facilities for generations to come.

Applications are being invited from local sports clubs, town and parish councils, schools and community organisations to support the delivery of a range of projects.

The outdoor sports that could benefit from the funding programme include football, rugby union, tennis, cricket, lawn bowls, hockey, netball and stoolball.

For further information on the funding programme, please go to [www.wealden.gov.uk/community-and-safety/information-on-grant-funding/sports-infrastructure-fund-2024-2027](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/community-and-safety/information-on-grant-funding/sports-infrastructure-fund-2024-2027).

To request an application pack, organisations should email their details and provide a short summary of the proposed project to : [sportsinfrastructurefund@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:sportsinfrastructurefund@wealden.gov.uk).

1. **Statement from the Leaders of East Sussex Local Authorities**

We are deeply disappointed that the government has agreed to cancel the elections.

We have made clear that we do not oppose devolution, but that this must be done with the consent of residents, businesses and partners. The government has ignored this.

Whilst we object to this decision, we will – as always- put the best interests of residents ahead of everything.

The services that the districts and borough councils provide are multiple and vary greatly even within East Sussex. We will work together to protect them.

We will do everything in our power to promote the vital importance of Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, and Wealden, ensuring that the services that matter most to our residents are not downgraded as part of any reorganisation.

At this time, most future governance arrangements and how we will arrive at them remain unclear. These important details will be confirmed over the coming months, and we will keep our residents up to date and fully informed.

1. **Wealden Citizens Advice receives additional Cost of Living contribution**

An additional contribution of £15,000 has been given to Wealden Citizens Advice from Wealden District Council’s Cost of Living reserves.

The Wealden-based charity received extra funding from the council for the winter of 2024-2025 to help residents with debt problems. Last year, the council also gave the charity £43,000 from the Cost of Living reserves for the 2023-2024 financial year.

The extra funding will help the organisation to obtain additional resource to ease pressure within the organisation and to support Cost of Living.

Between April 2023 – March 2024, Wealden Citizens Advice supported 1,281 clients with 4,270 issues relating to benefits and tax credits and 655 clients with 2,784 debt related issues.

The overall service supported and assisted their clients in achieving an income gain of £1,739,079, along with assisting clients with £723,077 of debts written off and a total of  £107,588 in reimbursements.

**David Greaves 17th February 2025**

**Appendix C -**

Extract from Cllr Greaves e-mail sent to Wealden D.C. Car Parking Team on 17th Feb. 2025:

“I have attended an Alfriston Parish Council meeting this evening and discovered that there is a  car park closure for the period 17th to 21st February 2025 for works of some sort to take place in the Dean Car Park.

I attach a copy of one of the three (I think)  notices that have been posted in the car park  -   I took this photograph at around  8.00 p.m.  this evening  (in the dark).

Parish Councillors mentioned this evening that there has apparently been a threat that any cars parked here during this week will be towed away  (but I did not see that warning on the signage),   and it sems that many  local residents  and indeed permit holders  (who pay for their space)   are not aware of the situation.

It seems that some vehicles are parked in their permit-holder’s  spaces  and their owners are in fact away and not able to move their cars.

I am sending you this e-mail because it would be grossly unfair for any residents who are not aware of the closure   (and indeed may not even be in the Country)  to be towed away or even receive penalty notices when it is clear that notification has been lacking in detail and clarity.    Presumably you will have contact and vehicle details for permit holders whose cars do need moving in order that work can be completed and to pursue this information should be the first line of approach.

Would you please notify the contractors and any Civil Enforcement Officers visiting Alfriston at this time that vehicles must not be towed away and Penalty Notices must not be issued because advance notification has been completely inadequate.

Many thanks, Regards, Cllr David Greaves, South Downs Ward”

**Appendix D - Rope Walk**

-----Original Message-----

From: Diana Kelly

Sent: 11 February 2025 12:57

To: [clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk)

Subject: Cars in Rope Walk

Dear Suzanna,

I would be very grateful if I could present this information to the parish council to clear up the village feeling that I have stopped cars using Rope Walk ‘because I own the land’

In 2023, there was a serious gas leak in the Twitten which put lives and property at risk. The gas people confirmed that cars were the main cause of this and gave me this letter. I gave Diana Montieth-Wilson a copy of this letter for council information,which she passed on to someone else. As far as I know, it was not read out or minuted at the council meeting, but a statement made that I said I owned the land.

Now that we are dealing with the cable people, it would be helpful to let the village know why I have put pots in the Twitten to stop any vehicles using it. And to have the letter from SGN on record so that the use of Rope Walk is secure.

Please give me a call if you have any questions. Thank you for your help in this matter.

All best wishes Diana

Diana Kelly Interiors,

Email from SGN:

