

NUTHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 29th June 2023,
at Copsale Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllr N Bryant (Chair), Cllr C Kenny (Vice Chair), Cllr W Bayley & Cllr D Livingstone
& after Co-option Cllr K McGovern, Cllr Court, Cllr Catterall & Cllr Oswell-Penton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Beccy Anderson, Parish Clerk and 20 members of the public.

224-23/24 APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY MEMBER

The Chair announced Cllr Dennis Livingstone had been appointed a temporary member of Nuthurst Parish Council by order of Horsham District Council on 22nd June 2023 under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972

225-23/24 CO-OPTION

1) The Chair invited Karen McGovern to speak after which the councillors voted unanimously to **approve** the co-option. Cllr McGovern signed a Declaration of Office and joined the meeting

2) The Chair invited Valerie Court to speak after which the councillors voted unanimously to **approve** the co-option. Cllr Court signed a Declaration of Office and joined the meeting.

3) The Chair invited Stuart Catterall to speak after which the councillors voted unanimously to **approve** the co-option. Cllr Catterall signed a Declaration of Office and joined the meeting.

4) The Chair invited Martin Oswell-Penton to speak after which the councillors voted unanimously to **approve** the co-option. Cllr Oswell-Penton signed a Declaration of Office and joined the meeting.

Following the Co-options, Cllr D Livingstone left the meeting, as his appointment was authorised to finish once co-option had been completed.

226-23/24 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **noted** there were no absences.

227-23/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest, as defined under the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Councils Code of Conduct, were made

228-23/24 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17th May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting,

229-23/24 PUBLIC SESSION

The Chairman invited questions from the public, reminding those in attendance that each question is limited to 2 minutes in accordance with Standing Order 3(g).

A member of the public spoke asking for a Carbon representative and it was confirmed it was on the agenda for an appointment of a Councillor to act a link councillor/representative for Barbon Busters.

A member of the public spoke regarding item 236-23/24 e) *To note the Clerk is currently compiling a report for Internal Audit, detailing financial irregularities that have taken place in the new financial year from 01/04/2023* asking if this followed transparency guidelines and stating it should have stated 'alleged' financial irregularities. Secondly, they raised item 240-23/24 CLERK'S PERFORMANCE asking if new councillors could comment on the Clerk's and this did not follow agreed policies and procedures and due process was not being followed.

A member of public spoke re item 236-23/24 above. They questioned this item stating it was unsubstantiated claim, damaging the Parish Council and those serving councillors and could lead to legal action and an error of judgement on behalf of the Clerk who should apologise.

A member of the public spoke regarding outstanding concerns regarding the playground asking if the Parish Council has a mandate from the whole Parish community to make any changes to the playground. They suggested the Parish Council carry a survey to identify the communities' opinions on the playground and, also asked if any changes would affect the ROSPA certificate and affect the insurance cover. If the survey identified no changes were wanted by the community would this bring an end to the matter.

A member of public spoke, expressing concern residents were still waiting for the Parish Council to consider their concerns regarding the new playground and waiting for new councillors to consider their concerns and any issues regarding insurance if the playground was altered.

230-23/24

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was **noted** the Chair did not have any announcements due to lack of information from the Clerk.

231-23/24

DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

Cllr Nigel Jupp (WSCC Councillor) introduced himself updated councillors and residents:- **Bridleways 1712 & 1799**, both closed for a while, are due to be repaired, following extreme weather damage. He will be in contact with the Rights of Way Officer to facilitate repairs. He informed the meeting there are volunteers who can help with maintenance to clear footpaths and to contact him for more information.

Highways Cllr Jupp updated residents regarding the programme to repair pot holes, and apologised for the time taken (24 weeks) to settle Claims for Pot Hole Damage.

Horsham Fire Station Cllr Jupp reported he visited the new Horsham Fire Station, (built at the cost of £21M) due to open the following week. He stated it was a new 'state of the art' facility, which included a Training Centre which will also be used by other Fires Station in West Sussex, East Sussex and Hampshire.

Cllr Dennis Livingstone (Ward Councillor for Nuthurst & Upper Beeding) introduced himself stating he is honoured to serve as their District Councillor and was looking forward to working with the Parish Council and residents to improve the Parish. He has been attending training courses, and is now on the HDC Planning Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Licencing Committee, and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee
Local Plan This is waiting to be finalised, which has resulted in the area being open to speculative development. He had attended a meeting with developers, where water neutrality and housing targets were discussed.

Planning Applications He spoke about the need for residents/developers to follow the correct planning procedures, rather than completing the works and then applying for retrospective permission.

Climate Emergency He reported that HDC had passed a motion to declare a Climate and Environment Emergency, and wants to support the community and the Parish Council to be involved to work with the local Carbon Busters Group and the HDC Climate Network.

He finished by stating he wanted to develop a good working relationship with the Parish Council.

232-23/24

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES FOR OTHER BODIES

a) It was **noted** that Cllr McGovern, Cllr Oswell-Penton and Cllr Court would become members of the Planning, Roads & Footpaths Committee also noting the Chair of the Council is also Chair of the Complaints Committee.

b) It was **noted** that Cllr Bayley volunteered to i) represent the Parish Council on the Horsham District Council Climate Action Network and ii) to act as Link Councillor to Nuthurst Parish Carbon Busters

c) It was **noted** that Cllr Court would be the Parish Council representative for WSALC and HALC. It was **noted** that Cllr Oswell-Penton would be the Parish Council representative for CAGNE.

233-23/24

REVIEW NUTHURST PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES Cllr Bryant

It was **noted** councillors were **unable** to approve the Nuthurst Parish Council Policies were not approved due to the newly co-opted Councillors needing more time to check the policies and be aware of any updates to the policies

234-23/24

PLANNING MATTERS

It was **noted** Application DC/23/1175 Mannings Heath Golf Club. The proposed use of the building for viticulture, specifically the production and storage of wine constitutes an agricultural practice (Certificate of Lawful Development Proposed) will be discussed at the Planning Committee meeting on Thursday 6th July 2023.

235-23/24

CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/DECISIONS (for noting only)

The Clerk distributed the Schedule of Training for all Councillors to consider and recommended the Full Day Face to Face Training and Planning Training for all Councillors.

236-23/24

FINANCE

a) Councillors **approved** the schedule of invoices for payment in June 2023.

b) Councillors **approved** the Internal Audit Report for 2022/2023

c) It was **noted** the 2022/2023 AGAR was not approved due to the newly co-opted Councillors needing more time to consider the AGAR report.

d) Councillors **reviewed** and **approved** the quotation for Internal Audit Services for 2023/2024, from Mulberry & Co, at the price quoted of £65 per hour + VAT fixed for a 3 year period.

e) It was **noted** the Clerk is currently compiling a report for Internal Audit, detailing financial irregularities that have taken place in the new financial year from 01/04/2023 which the Clerk confirmed would be submitted to the Internal Auditor now appointed. The Clerk was asked to apologise, as it was believed that it was not in the remit of her role, to identify any findings as 'financial irregularities'. The Clerk apologised as requested.

237-23/24

OPEN SPACES IN THE PARISH

- a) Councillors **reviewed** and **approved** the quotation for repairs to the playground fence from Horsham Fencing for the sum of £320 + VAT
- b) The Chair **updated** councillors he had carried out a councillor inspection 02/06/2023 and the report was with the Wicksteed after sales team awaiting a date to be scheduled to rectify all the faults reported.
- c) It was **noted** Cllr Bryant would continue with the monthly playground inspections
- d) It was **noted** any outstanding issues regarding the Playground installation will be scheduled for discussion at the next Parish Council meeting to allow any new councillors to review and contribute.
- e) It was **noted** the design of the new playground signage will be scheduled for discussion at the Parish Council meeting to allow any new councillors to review and contribute.
- f) It was **agreed** that discussion regarding the need to review the grass cutting arrangements for 2024 would be re-scheduled for the July 2023 agenda

238-23/24

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

It was **noted** that councillors could not approve the application for Nuthurst Parish Council to join the Local Government Pension Scheme due to newly appointed members being unable to make an informed decision as the any cost implication and the disputed status of the Clerk's employment contract

239-23/24

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the next meeting will be the Full Council Meeting to be held on 19th July 2023 at Mannings Heath Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm.

240-23/24

Discussed after excluding the public from the remainder of the meeting having regard to the nature of the business to be discussed.

CLERK'S PERFORMANCE - Councillors reviewed and discussed the issues raised by the Clerk of the Chairs comments on the Clerk's work and suitability to the role of Parish Clerk. IT was **agreed** the Clerk's performance would be reviewed by a Staffing Committee consisting of Cllr Court, Cllr Kenny and Cllr McGovern.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm.

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Chairman of the Parish Council

Date