

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

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MINUTES of the Ordinary Meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Monday 3rd October 2022 in the Village Hall, High Street, Fletching (7 – 8.33pm).

PRESENT: Councillors C Rothery (Chairman), D Greenish (Vice-Chairman), N Collum, R Hannay, K Minch, A Shaw and W Constantinou.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO)

Members of the Public in Attendance: 2

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Borton, D Kerwood and Councillor R Galley (District and ESCC Cllr)

22/185. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest RECEIVED in respect of items on the agenda, as required by the Members' Code of Conduct:

Minute 22/196 ii – Councillor Hannay as a member of the PCC.

In accordance with the FPC Code of Conduct, the councillors did not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter.

22/186. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 5th September 2022 were a correct record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

22/187. MATTERS ARISING

- i. *Piltdown Village Project*: The Clerk reported that Councillor Galley would be presenting the petition to reduce the speed limit to the ESCC Full Council on 11 October. It was noted that Wealden DC had received monies from the Prosperity Fund and were considering the options. A report would be submitted back to the Government by 30th November 2022.

Amanda Abrahams informed Councillors that the Piltdown Road Safety Committee (PRSC) and the Piltdown Residents' Association (PRA) would be holding a meet and greet to explain about the progress made to date with the campaign and compile a wish list of road safety measures.

The possibility of a Neighbourhood Plan was discussed that would sit alongside a vision for the Parish. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would contact the neighbouring parishes of Horsted Keynes and Newick to ascertain the cost, time and resources etc. that was required as well as contact Wealden DC to establish the process and how it would tie in with there not currently being a Local Plan.

- ii. *ESCC Highways Letter to Lead Member*: the Clerk had circulated a draft letter to members prior to the meeting. It was agreed that this be sent to the Lead Member.
- iii. *Grant application by Wealden CAB*: the Clerk reported that a further grant application had been received from the CAB, which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting, for funds towards a laptop for the new Uckfield manager. Councillors **AGREED** that a grant of £275 be awarded to the Wealden CAB.

22/188. REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

There was no report from Councillor Galley as he was not able to attend the meeting.

22/189. PILTDOWN VILLAGE PROJECT

The Clerk circulated a briefing note to Councillors with the agenda that set out the actions that had been taken since the last meeting.

22/190. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

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Updates were given by Councillors who attended the following external groups:

- i. *Community Safety Action Group*: the report from Cllr Minch of the CSAG meeting, circulated with the agenda was noted.
- ii. *Fletching Historical Project*: Rev David Knight reported that he was still waiting for a response from Ardingly College with regards to taking on the digitising of the information.
- iii. *Central West Parish Cluster*: It was noted that the meeting had been cancelled due to the period of national mourning and a briefing note circulated by Wealden DC in its place.

22/191. FLETCHING RECREATION GROUND COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the FRGC held on 21 September were noted. The Councillors expressed their thanks to John Shaw, the booking secretary and treasurer, for all the hard work and amazing job that he does in supporting the recreation ground committee.

22/192. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- i. *ESCC Urban Grass Cutting Options 2023*: the letter from the Contracts Management Group in respect of the urban grass cutting service for 2023 was circulated with the agenda. Councillors considered the three options being presented to them.

It was **AGREED** that Option 1 – Standard be approved, as in previous years, where two cuts over the course of the year would be carried out by ESCC at no cost to the parish council.

- ii. *Town and Parish Councillor Allowances 2023/24*: Councillors considered the request by the Wealden Independent Remuneration Panel circulated prior to the meeting and **AGREED** that they had no comments to make.

22/193. FINANCE AND HR

- i. The invoices and payments for October 2022 were **AUTHORISED** and the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation were noted.
- ii. *Home Office Allowance for Clerk*: Councillors considered the request made by the Clerk for using her home as an office. It was noted that this allowance was commonly paid to clerks where the Parish Council does not have a parish office and that HMRC allows a tax-free amount of up to £26pcm to be paid. It was noted that the payment of this allowance for 2022/23 backdated to 1st April 2022 could be accommodated within the existing salary budget. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk be paid a monthly allowance of £26 per month to be back dated to 1st April 2022.

Note: the Clerk left the meeting during the discussion of the above item.

- iii. *CIL funds and future projects*: the potential CIL funding that may be realised from recent planning approvals was noted. It was agreed that future projects be discussed once it had been ascertained whether CIL funding could be spent on developing a neighbourhood plan.
- iv. *Conclusion of the External Audit 2021-22*: Councillors received the conclusion of the 2021/22 external audit from PKF Littlejohn. It was noted that this had been published on the Council's website as required.

22/194. BURIAL GROUND

- i. There had been one requests made for an additional inscription on an existing monument which the Councillors **APPROVED**.
- ii. *Hard Surface path quotes*: The Clerk reported that she had contacted a company requesting a quote but a reply was awaited.
- iii. *Scattering Area and Tree Planting*: Councillor Hannay reported that the tree would be planted in late October and that no further information was available in respect of the possible scattering area.

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22/195. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING AND DRAINAGE

- i. *1 Quince Tree Cottages*: It was noted that Wealden DC had been contacted to see whether there was any action that could be taken in respect of the untidy land and old vehicles on the site. A response was awaited.
- ii. *Flitteridge Farm*: It was noted that a letter had been sent to the landowner by Wealden DC giving them 28 days to clear the land otherwise formal enforcement action would be taken.
- iii. *Moses Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown*: It was noted that the landowner had been advised to apply for retrospective planning permission for the entrance. Enforcement action was not going to be pursued as the entrance way had been covered over and was not in use.
- iv. *Bell Lane and Splaynes Green drainage/flooding*: Councillor Constantinou stated that he had met with ESCC and a report was awaited. It was noted that Councillor Galley had confirmed that he had spoken to ESCC about the matters and that they were dealing with it.

22/196. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED

It was RESOLVED to make the comments as set out after each application in respect of the following:

- i. **WD/2022/2203/F Denniker Farm Shop, Ruston Bridge Road, Fletching TN22 3SH**
Variation of Condition 6 of WD/2021/1409/F to move position of shop extension to allow mobility parking to stay in its current position.
The Parish Council agreed to support the application.
- ii. **WD/2022/2262/F St Andrew and St Mary's Church, Fletching TN22 3SP**
Installation of two balanced flues in the vestry roof, as part of a new gas boiler installation.
The Parish Council agreed to support the application
- iii. **WD/2022/2348/FA Land at Golf Club Lane, Piltdown TN22 3XB**
Variation of condition of WD/2017/0120/F to enable site to be used only by one user/occupier.
The Parish Council STRONGLY OBJECTS to this application. The permission already granted fully accords with the application originally made by the owner and the Design and Access Statement put forward in support of it. The proposal was for the housing of three carriages and stabling of two horses owned by the applicant. It was stated in support of the application that the stables would be privately owned, used and operated by the sole owner who was said to be very experienced equine owner and carriage driver. It was said in support of the application that "... the stabling is for the sole owner use of maintaining the well-being of the owner's carriage horses". This new application is wholly inconsistent with that.
- iv. **WD/2022/1637/MAE Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield**
Outline application for the erection of up to 424 no. residential dwellings. Provision of vehicular access from the A22, pedestrian and cycle access from Snatts Road. Full application for creation of a SANGS.
Fletching Parish Council STRONGLY OBJECTS to this planning application on the following grounds:
 1. *The Council is very concerned about the impact that the application would have on the local roads network. In particular Rocks Road and Snatts Road would see a marked increase in traffic due to the vehicular access to the proposed SANGS (Woodland Park) being located off Snatts Road. Both those roads are narrow country lanes and any increase in traffic would have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the area and give rise to significant road safety issues, particularly at the already dangerous junction of Rocks Road and Snatts Road.*

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Shortbridge Road would also see an increase in traffic movements as cars cut through from the A272 to the car park for the SANGS in Snatts Road. This is also a narrow twisting country road that was never designed to deal with the potential traffic volume that would arise if this application was approved. The increased traffic flow would also have a detrimental effect on the residents of Shortbridge and Piltdown.

2. *The close proximity of the new roundabout to Shortbridge Stream, which is an EU designated Salmonid and Cyprinid waterway supporting rare fish and eels from the Sargasso Sea, would result in a severe risk to the ecology of the area.*
3. *There are inadequate plans for sewerage and the potential inability to cope with run off from rainfall which would result in flooding and pollution into water courses including Shortbridge Stream.*
4. *The Wealden District Council 2019 SHELAA rejected any development on the land at Downlands Farm stating that it was an area of attractive and rural landscape on the fringes of Uckfield containing much ancient woodland which was not suitable for development. The Planning Inspector in 2009 also concluded that the site should never be built on. There has been no change to the area since then so those decisions remains valid.*
5. *The Council is also very concerned for the habitats, environment, ancient woodland and wildlife that currently occupies the unique Downlands Farm site and Lake Wood. The development would have a detrimental impact on the wildlife and biodiversity of the area and lead to degradation of species and habitat.*
6. *The Parish Council also supports, wholeheartedly, the objections raised by Uckfield Town Council in its comments on the application made at the Plans Committee on 26 September 2022.*

22/197. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS

Planning decisions RECEIVED from Wealden District Council since the last meeting:

Applications Approved

i. **WD/2018/0869/F Walk Wood Cottage, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3QU**

Retrospective application for a standing outdoor bath and outbuilding and the stationing of a shepherd's hut to create a 1 x 1 bedroom holiday let. (APPROVED – 7 September 2022)

ii. **WD/2021/2848/F Acorn Garage, Bell Lane, Splaynes Green, Fletching TN22 3TN**

Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide 5 no. dwellings, landscaping and car parking. (APPROVED – 16 September 2022)

iii. **WD/2022/0555/LB Clinton Lodge, High Street, Fletching TN22 3ST**

Removal and replacement of an area of lath and plaster to the west wall of a new first floor bathroom. (APPROVED – 6 September 2022)

iv. **WD/2022/0707/F Neva House, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XL**

Extension and alterations to existing building to create a 1 bed residential unit, to include alterations to roof and external staircase, and a cycle and refuse store and associated parking. (APPROVED – 22 September 2022)

Applications Refused: None since the last meeting

Applications withdrawn: None since the last meeting

22/198. PARISH IN BLOOM

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Councillor Minch reported that a Silver Gilt had been awarded to the Council in respect of the Parish in Bloom competition. Although this was the same result as 2021 it was noted that there had been a seven-point increase in the score.

22/199. FLAGPOLE

The Clerk reported that she was still awaiting to hear from the new contractor for an update on the project.

22/200. PLAQUES

- i. *Pump House*: Councillors **AGREED** the wording put forward by the Clerk for the plaque for the pump house.
- ii. *Jubilee Trees*: It was **AGREED** that the official Queen's Green Canopy plaque template be used for the Parish oak tree. The Clerk to seek quotes for a black granite plaque to match the existing golden jubilee tree plaque.

22/201. SPLAYNES GREEN PHONE BOX

The Clerk updated the Councillors on the cost of the replacement door and the works that would be required to install the door and re-paint the phone box. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk send Councillor Constantinou the details and that he would discuss the issue with Councillor Kerwood to agree an action plan.

22/202. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE

It was **AGREED** that the following articles be submitted by the Clerk for the next edition of the Parish Magazine:

- Parish in Bloom outcome
- Downlands Farm – Parish Council attendance at Uckfield Plans meeting and objection
- Thanks to John Shaw for his work for the FRGC
- Presentation of petition relating to speed limit reduction in Piltdown to ESCC Full Council

22/203. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that Councillors contact the Clerk with any items they wish to be considered at the next meeting.

22/204. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is due to be held on:

Monday 7th November 2022 at 7pm in the Village Hall.