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Ninfield Full Council Minutes 17th February 2022

Cllrs Present:

Chair K Williamson (KW); K Crittall (KC); G Pharo (GP); J Cheshire (JC); S Collins (SC), P Holland (PH), S Guard (SG)

In attendance: J Scarff Clerk, District Cllr R Cade (RC) and County cllr B Bowdler (BB) [part time](#), [left at 19:53](#) and 4 members of the public.

2510 KW welcomed everyone to the meeting.

To receive reports from the County and District Cllrs and any questions on these reports.

BB submitted a written County Council report, PD & RC submitted a written District Council report see appendix.

BB further reported that an abnormal load is due to be delivered to the Ninfield sub station 5th March. Officers will be returning to the offices at County Hall from 19th April. BB reported that the Planning inspectorate had dismissed the appeal for 40 houses at Land of Catsfield Road and that the WDC planning committee turned down an application for 700 houses in Willingdon, which is going to appeal.

RC added to the district council report that the household support fund which tries to help the most vulnerable people. RC stated that Parish Councils are the District Councils eyes and ear as far as trying to signpost people who are struggling. RC will try and help where he can and highlighted that WDC have distributed around £65m to businesses and individuals during the pandemic.

BB added that as a veteran he has the honour of being the armed forces champion and highlighted additional benefits available to anyone who has served in the forces.

KC commented to RC that she had noted that he and PD continue to visit the Manchester Rd building site and that it would be very useful for the Parish Council to receive an update on the visits especially as we are picking up lots of issues which we are also raising with ESCC Highways and have involved our MP. KC requested that RC update the clerk.

To receive reports from:

Schools

Ninfield C o E Primary School

The Chair of Governors reported that 20% of children have been off school, at any one time, with covid which has created challenges. The school have also got the builders in working while the children are at school. He has investigated why the school exterior lights are left on and reported that 2 of them are required for the CCTV and will see if there is a way to turn the others off. The police visited just before Christmas and would like to talk to the Parish Council and the Highways steward to see what can be done with the yellow markings. It can be raised at the next SLR meeting.

The school are conducting a litter pick 3rd March. Year 6 have been invited to go to the Manchester Road site to look at what is being done.

KC highlighted that she had spoken to contractors parking in Church Lane as one had driven on to the bank outside the recreation ground to park.

Head Start

Scott Fasciolo Barnes (SFB) introduced himself as the new executive head. He reported that

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covid had been challenging and since he started in November 2021 there has not been a full staff team in on any day. SFB asked if anyone would be interested in being a Governor at the school. The school is undertaking building work at the moment. The last OFSTED report was published just under 2 years ago and part of the new heads role is to try and improve on the last result (which was Good with outstanding features). The head wants the school to be involved in the community as much as possible.

Church

Paul Frostick had sent an update that the new boiler fitted.

Public Questions

Ten minutes are available for the Public to express a view or ask a question on **relevant matters on the following agenda.**

Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to stay and observe the rest of the meeting.

A resident highlighted that he was concerned that the ancient lime trees in Manchester Road were in need of pollarding. After a visit from the highways steward he had received a reply saying they did not need doing. The resident commented that their preservation relies on them being pollarded at regular intervals. BB commented that he would speak to the officer.

A resident asked about the noise devices that had been highlighted by Cllr Coleshill. It was explained that they were being tested elsewhere and Cllr Coleshill was going to do more research.

2511 **Apologies** and reasons for absence in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 S 85 (3).

Cllrs. J Cheshire & J Langley for personal reasons.

Apologies received from P Frostick and given for District Cllr P Doodes (PD).

2412 **Disclosure of Interests**

To receive any disclosure by Members of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of the interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Revised Code of Members Conduct.

There were no disclosure of interests.

2513 **Exclusion of the Public**

To exclude the public for a particular agenda item the following resolution must be passed. 'Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.'

There was no requirement to pass this resolution.

2514 **Minutes of previous meeting** to be agreed and signed as a true record

KC Proposed, SG seconded

Resolved The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council 17th February 2022 were agreed

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as a true record and signed by the chairman.

2515

Matters for discussion

- a) **To hear a request from the Bonfire Society to meet at Sparkes Pavilion and use the recreation ground for torch making and agree any actions required.**
The clerk has sent out a briefing document in advance.
Resolved that the Bonfire Society use Sparkes 15th May.
- b) **To hear a request from the Bonfire Society to use Sparkes Pavilion as their postal address and agree any actions required.**
The clerk has sent out a briefing document in advance.
The Bonfire Society were encouraged to speak to the Memorial Hall Committee.
- c) **To hear a proposal to install a CCTV camera at Sparkes Pavilion.**
The cllrs discussed the idea but were not in favour, there was no motion to take this forward.
There was a discussion about the school cctv being upgraded and whether there could be more engagement with youths. The chair of governors offered to check what the spec of their current CCTV first.
- d) **To Discuss the Queens Green Canopy for the Jubilee and the request from the Lords Lieutenant for the Chairman of the council to plant a tree 11th March 2022.**
There are free trees available from the Woodland Trust KC suggested talking to Muddy Boots. It was agreed that the chairman would plant a tree. SG suggested planting a permanent Christmas Tree. A resident offered to do some more research.
It was agreed that a tree should be planted at the Jubilee Garden site.
- e) **To hear an update on the neighbourhood plan and agree any actions required.**
To consider proposed recommendations for approval
The clerk reported that WDC have sent some feedback to our first draft. JC is looking at setting up a steering group meeting to go through the feedback and the senior planning policy officer has suggested planning a meeting when we have had time to do that.
The clerk reported that she had been told that NPC is not eligible for the second NHP grant.
- f) **To consider a response to the Street Naming Consultation associated with Manchester Road development and agree any actions required.**
The clerk explained that there were 4 names with suffixes required. We need to submit suffixes from the allowed list in order for them to be accepted and the names need to create a theme. KC put forward a suggestion linking country names for moons which links in with Moons Hill. The developers had contacted the school for suggestions. The cllrs had had previously discussed using Sir Gilbert Scott's name and had the required permission from the family. Resolved that the clerk put forward the following:
Gibbous Glade, Hunters Mount, Smugglers End, Harvest View, Poachers Way

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g) **To receive reports from Parish Councillors including those requiring actions.**

BB left the meeting 19:53

SG discussed the forthcoming Jubilee weekend. There are 4 days of events proposed following a meeting with societies in the village which will all be advertised including the beacon lighting as part of the national event.

KC reported from the latest WDC cluster meeting WDC are working on their draft plan to be published in the spring. They are awaiting information from central Govt. WDC are still lobbying Govt on the subject of reducing housing numbers. They are currently working on landscape and employment to be published in due course. Some of the SHEELA information is being held back while they await more information from central GOVT. When consultations start WDC are looking at holding some virtual events and have asked that Parish Councils help to ensure that residents look at the plan and respond to the consultation. KC asked at the cluster meeting where all the documents can be found as the website is not easy to navigate. KC has a link that she can send out, but if searching on the website its under Direction of Travel. KC also asked about enforcement and building control. WDC explained that there is a national problem with not having enough staff. The concern being that planning officers rely heavily on conditions in planning applications. Consequently, enforcement issues are being prioritised.

There was a discussion that its important to register all enforcement issues. Building control is a shared service across 4 district councils but most developers use the private sector for building control. KC shared that building control look at safety, not the quality of the build.

KC commented on the erosion of the bank in Church Lane and suggested that the council look at reinstating the bank. The village society were asked to have a look at it in the first instance. KC proposed that the bank is reinstated, SG seconded and all agreed.

Resolved that the bank is reinstated, and the village society are asked if it is a job they can undertake.

RC was asked about the issue with enforcement and who he would approach if there was an issue to be resolved. RC stated that it has not arisen through underfunding but is not a popular job and the people who do it don't feel they have the Powers. KW commented that at the Chairmans Forums she had attended she also raised the issue with Bob Standley who said he was aware of the problem.

KC reported that she had agreed with the wellbeing group that she would set up a dark night skies. KC commented that it would be great to get the schools involved.

KW reported on the Chairmans Forum from 8th February. There was a presentation from Sir John Morbick. The levelling up white paper has been issued and there is a summary as the document is over 300 pages long. The annual national pay rise for clerks is still under negotiation as 1.75% was rejected by the unions. Some chairmen have expressed sadness at the delay of re starting the SLR's. Complaints had been received about ESCC Highways. PKF Littlejohn are to increase their fees by 5% for the external audit which was not known when the precept was set. The cllr from Chiddingly reported that the algorithm that the Govt are using is unintelligible. There are lots of councils joining his group across Wealden and Rother.

The clerk reported that in the clerks forum Trevor Leggo reported that he had had

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complaints about ESCC Highways from 19 (out of 23) Rother councils. The clerk explained to the meeting that ESCC Highways is a contracted-out service to Costain in partnership with CH2M and the contract is due for renewal this coming summer. KC added that there are 3 companies shortlisted, which does not include Costain, to start in May 2023.

2516

Finance Matters

To receive the financial reports to 31st of January 2022 for noting.

The reports were noted.

To receive a report detailing the bank balances to 31st January 2022 for noting.

The bank balance at Unity Bank was £56,611.90 at the 31st January 2022.

To consider for approval the payment of invoices received.

Proposed KC, seconded PH

Payments on the Rialtas report were approved with the addition of the invoice for Rialtas for the annual software licence, which has been received since the payments were issued.

2517

Date of next meeting.

To note the date of the next meeting is Thursday 17th March 2022 at 7pm

2518

Correspondence – to note for possible inclusion on next agenda

The clerk has received an email on behalf of the Jubilee Committee to ask for a grant. KC asked that there is more detail about how much would be requested.

GP asked if the council could consider whether the bins could have lids fitted. The clerk explained that WDC had refused a previous request because of the cost.

KC commented that WDC are very good at collecting the bins.

SG had brought along the photo book that had been put together for the diamond Jubilee, including the letter to the Queen and the response back, if anyone is interesting in looking at it.

KW thanked RC for coming which was echoed by the cllrs and SG invited RC to all Jubilee events.

KW declared the meeting closed at 19:27

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Appendix.



East Sussex County Council Monthly update for - January 2022 Cllr Bob Bowdler – Wealden East Division

Children's Services

New Special Educational Needs and Disability information website launched

A new Local Offer website has been launched which provides a 'one stop shop' for information and resources aimed at supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in East Sussex.

The site brings together useful information about the range of services and support available across the county for children and young people aged 0-25, their families, and supporters. The modern and accessible website includes new illustrations and features such as audio readers for every line of text.

East Sussex County Council has designed the site in collaboration with parents, carers, and professionals. The site can be accessed at: <https://isend.eastsussex.gov.uk/>

Plans for SEND facility at Bexhill primary school

The county council's Lead Member for Education, Inclusion and SEND has agreed to a statutory consultation taking place with regard to a proposal to create a special education facility at All Saints CE Primary School in Sidley.

The facility would offer provision for up to 12 pupils with SEND. It would be the latest in a series of specialist facilities established by the council as it seeks to increase SEND places in light of a rise in children with neuro-diverse profiles, such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder and associated Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Speech, Language and Communication Needs, in the Rother area.

Initial consultations saw overwhelming support for the proposals and, following the statutory consultation, a final decision is expected to be made in April.

Holiday Activity & Food Project

We are happy to announce that this valuable project will continue during this half term and other school holidays during the year. It offers valuable activities (and parental respite) and nourishing food for vulnerable children in our community, and is scattered across the whole county.

Communities, Economy and Transport

Bidders shortlisted for £730m Highways contract

Three bidders have been shortlisted to provide highway maintenance and infrastructure services for East Sussex from May 2023.

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The county council has selected Ringway Jacobs, Balfour Beatty Living Places, and Colas to move to the next stage of the procurement process. The selected bidders have now been invited to submit detailed tenders about how they would deliver highway maintenance, improvement schemes and a range of other highways services.

The new £730million Highways Infrastructure Services contract will replace the council's current £300m seven-year contract with Costain and Jacobs. The new contract is likely to run for a maximum of 14 years – with an initial seven-year term and an option to extend by a further seven years subject to satisfactory performance.

The deadline for receipt of the detailed tenders is March 2022, with the announcement of the preferred tenderer to be made in September 2022.

Vital support for creative and digital industries

Hundreds of East Sussex businesses have received guidance and funding support from the South East Creatives business support programme, designed to help the creative, cultural, and digital sectors across the region.

The programme, set up by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's South East Creative Economy Network, has supported local creative and digital industries in East Sussex, Kent and Essex since its launch in 2018. Much of the funding and support has been delivered during the coronavirus pandemic, which has been one of the toughest periods for these businesses in living memory.

The programme has recently provided guidance to 159 businesses in East Sussex and awarded over £300,000 in grant funding across the county. The scheme has also helped create 18 new businesses and has seen 35 new products brought to the market.

Local businesses helped through the scheme include St Leonards Modern Goods, whose owner received mentoring support, and 18 Hours Events, who received a grant towards the cost of a new delivery van.

Governance Services

East Sussex Pension Fund invests in sustainable global equity portfolio

The East Sussex Pension Fund is investing £200m of its passive equities in the Osmosis Resource Efficient Ex-Fossil Fuels Strategy, as part of its ongoing commitment to rid its portfolio of fossil-fuel equities.

The portfolio has already achieved a carbon intensity reduction of 63% as of December 2021, as well as a reduction in water consumption of 67% and a reduction in waste generation of 61%, relative to the MSCI World Index.

Councillor Gerard Fox, chair of the East Sussex pension committee, said that while keeping fees low for its members by retaining passive equities, the committee felt this new investment met several key objectives for the pension fund.

Bob Bowdler

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Wealden District Councillors' Report to Ninfield Parish Council February 2022

Housing

An important service delivered by the Wealden Housing team is the provision of aids and adaptations to our Council tenants with long term health conditions and disabilities affecting their quality of life. We have installed over 900 major and minor aids and adaptations over the past 5 years at a cost to the Housing account of £1.4m. We like to take every opportunity of highlighting Wealden's involvement in the private rented sector and here too we manage the provision of aids and adaptations in private and Housing Association rented properties. This is funded by the Government's "Better Care" scheme. In this respect, during the last 5 years the Council's Housing team has also supervised the installation of £5.2m worth of aids and adaptations, which have helped to improve the lives of Wealden residents with disabilities.

We have had a number of Government directives insisting on reviewing policies relating to Council Housing tenant involvement. These are, in large part, as a result of the Grenfell Tower enquiry, which has strengthened the working relationship between the Housing Regulator and Ombudsman.

The advised changes and updates noticeably stress the importance of identifying and removing barriers to tenants expressing their views and concerns. This is complimented by having processes in place to record and monitor interactions and exchanges between the residents and the Housing team. Also, there must be transparent and detailed accountability by the Council and its responses, remedies and solutions to issues raised by tenants.

Benefits and Local Taxation

Monthly Update – 01/02/2022

Test & Trace Standard & Discretionary

Scheme will end on 31st March 2022.

Total Paid Out	479	£239,500
Discretionary	142	£71,000
Standard	337	£168,500

Total applications received to date	1099
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Month	Cases Paid
Oct-20	12
Nov-20	21
Dec-20	22

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Jan-21	73
Feb-21	21
Mar-21	4
Apr-21	3
May-21	0
Jun-21	9
Jul-21	55
Aug-21	26
Sep-21	30
Oct-21	20
Nov-21	30
Dec-21	47
Jan-22	106

January 2022 saw the highest number of claims paid since the start of the scheme in Oct 2020.

Household Support Fund

We received an initial grant of £125,400 from ESCC to provide assistance to those with energy / water arrears and food vouchers. A further grant of £90,000 was received in early January enabling the scheme to be re-opened.

Recipients had to be in receipt of a means tested benefits to qualify.

Awards were up to £250.00 for arrears and £100 per adult and £60 per child for food vouchers.

Scheme	Total £	# of awards made
Energy & Water	£ 47,914.04	213
Food	£ 165,060.00	698
Grand Total	£ 212,974.04	911

We have just over £2,400 remaining and expect the scheme to close tomorrow (Wednesday 2nd Feb).

Business Grants

Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant

Grant for businesses with a rateable value in the Hospitality, Leisure or Accommodation sectors.

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Applications Received	211
Applications Approved / Paid	148
Total Amount paid	£504,694
Waiting review	60

ARG Discretionary Fund

We have a discretionary grant amount of approx. £1.4m to spend by 31st March 2022. We have since received a further £363,317 as part of the Omicron funding.

There are currently 4 schemes;

- Omicron Top-up for Hospitality and Leisure - SUSPENDED
- Personal Care - CLOSED
- Gyms, Leisure Centres and Indoor Exercise Facilities
- Travel Industry

Application Received	244
Applications Paid / Approved	140
Total Amount Paid	£707,200
Waiting Review	101

The Personal Care scheme has now closed and the Top-up for Hospitality and Leisure has been suspended whilst we process the outstanding applications to ensure we have sufficient funds remaining.

The Gyms and Travel grants remain active as these are linked to the additional ARG money of £363,317.

Manchester Road

We continue to visit the Manchester Road site regularly and have built a very useful working relationship with the site manager.

Resident's issues and problems

From time to time residents of Ninfield will contact us for advice help and assistance. We are very happy to do all can to help, even if we are only able to signpost them to others who have more detailed information. This can be very time consuming and as you would expect, must remain confidential

Recent useful Press Releases

Rather than repeat the information contained in the Wealden Press releases, which would make our report too lengthy we list the recent ones of particular interest:

- [£300K support package for voluntary organisations announced by Wealden council](#)

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- **Council tax fraudster convicted**
- **Employability aid available for those aged 16-24 in Wealden**
- **Wealden limits council tax increase to 9p a week**
- **£300K support package for voluntary organisations announced by Wealden council**

Press releases are published on the Wealden website

The Great British Spring Clean

This year the Great British Spring Clean runs from 25th March until 10th April. As usual Wealden will have a limited number of rubbish bags and other equipment available on request on a first come basis. Arrangements can be made with the Street scene team to collect the spoils from an agreed location

Cllr Ray Cade and Cllr Pam Doodes