

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held on Tuesday 19th July 2022 at the Dunn Village Hall

PRESENT: Councillors Caroline Thompson, Andy Long, Steve Williamson, Charlie Saunders and Bruce Simpson

Also present: Jackie Cottrell – Parish Clerk
7 members of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Roy Iremonger – Family commitments

Chris Wells – Covid isolation – pre-op requirement

Buster Ansell – New councillor had not received agenda documentation

00547 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - NONE

ELECTION OF AN ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Caroline Thompson was nominated to be the new Environment Chairman.

00548 Cllr Caroline Thompson was duly declared Chairman of the Environment Committee

ELECTION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMAN

There was one nomination for vice-chairman which was proposed and seconded without challenge.

00549 Cllr Bruce Simpson was duly declared Vice-Chairman of the Environment Committee

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee meeting held on the 24th March 2022 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

00550 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Environment Committee held on the 24th March 2022

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Four members of the public spoke in support of the ESCC verge trial stating they believed sight lines had not been effected and new wildlife had emerged as a result. Two of these public speakers felt the grass on The Green had been cut too short and requested clarification on what was

being done to tackle members of the public cutting their own verges. Another suggestion was to leave the edges of The Green wild.

Another MOP highlighted to the PC that some sight lines had been effected especially entry and exit points to private properties.

The Chairman referred the MOP to the ESCC website where a cutting request and relevant photos could be submitted.

A further MOP spoke in support of the speed roundels but suggested the speed should be 20mph rather than 30mph. The MOP was strongly against the idea of a speed indication device. He also supported the idea of a bike rack for The Green and recommended Councillors consider a similar model to the one outside the Co-op in Heathfield.

Lastly a member of WAW updated the committee by stating a survey had been completed in May and had been sent to ESCC.

A question of who owns the grass at the top of Kingsley Hill was raised. The Clerk to seek clarification but the PC usually complete one or two cuts a year on this land.

The Chairman thanked the WAW member for her work on the survey.

TO REVIEW THE CUTTING OF RUSHLAKE GREEN VILLAGE GREEN

7.1. To review any changes to the cut length of the grass

The Chairman reported she had received a number of comments from members of the public concerned The Green was being cut too short which was causing damage and death to plant life. It had been suggested to allow for a longer and less frequent cut.

A detailed discussion took place. Councillors agreed the survey on The Green which had been commissioned by WAW had showed positive results for The Green as it was. The Green was not consistent in its entirety, the southern end being much drier and firmer.

The grass cutting contract would be renewed shortly which would allow the PC to be clearer and more precise when a new contractor was agreed. Consideration would be given to allowing the contractor to make a prudent decision whether or not to mow without a resulting financial penalty.

The Committee also agreed biodiversity was not the only consideration when discussing the length of cut for The Green.

It was **AGREED** a meeting would be held with Orchard Landscapes, Cllr Long and the Chairman of the Environment Committee to consider a way forward. Any recommendations would be taken to Full Council for approval.

TO REVIEW THE ESCC VERGE TRIAL

The Chairman informed the committee a number of surveys had been carried out by WAW at least every two months which had been submitted to ESCC who were very pleased with the results.

The Chairman reported there had been inappropriate mowing, sometimes in large sections. She encouraged cases to be reported and to include photographic evidence with any submissions. ESCC would then write to the land owner informing them of their policy.

Some of the WAW signage had already been erected with positive results.

The Clerk to ensure the link for reporting inappropriate mowing was in a more prominent position on the website.

Several Councillors raised the following concerns:

- The vote to join the ESCC verge trial this year was marginal with some Councillors stating they would not be supportive in re-joining next year
- Sightlines were a serious issue
- A one cut policy could create additional hazards
- The results of the trial should be published so the success could be measured
- The PC must ensure they consider the wider view of the parish before re-joining the trial next year
- ESCC were benefiting financially by reducing their number of cuts
- The existing county wide problem regarding road safety for vulnerable road users
- Existing management issues regarding land owners not cutting back their trees and hedges compounding the problems with sightlines and vulnerable road users

The Clerk to ensure she updates the Council with any information regarding future verge trials as a matter of urgency.

TO NOTE THE INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGET FOR REPAIR WORK

£2,000 available from the 2022/23 PC budget

£1,140 available from the 2021/22 PC budget

NOTED

SLR

10.1 Clerk update including SLR action points

The minutes of the SLR meeting held on the 26th April had now been circulated to all Members. The Clerk had highlighted the following points:

- No priority was given to councillors when reporting matters to Highways
- Non compliance of road signage should be reported to Highways with photographic documentation
- The Iwood Dip repair works were booked in for the 5-9th September
- The Clerk was organising a meeting with Cllr Long and the Highways steward to do a site visit of overgrown hedges
- The missing Bodle Street sign had been replaced
- The hedges on the s-bends before Cowbeech were overgrown and Highways had written to the land owners
- Highways would be cutting back the vegetation outside Little Redpale Barn by the end of August
- The Clerk reported she still had to action her action points from the minutes
- Inaccuracy of the speed data survey results – A Councillor had provided further evidence of discrepancies. The Clerk to clarify with Ian Johnson

10.2. Review of the SLR log

The Committee noted the Clerk chases any items of concern regularly. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would send an additional email to any councillor correspondence with Highways on a separate day to encourage Highways to take action in a timely manner and to add weight to the complaint. The Clerk to also email the Council encouraging them to report any issues directly to Highways at any time with photographic evidence with directions to the link on the PC website.

10.3. To consider the idea of roundels for Rushlake Green and Bodle Street Green

The idea was supported by the Committee. It alleviated some of the concerns of the parishioners.

The Clerk to confirm if the roundels would be free of charge.

00551 **RESOLVED** WPC to move forward with the project subject to a specific proposal on location and to confirm there would be no cost.

10.4. To consider the idea of a mobile speed indication device

The committee discussed the idea of a SID and considered the potential costs which were £2,500 for each SID plus the additional costs of any poles and licences required.

The Clerk was instructed to send the speed survey results to the new councillors.

The committee **AGREED** that the speed survey data must be confirmed as accurate by ESCC. The PC could then re-review the data whilst considering the aspirations of the parishioners. The current evidence suggested the problem of speeding traffic was minor. The Clerk was instructed to compare data collected by other parishes with similar results and any actions taken as a consequence.

It was noted that the SIDs would only cover some areas within the parish so its benefit would be limited.

It was **AGREED** the cost of each SID was expensive and that cost needed to be taken into careful consideration when it was noted how many other pressing priorities the PC also had to consider.

ASSET REGISTER

12.1. To review the asset register as a result of the recent asset register check

The Clerk to add the Ian Price gate and the flag pole to the asset register.

The Clerk to contact Johnathon Austin regarding the ownership of the peter croft memorial fencing.

The Clerk to make any further adjustments required after completion of the minutes of the asset register check meeting.

11.2. To consider and agree any items which need repair work

It was **AGREED** Cllr Long would purchase oil to be used on any wooden street furniture that required it.

OSBORNE HOUSE CLOCK QUOTATIONS

The Clerk had approached all the companies based locally who were listed on the BHI website. Each company had been given the same quote specification.

The Committee reviewed the quotes.

It was **AGREED** to recommend to Full Council a one-off basic service of £1,244.00 with Twiates & Reed but not an ongoing annual service.

The quoted price was available until September 2022.

- 00552** **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to use the services of Twiates & Reed to complete a basic service of the Osborne House clock costing £1,244.

OSBORNE HOUSE CAR PARK REPAIR QUOTES

The item was deferred to the next meeting as the Clerk had only been able to obtain one quote for the work.

RUSHLAKE GREEN NOTICE BOARD REFURBISHMENT QUOTES

The item was deferred to the next meeting to enable the Clerk to obtain more quotes for the work.

TO CONSIDER THE INSTALLATION OF A BIKE RACK FOR RUSHLAKE GREEN VILLAGE GREEN

The Committee **AGREED** in principle to the idea.

It was **AGREED** that once the Clerk had completed work on the PC's six priorities the item would be re-visited.

Members noted the importance of encouraging a greener transport solution. They also noted there might be an extra bin requirement.

BT POLES / INFRASTRUCTURE ON PARISH COUNCIL LAND

The Committee **AGREED** it would be a resource intensive item with a limited reward. The item would be deferred until the Clerk had more time.

NEW BENCHES FOR RUSHLAKE GREEN VILLAGE GREEN UPDATE

The item had been agendered at the July Full Council meeting where it been agreed that CIL funds would be used to purchase two benches up to a maximum spend of £2,000 and £100 on delivery. The benches would be replaced like for like. They would not be bolted to the ground so installation costs would not be required. The Clerk to present the bench specification at a future Environment meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 27th September – TBC

The meeting closed at 20.10