

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Brightling Parish Council held on Monday 13th May 2019 at 7.30 p.m. at Brightling Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Caroline Croft, Daniel Lambert-Gorwyn, Judy Petty and Andrew Wedmore (Chair)

Parish Councillors absent: Cllr Jane Oxenford and Cllr Rodderick Wrenn

District / County Councillors present: RDC Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green, ESCC Cllr John Barnes

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Clerk to the Council
2 members of the public

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Andrew Wedmore was proposed by Cllr Croft and seconded by Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn. There being no other nominations Cllr Wedmore was declared Chairman.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Caroline Croft was proposed by Cllr Wedmore and seconded by Cllr Petty. There being no other nominations Cllr Croft was declared Vice Chairman.

3. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllrs Wedmore and Croft signed their respective Acceptances of Office.

4. Apologies for absence

Received from Cllrs Oxenford and Wrenn

5. Disclosures of interest

Cllr Croft declared an interest in item 16.1 as she lives nearby.

6. Additional agenda items

The Chairman approved the addition of the following agenda items due notice of which has been given to the Clerk on the day before the meeting by 12 noon:
Item 14.2.3 additional payments to authorise: Keith Robertson's Audit Invoice £143.15; Zurich Insurance Premium £257.60

7. Adoption of Minutes

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 11th March 2019 as a true and correct record.

8. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

This item was carried forward to the next meeting.

9. Asset Register of Council Property

The asset register showing the value of assets as £3172 was passed around and approved.

10. Appointment of members to serve on external bodies

- 10.1 RALC – Cllr Petty offered to serve as representative of the Parish Council on this association of local councils.

11. Dates and times of future meetings

Members adopted the following dates for meetings for the remainder of the council year:

- 2019: 15 July, 30 September, 18 November.
2020: 13 January, 9 March, 11 May (AGM).

12. Date of the Annual Assembly

Members set the date for 2020 as Monday 6th April.

13. Open Forum

- 13.1 Adrian Moore from Parker Dann talked about the latest developments at Woods Corner (Ref: RR/2019/845/P) regarding the retention of an extraction system. The acoustic box around it has been designed with the input of Greg Mimms from South Downs Environmental Consultants & RDC. Previous concerns on the noise of the extraction system have all been taken into account with new design and officers from Environmental Health will be checking regularly.

PC Response: The Council are happy to support the application conditional on follow-up monitoring taking place.

- 13.2 ESCC Cllr John Barnes reported on the following matters:

Financial engineering has been successful and has delivered savings of £7m which will be rolled into this current financial year where £17-£18m of economies are required. There is still a promise of a Comprehensive Spending Review, but in the current climate no date has been set. The business rates pilot produced good results saving £4m. Cllr Barnes also reported that he is now on the Scrutiny Committee where he may be able to exert more pressure.

- 13.3 RDC Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green reported on the following matters:

Recent election results meant that the Conservatives lost control of Rother. The Independents & the Liberal Democrats are likely to form a coalition and Doug Oliver will be the probable leader.

The Core Strategy is under revision and is likely to be put out for consultation in September 2019. This could be an opportunity to tighten up protection of the AONB. However, the new ruling coalition on RDC is likely to push for fewer homes in Bexhill, more in the rural villages. The problem is that 80% of Rother district falls in an AONB, and planners are under pressure from Central Government to build more homes. Smaller developers building a smaller amount of homes would be the ideal working partnership. Cllr Wedmore suggested that more council houses could be built on land owned or compulsorily purchased by the council. Cllr Barnes added that the Community Land Trust has worked in neighbouring villages where small parishes get together and build some houses which are reserved for people with a local connection.

14. RFO Report and Governance

- 14.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

- 14.1.1 Members reviewed the comments made by the auditor to address risk management of assets, and add it to the asset register.

- 14.1.2 The Annual Governance Statement was read aloud by the Chairman after which on approval by the Councillors the statement was adopted and signed.
- 14.1.3 The Accounting Statement was tabled, having been previously circulated, and was duly approved and signed.
- 14.1.4 The Clerk confirmed that the Council is still exempt from the need to submit the AGAR to the external auditor, as gross income and expenditure are less than £25k. The meeting authorised the Chairman to sign the Certificate of Exemption.
- 14.2 RFO Report
 - 14.2.1 The RFO tabled a schedule of receipts and payments for March 2019, the final month of the fiscal year and members approved it.
 - 14.2.2 The RFO tabled the bank reconciliation to the end of March 2019 and the Chairman advised that he has been on line to the bank and can verify the balances as correct.
 - 14.2.3 The following payments were approved:
 - 14.2.3.1 Annual Assembly refreshments – Champagne & Caviar - £37.50 (retrospective)
 - 14.2.3.2 Annual subscriptions to NALC and ESALC Ltd - £118.16;
 - 14.2.3.3 Keith Robertson's Audit Invoice - £143.15
 - 14.2.3.4 Zurich Insurance Premium - £257.60
 - 14.2.4 The RFO tabled the end of year statement of income and expenditure against budget. The annual accounts were adopted.
 - 14.2.5 The RFO reported on the national pay award for parish clerks which, on the motion of the Chairman, members resolved to adopt. With effect from 1st April 2019 the National Pay Award set the salary of clerks on salary point 7 in the scale LC1 (the Brightling clerk's contract of employment pay scale) as £19,554 pa, £10.16 per hour. The clerk's contract is for 30 hours per month making the monthly gross pay £304.80.
- 14.3 Governance
 - 14.3.1 Members reviewed the Annual Assembly on 8th April 2019 and it was deemed satisfactory. Attendance was slightly lower than last year, and it was proposed by Cllr Croft that in future the Chairman could read aloud a précis of the annual reports submitted by the various organisations of the village so that those attending were made aware of events that had occurred and how they'd been received. The Clerk also confirmed that the annual reports submitted for the meeting would be published on the website very shortly.

15. Community and Business Development

- 15.1 Nothing to report
- 15.2 Nothing to report
- 15.3 Other Utilities
 - 15.3.1 The recent meeting with SE Water was well attended and a useful exercise now that works have begun, although road closures aren't fully operational yet.
 - 15.3.2 The Chairman had posted a recent update on the website concerning the power outages that effect the parish, and the fact that the main underlying fault has hopefully been remedied.

16. Planning Matters

- It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Petty that in future a special meeting would be called to discuss an application that fell outside of the regular Parish Council meetings, or an extension in the time allowed to comment on an application would be requested in order to allow all councillors to meet and discuss applications.
- 16.1 RR/2019/704/P - Proposed farmhouse Acorn Farm, Mountfield Lane, Mountfield TN32 5LD
Although this falls outside the parish, the Council had been asked to comment on this application. After discussion the response from the Council was agreed upon as follows:
The Parish Council will object on the grounds that the applicant hasn't demonstrated viability or a need for this building and the proposed farmhouse would damage an area of A.O.N.B.

16.2 RR/2019/508/P Construction of a tool store and shelter (Part Retrospective) Woods behind Darwell Hill - Netherfield, Battle TN3 3QL

Again this application falls just outside the parish boundaries, but after discussion the Parish Council response to this application was as follows:

The Parish Council object to this application on the grounds that a tool store and shelter is not justified and damages the area of A.O.N.B

16.3 RR/2019/600/P BRIGHTLING DEL Filands, Brightling Road, Brightling TN32 5HD
New drainpipe connection from septic tank to Inspection Chamber in field.

No comment

16.4 RR/2019/790/FN BRIGHTLING DEL Giffords Farm, Battle Road, Brightling TN21 9LH
Replacement agricultural building. **This notification is for information only.**

No comment

17. Highways Matters

17.1 Finger posts

The Clerk reported on Charles Everett's report of the Hollingrove fingerpost which has some cracked paint and a significant crack down one side. The Chairman proposed that Doug Andrews be asked to carry out a survey of all 8 fingerposts in the Parish and submit a condition report & estimate of any works required.

17.2 Strengthening Local Relationships

The next SLR meeting is scheduled for 11th June. Cllr Petty agreed to contact the previous Councillor who had taken responsibility for liaison with ESCC about matters for discussion at SLR meetings. The Clerk agreed to review progress and also contact the Customer Services Manager about sending a council representative to the meeting to discuss broadband.

17.3 Road Names

The Clerk confirmed that the approved map of street names had been passed on to RSSN who confirmed receipt on 29th April and that it has been passed to the RSSN Officer for consideration.

18. Training - No matters.

19. Correspondence received

19.1 The chairman read out an email from the Beard's that he had received thanking the Parish Council for all their hard work.

20. Empty Agenda Item

21. Parish Councillors' Forum

21.1 Individual Parish Councillor responsibilities were decided upon as follows:

Cllr Croft – Crime, Police Relationships, Anti-Social Behaviour; Defibrillators; Planning; Refuse Collection

Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn – Signposts; Trees; Utilities

Cllr Oxenford – Phone Box; Village Hall; Welcome Packs

Cllr Petty – Footpaths & Rights of Way; Hedges overhanging highways; Potholes, Road Surface & Drainage Problems

Cllr Wedmore – Broadband; Website

22. Circulation Folder

None

23. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

None

24. Next meetings

- 24.1.1 Meetings of the parish council will be in Brightling Village Hall at 7.30pm.
- 24.1.2 The following are the remaining dates for council meetings in the current council year:
2019: 15 July, 30 September, 18 November.
2020: 13 January, 9 March, (6 April Annual Assembly), 11 May (AGM)

..... Signed (Chairman) Date