

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Brightling Parish Council held on  
Wednesday 8th July 2020 at 7.30 p.m. via Zoom video conference

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*The meeting was being held under the terms of the following Statutory Instrument: SI 2020/392 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020*

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

Parish Councillors absent: Cllr Rodderick Wrenn

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

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Clerk to the Council  
1 member of the public

**1. Apologies for absence**

None

**2. Disclosures of interest**

None

**3. Additional agenda items**

None

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 11th May 2020 as a true and correct record.

**5. Open Forum**

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

The De La Warr pavilion received a sizeable loan from RDC as it has lost a considerable amount of revenue since closing in March. The Blackfriars development is moving forward with the recent cabinet meeting agreeing to progress the compulsory purchase order to enable the construction of the necessary spine road. The 1066 Walk from Bexhill to Battle has been re-vamped with various tourist attractions including some excellent wooden sculptures.

ESCC Cllr John Barnes reported on the following matters:

The Local Plan is still a work in progress. Cllr Barnes is seeking to clarify the position on household projections. Of the two projections, the government favour the 2014 report with a higher household projection of up to 300,000 houses compared with 2016 or 2018 figures which would be lower for Rother, and approximately a third lower across the South East. 82%

of Rother is designated AONB so still a high figure. On finances, the government has given ESCC £26 million but there will be a deficit of approximately £17 million, and whilst there are some reserves to fall back on, the council may have to revert to core statutory functions. The business rates holiday due to coronavirus means the main source of council income has vanished.

## 6. Development site at Netherfield

Cllr Croft reported that a couple of residents had asked if the parish council was going to comment on the development of a site at Netherfield. Cllr Kirby-Green was asked if she could add anything further. She advised that she was aware of a lot of local upset over the development. However now there was an application which would go through the usual planning process. She felt that as there was a large amount of opposition to the proposal by local residents and Battle Town Council any comments from BPC wouldn't necessarily add anything as it was outside the parish of Brightling. Cllr Mower added that looking online, there are many objections regarding the site being in an AONB, and next to ancient woodland. Various comments made by Forestry Commission experts and others counter the claims made in the application. Cllr Wedmore proposed the motion that the Clerk submit comments online on behalf of the council regarding the planning application "to object on the grounds that the application is outside any designated development area, will damage the AONB and is not in accordance with RDC's planning policy". The motion was seconded by Cllr Croft and approved by all members.

## 7. RFO Report and Governance

### 7.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

7.1.1 The Clerk read out the statements on the Annual Governance Statement which all members agreed upon and the statement was duly approved and signed.

7.1.2 The accounting statement was approved and signed by the Chairman.

7.1.3 The parish council continues to meet the criteria to submit a Certificate of Exemption and this was also signed. The Clerk will submit the certificate in line with the audit procedure and publish all items on the website.

### 7.2 RFO Report

7.2.1 The RFO had previously circulated the internal auditor's report following the audit held remotely on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

7.2.2 The RFO had previously circulated the bank reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and the Chairman advised that he had checked the online bank that day and verified the balances were correct as stated.

7.2.3 The RFO had previously circulated the Income and Expenditure statement for the first quarter to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

### 7.3 Receipts and Payments

7.3.1 The RFO had previously circulated the schedule of receipts and payments for May and June 2020 and members approved it.

7.3.2 The following payments were approved:

7.3.2.1 Internal Audit invoice – Keith Robertson - £136.00

7.3.2.2 Akismet invoice - £22.50 (retrospective)

7.3.3.3 The salary of the clerk for the next 12 months was approved by members. NALC has not issued the Pay Award scale for the current financial year, so there is no change to the current pay for salary point 7 in scale LC1 - £18,870 pa equating to £10.16 p/hr for 30 hours per month.

#### 7.4 Governance

7.4.1 In Cllr Wrenn's absence the Clerk agreed to send him a copy of the Register of Members' Interests for completion and updating on the website.

### 8. Grass cutting Programme

Cllr Wedmore reported that several residents had expressed upset at the verge cutting that was carried out in May just as many wildflowers were in their prime. To protect against this in the future, verges need to be designated as "wildlife verges" and then they can only be cut between the months of September and February. There is a procedure to follow in order to take back control of verge cutting, which require some research, and a local resident has offered to carry out a survey of Fontridge Lane, Perrymans and Brickyard Lane. Road safety must also be considered especially at junctions and bends. Cllr Wedmore will report further at the next council meeting in September.

### 9. Community and Business Development

#### 9.1 Broadband

Cllr Wedmore had previously circulated a report via email about broadband (see village website for details). Nothing further to report at present.

#### 9.2 Crime, Anti-Social behaviour & Police relationships

Nothing further to report since the last meeting.

#### 9.3 Defibrillators

Nothing to report – the Chairman suggested that a 3<sup>rd</sup> defibrillator could be a consideration for future procurement due to the sprawling nature of the village.

#### 9.4 Footpaths & Bridleways

A wooden bridge in Darwell had been temporarily closed to horse-riders but has now re-opened.

#### 9.5 Highways, Hedges & Potholes

Cllr Petty reported that jet-patching had been taking place to repair potholes in the parish 'on the move'. At the recent SLR meeting, Highways reported that they had carried out repairs to blocked drains at Oxley's Green (Jack Fullers) but the resident there didn't feel that sufficient work had been done. The sinkhole in Penhurst Lane has had a temporary fix but will require a road closure and engineering work to repair it properly – there is no time frame yet for this. The Clerk and Cllr Petty will continue to exert pressure on Highways for updates & progress. Cllr Wedmore reported that a new website *one.network* gives a detailed map of planned roadworks.

#### 9.6 Phone Box

Cllr Oxenford reported that a young resident had volunteered to help with the painting and that the project was progressing further. Cllr Wedmore suggested an update to that effect be submitted to The Messenger together with the planned next stages.

#### 9.7 Trees

The Tree Warden, Doug Edworthy, praised the suggested text about tree planting in the proposed environmental strategy currently being drafted. He also reported that a resident of Dallington had secured funding for the creation of new woodlands and native tree planting in the area. They are therefore looking for landowners who will agree to planting on their land (with nil expenditure) although the trees should be visible by the public from a nearby road, or footpath. Further information to follow.

#### 9.8 Utilities

The Clerk had previously circulated a recent email from UK Power Networks explaining how things were progressing with regard to the many outages in the area. The work is ongoing, and Cllr Wedmore suggested inviting the representative from UK Power Networks to a future parish council meeting for an update.

#### 9.9 Refuse Collection

Nothing to report.

#### 9.10 Village Hall

Cllr Oxenford reported that the village hall committee were meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> August to discuss re-opening the village hall and the hygiene measures that would be required. She will report further at the September meeting, which may or may not take place in the village hall.

### 9.11 Website

Cllr Wedmore reported that after successful reports from other Clerks who have migrated their websites to Rother for hosting, he has asked them to proceed with the migration of Brightling's website. There should not be any noticeable difference but moving forward there will be a considerable cost-saving.

### 9.12 Welcome Packs

Cllr Oxenford stated that none had been issued, although a new family were due to be moving to the village in mid-July.

## 10. Planning Matters

### RR/2020/1055/P and RR/2020/1056/L – Becket House, Brightling TN32 5HH

Re-building of wall on the roadside and building a new stone wall down the side of the driveway.

The Council supported this application and the Clerk will submit this support online.

## 11. Training

None

## 12. Correspondence

12.1 Email from UK Power Networks (previously circulated).

12.2 Rother's consultation on a new model code of conduct – the Clerk was asked to submit the necessary comments on behalf of the council.

## 13. Parish Councillors' Forum

13.1 Emergency Plan – Cllrs Croft & Petty had updated the details from a previous emergency plan, and there are still sufficient volunteers in the parish to help with 4x4 vehicles, first aid etc. The Clerk will circulate the finished document to all members for approval before publication on the website.

13.2 Rother's Empty Homes Consultation - the Clerk was asked to submit comments on behalf of the council that were supportive of this initiative, despite not being wholly applicable to Brightling.

## 14. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

- Village website
- Environment strategy

## 15. Future meetings

15.1 Meetings of the parish council will be in Brightling Village Hall at 7.30pm or via Zoom dependent on government advice.

15.2 The following are the remaining dates for council meetings in the current council year:

2020: 9<sup>th</sup> September, 11<sup>th</sup> November.

2021: 13<sup>th</sup> January, 10<sup>th</sup> March, (14<sup>th</sup> April Annual Assembly), 12<sup>th</sup> May (AGM)

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Signed (Chairman)

Date .....