

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Brightling Parish Council held on
Monday 13th January 2020 at 7.30 p.m. at Brightling Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Daniel Lambert-Gorwyn, Jane Oxenford, Judy Petty, Caroline Croft & Andrew Wedmore (Chair),
Parish Councillors absent: Cllr Dianne Mower, Rodderick Wrenn
In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Clerk to the Council
1 member of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Cllrs John Barnes, Eleanor Kirby-Green, Dianne Mower

2. Disclosures of interest

None

3. Additional agenda items – moved to Item 9 on the agenda (Planning)

3.1 Planning

3.1.1 RR/2019/2525/P – Park Pale Meadow

3.1.2 RR/2019/1682/P – Edlins Farm, Mountfield

3.2 Giffords Farm – alleged land contamination – moved to item 8.2 (anti-social behaviour)

4. Minutes

4.1 The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 18th November 2019 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

5. Open Forum

5.1 Unfortunately neither the County Councillor nor District Councillor could be present so their reports were read out as follows:

Cllr John Barnes, ESCC: There is nothing really to report from County beyond the inevitability that we shall raise the maximum council tax rate that is permitted short of a referendum – that I think will be confirmed as 5%. I have yet to hear the final figure for one offs from Government, but if it is as I expect, we shall almost certainly be able to reprofile some of the cuts and put a little more into capital spend (probably on highways).

You are aware of the latest position on drainage at the Jack Fuller junction (see item 8.5) and the work to be done in Brightling itself. I have also mentioned to Cllr Petty the way in which problems with traffic are occurring in Willingford Lane despite the 3.5 ton restriction, which Burwash have raised with me. There is no obvious solution as additional signage might undermine the restriction. Reporting on Operation Crackdown may have some impact.

Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green, RDC: It looks as though the proposal will be to raise a Band D council tax by £5. There will still be a £2m short fall which will be funded from reserves. The new waste contract is costing the council a lot more money than the previous one.

Parish Councils may now address planning meetings should they wish to. How the governance review for Bexhill will proceed has not been decided. I have not had any update from Andrea Ingram regarding the Park Pale application to vary the planning conditions.

5.2 Members of the Public commented as follows:

- a) Power cuts – far too many of them. The Clerk confirmed that they are hoping to get a representative from UK Power Networks to speak at the next meeting in March. Meanwhile the Chairman advised that keeping a record of power cuts was useful as all data gathered could be presented when requesting an improved service.
- b) Highways – a 6 ft deep sink hole has appeared on the edge of the verge in Penhurst Lane. It has been reported both verbally & online the previous week, but no reply yet. The Clerk & Cllr Petty offered to follow up on this.
- c) Some members of the public believe that someone maybe living permanently in Darwell Woods, and a local property may be breaking the terms of their planning conditions regarding light pollution. The Clerk was asked to communicate with the enforcement officer in the event of any breaches of planning permissions.

The Chairman thanked the member of the public for bringing these matters to the Council's attention and then they left the meeting.

6. Finance and Governance

6.1 RFO Report

- 6.1.1 Members had earlier received by email the bank reconciliation for the third quarter to the 31st December 2019. The Chairman confirmed that he had logged on to the bank account and verified the totals as stated.
- 6.1.2 Members received the income and expenditure report against budget for the third quarter of the year ending 31st December.
- 6.1.3 As discussed at the previous meeting, it was agreed to increase the precept by the September's CPI inflation rate which was 1.7%. The RFO stated that the precept for 2020/'21 should be increased to £7,454 – an increase of £79 equating to £0.39 per average Band D property in the parish. Members agreed and the budget was proposed by Cllr Wedmore and seconded by Cllr Croft. The Clerk duly signed the Precept form for submission to Rother District Council.

6.2 Receipts and Payments

- 6.2.1 Members approved the following payment:

ICO Direct Debit mandate - £40 reduced to £35 for setting up DD mandate. This will be taken in January.

6.3 Governance

6.3.1 Standing Orders – The Clerk had had difficulty producing the letterheaded version of the approved Standing Orders for the meeting. This item was therefore carried forward to the next meeting.

7. Rother's budget consultation

Rother District Council asked for comments on it's budget proposals. Members had looked at the details and made the following comments: the majority of items are useful – the Parish Council felt that promoting tourism was an area where the council could cut back & the Clerk was asked to submit this comment online.

8. Community and Business Development

8.1 Broadband

Cllr Wedmore reported that there was no real change to the situation. Some deliveries under Contract 3 have been made according to the latest update on the website but the remainder are still in a state of limbo as before.

8.2 Crime, anti-social behaviour & police relationships

Cllr Croft reported that she had received a letter from a member of the parish about the land at Giffords Farm. The top field is heavily contaminated with construction waste (old fragmented fiber board with gloss paint, possibly lead, pieces of what looked like asbestos board, and plastic bottles and bags etc), that have obviously been buried / ploughed in and these are starting to surface in the rain. This land is agricultural, has farm subsidies attached to it and is closely grazed. At the time of viewing it was grazed with sheep, so potential contaminants will not only be contaminating the land and water table and river run off, but also the food chain. Cllr Croft had recommended that DEFRA be contacted and they had quickly replied to confirm that they would look into this as a matter of urgency as a potential hazard to cross-contamination of the food chain. The Chairman thanked Cllr Croft for her advice to the member of the public.

8.3 Defibrillators

Nothing to report

8.4 Footpaths & bridleways

Nothing to report except that the Chairman reminded the Clerk to write to the Rights of Way officer soon in order to keep the refurbishment of the bridleway Battle 1 uppermost on the list as budget allocation time approaches.

8.5 Highways, hedges & potholes

Cllr Petty reported on the recent SLR meeting as follows:

A new highways steward has been appointed. The line painting outside Becket House is due to be done this week (weather permitting) and the cat's eyes and other repairs on or before 28th Feb.

The flooding at Mr Meakin's property at Oxley's Green had been investigated last week and 2 distinct problems were found: hopefully progress has been made, although one is more complicated to resolve, and requires escalation.

The potholes outside Brightling Park, roadside erosion from Twelve Oaks towards Cackle St & the drains that appear to be overdue clearing were all reported. Cllr Croft commented that the flooding at Stacy's Corner has been bad since ditching on the right hand side (going from The Avenue towards Stacy's Corner) no longer takes place. Cllr Wedmore said that the efforts being made meant that there were some encouraging results.

The grit bin requirement raised by the owner of Becket House was discussed and there wasn't a collective opinion on it's location or efficacy, together with a dislike for the bright yellow, un-eco friendly material. The Council decided to wait until the line painting and other safety measures had been carried out & more information gathered on alternative materials before making a decision.

8.6 Phone Box

Cllr Oxenford said that the winter weather is not appropriate for painting the phone box but hopefully the project will move on in the Spring.

8.7 Refuse Collection

Nothing to report.

8.8 Signposts

All fingerposts are currently in good order.

8.9 Trees

Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn reported that Doug Edowrthy the Tree Warden had written to the Parish Council to request funding for tree-planting materials for the Black Poplar whips that had been donated by Wakehurst Place. Deer proofing and stakes are required before the trees are planted in the Spring. Cllr Wedmore proposed that funding be approved provided the trees are planted on land where members of the public can see the trees. Cllr Oxenford seconded this proposal. The Clerk will arrange for the amount (up to £321 as approved) to be paid. Cllr Petty also reported that at the recent RALC meeting the Woodland Trust and an organisation called I Dig were offering free trees to communities for planting. Cllr Oxenford asked for that to be discussed further at the next meeting and that Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn could identify some potential sites.

8.10 Utilities

The Clerk restated that a representative from UK Power Networks would hopefully be able to attend the next meeting in March to discuss the numerous power cuts in the area.

8.11 Village Hall

Nothing to report.

8.12 Website

Cllr Wedmore has been in contact with Rother District Council about hosting the village website and he will report further at the next meeting.

8.13 Welcome Packs

Nothing to report.

8.14 Street Naming

Cllr Wedmore reported that Rother Street Naming department had sent the wrong letters to residents in Hollingrove Hill & Lane and muddled the two up. The corrected letter (Version 2) was duly re-sent and the return date for 'votes' is 3rd February.

9. Planning Matters

9.1 Existing applications – members noted progress and outcomes of those tabled at a previous meeting.

9.1.1 Mountfield Park Farm, Mountfield Lane, Mountfield TN32 5LD Ref: RR/2019/2134/P

Erection of a stable. **Status: Planning permission granted.**

9.1.2 Fernhill, New House Farm, Brightling TN32 5EY Ref: RR/2019/2338/P

Addition of front entrance porch. **Status: Planning permission granted.**

9.1.3 Doves Barn, Oxleys Green, Brightling TN32 5HD Ref: RR/2019/2338/P

First floor extension to garage to create guest accommodation.

Status: Planning permission approved conditional.

9.1.4 Bank Cottage, Cackle Street, Brightling TN32 5HZ Ref: RR/2019/2358/P

Extension and alterations to dwelling plus new attached garage and associated ground works. **Status: Planning permission approved conditional.**

9.2 New Applications/Matters (item 3.1.1 & 3.1.2 moved to this item on the agenda)

9.2.1 – Edlins Farm, Mountfield

The Council reported that the applicant has appealed the refusal of planning permission and although there are no new comments to add, the Clerk was asked to re-submit the objections directly to the appeal officer.

9.2.2 – Park Pale Meadow

Cllr Wedmore reported that despite the objections made previously permission had been granted by the Council with 2 extra conditions: i) the permission was personal to the applicant and ii) if use (as a stable) ceased, then the building had to be demolished. The applicant has now made a new planning request to remove these two conditions. Rother's legal services department are examining whether the planning department acted legally in imposing these conditions & a response has yet to be made (see RDC Councillor's report item 5.1 last paragraph).

Cllr Wedmore proposed that the Council enter an objection to the removal of the conditions as they were included in the permission being granted reluctantly given the many objections as the benefits to the applicant outweighed the damage to the AONB. However, this will no longer be the case if these conditions are removed. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary comments online.

9.3 Breaches and Enforcement

8.3.1 Ref: BRI/2013/487

Land at Den's Wood, Kent Lane, Brightling

Construction of stable and additional works. Status: No further action required – planning permission granted.

10. Highways Matters

10.1 Recent RALC Meeting

Cllr Petty had attended the RALC meeting on 8th January and had the following to report:

Other parishes had mentioned the damage done to roads by utility companies. There is going to be a draft environmental strategy published on 25th Feb which parishes will be asked to comment upon. There was still much discussion on speeding. Also, how many parishes have an emergency plan? Cllr Oxenford said that we did have one, but it probably ought to be updated.

11. Training

None planned

12. Correspondence received

None

13. Parish Councillors' Forum

Cllr Oxenford said that the village flower show has been moved to August 1st this year.

The Clerk was asked to communicate with the enforcement officer regarding an alleged access that appears to have been created without planning permission in the parish.

14. Circulation Folder

Letter from Gatwick Airport – the Clerk will scan and email it to Councillors.

15. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

15.1 Eucalyptus trees

15.2 Tree planting sites

15.3 Rother's Parish Conference in May '20 on Climate Change – ideas to be put forward

15.4 Alternative RFO

15.5 Village emergency plan

16. Future meetings

16.1 Meetings of the parish council will be in Brightling Village Hall at 7.30pm on a Monday.

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

2020: 9 March, (6 April Annual Assembly), 11 May (AGM)

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Signed (Chairman)

Date