

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Brightling Parish Council held on
Wednesday 10th November 2021 at 7.30 p.m. at Brightling Village Hall**

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

Parish Councillors absent: Cllr Jane Oxenford

District / County

Councillors present: RDC Cllr John Barnes and ESCC Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Clerk to the Council & the Tree Warden, Doug Edworthy

1. Apologies for absence
Received from Cllr Jane Oxenford.
2. Disclosures of interest
Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn re Item 12.1.3 - the planning application in question is for his own property and Cllr Andrew Wedmore re Item 12.1.5 as a holiday cottage in the parish represents potential competition. Both councillors withdrew from any discussions about the respective agenda items.
3. Additional agenda items
There were no further agenda items that had not already been included on the agenda.
4. Adoption of Minutes
The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 8th September 2021 and the Special Meeting on Tuesday 5th October as true and correct record.
5. Open Forum
 - 5.1 Cllr Kirby-Green read from a report previously submitted to the Clerk with an update from ESCC. This is attached as a separate document.

Cllr Barnes confirmed that the planning appeal at Netherfield Hill had been dismissed. The Planning Department is making headway with the backlog of applications. The new appointments as Head of Planning and Head of Place & Climate Change are looking to streamline the department and improve communications. There are still staffing issues, however. Cllr Wedmore asked if there is a Conservation Officer, and Cllr Barnes explained that this role is currently being covered part-time.
6. The Tree Warden, Doug Edworthy, explained the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) initiative for the Platinum Jubilee and that he had been asked by the Parish Council to advise on the best species to plant, the location and any other requirements. In terms of climate change, his recommendation is for a broad-leaved variety and the best of these would be a sweet chestnut tree. Some members of the

public are currently propagating some chestnuts gathered from the local area with the aim of nurturing a strong enough sapling to be planted next Autumn. The location was previously agreed upon as the triangle of grass by Brightling needle where an oak tree was planted for the Golden Jubilee. The Tree Warden further confirmed that a metal tree protector had been donated by some residents who moved away from Brightling.

7. Finance and Governance

7.1 RFO Report

7.1.1 The bank reconciliation to 31st October had been previously circulated and the Chairman confirmed that having checked online, the balances were correct as stated.

7.1.2 The schedule of receipts & payments for September & October had been circulated for information.

7.1.3 The Meeting Papers previously circulated detailed the following payments which were approved for payment:

7.1.3.1 First Aid Training Course - £45 (retrospectively paid on 23rd September)

7.1.3.2 ESALC Rural Planning Training - £72 (retrospectively paid on 12th October)

7.1.3.3 Jon Avery's invoice for churchyard mowing - £360 (incl VAT)

7.1.4 Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn proposed the approval of Section 137 grants of £55 each to the following recipients and this was seconded by Cllr Croft:

7.1.4.1 St Michael's Hospice

7.1.4.2 Rother's Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB)

7.1.4.3 Sussex Air Ambulance

7.1.4.4 RNLI

7.1.4.5 Victim Support

7.1.4.6 Rother Rural Trust

7.1.4.7 Battle Food Bank

Action: The Clerk will make the necessary payments online.

7.1.5 Budget 22/23

7.1.5.1 The Clerk had previously circulated to all councillors the first draft of the budget for 2022/'23. She explained the notes and the application of the September 2021 CPI figure of 3.1% as the suggested increase to the precept. With no unexpected demands on income, there would be a small surplus of approximately £100 for the next financial year. There were no questions from any councillors, and the Clerk confirmed that she would finalise the budget for approval at the January meeting.

7.1.5.2 The Clerk then explained that a new auditor was required for the year-end audit as Keith Robertson is retiring and having carried out some research, she suggested Mulberry & Co, who are recommended by many other local parishes. Cllr Wedmore proposed the appointment of Mulberry & Co as the new auditors, and this was seconded by Cllr Petty.

Action: The Clerk will organise the necessary letter of appointment in readiness for the audit next May.

- 7.2 The Clerk then updated the Council regarding the councillor vacancy. 14 working days publicising the vacancy had expired on 1st November, and as no electors had requested an election, the Council can now move to co-option. One expression of interest had been received so far, and the Clerk confirmed that an article would appear in the December issue of The Messenger and on the website to further advertise the vacancy. The slightly extended deadline of 10th December would allow for publication of the parish magazine. She then suggested mid-December for interviews, with the new member being approved and appointed in the January meeting. Members approved of this timetable.

Action: The Clerk will submit the necessary article and deal with any applications arising.

8. Highways

Cllr Petty updated Council regarding the drains at Jack Fullers, where despite road closures and significant works being carried out, Mr Meakin had again experienced flooding in a recent downpour. Contractors had arrived to carry out further works in the week beginning 25th October. It was unclear whether even further works were planned. The Highways Customer Service department will provide an update following a drainage team meeting tomorrow (11th November).

Similarly, at Doctor's Farm, the drainage contractors had jetted and cleared drains further up Netherfield Hill and the main surveyor had made recommendations for works to increase the existing drain to a double weir drain and, on the opposite side of the road, a drain to have a bigger chamber capacity. He was also going to report a crack in the middle of the bridge. Again, an update is pending the draining meeting taking place on 11th November.

9. 20mph Campaign

Cllr Wedmore provided a summary of the information that had previously been circulated regarding the request to support the county-wide 20mph campaign from Burwash's Quiet Lanes group. He proposed the following comments:

Brightling Parish Council supports the "20's Plenty for East Sussex campaign"; it calls on East Sussex County Council to implement 20mph in the centre of Brightling and other minor roads in the parish; it will write to East Sussex County Council to request 20mph speed limits on streets throughout East Sussex where people live, work, shop, play or learn with 30mph as the exception on those roads, where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allows a higher limit.

These comments were seconded by Cllr Croft and unanimously agreed upon.

Action: Clerk to write to ESCC & inform Burwash Quiet Lanes group of decision.

10. Grass-cutting Programme for 2022

BPC is required to confirm the number of cuts provided by ESCC by the end of the year. The least number of cuts is two (Option 1), although the current wildflower verge trial meant no summer cuts. It was unclear in Cllr Oxenford's absence if the trial is due to continue or what feedback had been received. Cllr Croft preferred two cuts as the verges became very overgrown with ferns and

brambles and it looked very untidy and was unsafe. Cllr Petty agreed. After discussion, Option 1 was agreed upon, but the Clerk was asked to find out if there could be flexibility mid-year depending on growing conditions.

Action: The Clerk will confirm Option 1 but ask the question of maintaining no summer cuts or if there is flexibility mid-year and if there are any results from the county-wide wildflower verge trial.

11. RALC Meeting

Cllr Petty had attended the recent RALC meeting in October. Following the last meeting, and the request for information about issues with Highways, 16 Parish Councils had replied with details of the lack of communication. As a result, Trevor Leggo was due to have a meeting with Clare Dowding. Cllr Kirby-Green asked for a copy of Cllr Petty's unanswered email to be sent to her to chase.

Furthermore, the Quiet Lanes initiative was proposed as an agenda item at the next RALC meeting. A very recent update from the Burwash group stated that Willingford Lane would have new signage to the effect that it is a "Narrow road with passing places" provided by ESCC.

12. Planning Matters

12.1.1 RR/2021/2199/P at Giffords Farm, Battle Road, Brightling TN21 9LH - *Proposed garden building to provide home office/studio ancillary to dwelling.*

The following comments had been previously circulated and after discussion, proposed by Cllr Wedmore and seconded by Cllr Petty. All members were in favour.

Brightling Parish council does not in principle object to the erection of a garden building; however we object to this particular design, in particular the design of the roof with combination of hip and glazed gable, which is not traditional and is not in keeping with the need to preserve the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and the curtilage of a listed building.

However if RDC are minded to grant planning permission, then we would request the following conditions.

1. No external lighting, in order to support the "dark skies" policy
2. A condition that the building never be sold off separately, enforced through a section 32 agreement.
3. Planning permission should not be granted until satisfactory details of heating and energy use have been supplied, to conform with Rother's policy SRM1: Towards a Low Carbon future. This policy should apply in full since it is a new building.

12.1.2 RR/2021/2200/P (& associated listed building consent RR/2021/2201/L) at Giffords Farm, Battle Road, Brightling TN21 9LH - *Proposed single storey extension to enlarge the kitchen and dining area.* The following comments proposed by Cllr Wedmore were discussed and seconded by Cllr Mower and unanimously agreed upon for submission.

Brightling Parish Council does not in principle object to the extension of the existing building; however, we object to this design, in particular the attempt to extend the existing external walls in a straight line. It would be much better if the new work was set back slightly from the existing, making a clearer and neater break between old and new.

12.1.3 RR/2021/2517/P (& associated listed building consent RR/2021/2518/L) at Prinkle View, Battle Road, Brightling TN32 5JA – *Proposed removal of lobby to rear of existing building and erection of single storey extension to rear of building and conversion of roof space to bedroom.*

BPC had no objection to this application.

12.1.4 RR/2021/2183/P (& listed building consent RR/2021/2184/L) at Little Worge Farm, Willingford Lane, Brightling TN32 5HN - *Proposed new single door and window opening and external paving to Little Worge Barn Annexe out-building.*

BPC had no objection to this application.

12.1.5 RR/2021/2509/P also located at Little Worge Farm, Brightling TN32 5HN

Proposed demolition of part of agricultural barn and erection of holiday cottage.

After discussion, the following wording was proposed by Cllr Mower and seconded by Cllr Petty. Other members all agreed and Cllr Wedmore abstained from discussions having withdrawn due to a personal interest.

BPC objects to this application on the grounds of design and proposed materials. The design impacts an area of AONB and the UPC materials should be timber not UPVC for all joinery and windows.

However, if RDC are minded to grant planning permission, then we would request the following conditions:

1. No external lighting in order to support the "dark skies" policy.
2. A condition that the building never be sold off separately, enforced through a Section 32 agreement.
3. Planning permission should not be granted until satisfactory details of heating and energy use have been supplied, to conform with Rother's policy SRM1: Towards a Low Carbon Future.

12.1.6 RR/2021/1880/P at 5, Longhouses, Hollingrove Lane, Brightling TN32 5HT – *Proposed erection of a detached garden room.* Cllr Wedmore proposed the following comments regarding this application, and this was seconded by Cllr Croft. All members agreed upon the following comments:

Brightling Parish Council does not object in principle to the building, however, we oppose the application in its current form on the following grounds: its impact on the High Weald AONB, the proposed use of UPC for windows and doors - joinery and windows should be timber not UPVC and the inclusion of a shower room in a garden room.

However, if RDC are minded to approve the application, we would request the following conditions:

1. No external lighting, in order to support the "dark skies" policy.
2. Planning permission should not be granted until satisfactory details of heating and energy use have been supplied, to conform with Rother's policy SRM1: Towards a Low Carbon Future. This policy should apply in full as it is a new building.
3. A condition that the building never be sold off separately, enforced through a section 32 agreement.

12.2 Decision Notices – For information

12.2.1 RR/2021/1741/P - Birch Farm, Cackle Street, Brightling TN32 5HY

Permission granted with conditions for construction of single storey side extension.

12.2.2 RR/2021/1818/P - Brown's Oak Cottage, Brickyard Lane

Permission granted with conditions for construction of single storey oak framed kitchen extension to side.

12.2.3 RR/2021/1431/P - Perch Hill Cottage, Willingford Lane

Permission granted for conversion of garage into ancillary studio accommodation.

13. CEE Bill

Cllr Wedmore summarised the aim of the bill which is backed by 118 MPs and 103 Local Authorities to ensure the government takes practical steps to meet climate targets. Cllr Petty asked how it differed from the Environment Bill, and Cllr Wedmore replied that the CEE is more specific on ecological and environment issues – the Environment Bill largely replaces the EU regulations post Brexit. The following resolution was proposed, and Cllr Mower seconded the motion. All members resolved to adopt the following:

Brightling Parish Council

- (i) believes that there is a climate and ecological emergency
- (ii) urges the government to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill
- (iii) will write to local media informing them of this decision
- (iv) will write an open letter to Huw Merriman M.P. (shared with our residents through local and social media) urging them to sign up to support the Bill, or thanking them for doing so;
- (v) Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support.

Action: The Clerk will write the required letters on behalf of BPC.

14. Rother's Infrastructure Delivery Plan

A detailed questionnaire had been received from Rother DC requesting responses to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The most relevant subject for Brightling was the superfast broadband although the target of 24Mbps is already out of date and should detail full-fibre broadband instead. Cllr Wedmore proposed that the Clerk be asked to respond to the questionnaire to this effect, and other members agreed with this proposal.

Action: Clerk to respond to the questionnaire on behalf of BPC.

15. Community and Business Development

15.1 Broadband

Cllr Wedmore circulated a report with an update on broadband which is attached as a separate document to these minutes.

15.2 Crime, anti-social behaviour & police relationships

Cllr Croft stated that there hadn't been a recent meeting with the PCSO but from recent reports there is a slight increase in thefts from sheds and outbuildings with the dark evenings, but no other significant crime in the area.

15.3 Defibrillators - nothing to report.

15.4 Environment Policy & Bio-Diversity – nothing further to report (see item 13)

15.5 Footpaths & Bridleways

Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn confirmed that the footpath (known as Brightling 23 / Dallington 13b) over the bridge in the woods by Brightling Park has been closed for safety reasons and will remain so until further investigations by Historic England have been carried out.

15.6 Highways, hedges & potholes – Road patching has taken place outside the gates to Brightling Park.

15.7 Messenger Magazine

Cllrs Petty confirmed that details of the CEE Bill, the councillor vacancy and the 20mph campaign would be submitted for the December issue of The Messenger.

15.8 Phone Box

The Clerk confirmed that she was making enquiries with BT about the power supply to the phone box which had recently been knocked off its base and needs to be disconnected before being re-positioned. She was waiting for a response. Cllr Wedmore suggested that its refurbishment could be completed as a Platinum Jubilee project and that perhaps some new volunteers could be found to speed up progress.

15.9 Trees

The Clerk had received confirmation from the Forestry Commission (FC) that the felling licence regarding the eucalyptus and Norway Maple had now been complied with when the site was visited in July. Cllr Wedmore stated that the trees in question had not been felled but cut down to a lower height and were now sprouting vigorously. He suggested that another letter be sent to the FC with photographs taken from the road and that a request be made for a site visit.

Action: Clerk to write to the FC

15.10 Utilities – nothing to report.

15.11 Refuse Collection – nothing to report.

15.12 Village Hall

Cllr Petty reported that the village hall committee has agreed to install broadband and that hire of the hall will continue to be free of charge for another year for community activities Private hirers will revert to paying fees in the new year.

15.13 Website

Cllr Wedmore gave an update regarding the purchase of the domain name and that there is a minimum charge of \$199. He therefore requested an increased budget of £200, and Council agreed to this.

Action: The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements to purchase the domain name through the appropriate channels.

15.14 Welcome Packs – Cllr Oxenford was absent.

16. Training

Cllrs Mower and Petty to attend ESALC Councillor Training on 17th November.

17. Correspondence

17.1 An email from the Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee had been previously circulated.

18. Parish Councillors' Forum

Cllr Petty asked if Brightling should be considering a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Kirby-Green felt that with no housing targets and being predominantly in an AONB it wasn't necessary. Cllr Barnes added that it would be better to put energies into the Local Plan and have aspirations for an Action Plan.

19. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

To re-visit the 5-year Action Plan for Brightling.

20. Future Meetings

Cllr Wedmore proposed that it may be useful to include additional Planning Meetings in the months when there is not an ordinary meeting of the parish council. It would purely be for any time-sensitive planning applications. He suggested the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm in line with the ordinary meetings and asked councillors to note 15th December and 9th February at 7.30pm for the additional dates in the remainder of the council's year.

20.1 The next meeting of the parish council will be in Brightling Village Hall at 7.30pm.

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

2022: 12th January, 9th March, (6th April Annual Assembly), 11th May (AGM)

..... Signed (Chairman)

Date