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**Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held virtually on Zoom on  
Tuesday, 4 May 2021 at 7.30 p.m.**

**Present:** WPC Cllrs. C. Dixon (Chairman), W. Noel, P. Williams, M. Batchelor, J. Pragnell,  
R. Noel, D. Austin and L. Fricker.  
S. Mamoany (Clerk)

**Others Present:** 3 members of the public

*Cllr. Dixon informed Councillors that the meeting was being recorded for administrative purposes, and the recording will be deleted once the Minutes have been approved.*

**2021-247. Appointment of the Chairman**

**It was RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr. Dixon as Chairman. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by Cllr. Dixon; due to the meeting being held remotely this will be posted to the Clerk for signature.

**2021-248. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr. M. Crocker

**2021-249. Minutes of the meeting held on the 22 April 2021**

Some minor amendments were made to the minutes. Cllr. R. Noel wished to clarify his comment regarding the planning application at Woodmancote Parish Hall; noting if the application was approved by the delegated planning officer; it would then be passed to the Planning Committee to make the final decision. The minutes were **RESOLVED** by the Council and duly signed by Cllr. Dixon.

**2021-250. Actions from previous Minutes**

The Clerk has chased up Balfour Beatty in regards to the SID pole installation date.

The application has been started to Historic England in regards to Woodmancote Parish Hall. Cllr. Batchelor has uploaded information onto the system and will work with the Clerk to complete the application.

No update was available on the Community Highways Scheme Application.

WSCC Highways have recommended a sign company to the Clerk in order to obtain a quote for the missing 'thank you' signs on the Blackstone gateways.

The road subsidence on Blackstone Lane has been reported again via Love West Sussex, the work is scheduled for completion, but no date has been provided.

#### **2021-251. Public Participation**

A member of the public commented that the agenda did not state 'Annual' meeting of the Council. The Clerk responded that this was an error. Comments were made regarding the Council's spending and that this was higher than the precept but this was not mentioned in previous minutes although it had been discussed. The matter of the valuation report on Blackstone playing fields was raised and the Chairman advised this would be discussed at a future meeting.

#### **2021-252. Declarations of Interest from Members in respect of any items in the Agenda**

Cllr. Dixon noted that he owns the property adjacent to the planning application noted on item 256.1.

#### **2021-253. Appointment of Vice Chairman**

**It was RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr. Batchelor as Vice Chairman. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by Cllr. Batchelor; due to the meeting being held remotely this will be posted to the Clerk for signature.

#### **2021-254. Appointment of:**

**It was RESOLVED** to appoint the following representatives:

##### **254.1. HALC representative**

Cllr. Prangnell and Cllr. Batchelor

##### **254.2. WSALC representative**

Subject to decision on agenda item 15.2 Cllr. Dixon

##### **254.3. Blackstone Playing Fields representatives**

Cllr. W. Noel - it was noted that Cllr. Williams will remain as a resident.

##### **254.4. South Downs National Park Authority**

Cllr. R. Noel

##### **254.5. Any other roles.**

Speed Indicator Device (SID) representatives - Cllr. Prangnell, Cllr. R. Noel and Cllr. Austin.

#### **2021-255. Report from Horsham District Council**

Cllr. R. Noel reported as follows:

- The full Council will meet on the 9 June 2021 to consider the Local Plan.
- Green funding has been approved for St Peters Hall/RAFA buildings in Horsham.
- Cllr. R. Noel had spoken with the S106 officer at HDC and was advised that £3,053 was available. The Clerk noted the Council had agreed to use this should the Community Highways Scheme get approval so it would therefore not be available for SID expenses which Cllr. R. Noel suggested

- Flyers for the new recycling services will be distributed in May.

## **2021-256 Planning**

### **256.1. SDNP/21/00976/LIS Catsland Farmhouse Bramlands Lane Woodmancote Henfield West Sussex BN5 9TG - The construction of a new oak clad entry porch with pitched roof.**

It was noted that Councillors had experienced issues with the SDNP planning website and had not been able to access the documents to view the application. Therefore, using delegated powers the Council's comments will be submitted to the Clerk who will submit comments agreed via email to the planning authority. An extension for comments will be requested if it is required.

### **256.2 DC/21/0569 Bramcote Farm Bramlands Lane Woodmancote BN5 9TG - Erection of a single storey side extension.**

**It was RESOLVED** to comment on the application as follows: -

Woodmancote Parish Council have no objection to this application.

### **256.3 Any applications received since publication of the agenda.**

The Clerk had circulated the following application prior to the meeting:

**DC/21/0658 Morley Farmhouse Wheatsheaf Road - Conversion of roof garage roof space incorporating roof extensions and alterations, creation of dormers to front and rear, installation of rooflights and raising of ridge height to form an annexe.**

**It was RESOLVED** to comment on the application as follows: -

Woodmancote Parish Council have no objection to this application; however, they would like to note that this accommodation should be ancillary to the main dwelling with no floodlighting.

## **2021-257. Planning Update**

No decisions to note.

## **2021-258. Insurance**

The Clerk had circulated a report on the insurance renewal, **it was RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Zurich for the sum of £279.60. It was noted that the SID poles would need to be added to the policy, although the Clerk was awaiting a response from Zurich in regards to as if this would increase the premium.

## **2021-259. Delegated Powers**

### **259.1. To approve delegated powers if required due to remote meetings no longer being allowed under current government legislation from the 7 May 2021.**

The Council discussed if it would be possible to hold face to face meetings, with the current COVID-19 restrictions still in place until the 21 June, which is dependent on the Government roadmap following the timelines

suggested. It was suggested that the Council could ask Sussex Cricket if they could use the temporary marquee as a meeting venue if meetings needed to be held between now and the 21 June 2021. The Clerk was requested to contact Sussex Cricket to see if this would be possible. It was noted that meetings have to be held so that members of the public can attend and they cannot be turned away, so it would be difficult to meet inside due to not knowing the numbers that might attend and current restrictions. If it is not possible for the Council to meet the Clerk has recommended as an interim measure that delegated powers are put in place so that the Council can still function.

The following delegated powers **were RESOLVED by the Council.**

- To give the Clerk the delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such decisions cannot reasonably be differed and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible by consultation with members by electronic means or telephone. The Clerk will further consult with the Chairman/Vice Chairman for guidance as necessary.
- To give the Clerk the delegated authority to make payments that are required to comply with payment terms, including staff salaries. A copy of the invoice will be circulated to all members of the Council and two Councillors will be requested to agree the payment prior to the Clerk making the payment through electronic payments with one Councillor authorising the payment with the bank.

Cllr. Austin and Cllr. Dixon will agree the payment and Cllr. Williams will authorise the payment with the bank.

- To give the Clerk the delegated authority to send comments to the relevant Planning Authority in the required timeframes. The Clerk will circulate the details of the planning application via electronic means and will request comments from members of the Council within 5 working days. A response will be drawn up by the Clerk and circulated to all members and if a majority are in agreement with the response, the Clerk will submit these comments on behalf of the Council.

It was confirmed that the Zoom subscription would be cancelled.

## **2021-260. Finance/Payment**

### **260.1. To approve the schedule of payments**

**It was RESOLVED** to pay the following, listed on the schedule of payments amounting to £691.37 with the addition of the invoice from Mulberry & Co for £180.00 which was received on the 4 May 2021.

WSSC – Salaries April - £652.59

S Mamoany – reimbursement of Talk Mobile phone charges - £10.00

S Mamoany – reimbursement of Zoom remote meeting fees - £28.78

Mulberry & Co – internal audit - £180.00

### **260.2. Approval of accounts 2020/21**

**It was RESOLVED** to approve these.

Cllr. Dixon noted that the expenditure of the Council has increased, due to increased hours and salary scale of the Clerk which was in line with current salary scales. Income will have to increase in order to cover this eventually, either through the precept or an increase in revenue; although currently the Council holds good reserves, but it cannot continue to use these for annual expenditure.

Cllr. Dixon noted on the asset register that the playing fields were acquired in May 1950 and this should be added to the information.

### **260.3. Approval of:**

**It was RESOLVED** to approve the following:

- a) Internal Audit Report** It was noted that the internal audit report contained an error in relation to the name of the Council and the Clerk will obtain a corrected copy prior to making payment of the invoice received.
- b) Certificate of Exemption for External Audit**
- c) Annual Governance Statement**
- d) Accounting Statements**
- e) Notice of Public Rights – from 06.06.2021 to 14.07.2021**

Due to the meeting being held remotely, the Clerk signed the forms and these will be posted to the Chairman for signatory.

### **2021-261. WSALC (West Sussex Association of Local Councils)**

#### **261.1. Recording of WSALC Clerks meeting and associated correspondence.**

Cllr. Dixon gave an update regarding the WSALC Clerks meeting held on the 15 April; a recording of which had been circulated to all Clerks in West Sussex. This meeting contained, in error, a recording of a private meeting with members of HALC, WSALC and the WSALC CEO. Discussions were held by these individuals that mentioned Woodmancote and Shermanbury Councils in a derogatory way which the Clerk and previous Clerk had found offensive. The Clerk wrote on the 16 April to the WSALC CEO and copied in the two other parties to make a complaint; however, no response was received.

Both Woodmancote and Shermanbury Chairman sent a letter requesting an apology to the Clerks and Councils on the 20 April. Following this an apology was sent from the HALC Chairman to the Clerk at Woodmancote and Shermanbury but not the previous Woodmancote Clerk who had been named in the recording. This was subsequently followed by a letter on the 22 April from the HALC Chairman and CEO of WSALC; however, both Chairman did not feel it addressed the issues raised and therefore Cllr. Dixon together with Cllr. Brown from Shermanbury Parish Council responded by advising that they wanted a full retraction by the 26 April; no response was received. The HDC Monitoring Officer was then involved and Cllr. Dixon and Cllr. Brown liaised with them regarding the situation; at this stage they were advised that the WSALC CEO does not have to abide by the Code of Conduct; however, it was felt that the Chairman of HALC had broken the Code of Conduct. Cllr. Dixon also spoke to the WSALC CEO to give him the opportunity to respond; the response provided was that it seemed Woodmancote and Shermanbury were the only ones that have an issue with the recording.

Subsequently, the previous Clerk involved in these comments also received a letter of apology from the Chairman of HALC. Following receipt of these letters it was agreed that no further action would be taken with the Monitoring Officer.

**It was RESOLVED** that a letter would be written to the Chairman of HALC to request an apology to Woodmancote Parish Council as it was felt the comments he made personally, were not only derogatory to the Clerks, but also to the Council.

## **261.2 To consider renewal of membership to WSALC**

Following on from the issues noted above and in relation to previous correspondence regarding WSALC the Council agreed that they had lost confidence in the services and professionalism of WSALC and **the Council RESOLVED** not to renew the Council's subscription in 2021/22.

The Clerk had circulated a report advising the Council of other options and confirming that the membership to NALC would not be possible if the Council were not members of a County Association; although being a member of NALC was not a mandatory requirement. **It was RESOLVED** that the Council would pay for a subscription for the Clerk to be a member of SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) which can also offer advice on council issues. Training could be accessed through Mulberry & Co if required for both Councillors and the Clerk.

## **2021-262 Keep Britain Tidy Campaign**

### **262.1. To consider Great British Spring Clean**

Cllr. W. Noel noted that she had seen litter around the Parish and it would be good for the community to join in the campaign. It was agreed that the Clerk would put an article on the website asking for volunteers to come forwards for a litter pick event. It was noted that high visibility jackets, pickers and bags would be needed which HDC can provide. A risk assessment would also need to be completed for insurance purposes. It was felt that the A281 would be too dangerous to carry out a litter pick with volunteers.

## **2021-263. Correspondence/meetings/consultations**

**DCMS Rural Broadband Consultation** – noted, no comment.

**WSCC Highways Licence for SID units on A281/B2116** – The Clerk had received the licence from WSCC Highways in relation to the siting of the posts to support the Speed Indicator Device (SID) and **it was RESOLVED** that the Clerk could sign this document on behalf of the Council.

## **2021-264. Other Business**

Cllr. Austin noted that the noticeboard in Bramlands Lane would need two met posts to make it secure as the posts were rotting, these would cost £26. Cllr. Dixon offered to assist Cllr. Austin with the work.

Cllr. Williams advised she had reported an incident of fly tipping in Blackstone Lane via the Love Sussex website.

Cllr. Williams noted that access to some of the comments on HDC Planning website in regard to the Woodmancote Parish Hall planning application was still not possible.

Cllr. Williams noted that the work on the A281 to install a new footway had been completed, and felt they should be thanked for the work; a sign had been left behind and was located on Blackstone Lane.

## **2021-265. Date of next meeting**

8 June 2021 at 7.30pm. It was noted this meeting would be subject to a suitable venue being available due to the COVID-19 restrictions. It was also noted that a meeting needed to be arranged to discuss the playing fields

valuation report, this would be an extraordinary meeting, with the exclusion of members of the public (under the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 S.1.(2) due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. The Clerk will check if this can be held remotely, however was doubtful that this was possible as it was still a meeting of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm