

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Brightling Parish Council held on
Wednesday 20th September 2023 at 7.00 p.m. at Brightling Village Hall**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Judy Petty, Jane Oxenford, Andrew Wedmore and Joanna Coleman (Chair), Philip Garbutt & Caroline Croft

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

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Kirby-Green, ESCC and Cllr John Barnes, RDC.
2. Disclosures of interest
Cllrs Petty, Oxenford and Garbutt declared an interest in Item 7.1.4 and will abstain from the discussion.
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 meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 12th July and the additional planning meeting on 20th July 2023 as true and correct records.
5. Parish Councillor Vacancy
Some members had earlier met informally with a candidate for co-option. JC proposed that she be co-opted, and CC seconded the motion, which was unanimously supported, and Katrina Blench was duly co-opted. She signed her acceptance of office form and joined the meeting.
6. Open Forum
 - 6.1 In his absence, the clerk read from a report that Cllr Barnes had sent. This is attached as an appendix.
 - 6.2 Members of the public were present to address the issue of the current enforcement action on the land between Wyland Wood & Silver Birches. They explained that they had bought the land, which they renamed Column Wood 2.5 years ago and there are some ongoing legal wrangles with neighbours. They use it recreationally with their children for the stipulated 28 days per year and are planning a lot of planting in the autumn. They are keen to work with local organisations and invited members of the parish council to visit the site anytime. The Chairman thanked them for coming to the meeting and addressing the council and clarified that the parish council does not

comment on open enforcement cases which are handled entirely by Rother's planning department.

7. Finance and Governance

7.1 RFO report

- 7.1.1 The bank reconciliation to 31st August 2023 had been previously circulated together with a copy of the bank statement showing that the balances were correct as stated. JC also had been online and confirmed that the balances were as stated.
- 7.1.2 The schedule of receipts & payments for July & August 2023 had previously been circulated and was approved by members.
- 7.1.3 The clerk had recommended a subscription to Satswana to provide a data protection service. This is used by many other local councils and will cost £150 per year. AW proposed subscribing to the service, and JP seconded it, and the motion was carried. The clerk will make the necessary arrangements.
- 7.1.4 There had been a request from the VH for a grant to cover the cost of broadband provision. JC felt that the broadband service is excellent and could benefit the village in the event of power outages or similar problem. All members approved the grant payment, and the clerk will liaise with the Treasurer of the VH to arrange payment.
- 7.1.5 The following payments were approved:
 - 7.1.5.1 IT support, Battle Computers - £65 (retrospective)
 - 7.1.5.2 ESALC New Councillor Training - £48
 - 7.1.5.3 GACC Annual subscription - £10 (paid by DD on 1st September)

8. Planning Matters

8.1 New planning applications

- 8.1.1 - RR/2023/1773/P – Orchard Cottage, Perrymans Lane, Brightling TN32 5FH

Proposal: Erection of a single storey extension.

After a brief discussion, the clerk was asked to submit the following comments online:

Brightling Parish Council does not object to this application but would like to highlight that timber materials are only specified on the front for cladding and windows, but not on the other facades. This may be an oversight in the written detail but needs to be clarified.

Other conditions to be included are:

- 1. No, or limited, 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.*

- 8.2 Open Enforcement Cases – updates had previously been circulated to members for information.

9. Highways - an update

JP reported that the “honeymoon period” appears to be over with Balfour Beatty, the new contractors. The drain clearing lorries had recently been out overnight and missed a lot of drains. The website is poor & the interactive map is difficult to use. It is more frustrating than ever before. There is an SLR meeting scheduled in October, and she will mention all this.

PG also mentioned that the edge of the Battle road is destroyed where lorries have been turning into a farm & parking on the side of the road. If he can safely take photos, JP asked him to send them to her to report.

JO asked if anyone knew why a traffic camera had been in situ for 24 hours at the end of Long Reach Drive? The clerk was asked to investigate.

CC mentioned a recent accident at the bottom of Darwell Hill – JP said it would be useful to know the details as this is a location with ongoing visibility problems that has been reported in the past.

AW also mentioned that the SLOW sign on the road by Wealden House has almost worn away. The clerk will report it and request it is redone.

10. Rother’s Call for Sites

Members confirmed that Brightling does not have any suitable sites.

11. Clerk Vacancy

The clerk reported on the applications to date and will arrange interviews for those candidates taken forward.

12. Consultation on proposed changes to Permitted Development Rights in AONB’s

AW had picked up on this consultation which had not been widely promoted and had a relatively short consulting period. He had previously circulated suggested responses which all councillors agreed with, and he proposed that the clerk used her delegated authority to respond on behalf of the parish council. Members agreed unanimously.

JP also asked the clerk to circulate the details to RALC and ESALC and the clerk confirmed that Cllr Barnes had already alerted the Burwash clerk who had circulated it to all Rother clerks earlier in the week.

13. Dark Skies Festival 2024

The Environment Group are meeting again on 1st October to discuss plans, but they have already expressed an interest in taking part. AW will report further at the next meeting.

14. Community & Business Development

JC proposed that a review of activities be arranged for the next meeting now that there is a full complement of councillors again.

14.1 Broadband - Cllr Wedmore had previously circulated a report (attached as an appendix). JC again offered a huge thankyou to AW for all his work on this.

14.2 Crime, anti-social behaviour & police relationships – JC noted that there have been some incidents of garden machinery theft etc. in the most recent report from Sussex Police. She remembered that she was to write an article for The Messenger and the website to inform residents that reporting any crime is paramount for building up a picture.

PG had seen an off-road bike in Prinkle Wood recently and will keep an eye out for further activity.

14.3 Defibrillators - CC confirmed the de-fib at Darwell Hole is fine. The Clerk needs to register both locations on The Circuit, the national register of de-fibs which is proving tricky.

14.4 Environment Policy & Biodiversity - See AW's report attached. JC suggested a dog waste bin. The clerk will look into the associated costs.

14.5 Footpaths & Bridleways - no current issues.

14.6 Highways, hedges & potholes - see item 9.

14.7 Messenger Magazine - The clerk will submit a meeting report for the next issue.

14.8 Phone Box - JC needs to chase for the quote approved at the last meeting to arrange for a concrete base which will stabilise the phone box. CC proposed that it be used as a book exchange as there is no longer one in the VH. JC suggested an information point about the follies. A future item for discussion once the phone box is finished.

14.9 Trees – nothing to report.

14.10 Utilities – there had been a few short-lived power cuts.

14.11 Refuse Collection – nothing to report.

14.12 Village Hall – JP said that there are new committee members, and they will be organising some fund-raising events including a quiz night & a film night.

14.13 Website - Cllr Wedmore had previously circulated a report (attached as an appendix).

14.14 Welcome Packs - JO requested an updated copy to print out.

15. Correspondence

15.1 The Tree Warden's Report on Defra's hedgerow protection consultation.

15.2 Rowena Suthers had provided an update on Rother's report on the gypsum mine. The noise recordings taken in August have been sent to an independent acoustics company for further assessment. She will update at the next meeting hopefully.

Rowena also requested a copy of the parish council meeting minutes from April 1990 which the clerk is endeavouring to locate at The Keep, Lewes.

16. Parish Councillors' Forum

JP – ES Fire & Rescue for the Annual meeting in April. There has been some concern in the village about response times and water pressure.

17. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Item

- 17.1 Residential development in Rother Event – Thursday 2nd November at 2pm, Manor Barn, Bexhill – Cllr Coleman to attend.
- 17.2 Planning Training – 21st September – Cllr Garbutt to attend.
- 17.3 Re-scheduled Finance Training – 2nd October – no councillors wished to attend.
- 17.4 ESALC Chairman’s Forum – 28th September, Cllr Coleman to attend.
- 17.5 RALC Meeting – 11th October at 2pm, Staplecross Village Hall, Cllr Coleman to attend.

18. Future Meetings

- 18.1 The next meeting of the parish council will be in Brightling Village Hall at 7.00pm.
- 18.2 The following are the remaining dates for council meetings in the current council year:
 - 2023: 8th November.
 - 2024: 10th January, 13th March, (10th April Annual Assembly), 8th May (AGM)

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

..... Signed (Chairman)

Date