



MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on Tuesday, 22nd January, 2025 in Borden Wood Hall, commencing at 18:00 hrs

Members present: Dave Dawtrey Dominic Ferguson, Kathryn MacKellar, Neil Ryder

Also attending: Tim O'Kelly (CDC), V Carter, B Cooper, S Southern

1. Apologies: Chris Cullen, Max Maharajh, Anne Stephens [DD chaired the meeting]
2. Disclosure of Interests: None
3. Public input: The chairman invited members of the public to speak in relevant parts of the meeting
4. Reports from district and county councillors: copies attached to minutes on website.
There was some discussion about plans for a mayoralty and unitary authorities for Sussex and the implications on parishes. TO'K felt East and West Sussex County Councils and Brighton & Hove Unitary Council would have preferred to be in the "second wave" but may be pushed into the "fast track" group as they already have merged police and fire services and some other shared services. NR suggested that the merger or loss of district councils into unitary authorities could create a bigger "democratic gap" between parish councils and local authorities and it might make sense for small parishes at least to consider merging or creating "umbrella" groupings.
5. Previous minutes: items arising were all on the agenda and the minutes from 3rd December were approved.
6. Finance:
 - a. A budget update had been circulated. NR reported that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) officer at the SDNPA had confirmed it would be acceptable to spend our CIL funds on grit bins. Members approved the purchase of 5 grit bins for up to £2,000 subject to WSCC Highways approval of the suggested locations [post-meeting note: all locations have been approved – NR/DF/DD to discuss order and installation].
 - b. Members also approved the transfer of £2,000 of unspent amenity funds plus £1,000 from the 2024 Trotton fete to the new community charity (see separate item below) as soon as its bank account was opened.
 - c. The proposed budget for 2025-6 had been adjusted for these changes and was approved, subject to further adjustments up to the year end of 31st March.
 - d. New bank accounts at Unity Trust bank had been opened as agreed and all PC funds had been transferred. Members approved the closure of the NatWest accounts as soon as practicable.
7. Parish council membership: CC and AS had submitted their formal resignations, as previously notified. Members agreed a vacancy notice to be published, and elected co-chair MM as sole chairman of the PC until its AGM in May. Members thanked CC and AS for their service to the PC and for agreeing to continue supporting its efforts.

Priority action team updates:

8. Action team 1: Local environment
MM was not present at the meeting but members agreed that there was no need for the PC to comment on the Rogate community traffic scheme consultation – individual residents were welcome to express their views.
9. Action team 2: Community facilities / infrastructure: Minutes of the team meeting on 20 Jan had been circulated.
 - a. The lost paths project was proceeding slowly but members had promised to complete their initial research assignments before the team's next meeting on 3rd March
 - b. Trotton walkway: NR confirmed that WSCC had (as expected) advised against us submitting the planned Trotton walkway proposal as a single community traffic scheme, so the team had agreed to tackle it in stages, starting with an application for Operation Watershed funding to replace the drain down the A272 from Rother Lane to Rectory Lane, where the previous partial project had failed to stop flooding.
 - c. Community charity: notes on the working party meeting 20 Jan had been circulated (see meeting papers). The group had formed the charity as a Community Interest Organisation using the Charity Commission 'Association' model (ie with voting membership available to all residents) and the provisional name of Trotton Area Support Community Association. The working party members had agreed to be the interim trustees until the members had been recruited and new trustees elected. It planned to launch a survey as soon as practicable, inviting all residents to join, to nominate potential trustees and to give their initial views on priorities and use of funds. It was hoped to complete this process and hold the inaugural meeting by mid- to late-March and then to register with the Charity Commission.

10. Action team 3: Community events & activities
- Trotton Fete: Caroline Pilley had agreed to host the fete again this year, on 6th September
 - Bonfire & fireworks: All present agreed that this is a popular community event so difficulties over the venue and local horse owners must be addressed. DD pointed out that his team had moved to quieter fireworks and to exclude “screamers” following previous requests and DF agreed to invite other local horse owners to a meeting to discuss this year’s event. This, and the venue to be used, needed to be sorted out as soon as possible to allow planning to go ahead. Regulatory issues should be less onerous if the event was held under the auspices of the new charity, rather than the PC, but it would still require insurance and to comply with guidelines agreed between the government, events industry and other bodies (the Purple Guide).
 - First Friday: SS said the team had agreed plans for the next 6 months and these were on the PC website.
11. Action team 4: Community support
- DF had talked to the Midhurst Hub and agreed to attend their meeting in April to see how we could best offer their services in our parish.
 - DF had also recruited an experienced carer to provide interim help if needed in the parish. NR agreed to liaise with DF over the parish “emergency and resilience” plan and resources.
12. Action team 5: Housing and planning
- After a number of prompts, START Community Trust had failed to apply for funding for a viability study by a qualified engineer on the entrance to the Aylings site for potential new small houses. NR reported that START now appeared to be ineffective and members agreed that they would prefer to see START merged into the Midhurst Community Land Trust than have it stay alive but inactive, potentially blocking our access to funding and official help.
 - NR had circulated the SDNPA consultation on their Local Plan review documents and recommended that members read them and respond individually if they wished. Under potential housing sites it included the Aylings site as “Excluded” and NR had sought and received assurance from the SDNP Director of Planning that this would not preclude it being considered as a rural exception site.
 - Planning applications:
 - SDNP/24/04914/LDP: (Lawful Development Proposal application) for skylights and new shed at 1&2 Nursery Cottages: members had no objections
 - SDNP/25/00046/LIS: planning applications for conversion of barn into habitable accommodation at Chithurst Farm: members felt this looked like a sympathetic development and would save a building with strong historic character which might otherwise be allowed to decay beyond redemption. Members recommended approval.
13. Action team 6: sustainability & biodiversity
- KM reported that the team will meet on 29th January to discuss priorities for the next year.
 - VC confirmed that the team had agreed not to apply for a WSCC Waste Prevention Community Grant as these were clearly aimed at much bigger projects than she had in mind and the process was too arduous.
 - Members approved the request from Eco Rother Action for a £70 donation for their fluidion monitoring
14. Information for councillors that are considered urgent or to be included on future agenda: None
15. Date of next meeting:
22nd January 2025 (regular PC meeting)

Follow-up actions

Reference	Who	Action	By when
20240925-7e & f	MM	Discuss with team 1: popular paths, new conservation areas, identifying landowners	ASAP
20250122-6a / 11b	NR/DF/DD	Discuss installation of grit bins and place order; review emergency resources	ASAP
20250122-6b	NR	Apply for charity bank account and transfer funds as per minute	ASAP
20250122-7	NR	Publish vacancy notice and inform CDC	23 Jan
20250122-9b	NR	Apply for Op Watershed funding	ASAP
20250122-9c	NR	Proceed with charity set-up steps	ASAP
20250122-10b	NR/DF/DD/SS	Invite horse owners to meeting re bonfire	ASAP