



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on  
Monday 19th December 2022 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Lynda Roller (LR), Sonia Plato (SP), Geoff Thomas (GT) and John Goddard (JG)

*In the absence of the chairman, Cllr Plato chaired the meeting.*

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Parish Clerk

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### 1. Public Questions

There were no members of the public. SP had received a resident's correspondence about the empty grit bins in Station Rd. The clerk confirmed that she had been in touch with Network Rail who had replaced the damaged bins, and said that they were due to be filled in the very near future – the clerk will check on this.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Ros Day, Jill Mitcheson, Gary Curtis, RDC and Kathryn Field, ESCC.

### 3. Declaration of Interests

Received from:

Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee

Cllr Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Plato – Youth Club & Crowhurst Environment Group

### 4. Adoption of Minutes

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the parish council held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 as a true and correct record.

### 5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

5.1 The clerk was asked to ring the Environment Agency and report the carp in the ponds by the Pelham Buckle Bridge.

5.2 The bench has still not been moved to Station Road despite a reminder email being sent. The clerk was asked to send a further reminder as the new bench cannot be installed until the current one is moved.

5.3 Hedge cutting – The hedge cutting has now been finished satisfactorily by John O'Conner and the associated payment is on the list for approval (Item 7 ii).

5.4 De-fibrillators – Tony Barham has provided an acceptable quote to install the new de-fib and this will take place early in the new year (he will liaise with the Village Hall manager about when it is convenient).

*\*Subsequently the village hall was booked and installation of the new de-fibrillator will now take place on 11<sup>th</sup> February.*

The clerk relayed some correspondence that had been received by a resident about the need for a 3<sup>rd</sup> de-fib and the appropriate training in a village the size of Crowhurst. Councillors felt that as it was a replacement for a de-fib that had stopped working and was in a location of high footfall (the church, the school and the village hall) it was a necessity. The headmaster is also reassured that there is one on site.

The clerk will investigate training offered by Community Heartbeat (perhaps to coincide with the parish Annual Meeting when more members of the public attend).

5.5 Matting for the Pavilion floor – a quote from Plastex had previously been circulated and GT proposed that it was approved and ordered. This was seconded by SP and all members present agreed. The clerk was asked to progress the order.

5.6 The clerk is in the process of arranging a 3 way meeting for the new year between the EA's Bio-diversity Team, the football club and the parish council to discuss the requirement for an access path to retrieve lost footballs.

5.7 Sandrock Hill – Feasibility study / bollards application.

The clerk confirmed that the application form to request the feasibility study from Highways has recently been submitted. There is no response to date.

There was then a brief discussion about the bollard application for the same area, and it was decided to await the results of the feasibility study before submitting this as the results will impact the requirement for bollards.

## **6. Representations from District & County Councillors**

No written representations had been received from district or county councillors in their absence.

## **7. Financial Matters**

7.1 The financial report to 30<sup>th</sup> November had been previously circulated and was approved by members.

7.2 The payments report for December was considered and approved.

7.3 The bank reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chairman.

7.4 The clerk had previously circulated an amended draft of the budget plans for 2023/'24. She is awaiting the estimated costs of the May '23 election and will then finalise the budget proposals for approval at the January meeting.

## **8. Recreation Ground**

8.1 GT had carried out the monthly inspection and said there were no major issues. There are fresh molehills in the picnic area, and the clasp on the gate into the playground is missing (the clerk confirmed that this was on the list of tasks for the handyman). He mentioned the diseased tree, and JG confirmed that there is a replacement tree which requires planting. He offered to arrange for the digging of a hole etc.

GT also remarked that a shortcut path is beginning to degrade the grass and the more it looks like a path, the more it is being used. SP said that she would ask Glenys to remind parents to use the footpath, although that had been flooded in quite a few places recently. The vehicle tracks across the grass were made by the tree surgeon as he had to take a woodchipper to the location. Finally,

he reported that paint has been scratched off the top of most of the new bollard lights, likely to be further vandalism following the recent broken bulb damage.

8.2 The clerk provided an update from the handyman: he has located the leak in the away changing room, repaired the damage and sealed it, and he has replaced the floor boards in the gents toilet. He was working again last Friday and again next Wednesday so further updates will follow.

8.3 Following the recent leak in the Pavilion, SP suggested the clerk ask Luigi Romano to quote for the work required and get him booked in as soon as possible. All members agreed. GT also asked the clerk to ensure that any users of the Pavilion are made aware that there is no water until the repair work is carried out.

SP also reported that the Green Growth Project have some money remaining in their budget and have agreed to fund the fencing to protect the newly planted hedging when the tree protectors are removed.

## **9. Emergency & Resilience Planning**

In the absence of Cllr Day, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

## **10. Warm Space**

LR was pleased to announce that Crowhurst will have a warm space programme in The Plough starting on Saturday 21st Jan from 12-4pm. The intention is to run it weekly until April & review feedback then. Lewis the landlord is very keen and has been extremely helpful and SP & GT advised on his grant application to the 'Pub is the Hub' scheme.

Using statistics from the Warmer Crowhurst group survey, 58 out of the 96 households who responded admitted that they were concerned about fuel poverty and would struggle to pay their bills. The warm space initiative aims to provide an informal, welcoming setting where advice can be provided on fuel poverty and other related issues and tackle social isolation.

Lewis has offered to provide freshly made soup & a roll and free tea & coffee. A donation of £1 will be requested (based on research from other similar schemes). There will be books and games & a laptop made available. The aim is to develop a greater sense of community, the possibility of part-time employment in The Plough, to improve mental health & well-being and develop appropriate skills for those who volunteer. The hope is to have an average of 15 participants per week.

There was further discussion about a food charity (OLIO) and the methods of publicising the first session. Lewis is going to use the pub's Facebook page and design a poster. The parish council agreed to cover appropriate printing costs until grant funding is received.

LR asked the clerk to write on behalf of the parish council to thank Lewis for all his help and energy in launching this initiative. The clerk was also asked to confirm publication dates of the parish magazine and to create a post on the website for further publicity. SP thanked LR for all her hard work, and she in turn thanked GT & SP for their support.

## **11. Dark Skies Festival**

SP reported that the Dark Skies Festival planned for February 2023 has now been launched.

Although the events are free, they are bookable on Eventbrite as anyone from HWAONB and local parishes can attend. The Environment Group will help anyone locally who doesn't have online access. Events include presentations in the Village Hall on Wildlife at Night (18<sup>th</sup> Feb.), a night walk on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb and a session for the Youth Club on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb. This will include, weather permitting, the use of a telescope to examine the night sky. SP asked if the parish council gave permission for the Pavilion to be used that night (if the weather allows) and members agreed.

There is also a mobile, inflatable planetarium located in the Memorial Halls in Battle which can be booked for 20-minute sessions. Sussex Lund have funded the festival across 5 parishes, and other organisations such as the National trust are also involved.

**12. Planning Matters**

- 12.1 There were no new planning applications to discuss.
- 12.2 JG reported from a recent meeting in Catsfield about the proposed development at the Normanhurst Estate and suggested offering support in writing. After a brief discussion, SP proposed that the clerk write to the clerk of Catsfield Parish Council to offer support as a neighbouring parish council. JG seconded this proposal, and one member agreed and one abstained. The clerk will draft a letter of support.

**13. Councillor Updates on External Bodies**

- 13.1 Village Hall Management Committee – nothing to report.
- 13.2 Policing Meeting – LR reported that there hadn’t been a recent meeting, and the next meeting with the police will take place in the new year (date to be confirmed).
- 13.3 Combe Valley – nothing to report.

**14. Clerk’s Report**

- 14.1 Emergency water supplies – the clerk is in the process of registering a suitable location in Crowhurst with East Sussex County Council for bottled water to be delivered in the event of supply issues. The recent problem had not lasted for long enough to warrant deliveries, which were coupled with the icy road conditions, but in the future bottled supplies will be delivered to the Rec Ground car park.
- 14.2 The clerk reported that there will be a nationwide beacon lighting for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for D-Day next June.
- 14.3 The clerk will investigate de-fib training following correspondence from a resident (see item 5.4)

**15. Review of Council Policy**

The Winter Maintenance policy had been updated by the clerk and previously circulated. SP suggested incorporating it within the Emergency & Resilience plan and GT agreed as he felt it is not really a council policy, but an information provider. This will be revisited at the next meeting (see item 9).

**16. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items**

SP asked to include the Community Map on the next agenda. Following a meeting with Andy Pope, the new Project Manager, there is still a short fall in funding which he is following up with Rother DC.

LR said that the ‘Winter Warmers Group’ will provide an update at the next meeting as the first Warm Space session in The Plough will be imminent.

**17. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed by

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Date: