



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 17th April 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

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

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Parish Clerk & 5 members of the public.

1. Public Questions

Nick Stell asked if the results of the feasibility study at Sandrock Hill were available yet. The clerk confirmed that they were due the previous Friday and that she would chase them up as nothing had been sent from Highways. He also asked if the pitch maintenance fund details from the football foundation had been seen – the clerk confirmed that they had been circulated for information. The Football Club representatives then gave further details of the pre-fabricated building that they have offered as a new or additional pavilion. It measures 15m x 5m, and would require a concrete slab and appropriate connections, but is removable at any time. They are keen to contribute to the community as well as improving the current conditions regarding showers and changing rooms which is a requirement for higher divisions in the football league. RD asked how the interior layout would be arranged, Brett Moor confirmed that it is currently open plan and can be partitioned to suit. SP asked about the materials (timber & UPVC) and wondered if solar panels could be fitted to help with energy efficiency. She also suggested a working group meet at the Rec to consider where it could be positioned, and BM offered to peg it out to get an idea of the dimensions. The clerk will liaise with the football club and arrange a site meeting.

There were no further questions from members of the public.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Jill Mitcheson & Cllr Kathryn Field.

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 Additional Meeting of the parish council held on 6th March and the Ordinary Meeting held on 20th March 2023 as true and correct records.

5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

5.1 Football club use of the containers for storage of the U9's goalposts. The clerk confirmed that the cricket club chairman had been away, and she had yet to discuss this matter further with him. SP

reiterated that the youth group had carried out extensive clearance work on the ground around the containers, and the area was due to be re-seeded soon, so they are concerned about damage. The youth group are meeting on Wednesday evening, and she suggested a site visit after the re-seeding had been done. This led to further discussion about the path which is currently very wet despite there not being as much rain. The clerk will liaise with the pre-school volunteers to make the repairs with material provided by the parish council.

- 5.2 Timbers for bench repair – the clerk confirmed that the timber had been delivered to the Pavilion and LR reported that she'd seen the handyman earlier that day and he had almost finished repairing the benches. (See item 8.3)
- 5.3 Community Map – SP reported that there had been a very good response to a circular informing residents about the map and where to see it currently, including offers to supply and make an oak frame, and a funding offer from the Powdermill Walk group. SP suggested to members that the offer is accepted, and a separate fund is set up which is ring-fenced to pay for the frame. Other councillors agreed. Also, the artist has offered to do map workshops with the school.
- 5.4 Youth Hut floodlight – The clerk had spoken to Tracy Hoad who confirmed that they were arranging an electrician to disconnect the floodlight when some other works are carried out in the youth hut. RD also said that a resident had reported to her that the bollard lights seem to be on very frequently, and that perhaps the sensor is too sensitive, picking up movement in the car park. She will try to alter it. JG asked about spare bulbs for the bollard lights – the clerk needs to confirm the wattage to match the existing bulbs and will then order a supply.
- 5.5 Feasibility Study, Sandrock Hill – see Item 1.

GT added that following on from discussions about a suitable venue for a Warm Space next autumn, the VH is available for 17 Sundays from the end of October and will cost £680 to hire.

6. Representations from District & County Councillors

6.1 There was no report from Rother District Council in Cllr Curtis' absence.

6.2 Cllr Kathryn Field had provided the following update from county:

In spite of receiving over £2m from the Government for pothole repairs, a Freedom of Information enquiry has determined that East Sussex County Council is the worst authority in the country for mending potholes. Cabinet on 18/04 will be agreeing a Scrutiny report on social value in procurement. This will lay out requirements for sustainability measures required from contractors.

7. Financial Matters

- 7.1 The financial report to 31st March had been circulated and was approved by members.
- 7.2 The payments report for April was considered and approved, to include the Dragon Signs invoice for assembly signs. This will be on the payments list next month for retrospective approval.
- 7.3 The bank reconciliation to 31st March 2023 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chairman.
- 7.4 The year end statement had been circulated, and the clerk confirmed the date for the internal audit as 20th April. Full year-end information will then be prepared for the May meeting.
- 7.5 The necessary information to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 had been circulated to all members. They approved its inclusion on the website and the clerk will update it accordingly.

8. Recreation Ground

- 8.1 JM was due to carry out the monthly inspection, so no report in her absence. Nicola Stell's most recent weekly inspection hadn't reported any new issues.
- 8.2 The clerk confirmed that hire fees and agreements for the 2023/'24 season with the various clubs who use the Recreation Ground & the Pavilion were updated, with fees agreed as per the budget plan and are in the process of being signed.
- 8.3 The handyman had completed the repair of the long benches in front of the Pavilion with a second coat of oil.
- 8.4 SP spoke to Sarah who has quoted £200 to supply 10 tonnes of road plainings. She had also spoken to Jeff Cornwell who is happy to help spread it. JG suggested getting a full load (double the quantity & price) and using it for potholes in the car park. RD was concerned about taking up space in the car park until it was used. DJ offered help from the football club. Further discussions about the water flowing onto the path led to a suggestion that the clerk verify with SE Water who owns the stopcocks at the bottom of the Rec. JG also wondered if the work done to the pond at Blacksmith's may not have been done correctly and could be adding to the problem. Clerk to speak to pre-school about making repairs over the May Bank holiday weekends. JG to follow up with the owner of Blacksmith's Cottage.
- 8.5 Offer of a new Pavilion building from the Football Club - see item 1.

9. Asset Register & Risk Assessment

The clerk had circulated an updated asset register and risk assessment in preparation for the audit. These items will be on the AGM agenda in May for final approval.

10. Annual Parish Assembly

The clerk confirmed that refreshments have been purchased and the new trophy for the Community Award engraved and ready for presentation. Glass hire was proving tricky. Members and the clerk will ask various contacts in the village if they have some available to borrow.

11. Town & Country Planning

RR/2023/577/P – Oakleigh, 6 Woodland Way, Crowhurst

RD & SP had visited the applicant, and there was a lengthy discussion about the design and other concerns. All members agreed to submit the following comments to Rother's planning department:

Crowhurst Parish Council does not object to suitable new dwellings and this application does fall within the development boundary, but we do have concerns.

- *The layout/design of the dwelling, whilst suitable for an annexe/overspill accommodation as currently allowed for, is not adequate for a stand-alone dwelling.*
- *The rear bedroom will get very little natural light, due to the overhead decking and terraced garden design.*
- *It is not clear that a reasonable provision is made to provide adaptable floor-space by meeting M4(2) of the building Regulations.*
- *The proposed boundary wall to separate the property is detailed as 1.8m high – that seems high & the gap from the proposed dwelling is very narrow.*
- *1.8m fencing is proposed in the rear garden, where native hedging should be used as being more appropriate to the area.*

However, if Rother is minded granting permission, we would like the following conditions to be included:

1. No or limited external lighting (downlighters only) to protect dark skies as detailed in policy CE32 (v) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
 2. Any new hard-standing to be made of a porous material to limit run-off (see policy CE5 of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan).
 3. There should be infrastructure for a car charging point in any new build as detailed in policy CB1 (9) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
 4. The garden should be larger to allow for an appropriate amenity space as detailed in policy CB1 (4) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan and Rother DC own policies (DHG7).
 5. Encouragement should be given to solar panels on the south facing roof as detailed in policy CB1 (8) of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan
- Finally, we were made aware of safety concerns for a neighbouring resident with failing eyesight who, due to this development, now has a gap in his boundary hedge with a steep drop on the other side. This should be rectified.

The clerk was asked to submit the comments online.

12. Emergency & Resilience Planning

No further update at present.

13. Elections – 4th May

Following the deadline to submit nomination papers, Rother has sent through the notice of an uncontested election in Crowhurst as there are fewer candidates than vacancies. 4 positions need to be filled. JG confirmed that he agreed to co-opt, and the clerk will speak to JM. All members agreed to chat informally to other residents at the Parish Assembly and in general. The deadline to fill the vacancies is 26th June, 35 working days after the election date.

14. Councillor Updates on External Bodies

- 14.1 Village Hall Management Committee – GT reported that stage curtains have been cleaned and stored and will be put up only when required. Window curtains will also be replaced.
- 14.2 Policing Meeting – LR reported that the next meeting with the police is on 20th April. The clerk had sent the updated patrol plan. Most crimes are ASB (anti-social behaviour). LR will report the vandalism of the lights on the Rec. She also said that Sussex has been chosen as a trailblazer for an ‘Immediate Justice’ pilot programme to tackle ASB. SP said that people are camping illegally in the countryside park & fishing along riverbank. She has reported it to Ben Coles on the Countryside Park CIC who will report it to the police. Also, some potential wildlife crime with trees being cut down on Chapel Hill and disturbing wildlife.
- 14.3 Combe Valley CIC – the next meeting is on Wednesday 26th. GT will report back after that.

15. Clerk’s Report

The investment account held at NS & I required new signatories and is currently earning 0.6% interest and cannot be registered for online or telephone banking. The clerk asked current councillors to sign the mandate and will then arrange for the funds to be withdrawn and deposited in an alternative account. Members agreed and GT, LR & SP signed the mandate.

16. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

Handyman to plane the door to go over new matting. Replace bolts for ones that work.
Neighbourhood Plan Review
Warmer Crowhurst update.

17. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council, the AGM, will take place on **Monday 22nd May at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed by

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Date: