

ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 27th February 2023 in the David Francis Room of the Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Penny Simpson - Chairman

Cllr Richard French

Cllr Sanjeev Joshi

Cllr Brian O'Connor

Cllr Sarah Peay

Cllr Alan Strudley

The Clerk Jan Critchley

County Cllr Amanda Jupp

Ian Walker, Chairman of Itchingfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan

15 Apologies for Absence – were received from Cllr James Sheppard and District Cllr Stuart Ritchie. The Clerk said that our County Cllr Amanda Jupp will be late as she is attending another meeting this evening.

16 Declarations of Interest - *Members are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.*
No declarations were given.

17 Minutes of the last Meeting to be approved

The Minutes of the last meeting on 30th January 2023 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The Minutes were then accepted and signed by the Chairman.

18 To consider any matters arising from the last Meeting that cannot wait until the next meeting.

1. Minute 3:1 Clearing of verges/briars at the bottom of Fulfords Hill. The Clerk has now received a response from the owner of the small barn which is at the front of the development at the bottom of Fulfords Hill and she has said that she will get on and do the work that is required to clear the area.

Action

19 Open Session for Members of the Public – no members of the public were present.

20 Itchingfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan – The Chairman welcomed Ian Walker to the meeting. Ian Walker who is the Chair of Itchingfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, addressed the Cllrs and gave the following update:

Itchingfield Parish Council began the Neighbourhood Plan process in 2015 – 8 years ago. £48k has been spent so far with £10k back from the Government and we still do not have a finished Plan. We completed all the stages we had to do in late 2019 and control of the process was passed to HDC. We were due to have Referendum in November 2021, but this was cancelled at last minute by HDC due to Water Neutrality. We are now in the same position as three other parishes, Cowfold, Pulborough and Lower Beeding. With the emergence of the Water Neutrality issue, we could not convince HDC that our suggested revision to the Plan would deal with the matter therefore nothing has been done by HDC since then. However, HDC granted approval for the Sumners Ponds Development, deciding that their strategy on Water Neutrality was acceptable. The same approach has been adopted in two other parishes. So, Water Neutrality cannot be the reason for continuing the delay. Recently we held a virtual meeting with Cowfold, Lower Beeding and Pulborough Parish Councils (note that West Chiltington are further behind) and agreed to send a joint letter to HDC stating that we have got to get this resolved. A copy of this letter had been circulated to all Parish Cllrs. Our District Cllr Tricia Youtan has had a conversation with Catherine Howe, Head of Strategic Planning at HDC who said that HDC has received legal advice from solicitors and they are busy trying to ascertain whether our Neighbourhood Plan could go ahead irrespective of the District Local Plan so that we should know our position soon, however, nothing further has been forthcoming from HDC apart from a formal acknowledgement of the joint letter. Ian said that with elections coming up on 4th May this year, it would be really good to have our Referendum on that day, however, no decisions can be made until we know what HDC are going to say. District Cllr Tricia Youtan said she had spoken to Catherine Howe this week and she had told Tricia that HDC are still trying to work out the ramifications of the legal advice they have been given and hope to have an answer by the end of this coming week. Tricia said that

she will contact Jeremy Quin to try to arrange a meeting with her and Ian this coming Friday. Ian to keep the Chairman in the loop.
Cllr Sanjeev Joshi to make some initial enquiries in case the Parish Council needs to obtain legal advice on this.

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- 21 **Planning Applications** – Circulated to all Cllrs ahead of the meeting. Can Cllrs please check all documents relating to the planning applications on the HDC Planning Portal ahead of the meeting.

Action

1. New Applications

HRA/23/0003, ref DC/21/1998 - Mr J Forster. Clayfield Farm, Valewood Lane, Barns Green - Application under regulation 77 of the Conservation of habitats and species regulations 2017 in respect of Prior Approval.

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections and recommends for approval.

DC/23/0242 - Mr Simon Smith, Slaughterford Farm, Chapel Road, Barns Green - Retrospective application for the change of use of agricultural land for the exercising of dogs, including the installation of perimeter fence, pathways and associated parking.

Itchingfield Parish Council recommends this retrospective planning application for approval.

22 **Reports by County and District Councillors –**

District Cllr Tricia Youtan gave the following report:

1. Tricia reiterated her conversation with Catherine Howe, Head of Strategic Planning at HDC and said that she had told Catherine that she felt it to be unreasonable for the Neighbourhood Plan to be delayed for so long, did not understand why legal opinion had not been sought earlier and Tricia said she failed to understand why a Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to Water Neutrality as it was not a planning application. Thus if the Neighbourhood Plan went ahead any resultant planning application would have to pass suitability for Water Neutrality anyway. An answer from HDC should be received by 6th March at the latest.
2. Tricia said how much the white lines had improved Baystone Corner and that further lineage was necessary.
3. Tricia also advised that Slinfold had been given a 20mph limit by WSCC throughout the village and said that she wanted to help achieve the same speed limit for Barns Green.
4. Tricia said that HDC Local Plan had been turned down and not gone through. Following that the Leader of HDC Jonathan Chowen has resigned and Claire Vickers is now the new Leader.

23 **Highways**

1. Valewood Lane drainage issues – no more to report in Cllr James Sheppard's absence.
2. Grit Bins – The Clerk reported that the grit bin in Valewood Lane was completely empty as it had been used for personal driveways instead of the public highway. Subsequently Cllr Brian O'Connor has now put grit in all our grit bins in the parish from the supply held at Sumners Pond. Depending on the forthcoming weather, the Clerk will order another hippo bag if necessary to be stored at Sumners. Cllr Sarah Peay reported that in the recent bad weather, New Road near the junction with West Chilton Lane was extremely icy. The Clerk to write to Billingshurst Parish Council to see if they would place a grit bin at the top of New Road as it is in Billingshurst Parish.

Action

24 **Local Traffic and Roads**

Cllr Richard French gave the following report:

1. Richard reported that following on from his proposal to allocate some funds to help with drainage issues around the village, he had circulated a draft to be put in the BIG MAG regarding appointing a Drain & Ditch Warden role to cover ongoing monitoring and light intervention clearing work of our drains and ditches within the parish to complement the yearly or every other year visits by WSCC. All Cllrs agreed on the article to be submitted. Richard said there would also be scope to invite tenders from several local drain clearing specialists for a once-a-year targeted visit of two or three sites again to complement WSCC visits. All Cllrs agreed with this proposal.
2. Richard reported that he has updated the Local Traffic and Roads Flyer to go into the BIG MAG with reporting and information links. The Clerk has arranged for these to be printed and distributed.
3. With regard to the installation of the SID's, Richard is just waiting for a response from James Strachen regarding approval of the final part.
4. With regard to Speedwatch, as the police are so overstretched, Richard said he will put this on hold subject to the outcome of the speed strips that James Strachen is putting in Bashurst Hill and West Chilton Lane.

5. Richard reported that Alan, Brian and he had attended a Charging Points Scheme meeting which was well thought out. However, the presentation was more focused on towns. In this village the best possible place for charging points would be one or two in the village car park.
6. Richard said he was hoping to get an update from Amanda regarding the reinstating/realigning of the fence on the A264 on the left-hand side on the approach to Toat Hill. Cllr Sarah Peay said there is still an ongoing issue of parked cars by Toat Hill Garage and the flood light by the garage needs to be lowered so as not to blind drivers when approaching the garage. The Clerk to bring these issues to Amanda's attention and copy in Cllr Richard French and the Chairman.
7. With regard to Slinfold's newly installed 20mph throughout the village, Richard said that he is hesitant to promote 20mph in our village just yet and would rather focus on the SID's installation and speed limit in Bashurst Hill and see what problems/issues Slinfold faces and learn from that.
8. Finally, Richard reported on a meeting that he had dialled into regarding the demo of a computer based analysis system that the police are using to effectively monitor massive amounts of information and present it in a very digestible way to analyse that they are putting their resources in the right place. Richard said that this system is something to be proud of with a very much under resourced police force.

Action

25 Finance – All payments for approval since 30th January 2023.

1. There are six payments to be paid

£28.50 to EE Home Broadband in respect of the Internet Service for February 2023.

£22.50 to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of the hall rental for the Parish Council Meeting 30 January 2023.

£43.20 to Vision ICT in respect of 2 hosted email accounts April 2023 to March 2024.

£100.00 to Pat Cochran in respect of Litter Warden duties for February 2023.

£22.50 to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of the hall rental for the Parish Council Meeting 27 February 2023.

£1,930.50 to the Clerk comprising of £1,858.55 salary for February 2023, (this includes arrears of pay) and £71.95 expenses.

It was proposed by Cllr Brian O'Connor to accept and approve the payments, seconded by Cllr Richard French, Agreed unanimously.

2. Parish Council Reserves

(i) Barns Green Sports and Social Club Changing Rooms Project

The Chairman said she had received an update from Victoria Barrett, who is acting as an adviser in terms of raising the funds, regarding the project to improve the old changing rooms at the Barns Green Sports & Social Club. The committee are aiming to go live with a crowd funding page on 1st May 2023 to allow them to apply for match funding such as Sports England fund. The committee has asked for quotes for the work which is understood to be around £45k. The immediate plan is to hire a skip to clear the changing rooms and position a container to store equipment whilst the improvement work is in progress. There is also an asbestos roof ceiling which will need to be removed and existing funds will cover this, the skip and container. All of the sports clubs are on board with this project and the Rugby Club are leading it and will hold any funds raised. The Chairman has asked Victoria to keep her informed of the fund raising and said that the Parish Council is minded to help out going forward.

(ii) Barns Green Village Hall Roof Project

The Chairman said that she had received an update from Paul Harding, Chair of Barns Green Village Hall Committee regarding the project to repair the Village Hall Roof. The committee are going for a two-stage approach, southern aspect first (car park side), hopefully this summer. The remainder when they have the money raised. To date the committee has raised £2k. HMRC has granted the Barns Green Playing Field and Village Hall Trust, Charitable Tax Status and therefore they can apply for Gift Aid on monies raised. To reduce the impact of inflation and secure materials, the committee purchased 5,000 tiles costing £3k and these will go a long way to cover the southern aspect. The committee is now in the process of obtaining quotes for all of the work and obtaining grants. The Chairman has asked Paul to keep her informed and said that once all grants and funds have been raised by the committee, she hoped that the Parish Council would be able to give the Village Hall Roof Project a substantial grant.

(iii) Barns Green Footpath, Trim Trail and Outdoor Gym Project

The Chairman said she had received a letter from Ben Woodman, Chair of Barns Green Trim Trail and Outdoor Gym Committee which had been circulated. Phase 1 of the Project is to build a pathway from the top of the Village Car Park to the Arboretum so that the Arboretum is accessible to everyone all year round. The demand from the Village Community for this pathway has been increasing over the years and would allow all weather access as well as a path for wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs.

The Parish Council owns about a third of the land (Jubilee Field) between the car park and the Arboretum so firstly, the committee are asking permission to install the pathway across our bit of land and also to clear brambles from our part of the Jubilee Field. The Chairman asked all Cllrs if they approved this permission. Cllr Alan Strudley asked what type of pathway it will be and whether it will be in keeping with the rural setting. The Chairman said she didn't have these details but will find out. An article is due to be put in the BIG MAG which will give more details. The Chairman asked for a vote to give the Parish Council's permission. 3 votes for and 2 abstentions. Therefore, the motion was carried to give permission to install the pathway across the Parish Council's part of the Jubilee Field and also remove the brambles from this area. The Chairman continued to say that the committee has received initial costs for the pathway of up to 25k and bearing in mind the Parish Council's part ownership, the committee would like to ask for a proportionate contribution. The committee is also seeking a contribution from the Arboretum Grove Trust as well general fund-raising. Cllr Sarah Peay proposed that the Parish Council give a grant of £8,500 to the Project, seconded by Sanjeev Joshi, 3 in favour and 2 abstentions. The motion was carried to give a grant of £8,500.

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Cllr Brian O'Connor then said that he would like to refer back to the Barns Green Village Roof Project and state that he was disappointed that there was no mention of alternative energy sources to be put on the roof before they renew the roof. It is a golden opportunity to consider this bearing in mind the considerable sums of money involved in replacing the roof and with a bit of thought some of the costs could be offset by installing solar panels, especially as it is a south facing roof. The Chairman said she will pass on our comments and ask that they let us know that they have considered this option.

Action

26 Privacy Statement – To be approved.

1. The Clerk had circulated a proposed Privacy Statement ahead of this meeting, to be put on the front of the Parish Council website. The Chairman proposed to approve the Privacy Statement, seconded by Cllr Alan Strudley and agreed unanimously. The Clerk to get our website provider to put it on the website.

Action

County Councillor Amanda Jupp arrived at 9pm.

Reports by County and District Councillors – continued

Report from County Cllr Amanda Jupp:

1. Amanda reported that the WSCC Budget was approved at full Council on 17th February 2023 and there is to be an extra 4m available for highways due to extreme weather that we have experienced this year.
2. Inspections of potholes continue and Amanda said was pleased to see that the WSCC have repaired the potholes and put white linings on Fulfords Road, on the corner by Yew Tree Cottages.
3. Amanda reported that secondary school places will be announced this coming Wednesday 1st March and primary school places in mid-April. There is a shortage of places in Horsham due to increase population even though a new secondary school Bohunt has just been built. This is proving to be popular and it is expected that all 300 places at Bohunt will be allocated.
4. Cllr Richard French asked Amanda whether there has been any progress regarding the realigning of the fence on by A264. Amanda said that she hasn't had a meeting with David Exwood, yet but it is on her list of things to get done. Cllr Sarah Peay asked what can be done about the parked cars at Toat Hill Garage as so many are already parked on the forecourt and also mentioned about the flood light that needs lowering. Amanda said she would look into this and get advice.

Action

27 Risk Policy

Cllr Alan Strudley had circulated a draft Risk Policy ahead of the meeting. He requested that all Cllrs look through the document in detail and come back to him with comments with additions, deletions, amendments etc. and then Alan will come back with a final document. Alan said that this was a two-stage process. The first stage is for the Parish Council to agree to adopt a Risk Policy. Secondly, part of that policy is that the Parish Council will follow a Risk Management Strategy and part of the strategy can be to maintain a Risk Register. The Chairman asked for a proposer to agree to adopt a Risk Policy. Cllr Richard French proposed that the Parish Council agree to adopt a Risk Policy, seconded by Brian O'Connor, agreed unanimously. The Clerk to put this on the next agenda. The Chairman thanked Alan for all his hard work on this.

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| 28 | <p>Tree Planting</p> <p>The Chairman reported that she has taken delivery of a large oak tree from HDC which is currently in her front garden. It is going to be planted on the Village Green at the bottom to replace the oak tree that is no longer there. We need to contact HDC when a date for planting it has been agreed, hopefully by the end of March. The Clerk to order a specific Queen's Jubilee Plaque. There followed a discussion about whether there was any other place on the Village Green to plant the tree. It was decided to go with the first option and the Chairman said that she will contact Matt Treasure-Jones to assist with digging the hole and check for any roots and then go from there.</p> | <p>Action</p> <p>Action</p> |
| 29 | <p>Correspondence</p> <p>1. The Clerk said she had received an email from Jade Foster, Property Manager at Hobdens Property Management Limited. Jade writes that she is emailing the Parish Council with regards to The Ashmiles which she manages. She asked that as the Parish Council owns and maintains the land to the rear of The Ashmiles, which is the Ancient Woodland, can we repair the fencing that lines the exit path that leads out of the back of the development as it is in a state of disrepair and needs re-aligning and posts repositioning. The Clerk to obtain a quote to repair the fence and send a reply to Jade Foster.</p> | <p>Action</p> |
| 30 | <p>Any other Business</p> <p>1. The Chairman and Cllr Sarah Peay are looking at the Parish Council's current Standing Orders and Code of Members Conduct and the NALC Models and will be making recommendations to the full Council in due course.</p> <p>2. Cllr Sarah Peay reported that the rubbish in Bashurst Hill has got bad again. The Clerk to request that HDC do a sweep in Bashurst Hill and West Chiltonington Lane.</p> | <p>Action</p> <p>Action</p> |
| 31 | <p>Date of Next Meeting - Monday 27th March 2023. There being no other business closed at 9.46pm.</p> | |