

ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 26th June 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
District Cllr Tricia Youtan

78 Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Alan Strudley signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office having been co-opted at the May meeting. He has signed the Register of Members' Interest form and given this to the Clerk.

79 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr James Sheppard and District Cllr Tricia Youtan.

80 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.

81 Minutes of the last Meeting to be approved

The Minutes of the last meeting on 22nd May 2023 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The Minutes were accepted and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Sanjeev Joshi arrived at 7.35pm.

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

1.Flooding under the Railway Bridge. The Clerk reported that WSCC has cleared all the drains under the railway bridge so we are now waiting for Network Rail to repair the guttering which is causing more rain water to fall into the drains beneath the railway bridge. The Parish Council has been given an incident number so the Clerk will chase up.

Action

83 Barns Green Village Hall Roof Update

Paul Harding, Chairman of Barns Green Village Hall was invited to address the Parish Council. Paul thanked the Council for inviting him. He said he had written to the Parish Council back in October last year about the work that was needed to be carried out on the Village Hall roof. Originally there was concern about the flat roof over the store room on the southern aspect that was leaking and the tiles over the kitchen had slipped. The Committee initially got contractors in to look at it and then paid for an independent report, a scope of work and specification. The Committee purchase 5,000 tiles at a cost of £3,500 which will be used by the contractor. The southern part of the roof is urgently in need of repair. The remainder of the roof is alright at the present time, but some of the clay tiles are breaking up and with wetter winters the damage will increase. The Committee sent to five companies of which three came back with quotations. Solar panels are also being considered. There are now three options:

- (i) To refurbish the whole roof completely with new tiles and solar panels at a cost of £91,000.
- (ii) To refurbish the whole roof then raise money for the solar panels at a cost of £63,200.
- (iii) To focus on doing immediate repairs to the flat roof extension and the southern roof at a cost of £26,640. Then the Hall Committee would need to raise £34,000 for the rest of the roof at a later stage and £28,000 for solar panels.

Paul said that the Village Hall currently has £19,500 which would be put towards the costs and keep back £10,000 for reserves. Therefore, the gap for all options is (i) £71,000 (ii) £43,500 (iii) £7,100.

The question was raised about asbestos in the roof and Paul said that the Committee will be getting that checked. The Parish Council was minded to go with Option (ii) bearing in mind that there are grants available for solar panels. Cllr Alan Strudley proposed that the Parish Council give a grant of £43,500 as a limit of liability and subject to completing a risk management, seconded by Cllr Sanjeev Joshi and agreed unanimously.

Paul thanked the Parish Council for their generosity.

County Cllr Amanda Jupp said that she would look into the availability of grants for village halls regarding solar panels and send the Information to Paul.

Action

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

85 **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

DC/22/2287 – Highdown, Muntham lane, Barns Green – Erection of 8 lighting poles for tennis court.

Itchingfield Parish Council recommends this planning application for approval.

DC/23/0986 – Senior Living, (Broadbridge Heath) Limited, Five Oaks Road, Broadbridge Heath – Application for consent to display an advertisement(s). Three advertising billboards and three adverts displayed on a replacement fence.

Itchingfield Parish Council has concerns regarding the proposed siting of the three adverts sited on a replacement fence. This is almost directly opposite the junction of the A264 five Oaks Road and Lyons Road, which is a notorious accident black spot. The adverts have the potential to distract drivers coming to the junction from Slinfold village. There is currently a white fence recently erected by the developer approximately midway between the entrance to Wellcross Grange and the norther boundary of the site, which would be a better site for these adverts. Therefore, Itchingfield Parish Council would object to the application as being a possible hazard at this junction.

DC/23/1094 – Christ's Hospital, Christ's Hospital Road – Site address Westons Farm House, Westons Hill, Itchingfield – Construction of agricultural track.

There are discrepancies regarding the line and construction of the access track. In the covering letter from the agent, the track is 5 metres wide and has permeable construction with a 75mm topping layer including 40mm to dust; while the typical track section shows a concrete slab topping of 50mm. Regarding the track layout, the site location plan and proposed site plan shows the track being formed of two straight sections joined by a 90 degree bend. Whereas the Technical Note from Reeves Transport Planning Ltd shows a more tortuous route. The site is also clearly visible from the public highway at Westons Hill. In the agents covering letter the status of the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan is grossly understated, claiming that "the submission draft Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan was recently out to consultation in line with regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 20212 as amended". In fact, this regulation was passed some 4 years ago.

Otherwise, there are no objections posted, so providing the route and the construction of the road is clarified there are no objections from Itchingfield Parish Council.

HRA/23/0003 – (DC/21/1998, DISC/23/0129) – Clayfield Farm, Valewood Lane, Barns Green – Application for approval of Details Reserved By Condition.

Itchingfield Parish Council recommends this planning application for approval.

DC/23/0607 – 15 Trout Lane, Barns Green – Revised roof as requested by HDC.

Itchingfield Parish Council recommends this planning application for approval.

DC/23/0460 – Site Address Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Itchingfield – Demolition of an agricultural building and the erection of dwelling, (as an alternative to prior approval DC/21/2078).

Itchingfield Parish Council recommends this planning application for approval.

DC/23/0780 – Little Gaynes, Valewood lane, Barns Green – Reinstate lapsed consent for works to garage. Two storey rear extension with a single storey side extension, pool and associated pool house.

"Little Gaynes" is a rebuilt, (1996) 4-bedroom detached dwelling in a substantial plot. Planning consent was given for the construction of an ancillary annex for family use, under DC/19/1675. This has not been constructed and the permission has elapsed. Contrary to statement on the planning application there is a change in the car parking arrangements. We now have in effect two dwellings with a total of 6 bedrooms, standard methodology in order to arrive at a realistic consumption figure. Itchingfield Parish Council must also re-iterate that the annex must remain ancillary to the main dwelling. Car/cycle storage facilities need to be brought in line with current requirements and the water neutrality calculations need to be re-assessed before permission can be granted. Itchingfield Parish Council, therefore **do not recommend this application for approval** as it stands.

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

County Cllr Amanda Jupp gave the following report:

1. The County Council, as part of the West Sussex Waste Partnership, has been working in collaboration with The Environment Agency and Sussex Police, to stop waste crime by targeting areas with well-known fly-tipping problems. Three joint operations took place in Chichester, Horsham and Arun Districts which involved stopping vehicles that could be potentially carrying waste. Officers interviewed drivers and examined the vehicles' contents to deter and disrupt ongoing fly-tipping, helping identify waste-carrying vehicles and ensuring compliance. The success of the trial means all the partners have committed to extending the operation on a rolling programme throughout West Sussex. The public can report any unlawful waste activity to the Environment Agency's Area Crime Team anonymously via their 24-hour freephone emergency hotline on 0800 807 060 or via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

2. Last Friday I visited the new Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre off the A24 at Highwood which will officially open in a few weeks' time. It will incorporate the first state-of-the-art training facility in the county together with a new fire station which will serve Horsham and the surrounding area. It has been named Platinum House in memory of the late Queen Elizabeth II.
3. The County Council Youth Justice Service has been working with a group of children at Lodge Hill, an outdoor activities centre near Pulborough. Twenty-five young people aged between 14 and 18 years old have transformed an area of woodland by developing a mountain biking track and nature trail, serving reparation hours to 'pay back' the local community after offending. One 17-year-old male who took part in the project has been working on this for several months has led to him passing his Construction Skills Certification Scheme card which has subsequently gained him employment.
4. As you know our footpaths and bridleways are an important part of the Council's service delivery and the annual progress report 2022 for the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) team is now in the public domain. The [report \(PDF, 109KB\)](#) sets out the achievements of the service over the past year. With over 4000km of PRoW to maintain across the county, the team provides an important service to residents and visitors. Responsibilities include maintaining path surfaces, negotiating improvements with landowners, and working closely with key stakeholders to help support corporate objectives. Volunteers are crucial and help with path inspections and practical tasks across the network. Please let me know if there are any PRoW in the parish that need vegetation cutting back.
5. An additional £4.5m has been put into the Highways budget to cover drainage, road markings, sign maintenance/cleaning, tree work, and jet patching as well as extra staff to support the additional work. Discussions are underway at present for the budget for 2023/24 which will hopefully include further investment into Highways. With regard to the schools 'Keep Clear' signs and the trials currently undergoing, I have made a request of the Cabinet Member for Highways for more information on how individual schools can apply for these. I understand that it requires more funding, but the cost is relatively low so she is looking into sponsorship and other means of funding. In my opinion, it is a simple way of making parents and the public aware of school drop off and pick up times. I have requested that Highways make the drain/culvert jetting/clearance for IPC a priority given recent communication regarding the blocked "hotspot" under the railway bridge in Two Mile Ash. I reported some weeks ago that the junction at Toat Hill Garage, Bashurst Hill and the A264 Five Oaks Road needed the vegetation clearing again and having used this route several times recently I notice that it has been given a very thorough cut back. Highways are still experiencing staff shortages, so there is a backlog of inspections but I continue to highlight priority areas.

District Cllr Tricia Youtan sent the following report in her absence:

1. *"I have very little to report apart from a long-standing ambition that finally takes place on Saturday July 1st in Swan Walk. This is the opening of a new purpose facility for Health and Wellbeing which will be staffed by various experts in their field and who are ready and delighted to give advice and help for all matters that fall under this headline. Officers have worked tirelessly to deliver this to the people of Horsham and replaces the one that had to close down on the walkway to the Forum. The lease is for four years and it will be open all day throughout the week. Further details are on HDC website.*
2. *It appears that works to the residential development (which was approved on appeal) at Wellcross have ceased and there has been no movement at all for over two months. It remains a mystery but quite frankly the longer it takes the better as it was most certainly not wanted by any of us locally."*

87

Highways

1. Valewood Lane drainage issues – no more updates

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Local Traffic and Roads

1. Richard reported that he had a call with James Strachan regarding the SID's notices and final consultation period. 28 days on from then we will be able to commission the SID units.
2. With regard to the speed strips in Bashurst Hill and West Chiltington Lane, these should be put down soon with results by mid-July.
3. WSCC are reconsidering the proposal to get volunteers within the parish to put down markers by serious potholes. Amanda said that she has spoken to Michelle Hume, Head of Highways Operations and a meeting has been arranged for 3rd July 2023 with James, Richard, Chris Dye and herself to discuss this proposal.
4. Richard said that he hasn't had any further communications with Southwater Parish Council regarding initiating speed measures at Dog Barking bends in Two Mile Ash as this is on both boundaries.
5. Richard reported that the zig zag yellow lines have now been done at the front of the school and at the side.
6. Richard said that he along with Paul Allen and Terry Jones have been walking round the parish and submitted reports to James Strachan on where the potholes are situated. They have also looked at drains around Two

Mile Ash Road and Trout Lane and sent a summary to Adam Bazley at WSCC. Cllr Alan Strudley will send in a report regarding the drains near him in Trout Lane. The Clerk reported that she has ordered some hi-visibility vests that Richard has requested for the groups to use when they are walking around the village.

7. With regard to the condition of payments in Finians Field, it now looks like something has been done and some of the pavements have been repaired.
8. With regard to the 'crash site' in Two Mile Ash where a car went into the bridge over the brook near Marelands Farm, the WSCC are now waiting for the street furniture to arrive before the bridge can be repaired.
9. The 30mph sign which has fallen down in Chapel Road has been reported.
10. Finally, Richard said that he will produce some flyers to distribute at the Annual Village Meeting along with guidance material regarding 'Operation Crackdown'.

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Finance – All payments for approval since 22nd May 2023.

1. There are seven payments to be paid

£22.50 to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of rental for Meeting on 26th June 2023.

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

£758.18 to West Sussex County Council in respect of the Street Lighting Maintenance for Apr 22 to Mar 23.

£199.80 to Mulberry & Co. for year-end Internal Audit Review.

£37.96 to HDC in respect of the emptying of the dog bin July, August and September 2023.

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

£1,151.10 to the Clerk comprising of £1,082.55 salary for June 2023 and £68.55 expenses.

It was proposed by the Chairman to accept and approve the payments, seconded by Cllr Brian O'Connor, agreed unanimously.

2. Financial Report

- (i) The Clerk presented the Cllrs with a bank reconciliation as at 3rd June 2023.
- (ii) The Clerk reported that the Parish Council is in need of an IT upgrade having last purchased a Computer in 2015. It is generally recommended that computers are upgraded every three years so this computer is no longer fit for purpose. An IT upgrade had been included in the Parish Council's year-end reserves. Cllr Alan Strudley reiterated the Clerk's comments and proposed getting a hardware upgrade with an ongoing maintenance system which is the Microsoft 365 which will be an annual subscription and will give enough cloud storage for the Parish Council, seconded by the Chairman and agreed unanimously.

Action

3. Year-end Internal Audit Report

The Clerk had circulated the year-end Internal Audit Report. The Clerk first read out a summary of the Report And then the Clerk went through the recommendations for action going forward.

- (i) Summary as follows: *"Our sample testing at the interim audit did not uncover any financial errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, although we did identify significant weaknesses in the internal controls and governance processes of the council. At the time of the final audit, I am pleased to note that the council has used the interim recommendations to form an action plan and has already completed some of the recommendations and begun work on addressing the other identified issues. It is apparent from our reviews, that while the previous Internal Auditor may have checked the accounts for accuracy, little or no checking of governance procedures and processes have been conducted. There is no suggestion of any financial irregularities and I am confident that these can be all addressed by the end of 2023/24 financial year.*

(ii) Recommendations for action

- a) It is recommended best practice to not use terms such as 'Matters Arising' and 'Any Other Business'. The Parish Council has reviewed and considered its Agenda items and has made some changes.
- b) The Council was reminded that it is required to also post any supporting documentation with the agendas. At present the Clerk circulates all documents to Cllrs ahead of the meeting, but will look at which ones are necessary to post with the agenda.
- c) Standing Orders have been reviewed and due to be approved at the May 2023 council meeting. Standing Orders were duly approved at the May 2023 meeting.
- d) The council has drawn up a set of Financial Regulations based on the NALC model and these are due to be approved at the June 2023 meeting. Adoption of Financial Regulations are on this meeting's agenda to be adopted shortly.
- e) It is recommended for a council of this size, a quarterly report is presented to council, showing actual income and expenditure against budget and recorded in the minutes. A rolling budget is to be up and running and put in place soon.

- f) The Clerk is putting in place a process where the council ensures a minimum of quarterly Bank reconciliations are completed and these are independently checked by a Cllr and This activity is reported to council. Year-end bank reconciliation was presented at the April meeting and again at this meeting.
- g) The council is encouraged to ensure that its banking arrangements are in accordance with its adopted Financial Regulations once in place. To be looked at.
- h) Year-end balances remain over the £85,000 FSCS threshold and the council is encouraged to consider opening an additional bank account with an alternate provider. To be looked at.

90 Review and Approval of Code of Members' Conduct

The Clerk had circulated this document ahead of the meeting for review.

Cllr Brian O'Connor proposed that The Code of Members' Conduct was approved and adopted, seconded by Cllr Richard French, agreed unanimously.

91 Adoption of Financial Regulations

The Clerk had circulated this document ahead of the meeting which was based on the NALC model.

Cllr Alan Strudley proposed that the Financial Regulations be approved and adopted, seconded by Cllr Sanjeev Joshi, agreed unanimously.

92 Review of Risk Register

Cllr Alan Strudley said that the Risk Register is on the website so suggested that all Cllrs take a look at it And consider putting in a line item every time the Parish Council carries out an action.

93 Correspondence - None

94 Annual Village Meeting – Monday 10th July 2023 – to discuss agenda items

The Chairman reported that she had put a notice in the BIG MAG. Subjects for discussion include:

1. Sumners Pond Development
2. Outdoor gym on the Village Green
3. All weather accessible path to the arboretum
4. Parish Emergency Plan update
5. Village Hall repairs
6. Proposed Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan and where we are
7. Local Traffic and Roads update

The Clerk to put up some A4 posters and also get an A1 Poster for the Village Green and put a notice on our website. The Clerk to request that Simon Gale sets up the IT facilities for any of the presenters to use and also request that we have two mikes.

Action

95 Barns Green Primary School

The Chairman said that she has been in contact with Tracey Newbold, Headteacher at the school, with regard to the grant that the Parish Council has offered to the school for a project to celebrate the Kings Coronation. The Chairman has also asked about the dog poo situation outside the school and whether the school wanted financial assistance with setting up cameras. The Chairman she has not heard anything back so far so will contact Tracey again. The Chairman proposed that this item is now taken off the agenda.

Action

96 Any other Business

1. Cllr Brian O'Connor said that he subscribes to CPRE, the Countryside Charity who have been very active at looking at the new Development Planning Policy that the government has been trying to bring in. Brian said he has received a letter from Jeremy Quin MP stating that with all the controversy about how this policy should be implemented the government has been looking hard into it and one of the changes are that the five-year land supply has now been scrapped.
2. The Chairman said that Ross Dye applied to become a Parish Councillor just after the Election so it was agreed that he will be co-opted at the next meeting in July.
3. HDC are currently running Climate Action Network meetings three times a year which are open to two representatives from each parish and Cllr Richard French thought that it would be a good idea to mention this at the Annual Village Meeting. All agreed.
4. Following Cllr Sarah Peay's attendance at a Public Rights of Way (PROW) Seminar in June, Sarah has now written a full report which will go on the September meeting agenda to be discussed.

Action

Action

Action

97 Date of Next Meeting - Monday 24th July 2023. There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.44pm.