

ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 23rd October 2023 in the David Francis Room of the Village Hall

Present: Cllr Penny Simpson – Chairman
Cllr Richard French
Cllr Brian O'Connor
Cllr Ross Dye
Cllr Sarah Peay
Cllr James Sheppard
Cllr Alan Strudley
The Clerk Jan Critchley
County Cllr Amanda Jupp
District Cllr Kasia Greenwood
Lee Goossens

The Chairman said that she had had a discussion with Cllr James Sheppard a few weeks ago with regard to allowing James six months leave of absence due to personal circumstances. So, with the Parish Council's approval, the Chairman said that she would like to grant this to James. All approved and agreed. James said that during that time he will attend meetings when he is able to.

125 Apologies for Absence were received from District Cllr Tricia Youtan.

126 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.

127 Minutes of the last Meeting to be approved

The Minutes of the last meeting on 25th September 2023 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The Minutes were approved, accepted and signed by the Chairman.

128 To consider any matters arising from the last Meeting that are not on this Agenda.

1. Minute 114:1 Flooding under the Railway Bridge. The Clerk reported that she has no more to report on this matter, but will chase up Network Rail again.

Action

129 Open Session for Members of the Public –

The Chairman welcomed Lee Goossens who is attending the meeting at the Chairman's invitation to talk later about the Sigma Homes Development and also welcomed Paul Allen to the meeting. Paul Allen addressed the Parish Council on behalf of local residents who live in Chapel Road and near to Sumners Ponds. Paul said that as the Sumners Ponds/Sigma Homes Development is now going to be a regular agenda item, one or two of the residents will be attending future meetings. The purpose of this is to ensure that they hear regular updates and then there can be an early and timely cascade to other residents and also a chance to raise any questions or concerns. The residents feel that communication is very important and what they will do is let the Parish Council have any information relevant to what the residents have done or propose to do. Paul said that he noticed that HDC had published the Decision Notice on their website on 6th October 2023 and Section 2:3 of the Pre-Commencement Conditions states details of how residents will be advised of the Site Management contact details. The reason that is shown is that it is fundamental to consider the potential impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers and highway safety. What the residents have decided is that once they have received the contact details, they will make contact with the Site Manager and arrange an introductory meeting with Sigma Homes.

130 Sigma Homes Development

Lee Goossens addressed the Parish Council on behalf of Sigma Homes. He said that now that the Section 106 Agreement and the Decision Notice has been issued, there is going to be Site Meeting on Thursday 26th October 2023 to discuss how the project is to move forward. At this moment in time, Simon Smith is still in full ownership. Sigma Homes are likely to complete their acquisition of the residential part of the site on 6th November 2023. From that point onwards Sigma Homes will take the residential part of the site forward. Lee said that he has

received some questions from the Parish Council which he will answer. He said he has had a catch up with Chris East, Land Director of Sigma Homes who gave his apologies for this meeting, but he will attend subsequent Meetings if required. The first question that was raised: Will vehicle movements be restricted to avoiding commuting and school pick up and drop off hours? Lee said that the developer can only request this from the companies that they use for ordering materials. A second question that was raised: What route is proposed to be used by heavy vehicles coming to and leaving the site. Lee asked whether the Parish Council had a preference? Cllr Richard French said that a risk assessment should be carried out by Sigma Homes and then they should come back to the Parish Council with a proposal for the best route. Lee said he is increasingly aware of how concerned the Parish Council is over the construction process and particularly access and the impact that has on local residents and he said he will make sure when they have the Site Meeting, he will relate these concerns and he said he was sure that Sigma Homes would want to give us all the assurance that they can. This is one of the benefits of a smaller developer like Sigma. The only have a small number of sites that are being constructed at any one time so they are able to focus on the delivery of those sites. Lee said that he feels confident in the way Sigma Homes has worked with himself and the Smith family over the past three years. Of course, there will be challenges, but he reiterated that he would take any concerns back to the Site Meeting on Thursday and he feels sure that the Parish Council will get a full and detailed response. A third question was raised: It is good to see a Highway Condition Service Plan. Is there a commitment to make good? Lee said that if there is any damage, Sigma are duty bound to make good. A final question: Will pedestrian access to the lakes, café and campsite be affected? In reality Lee said it will be affected, but it will be managed. Simon Smith was very clear in the purchase contract that he wanted access maintained throughout. The Chairman said there was another question and it was whether residents most impacted by the development received a copy of the Transport Management Plan. In answer to that the Chairman said she would put in to the Parish Council's Facebook page and the Parish Council website. Cllr Ross Dye asked that with regard to vehicle movements, could there be a one way in and one way out considering the narrowness of most of our roads in and out of the village? Cllr Ross Dye also asked how will the developer manage vehicles arriving before the site opens in the mornings. Lee said that attached to the Transport Management Plan is a Site Plan that shows quite a few areas where vehicles could park off the carriageway if they arrived early. Lee said he would raise all these matters with Sigma.

Action

131 Planning Applications – Circulated to all Cllrs ahead of the meeting.

1. New Applications

HRA/23/0023 (DC/21/1998) - Mr J Forster, Clayfield Farm, Valewood Lane, Barns Green - Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations in respect of Prior Approval consent DC/21/1998.

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this HRA application, however, the Parish Council does note that Condition 3, Car Parking has not yet been addressed so this issue still needs to be looked at.

DC/23/1810 - Mr Francis Pulvermacher, Christ's Hospital, Christ's Hospital Road, West Sussex Site address: Westons Farm House, Westons Hill, Itchingfield - Non Material Amendment to previously approved application DC/23/1094 (Construction of agricultural track) amendment to layout of the agricultural track, addition of a French drain, and removal of the cattle grid.

Itchingfield Parish Council recommend this planning application for approval.

EN/23/0435. Alleged breach of condition 4 of DC/17/1971, (ancillary occupation only). Westons Farm House.

Itchingfield Parish Council noted that all the original documents state that the "annex" is for ancillary use only. Parish Councillor Brian O'Connor has spoken to Case Officer Jo Hopkins-Brown, who told him that Christ's Hospital were intending to rent out this annex separately to the house, thus contravening condition 4 of the original planning consent DC/17 1981. Jo Hopkins-Brown further informed Parish Councillor Brian O'Connor that Savills the agents had advised her that although the intention was to rent the property separately this has not been done, so no breach has occurred.

132 Reports by County and District Councillors

District Cllr Kasia Greenwood gave the following report:

1. Active Travel. HDC are working hard on improving Active Travel in the district, which means making it easier and safer to walk and cycle. A lot of this is happening in partnership with West Sussex County Council, so with that in mind I'd like to draw your attention to the public consultation WSCC have opened on the future of active travel:
Notification From WSCC Active Travel Team "Public consultation has begun on the future of active travel in West Sussex. The proposals that are being put forward set out how we can deliver improved walking, wheeling and cycling facilities across the county. We are seeking your feedback on two important documents related to the way that we travel:
(i) Our draft Active Travel Strategy, which sets out our vision and goals for active travel in the county for the next decade and beyond. (ii) Our draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which identifies key locations where WSCC wants to invest in active travel. Have your say - You can find out more about the suggested improvements by visiting the project's website: <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/active-travel-strategy>.
On the website you can read the draft Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP in full and have your say by completing a Survey. The survey closes on 15 November 2023. We would like to gain as many responses as possible, so please

share details of these proposals through your networks.”

Active Travel affects the entire district and will be looking at how we make routes and connections easier between towns and villages, as well as within them. It would be great to hear your thoughts on this and please do pass on the details of the survey to any keen walkers or cyclists you might know because it would be great to have as much participation and information as possible.

2. **Horsham Matters.** I recently spoke to representatives from Horsham Matters who run community support schemes such as the food bank. They advised me that villages like Barns Green, Slinfold and Warnham have been identified as areas where people struggle with loneliness and isolation. I was excited, therefore, to hear about a new community outreach scheme on the horizon. Horsham Matters have been given a vehicle which they are in the process of fixing up. Their aim is to bring this vehicle into villages like ours, initially on a fortnightly basis, in order to reach out to those who find it difficult to get out of the village and who perhaps don't have the social networks they need. The service will offer things like advice on pensions, as well as identifying who may need help with things like food shops and access to healthcare. Horsham Matters told me that the difficulty they face is that those households who are isolated are particularly hard to reach and to identify because it is precisely their lack of access to things like social media and community networks which prevents them from hearing about schemes like this. They would like to work in collaboration with our village in order to help identify which households may find this scheme beneficial and which locations might be best for the vehicle to park. So I will keep you updated on the progress of the scheme and please do contact me or Horsham Matters directly if you have any information you feel might help.
3. **Local Plan.** A quick update on the Local Plan, I can confirm that a meeting date has been set for early December when the Local Plan will be put before Council, so the ambition to have a Local Plan in place by the end of the year is still very much on the agenda.

County Cllr Amanda Jupp gave the following report:

1. **Sigma Homes Development** – Amanda said that it may be a good idea to apply for a speed reduction whilst the site is being constructed. This has been done in other villages.
2. **Valewood Lane** – there is still water constantly running down Valewood Lane from Clayfield Farm. Amanda said that she has spoken to Michelle Hume about this and what can be done. Amanda will chase up. The hedges in Valewood Lane need to be cut back. The Clerk will contact John Forster at Clayfield Farm and Cllr Brian O'Connor will contact the residents of Greenfield Farm to get the hedges cut back. **Action**
3. **Footpaths in Smugglers Way** – Amanda said that the Chairman had copied her in on an email from Lorraine Allcock regarding the terrible state of the footpaths in Smugglers Way. Amanda said that she has followed this up. **Action**
4. **New Pathway in Muntham Drive** - The Chairman said that she had walked from the Village Hall Car park to the bottom of Muntham Drive ahead of organising an opening of the new pathway. There is need of a grasscrete pathway from the Village Hall down to the playground. The Chairman asked Amanda whether this was something the WSCC could do. The Chairman also said that she believes that Christ's Hospital has some grasscrete that could be available. There was a proposal to mark a footway along the edge of the Barns Green Sports and Social Car parking area and also to mark an area in front of the new pathway so that there is no parking there during school drop off and pick up times. The Clerk to get obtain some quotes. **Action**
5. **Fencing along the A264 on Christ's Hospital land** – Amanda said she would contact Francis Pulvermacher again to see if the fence could be repaired and the brambles cut back. Perhaps this could be done by a working party. **Action**
6. **Ditches and Hedges** - Now is the time to cut back hedges and clear ditches, although this can be continued throughout the winter and spring until the nesting season begins at the end of March. Under Riparian Rights, the responsibility for clearing ditches and cutting back hedges that encroach on the highway or footpaths lies with the homeowner. It not only helps to keep footpaths clear, improve highway sightlines and road widths, make access for pedestrians and cyclists easier, but ditch clearance also prevents flooding. Gulley clearances are currently being undertaken so please report any that need immediate attention.
7. **Highways** - have had three jet patchers in operation from April this year. Last year approximately 9000 repairs were carried out compared to 15,500 by the end of September this year.
On average 95% of pothole repairs are being carried out by the “cut and sawn” method which means they last longer and often address several potholes in one area at the same time. The volume of enquiries this year has been the highest ever over the last 12 years and there has been a 26% increase in workload on average.
8. **Public Rights of Way** - There is an online reporting tool on the County Council website where residents can raise any issues with footpaths and bridleways - [Report a problem with a Public Right of Way](#). These issues can then be triaged by the office team and dealt with if urgent or checked at the next inspection and the appropriate actions taken. Issues such as missing or damaged signs need not be reported as these will be identified as a matter of course during the inspection and maintenance cycle.
9. **Children and Young People** - A decision has been made by the Interim Director of Education for the award of Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) 2023/24 programme grants up to a total value of £1,050,107. These include:
The allocation of further HAF 2023/24 programme funds up to a value of £25,000 to assist providers with delivering the food offer in specific circumstances and to ensure inclusivity for children with higher needs.
The allocation of HAF 2023/24 programme funds to an anticipated value of £270,000 to providers for a programme for the Christmas holiday period. The allocation of further HAF 2023/24 programme funds to the anticipated value of £25,000 for the provision of one-day family events to increase engagement opportunities for families eligible for free school meals.
10. **Tackling Climate Change** - The County Council's [Climate Change Strategy](#) pledges to tackle climate change and protect

the environment and [Our Council Plan](#) priorities have an underlying commitment to climate action. The ambitious target is to be a carbon neutral and climate resilient organisation by 2030.

The [Tackling Climate Change April 2021 to March 2023 Progress Report \(PDF, 2.1MB\)](#), issued this month, shows the progress made and work undertaken, between April 2021 and March 2023, towards achieving the target.

11. **Young Persons' Fare Scheme – 16 to 20 Bus Saver** - The '16 to 20 Bus Saver' launched on Sunday, 22 October (delivering on the proposal included in the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan). Currently when young people reach the age of 16 they usually stop qualifying for cheaper child-rate tickets and have to pay the full adult fare. The new scheme means young people can continue to receive a discount up to their 21st birthday. To get the discount, young people just need to show a valid ID or a [Citizencard](#). Discounted fares and tickets purchased under the '16 to 20 Bus Saver' scheme apply to any direct bus journey which starts or finishes in West Sussex. Further details, including FAQs, are included on the County Council's website. The scheme responds directly to the issue raised during previous engagement with young people about reducing the cost of bus travel. The County Council and bus operators will monitor the take-up and working of the scheme which will run until March 2025.
The Government's existing [£2 Bus Fare Cap](#) is separate from the '16 to 20 Bus Saver' and may offer a cheaper alternative. Young people are encouraged to plan their travel ahead and check with the bus operator to see which fare offers them the best value for money.
12. **Your Voice Engagement Hub** - Information can be found about current and past consultations, public notices and engagement activities on the Council's [Your Voice Engagement Hub](#). There are also details of current and past projects. A simple registration process to enable people to have their say, share ideas, discuss important topics and provide feedback on policy and planning to contribute to the future of West Sussex.
13. **England Coastal Path** - The King Charles III England Coast Path is a new walking route being developed by Natural England in partnership with local access authorities that will follow the entire coast of England. The path is being opened in sections and will, when completed, be the longest coastal path in the world at approximately 2,700 miles. In West Sussex, a short section of the King Charles III England Coast Path is open in Shoreham-by-Sea and the County Council's Public Rights of Way team has been undertaking infrastructure works on the next stretch from East Head to Shoreham-by-Sea, which is now complete and will be accessible from 18 October. These new rights relate to the England Coast Path and the coastal margin (a wider area of generally accessible land, mostly between the path itself and the seaward extent of the foreshore), with a number of access restrictions which will be shown on information panels and online. Once opened, the King Charles III England Coast Path will join the family of National Trails. For more information visit [National Trail - King Charles III England Coast Path](#). Details about planning a walk can be found on [National Trail.co.uk](#). The remaining West Sussex stretch from South Hayling to East Head is awaiting approval by the Secretary of State and Natural England forecast this stretch will be complete by end of 2024.

133 Highways, Local Traffic and Roads - Cllr Richard French gave the following report:

1. SID's – Richard said that he has now contacted 6 providers to get quotes and is now waiting to receive these.
2. There is a North Horsham Focus Group meeting on 23rd November 2023 from 10-2pm relating to Traffic matters. Unfortunately, Richard can't attend as he is working but if anyone else is able to attend that would be good.
3. With regard to the school crossing, Richard asked whether there had been many taking up the opportunity to walk to and from the village car park to the school? Amanda said that the Headteacher was going to do some promotional work with the children so that the parents can be persuaded to use the new pathway. Richard asked about the Keep Clear signs outside the school. Amanda will make enquiries. Amanda also mentioned about some towns shutting the street during school drop off and pick up, however that may not be feasible in Barns Green.
4. Richard said that he will be getting the Bashurst Hill TRO resubmitted shortly.
5. Richard said he was pleased to see the resurfacing work being carried out in Chapel Road, however, a contractor's vehicle was parked right up onto the pathway throughout the day. Richard said he took a photo and made Amanda and James Strachan aware of this and it was reported straight away to the contractor working on behalf of WSCC.
6. Cllr Alan Strudley asked whether anything has been logged with WSCC regarding the blocked gullies in Trout Lane that he reported with photos about a year ago. Amanda said it has been logged and is on the list to be done very soon. Cllr Alan Strudley said that it was not just a case of jetting the gullies, there is a major blockage in the system.

134 Finance – All payments for approval since 25th September 2023.

1. There are seven payments to be paid
£28.50 to EE Home Broadband in respect of the Internet Service for October 2023.
£126.00 to Barns Green Community Publications, The BIG MAG, in respect of a quarter page inclusion from November 2023 to October 2024.
£22.50 to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of rental for the Parish Council Meeting 23rd October 2023.
£100.00 to Pete Cochran in respect of Litter Warden duties for October 2023.

£1,165.70 to the Clerk comprising of £1,082.35 salary for October 2023 and £83.35 expenses.
£1,058.19 to HM Revenue and Customs in respect of employers and employees tax for July, August and September 2023.
£9.54 to Jewson in respect of a bag of post fix for the Oak tree on the village green.
It was proposed by the Chairman to accept and approve the payments, agreed unanimously.

2. **Bank Mandate**

The Clerk said that we now require a new signatory to sign cheques as Sanjeev Joshi has left the Parish Council. The Clerk said that Cllr Alan Strudley is willing to become a signatory. The Chairman asked if everyone was in favour? All agreed unanimously. The Clerk to organise for a new mandate to be completed and signed.

Action

135 Correspondence

1. The Clerk reported that she had received a letter from the IPCC, Itchingfield Parochial Church Council thanking the Parish Council for the increased grant of £2,000.00 given from this years' Precept and a request for a similar grant from next years' Precept 2024-2025. A copy of their year-end accounts were enclosed. After deliberation by the Cllrs, it was proposed by the Chairman to give the IPCC a grant of £2,200.00 from the Precept 2024-2025, seconded by Cllr Brian O'Connor and agreed unanimously.
2. A letter had been received from 4 Sight Vision Support, a registered charity supporting blind and sight impaired children, their families and carers across West Sussex. The letter explains how the parish can help support this charity by spreading awareness, promoting fund-raising events and supporting financially. The charity is not currently supporting any residents in our parish, but the Clerk to request that the charity informs us if and when this changes. It was decided to ask that the BIG MAG to put an article in their next edition. The Clerk to also ask if the charity have any posters that they would like us to put up.

Action

136 New Trust Representative for the Parish Council to be appointed

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council now needs a new Trust Representative to be appointed now that Alan Peers is no longer on the Council. Cllr Alan Strudley said that he would be pleased to come back on as our representative again. All agreed that Alan should be our new Trust Representative. The Clerk to write to the Chairman of the Trust.

137 Any other Business – items to be advised before the meeting.

1. Cllr James Sheppard asked whether we had received any Service Reports from BEAT regarding the Defibrillator. The Clerk said that she would chase this up.
2. Cllr Alan Strudley said that he has been working with the Clerk to upgrade the Parish Council IT Systems and he said that she has done a great job in taking on a completely new technology platform. The Clerk said that she was very grateful for Alan's help. The Chairman thanked the Clerk and Cllr Alan Strudley for their work on this.
3. It was noted that BT are working in Plumtree Cross Lane and Cllr Ross Dye said that there is wiring for the emergency generators they are using, across the bridlepath. It is assumed that this thick wiring is safe for walkers and riders and it is only there for a few days.

Action

138 Date of Next Meeting - Monday 20th November 2023. There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.03pm.