

ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 30th January 2023 in the David Francis Room of the Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Penny Simpson - Chairman

Cllr James Sheppard – Vice-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

1 Apologies for Absence – none.

2 Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting on 19th December 2022 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The Minutes were then accepted and signed by the Chairman.

3 Matters arising from the Minutes

1. Minute 144:1 Clearing of verges/briars at the bottom of Fulfords Hill. The Clerk has ascertained the owner of the small barn which is at the front of the development at the bottom of Fulfords Hill and written to her on 19th December 2022. The Clerk has not received a response to date. The Clerk to write again.

Action

4 Open Session for Members of the Public

Cllr Sarah Peay arrived at 7.40pm.

5 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/23/0017 – Church Farm, Fulfords Hill, Itchingfield – Erection of a single side extension/garden room

DC/23/0018 – Church Farm, Fulfords Hill, Itchingfield – Erection of a single side extension (Listed Building Consent).

The proposed extension is an oak framed structure subservient to the current main house and is designed as a garden room with mainly glazed elevations and a reclaimed tile pitched roof. In order to gain access to the extension from the main house it is proposed to remove the currently exterior chimney and chimney breast and to remove two existing windows either side of the chimney and take the resultant openings down to floor level. Itchingfield Parish Council considers that removing the chimney is destroying an important element of this, “relatively well-preserved example of a C17/C18, or possibly earlier farmhouse” and removing a key landmark heritage feature of the house from the exterior which can currently be readily seen from the public highway, (Fulfords Hill), local public foot paths as well as from the neighbouring dwellings and structures within the conservation area.

For this reason, Itchingfield Parish Council recommends that this application should be **refused**.

DC/22/2352 – Muntham Home Farm, Mobile Home, Muntham Drive, Barns Green – Application to confirm the continuous use of land for the siting of a mobile home for residential occupation (class C3) purposes for a period in excess of ten years, (Lawful Development Certificate – existing).

It is stated in the application that the mobile home has been in use from 31/12/2006 without interruption. Itchingfield Parish Council’s Planning Officer has visited the site. The mobile home is situated behind a wall and has a newly installed shed, but does not seem to currently be in occupation as the mobile home has algae and mould on the outside and visible curtains and blinds appear to be dirty and mouldy.

The position of the mobile home is discreet and no loss of amenity or privacy to neighbouring properties not in Mr and Ms Banks and Dorkings ownership. However, while there seems no particular reason for refusal, the claim that the mobile home has been in continuous use should be challenged and resolved before permission is granted.

2. Compliance issues update:

EN/23/0030, Unauthorised field entrance and crossover between The Lodge and Plumtree Cross Lane has been registered by the HDC Case Officer, Jo Hopkins. Cllr Brian O'Connor has spoken to her and submitted photos of the entrance. She informed him that she has been in contact with the owners of The Lodge and she has required the opening to be closed and the gate and attendant posts and furniture to be removed with the hedge restored to its previous state by 11th February 2023.

EN/23/0050 – This has now been received by HDC Compliance Team after Cllr Brian O'Connor wrote to Madeline Hartley. Cllr Brian O'Connor had noticed a "new" crossover being constructed between 8 Peskett Close and Two Mile Ash. He notified Madeleine Hartley of HDC Compliance Team on Friday 27th January and supplied photos of the installation. Cllr Brian O'Connor advised the tenant at No 8 to check with HDC Planning Department regarding the legality of what she was doing. The Chairman and Parish Clerk were also informed. Update: Cllr Brian O'Connor has received an email from Madeleine Hartley today stating:

"Further to your email, and to the subsequent emails from the tenant with regards the works that have recently been undertaken to land forward of 8 Peskett Close, it is clear from looking at Google maps that an informal access has existed for at least four years across the verge at this point, and as such it would appear that any recent works to formalise the access are a matter for West Sussex County Council or the landowner."

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

County Cllr Amanda Jupp gave the following report:

1. The County Council is finalising its budget for 2023/24 which will include:
 - £84m on waste services, climate change and the environment
 - £80m on maintaining 4046km of roads & 3,956km of footway
 - £435m supporting 8,500 adults through social care
 - £36m keeping 883,000 residents healthy through public health services.
 - £174m supporting 880 children cared for, 760 children on Child Protection Plans, 1,585 children on Child in Need Plans and 2,130 families through early help
 - £883m on support to 118,276 children in the 286 schools, 6,510 children with education health and care plans which has seen an increase of 90% since March 2015 and support to 2,400 families and young carers.

It will be endorsed by Cabinet at its public meeting on Tuesday 31st January and then proceed to Full Council on 17th February for agreement by elected members.

2. The recent extreme weather conditions have had a significant impact on the highway network due to flooding and highway damage. As such, the highways teams are very busy focussing resources on safety matters. Responses to emails and reports are taking longer than usual, but every effort will be made to respond to enquiries in a reasonable time period. The A29 at Pulborough continues to be closed and it may be some time before it is open again. There are diversions in place and signage to this effect in the area.
3. I met with Cllr Richard French prior to the meeting this evening following my meeting with James Strachan, Assistant Area Highway Manager, regarding the re-application of the TRO to reduce the speed limit in Bashurst Hill. His advice was to get up-to-date speed data in the first instance before meeting with him again, to discuss the best way forward. James will arrange for the speed strips to be laid in the road shortly.

7 **Highways**

1. Valewood Lane drainage issues – Cllr James Sheppard reported that the Parish Council has received a quote from Waste Assess on 20th December 2022 to do the testing and this has been accepted. The company should have started the testing in January 2023 but so far this has not been confirmed. Cllr James Sheppard will chase up again.

Action

2. Clearing of drains within the parish

The question was raised as to whether the Parish Council should seek to employ someone to clear the leaves from drains within the parish on a regular basis in the autumn and winter months. At the moment this task is carried out by residents on a voluntary basis within their own locality. Cllr Richard French to put together a draft for the BIG MAG and circulate to all Cllrs.

Action

8 **Local Traffic and Roads**

Cllr Richard French gave the following report:

1. Richard said that with regard to Bashurst Hill he has been in touch with Sussex Police in respect of the police doing a talk to residents about Speedwatch.
2. Richard said that he has submitted an article for the BIG MAG about reporting pot holes. He said that there needs to be a balance in people's expectations. Richard said that he will make an updated version

Action

of The Traffic Reporting flyer to go into the BIG MAG again

3. Richard said that he has been in touch with James Strachen at WSCC regarding the SID's proposal. James had given some feedback and Richard has now made some final recommendations. Once James has given feedback on our final recommendations we will then have the definitive locations of the SID's. Notices will go up for a period of time and then we can get the go ahead for installation of the devices.
4. Richard said that he will be joining a virtual meeting on 16th February regarding Charging Points and will also be joining a Summer Road Safety Virtual Briefing on 13th March.
5. Richard asked County Cllr Amanda Jupp whether anymore has been done about reinstating/realigning the fence on the A264 on the left- hand side on the approach to Toat Hill. Amanda said that she has still to meet with David Exwood. Richard suggested that this should happen before the Spring foliage grows. **Action**

9

1. Accounts for Payment

There are six payments to be paid

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

£172.80 to Vision ICT in respect of hosted email accounts March 2023 to February 2024.

£281.52 to Mulberry & Co. in respect of the Interim Audit Report January 2023.

£156.22 to Amazon in respect of printing cartridges.

£1,072.65 to the Clerk comprising of £1,004.95 salary for January 2023 and £67.70 expenses.

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

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

2. Interim Internal Audit Report.

The Clerk had received an Interim Audit Report from Mulberry & Co. which she had circulated ahead of this meeting along with action points from the report. The Clerk reported that there are a few statutory procedural requirements which require immediate action and several recommended procedural requirements.

- a) The first statutory requirement is for all Parish Councillors to complete the Register of Members' Interest Form within 28 days of each election and published on the Parish Council website so that all forms are no more than four years old. The next election is in May 2023. It was agreed by all Cllrs to complete the Members' Register of Interest Form after this meeting and then again in May 2023. **Action**
- b) The second statutory requirement is for agendas to be dated and published on the Parish Council website 3 working days before a parish council meeting. The Clerk confirmed that she had published the agenda for this meeting as per the statutory requirement. Following recommendations for Agenda content it was agreed that Agenda Item 2 will be 'Declarations of Interest' and Agenda Item 4 will be 'To consider any matters arising from the last meeting that cannot wait until the next meeting. Each agenda item to be followed by a brief summary of what is to be discussed. All other agenda items to remain unchanged.
- c) The report stated that the Parish Council has a duty to assess the risks associated with its functions including operational and financial risks. It was proposed by the Chairman that Cllr Alan Strudley and the Clerk to create a draft Risk Management Policy to be considered at the next meeting, seconded by Cllr James Sheppard, agreed unanimously.
- d) Although the Parish Council has Standing Orders in place, it is recommended that the Parish Council reviews the NALC model of Standing Orders and considers adoption of this (tailored where appropriate). It was proposed by the Chairman that the Parish Council reviews our Standing Orders annually at the AGM, seconded by Cllr Alan Strudley and agreed unanimously. The Chairman and Cllr Sarah Peay to to look at the NALC model and make recommendations to the full Council. **Action**
- e) It is recommended that the Parish Council reviews the NALC model of Financial Regulations and considers adoption of this (tailored where appropriate). It was proposed by the Chairman that the Parish Council considers adopting the NALC model of Financial Regulations annually at the AGM seconded by Cllr Alan Strudley, agreed unanimously. Cllr Alan Strudley to look at the NALC model and make recommendations to the full Council. **Action**
- f) The Parish Council fully intends to look into software packages and Cllr Alan Strudley will start this process. **Action**
- g) The Clerk to look into the way the transparency information is published on the website and report back at at the next meeting. **Action**
- h) The Clerk to contact the Parish Council's website provider regarding putting a Privacy Statement on the website. **Action**
- i) It is recommended for a council of our size, a quarterly report is presented to Council, showing actual income and expenditure against budget and that this is recorded in the minutes. It is also recommended that the council ensures a minimum of quarterly bank reconciliations are completed and reported to the full council. **Action**

Whilst reviewing all our procedures it was proposed by Cllr Brian O'Connor that the Parish Council considers reviewing its Model Code of Members' Conduct, seconded by Cllr Richard French, agreed unanimously. The Chairman and Cllr Sarah Peay will look at the new Code of Members' Conduct adopted by Horsham District Council in December 2021 and come back to the full Council with recommendations.

Action

10 Finances

Decision to be made with regard to paying back the PWLB early.

Cllr Alan Strudley said that he would be happy to keep the PWLB loan and not pay it back early as long as the Parish Council has earmarked items against its reserve. After deliberation by all the Cllrs, it was proposed by the Chairman that the Parish Council does not pay back the loan early at the present time and considers items to be earmarked for our reserves at the next meeting, seconded by Cllr Sanjeev Joshi, agreed unanimously.

11 Correspondence –

1. A letter was received from MPC on behalf of Inspired Villages informing the Parish Council that in Order to implement the access approved at the outline stage for the proposed development at Wellcross Grange, some tree removal works are required and this work is scheduled to commence On 31st January 2023 and will take place over two weeks. There will be a lane closure in place on Five Oaks Road on both 8th and 9th February 2023.

12 Clerk's Salary with effect from 1st April 2022

The Parish Councillors considered the Clerk's Salary with effect from 1st April 2022 using the recommendations from the National Association of Local Councils on the new pay scales for 2022-2023 to be implemented from 1st April 2022. It was proposed by the Chairman that the Clerk's salary be increased in line with the NALC recommendations with effect from 1st April 2022, seconded by Cllr Sarah Peay, agreed unanimously.

13 AOB

No prior AOB items have been requested.

14 Date of Next Meeting - Monday 27th February 2023. There being no other business closed at 9.43pm.