

## **ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 in the David Francis Room of the Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr Alan Strudley – Chairman  
Cllr Lorraine Awcock  
Cllr Jenny Cass  
Cllr Elaine French  
Cllr Rob Fryatt  
Cllr Brian O'Connor  
Cllr Simon Ott  
Cllr Sarah Peay  
The Clerk Jan Critchley  
District Cllr Kasia Greenwood  
County Cllr Amanda Jupp  
Members of the Public: Simon Gale, Russ Parkes, Nick Yeo and David Pickard

**1 Apologies for Absence** – were received from Cllr Ross Dye, Cllr Rebecca Jackson and District Cllr Tricia Youtan.

**2 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.* Cllr Rob Fryatt and Cllr Elaine French declared a personal interest in relation to Sigma Homes Development as they live near to the development site.

**3 Minutes of the last Meeting to be approved**

The Minutes of the last meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. It was noted that Cllr Rob Fryatt declared a personal interest in relation to Sigma Homes Development as he lives near the development site. The Minutes were amended to reflect this. The Minutes were then approved, accepted and signed by the Chairman.

**Action**

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

1. Minute 158:1 – On-site meeting to discuss car parking facilities up at Itchingfield – Cllr Sarah Peay reported that she had held an on-site meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025, with the Chairman Cllr Alan Strudley and Pip McBean to discuss how car parking, up at Itchingfield could be improved. Parking at St. Nicolas Church is a big issue bearing in mind the narrow road. Three possible areas were looked at: 1) An area in the field south of the Old Archdeaconry 2) Part of the old school playing fields where housing development may take place and 3) An area on the southwest corner of the field opposite the school site, inside the hedge. Investigations will now need to be made to see if any of these areas could be a possibility with an approach to landowners.

**Action**

**5 Village Projects - funding**

The Clerk reported that she had sent out letters to all the Clubs who had made requests to let them know what had been decided at the last meeting:

Barns Green Playpark – all the quotes had been received and signed and this project will be going ahead in March or April 2025.

Barns Green Players – a cheque will be raised this evening for the grant to purchase some new theatre lighting.

Barns Green Tennis Club – the Parish Council is waiting for the quotes to be re-sent and approved so that work can commence on the improvements to the Car Park, Pathway and Ramp by the Tennis Courts.

BIG MAG – as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 the Parish Council will be giving an annual grant of £500 towards printing costs.

Barns Green Sports & Social Club – the Chairman will be meeting with Alan Lambkin and Victoria Barrett next week for further discussions.

Barns Green Cricket Club – this project had been deferred until more information is received. The Chairman reported that Russ Parkes will be making a representation on behalf of the Cricket Club later in this meeting.

**6 Reports from County and District Councillors**

The Clerk reported that reports from both our District Cllr and County Cllr had been published on the website.

District Cllr Amanda Jupp said that she would like to add that she had received notice of work to be done on West Chilton Lane and Bashurst Hill in February when the road will be closed for 5 days for carriageway patching. Amanda said that she has requested that the gullies are cleared out at the bottom of Bashurst Hill.

Amanda also reported that about 4 weeks ago, the fence along the A264 near to the Toat Hill junction, has been removed, scrub removed and the fence replaced so visibility at that junction is greatly improved.

Amanda suggested that when gateways are finally installed in Bashurst Hill/West Chilton Lane, it would be a good idea to add 'unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles'.

The Chairman said that Emms Lane, although some repairs to potholes have been done, the whole area needs resurfacing again. Amanda said that she will get someone from the Highways team to come and inspect it. Kasia added to her report on the Local Plan Update that the Inspectors have paused the HDC Local Plan, but is it still unclear as to why this is. The Officers have provided all the information that has been requested so HDC are just waiting to hear what the outcome is. Kasia said that there is plenty of information regarding Community Funds and Grant in her report on-line.

Action

The Chairman said that, with regard, to recent reports of surveyors looking at the fields opposite the shop and pub, he said that it would be really good practice if HDC would inform the Parish Council of their plans and let the Parish Council know what is happening in our parish as a lot of questions have been asked. It appears that these Surveyors are working on behalf of landowners but nothing has been officially confirmed to the Parish Council. Kasia to make enquiries on behalf of the Parish Council as to what is being planned.

Action

## 7 Open Session for Members of the Public

Russ Parkes addressed the Parish Council on behalf of the Barns Green Cricket Club in response to the Parish Council's request to have more clarity on what the Cricket Club's reserves are being set aside for as they are requesting a grant from the Parish Council. Russ said that 5k of its reserves have been set aside for pre-season working capital and the Club would like to set aside 2.5k towards new training nets which are part of a three-year project costing around 50 to 60K, so this is why the Club is requesting assistance with maintenance of the mowers. The Chairman said that as a general principal and guideline, the Parish Council is adopting a process by which it is more appropriate to spend money on infrastructural projects i.e. the Cricket Nets, rather than assistance with operational ongoing costs for clubs. Russ thanked the Parish Council for their consideration and advice.

David Pickard addressed the Parish Council. He said he is interested about what is happening to the fields opposite the shop and pub and wondered at what stage one could make objections. Cllr Brian O'Connor gave a summary stating that now that the HDC Local Plan has been stalled and as a consequence, all outstanding Neighbourhood Plans are also stalled even though our Plan is 99% done, but not made. HDC has been premature and high-handed in approaching the owner of the fields opposite the shop and pub to move ahead. Even though it is within our parish, the Parish Council hasn't formally been informed about what is going on. Brian said that there was an on-line meeting earlier in the week regarding the stalling of the HDC Local Plan which he attended and he said that the Parish Council was very disappointed in HDC's lack of communication and the fact that the Parish Council had not been approached regarding the rationale of developing the fields for 87 homes.

Nick Yeo addressed the Parish Council. He said he wanted to find out the Parish Council's position regarding development on the land between Kingfisher Farm and Greenfields Farm known as 'Greenacres' site. HDC's strategy was dependant on the Local Plan going through which would have created a better understanding of the number of pitches etc. which would have been used as a marker for additional development in that area. Now that the Local Plan has been stalled this allows unauthorised development with inadequate infrastructure. The Chairman said that the Parish Council has spent many hours and weeks debating this issue, but we do not have any enforcement powers. District Cllr Kasia Greenwood to raise this issue once again when she meets with HDC Officers next week. The Chairman said that it would be good for a representative from the Parish Council to attend too.

Action

## 8 Sigma Homes Development –

No official report in Cllr Ross Dye's absence. The Chairman said that there have been a few nuisance issues that have been reported by local residents living nearby. The Parish Council is currently waiting to hear back about a meeting with Sigma Homes and the sub-committee.

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

### 1. New Applications

**DC/24/1981 - Mr and Mrs Harding, 29 The Hordens, Barns Green - The erection of a new conservatory.**

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this planning application and recommends for approval.

**DC/25/0005 - Mr and Mrs Christian John, Stables to the south of Lower Batchelors, Emms Lane, Barns Green - Permission in principle for demolition of an existing structure and erection of a single dwelling.**

The first matter that needs attention on this application is that the site description states the site address to be stables to the south of Lower Batchelors. The site shown on the location plan and the block plan is to the **north west** of Lower Batchelors. Bearing in mind previous applications for planning permission, this matter is important and needs clarifying. Both the above plans also show a site that seems to be too small to accommodate either the indicative type 1 or indicative type 2 dwellings proposed. Whilst this is a request for permission in principle, Itchingfield Parish Council considers that the applicant should at least get his geography in order and that the site proposed is suitable for the proposed dwelling. Therefore, Itchingfield Parish Council recommends this planning application for refusal due to incorrect information being supplied.

**DC/25/0055. Validated 23/01/2025. Mrs A Ray, Greenfield Farm, Valewood Lane, Barns Green - Use of land for the stationing of 5 static caravans for residential purposes and 3 associated, day rooms. Associated landscape works.**

The proposed development is situated on the existing Gypsy site of Greenfield Farm, which already has some 14 permitted pitches with attendant day rooms and vehicle parking. The most recent were permitted under DC/21/2528. These properties are situated around the two sides of the perimeter of the site facing onto and gaining access from Valewood Lane, (the original permitted entrance) and West Chilton Lane, a more recently constructed entrance. The proposed units which are situated to the north of the site will infill the "L" shape of the existing properties and will have a third access onto West Chilton Lane. Itchingfield Parish Council objects to this planning application as it is overdevelopment in line with the already overdeveloped Travellers' site at Greenfield Farm (14 pitches instead of 11). Further there is lack of drainage from the site with zero soakaways and there are already many existing sewage issues. The Parish Council recommends refusal.

**DC/24/1998. Validated 23/12/2024, Mr Durwin Banks, Muntham Home Farm, The Linseed Farm, Muntham Drive, Barns Green - Prior notification for alterations to existing farm building to provide alternative access and associated tack.**

Itchingfield Parish Council notes that this Prior Notification has already been approved.

**DC/24/1809 - Willow Cottage Bashurst Hill Itchingfield - Construction to existing car parking area, to provide a double car, timber-framed garage building and amended vehicular access.**

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this planning application and recommends for approval.

**DC/21/2697/S106/24/0024 - Land at Sumners Pond, Chapel Road, Barns Green - Variation of S106 Agreement relating to DC/21/2697 (Erection of 32 no residential dwellings including 35% affordable housing, 8 No commercial units and 1 no reception building. Creation of access and circulation routes, parking, hard and soft landscaping together with a sustainable to drainage system). To change the Affordable Rent Housing to Shared Ownership Housing.**

The Parish Council discussed this application at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and requested the need to understand the legal position of this application. Councillors will have noted in the forwarded email of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 from the Clerk, that the change of S106 status for the 'Affordable Homes' on the Sumners Fields development is considered analogous to 'Shared Ownership' as a means of providing affordable housing. This would seem to acknowledge the fact that as the developer decides the market value of a property to maximise profit the proportional reduction in price to qualify as 'affordable' is likewise higher than it might otherwise be, being a proportion of this market price.

**10 Highways, Local Traffic and Roads**

Cllr Sarah Peay reported the parking of vehicles on the corner of Scott's Farm in West Chilton Lane, which is dangerous on a narrow bend. The vehicles and vans and cars are from the Little Barn Owls Forest School Nursery. Sarah has contacted the Nursery and spoken to the owners, but there has been no response. It was suggested that the Clerk write on behalf of the Parish Council as it is a traffic hazard in our parish. It was suggested that the owners of the property where the Forest School is held, should provide off road parking as this occurs every day. Cllr Sarah Peay to draft the details and send to the Clerk.

**Action**

**11 Correspondence**

1. The Clerk said that she had received a letter from the Barns Green Sports and Social Club requesting a grant towards the cost for replacing the carpet which will cost around 9k and the bench seating which will cost around 24k in the Club. Even though the Club is not a registered charity, it is a long-standing pillar of our local community. The Chairman asked all Cllrs for their comments on this request even though the Parish Council has set its budget for this coming year. After deliberation by the Cllrs, it was agreed by the majority that they supported the fact that all the Sports Clubs use it, so it is an important part of village sports and social life. However, before the Parish Council can consider this request, we need to request financial information from the Club and follow up with further discussions once these are received.

**Action**

**12 Finance – All payments for approval since 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

**1. There are seven payments to be made paid**

**£28.50** to EE Home Broadband in respect of the Internet Service for January 2025.

**£17.00** to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of meeting in January 2025.

**£1,675.00** to Barns Green Players in respect of a grant towards theatre lighting.

**£378.00** to Vision ICT in respect of three generic emails pro-rata to March 2025 and hosted email accounts Mar 25 to Feb 26.

**£40.95** to HDC in respect of the emptying of the Dog Bin January, February and March 2025.

**£1,249.90** to the Clerk comprising of £1,171.90.10 salary for January and £78.00 expenses.

£100.00 to Pete Cochran in respect of Litter Warden duties for January 2025.

£269.99 to Screwfix in respect of one tonne of salt to replenish the salt bins.

With regard to the Grit Bins, it was suggested that Cllr Simon Ott and Cllr Brian O'Connor liaise and put an article in the BIG MAG about our Grit Bins and to remind residents how the salt is for use on the public roads and not on private driveways etc.

**Action**

2. Bank Reconciliation as at 03 January 2025. The Bank Reconciliation as at 03 January 2025 and Bank Statements were signed by the Chairman.

**13 Review and Adoption of Standing Orders**

A copy of the revised Standing Orders had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Brian O'Connor to approve and adopt the revised Standing Orders, seconded by Cllr Elaine French and agreed unanimously. The Clerk to publish these on the Parish Council website.

**Action**

**14 Review and Adoption of Financial Regulations**

A copy of the revised Financial Regulations had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Rob Fryatt to approve and adopt the revised Financial Regulations, seconded by Cllr Sarah Peay and agreed unanimously. The Clerk to publish these on the Parish Council website.

**Action**

**15 Clerk's Salary**

The Parish Cllrs considered the Clerk's Salary with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 using the recommendations from the National Association of Local Councils on the new pay scales for 2024-2025 to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. It was proposed by Cllr Lorraine Awcock that the Clerk's salary be increased in line with the NALC recommendations with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, seconded by Cllr Sarah Peay, agreed unanimously. The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Clerk for all her hard work throughout the year.

**16 Any Other Business – items to be advised before the meeting**

1. Cllr Sarah Peay said that she needs to liaise with the Clerk regarding arranging a meeting with the PRoW Officer. Cllr Simon Ott volunteered to assist with regard to PRoW's. The Clerk to write. The Chairman reminded the Cllrs to feedback in any information to the Clerk and Sarah regarding any issues with footpaths and bridleways. **Action**
2. Cllr Simon Ott asked who was looking after the Village Car Park. The Chairman said it is the responsibility of the Trust. Cllr Simon Ott to let the Clerk know of the current issues with the car park and she will send it onto the Chairman of the Trust for their next meeting on Monday. **Action**
3. The Chairman said that with regarding to Parish Council 'Roles', it would be a good idea to have more than one Cllr per role if possible. Cllr Rob Fryatt said he would like to offer to get involved with environmental and sustainability projects within the parish and come back to the next meeting with some scope on this subject. Cllr Elaine French and Cllr Jenny Cass said that they would also like to get involved. **Action**
4. The Clerk said that the broken 'Hordens' street sign has been reported to HDC who will repairing it in due course.
5. The broken fingerpost in Trout Lane that was knocked over by a motorist has been reported to the police. The Clerk to chase up. **Action**

**17 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025.** There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.27pm

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