

ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 24th February 2025 in the David Francis Room of the Village Hall

Present: Cllr Alan Strudley – Chairman
Cllr Lorraine Awcock
Cllr Jenny Cass
Cllr Ross Dye
Cllr Elaine French
Cllr Rob Fryatt
Cllr Brian O'Connor
Cllr Simon Ott
Cllr Sarah Peay
The Clerk Jan Critchley
County Cllr Amanda Jupp
Members of the Public: Victoria Barrett and Simon Gale

18 Apologies for Absence – were received from Cllr Rebecca Jackson, District Cllr Kasia Greenwood and District Cllr Tricia Youtan.

19 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.

20 Minutes of the last Meeting to be approved

The Minutes of the last meeting on 30th January 2025 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. It was noted that the last sentence under Minute 16:3 should read 'Cllr Elaine French and Cllr Jenny Cass said that they would also like to get involved. The Minutes were amended to reflect this. The Minutes were then approved, accepted and signed by the Chairman.

Action

Cllr Ross Dye arrived at 7.35pm.

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

1. Minute 5 – Project funding grant for Tennis Club Car Park – The Clerk said that as the grant is for £4,800, she would like to propose that this grant is taken from the CIL Money that the Parish Council has been awarded which currently amounts to £4,739.64. This was unanimously agreed. The Clerk to contact HDC to let them know that the CIL money has now been allocated and spent to date.

Action

2, Minute 11 – Barns Green Sports & Social Club request for a grant towards the cost of replacing the Bench Seating and Carpet. The Chairman said that he had had a follow up meeting with the Club Committee members. The Club clearly wants to improve its public offering. The key question is whether this falls under the Parish Council's remit to provide public funds to a private members club. One of the Parish Council's criteria for giving a grant is whether it will be beneficial to the village and the club clearly is. Another criteria is whether this is an infrastructural project or a refurbishment/maintenance expenditure which this request falls under the latter. On this basis the cost of a refurbishment of a private members club should be drawn from its own reserves. The Chairman then asked for all Cllrs to give their comments. After deliberation from the Cllrs, the Chairman gave the following summary: From a principal point of view, the Parish Council can see that some contribution could be within its powers, but we need to be aware that the Parish Council does not want to be seen unfairly giving contributions to one specific business within the parish. The Parish Council still has a substantial request for the completion of the Barns Green Sports and Social Club Changing Rooms so until the Parish Council has more information on its powers and rulings, it was agreed that this request be deferred. Once this information has been obtained, then the Parish Council can reconsider whether a reduced amount would be appropriate. The Clerk to write to the Barns Green Sports and Social Club.

Action

3. Minute 16:1– PRoW – The Clerk said that she had written to Nigel Bird who is the PRoW Officer at WSCC about arranging a meeting but has not had a response. The Clerk will chase up.

Action

4. Minute 16:2 – Village Car Park – The Clerk reported that she had informed the Chairman of the Trust about the issues ahead of its meeting. Some actions had been taken, but still more work needs to be done. The weeds need to be dug out before sweeping and the drains need to be cleared. The Clerk to write to the Trust again.

Action

22 Funding Request on behalf of Barns Green Sports & Social Club - Changing Rooms

The Chairman reported that he had met with Victoria Barrett and Alan Lambkin again following their presentation at the Parish Council meeting in November 2024 and the Council's detailed consideration at its meeting in December 2024. To summarise, the Chairman asked Victoria Barrett whether the project would be fully funded if the Parish Council gave the requested grant of 50k. Victoria said that it would be with the 32k they have raised so far and with the reclaimed VAT of around 30k that they are still hoping to get, the project will be fully funded. It is intended that work will commence on 7th April 2025 and will continue works with the existing money currently available and the contractor has been asked for a staged approach with the price to be fixed at every stage. Local tradesmen may also be utilised to supply materials for the project. This project is primarily driven by the Barns Green Rugby Club, but with the ambition that it fulfils the needs for sports clubs within the village. The vision is that there are enough changing room facilities for multiple genders, youngsters and adults to use at the same time. Victoria said that the more urgent need is for safe guarding when there are multiple sports on the village green needing the facilities. The Chairman asked all Cllrs whether they felt this was a project within the Parish Council's powers and criteria for spending public money. After deliberation by all the Cllrs, it was proposed by Cllr Simon Ott that the Parish Council give a grant of 50k so that the Changing Rooms can be completed, seconded by Cllr Lorraine Awcock, agreed unanimously. The Chairman said that there was a caveat on all funding by the Parish Council, that the Parish Council is involved with each project team so we will nominate a representative at a meeting within the next few weeks. The Clerk to liaise with the Chairman and Victoria to confirm the logistics of how the Parish Council provide the support.

Action

Cllr Rob Fryatt added that once the project has been completed, he thought it would be an idea to put up a plaque with all those who have donated.

23 Reports from County and District Councillors

Report from County Cllr Amanda Jupp had been circulated ahead of this meeting. The Clerk reported that this report had been published on the website.

Amanda added that the newly appointed Assistant Highways Manager is George Fort and she thought it would be a good idea to invite him to the next Parish Council meeting in March. The Clerk to write to him. The Clerk to update George with regard to where the Parish Council had got to with WSCC with the SID's within the parish and Gateways in West Chilton Lane and Bashurst Hill. The Clerk to also suggest a meeting with George, Amanda and our Chairman on Wednesday 26th March to walk around the village to hi-light issues etc.

Action

Cllr Lorraine Awcock reported that Maize lorries have destroyed the grass verges near to the Bax Castle. This is actually in Southwater parish, but Amanda asked that Lorraine send her photos of the damaged verges and she will report this directly to WSCC Highways.

Action

The Chairman suggested going forward the Parish Council keeps a 'Highways and Drainage Log' of all observations and issues within the parish. Cllr Jenny Cass offered to start this so all issues to be directed to the Clerk and Cllr Jenny Cass.

Action

24 Open Session for Members of the Public

No members of the public wished to address the Parish Council further.

25 Sigma Homes Development –

Cllr Ross Dye reported that Paul Allen has been good at contacting Sigma Homes directly in his absence. Ross said that he has finally had a response from Tony Kenny who is prepared to engage with the sub-committee, but has not taken a huge amount of responsibility for what has been happening on site. Ross said he would try to set up a meeting with Sigma Homes and the sub-committee. Ross reported that the Site Manager Mark Moore has now left Sigma homes, but has now been replaced by Simon Austin. The approach is to try to look forward rather than look back at what has happened in the past.

Action

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

1. New Applications

DC/25/0148 - Mr Graham Lovegrove, 17 Sycamore Rise, Barns Green - Fell 1x Maple and Surgery to 1x Maple Trees. Trees requiring surgery are shown as T1 and T2 in the supporting plan.

Itchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this planning application and it will be for the HDC Arboriculturist to make the decision.

DC/24/1290 - James. 3 Greenfield Farm, Valewood lane, Barns Green -Change of use for 2 no gypsy residential units along with day room, full drainage, car parking, 2metre high bund and soft and hard landscaping.

Itchingfield Parish Council sent the following representation on 15th October 2024 which read:

'Itchingfield Parish Council strongly recommends this planning application for refusal for the following reasons: The provision of two more pitches in essence to the existing Greenfield Farm site which already has 14 pitches, is contrary to the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people regulations 1994, which recommends that no more than 11 pitches are sited on any one development. To the rear of the proposed development as mentioned in the planning statement, there is already a site illegally occupied by another group of travellers. This site is also currently being subject to further extensive development without any permissions being sought or given. This proposed (retrospective) application further coalesces development in this otherwise rural setting and exacerbates existing issues with integration between the established local community and travellers.'

Now with further information, Itchingfield Parish Council would like to make the following comments: WSCC Highways require more information which has still not received been from application DC/23/2104. Fire and Rescue need more information regarding emergency vehicle access and turning space, also a new emergency fire hydrant will be required as the nearest existing is some 320 metres distance and the maximum allowed distance for residential properties is 175metres. WSCC Flood Risk Management team has reservations as no infiltration testing has been carried out or groundwater monitoring carried out to support the use of soakaways. HDC has reservations and would not support approval until clarification is provided on the proposals for rainwater harvesting. Also, the information provided about the proposals for foul drainage is totally inadequate.

Taking all the above into consideration, Itchingfield Parish Council strongly recommends this planning application for refusal.

2. Kingfisher Farm, Greenfields and Greenacres

Cllr Sarah Peay asked whether the Council could request a visit from Madeleine Hartley, Enforcement Officer at HDC to look at Kingfisher Farm, Greenfields and Greenacres as the sites seemed to be increasing all the time. After deliberation by the Cllrs, the Chairman said that the Parish Council has spent thousands of hours debating the issues we are facing on these sites with very little powers. As a Parish Council should we request a focussed meeting with HDC to get them to reveal to us what are their plans and what are they going to do about this in recognition of what the situation is. We need to make sure that all the points we have around the table are properly aired and look for a concrete action plan from that. Is this something that we as a Council agree to do? All agreed. The Chairman said that we will defer this matter from this meeting and look to set up another meeting with HDC Leader of the Council, HDC Head of Planning and look to get some resolutions.

Action

3. Cllr Brian O'Connor reported that he had received the following two Compliance Complaints from HDC Enforcement for the Itchingfield area:

- 1) EN/25/0048 Richmond Farm Stables, Rye Farm Lane, Barns Green - Alleged Breach of condition 1 of I/3/01 (relating to the installation of floodlighting)
- 2) EN/25/0056 Land West of Tickners Barn, Trout Lane, Barns Green – Alleged unauthorised land level changes and extension of residential curtilage.

27 Highways, Local Traffic and Roads

No more to report.

28 Correspondence – No.

29 Finance – All payments for approval since 30th January 2025.

1. There are four payments to be made paid

£23.00 to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of meeting in February 2025.

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

£1,832.84 to the Clerk comprising of £1,749.96 salary for February including arrears of payment and £82.88 exps.

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

4. Bank Reconciliation as at 03 February 2025. The Bank Reconciliation as at 03 February 2025 and Bank Statements were signed by the Chairman.

30 Review and Adoption of Risk Policy

A copy of the revised Risk Policy and Risk Register had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Elaine French to approve and adopt the revised Risk Policy and Register, seconded by Cllr Rob Fryatt and agreed unanimously. The Clerk to publish these on the Parish Council website.

Action

31 Annual Village Meeting – Monday 31st March 2025 – Agenda

The Chairman reiterated that the Annual Village Meeting is one that the Parish Council call on behalf of the village. He suggested that the Cllrs feed through agenda item ideas to the Clerk so that she can craft an agenda which the Clerk will then circulate to all Cllrs. Two hot topics that will feature on the agenda will be the land opposite the shop and pub and the Travellers sites. The Chairman said that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee are meeting soon so we will find out from the Committee whether there are any updates on the Neighbourhood Plan to be given at the Annual Village Meeting. Cllr Rob Fryatt said that he would like to introduce the village to the concept that we are looking to the future sustainability and environment in the village. Cllr Sarah Peay said that she will give a short talk regarding all the footpaths and bridleways that we have within our parish.

Action

32 Greener Barns Green

Cllr Rob Fryatt reported that the Clerk has circulated a document that he, Jenny and Elaine had put together. It is about: 'What does our environment looks like today and how do we preserve that and how easy is it to have a sustainable environment within the village going forward? What is currently happening in the village that we are aware of and are there things that we are not aware of within the village. It would be good to put together a register of what we collectively think of as the environment and sustainability and how we can enhance it?' Rob said they had some initial ideas, but would welcome any comments and feedback of ideas to Jenny, Elaine and himself.

Action

33 Any other Business - items to be advised before the meeting – none.

34 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 24th March 2025. There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.07pm.