ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

[www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk)

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**Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC)**

**held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 20th January 2020**

**Present:**

Cllr Watkins [Chair] Cllr Daw

Cllr Beechey [Vice Chair] Cllr Savage

Cllr Cooper Cllr Adcock

Cllr Rabagliati

**In attendance:**

Victoria Rutt - Parish Clerk

Approximately 25 members of the public

**124. Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Watkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed her thanks to Alfriston Emergency Group [AEG] for all their hard work with the recent flooding. There have been a number of issues in Winton Street since the start of the water works but as of tomorrow the Dene car park will open two way which will hopefully alleviate some of these. Cllr Watkins reported that APC received some disappointing news from Wealden District Council [WDC] that they, WDC are taking back the management of both car parks as of the 1st April 2020 so APC’s income will be affected. As a result, the budget has had to be looked at very closely, this will be covered later in the meeting.

**125. Public Questions**

1. A resident asked what APC is going to do about the rat running happening in Winton Street? He explained that in 6 hours, he counted 700 cars drive up there. It has caused chaos and a traffic jam lasted over an hour last week. He said there is now a danger to pedestrians, cyclists and horses. Mr Buckle’s second question was who is going to reinstate the road and pay for the damage to Winton Street? Cllr Beechey responded to the questions stating that APC is not the body with authority for the highways so can’t take any action and those that can answer these questions are Clancy Docwra and East Sussex Highways [ESH]. Contacts for them are [steve.anthony@theclancygroup.co.uk](mailto:steve.anthony@theclancygroup.co.uk) and

[customerservicemanager@eastsussexhighways.com](mailto:customerservicemanager@eastsussexhighways.com)

A resident asked whether APC feel that the authorities are meeting their duty of care? Cllr Beechey answered that yes he believes they are. They have done all they can and would not be able to close the road completely. Those at the meeting were asked what more it was they thought could be done by the authorities. A 20mph limit was suggested. Residents were informed that APC would write to the authorities outlining all the issues raised. **Action 1.** *[Document has since been circulated and on the APC website].* Residents could also do the same, but were asked to temper their expectations as the answer will not be the closing of the road. A resident asked why Clancy Docwra had not considered a 20mph speed limit. This was not known and would be included in the letter being sent by APC.

A resident asked why are APC not supporting the residents of Winton Street. Cllr Beechey explained that there is support but there is only so much APC can do about this as it is not the responsible authority for the works. Cllr Beechey said that there were a number of different interests that had to be considered and the village could not just be shut off as that would be the end for many businesses. He said that a lot of effort had been expended in making sure the message went out that the village was still open for business.

Cllr Shing said that this disruption is not something anyone wants for the village but there is a need for the works. He explained that it would be down to Clancy Docwra to reinstate the road and any picture evidence would be useful and could be included with any emails. He went on to say if they had shut the village this would have hugely affected all the businesses and tourism to Alfriston.

Mrs Bella Freeman said that she was surprised there was no temporary speed limit as Clancy Docwra had so much time to prepare for this project.

Mrs Vanessa Rowlands said there had been a lot of traffic through Litlington and they had been given signs to put on posts that state ‘20 is plenty’. Cllr Rabagliati stated that Mr Steve Anthony did inform him that some of these signs were given to a resident of Winton Street but these have never gone up. Cllr Rabagliati went on to explain that the Dene car park will be opened up as two way on Tuesday 21st January so it is hoped this will reduce the number of cars going up Winton Street, but we do need to ensure the same issues do not happen in the car park as it could become very dangerous. He explained that Clancy and ESH are doing a walk through this week to review everywhere and risk assess, APC will ask if they can attend. A question was asked would the ‘road closed’ signs be moved up when the Dene car park was open, Cllr Rabagliati said that this is going to be included in the review later this week. The Clerk explained that she had received emails from Winton Street residents on this subject but as all comments had been covered in public questions, they would not all be read out. Councillors confirmed they had seen these and all comments will be included in the letter sent from APC.

1. **Report from Maria Caulfield MP**

Maria Caulfield MP was not able to attend the meeting but sent in the following report:

*During the election period, I did meet urgently with the Environment Agency to ask them to urgently clear the mouth of the river as the flooding in West Dean, and Litlington was encroaching on Alfriston. This they begrudgingly did, and it did clear some water as the Pevensey & Cuckmere Water Level Management Board decided to utilise its Reserves to fund an urgent ‘one-off’ de-shingle of the river mouth at Cuckmere Haven. Going forward I am working with the water board to transfer permission for them to take over dredging the mouth of the river on a regular basis from the EA so that we can avoid this situation in the future. However, over Christmas further flooding accord in Alfriston and although I contacted both Wealden district council and East Sussex County council, I was disappointed in the response as many residents and businesses in the village were unable to get the help, they needed such as sand bags to protect properties. If the parish council would like me to raise this further, I am very happy to do so.*

*Please do let me know if the planned roadworks are not working for the village. I have been contacted by some residents with concerns over the impact on local businesses and also about the diversions in place. If these are problematic, I am very happy to raise with the County Council to see what can be done. While the road closures are in place, it may not be such an issue but I am working with Ditchling parish council who also have issues with HGVs cutting through their village and I am happy to share some of the work we are doing with the police on tackling this going forward. On parking enforcement , Wealden District Council are still reluctant to take this on but I am meeting with the leader of the council again shortly and will once more push this as Rother district council have recently taken on this responsibility and so Wealden are one of the last councils in the country not to be taking this over.*

1. **Report from Cllr Stephen Shing [ESCC]**

Cllr Shing confirmed that ESCC have agreed the transfer of Seven Sisters Country Park to SDNPA; he is strongly against the transfer. If SDNPA ever want to sell Seven Sisters to someone else, County Council have the right to have it back for £1. ESCC continue to try to make savings, they need to do so by £10million. They propose to raise the precept by £1.10 a week.

1. **Report from Cllr Michael Lunn [WDC]**

Cllr Michael Lunn reported that WDC are recommending a £5 increase per annum in Council Tax for band D residents. He reported that WDC received bad news as their local plan was rejected by the Inspectorate. Even though Alfriston comes under SDNPA for planning this could still affect Alfriston as Berwick could become a prime area for growth, which would have implications for traffic coming through the village. Cllr Lunn expressed his disappointment with some services during the flooding before Christmas. He received reassurance from East Sussex Highways that sand bags would be provided to Alfriston, this did not happen. He contacted the ESCC emergency line which went to voicemail, which is obviously not acceptable. Both these matters are being looked into. He went on to explain that the new waste collection contract with Biffa is going well. In future the Christmas bin timetable will be sent out in electronic format as the calendars posted through the door cost £30k and the 2019 idea to leave flyers on the bin did not work due to the bad weather. Cllr Beechey asked Cllr Lunn to what extent he was consulted before WDC took their decision on the car park. Cllr Lunn confirmed that he received no consultation and was informed the evening before the Parish Council was written to on the 6th January 2020. Cllr Savage asked why did he not get an opportunity to ask questions as APC’s District Councillor, Cllr Lunn did not know why and said there are no excuses, he should have been informed and is asking WDC why he was not.

Ms Lynnette O'Halloran raised concern at the impact new housing development could have on the water supply i.e. drinking water, Cllr Lunn said there would need to be an increase in the capacity at Arlington Reservoir. On the A27, the latest news is no plans have been determined yet for any new road, and all that is being done at the moment is bidding for sources for funding. Cllr Lunn ended his update by confirming to the Clerk that he is looking into the Sloe Lane signage that she recently emailed him about, this is regarding an issue raised a year ago by residents of Sloe Lane who wish for a sign stating ‘No Through Road’ to be placed near the West Street entrance to prevent large vehicles going up there, turning around and causing damage to walls and gates.

1. **Apologies for absence**

No apologies received.

1. **Declaration of interests**

Cllr Daw, Cllr Savage and Cllr Watkins declared an interest under item 136 as they are all members of AEG.

1. **Minutes**

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Cooper seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2019 were a true and accurate record. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cllr. Watkins duly signed the minutes.

1. **Finance**

132.1 To approve the Statement of Finances and sign invoices for payment

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded a motion to approve the Statement of Finances. [Appendix A]. **MOTION CARRIED**

Cllr. Cooper approved and signed Invoices for Payment. **MOTION CARRIED**

132.2 To approve the budget for 2020/21

Clerk explained that following the decision from WDC about the car parks and subsequent loss of income to APC as a result, there has been a need to thoroughly review each budget line to see where savings could be made so as to keep any increase in the amount the 2020/21 precept needs to be raised to a minimum. The finance committee met on the 14th January where the budget was discussed in full. All Councillors have had sight of the proposed budget. The Clerk read through each budget line and took any questions. Any notable changes and questions are listed below:

*Income*

Income will no longer be received from Willows car park or private spaces; allotment rent will need to rise, which will be discussed later in the meeting. Interest from bank accounts, pavilion refunds and VAT refunds remain the same so only income [minus the precept] that APC will now receive is £3,305.

*Expenditure*

Staff costs have reduced due to no longer paying the wages, tax/NI and payroll for the car park attendant. The Clerks mileage will also be reduced as there will be no need to come and deal with the cash boxes so will only be in the village once a week if required. Administration has been reduced by £400 as will no longer be paying for the car park attendants’ phone and Clerk is trying to reduce the amount of printing she is doing for meetings thus reducing paper and ink usage. Grass cutting has had to be increased from £5k to £8k as we are going out for tender this year for another 3 year contract. Cllr Adcock asked why did the pricing look low this year and why the large increase? Clerk explained that the bill for id verde gets split in March and October so the first payment always comes under the previous financial year accounts. The budget was proposed at £5k and their bill comes in a little over £4k as we have made savings in the past by cutting some areas that ESH have to do. The increase is due to looking at the previous tender figures submitted and id verde were considerably cheaper but we did not get a good service. It is expected the tender prices will be higher this year. *The above information relates to the grass cutting budget, it is redacted due to being commercial sensitivity and an unredacted version will be signed and placed in the minutes record*. Allotment and pavilion expenditure remains the same. Recreation ground and playground has been reduced to £2k, this is £1,500 ring fenced for playground refurb and £500 for annual maintenance. Bins have been reduced by £500 due to no longer paying to have the car park bins emptied. The Tye has been reduced to £4k, with £3,500 ring fenced for the Tye Road resurfacing and £500 for annual maintenance. Village maintenance, insurance and jubilee clock remain the same. S137 grants have been reduced to £300 so Councillors will need to carefully consider any requests. Courses and subscriptions reduced to £500 to just cover subscriptions; if Clerk or Councillors wish to attend a course they can either pay for themselves or submit a report to the Council for authority. The rent has had to be reduced to £600 to only cover the costs of hall hire for meetings and APC will no longer be able to pay the £1,113 rent for the AEG container.

Bank charges have been reduced to just cover the monthly standing charge as coins will no longer be banked which costed extra in the height of the summer. Election expenses reduced to £500. VAT payments reduced to zero as no VAT rated income will be received as losing the car park; so all VAT returns will be money received from HMRC, not paid to them as previous years. Cllr Adcock questioned this in the meeting but Clerk explained as above.

Cllr Adcock asked could extra money be added into expenditure for the sculpture and the possible Tye path widening. She also stated that 70% of the budget was spent on Councillors sitting in the hall not doing a lot. Cllr Daw expressed her disagreement with this statement as the Parish Council do a lot behind the scenes. Cllr Beechey asked if Cllr Adcock was proposing a further increase in the precept or a redistribution of the existing budget. He said that he understood from reading the Cuckmere News that the sculpture proposal was no longer being pursued and reminded Cllr Adcock that £500 had previously been ringfenced for the Tye path. Cllr Adcock stated this ringfenced money was not clear to her. The Clerk explained that the reserves would not show on the budget but they are listed on the monthly finance reports. Cllr Adcock said it was not clear from the report what the ringfenced amounts were for. The Clerk confirmed she will add this to the finance report in future **Action 2** and explained that the £8k in ringfenced reserves is broken down by £4,500 for Tye Rd resurfacing, £500 for Tye path widening and £3k for playground refurb.

Following the above discussion, the budget was approved for 2020/21 with an expenditure of £52,340. Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Cooper seconded a motion to approve the budget for 2020/21. **MOTION CARRIED**.

132.3 To approve the precept for 2020/21

Clerk reported that due to the changes discussed in the previous agenda item, the precept will need to be increased by just over £10k. The Clerk referred to an earlier email sent to all Councillors referring to APC’s reserves. Guidelines state that there should be 6 months’ worth of expenditure in general reserves, which with the new agreed budget for next year would mean a general reserve of £26k. The Clerk explained that for the past 2 years APC have managed with £10k in general reserves and £8k in ringfenced reserves, so asked, as APC are having to increase the precept again this year due to the car park decision, are Councillors content with keeping the reserves as is and review again next year? It was agreed that no extra would be added to the precept to increase the reserves. To cover all expenditure and be able to run business as usual the precept will now need to be £49,035. This is a 28.4% increase which is a 47p weekly increase for a Band D property.

Cllr. Daw proposed and Cllr. Cooper seconded a motion to approve the precept of £49,035 for 2020/21. **MOTION CARRIED**.

Cllr Watkins and the Clerk completed the official paperwork to be submitted to WDC.

**Action 3**.

132.4 To approve the Q3 2019/20 audit paperwork

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded a motion to approve the Q3 2019/20 audit paperwork.

**MOTION CARRIED**.

1. **To agree to go out for grass cutting tenders**

Clerk reported that the id verde grass cutting contract ended in October 2019 so it is time to go out to tender for a 3 year contract. It was proposed that tenders would go out next week, responses will be received and opened at the February meeting, then a comparison exercise will be undertaken with the company being awarded the tender at the March 2020 meeting. The proposed timetable with number of cuts had been circulated to Councillors previously for approval. Cllr Adcock asked if West Street outside the Old Rectory could be added to the schedule as the taskforce have recently cleared it. It was explained that as this is a highway it can’t be added to the schedule but it was recently raised at a Strengthening Local Relationship meeting so the Clerk can chase them for a response. **Action 4**.

The Clerk explained that she will advertise the tender and send tender requests to Tim Jordan Grounds Maintenance, Burleys, Countrywide and Honeysett Groundcare.

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Rabagliati seconded a motion to approve the grass cutting tender paperwork. **MOTION CARRIED**.

1. **To discuss the erection of sheds on individual allotment plots**

Clerk reported that a request has come in for some sheds on the allotment. The current agreement states *‘Small sheds of a design approved in advance by the Council shall be permitted and will be procured by the Council. The cost of the shed to fall to the Tenant and to be payable to the Council in advance of the purchase. The shed shall remain the property of the Tenant and shall be removed by the Tenant at the termination of the tenancy, unless the Tenant has written consent from the Council to the contrary’*.

Councillors recently queried this as it was believed planning permission was required. The Clerk contacted South Downs National park to ascertain whether this was correct. Documentation has been received that sheds on allotments do require planning permission. The allotment agreement, ready for renewals to go out next week, will be updated to include this change and that plot holders would also need to provide evidence they have public liability insurance for their shed. Clerk to amend the agreement and circulate to Councillors for approval prior to sending out the renewals. **Action 5**.

1. **To approve the changes to APC’s code of conduct**

Clerk reported that WDC have suggested some amendments to the Code of Conduct to include harassment in the policy. APC’s code of conduct has been amended to include these changes and circulated to all Councillors for approval.

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded a motion to approve the Code of Conduct.

**MOTION CARRIED**.

1. **To discuss APC’s future relationship with Alfriston Emergency Group [AEG]**

Clerk reported that conversations happened in December with AEG about their lack of Public Liability Insurance, this has since been obtained but working relationships have been strained due to this issue. AEG had expressed a desire to the Chairman to be a sub-committee of APC and not an Outside Body. When it was explained to them by the Chair that they would then come under APC’s Standing Orders, they decided they would like to continue as an outside body. It was agreed that Councillors are happy for them to continue being an outside body. Cllr Savage said that AEG are regularly receiving praise from all the authorities. Cllr Beechey said the issue has raised the need for a definition of outside bodies to be placed into the Standing Orders. The draft wording was read out and agreed, however it will be an official agenda item to adopt at the February 2020 meeting for approval. **Action 6**.

1. **To discuss charging in the Willows car park for the duration of the water works**

Clerk reported that a few requests have been received for APC to consider making the Willows car park free for the duration of the water works. This was discussed and it was agreed that no changes would be made as APC would be paying a car park attendant who would have nothing to do and APC would not be able to submit a compensation claim to WDC regarding the current income loss following the flooding.

Cllr. Savage proposed and Cllr. Beechey seconded a motion to continue to charge in the Willows car park. **MOTION CARRIED**.

1. **Report on Highways & Twittens – Cllr Rabagliati**

138.1 Taskforce Update

Cllr Rabagliati reported that the task force has secured a team of volunteers from East Sussex Highways to work on the Recreation Ground for the day, for free, on Thursday 6th February. Cllr Adcock explained that she had assured the volunteers that the Pavilion would be available to them for toilet facilities and to make hot drinks. The Clerk explained that we would need to ask Mr John Harmer regarding this request. **Action 7**. Cllr Beechey reminded Cllr Adcock that the Cricket Club lease the Pavilion from APC so assurances should not be given until they are spoken to and agree. Cllr Rabagliati explained that the task force has further plans for other areas in the village when the weather improves. Cllr Adcock reported that the task force is planting bulbs outside Deans Place on 9th February, anybody welcome to attend to help. Cllr Rabagliati asked if the Council would consider making the Task Force an outside body. It was agreed to be put on the agenda for the February meeting. **Action 8.**

138.2 South East Water works update

Cllr Rabagliati reported that he spoke with Mr Steve Anthony [Clancy Docwra Customer Service Manager] prior to the meeting, he confirmed the first 60m is in place and is now backfilled and ready for being tarmacked tomorrow. The Dene car park will be open two way from tomorrow. Cllr Beechey reported that the contractors undertaking the work on the road have been extremely helpful, polite and friendly and would like this noted.

138.3 ESCC traffic meeting update

Cllr Rabagliati reported that we are still awaiting a date for a follow up meeting from ESCC. It was agreed that the Clerk would chase for a date. **Action 9.**

1. **Report on Allotments – Cllr Cooper**

Cllr Cooper reported that all is well at the allotments. At the Finance Committee, the allotments fees were discussed due to the financial situation the Parish Council is facing. As the rent has not had an increase in a long time and they are considerably cheaper than other parishes’, it was agreed to put each plot up by £5. This will be on the February agenda to ratify the decision. **Action 10.**

1. **Report on Rights of Way and Countryside – Cllr Daw**

Cllr Daw reported that a number of trees have come down on footpaths and would like to thank AEG for helping with cutting them down and removing. Cllr Beechey raised some incorrect signage at the top of the hill near Lullington Church and at Spring Dick. The Clerk confirmed she had reported but neither ESCC or SDNPA are accepting ownership. Clerk will chase this and copy in Cllr Daw. **Action 11.**

1. **Report on Car Parks and Public Transport – Cllr Savage**

Cllr Savage expressed his frustrations with the recent car park decision from Wealden and feels that the stated costs of the toilets are wrong and feels it is very wrong that Cllr Lunn was not consulted. The Clerk read out the emails that have gone back and forth so far to Wealden. The content of these emails can be found in Appendix B. APC are awaiting a response to the email sent on the 16th January requesting a number of documents and responses to questions.

The Clerk reported that Wealden have confirmed that invoices will go out from them on the 1st April to the private bays in the Dene car park and there will be no increase for this financial year. Permits in place for Dene car park will remain until they expire in September 2020 but management of them will be with Wealden from the 1st April. New 6-month Wealden permits will be issued in September 2020 taking them to the 1st April 2021 when a charge may be considered and likely to be about an annual charge of £25. Wealden will confirm this nearer the time to all permit holders.

Cllr Beechey said WDC may be able to make this decision on the car park but whether they have undertaken the decision making process correctly could be looked into further and advice taken. It was agreed to await their response from the recent email sent to them. Clerk to chase a response if not had one by Thursday 23rd. **Action 12.**

1. **Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Daw**

Cllr Daw reported that she attended a meeting on the 15th January 2020. Kristina Shaw-Hamilton who is the monitoring officer at Wealden talked about the changes to the code of conduct proposed by Wealden, which was agreed earlier in the agenda. A representative spoke about a meeting she attended about South East Ambulance service and things have improved and it was a very positive meeting. A representative was needed for a Working Party to liaise with the Broadband Team at ESCC, Cllr Daw volunteered for this. In the report from WDC they discussed how disappointed they were that the Local Plan had been turned down, it had taken 3 yeasts to produce and now even though they thought they had reached a good balance work would have to start again. There is going to be a Sustainable Energy Climate Change workshop in Feb/March 2020 about reducing our carbon footprint, baseline for our carbon footprint and planting trees. PC’s will be invited to attend. WDC now have a new planning website. Pevensey Bay Councillor gave a positive update on how they are tackling their dog poo problem and said that if you are stopped by a PSCO and are asked for your address you must now give it; this can be checked on their Police website.

1. **Report on Tye and Recreation Ground – Cllr Beechey**

143.1 Update on Tye footpath

Cllr Beechey reported that no further update, planning permission in place but funding is not currently.

143.2 Update on Playground

Cllr Beechey reported that he and the Clerk met with Mrs Kelly Ellis who had some excellent ideas for cheaper but nevertheless exciting plans for the playground. Clerk is looking into this.

1. **Report from Planning Committee – Cllr Adcock** 
   1. Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting

**SDNP/19/06017/HOUS** The White House, West Street, Alfriston

Provision of dormer to garage and installation of 2no roof windows

*The planning committee approved this application.*

A planning application for Pleasant Rise Campsite was also discussed but not on this agenda. This was also approved by the committee. Both comments can be seen in full on the planning minutes.

* 1. Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA
  2. Enforcement Updates

Cllr Adcock reported that someone said they had a near accident after a vehicle was pulling into an exit/entrance to land 300 yds north of Winton Street. This could be down to the vehicle travelling too fast as this exit/entrance has been there a number of years. Cllr Adcock reported that she has informed SDNPA of the signs that have gone up on the wall outside the Shot Coffee House as you walk down to the Tye. The enforcement officer has confirmed he will be visiting too take a look.

**145. Reports from Outside Bodies**

*145.1 Heartstart*: Mr David Watkins reported that there are still no new responders which is a shame. Their aim is to put out more defibrillators and renew the ones that are out there. There is now a defib in the school. Cllr Savage asked if they could offer training, Mr Watkins confirmed they could run familiarisation courses for a group or one to one.

*145.2 Alfriston Emergency Group*: Mr Vernon Reynolds reported on November and December, they were very rainy months and AEG pumped over a million litres of water back into the river. They have received numerous letters of support and Mr Reynolds read one out from Deans Place Hotel. AEG assisted motorists that got stuck in water despite being warned not to drive through and undertook welfare checks in River Lane. As a group, AEG have been very busy. They put up the Christmas tree and attached the lights, this took a long time and it was a success. Mr Reynolds reported that insurance for the lights was covered by ESCC’s licence, the putting up of the tree and lights was covered by Berwick Court Farm insurance and once the tree was in situ it was covered by APC insurance. Mr Reynolds asked, with this insurance cover in place, why were the tree lights turned off for a few days? Mr Reynolds wanted to know who told Ms Lisa Thompson to turn them off. The Clerk said that no one had told her to turn the lights off and as soon as it was reported to her, she contacted Lisa and the lights went back on. A heated and lengthy debate was held about the lights, Mr Reynolds stated he knew who had told her but would not tell the Council. The Clerk raised the point that this all came out within one day of AEG being spoken to about not having public liability insurance [PLI] so could this not be linked? Mr Reynolds disagreed and said it was all word play. After some length of time it was agreed to move on.

Mr Reynolds then went on to explain that in December he received an email from the Clerk asking about PLI and that if AEG did not have this then APC would have to consider at the next meeting whether they can continue to be an outside body. AEG felt unsupported by APC due to two emails asking for support from APC. It was pointed out that the two emails in fact asked for specific permission for AEG to undertake specific tasks one of which APC had no authority to give. Mr Reynolds raised these two emails and it became apparent that the Clerks full emails were not forwarded on to the full AEG group. The Clerk explained that the requests for permission came from Mr David Lewis. AEG requested permission to grit twittens, it was explained that APC could not give permission for this as it falls under ESCC authority. AEG then asked if they could have permission from APC to grit the Tye path, the Clerk consulted with the Tye portfolio holder and relayed to Mr Lewis that APC wouldn’t ask for this explaining that if AEG gritted every day and then one day they did not and someone slipped over, APC could be liable, hence a reason why not to give permission to grit. Additionally, AEG had no PLI at the time. A few days later AEG asked for permission to deploy the flood sign, APC are not able to give this as do not have the authority so AEG were referred to East Sussex Highways who can give permission for this. The explanations from the above email request were not forwarded to AEG members, they were just told the Clerk had said no. Requests for permission were denied but not because of lack of support from APC. Cllr Adcock said she was saddened to hear that AEG did not feel supported by APC and wanted to apologise for the negative communication. The Clerk was angered at this remark as Cllr Adcock had not seen the communication so had no right to apologise on her behalf, especially as the Clerk is able to apologise herself if felt that it was needed. The report was ended by Mr Reynolds apologising for any outburst in his report and would like to move on for 2020.

*145.3 Flood Forum* – Mr John Hurwood gave the Clerk a report to include in the minutes. It states that up to the 20th December the river coped well with the heavy rain. The situation was that the high river levels had flooded the Eastern fields along the valley here, and on the Alfriston side of the river the rainwater had caused some flooding, but the road into the village remained open due to the operation of the EA pump by The Willows car park. We were pleased that the shingle had been moved from the river mouth and the river flowed well. However early on the morning of the 20th December the very heavy rain proved to be more than the river could manage and it flowed over on both the East and West sides. This flooding resulted in the two houses in river lane being flooded, plus the house by The Willows car park, and the water reached the Deans Place Hotel. The road into the village was totally flooded to a considerable depth, and the EA pump was also flooded to a significant depth, and put out of action. The river level dropped by the 21 December, but the houses and road remained flooded till Christmas. Although that didn’t stop a certain breed of driver moving the road closed signs and barriers and trying to drive through.

Since Christmas the draining of the whole area has continued as the river has continued to flow well, to date the shingle is still clear of the river mouth. The EA pump had to go away for repairs, which have now been carried out and the pump is ready to be reinstalled.

*145.4 Neighbourhood Watch* – no report.

145.5 *Twinning Committee* – no report.

145.6 *Alfriston and Cuckmere Connect* – no report.

*145.7 St Andrew’s Church* – no report.

*145.8 Clergy House* – No report as Clergy House is currently closed.

* 1. *Cuckmere Buses* – Report can be found in Appendix C.

1. **Correspondence to The Clerk**
2. Clerk reported that approval was given via email since the last meeting to change the plaque wording approved at the meeting in November 2019 from ‘The Harmer Pavilion’ to ‘The John Harmer Pavilion’. It was also agreed that APC would pay for the plaque.
3. A gentleman who owns the Rodmill Post Office in Eastbourne would like to set one up in each of the three villages that have recently lost theirs: Alfriston, Horsebridge and East Dean. He is thinking it would be for a few hours a week. If any businesses in Alfriston are interested in housing the Post Office in their premises please contact Mr Joshua Grove on 07535 547 211.
4. An email was received at the end of last year from the AWMH committee consulting with users on their thoughts re changing the name of the hall from Alfriston War Memorial Hall to Alfriston Village Hall. The final decision would be with the Hall Committee but APC are of the view that the name should not be changed as the idea of Memorial is important. Cllr Savage thought the name should be changed so we stop glorifying war. Others thought that the idea of remembrance/memorial helps us to try not to repeat the past. It was also commented that Alfriston does not otherwise have a war memorial.
5. Permission was granted for the Rude Mechanical Theatre to have access to the Tye on Thursday 30th July 2020.
6. An allotment plotholder has asked if Councillors would consider allowing him to have 6 hens on his allotment, the current agreement only allows for 3 per household. Councillors said they had no problems with this but would need to check the Allotment Act first, also fox proofing would need to be excellent as foxes are often seen up at the allotments.

**147. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 7.15 pm on **Monday 17th February 2020** in Alfriston War Memorial Hall. The meeting will be suspended after the Chairman’s Welcome to allow Public Questions and Reports from County and District Councillors.

1. **Public Questions**

Mr Steve Woodgate introduced himself as the new Co-Chair of AEG. Regarding the Christmas tree lights, he asked where should the responsibility have been for showing Ms Lisa Thompson the APC insurance certificate. Chair confirmed it should have been a joint effort to show her but it has not been done previously. Cllr Beechey stated she was told that AEG did not have public liability insurance which at the time they did not. Mr Woodgate said the putting up of the tree and lights were covered by Berwick Court Farm insurance, Cllr Beechey asked if Berwick Court Farm insurance covers non-farm activities which Mr Woodgate confirmed it does. Mr Woodgate then confirmed the electrics were PAT tested by himself and they did everything to satisfy the requirements of ESCC. The Chair ended the meeting by saying there are lessons to be learnt from 2019 and the Council will look at resolving all issues before Christmas 2020.

Signed: Victoria Rutt - Clerk and RFO

**APPENDIX A**

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