ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

**CLERK TO THE COUNCIL**  33 Swaines Way

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

**held remotely via Zoom on Monday 18th January 2021 at 19:15**

**Present:**

Cllr Watkins [Chair] Cllr Daw

Cllr Beechey [Vice-chair] Cllr Savage

Cllr Cooper Cllr Rabagliati

**In attendance:**

Victoria Rutt - Parish Clerk

Approximately 12 members of the public

**91. Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Watkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed her thanks to Alfriston Emergency Group [AEG] for all their hard work they have undertaken recently.

**92. Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**93. Apologies for absence**

No apologies.

1. **Report from Maria Caulfield MP**

No report or attendance.

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

Cllr Shing wished everyone a Happy New Year. He reported that the Exceat Bridge consultation has been delayed until Easter. The roadworks on the A27 are still ongoing and Highways England have been contacted with a request to provide temporary lights at Exceat bridge to assist with diverted traffic. The transfer of the Seven Sisters Country Park to South Downs National Park has been approved and likely will take place around Easter. The County Council cabinet are meeting in next few weeks to discuss the budget, it is proposed that Council Tax will be increased by 1.99%. Cllr Shing will confirm this once it has been discussed at that meeting.

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

No report or attendance.

1. **Declaration of interests**

Cllr Daw and Cllr Watkins declared an interest as they are part of Alfriston Emergency Group.

Cllr Savage declared an interest under agenda item 100.

1. **Minutes**

98.1 To agree as a true record the Minutes of the APC meeting held on 16th November 2020

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Rabagliati seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting held on 16th November 2020 were a true and accurate record. **MOTION CARRIED.**

1. **Finance**

99.1 To approve the Statement of Finances: Jan 2021

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Savage seconded a motion to approve the Statement of Finances for January 2021. [Appendix A]. **MOTION CARRIED**

*The finance report and invoices could not be signed as it was a remote meeting*, *but they will be signed in due course.*

99.2 To approve the budget for 2021/22

Clerk reported that a Finance Committee meeting was held on Thursday 14th January 2021 where the proposed budget was discussed. All Councillors have since received a full report explaining any changes from the previous year’s budget. The Clerk briefly went through the report, most expenditure lines have remained the same but notable changes are listed below:

* Staff costs are up in line with annual inflation and subject to Clerk's performance appraisal in March.
* Grass cutting projected budget for this financial year was high as we were out for tender at the time. We now know the amount each year but have kept an additional £500 in the budget for any extras that may be required.
* Recreation ground remains the same, with £500 in the budget, and £1,500 added to the ring-fenced amount for playground project. *The year end for the Rec is over the £500 budget but this was due to the unexpected repairs on the infant swings and the decision to proceed with installing a gate at the top of the Rec. This is when general reserves are a positive thing as the funds for these unexpected issues will come out of the reserve.*
* Bins have been increased by £250 to cover the emptying of the new bin on the Tye.
* Tye remains the same, with £500 in the budget, and £3,500 added to the ring-fenced amount for Tye Road resurfacing.
* Village maintenance, this year there has not been much outlay as, thankfully, no issues; but need to keep this amount for any possible future issues and have also added an additional £200 to cover the cost of re-stocking the dog waste bags in the dispensers.
* S137 grants have been increased back to £500 in line with previous years; it was a mistake to try and save money in this area last year.
* Rent is down from last year as we no longer pay for the AEG container rent. This year the rent has been less due to meetings being held remotely. Have reduced the expenditure line this year but hopefully we will be back to holding meetings in the AWMH at some point in 2021.

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded a motion to approve the budget for 2021/22. **MOTION CARRIED**

99.3 To approve the precept for 2021/22

The Clerk explained that in previous years we have had to increase the precept due to expenditure increasing and losing the car park income, which was APC’s main source of income. The Clerk proposed that the precept should remain the same this year.

Cllr. Rabagliati proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded a motion to approve the precept of £49,035 for 2021/22. **MOTION CARRIED**

**100. To select a candidate to fill the casual vacancy**

Cllr. Watkins explained that Cllr Savage has declared an interest in this agenda item, therefore he will leave the Zoom call and not be included in any of the discussions or vote.

*Cllr Savage left the meeting.*

Cllr Watkins explained that there are 4 candidates for the casual vacancy. They were invited, in alphabetical order, to give a short presentation on why they wanted to be a Councillor and what they could bring to the Parish Council.

Mr David Bell

Mr Bell said that Alfriston village is very special to him. He has known the village and lived here for 42 years and would like to help steer it in the right direction. He feels that any decisions he would make would always be for the benefit to the village and not himself. He just wants the best for Alfriston in the future.

Ms Vanessa Bristow-Rose

Ms Bristow-Rose thanked the Parish Council and disclosed her relationship to Cllr Savage. She stated that they are separated but remain friendly and it would not be an obstacle to her being a Cllr. Ms Bristow-Rose explained that she has had a career in serving the general public, working for the Police, County Council and NHS. She feels confident with dealing with the authorities and feels that she is involved in supporting the Community.

Mr Michael Clinch

Mr Clinch explained that he was delighted to be a candidate but in awe of the others. He explained he is married with three children; his two sons manage a hotel in Worthing and his daughter manages Deans Place in Alfriston. Mr Clinch moved to Alfriston in 2016. He has a background working for the Borough Council for many years and his interests there were tourism, leisure and the environment. He stated that Alfriston deserves the best and he would like to contribute to his local community.

Ms Diana Monteath-Wilson

Ms Monteath-Wilson has lived in Alfriston for 26 years. She explained that she cares very much for Alfriston and would like to put that care into practice. She would like to enhance the community and has served on many societies in the past. Ms Monteath-Wilson is a churchwarden so is therefore DBS checked. She was a Parish Councillor previously and in her time she assisted with many projects, for example the refurbishment of the White Bridge, the refurbishment of the red dragon outside The Star Inn and the replacement of the tree in the Square. Ms Monteath-Wilson is a retired teacher with many transferrable skills, she is a good communicator and understands transparency.

*The above speeches from the candidates are not verbatim.*

Cllr Watkins said each candidate’s name and Councillors were asked to vote by a show of hands. Cllr Beechey and Cllr Cooper voted for Mr David Bell. Cllr Rabagliati voted for Ms Vanessa Bristow-Rose. Cllr Daw voted for Mr Michael Clinch. Cllr Watkins voted for Ms Diana Monteath-Wilson.

Therefore, Mr David Bell was co-opted as the new Councillor for Alfriston Parish Council. The Clerk thanked the other candidates for putting themselves forward. The Clerk explained that she will liaise with Mr Bell to get all the official paperwork completed and until the Annual General Meeting in May 2021, when the portfolios get discussed, he will take responsibility for the Planning portfolio which is currently vacant.

*Cllr Savage rejoined the meeting.*

**101. To discuss and agree if AWMH should become an outside body**

Clerk reported that Mr Adrian Butcher asked if the Alfriston War Memorial Hall [AWMH] could be considered as an outside body. This was fully supported by the Parish Council. Cllr Beechey proposed and Cllr Daw seconded that the AWMH becomes an outside body of APC. MOTION CARRIED. Clerk will add this to the agenda for the February 2021 meeting.

**102. Report on Highways and Twittens – Cllr Rabagliati**

Cllr Rabagliati reported that in regard to the Traffic Calming Sub-Committee, a site visit had been arranged for the end of this week. However, this will now be rescheduled when it is COVID-19-safe to do so. Cllr Rabagliati repeated Cllr Watkins' earlier thanks to AEG for all the work they have undertaken with the recent flooding. He reported that he met with a number of Winton Street residents last week, but this will be reported under Clerks’ Correspondence.

Some more rubble has been dumped at High and Over. This has been reported to Wealden District Council for removal, but it seems there may be a repeat offender fly-tipping in the area.

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

Cllr Cooper reported that all the allotment renewal paperwork was sent out last week with a return deadline of the 26th February. If any plots are not renewed, there is a waiting list with 4 people on so it is likely that we will remain full.

**104. Report on Public Transport – Cllr Savage**

Cllr Savage explained that nothing new to report.

**105. Report on Rights of Way and Countryside – Cllr Savage**

Cllr Savage explained that nothing new to report.

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

Cllr Daw reported that East Sussex Highways have recently moved the fallen trees after the recent storm. She explained that £250 was raised for Crisis at Christmas, so thanks to all who purchased a star for the tree. The stars have been returned to the pupils at the School and Pre- School.

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

Cllr Beechey reported that the project for the playground improvement project and the hard surface space for young people is currently on hold, as grant funding is mainly only for Covid related initiatives at the moment. Cllr Beechey thanked Mr Roger Cooper for re-setting a number of bollards along Tye Road, opposite the Wingrove car park. A quote has been authorised for a number of other bollards on Tye Road to be replaced; this will happen in due course. Cllr Beechey raised that a wooden post in the middle of the exit from the Tye to The Spots has rotted away; it was decided this did not need replacing at this time because there are metal bollards on the Spots.

**108. Report from Planning Committee – Cllr Watkins**

108.1 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting

SDNP/20/03653/HOUS 1 West Close, Alfriston, BN26 5UZ

SDNP/20/05444/HOUS 21 Deans Road, Alfriston, BN26 5XJ

108.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA

SDNP/20/03656/HOUS Pyewacket, 19 Deans Road, Alfriston, BN26 5XJ SDNPA granted

SDNP/20/03841/FUL South Downs Way, Kings Ride, Alfriston, BN26 5XW SDNPA granted

SDNP/20/03619/HOUS Burnt House Cottage, Alfriston, BN26 5TS SDNPA granted

SDNP/20/04069/HOUS Clifton House, High Street, Alfriston, BN26 5SY SDNPA granted

108.3 Enforcement updates

Clerk reported that the signs at Shot Coffee House are being looked into; the enforcement officer will be measuring them in due course. Also reported recently was the property known as Bats Wing. The new signs there will be measured and communications started with the owner. Clerk will update when more is heard from SDNPA.

**109. Reports from Outside Bodies**

*109.1 Volunteer Task Force*: no update.

*109.2 Heartstart*: no update.

*109.3 Alfriston Emergency Group*: Mr Steve Woodgate reported that 2020 was busy with 43 jobs which resulted in 377 hours work. They have undertaken gritting, setting up the helpline due to the pandemic, deliveries as and when required and their usual emergency work. They are grateful to the Parish Council for allowing the quad access to the Tye which meant they could access the whole village during the flood and water pipe replacement works. Mr Woodgate confirmed they have received permission from East Sussex Highways to undertake gritting in the village so this has been completed. 2021 has started busy. Cllr Watkins reported that the Cuckmere Support Network have undertaken 260 prescription deliveries to date.

*109.4 Flood Forum* – Mr John Hurwood reported that the river mouth has remained clear and has not overflowed on this side. AEG have done a grand job at pumping it out. Thankfully the EA pump has not flooded this time around!

*109.5 Neighbourhood Watch* – no report.

*109.6 Twinning Committee* – nothing new to report as all events on hold.

*109.7 Alfriston and Cuckmere Connect* – ACC is temporarily suspended at the moment. Clerk will contact them to ask if they wish to remain as an outside body. Action 1

*109.8 St Andrew’s Church* – Ms Monteath-Wilson reported that due to covid restrictions, WDC and the Bishop have agreed that no public worship should take place, however they are open for private prayer and funerals. The restoration has not gone away; there has been no opportunity for fundraising, but grants are going well. Work on the bells will commence soon.

*109.9 Clergy House* – Clerk read out a report from the Clergy House:

*“As a result of the coronavirus crisis the world is changing radically. This means change for all organisations, including the National Trust. We need to continue to manage it with care and determination to ensure we can serve our mission well into the future – protecting and caring for places so people and nature can thrive. Sadly, like every charity and business, our income has been hit really hard and the NT had to reduce our operating costs and project spend to become a leaner and more flexible organisation – ready to refocus our efforts and deliver our Renewal Plan of keeping Nature, Beauty, History; For Everyone For Ever as the foundation of all we do.*

*As part of the National Re-set programme to reduce the National Trust’s running costs a consultation with staff was launched in the South Downs portfolio and it resulted in the following for Alfriston Clergy House:*

*The Clergy House has moved to a pre-booked visitor system after the Welcome & Membership staff were made redundant.  The booking system is still in development for small properties around the country such as the Clergy House and there is an aim for an allowance of walk in visitors at some point*

*We no longer have a shop as all small properties across the country had commercial outlets closed to help save overhead costs.*

*The staff team has been reduced to three from eight and this team will also be working at and opening sister NT property Monks House.*

*Due to the reduction in staffing the opening days of ACH will decrease.  We will open from March to December and at this moment in time we are aiming to be open two days a week with a hope that this can increase in the future.”*

*109.10 Cuckmere Buses* – no report.

**110. Correspondence to The Clerk**

1. Clerk reported that the refurbishment works on the Dene car park toilets have commenced today and will take around 8 weeks. During this time the Willows toilets have been cleaned and opened so there are public toilets open in the village.
2. Clerk reported that a number of Winton Street residents have been contacted by East Sussex Highways to remove the white posts set out on the verges. The residents have explained that they have been in place for many years and there has been no consultation, just a letter asking for them to be removed within 14 days. Cllr Rabagliati met with the residents last Friday, outside and socially distanced, to get a better understanding of the issue. One of the residents has informed Maria Caulfield MP and she has suggested a stakeholder meeting.

Councillors agreed to host a stakeholder meeting and it was decided that a letter would be sent to all stakeholders, with Maria Caulfield MP copied in, requesting an urgent virtual meeting to discuss this issue. Cllr Rabagliati will draft the letter to be sent.

Action 2.

1. Cllr Beechey reminded the Clerk of an email received today from a sculptor who suggested that APC might consider a proposal for a sculpture in the village of Virginia Woolf ‘Striding the Downs”. He has designed and would make this sculpture, but a Parish Council or other would need to fund and manage it once in place. It was discussed and agreed that it is not something the Parish Council could undertake as no funds and also they fail to see the direct link to Alfriston.

**111. Public Questions**

1. Mr John Hurwood said that Cllr Stephen Shing should be included in the stakeholder meeting for the Winton Street problem as he is always very helpful.
2. Mr Steve Woodgate explained that he forgot to say that AEG have been in dialogue with the National Trust, and some semi-permanent pipe work has been laid on the NT land opposite Wingrove car park to assist with flood pumping. He asked if it would be possible to put a sign in one of the parking bays at the start of Tye Road, opposite the Wingrove entrance to prevent cars parking there so access to the pipes could be gained at all times? Cllr Beechey explained that works are in progress at the moment to fence that area off, on the far right, so vehicles can no longer park there. There would still be sufficient access for wheelchair users, pedestrians and AEG (when required). Therefore, a sign will not be needed. Mr Woodgate was happy with this.
3. Cllr Daw reported that one of the dog waste bag dispensers had been broken off near the White Bridge but she has repaired it using some string.

**112. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be Monday 15th February 2020 at 19:15 via Zoom.

**APPENDIX A**