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 15th February 2021 at 19:15**

**Present:**

Cllr Watkins [Chair] Cllr Daw

Cllr Beechey [Vice-chair] Cllr Savage

Cllr Cooper Cllr Rabagliati

Cllr Bell

**In attendance:**

Victoria Rutt - Parish Clerk

Approximately 12 members of the public

**113**. **Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Watkins welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**114. Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**115. Apologies for absence**

No apologies.

**116. Report from Maria Caulfield MP**

No report or attendance.

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

Cllr Shing wished everyone a Happy Chinese New Year. He reported that a full council meeting was held on the 9th February and an increase of 3.5% was made to Council Tax. It was confirmed that there will be no service cuts this financial year. He has been contacted about the Star Lane closure and has emailed East Sussex Highways [ESH] to see if the dates can be amended. He explained that the site meeting for the traffic proposals has been delayed due to the current lockdown and he feels it will be delayed further as ‘purdah’ is about to start and in this period no political decisions can be made. Cllr Beechey explained that he feels that as Mr Karl Taylor gave his assurance that all APC’s proposals could be included in a consultation, so long as they passed a safety audit, no decisions needed to be made and it is not political issue. Following the next lockdown announcement on the 22nd February, the site meeting may be able to be arranged before purdah commences. Cllr Beechey suggested writing to Cllr Dowling at ESCC to ask that purdah does not delay this further. Councillors agreed. **Action 1.**

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

Cllr Lunn reported that 17,000 people responded to the consultation for the Local Plan. Cllr Lunn has concerns new housing causing flooding in the Cuckmere valley. Although a little bit of shingle has been removed by the Environment Agency, the risk is very real, and he has real concerns for residents and businesses. He has expressed his views to the planning portfolio holder at WDC and feels that APC should do the same. The water level board met two weeks ago and discussed transferring responsibilities. This is ongoing and he will update further when more is known. The transfer of Seven Sisters to SDNPA has been approved and will happen later this year. They have received £1 million of CIL money to improve the site and install a SDNPA office. The Covid-19 hub continues, and they have seen a dramatic drop in cases locally. Waste and recycling services remain the same.

**119. Declaration of interests**

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

**120. Minutes**

120.1 To agree as a true record the Minutes of the APC meeting held on 18th January 2021

Cllr. Savage proposed and Cllr. Cooper seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting held on 18th January 2021 were a true and accurate record. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**121. Finance**

121.1 To approve the Statement of Finances: Feb 2021

Cllr. Beechey proposed and Cllr. Savage seconded a motion to approve the Statement of Finances for February 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.*

**122. To consider whether APC join the trial for the reduction of rural verges being cut**

Clerk reported that ESH contacted the Parish Council following a response to public interest they had received regarding roadside flora. East Sussex County Council will be undertaking a trial to reduce the number of cuts some rural verges receive in 2021 and they wanted to know whether Alfriston would like to be included in the trial. Currently the rural verges receive two cuts per year. The first cut is in May and the second in Autumn. These are carried out as a 1m wide swathe on the verges and at visibility splays at junctions and on the inside of bends, where sight lines may be obscured by vegetation.

The trial would reduce the grass cutting service of rural verges in Alfriston to:

1. One visibility cut undertaken around May/June
2. One 1 metre Swathe with Visibility cuts in the Autumn

Cllrs discussed and it was agreed. Cllr Beechey proposed that Alfriston join the trial and this was seconded by Cllr Savage. **MOTION CARRIED.** Clerk to inform ESH. **Action 2.**

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

Cllr Rabagliati reported that regarding the Traffic Management Proposals, we are awaiting the lifting of meeting restrictions before scheduling an on-site meeting with East Sussex Highways [ESH], Maria Caulfield MP, and other stakeholder representatives.

The Winton Street poles are still ongoing. The clerk wrote to ESH as agreed at the January APC meeting. In this letter APC requested a Zoom meeting where stakeholders could discuss the matter.  A reply was received from ESH this weekend, but it did not make any reference to the proposed meeting, which is believed to be the most appropriate next step.  ESH have been pressed to respond with a date for such a meeting. The letter sent to ESH and their response can be found on the APC website under Correspondence.

In January APC received notification that, owing to unexpected works required to the roof structure of The Star, a full closure of Star Lane to traffic had been approved from late March.  Cllr Rabagliati was contacted by Vanessa Rowlands, representing The Star, asking if APC could help in an appeal to ESH to bring this date forward, so that the works can take place sooner, during lockdown, and thereby have less of an impact on the village and The Star reopening just as visitors will be coming back to the village.  We are still awaiting a response to this request from ESH.

Residents may have noticed the proliferation of large temporary road signs sited along the valley and High Street at the end of last week.  Some of these were located on pavements and causing a hazard to pedestrians.  The signs are in connection with the overnight closure of the A27 at Drusilla’s for the removal of the roundabout and closure of the Berwick Station road for the duration of the works.  APC were not given notice of this closure and diversion and have requested the diversion plan and, again, are yet to receive a reply from ESH.  Cllr Rabagliati took the opportunity to walk up to the new T junction on Sunday and noticed that the new road layout makes access to and from the C39 quite hazardous.  Once traffic levels revert to normal he would not be surprised if there are serious delays at peak times.  

Cllr Rabagliati expressed his thanks to AEG for their efforts in gritting the footpaths, car park and Twittens during the recent cold spell. Thanks are also due to Michael Andersen and the litter pickers for removing the discarded electrical waste from the road side on the approach up to High and Over.  This fly tipping had been reported to Wealden, but they appear to have taken no action on this occasion. Cllr Rabagliti ended his report by confirming he will check the village roads for potholes in the next few days and report these to the clerk.

Cllr Beechey asked whether something could be done to ascertain why there are so many temporary signs in/around the village and whether it was necessary for such signs to remain in place until 2022, as seems likely.

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

Cllr Cooper reported that a recent water service inspection was undertaken, and the water troughs received a clean bill of health; thanks to Cllr Daw for attending this as Cllr Cooper was unable to attend. Cllr Cooper raised a recent request from a plot holder who would like to put a 6ft polytunnel on her plot. The Clerk has submitted a form to SDNPA asking if it needs permission in the same way that a shed does, but is yet to receive a response. A number of Cllrs expressed support for the idea; Cllr Cooper reminded the meeting that if permission is given for one tunnel, permission would have to begin to everyone who requested a polytunnel. It was agreed that the matter would be revisited once a response from SDNPA is received. **Action 3.**

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

Cllr Savage confirmed that nothing new to report.

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

Clerk reported that just under 2 weeks ago she reported the broken handrail opposite Deans Place and wanted confirmation that it had still not been repaired. Cllr Beechey confirmed that as of that weekend it was still broken and a trip hazard. Clerk explained that ESH have become very slow at responding and actioning things recently so will be escalating a few cases the following day, the handrail being one of them. **Action 4.**

Clerk also reported that she had received an email from SDNPA that had been forwarded to Councillors, but for residents’ information: the broken handrail over the white bridge has been acknowledged by SDNPA and extensive work is required. Specifications need to be drawn up, and additional consents are required, so it will take a little longer as not a simple repair. SDNPA will at the same time replace the broken kissing gate to the North, and plan to stabilise and widen the ramp.

Cllr Bell expressed concerns about the trees on the bank opposite Deans Place where the broken handrail is. One fell in the road just the other week and he feels it is an accident waiting to happen and ESH should be contacted about this. Cllr Beechey raised concerns about the wording of any contact with ESH, as we don’t want to see all the trees removed. Cllr Daw feels that the problem lies from when they cut some trees but did not remove them thus damaging the roots. There were also discussions on who is responsible for which trees. Clerk will look into this and report back to Councillors. **Action 5.**

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

Cllr Daw reported that some of the meetings she previously attended may start back up soon being hosted on Zoom so she may have other updates later in the year. She confirmed that £674.11 has been raised for the memorial bench for Lee and she will liaise with the Clerk to get this ordered. The location for the bench was discussed and all Councillors agreed on the Recreation ground.

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

Cllr Beechey expressed his thanks to Cllr Daw and Mick for helping to remove the padlock/chain at the bottom of the Tye and replacing with a thick chain and padlock. He confirmed that we are waiting for Mr Cooper to commence some jobs on the Tye, one being the fencing of the area opposite the Wingrove car park which will assist AEG when they need to pump. Regarding the playground, if anyone is interested in sitting on a committee to focus on fundraising/grant funding for the playground please contact the Clerk. The school and Pre School will be contacted again as suggested by Cllr Daw but Clerk confirmed they were contacted previously and no uptake from parents.

**129. Report from Planning Committee – Cllr Bell**

129.1 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting

SDNP/21/00033/TPO 15 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

SDNP/21/00034/TPO 13 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

SDNP/21/00035/TPO 11 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

SDNP/21/00036/TPO 9 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

SDNP/21/00039/TPO 7 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

SDNP/21/00040/TPO 8 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

SDNP/21/00041/TPO 10 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

SDNP/21/00042/TPO 12 The Broadway Alfriston BN26 5XL

129.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA

SDNP/20/03653/HOUS 1 West Close, Alfriston, BN26 5UZ *SDNPA granted permission*

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

129.3 Enforcement updates

Cllr Bell confirmed no new updates or reports.

**130. Reports from Outside Bodies**

*130.1 Volunteer Task Force*: Ms Adcock emailed in a report stating that she was delighted to see the snowdrops that were planted last February in bloom along the bank above Deans Place. Also, to look out for the daffodils at the top of the Dene car park, both projects undertaken by the Volunteer Task Force.

*130.2 Heartstart*: no update.

*130.3 Alfriston Emergency Group*: Mr Steve Woodgate reported that AEG have been gritting and pumping a lot. They have covered 118 hours since January. Following a call last week about the tree down at Whiteway, Mr Woodgate along with Mr Lewis attended to help clear it the best they could so the road could be reopened. When the gritting is finished, the salt bins will be filled with the remaining salt in the bags that have been ordered and paid for by APC.

*130.4 Flood Forum* – Mr John Hurwood stated that nothing new to report.

*130.5 Neighbourhood Watch* – no report.

*130.6 Twinning Committee* – nothing new to report.

*130.7 Alfriston and Cuckmere Connect* – ACC is temporarily suspended at the moment.

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

*130.9 Clergy House* – no report.

*130.10 Cuckmere Buses* – no report.

*130.11 AWMH* – Mr Adrian Butcher reported that the hall is being used by the Pre School during this lockdown. When the pandemic started Gerry undertook an excellent risk assessment which was circulated to users of the hall. They have managed to place Wendy on flexi-furlough so most of her wages are covered yet she can still ensure that admin is completed. They received a £10k grant from the government and hoping to receive another grant shortly so their income stream has remained topped up. The Hall Committee decided to proceed with the kitchen refurbishment, this has now been completed and looks very nice.

**131. Correspondence to The Clerk**

1. Clerk reported that permission was granted by Councillors, via email, for the Rude Mechanicals to change their date to use the Tye to Sunday 22nd August 2021.
2. A request has come through from Seaford RFC asking if they could use the Recreation ground on Fridays in the Summer holidays between 14:00 – 15:30 to run a free tag rugby session for children. Councillors agreed as long as it does not interfere with the cricket club.
3. A request has come through for a long-distance running event being held on the 30th May 2021, asking if a small gazebo could be erected on the Tye near to the Old Chapel Centre for an aid station point. Councillors discussed and questions were asked if this was a charity run, or one for participants’ pleasure and the exact location for the gazebo. Clerk will get the information and report back to Councillors via email. **Action 6.**
4. Clerk reported that at the end of last year the Parish Council was asked to nominate those who have made an impact on their community during the pandemic. APC nominated the Cuckmere Support Network as a whole. The network has been placed in Wealden’s roll of honour and received a certificate which the Clerk showed to attendees. The Clerk will be liaising with Mr Butcher to see if it could be displayed in the AWMH. **Action 7.**
5. The Clerk explained a few weeks back that a resident contacted APC about the broadband connection at the back of the village. This email was circulated to Cllrs and a response was made. The resident wanted it brought to this meeting for discussion, since then the Clerk has received 7 further emails from residents along the Broadway on the same subject. Cllr Beechey explained that the only recent broadband matter that APC has been involved with was about 5 years ago, when Openreach contacted APC as they needed to install a new cabinet in the village as part of their ‘superfast’ broadband roll-out (facilitated by ESSC). The cabinet is 6ft x 4ft x 2ft and was always to be in addition to the existing cabinet outside the village shop. Openreach suggested putting this new cabinet in the middle of the Square. Both APC and SDNPA rightly objected to this. The new cabinet had to be within 50/100m (can’t recall which it was) of the existing one outside the village store, so as not to cause any drop off in speeds. APC did everything it could within its power to find a suitable location, as otherwise the village would not have been included in the roll-out. Eventually, a very generous resident gave some space on his land and the box was installed in River Lane. This was within the required distance from the existing cabinet. There is a second cabinet, close to the original one on the corner of North Road/West Street, which is believed to support North Road and the Broadway. As the ‘superfast’ improvement is only fibre to cabinet and not fibre to property, it has always been the case that the further one lives from the cabinet, the greater the drop off in connection speeds. This drop off has been made worse in the current situation, with everyone at home using the internet a lot more than usual. Cllr Beechey stated that we could try to persuade a company to lay fibre cable to properties; this is expensive; requires digging up the streets to lay cable; and it is believed this is not being done in rural areas at present. Clerk will look into this. **Action 8.**

Cllr Rabagliati reported that he recently went, as a friend and not a Cllr, to a meeting with a resident about a proposal for a further box to be installed on the cobbles outside the resident’s rear gate. There has been no contact with APC about this. It is not known precisely what this box was to be for. It is understood that, as she was entitled to do, the resident refused permission for the cabinet to be placed on her land. Cllr Rabagliati will get the details so the Clerk can liaise with the company who proposed installing this. **Action 9.**

**132. Public Questions**

1. Mrs Hannah Parkinson asked whether bin collections in Star Lane would be affected with the Star Lane closure. The Clerk confirmed as part of the closure Biffa would be informed by ESH, but when the dates have been agreed, as they may have a slight change, the Clerk will contact Biffa direct to ensure they are aware. **Action 10.**

2. Cllr Bell asked about the licence being 28 days for Star Lane closure, as we wouldn’t want to see it being extended. Cllr Rabagliati confirmed that the work is being undertaken so the Star's opening date does not slip, so it is expected the work will be finished promptly.

3. Cllr Savage confirmed that he had spoken to the foreman at The Star recently and English Heritage have been causing them a lot of issues, but it will be very exciting and a real rebirth for them when they do open later this year.

**133. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be Monday 15th March 2021 at 19:15 via Zoom.

**APPENDIX A**

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