ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC), held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on 19th February 2024 at 19.15.

**Present:**

Cllr D Monteath-Wilson (Chair) Cllr S Daw

Cllr J Watkins (Vice-Chair) Cllr N Parkinson

Cllr A Harris

**In attendance:**

Mrs Suzanna Dry – Parish Clerk

There were 10 members of the public present.

**150. Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked our County Councillor Stephen Shing and District Councillor David Greaves for attending.

**151**. **Public Questions**

There were no questions from the public.

**152. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Rabagliati and Cllr Spring.

**153. Update from Maria Caulfield**

The Clerk read out a summary of the report received from Maria Caulfield. The full report is attached (A**ppendix A).**

**154. Update from Cllr Stephen Shing – East Sussex County Council (ESCC)**

Cllr Shing read his report to the meeting, the full report is attached (Ap**pendix B).**

Cllr Daw commented that since the new cycle path, there has been considerable flooding by Dawes House near Drusilla’s roundabout. As this is just outside the APC boundary, Cllr Shing asked Cllr Daw to send a photo of the flooding to him so that he can pick this up with the County Council. Action 1.

**155. Update from Cllr Greaves – Wealden District Council (WDC)**

Cllr Greaves read his report to the meeting, the full report is attached (**Appendix C).**

**156. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Watkins declared an interest in agenda item 172.2 as she is a member of AEG. Cllr Daw declared an interest in agenda item 172.6 as she is a Churchwarden. Cllr Parkinson declared an interest in agenda item 165 as he is a bay holder in the Dene Car Park.

**157. Minutes**

Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Watkins seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024 were a true and accurate record. **RESOLVED** that the Chair duly sign the minutes as an accurate record.

**158. To approve the Statement of Finances for February 2024**

Cllr. Harris proposed that the Statement of Finances for February 2024 (appendix A on the Agenda) be approved. Seconded by Cllr Watkins. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr Watkins sign the invoices for payment.

**159. Civility & Respect Pledge**

Wealden District Council have invited all councils to sign up to the pledge (appendix B on the Agenda), the aims of the pledge were discussed and councillors unanimously **AGREED** that APC would sign up to the pledge. Clerk to check that APC have a dignity at work policy, as mentioned in the pledge and sign APC up to the pledge. Action 2.

**160. Vacancy for a Board Member on the South Downs National Park Authority**

Councillors were made aware of a vacancy on the board of SDNPA (appendix C on the Agenda) and asked if they wished to be put forward. There was no uptake for this.

**161. Wealden District Parish Conference – Thur 14th March 2024.**

APC invited to attend the District Parish Conference (appendix D on the Agenda). It was **AGREED** that Cllr Parkinson would attend on behalf of APC. Clerk to book Cllr Parkinson’s place on the conference. Action 3.

**162. Rural Grass Cutting Service from East Sussex**

Council to decide on an option for the rural grass cutting carried out by East Sussex County Council (appendix E on the Agenda). Cllr Harris proposed Option 2 – Environmental Enhancement Service, Cllr Watkins seconded, it was **RESOLVED** that Option 2 be taken. Clerk to confirm to ESCC. Action 4.

**163. Annual Assembly - Monday 22nd April 2024.**

As the Clerk is unavailable on the original date of Monday 15th April 2024, due to pre-booked annual leave, it was **AGREED** the date would be changed to the following Monday 22nd April 2024. The Clerk asked Cllrs for ideas for a speaker to be invited for the evening.

**164. CILCA Training & SLCC Membership for the Clerk**

Cllrs discussed the Clerks report on the above (appendix E on the Agenda). It was **AGREED** the council would pay for CILCA Training and the annual SLCC membership for the Clerk. The Clerk was asked to make these payments. Action 5.

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

As Cllr Rabagliati was unable to attend, his report was read out by the Clerk as follows:

High Street Plan **-**   There is no further update other than to say that I have contacted East Sussex County to request an update on the timelines for gateway and 20mph implementation and suggested an on-site meeting with the new designated project manager.  I have also chased for a contact to assist and advise with gateway design options.  In the next couple of months I hope to re-engage dialogue to develop the APC plan for a change of surface for the length of the High Street

Business Open Signage **-**  APC purchased 4 large signs to advertise that businesses remain open at times of road closure and flooding.  We have obtained full approval from ESH for them to be put out at such times, and they have now been delivered to AEG.  I’d like to express thanks to AEG for all of their efforts on behalf of the village this winter.  The tireless support that they provide for the benefit of the village is much appreciated.  In particular they have been involved in gritting, water level management, drain and gully clearing, and discovering the broken sluices which are contribute to the flooding on North Street which have  been reported to Wealden, who we believe are responsible to maintain them.

At this point I would like to propose that the current grant of £300 that APC make to AEG for this year be increased to reflect the additional work and associated costs.  I believe that there is budget available for this and propose increasing this to £450.

It was unanimously AGREED at the meeting that this year’s grant to AEG be increased to £450. Clerk to advise AEG. Action 6.

Wealden Dene Car Park consultation **–** Wealden have confirmed the introduction of charging for residents’ and business permits for the Dene car park, despite our representations that this will have a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the village, with an inevitable increase in parking in restricted areas, as a result of the lack of enforcement.

I would propose that APC should write to complain that our views were not listened to, that the changes will have a serious impact on illegal parking within the village, and that the decision to charge for permits should be retracted immediately.

It was **AGREED** at the meeting that the Clerk would draw up a letter to send stating APC are not happy with the outcome. Action 7.

Schedule ESH High Street works on 24 January **–** the planned road closure for work to repair sections of the High Street did not take place.  We have not been advised why this was, and we await the re-scheduling of this much needed work.

Cllr Monteath-Wilson stated she had spoken to the contractors as they were packing away the signs and they stated work could not be carried out as cars had parked on the market cross area. Cllr Daw volunteered to put cones out here before the next schedule of works. Clerk reported that ESH had today confirmed this work has now been re-scheduled for overnight on 5-6th March. Clerk to put details on APC website and send out via the e-mail listing. Action 8.

ESH works:   North Street– between Lullington Rd & The Willows Car Park  1st March – 5th March  -  works are scheduled to take place overnight (between 7pm – 7am) for patch repairs.  Details on the APC website and sent out via the e-mail listing.

ESH works:   West Street– re-surfacing of pavement on-going**.** New utilities covers have been installed which currently present a trip hazard.  ESH have confirmed the final part of the works will rectify this, which will be carried out by another team in 2-3 weeks.  APC to discuss whether to contact ESH regarding the current trip hazard.

Cllr Monteath-Wilson spoke to contractors on site and they advised the second part of the works will make good. APC **AGREED** to ask the Clerk to write to ESH and ask if there is a reason for the 2-3 week delay for the 2nd part of the work. Action 9.

Deans Road BT manholes **-**  corrective work has yet to be completed by BT.

**166. Report on Allotments and Recreation Ground - Cllr Daw**

Allotments - Cllr Daw reported the meter readings taken for the allotments since the last meeting, have remained the same. Cllr Daw will provide the meter readings on a weekly basis going forwards. Allotment renewal letters have now gone out and those on the waiting list will be contacted to advise there are allotments available. Clerk & Cllr Daw to action – Action 10. Cllr Daw reported that some allotments had been left in a very bad state and wondered if it is possible to request a deposit when the lease is taken out. Clerk to look into this . Action 11. Cllr Daw will be putting a copy of her report on the allotment noticeboard for information. Action 12. Clerk to advise of the date in March for the water to be turned on. Action 13.

Playground – Cllr Daw thanked the Clerk for her work on this. The Clerk & Cllr Daw met on site this week with Daniel Larkin Tree Surgery, to obtain quotes to repair the post and rail fence between the playground and recreation ground and to supply and install a new fence between the playground and the allotments. These have now been received at a cost of £230 and £260 respectively. The cost has been kept down as APC will organise the clearing of vegetation prior to work commencing. Cllr Daw and Chris Daw will carry this out, this Saturday 24th February and would be grateful for any volunteers to assist. It was **AGREED** the Clerk will contact The Friends of Alfriston Playground to see if they can provide any volunteers. Action 14. Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Watkins seconded the quotes for £230 and £260 from Daniel Larkin Tree Surgery. It was **RESOLVED** that these quotes be accepted and the Clerk was asked to instruct Daniel Larkin Tree Surgery. Action 15. Clerk to see if the cost of providing the new fence can be funded by CIL money. Action 16.

Recreation Ground - Cllr Daw reported that she has not been able to organise a meeting with the football team, who wish to use the recreation ground, as yet. The cricket club are happy to discuss the idea, Cllr Daw to arrange a meeting. Action 17. Cricket starts again in April.

Next Coffee Conversation - Cllr Daw suggested Saturday 20th April for the next one and will give a presentation on the recreation ground and allotments. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Daw would arrange this and report back to the next meeting. Action 18.

**167. Report on Public Transport – Cllr Harris**

Electric Charging Points, Willows Car Park – Cllr Harris reported these have still not been connected but he will be advised when a date is confirmed. AEG previously asked for written confirmation that these will be safe when under water during flooding, Cllr Harris has requested this.

**168. Report on Rights of Way and Countryside – Cllr Harris.**

Cllr Harris reported that after the recent heavy winds, there were lots of reports of blocked pathways which have been reported and many have been cleared.

Cuckmere River – Cllr Harris spoke about the importance of a meeting with Maria Caulfield and has now received an e-mail from Maria Caulfield looking to arrange a meeting in March, details to follow. Cllr Harris will attend along with councillors from Cuckmere Parish Council.

Water Level Management Board have scheduled phase 2 of the desilting work on the east side of the river between White Bridge and Deans Place Hotel, to start in February\March. Phase 3, a full repair of the embankment will commence August\September. It was reported that Phase 1, which was completed in January cost £144,582.00 of which only £14,255.00 was spent on direct work, the rest was consultant\project fees.

APC have been approached by Mandy Foss to consider a platform for kayakers\canoeists to use by the kissing gate, on the other side of the river from Alfriston. Cllr Harris has replied stating a concern with the river being tidal, it would necessitate a complex design to accommodate a platform. Also there is concern at the number of users this would attract, arriving by car. There are excellent facilities at Exceat. The land is in fact outside of the parish boundary and falls within Cuckmere Valley Parish Council. It was **AGREED** to ask the Clerk to write to Cuckmere Valley Parish Council, advising APC is not in favour of this and has concerns over parking issues.

**169. Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Spring**

Cllr Spring is working on his report which will be ready for the March meeting and will cover some key objectives.

**170. Report on Tye – Cllr Parkinson**

Cllr Parkinson expressed his thanks to the Tye Team who have met over the last two Saturdays and carried out gardening at both ends of the Tye. The team would be grateful for any plants that can be donated. The team have cleared alongside the memorial garden and Clergy House, and over the next two Saturdays plan to transplant snowdrops so that they are more visible.

Coffeehouse Conversations – research is being done on ideas raised and these will be brought forward. With regard to the suggestion of an extra dog poo bin, Wealden District Council provide these and carry out the collections. The cost for another bin to be added to the collection is £265.00 p.a. This is not accounted for in the budget and the budget is quite tight. Cllr Parkinson suggested that council see how the budget develops and review at a later date. This was **AGREED.**

Cllr Parkinson thanked Nick Beechey who has been distributing the dog poo bags. These are ordered by the Clerk and just need distributing. Cllr Monteath-Wilson volunteered to take this on.

Cllr Parkinson confirmed we are awaiting delivery of the new parking signs. For information, there will be a skip outside the Clergy House for a couple of days to remove garden vegetation.

Both Cllr Parkinson and Nick Beechey carried out some experimental pothole filling today to see how effective this was.

Cllr Parkinson made the following recommendations in his report (Appendix I on the Agenda):

APC approve the draft specification for repairs to The Tye Road to send out to three companies. If this goes out to contractors in the next couple of days we can give three weeks notice and have the quotes back in time to discuss at the next council meeting. It was unanimously **AGREED** that the Clerk be asked to send out the specification. Action 19.

Councillors discussed the offer of financial assistance towards the Tye Road repairs by a business and if this is accepted, that all businesses on The Tye Road are invited to make a contribution. It was **AGREED** to thank the business for their offer and come back to them once we know costs.

APC approve maintaining the Tye Road at its current width and with the current surface, since this is assumed in the specification document. **AGREED.**

APC approve the spending of £150 + Vat on materials for repainting the yellow lines. **AGREED.**

Cllr Parkinson reported the council had received a request for a disabled parking bay close to the entrance of the AWMH. Cllr Parkinson would be grateful if anyone concerned by this contact him to discuss further in the first instance. Cllr Watkins suggested this would need the trustees to agree to a change in the byelaws and changing a byelaw is a very complicated and costly process.

Cllr Monteath-Wilson thanked Cllr Parkinson and the volunteers for their hard work.

**171. Report from Planning Committee**

**171.1 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting.**

No new applications received.

**171.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision on from SDNPA**

**APPROVED**:

**SDNP/23/05339/LIS** Tile Barn Cottage, Tile Barn, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5US.

**IN PROGRESS**:

**SDNP/23/03986/FUL** Kings Ride Farm, Kings Ride, Alfriston, BN26 5US. SDNPA held a committee meeting on 15th February 2024. APC circulated details on the website and e-mailing list. Results have not been announced by SDNPA as yet.

**SDNP/24/00084/TPO** Trees west of Smugglers Close, Alfriston. To reduce back to 20/30% for good tree management. Pending consideration.

**171.3 Enforcement updates**

No enforcement issues.

**172. Reports from Outside Bodies**

**172.1** Heartstart - no report received.

**172.2** Alfriston Emergency Group – no report received.

**172.3** Flood Forum – no report received.

**172.4** Neighbourhood Watch – no report received.

**172.5** Twinning Committee – no report received.

**172.6** St Andrew’s Church

Cllr Daw was pleased to report that the new Musical Director starts after Easter and a new Administration Officer was appointed today. There will be a violin & piano recital in the church on 3rd March. Tickets are available on line or via the Cuckmere News. Cllr Harris advised proceeds from ticket sales will go direct to the church. Cllr Daw advised that Peter Radcliffe will be leaving the village, on 3rd March after church there will be tea & cake in the Old Chapel Centre to say goodbye.

**173.7** Clergy House – no report received.

**174.8** Cuckmere Buses – no report received.

**174.9** Alfriston War Memorial Hall

Adrian Butcher reported that the Curry & Quiz night on Friday 23rd February 2024 is full to capacity.

**174.10** Speedwatch – no report received.

**174.11** Events – no report received.

**173. Correspondence – Asking for permission from the Council**

Mish Mash Morris Dancers requesting to dance on the Tye for one day either Saturday 27th July or Sunday 28th July 2024 – Council **AGREED**. Clerk was asked to notify requestor. Action 20.

Alfriston W.I. Tabletop Sale in AWMH – request for A boards in Market Cross & The Twitten Saturday 20th April 2024. Council **AGREED** to A board in Market Cross. A board on The Twitten will need permission from East Sussex County Highways. Clerk was asked to notify the requestor as such. Action 21.

Easter Egg Hunt on The Tye, Saturday 30th March 2024. Request to use The Tye for the egg hunt if required - Council **AGREED.** Request for A board on Market Square – Council **AGREED.** Clerk was asked to notify the requestor. Action 22.

Church Concert 24th February – 3rd March 2024, request for A board on Market Cross. Council **AGREED.** Clerk was asked to notify the requestor. Action 23.

**174. Public Questions**

The meeting was adjourned at 20.45hrs by the Chair before Public Questions commenced.

**175. Date of next Meeting**

Monday 18th March 2024 in the AWMH at 19:15.

Cllr Parkinson thanked the Clerk for sending papers out with the Agenda and Cllr Monteath-Wilson confirmed this will continue going forwards.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 21.00 hrs

**Appendices, as referred to in the minutes, attached below.**

**APPENDIX A**

Update from Maria Caulfield MP

Please accept my apologies that I am unable to join you at your upcoming meeting. I do however have the following updates for the parish.

Draft Local Plans

Wealden District Council are preparing a new local plan which will replace the current Local Plan. The new Local Plan will provide policies to shape our places, plan and manage growth in the district and guide development over a 15-20 year period.

The local plan will ultimately be the key planning document against which the Council assess and make decisions on planning applications. I am encouraging as many as possible to join the consultation process, please register using their [consultation portal](https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kse).

Kings Portrait Scheme

The Cabinet Office has unveiled a new official portrait of His Majesty The King, captured by photographer Hugo Burnand at Windsor Castle last year. The portrait depicts His Majesty donning a Royal Navy uniform as Admiral of the Fleet, adorned with official medals and decorations. In a bid to commemorate the new reign, public authorities across the United Kingdom, including Local Authorities, schools, courts, police forces, and fire and rescue services, are invited to apply for a free copy of the portrait. The scheme will extend to town, parish, and community councils, as well as Ministry of Defence-sponsored cadet forces in February

I will be in touch with further updates on how to apply soon. However, please do let me know if this is something you would be interested in.

Boost to Housing Benefit

I'm delighted to share that the Government is introducing legislation to Parliament, aiming to increase the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). This initiative, benefiting 1.6 million low-income households, is projected to save families an average of £800 in the upcoming fiscal year. The government's decision to raise the LHA rate to the thirtieth percentile of local market rents in April 2024 addresses the challenges posed by high rents due to global inflationary pressures. This move will support over one million families in meeting current housing costs. Over the next five years, a significant investment of £7 billion will aid 1.6 million private renters on Universal Credit or Housing Benefit across the UK, providing an average benefit of £800 for the year 2024-25. This critical cost of living support is a direct result of the Government's strategic decisions to combat inflation and strengthen the economy. Responding to concerns from residents about previous LHA rates, I am pleased that the government is taking steps to increase LHA, benefiting 75,000 households in the South East.

‘Excellent’ Rating on Local Bathing Waters

I am delighted at the recent announcement from the Environment Agency, confirming the Excellent quality rating for the bathing waters in the Lewes Constituency, specifically Birling Gap and Seaford. The Environment Agency assesses over 400 bathing waters across the country annually, categorising them as Excellent, Good, Sufficient, or Poor based on water quality. This year's results, reflecting a 96% compliance with minimum standards, with almost 90% achieving the highest ratings of Excellent or Good, underscore the continuous efforts needed to enhance bathing water quality. Government initiatives, such as the 'Plan for Water,' which involves a substantial investment of approximately £1.6 billion addresses issues like sewage discharges, nutrient pollution reduction, and water supply augmentation. I acknowledge the progress made since the 1990s, highlighting that increased regulation and sustained investments have significantly improved coastal bathing waters across England.

Urging Parents to get Children Vaccinated for MMR

Recently, in my role in the Department for Health and Social Care I appealed to parents to ensure their children receive the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccinations as cases of measles rise. With the UK Health Security Agency declaring a national incident due to potential outbreaks spreading across the country, I emphasise the importance of vaccination to curb the spread of this preventable disease. The MMR vaccine is a crucial component of the NHS Routine Childhood Immunisation Programme, with doses offered at one year and a second at three years four months. Parents with children who missed vaccinations and individuals of any age not yet vaccinated are encouraged to come forward for the safe and free MMR vaccine. I have highlighted the proven safety of the vaccine and its lifelong protective benefits, urging all parents to prioritise their children's health. Over 99% effectiveness is achieved with two doses of the MMR vaccine, providing robust protection against measles and rubella.

£150 Warm Home Discount payments extended for Park Home residents

I would like to thank E.On Energy and Ovo Energy for this extended scheme, these additional funds have come at just the right time for park home residents as winter temperatures continue to drop. Those who have already been awarded the £150 Warm Home Discount will automatically receive the Heat the Home bundle. Please see my recent announcement for more information ; [www.mariacaulfield.co.uk/news/maria-caulfield-mp-welcomes-ps150-warm-home-discount-payments-extended-park-home-residents](http://www.mariacaulfield.co.uk/news/maria-caulfield-mp-welcomes-ps150-warm-home-discount-payments-extended-park-home-residents)

**APPENDIX B**

Update from Cllr Shing - East Sussex County Councillor

Council Tax

As I reported to you at the last meeting about county council proposed to increase the maximum council tax 2.99% and 2% for audit social care.  It was approved at the full council on 6 February. County council have to draw from the reserve to balance the budget/book for the first time in my 22 years of county councillor, if county council continue don’t receive adequate funding for audit social care from central government next year. County council could be in financial difficulty and could be Bankruptcy or service cut.

Local transport plan 4

County Council have Launched the local transport plan 4 for public consultation on 27 November ,  at the county full council on 6 February the leader of transport and environment reported that the up to date the public  response are very good, and she is ask us to encourage those public not yet have commented to comment by 27 February.

Another item on the agenda was Foster Children (please find the poster I passedon to you), essential information is in the poster, county council would like resident to become a Foster parent.

Road closed and business open signs

As I reported at your last meeting that a resident requested, finally I am pleased that county highway agreed to supply the sign. Thank you for the resident suggestion.

Report potholes

I had submitted 2 written questions at ESCC full council meeting on 6 February, after a long debate and I am not convinced that our county council highway management have done enough to manage our highway standards.

North Street

County highway have sent out information to your parish and local residents about the patching work at North Street between 1 March to 5 March, therefore i am not repeating.

**APPENDIX C**

**Update from Cllr Greaves - Wealden District Council**

1. **Southern Water - failings**

Southern Water (which is responsible for wastewater and sewerage treatment across the Wealden district) had agreed to attend a meeting arranged to address concerns across Wealden including flooding, sewage seeping into people’s homes, gardens and roads, the ongoing problem of discharges into rivers and waterways and the inability to deal with additional development. Shortly before Christmas Southern Water officials withdrew their agreement to attend the meeting.

Wealden District Council and two dozen other local authorities have pledged to keep the pressure up on Southern Water and to hold it to account for constant failings.

OFWAT has pledged to work closely with Local Authorities to hold Southern Water to account and ensure that infrastructure pledges are actually honoured.

1. **Wealden Community Sports Hub given planning permission**

Full planning permission for the development of a new sports hub facility in Hellingly has been given the green light.

The new 20 acre sports hub will include two full size floodlit artificial pitches, two multi-use games areas (MUGAs) (containing four dual floodlit tennis/netball courts), two padel tennis courts, skate park, play facilities and a sports building providing changing rooms, toilets and café, alongside parking, landscaping, drainage, ancillary works and vehicular access via the A267.

The state-of-the-art hub will also accommodate 206kWp solar array of photovoltaic (PV) panels over the parking spaces in the main car park - 60 spaces will have the ability to provide electric car charging with 20 spaces fitted with active chargers from the outset with the remaining 40 passive spaces being capable of being brought into use as and when demand requires to plan for future increase in uptake.

The sports hub will be accessible by a new pedestrian and cycling access, which will also connect the site to the Cuckoo Trail.  Bus routes will be enhanced to provide public transport links to the facility.

As I have mentioned before the original £5m or so costs projection has now been topped up with some £8m from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies but the project has not been fully costed and total costs are not known. I have no doubt that they will escalate beyond £13m

The full application, with a layout plan outlining the proposed development is available below.

<https://council.wealden.gov.uk/documents/s85815/WD20232100DC%20-%20LAND%20AT%20KNIGHTS%20FARM%20EAST%20LOWER%20HORSEBRIDGE%20HAILSHAM.pdf>

1. **Draft Local Plan**

At an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 8th February it was decided that the draft local plan be released for public consultation. This will commence in March and run for 8 weeks. There will be a virtual exhibition and drop-in sessions. The link for the consultation is: <https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kse/>

The plan allows for 15,729 new homes to be built by March 2040

1. **Roadworks**

Work to carry out patch repairs in North Street will take place between Friday 1st and Tuesday 5th March. Work will take place between the hours of 7.00 p.m. and 7.00 a.m. Diversions will be put in place.