

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

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Tuesday 28th May 2024

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC), held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 20th May 2024 at 7.50pm

Present:

Cllr D Monteath-Wilson (Chair)
Cllr J Watkins (Vice Chair)
Cllr S Daw

Cllr J Harris
Cllr S Rabagliati
Cllr J Spring

In attendance:

Mrs Suzanna Dry – Parish Clerk & RFO

There were approximately 8 members of the public present.

16. Chairman's Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

17. Public Questions

Mike Rawlings asked the meeting for APC's response to questions raised at the flood meeting held in the village on 15th May. Cllr Harris has addressed these in his report under agenda item no. 29 - Rights of Way and Countryside. With the Chair's permission, Cllr Harris gave his report now in order to respond to Mike Rawlings question:-

At the last APC meeting on 22nd April, I reported on a meeting with Maria Caulfield on 28th March, attended by Jamie Mansfield, James Dobson and myself, the main result being that MC would set up a meeting with the Environment Agency and interested parties, and that we would be advised of the date 'next week' ie 29th April. The Chair advised that APC received notice this afternoon regarding the meeting with Maria Caulfield that Cllr Harris has been pushing for, for so long. This has now been set as a virtual meeting on 23rd May. This meeting will include representatives from the Environment Agency, Water Levels Management Board, Wealden District Council, Alfriston Parish Council and Cuckmere Valley Parish Council.

On the same date, at the Annual Parish Assembly, Cllr Richard Brown of the Cuckmere Valley Parish Council gave a very illuminating presentation on the flooding issues related to the Cuckmere River. The content of his presentation is set out in detail in the minutes of that meeting. Richard Brown very kindly repeated that presentation at a public meeting last week, the 15th May.

The principal problem is as follows:-

1. The EA eventually granted licences to the WLMB to carry out works to the bank, and de-silting work from the White Bridge to Deans Place.
2. The work had to be completed by Mid March this year.
3. The work could not be carried out because of flooding.
4. The EA will not allow work to be carried out in the summer, which means a delay until the flooding season, with the obvious consequences.

There are various lines to be pursued to try and break the log jam, principally as follows:-

1. The Parish Councils to present a combined front, and to generally co-operate. This is not a problem, we are all in agreement about the problem.
2. The Councils and the community in general need to campaign for two very particular points:-
 - a. That the EA extend the period of the licences to allow the agreed work to be done in the summer months.
 - b. That the EA agree to the Cuckmere River to be officially de-mained, meaning that they would surrender responsibility for works to the Cuckmere River to the Water Levels Management Board.

I should point out that de-maining the river is not without its consequences. Any new and on going costs that the WLMB would then be responsible for, would not be funded by the E.A. and would have to be paid for out of additional council tax. A point to be aware of.

Richard Brown suggested that pressure could best be applied by the Councils, and individuals, flooding the Regional Director of the Environment Agency with letters on these two points. Richard Brown has agreed to supply contact details for the EA, and to suggest the particular points that individuals should make in their letters.

I also think that the Caulfield/EA meeting is extremely important, and will report back after this meeting which is now set for 23rd May.

The Environment Agency should not be regarded as total villains – as I have reported before, they have had their budget slashed, the Cuckmere Valley is, in their view, low risk (only 5 houses at risk of flooding, and no lives), and clearly they have demands on their resources in other parts of the country. However, the two proposals mentioned above should, if anything, reduce the pressures on them.

At the last meeting, I expressed my feelings that a detailed record of weather conditions, and flooding, should be kept, not only to assist the campaign, but also to record the effect of climate change which is clearly with us. I said I would bring to this meeting a proposal for some form of record with public access, possibly to include a village diary. I have not been able to prepare the proposal in time – my apologies – but can give the assurance that daily weather details are being kept – and I have those records going back to 2002.

Cllr Harris encouraged individuals to write to the following contacts, to request urgent maintenance work be carried out on the Cuckmere at Alfriston and for responsibility of the Cuckmere River to be transferred to the Water Levels Management Board.

- Simon Moody, the Environment Agency Regional Director at Worthing: Simon.moody@environment-agency.gov.uk
- James Seymour, the Natural England Deputy Director for Kent and Sussex: protectedsites@naturalengland.org.uk
- Maria Caulfield, maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk
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The Chair confirmed that APC are actively working with Cuckmere Valley Parish Council on these issues and will write jointly with CVPC to the E.A. Also APC have agreed to pursue ways of getting the Environment Agency to hand over responsibility to the WLMB, there are however many financial implications of this, but it is being looked into.

Cllr Spring confirmed that the meeting on 15th May was not an APC meeting, and was organised to try and get information out to more people as the turnout for the annual village assembly, where Cllr Brown initially gave his presentation, was so low. Cllr Spring will promote the contact details outside of the council as well, to encourage as many people as possible to respond.

Ashlee Kemsley asked the meeting if the patch of grass opposite Saffrons Gardens, could be used for parking. Parking is a major issue on The Furlongs, especially for herself as she has a disabled daughter. This is being exasperated by staff from The Star parking there. Cllr Rabagliati responded we are all aware of the change in parking in the last year or so, with everywhere being so busy. It is a real problem for The Furlongs and Saffrons Gardens. This hasn't been helped by Wealden's policy to start charging residents and businesses to park in the Dene car park. Cllr Rabagliati has a meeting with East Sussex Highways in a couple of weeks and will bring up the idea of parking bays here.

Katie Salmon mentioned that there is also a problem with people parking on the road opposite driveways stopping residents from getting in and out of their drive. It was **AGREED** that the Chair and Cllr Rabagliati will ask the owners of The Star, The Wingrove and Deans Place Hotel to a meeting to discuss the issue of staff parking and will report back to the next coffeehouse meeting which is on Highways.

The traffic monitoring equipment seen recently, is to do with the 20mph and gateway scheme.

18. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Parkinson, who is currently away, Cllr Stephen Shing (ESCC) who has another meeting to attend and Adrian Butcher (AWMH).

19. Update from Maria Caulfield

Maria Caulfield's report was attached to the Agenda was also read out at the Meeting.

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

Cllr Shing's report was received after the meeting and a copy is attached to the minutes, ([Appendix A](#)).

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

Cllr Greaves presented his report to the meeting. A copy is attached to the minutes ([Appendix B](#)). Cllr Rabagliati asked if the change in leadership at ESCC will lead to a change in parking enforcement. Cllr Greaves confirmed parking enforcement is being looked into officially and ESCC are aware of APC's view on it. Cllr Greaves did advise that although some councils such as APC are strongly in favour of enforcement, other councils are opposed to it.

22. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Daw declared an interest as she is a Churchwarden and a member of the Patient Participation Group. Cllr Watkins declared an interest in Heartstart and Alfriston Emergency Group.

23. Minutes

Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Harris seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting and the Annual Parish Assembly both held on 22nd April 2024 were a true and accurate record. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Chair duly sign the minutes as an accurate record.

24. Finance

To approve the statement of finance for May 2024 (as attached with the Agenda). Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Spring seconded that the statement of finance for May 2024 be approved. This was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

Now that the form of finance meetings has been agreed (at the Annual Council Meeting earlier tonight) the Clerk was asked to call a finance meeting, comprising all councillors to review the council's finances. This will of course be a public meeting and will be advertised in the normal ways.

Action 1.

25. D Day Celebrations 6th June - Update

Cllr Daw reported that plans are coming along nicely for the D Day celebration on 6th June and wished to thank Gerry Garnett for completing the risk assessment for the event. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant will arrive at 2pm and protocols for this visit have been received. There will be a trumpet fanfare and the union flag will be raised in accordance with protocol. Other activities include a mini rifle range, accordion player, refreshments served in the AWMH by the W.I, Alfriston school choir and a group called 'The Land Girls' will be playing swing music. Decorations are being organised for the High Street and The Tye. There will be no cost to provide any of the activities. The event is designed to be just for the village and therefore advertising has been kept to posters in the village shop, APC website and e-mail listing, Cuckmere News and Alfriston Hub.

The church will be displaying special flowers for 6th June and the Clergy House has a special exhibition. Litlington will be lighting a beacon at 9.00pm for anyone who wishes to go along and join them.

26. Report on Highways & Twittens – Cllr Rabagliati

High Street Plan

I heard last week that the High Street Plan has been progressed by ESH and we have been invited to a presentation at Lewes on 5th June where details of the implementation will be given. I will provide an update on this at the next meeting. We already know that the cost of the gateway furniture is to come from APC where I believe we have some budget ring-fenced, and I will seek more information as to what will be required and what input we can have at that meeting. I can confirm that the monitoring equipment seen on the Furlongs recently is related to this.

Emergency Traffic Management plan for flooding

Together with Steve Woodgate from AEG I attended a meeting last week with James Ward of East Sussex Highways where we discussed some significant changes to the plan that is implemented on the occasions when the road floods. These changes are being drawn up for approval but provide (we hope) more effective measures to limit traffic flow, protect Winton Street, and ensure that visitors understand how to access the businesses. We also discussed the creation of an Emergency Plan to be actioned when there is an incident which blocks the Newhaven road and traffic diverts through Alfriston. Mr Ward committed to produce such a plan and we await this with interest.

Overweight and oversized vehicles in the village

There have been many instances of oversized vehicles in the village recently, some of which have struck buildings on the High Street, causing significant damage. We continue to pressure for action on this and I will be raising it again at the meeting with ESH on 5th June.

Potholes and pavement works

Some of the worst potholes in the village have now been fixed, and we have dates for the following repairs:

28-31 May Pavement works in West Street

29-31 May Street works – diversion via Litlington

17-21 June High Street for UKPN works

Parking in The Furlongs

I have received emails from residents in The Furlongs and Saffron Gardens about the difficulties they face parking near their homes. This is a tricky problem, as there are clearly not enough street parking spaces for all of the properties, and there are also a number of properties that have more than one vehicle. The situation is not helped by the recent change in Wealden policy regarding charging. I would suggest that this topic could be discussed at the upcoming Coffee House meeting and any conclusions brought back to the next APC meeting

Highways Coffee House

I suggest that we set a date for this to be after the meeting with ESH on 5th June, when we will be able to discuss not only the High Street Plan, but traffic issues in the village, generally. Saturday 15th

June was suggested. The Chair asked Cllr Rabagliati to confirm the date and venue for the next coffeehouse meeting as suggested. **Action 2.**

27. Report on Allotments and Recreation Ground - Cllr Daw

Allotments - Cllr Daw reported that wooden signs have now been placed on all plots and allotment holders have been asked to put their plot number on them. Cllr Daw will be meeting with all allotment holders to re-confirm the plot numbers in order to re-do the allotment plan. This will take some time but will be worth it. Cllr Daw has been advised of people putting rubbish into the bins that are not allotment holders. A lot of councils do not provide bins and allotment holders have to use composts. If our bins are being used for other purposes we may need to look at the cost to the council. The clerk was asked to confirm the annual cost to provide the Biffa bins. **Action 3.**

Playground – Cllr Daw and the Clerk are meeting Wicksteed on site tomorrow morning to discuss outstanding maintenance issues. The annual ROSPA report has been booked and is being carried out in June.

Recreation Ground - The fencing at the bottom of the recreation ground has been pulled away, John Harmer of the Cricket Club has offered to repair it. Grass cutting has caused a problem as it was not short enough and caused issues for the cricket. The Clerk was asked to write to the contractors. **Action 4.**

Children playing football lost their ball as it went over the net and into a tree of the property opposite. It was reported that the owners were rude and did not return the ball. The Clerk was asked to keep a record in case this happens again. **Action 5.**

28. Report on Public Transport – Cllr Harris

Cllr Harris is still awaiting confirmation that the electric charging points in the Willows car park will be safe under water. However these have yet to be connected.

29. Report on Rights of Way and Countryside – Cllr Harris.

Cllr Harris will report on the overgrown path at the back of Kings Ride to East Sussex County Council.

30. Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Spring

Cllr Spring reported there was not a lot to update on this month. Cllr Spring is carrying on with putting together APC's priorities had has some input, and is still open to suggestions as trying to get as much in put as possible. Cllr Spring is meeting with David Lewis regarding the emergency flood plan and updating contact numbers so this can be updated before the autumn.

31. Report on Tye – Cllr Parkinson

Cllr Parkinson's report was attached to the agenda (Appendix C). In his report Cllr Parkinson asked APC to consider the following proposals:

Yellow Lines - To approve the purchase of thermoplastic lining for re-painting the remaining yellow lines at a cost of £172.00. Cllrs were unclear if this type of strip will work on the bend as these strips

come in straight lines. Cllrs decided to discuss further with Cllr Parkinson before purchasing any. The Chair thanked Cllr Spring and Aaron Timms for their work in re-painting the lines so far.

Potholes - The cost of materials to repair the potholes is estimated at £1,000.00. Cllrs were asked to approve this amount to be taken from the Tye Road reserves. Cllr Spring proposed and Cllr Harris seconded a motion to spend £1,000.00 from the Tye Road reserves. **RESOLVED**

Storage of Sub Base - To approve the storage of a bulk bag of type1 sub base near the Tye Rd. Suggested site – either behind the Tye Rd alongside the Clergy House or behind the two parking spaces opposite the Wingrove car park. Cllrs were concerned at storing the sub base on land open to the public in view of theft and/or vandalism. It was decided to discuss this further with Cllr Parkinson before making a decision.

32. Report from Planning Committee

Cllr Watkins confirmed that at the last planning meeting, the new owners of Deans Place Hotel gave a presentation regarding their planning applications. APC supported all the planning applications put forward so far.

32.1 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting

SDNP/24/01398/FUL Deans Place Hotel, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TW – **No objection**
SDNP/24/01399/LIS - Deans Place Hotel, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TW - **No objection**
SDNP/24/01400/FUL - Deans Place Hotel, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TW - **No objection**
SDNP/24/01400/FUL & LIS - Deans Place, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TW – **No objection**
SDNP/24/01341/LIS - Deans Place Hotel, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TW - **No objection**
SDNP/24/01342/LIS - Deans Place Hotel, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TW - **No objection**
SDNP/24/01338/DCOND - SDW, France Hill Kings Ride, Alfriston, BN26 5XW - **No objection**
SDNP/24/01643/TPO - 16 Kings Ride, Alfriston, BN26 5XP - **No Comment**
SDNP/24/01565/HOUS - Riverbank, River Lane, Alfriston, BN26 5SX - **No objection**
ISDNP/24/01636/LS - Old Manse Flat, High St, Alfriston, BN26 5SZ - **Application Removed**
SDNP/24/01673/DCOND - Flint Cottage, 12 North St, BN26 5UG - **Comments not permitted**
SDNP/24/01675/DCOND - 11 North St, Alfriston, BN26 5TW - **Comments not permitted**

32.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA
None

32.3 Enforcement updates -
SDNP/24/00166/BRECON - 6 Kings Ride, Alfriston, BN26 5XP - No update from SDNP.

33. Reports from Outside Bodies

223.1.1 Heartstart - Cllr Watkins reported that the defibrillator cabinet is now completed at the cricket ground, access codes to be added shortly. The box for the one at the AWMH will also be changed.

223.2 Alfriston Emergency Group - No report

223.3 Flood Forum - No report

223.4 Neighbourhood Watch - No report

223.5 Twinning Committee -Report attached to Agenda ([Appendix C](#)) and read out at the meeting

223.5.1 St Andrew's Church - Cllr Daw reported on forthcoming events – 9th June Evensong by the choir from Chichester Cathedral. 30th June - Chamber Ensemble of London performing Vivaldi & Bach. Cllr Harris advised a double violin concerto will also be performed which was composed by his father-in-law, and all proceeds will go the church.

- 223.6 Clergy House** - Report attached ([Appendix D](#)) and summarised at the meeting.
- 223.7 Cuckmere Buses** - No report
- 223.8 Alfriston War Memorial Hall** - No report
- 223.9 Speedwatch** - Nothing to report
- 223.10 Events** - No report.

34. Correspondence – Asking for permission from the Council

Dog Show on The Tye – Sunday 25th August. - Cllr Daw asked APC for permission to hold the annual dog show on The Tye. Cllrs **AGREED**.

Car Boot Sale – Bank Holiday Monday 26th August - Cllr Daw asked APC for permission to hold the annual car boot sale on the recreation ground. Funds raised will go to the Alfriston Cricket Club. Cllrs **AGREED**.

South Downs Summer Music Festival - 16th-21st July. Request for a mobile bar to be parked on The Tye from 16-21st July, as has been the case in previous years. Cllrs **AGREED**.

Grant Requests Received - The Clerk has received requests for grants from Cuckmere Flood Forum, St Wilfrid's Hospice and Wealden Citizen & Advice. These will go before a finance meeting for decision. Grants are normally awarded in December.

PCSO – At the Chair's request, APC had invited the local PCSO to attend APC meetings. The Clerk has received a response from Sussex Police saying the PCSO for Alfriston is currently undergoing their training and will be in touch once this is complete.

Village Post Box Update – APC continue to chase Royal Mail on this, it is on their radar, however it is not a priority for them as we have an alternative post box in the village. Cllrs referred to the fact that this is not ideal, as it is as up a steep hill and on the far side of the village. It will take a lot of time and coordination for Royal Mail to organise the asbestos licence and road closure licence required to carry out the repairs from the outside, as the village store will not allow the work to take place from inside.

Dene Car Park Update - APC have written back to Wealden County Council advising we are in support of their plan to implement speed bumps and would like to be consulted on the colour and material used.

35. Public Questions

Katie Salmon asked if it was possible to re-locate a post box somewhere else in the village. The Chair advised that the previous Clerk had raised this and Royal Mail did carry out an on site survey. Cllr Watkins confirmed that Royal Mail had said there were no suitable sites. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the previous clerk and report back. **Action 6**.

36. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 17th June 2024 in the AWMH at 7:15pm.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 9.15pm.

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

[Appendix A](#)

Cllr Shing's Report to be sent out once received.

[Appendix B](#)

Report by Cllr David Greaves, WDC for Alfriston PC - Monday 20th May 2024

1) Change in Wealden Council Leadership

The Annual Meeting of the Full Council on 15th May saw a new Leader of the Council elected (Cllr Millward - Green). Alternating Leadership is a feature of the Alliance agreement. A new Chair (Cllr Hulbert) and Vice-Chair (Cllr Blake-Coggins) were elected.

2) Cuckoo Trail

Outdoor gym equipment is being installed on the Cuckoo Trail in the stretch between Polegate and Hailsham. Completion was due by 17th May. Two cycle repair stations have been installed. They consist of giant air pumps and a stand with various tools including tyre levers as well as screw drivers and allen keys. One set of tools has been stolen already (at a cost of £200). The initiative has been funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other improvements include improved picnic area, new signage and replacement of many of the benches.

3) Elections

In the recent elections the new arrangements for receiving postal votes seemed to work well as did the need for people to provide photographic evidence.

4) Hailsham Swimming Pool

Work to replace the pool surround has been carried out - completion was due today (20th May).

5) NHS Health Checks

'One You East Sussex' is offering free NHS Health Checks to residents living in Wealden after the popularity of a similar programme delivered last year.

One You provides a free holistic lifestyle service for residents of East Sussex, helping people make simple changes that can lead to a longer, healthier, and happier life. The service delivers NHS health checks to residents, helps residents to lose weight, be smoke free, move more, eat well and drink less.

Residents need to book their NHS health check in advance as spaces may not be available on the day, by contacting:

sam.bentley@oneyoueastsussex.org.uk.

Appointments take between 30-40 minutes and your results will be discussed with on the day.

Local Date and location (Other dates and venues are available)

- Thursday 30 May - Hailsham, Vicarage Lane car park

6) Proposed cycleway linking Uckfield / Lewes to be explored

A new cycle and pedestrian route which would run alongside the old railway line between Uckfield and Lewes is currently being explored.

This could provide an off-road surfaced route, similar to the existing Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way for walking, cycling and wheeling.

The nine-mile route will potentially link the two towns of Uckfield and Lewes and create an alternative cycling route to the A26 between the two towns, joining Isfield and Barcombe directly. The Greenway

would form an important “green link” between the towns and villages along the route and support leisure journeys as well as commuter journeys, linking tourism hotspots such as the Lavender Line, The Laughing Fish, Barcombe Mills and the Anchor Inn on the River Ouse.

The former Uckfield to Lewes train line opened in 1858 to goods and passenger traffic, with stations at Isfield and Barcombe Mills but was closed in 1969 south of Uckfield. The route is safeguarded by protective policies within the current Local Plan that prevent

any development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of the former railway line to Lewes in the future.

However, at the Full Council Meeting on 15th May there was strong opposition because of the £15,000 cost of the feasibility study for a scheme which many Councillors felt would never get off the ground.

David Greaves
20th May 2024

[Appendix C](#)

Alfriston and Cuckmere Valley Twinning Association

The Big Fat Quiz was great fun and well attended. The excellent selection of varied questions gave everyone their chance for a "lightbulb moment". Scores were close throughout the evening, and the neck-and-neck performance of two of the teams ended the evening with a draw. Association funds were swelled by customers of the bar and the raffle.

The next event is the big one: the official visit of our guests from Veules-les-Roses. Some of them are new to their group, so we will be meeting new guests as well as seeing friends. We look forward to this, and are sure they will enjoy the programme of activities we have arranged. Fingers crossed for good weather!

We have members in a wide area of the Cuckmere Valley, Alfriston and Seaford. New members are always welcome, and there is no need to speak French, or to have a huge house!

Wendy Little e-mail: frogfirl@outloo.com

[Appendix D](#)

Report from Clergy House: While the garden is still recovering from the winter flooding with some areas still roped off to help with recovery it has been a good start to year for visitor numbers.

We are supporting the village event on the 6th of June marking the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings we will be opening the Clergy House (please see website for opening times as they may be slightly different to our usual times). With kind support from members of the local historical society and our staff and volunteers we have an exhibition dedicated to the 2nd world war which will then run on our open days to the end of June.

We have lots of events, tours and talks planned for the year so please do look at our website www.nationaltrust.org.uk/alfriston for full details.

Holly Jones, Site Manager, National Trust, Alfriston Clergy House 01323 871961 nationaltrust.org.uk