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**AGREED Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting**

**held at 7pm on Wednesday 17th May 2023**

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| **Present:** Cllr Graham Zacharias (GZ) – Chairman; Cllr Tony Marshall (TM); Cllr Mat Chesshire (MC); Cllr Jeremy Hunt (JH WSCC); Cllr Henry Potter (HP CDC) 25 members of the public also attended. |  |
| **Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence** – RT PW |  |
| **Agenda Item 2 – Election of Chairman -** It was proposed that Graham Zacharias be elected as Chairman, the vote was unanimous. |  |
| **Agenda Item 3 – Results of Election**- There were 5 applicants, GZ, RT, TM, PW and MC, the election was declared uncontested, the new councillors signed the Acceptance of Office. Robert Mayne and Barry Shrimpton who did not stand for re-election.. RM served for 4 years which is what he committed to and BS did not stand due to work commitments. GZ formally thanked them for all their efforts which are greatly appreciated. Congratulations were also extended to HP who was re-elected to the District Council. |  |
| **Agenda Item 4 - Co-Option of two new councillors, Sam Cox (SC) & Jeremy Rigby (JR) –** Both applicants gave a short presentation and were unanimously elected. GZ reported that we still have two vacancies, if any one is interested please let us know. |  |
| **Agenda Item 5 – Declaration of Interests/ Dispensation Requests -** There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests. |  |
| **Agenda Item 6 - Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting** – to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th March 2023. Correction to Minutes, Agenda Item 7, the Environmental Protection Agency to be changed to The Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). An additional correction, Agenda Item 6, the new ramp for the Centurion Way is being built behind West Dean School not at the old railway station. It was **Resolved that** with the corrections above thatthe minutes were correct, this was proposed by MC and seconded by TM, GZ signed the minutes. |  |
| **Agenda Item 7 – Chairman’s Annual Report -** Thereare three main projects that have been worked on for some time, these being, the Playground, Community Highways Scheme and The Leys Parking (formerly known as The Accessibility Project). GZ stated that our precept only covers regular commitments, therefore any projects need to be funded by grants and individual donations. We have raised £51,000 for the playground and £36,000 for the parking project, this is four times the council’s precept. Thank you everyone for their efforts and for all the generous individual contributions. The major issues going forward are Flooding and The Centurion Way, in particular the safety and accessibility. JR has been asked to get involved with the latter. HP announced that he is no longer the councillor representative for the SDNP, John Cross has taken over this role. The School Parking is our next major fundraising project. GZ thanked all the councillors for their time and commitment and thanked the Clerk for her tireless commitment and efforts which are greatly appreciated. |  |
| **Agenda Item 8 - County Councillor Report** – Mr Jeremy Hunt, Chichester North Division – WSCC  **Update on our Childrens Services**  You may remember that back in 2019 our Children’s services received an inadequate report from Ofsted. Since then we have invested millions of pounds in an extensive improvement programme and I am pleased to say that, following [Ofsted’s latest inspection](https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50216276) (click on this link for the full report), the service was given an overall rating of ‘requires improvement’, with ‘good’ judgements for children in care and leadership and management. The judgements on children needing help and protection and children leaving care are they ‘require improvement to be good’. Ofsted Inspectors have praised West Sussex County Council for its ‘*relentless approach to improving practice’* in Children’s Services. Some of the key findings from the report were:  Most children coming into care make good progress  The voice of children and young people is strong and well-considered in decision-making  Early Help support is making a positive difference to children’s lives  Staff benefit from a wide range of support, and training and development opportunities; and feel valued  The implementation of the new Family Safeguarding practice model has been carefully considered with clear plans for the next steps  Partnership working is improving, although there is more to do  Leaders have been determined to shift the organisational culture and put children first  The advice and support provided to care leavers aged 21 and over requires improvement  Placement choice for children who are looked after requires improvement  The full report can be found at on the following link: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50216276>  **Highways Update**  As you will be aware,  following the weather events we have experienced over the last year, we are now tackling a large number of issues on the network. We continue to see exceptionally high numbers of customer reports, in March this was just under 8,000 enquires , this is double what we would normally expect at this time of the year and this trend continues. In January the number of enquiries exceeded 11,000. The impact on the Highways teams has been significant. The teams are incredibly busy and the volume of work is unrelenting, including the significant incidents at the A29, Midhurst and Wiston, which have also added pressure to the workload. For example, we currently have two teams working full time on all the small side roads around MIdhurst, which are being used as ‘unofficial’ diversion routes and therefore experiencing much higher volumes of traffic - and heavier vehicles - than normal. I would like to assure you we are doing all we can to manage the workload across the county; officers are working over-time and we have successfully recruited new staff but they need support and training to become fully operational. Our contractors’ gangs are also working twilight shifts and Saturdays to manage the increased number of jobs.  We are also looking to increase the number of gangs further but as I am sure you will appreciate; this is common to the entire south-east and nationally, so sourcing additional gangs is very difficult. Our 3 Jet Patchers are now in operation so this will help.  In order to enable the Highway Teams to effectively deal with the volume of safety issues being reported, we will be pausing non-statutory  activities for a period of 4 weeks as we did in January. We will extend our response times to customers on general enquiries from 10-20 days.  We appreciate your support and understanding at this very busy time.    Just to clarify, the proposed temporary measures are:    Extend SLA for customer responses – up to 20 days  Pause non-essential licensing activities (e.g., residential Vehicle Crossovers, Standard Forms of Consent for activities like licensing banners or planters).  Pause responses to general enquiries, including Community Highway Schemes  Add pop ups to the webpages to advise members of the public of paused activities  Amend the wording on the corporate complaints acknowledgment  **Midhurst Road Closure update**  As referenced above, unfortunately the closure of the A286 in the centre of Midhurst remains closed to through traffic due to the recent fire at the Angel Hotel. Obviously this closure has not only had a huge impact on traffic flows, but it has also had a huge impact on local businesses. Similar to the position around the closure of the A29 at Pulborough - which is now open with single lane working - the situation is complicated in that both these incidents involve property owners and their insurance companies. Added to these complications is that the building is Grade 1 listed and therefore the remaining facade of the building cannot simply be knocked down. It therefore has to be shored up before it is safe to re-open the road. So, although this is not directly our responsibility - and in the interests of the travelling public and the businesses in the town - the SDNP, CDC and WSCC are working together to try and re-open the road as soon as possible. However, this is likely to take around seven weeks to complete the work before the road can re-open. CDC are co-ordinating press updates and the latest release can be found at: <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/37699/Midhurst-fire-update-from-South-Downs-National-Park-Authority-5-May>.  **Local Issues**  As a parish you appear to be working very successfully on a number local projects, two of which are being supported by WSCC. Thank you for keeping me up to date with the Leys car parking project, which sounds as if it is finally about to happen. I’m pleased that our officers have been able to adapt our normal ‘lengthy’ and rather cumbersome processes in order to expedite this project.  I have not had any update from either the PC or our officers on your Community Highway project, so I presume this is moving forward okay. Of course if at any time you need me to try and ‘move things on’, please don’t hesitate to contact me.  I have also been copied in to your correspondence with Southern Water, which has been very informative. I have also added a few prompts to SW where applicable, but Tony obviously had this under control. I haven’t seen any recent emails, so hopefully the situation is improving and I suppose we now wait to see their plans for repairing/replacing the pipe across the water meadow.  With regard to the Charlton Road and the proximity of the river to that road, our Highways Department have written to Goodwood pointing out their riparian duties with regard to maintenance of the river, explaining our concerns that the flooding is undermining the integrity of the road. To date I am not aware we have had any response.  Finally, please don’t forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>  Also, a reminder that all our public meetings are webcast live and are also archived, so you can always view them later. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/watch-county-council-and-committee-meetings-online/>  JH reported that Town Lane will be closed on 7th June 9.30-15.00 for approximately 5 days, however, the work should not take the whole 5 days. |  |
| **Agenda Item 9 - District Councillor Report** – Mr Henry Potter, Goodwood Ward  I have little to report due to the Purdah period prior to the Local Elections.  I was one of the fortunate Members to retain my seat as your representative for the Goodwood Ward, many failed and you now have a Council with a distinct majority of Liberal Democrat members. The adjustment to this new balance will take some time, the membership of various committees is, as I write this, undecided but should be made clear at the first Full Council Meeting on the morning of your meeting. (17th) There is one thing quite clear, the new Leader ‘elect’ will appoint someone else to attend SDNPA Meetings instead of me, so any news of activities in the Park will be less apparent in the future.  Currently, the work on the railway line north east of Singleton Bridge is nearing completion and until more funding is found any further works will be curtailed and there is still no firm decision on how the West Dean Tunnel is to be negotiated, though there is now greater discussion about a route through a small spinney of woodland north of the Highways footpath, the original concept, which is now considered too dangerous with often fast moving traffic using the A286. The result of the bat survey in the actual tunnel is still not completed, so for now the idea of passing through the tunnel is discounted.  The District Council is publicly consulting on a review of the Public Spaces Protection Order for control of Dogs (2020) 'from last Wednesday (10th) until 7th June. The proposal is to extend the PSPO Order for a further 3 years but any comments or opinion once received will be considered before the extended Order is confirmed. The link to the consultation can be found on the Councils webpage ‘letstalkdogsinpublicspaces’ so if you have thoughts on any variations to the Order, now is the time to provide them.  GZ asked HP if he knew what the plans were to enable wheelchair users, bikes etc. to access Singleton via the very large ramp that has been built at the bridge at the top of Hat Hill path. HP is not aware of the plans. SDNP are leaning towards creating a path from the old railway station at West Dean through the woods. JH reported that the PC will be receiving an email from the Head of Footpaths with a pack containing a pack of information regarding trees, info for landowners etc. |  |
| **Agenda Item 10 - Public Open Forum** –  A member of the public raised the point that WSCC received a zero rating from Active Travel England which means they are not able to access government funding. JH reported that the government have accepted that they got it wrong and it looks like WSCC will be eligible for the next round of funding. However, the government is diverting the money for cycle routes to fixing potholes which does benefit cyclists in the long run. The member of the public also raised the question about access to the Weald & Downland Museum and whether there was any progress on the suggested path between West Dean Gardens and the W&D. There seems to be no joined up thinking with regard to access from the Centurion Way. JR has been asked to look into the whole question of access and the SDNP’s future plans. Another member of the public raised the subject of the tankers in Charlton, this will be discussed in Agenda Item 11. Philip Maber raised the subject of the Singleton Oil Well and the fact that there appears to be no regulation of emissions and stated that if any member of public would like to contact him, he can update them on the latest situation. A MOP raised the extra cars parking on the corner of Knights Hill is an accident waiting to happen, this is because the tankers are blocking the parking area at the bottom of North Lane. This will be dealt with under Agenda Item 11. |  |
| **Agenda Item 11 - Village Matters**  **Playground Equipment/Update** – It was unanimously agreed that the zip wire and roundabout would be purchased, the potential installation date is 29th June. A member of the public mentioned the BBQ and Bingo evening which is being held in the Village Hall to raise further funds for the playground, this will be held on the 24th June, Kathryn Holt is organising this event. Another member of the public asked where in the playground the roundabout would be placed. MC and the clerk are due to look at the space required and a suitable position.  **CHS Update & TRO’s – CHS,** it has been confirmed that there will be a scheme for Singleton that will hopefully start in 2024. TM had a telephone conversation with the project leader and at the moment they are working on the technical aspects of the various solutions, they will feed back to us when there is more information. JH requested the contacts names and he will follow up with the individuals.  **TRO –** the request to move the 30 mile an hour limit up Town Lane to just before the Museum has been approved by the technical team and the public consultation is now taking place. During the conversation with the project manager of the CHS Scheme, TM asked about the speed strips that have been installed on the A286 and through the village, it was confirmed that they were to measure the speed of cars with a view to restricting the speed limit through the village to 20 mile an hour. The project manager confirmed that it was very likely that this would be agreed. JH pointed out that cars needed to drive slowly over the strips as it was more likely to get the speed reduced if it was proven that the cars typically drive at 20 or below in the area.  **Accessibility Project/The Leys Parking** – VN outlined the plans for the area, creating 10 parking bays, one being a disabled bay, a path to give safe access to the School and Levin Down, there will also be a fence to separate the cars from the path and that we have applied for some trees from SDNP, which will hopefully arrive in the autumn. There have been several meetings with contractors and Mike Dare, who has been extremely helpful. Landbuild have been identified as a suitable contractor and have submitted a competitive quote and indicated that they can start the work on the 24th July so that it will be completed during the school holidays to cause the least disruption. GZ stated that TM had rightly raised the question of what the impact would be if the land was contaminated as on the quote it says the price is based on the assumption that the ground was inert. JR who has experience with this sort of issue has now given reassurance on how this would be dealt with and that if there were an issue that the cost to the PC would be minimal. We have raised the funds to complete the work, a vote was taken as to whether we proceed with Landbuild, this was unanimously agreed. GZ also mentioned that it was the intention to install electric car charging point, RT is talking to a company that provides them free of charge. SC offered to help with this as he has knowledge of the ins and outs of charging points.  **Update on Southern Water & Flooding –** TM reported that after weeks and weeks of tankers in Charlton they appear to have gone. There is still over pumping taking place, this is very unusual for this time of the year. He explained about the size of the pipes and having lined the pipes to stop the ingress of surface water, the useable diameter has reduced. This would appear to be causing the problem with the flow of sewage through to Singleton. He is keeping the pressure on Southern Water to replace the narrow pipe across the meadow. JH said he would send another letter to the CEO of Southern Water, quoting the information that TM received from the engineers he spoke to in Charlton. HP pointed out that Southern Water hold online workshops which seem to be worthwhile attending, TM said he would attend the next one. Two MOP’s mentioned the disruption to two local businesses from the noise of the tankers and the raw sewage running across the pub carpark. GZ stated that the PC will keep the pressure on SW along with JH doing the same. With regard to the constant flow of tankers, TM is keeping an eye on this and has a direct phone number for Floyd Cooper and is able to contact him when the tankers are causing an obstruction, currently they are not in situ.  **Flooding** – Looking at old x-ray maps it would appear that there were a number of different routes for the river crossing the meadow has been changed at some time. During the period of heavy rain the river flooded on to the road, this caused a problem for cars but more importantly a Health & Safety issue outside the school with contaminated water splashing over pedestrians. A meeting was held with Lloyd McNeil and Darren Norris where it was suggested that one of the problems with the river flooding was caused by the debris in the river not being cleared, thus the river could not flow easily down stream. Goodwood have riparian responsibilities for the river as they are the land owners of the meadow. They have now suggested that they may now clear the river when it is dry. JH has been in contact with Lloyd McNeil and there is going to be a meeting with the EA to try and resolve the situation. TM asked JH if he could request that a representative from the PC attend the meeting.  **Flood Action Plan & Vulnerable People –** Following the flooding, it was agreed that PWwould update the flood action plan and produce an abbreviated version, this has been completed and will be uploaded to the PC website – singletonparishcouncil.co.uk. With regard to sandbags, the PC have a small number of them and grit to fill them, however, it is not the responsibility of the PC to supply them to all the households who may require them. A new type of sandbag is now available that is filled with a gel that reacts to water and provides protection but can be stored flat when dry. They are called Floodsax and most DIY places like Covers stock them. It is the decision of households who feel they may be threatened by floodwater as to whether they purchase these bags. We will also be updating the Vulnerable Peoples List, the intention is to visit all households to ask if they would like to be included on the list, so that if there is an emergency we can offer help. |  |
| **Agenda Item 12 – Finance**  Balance in Current Account (15/05/23) £14,801.25  Playground Reserves held in Current Account - £17,557.88.  Accessibility Project Reserves held in Current Account - £10,158.54  **Total in Current Account – £** 42,517.67  Balance in Savings Account – £7,013.93  GZ raised the point that it is recommended that we should have 50% of our precept in our reserves held in the savings account, we do not hold this amount and if we were to follow this recommendation we would need to allocate a further £5,000 of our precept to this reserve, do we feel that the reserves should be increased. GZ’s opinion is that the figure we hold is sufficient and that it should remain at the current figure. It was agreed by all councillors to leave the figure as it stands.  **Funds Received since 21/03/23**  ½ Years Precept - £12,670.50  Private Donations for the King’s Coronation Party - £200.00  **Grants Due**  Balance of CDC Grant for the playground - £6,971.00  Kings Coronation Grant from CDC for the playground - £500.00  IGas Grant for the playground - £2,000  Rees Jeffreys Grant for the parking project - £21,000  **Total Raised for the Playground - £50,600.00**  **Total Raised for the Parking Project - £36,200**  **AGAR**  GZ explained that the PC accounts are audited each year by an Internal and External Auditor and once the Clerk has supplied the accounts to the Internal Auditor and had them approved, they then need to be approved by the Full Council before being submitted to the External Auditor.  Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) – This was circulated to all councillors and agreed by all councillors, the chairman GZ signed the document.  Annual Accounting Statement (Section 2) – This was circulated to all councillors and agreed by all councillors, the chairman GZ signed the document. |  |
| **Agenda Item 13 – Planning**  Reports have been circulated, posted on the notice boards and website. Addition – The Sunnyhurst application has been approved. |  |
| **Speaker -** Richard Pailthorpe – The History of Singleton and Charlton. Richard gave an extremely interesting illustrated talk, covering from the Ice Age up to the 1900’s, this was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and all agreed that we would like to arrange another session to bring the information up to the present day. Our thanks go to Richard for his time and effort. |  |
| **Meeting Closed – 21.25** |  |
| **Confirmed that these minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting**  Signed: GRAHAM ZACHARIAS  Name & Position: CHAIRMAN  Date: |  |