



Chailey Parish Council
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Minutes

A Meeting of Full Council was held on Tuesday 15th December 2015 in the Reading Room, Chailey Green, commencing at 7.50pm

Present: Cllr. M. Evans (Chairman).
Cllrs. P Atkins, S Avery, K Jordan, K. Matthews, J. Millam, P O’Conor, P. Olbrich,

Public present: One

In attendance: S Treharne (Clerk)

15/128 Apologies for absence: Cllrs. A Scott and R Barnard

15/129 Declarations of Interest: none.

15/130 To consider the co-option of a Councillor: the Clerk reported that both the remaining candidates had been invited to the meeting. Nothing had been heard from Mr Ellis (who was not present) and Mrs Harrison had written expressed a continuing interest in the possibility of being co-opted but saying that she would be unable to attend the meeting as she would be away.

Councillors discussed whether to defer the matter to the next meeting but concluded that the process should be resolved at this meeting. Cllr. Millam considered that Mrs Harrison had taken the trouble to express continued interest and proposed that she should be co-opted to the Council. This motion was seconded by Cllr. Atkins and was passed unanimously. The Clerk was asked to contact Mrs Harrison, make all the necessary arrangements and circulate her contact details to Councillors.

15/131 Questions/comments from members of the public: none

15/132 Items considered as a matter of urgency:

Cllr Evans informed the meeting that he would be away for the Full Council meetings in January and February. He could attend the February meeting if Councillors agreed to move the date back one week. After discussion it was agreed that the meeting date in February should remain unchanged and that both meetings would be chaired by Cllr Olbrich as Vice- Chairman of the Council.

Cllr O’Conor alerted Councillors to the works being undertaken to a property at Warrenwood and to the damage being done by contractors’ vehicles to the roadway and the verges on the lane outside. He thought that the verge on the North side, being part of Lane End Common, could belong to the Council. He suggested that the

contractors concerned should be approached and asked to make good the damage. Cllr. Evans agreed to draw this matter to the attention of Highways and to ask them to take action.

15/133 To agree the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17th November 2015: the minutes were revised so that "Roeheath" where it appeared three times in minute 15/123 was corrected to "Rowheath". After making these amendments the minutes were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

15/134 To receive financial reports: Cllr. Evans referred Councillors to the financial report for November 2015 circulated with the agenda.

In November receipts totalled £115 and payments for the month were £6,279. Receipts for the year to date (excluding the precept and support grant totalling £48,840) were £2,988 and payments £39,065. Councillors' attention was drawn to the analysis of payments by category shown in the financial report and to the detailed breakdown of the receipts and payments for the month and the bank reconciliation attached.

Cllr. Millam proposed and Cllr. Jordan seconded a resolution that the financial report for November 2015 be approved and this was passed unanimously.

The Clerk informed Councillors that, in November, the Internal Auditor had made one of his two planned visits to the Council to examine the Council's procedures and processes. The Internal Auditor had been satisfied with what he had seen and had confirmed that there was nothing that he needed to draw to the Council's attention.

The Clerk informed Councillors that he had received thanks from Chailey Rainbows and Brownies for the small grants made to both organisations in August 2015. He also advised Councillors that Plumpton Guides had written to ask if the decision made in relation to their application could be reviewed. The Clerk reminded Councillors that the application had been turned down as Councillors had considered there to be insufficient connection with Chailey Parish. Councillors discussed the matter and agreed that, because no additional evidence had been provided to suggest that the original decision should be reviewed and because in any event the time limits agreed for dealing with small grants had long since passed, the original decision not to give a grant should stand.

The Clerk circulated a letter received from the Treasurer at the Parish Hall asking whether the Council would be willing to contribute to the cost of replacing the boiler at the Parish Hall. He also circulated a summary of the current financial position at the Parish Hall. He reported that, since the letter had been received, the boiler had been replaced.

Councillors debated whether assistance should be offered but agreed to defer a decision until after consideration of the Council's finances (see 15/137 below). After consideration of the finances, Cllr. O'Connor proposed a motion that, in view of the reserves presently held by the Parish Hall, no assistance should be offered at this time but that the Parish Hall should be encouraged to seek assistance in future if the need arose. This motion was seconded by Cllr. Millam and was agreed.

15/135 To consider the changes to the procurement of audit for smaller authorities and to consider whether the Council should opt out of the new arrangements:

the Clerk referred Councillors to the paper circulated with the agenda and explained that, from 1st April 2017, smaller councils such as the Council would either have their external auditor services procured for them by a “sector-led body” or could opt out and appoint their own external auditor. If the Council wished to opt out then it needed to do so by 31st January 2016.

The Clerk further explained that the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Clerks were working to establish a sector-led body with the aim of achieving the benefits of collective procurement. So far as concerns the Council, the Clerk identified these as being the fact that the Council would not have to take all the necessary steps to identify and appoint a local external auditor and, although there was no guarantee, a saving in costs. His view was that the Council should not opt out and he confirmed that the Council’s Internal Auditor also held this view.

Cllr. Jordan proposed and Cllr. Atkins seconded a motion that the Council should not opt out of the new sector-led arrangement. The motion was agreed unanimously.

15/136 To receive a paper on the proposed pedestrian refuge over the A275 at Mill Lane, South Chailey and to consider how the Council should proceed: Cllr.

Evans referred Councillors to the paper circulated with the agenda and to the latest estimates for the cost of installing a refuge. The likely cost of the installation, including the cost of associated works (in particular widening the road to accommodate the central refuge) was now estimated to be £45,000. This sum included the costs associated with preparing preliminary and detailed designs, the actual cost of construction, supervisory costs and a contingency. At the outset the Parish Council would be expected to set aside £22,500, being one half of the overall cost and works would not start without this being done. If the overall cost were to exceed £45,000, the Parish Council would be expected to meet half the additional cost.

Councillors discussed how to proceed. They appreciated the desirability of establishing a refuge as many residents would benefit from being able to cross a busy road in greater safety. They noted that one reason for the significant cost was that the specification was likely to include certain design features which could be considered to be unnecessary but which would be required to be incorporated.

Cllr Evans asked the Clerk whether, if Councillors were minded to proceed with this project, the Council was in a position to commit £22,500 or possibly more to it. The Clerk confirmed that, particularly given other calls on the Council’s reserves, his view was that there were insufficient monies to allow the Council to either set aside £22,500 or to meet its share of any additional costs that arose.

After further discussion, Cllr. Millam proposed and Cllr. Atkins seconded a motion that, with regret, the Council should not pursue the installation of a pedestrian refuge at Mill Road in South Chailey because funds are not available to meet the level of the financial commitment required. The motion was agreed unanimously.

The Clerk informed Councillors that he would write to those residents with whom he had corresponded on this matter and Cllr. Evans agreed to advertise the decision in Chailey News.

15/137 To consider the budget for the financial year 2016/17: the Clerk referred Councillors to the forecast outcome for 2015/16 which suggested that the overall reserves at 31st March 2016 would be £5,526 lower than originally budgeted. One reason for this is the inclusion in the forecast of the costs of moving the Parish Office, none of which were included in the original budget. The Clerk referred Councillors to the variance analysis explaining the differences over £250 under individual budget headings.

The draft budget for 2016/17 is largely built on the forecast outcome for 2015/16, with changes made where thought appropriate. The previous format has been retained, but a number of expense headings have been amalgamated and the Neighbourhood Plan has been separately identified. All the grants and donations that the Council is expected to make are now under one heading.

Income (other than the precept and support grant) for 2016/17 is budgeted to be £3,315 as against the forecast outcome for 2015/16 of £3,788. Leaving aside the one-off items of expenditure in both years, the budgeted expenditure for 2016/17 is currently estimated at £51,981 as against the forecast outcome for 2015/16 of £50,124.

The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to the two one-off items included in the draft budget for 2016/17. The first is an estimate of the amount which may be payable in respect of the pension deficit, and the second the expected expenditure at the Sports Pavilion. These two items together total £47,000 and, if spent as expected, will mean that the Council's reserves at 31st March 2017 will be considerably lower at around £33,372. The Clerk referred Councillors to the documents showing the expected movements on reserves.

The Clerk explained that further information was needed from Lewes District Council before the precept for 2016/17 could be set. The final budget and the precept for 2016/17 would therefore be agreed at the meeting of the Council on 19th January 2016.

The Clerk referred to the decision made under 15/136 above and asked Councillors to agree to the reserve of £10,000 currently held being moved to a new earmarked reserve for the Parish Office. Cllr. Evans proposed and Cllr Olbrich seconded a motion moving the reserve as requested by the Clerk and this was agreed unanimously.

15/138 To receive a report on the Sports Pavilion and to consider and if thought appropriate approve two draft legal documents: the Clerk informed Councillors that, with legal assistance, he had drafted two documents that would be required in order to bring the existing lease to an end and to allow the Sports Club to continue to use the pavilion and grounds for sporting activities.

The first document, to be executed by the Trustees in whose name the lease was granted and by the Council, would bring the 1981 lease to an end by consent. The draft was based upon a pro-forma prepared by the Council's solicitor. The Clerk informed Councillors that, if this document were entered into, a line would be drawn between the Trustees and the Council with no claims being able to be brought by either party against the other. The Chairman of the Sports Club has spoken with both Trustees who have indicated their agreement to the document.

The second document is an agreement under which the Sports Club will be able to occupy the land and buildings on a temporary basis whilst the Club and the Council agree the nature of any longer term arrangement. The draft agreement is also based on a pro-forma provided by the Council's solicitor but, in view of the changes and insertions made by the Clerk, he had asked the solicitor to review the amended draft and to confirm that it would have the desired effect. The solicitor had confirmed that the draft agreement would suffice.

The Clerk referred Councillors to two effects of the draft agreement. The first was that the Sports Club would be making only a nominal quarterly payment for the duration of the agreement. The second was that the agreement could be terminated by either the Club or the Council on one month's notice. In addition, the Council could terminate the agreement at any time if the Club was in breach of any term of the agreement and the agreement would in any event determine after 12 months had elapsed.

The Clerk informed Councillors that the Club, on seeing the draft agreement, had raised a couple of points and these had been addressed. It was unlikely that the draft as presented to Councillors would need to be amended to take account of these points.

Cllr. O'Connor raised the question of insurance and suggested that the words "to the Council's satisfaction" should be inserted in clause 5.6 after "insurance" in the first line. The Clerk informed Councillors that he had approached the Council's insurance brokers who had confirmed that the Pavilion can be placed on cover under the existing policy but a reinstatement valuation will be required. The Clerk was asked to contact Mr James Tillard to see if he could help with this.

Cllr. Olbrich proposed and Cllr. O'Connor seconded a motion that, subject to the change suggested to clause 5.6 being made, the Council should enter into both agreements in the form enclosed with the agenda and that Cllrs. Olbrich and O'Connor should sign the documents on behalf of the Council. The motion was agreed unanimously.

15/139 To receive reports:

- (1) **Play provision and brush clearance at Rowheath:** Cllr Olbrich reported that the offer to assist with the cost of play equipment at Rowheath has been withdrawn. Discussions continue over the brush clearance.
- (2) **Japanese knotweed:** The Clerk reported that Barcombe Landscapes had undertaken the initial clearance of the affected area and, following an inspection of the site by Cllr. O'Connor an initial treatment had been carried out where it was thought this would have some effect. The Clerk reported that he had written to the six households in the lane advising them what is being done and why. No replies have been received.
- (3) **The noticeboard at Chailey New Heritage:** the Clerk reported that the noticeboard had been installed. It had been agreed that the board would also be used by the management/residents' committee for their official notices.
- (4) **The new website:** Cllr Avery reported that all information had been migrated from the old to the new website. He had carried out some updating and editing as part of this process and some new material had been added. The new site

was therefore ready to go live. He asked Councillors to let him have photographs of themselves so that these could be included.

It was agreed that the new site should be activated as soon as possible and that this should not wait until all necessary editing and tidying up had been done. Cllr. Avery agreed to contact Upper Bridge with a view to the new site going live on 1st January 2016.

Councillors thanked Cllr Avery for all his hard work in bringing the new website into being. It was agreed that going forward the Clerk would assume responsibility for the site as administrator, although Cllr. Avery would remain ready to help if and when necessary.

Cllr. O'Connor raised the possibility of the Council joining Twitter and/or Facebook as, by using social media, the Council could potentially connect with more and younger residents. It was agreed that Cllr Avery would explore how this might be done.

15/140 To consider items of correspondence for noting and response: The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to correspondence which had been received, a list of which was circulated. Councillors were asked to contact the Clerk if they required more information. The Clerk was asked to circulate the letter from the Assistant Chief Constable.

15/141 To note Risk implications: none to note.

15/142 Confidential information – exempt matters: Cllr Evans advised Councillors that it was not necessary this month to consider a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2) in order to discuss any items due to their confidential nature.

15/143 Next Full Council meeting: 19th January 2016 at 7.30pm.

Next Planning & Environs Committee meeting: 5th January 2016 at 7.30pm

Signed: *P Olbrich*
Chairman

Date: *19th January 2016*