

EAST HOATHLY with HALLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting of the Full Council on **25th March, 2024 at 7.00pm.**
MEETING MINUTES

In attendance: Cllrs. Butcher, Cole, Freezer (chair), Magness, Partridge, Pope, Thatcher and Whitlock.
Also participating: County Cllr. Nick Bennett, Malcolm Ramsden (clerk), Verne Heath (rfo) (via Zoom) and three members of the public.

Please note that meetings are recorded. Recordings are destroyed following adoption of the meeting minutes.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend. The first fifteen minutes of the meeting will be available for the public to express a view or ask a question on relevant matters on the agenda. The public and members of the press are also welcome to stay and observe the rest of the meeting (subject to any items considered as confidential within the terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960).

Members heard from a resident how disappointed he was at the village outlook, specifically grass cutting, signage grown over and the disparity between 'free' parking signage relating to the 23 hour limited car park in Church Marks Lane. In responding to a 'missed opportunity' comment regarding soil being available for landraise at the War Memorial Sports Ground, Cllr. Pope reminded members of the professional advice received at the time this was last considered advising against a landraise option. In response to a challenge that Garden Plots costs were £145,000 and not 'in the region of £45,000' as stated in the February meeting minutes, chair read from the latest report regarding the Garden Plots (Appendix A) with the clerk asked to re-send the detailed breakdown of costs originally provided in 2019 showing costs to be less than £45,000.

In responding to a comment regarding the number of plots of land that had been put forward for potential development, Chair summarized progress regarding the 'Neighbourhood Plan' and that, separately, there was going to be a presentation in the parish by the District Council on the 22nd of April regarding their 'Local Plan' at which an opportunity would be available for residents to question and comment.

2. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Cllr. Bennett informed members that County were running a campaign to encourage fostering and provided poster that will be placed on the parish notice boards giving further details and invited questions relating to his previously circulated report.

In response to a question from Cllr. Cole, County Cllr. Bennett believed that passing places that had recently appeared around the areas being repaired would only be temporary but cautioned that if the Type 2 put in place as a temporary measure were to be replaced with a permanent fix then the consequences would become a different problem; increased traffic speed. All agreed that the weather would need to be better before the road issues would be improved.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to make any declaration of personal or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and are reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is to be considered

Cllr. Pope declared his continuing interest in matters relating to his association with Church Marks Green Management Co. Ltd. and Cllr. Freezer regarding her membership of the Carnival Society.

4. APOLOGIES – to receive apologies for absence

None.

5. MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 26th February, 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Pope

- 0667** **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday, 26th of February, 2024, subject to the inclusion of the missing word 'contact' in section 1 and correction of two typos, be taken as read and be signed by the Chair.
- 5.1.1 Matters arising from minutes not otherwise covered by agenda items
- 5.1.1.1 High Street pavement cherry trees
Clerk reported that he is still waiting for a response from the preferred supplier. Clerk to chase again and contact Balfour Beatty who have been suggested as an alternative supplier.
- 5.1.1.2 Website improvements
Chair reported that the urgency for this item is reduced as the option to opt out of the current annual contract has recently passed. Chair and Cllr. Thatcher to contact Netwise to see what improvements can be made now.
- 5.1.1.3 Church Marks Lane pavement
Clerk reported that he had informed Highways that their statement that the dropped kerb had been re-instated, the raised metal work problem cured and that the final (exact nature still to be determined) surface work had been completed, were not correct and was waiting for a further response. County Cllr. Bennett to be supplied with a copy of correspondence relating.
- 5.1.1.4 80th Dday anniversary events
Clerk reported that no requests for grants had been received. Chair understood that the Carnival Society would be lighting a beacon. Cllr. Butcher suggested the planting of another oak tree further along than the Preservation Society tree in the sports field. Members to consider where might be appropriate in Halland for marking the event. Clerk to arrange for quotes.
- 5.1.1.5 Wildflower verge markers/licences
Clerk reported that County were now asking for details of the signage, numbers of markers, positions proposed before proceeding. Kent County Council are still thought to provide wildflower markers. Clerk to investigate and supply details.

6. FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION

- 6.1 To approve/note payments payable/paid February, 2024
Following a proposal by Cllr. Thatcher and seconding by Cllr. Cole
- 0668** **RESOLVED** to approve/note payments payable/paid February, 2024 totalling £4,970.14 (See appendix B).
- 6.2 To note income/expenditure-vs-budget and approve, if necessary, overspends/under-receipts not previously approved
Noted. Last month's minutes, previously circulated, highlighted that overspends in the areas of village furniture, pavilion consumables, insurance, staff training, professional fees and grants had previously been reported and approved.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Thatcher
- 0669** **RESOLVED** to note the overspends to date and approve the increase in salary payments as a result of the clerk's increase in salary approved by Council during last year after the budget had been set.
- 6.3 To note Bank Account Reconciliation
Noted.
- 6.4 Account signatory update
RFO informed members that each banking provider had different requirements for cancelling and adding new signatories but that progress was being made. The internal auditor's suggestion that the RFO be approved as a signatory failed to achieve support.
- 6.5 To consider grant to the War Memorial Sports Ground Trust
Following a proposal by Cllr. Pope and seconding by Cllr. Magness
- 0670** **RESOLVED** to approve a new grant of £5,000 in the new financial year to the War Memorial Sports Ground Trust to meet commitments.

- 6.6 To consider authorizing clerk to allow dispensations
Clerk referred members to the previously circulated paper pointing out the benefits in certain circumstances of granting the clerk the authority to provide dispensations relating to some members interests.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Butcher
- 0671 RESOLVED** to approve granting the clerk the authority to provide dispensations under the Council's Code of Conduct.
- 6.7 To consider Planning Committee membership
Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Thatcher
- 0672 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr. Whitlock to the Planning Committee.
- 6.8 To consider moving away from org.uk to gov.uk for emails
Members learnt from Cllr. Butcher that it would be more professional to switch from org.uk to gov.uk
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer
- 0673 RESOLVED** to approve clerk making further enquiries.
- 6.9 Email policy
Cllr. Butcher informed members that there was no formal email policy stated on the NALC, ESALC or SLCC websites. Chair reminded members how their personal emails could become public in the event of an FOI request being received when requested information was not held on members org.uk mailboxes. Clerk to chase request to Ashdown Services for advice.

7. PLANNING

- 7.1 Neighbourhood Plan
- 7.1.1 Update
Members learnt from the chair that the examiner had stated that a hearing would not be required and that he planned to visit the parish shortly.
- 7.1.2 2021 census figures 'discrepancy'
In responding to a notification of census figure discrepancies from the Steering Group, Cllr. Magness reminded members that various different departments would have been involved with compiling the figures with little overlap between them. Members agreed that little could be done. Noted.
- 7.2 WDC response to discharge of conditions 18 and 19 at Paddock Green
Cllr. Pope referred members to the previously circulated WDC condition discharge correspondence regarding compliance with Southern Water's requirements and urged that Council continue to seek confirmation from Southern Water that the pumping station on site and specification for the real time controls meet with their requirements. Clerk reported that in a conversation with Stacey Robbins he was led to believe that an application was about to be received showing the site of the pumping station. Chair was told at the liaison meeting that Redrow would continue to run with the development as a stand-alone member of Barratt Homes.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Pope and seconding by Cllr. Freezer
- 0674 RESOLVED** to approve clerk seeking confirmation from Southern Water that their terms had been met and that Redrow be approached regarding the pumping station siting.
- 7.3 To consider Redrow offer re. Paddock Green 'play area'
Chair reminded members that before full details had been received, they were of a mind not to take on the play area and green spaces. Redrow Planning department are arranging a three-way meeting, including WDC, to cover the offer in finest detail.
- 7.4 To consider response to District draft Local Plan
Cllr. Magness stated that he couldn't see how District could make a case for a reduction in housing target numbers and justify the 'cross-border' elements in the Plan. Carried forward until after the District's presentation to the parish on 22nd April.
- 7.5 To note District Council and Planning Inspector decisions to date
Noted.

8. PROPOSALS/REPORTS FOR APPROVAL, DISCUSSION OR NOTING

- 8.1 Correspondence

(See appendix C) Cllr. Cole to provide clerk with a list of which items she'd like to see. Noted.

- 8.2 Woodland footpath remedial action update
Clerk reported that only the one quote had been received to date and that two more potential providers would be chased.
- 8.3 To consider May annual village assembly content
Although not a Parish Council meeting it was agreed to hold the event on the 13th of May. The format would be of an informal format with local groups 'selling' their wares at tables around the room. Clerk to investigate and meet with interested members to take forward.
- 8.4 To consider making Tree Protection Order (TPO) applications
In response to Cllr. Cole's requested consideration of seeking a TPO for a row of conifers along London Road, chair read out a response from the District Council Tree Officer stating that, as the trees in question were already the subject of a successful planning application, that it was not now possible to apply for a TPO.
- 8.5 Garden Plots update
Members learnt from Cllr. Magness that there been no meetings of the 'Plotters' since Council's last meeting. RFO explained the annual rent payment process and clerk agreed to contact the Garden Plots chair to learn how and when the rent demands would be sent.
- 8.6 King Charles III's portrait
*Cllr. Butcher had learnt of an offer from the Society of Local Council Clerks of free portrait pictures of the King.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Pope and seconding by Cllr. Thatcher*
- 0675 RESOLVED** to approve that Cllr. Butcher obtain a copy together with a suitable frame.
- 8.7 Clerk's progress report
Clerk read his previously circulated report. Noted.
- 8.8 District Council Conference update covering Civility and Respect training and Climate Change policy
*Clerk reported that along with signing up to the Civility and Respect (C&R) Pledge came the commitment to attend training. Chair agreed to put together a draft policy for Climate Change to be considered at a future meeting.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Pope*
- 0676 RESOLVED** to approve that clerk arrange for C&R training via. Zoom for Cllr. Thatcher.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Monday 29th April, 2024 at 7.00 pm at the Village Hall, East Hoathly

Noted. 'Apologies' noted from Cllrs. Butcher and Pope.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE E-MAILED COPIES OF THIS AND FUTURE AGENDAS
PLEASE CONTACT THE CLERK (07948 496760) and/or
clerk@easthoathlywithhalland.org.uk

Background papers that are available can be found on the Parish Council website:
<https://easthoathlywithhalland.org.uk/>

East Hoathly with Halland Parish Council

Garden Plots

Why do we have Garden Plots?

Firstly, it is important to state that it is a statutory duty of Parish Councils to provide allotments if 6 or more council taxpayers request that the facility be made available. This is enshrined in an Act of Parliament that dates back to 1908. The Parish Council (PC) is expected to acquire suitable land and buy it using Parish funds, wherever possible. The PC was in receipt of a request to provide allotments and so had a statutory duty to source suitable land and provide this resource. We are also obliged to prepare the site and arrange the format of plots and basic facilities, ie. fencing, etc. Thereafter, the PC has to maintain the site and fund any ongoing repairs. These costs can be offset by charging an annual rent for the use of the plots.

Gardening has been proven to have a hugely beneficial impact on physical and mental health & wellbeing. It allows interaction with nature, provides exercise, helps with social isolation, reduces food miles and encourages people to produce their own fresh food, indeed some GPs now prescribe gardening as part of a treatment plan. During Covid the Garden Plots provided a huge resource to the plot holders and also to those who walked through the plots on a daily basis.

The History of the Garden Plots

East Hoathly village had allotments in the Church Marks Lane area, but these were lost when houses were built there in 1950-1960s.

An opportunity came about in 2012 to acquire a suitable site with an offer from the owners of Hesmonds Stud to exchange a part of Harrison's Field for the Long Pond area – land amounting to 3.9 acres. This was gratefully accepted and the PC agreed to pay the legal charges involved in the exchange of titles. The PC also paid for the setting-up costs of preparing the plots for use. Once ready, a Garden Plots Committee (GPC) was formed who have a constitution based on Terms of Reference issued by the PC. The use of the plots is available for a reasonable rent to Plotters, provided they follow the rules set up by the GPC.

Freedom of Information Request

In 2019, the Parish Council received a Freedom of Information request from a resident regarding the costs involved in setting up the GPs. Extensive research was done by the present Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) on the previous records kept by the PC. This resulted in an itemised list of invoices paid to complete the project, including all legal charges, which was sent to the resident in November of that year. The total cost was just under £42,000. This cost was met from the PC General Reserve Fund. With applications for new developments, the terms of S106 arrangements are set up between the developer and the Local Planning Authority (not the PC), in this case Wealden District Council, before final approval of the application. Hence, the developments on the Juziers and Nightingales estates, which pre-dated the GP by around 4 years or so, played no part in the funding. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) legislation only came into force in 2010, so is also not relevant to this situation.

In October 2023 Councillors, the Clerk and the RFO reviewed the figures submitted as part of the FOI on 2019. This included contacting historical parties that were involved in the land legal transfer and establishment of the plots. We can confirm that we have been informed by these parties that no payments were received from East Hoathly with Halland Parish Council at that time or since. Therefore, the figure of just under £42,000 was the cost to the Parish Council relating to the Garden Plots.

Continued Funding and the Contribution that the GPs make to the Parish

The GP rent is reviewed annually so that operation does not run at a loss, if at all possible. Over the period from 2014, when the GP became fully operational, a small profit has been returned to the PC of, on average, about £1000/pa after maintenance and water supply costs are deducted. It was always the intention that the cost of establishing the Garden Plots would be recovered over time and, in order to facilitate this and set the plot rental at an affordable rate, on this basis it will take until around 2056 to repay the initial investment in simple terms.

The Parish Council are pleased that we are able to provide this valuable facility as part of our overall responsibility to the Parish and one that has brought interest, enjoyment and community involvement to many. The GPs also sit as an appreciating asset for the Parish as we own the land outright with no borrowing.

If you are interested in having a Garden Plot, please contact the Clerk who will forward your details to the Garden Plots Committee.

Appendix B

Date	Payee Name	£	Transaction Detail
29/02/2024	HMRC	£602.93	Tax and NI
29/02/2024	Ashdown Solutions Ltd	£92.76	Storage/support for Feb
29/02/2024	East Sussex County Council	£240.00	Streetlights
29/02/2024	Gamma Inns	£92.00	Christmas tree lights
29/02/2024	Salaries/expenses	£3,942.45	
	Total Payments	£4,970.14	

Appendix C

Correspondence: 22nd February, 2024 to 19th March, 2024

1. CPRE: Government announces changes to planning rules
2. WDC: Supplement: Presentation Slides for Applications Listed on the Agenda to the agenda for Planning Committee South, Thursday, 29th February, 2024
3. Wealden Weekly Commencing 26 February
4. WDC: cc'd response from Planning to Halland resident RE: Stavertons Nursery Re: WD/2022/3294/FR
5. VWA members walk - 17 March
6. Gatwick In Touch - February 2024
7. Parish Online Newsletter #48
8. The Rural Bulletin - 27 February 2024
9. NALC events – 27 February
10. WDC: Media release: Draft Local Plan consultation dates released
11. ESCC: Calling all Tree Wardens - Submit a 'Spring In Your Step' walk 2024
12. WDC: Agenda for Standards Committee, Wednesday, 6th March, 2024
13. NALC newsletter: 28 February
14. Hallmaster Newsletter | February 2024
15. NALC: Chief executive's bulletin – 29February
16. WDC: Media release: Council Tax Reduction Scheme
17. cc'd letters between South Street residents re. fence and tree
18. Open this to spring into the Applause monthly update
19. Wealden Weekly Commencing 4 March
20. The Rural Bulletin - 5 March 2024
21. NALC events – 05 March
22. Edukit: Grants to support refugees & asylum seekers, work with YP from ethnic minorities and more
23. WDC: Agenda for Cabinet, Wednesday, 13th March, 2024
24. WDC: media release: A new contractor appointed for Streatfeild House in Uckfield
25. BRTA Newsletter 3
26. BRTA Newsletter 4
27. NALC newsletter: 06March
28. RSN Rural Funding Digest - March 2024 Edition
29. ESALC: Breakthrough Communications Training
30. WDC: Newly published decision: Awaab's Law: Consultation on timescales for repairs in the social rented sector
31. East Hoathly resident: Church Marks Lane pavement and sports field daffodils
32. NALC: Chief executive's bulletin – 7 March
33. WDC: Agenda for Licensing Committee, Friday, 15th March, 2024
34. WDC: Newly published decision: Armed Forces Covenant
35. WDC: Newly published decision: Wadhurst Parish Council Neighbourhood Development Plan
36. WDC: Newly published decision: Housing Allocations Policy Review
37. WDC: Newly published decision: Changes to Outside Bodies March 2024
38. WDC: Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Monday, 18th March, 2024
39. Wealden Weekly Commencing 11 March
40. Wealden CA: Digital Fairness Survey
41. WDC: Media release: New medical centre plan for Wealden moves forward
42. WDC: Wealden Community Lottery 1st Year Celebration Event
43. WDC: Media release: Business support programmes launched in East Sussex
44. WDC: media release: Wealden council provides residents with Southern Water watchdog group updates
45. WDC: media release: New free courses released for residents in Wealden and Eastbourne
46. Edukit: Grants for the advancement of education, social welfare, improving quality of life and more
47. WDC: media release: Keep Britain Tidy celebrates platinum anniversary

48. Edukit: Up to £30k of funding for people who are disabled or disadvantaged
49. The Rural Bulletin - 12 March 2024
50. NALC events – 12th March, 2024
51. WDC: Agenda for Audit, Finance and Governance Committee, Wednesday, 20th March, 2024
52. NALC newsletter: 13March
53. WDC: Minutes for Planning Committee South, Thursday, 29th February, 2024
54. WDC: Decision sheet for Cabinet, Wednesday, 13th March, 2024
55. WDC: Agenda for Planning Committee South, Thursday, 21st March, 2024 (already forwarded to members)
56. SDNP Elections 2024 - Statement List & Full Election Statements
57. WDC: Media release: Housing development completed in Heathfield
58. NALC: Chief executive's bulletin – 14 March
59. Healthwatch East Sussex - Read our latest insight on health and care issues
60. WDC: Supplement: Presentation Slides for Applications Listed on the Agenda to the agenda for Planning Committee South, Thursday, 21st March, 2024
61. Wealden Weekly Commencing 18 March
62. Edukit: Grants for children with SEND, people facing inequality and more
63. ESALC: Wealden PCSO's (already forwarded to members)
64. NALC events – 19th March, 2024
65. The Rural Bulletin - 19 March 2024
66. WDC: Newly published decision: Consultation on Reforms to Social Housing Allocations
67. CPRE: Fw: verne, join our call for a countryside everyone can afford to live in
68. NALC newsletter: 20March
69. Edukit: Up to £10k of funding to assist with the care of children, YP & adults with learning disabilities