



Chailey Parish Council
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Minutes

A Meeting of Full Council was held on Tuesday 17th November 2015 in the Reading Room, Chailey Green, commencing at 7.50pm

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

Public present: One

In attendance: S Treharne (Clerk)

15/112 Apologies for absence: Cllr. K Jordan

15/113 Declarations of Interest: none.

15/114 Questions/comments from members of the public: none

15/115 Items considered as a matter of urgency: none

15/116 To agree the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 20th October 2015: the minutes were approved without alteration and were signed by the Chairman.

15/117 To consider the co-option of a Councillor: Cllr. Evans reported that two Councillors had written expressing concern that the resolution passed at the meeting on 20th October 2015 had not been implemented and that the remaining candidates for the final vacancy had not been invited to attend the current meeting. Other Councillors, including Cllr. Millam, also expressed concern.

Cllr. Evans explained that the Clerk had expressed reservations about the process and had queried how it would work in practical terms. After considering the concerns, the decision had been made that the two remaining candidates would not be invited to the meeting.

Cllr. O’Conor considered that asking the candidates to attend remained the best way of making a decision. Cllr. Scott asked whether there was a procedure laid for Councillors to follow when co-opting additional Councillors and whether there were HR issues that should be considered. The Clerk advised that he was unaware of any agreed procedure and that, as Councillors are not employees of the Council, HR considerations as such do not apply, although that does not prevent good HR practice from being used if thought appropriate.

Cllr. Olbrich referred to the Council’s Standing Orders which indicate that resolutions passed previously can only be reversed after six months or by special motion (requiring notice to be given).

After further discussion, Councillors reaffirmed the resolution passed on 20th October 2015, that all remaining potential candidates should be asked to attend the next Full Council meeting to make a brief presentation to the Council and to answer any questions that Councillors may have, following which a decision could be made, and the Clerk was asked to invite the two applicants to attend the meeting on 15th December 2015.

15/118 To receive financial reports: the Clerk referred Councillors to the financial report for October 2015 circulated with the agenda.

The Clerk reported that, in October 2015, there had been no receipts. Payments for the month totalled £2,342. Receipts for the year (excluding the precept and support grant totalling £48,840) were £2,873 and payments £32,786. Councillors' attention was drawn to the analysis of payments by category shown in the financial report and to the detailed breakdown of the payments for the month and the bank reconciliation attached. The Clerk reminded Councillors that the comparison with the budget for the year to date needed to be regarded with some caution as the figures in the budget column were simply calculated as being 7/12ths of the budget for the whole year and this did not in all cases (for example items of expenditure such as insurance which is paid once a year) reflect the true timing of transactions.

Cllr. Scott proposed and Cllr. Barnard seconded a resolution that the financial report for October 2015 be approved and this was passed unanimously.

The Clerk asked Councillors to approve his putting in place a direct debit with BT for the cost of the Parish Office telephone. He explained that putting such an arrangement in place (which can be done online) would save about £70 in charges levied on the Council for not paying by direct debit. Cllr. Olbrich proposed and Cllr. Scott seconded a resolution that the Clerk be authorised to put the direct debit in place and this was passed unanimously.

15/119 To receive a report on developments with the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission of the electoral wards in Lewes District: the Clerk reminded Councillors of the recommendation made by a Working Group within Lewes District Council that Chailey and Wivelsfield ward should be split with Chailey joining with Barcombe and Hamsey in a new electoral ward.

He advised Councillors that, since they had resolved that representations should be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission ("the LGBC") making the case for the existing ward structure to be retained, Lewes District Council had approved the Working Group's recommendations without change. The minutes of the meeting showed that it lasted 25 minutes and there was no mention of the opposition to the recommendations as voiced by Cllr. Sharon Davy and Cllr. Isabel Linington (Barcombe and Hamsey).

The Clerk advised Councillors that he therefore proposed to make the representations to the LGBC. Councillors agreed that it was not necessary for the representations to be circulated prior to their being sent.

15/120 To consider the draft revisions made to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors and to consider a resolution to adopt the revised code: Cllr. Evans reminded the meeting that it was necessary for Councillors, from time to time, to review and if thought necessary amend the Council's various policy documents and similar in existence and to establish whether any further such documents needed to be put in place.

Cllr. Evans referred Councillors to the proposed revised code of conduct circulated with the agenda. Cllr. Avery queried the use of the use of “co-opted member” as a defined term in the draft code as meaning something other than its normal meaning. The Clerk agreed that this was not helpful, but as the draft code followed an “industry standard” he had concluded that changing it ran the risk of causing problems.

Cllr. Evans asked that the date of adoption be shown clearly at the top of the document.

Cllr. Olbrich proposed and Cllr. Scott seconded a resolution that the code of conduct as circulated should be adopted by the Council. The resolution was agreed.

15/121 To consider a note of a meeting with East Sussex Highways on 5th October 2015: Cllr. Evans referred Councillors to the note circulated with the agenda.

He reported that there was nothing he could usefully add to what was said in the note about the footpath past the brickworks.

On the pedestrian refuge, he explained briefly the long history to this project and the fact that at one time money had been available under a s106 agreement. The position now is that the indicative costs continue to rise, half of which would have to be met by the Council.

Cllr. O’Conor asked the local education authority would have an interest and whether there have been any fatalities at the point where the refuge might be installed. Cllr Evans suggested that the education authority would almost certainly be interested, but it was unlikely that they would have the funds available to contribute. So far as he is aware there have not been any fatalities but there has been one injury.

Cllr. Evans advised the meeting that he proposed to prepare a paper on the refuge setting out the history and the present position and he would table this at a future meeting so that Councillors could decide how to proceed.

15/122 To consider the estimates received for relocating the Parish Office at the Reading Room: Cllr. Evans reminded Councillors that it is proposed that the Parish Office should move to the Reading Room before March 2016.

The Clerk referred Councillors to the update circulated at the meeting. He outlined the two broad options identified: locating the office in the Reading Room itself or in the adjacent storeroom. If the office were to be located in the storeroom, there was a choice of opening up an internal door between the Reading Room and the office or not doing so and using the existing storeroom door as the only means of access. The indicative costs of the principal works of each option, including the provision of a post box, were £5,960, £8,318 and £7,237. These costs did not include electrical works (estimated at £400-500 whichever option was chosen) or carpeting if the office were to be in the storeroom. Other costs not included, but which would be incurred whichever option was chosen, were telephone and broadband costs and possibly additional furniture and equipment.

Councillors debated the three options. Cllr. Olbrich considered that locating the office in the Reading Room itself would not make the most of space that is effectively unused at present and would detract from the Reading Room. He was in favour of opening up the doorway and noted that the additional costs of doing so were modest. Cllr. Millam thought that locating the office in the Reading Room itself would significantly reduce the space available: for example the tables for Council meetings would have to be moved very much nearer the door leaving little or no room for

members of the public to attend. He also thought that the costs of locating the office in the storeroom could be reduced as the floor already has a damp-proof course. Cllr. Matthews pointed out that, if the window in the storeroom were to be replaced, consent would be required because of the conservation area. Cllr. Evans considered that the office should be located in the Reading Room itself as he considered that the storeroom was dingy and thought that it may not be a suitable office for a future Clerk. Councillors considered that the indicative cost of the post box (£483) seemed high.

Cllr. Olbrich proposed and Cllr. Barnard seconded a motion that the Parish Office should be located in the storeroom with an access door opened up between the office and the Reading Room. The motion was passed.

Cllr. Evans referred Councillors to the extract from the Council's Financial Regulations set out in the update and reminded Councillors that to date only one estimate for the works had been sought. The norm would be to procure three estimates to ensure that the best available terms are obtained, although it is open to Councillors to waive this requirement.

Councillors discussed the estimate received and whether further estimates should be obtained. They noted that seeking further estimates would take time and could mean the works not being carried out before the end of March 2016, resulting in the need to renew the agreements at Scaynes Hill Village Centre. A number of Councillors were aware of previous work done by the contractor concerned (including work done for the Council) and agreed that he had a good name in the village and gives value for money. There were no issues over bad workmanship or the end price coming in over budget. A number of Councillors thought that the estimate given was fair and was unlikely to be beaten. It was agreed that it would be necessary to discuss the works as they proceed to ensure that any additional works were identified and properly managed.

Cllr. Olbrich proposed and Cllr. Millam seconded a motion that no additional estimates should be obtained and that the estimate already received for locating the office in the storeroom and opening up the internal access should be accepted, subject to the views of the Council's Internal Auditor being obtained. The motion was agreed unanimously.

15/123 To receive reports:

- (1) **Play provision at Rowheath:** Cllr Olbrich reported that the parishioner concerned is now well and a meeting with him is to be held to take matters forward.
- (2) **Japanese knotweed:** The Clerk reported that Barcombe Landscapes had quoted for dealing with the Japanese Knotweed. To cut down and burn the growth on the affected area and to mulch the area will cost £400 plus VAT. To implement a spraying programme over a two year period would cost £750 plus VAT per annum. Councillors agreed that the area should be cleared and mulched and agreed the quotation of £400 plus VAT. However they thought that the cost of the spraying programme was high and should be revisited. Cllr O'Connor agreed to visit the site to see if it was worthwhile undertaking one treatment this side of the winter and he would liaise with the Clerk after his inspection.
- (3) **Footpath clearance at A272/A275 in North Chailey:** the Clerk reported that Barcombe Landscapes had quoted £100 plus VAT to cut back the "hedge" bordering the Council's land. Councillors agreed that this should go ahead.

Initials:

Date:

- (4) **Noticeboard at Chailey New Heritage:** the Clerk reported that the noticeboard had been collected and he hoped that it would be installed shortly.
- (5) **Brush clearance at Rowheath:** no conclusion has yet been reached about the brush clearance at Rowheath and the possible creation of a short cycle run. Barcombe Landscapes have quoted £300 plus VAT to undertake the work. Cllr Olbrich will take this matter forward.
- (6) **The neighbourhood plan:** the next meeting of the steering group is next week. The responses to the survey are currently being analysed.
- (7) **The Sports Association:** Cllr O’Conor reported that a meeting is to take place on 19th November 2015. Both Trustees are now aware of the proposed plan of action as regards the lease. The draft licence is awaited from the solicitor. He confirmed that it is intended that the Sports Club will contribute funds to the project. He also confirmed that the provision of female changing facilities will need to be considered.
- (8) **Repairs to the windmill:** The Clerk reported that the replacement window has been installed and that further small work to replace some rotting boards had also been carried out.
- (9) **Chailey allotments:** The Clerk reported that, of the 5 plots identified by the Allotment Society as not being properly kept, 2 were to be retained by the present holders as they had expressed a willingness to put matters right. One of the two who had not paid his rent has now done so. Of the remaining three plots, 1 had been handed back, 1 wished to keep half the plot and hand back the other half and nothing had been heard from the third holder despite two letters having been sent. Councillors agreed that the tenancy agreement with the holder who had not replied should be ended and that this plot, together with the other vacant plot and half plot should be offered to those on the waiting list.
- (10) **The new website:** Cllr Avery reported that he expected to have access to the dummy website by the end of November. Data transfer could then begin.
- (11) **Chailey commons management:** Cllr Avery reported that he had attended the first meeting of a new group of interested parties with a view to re-establishing a management committee, following the demise of the previous committee. Amongst other things, the new body would seek to monitor how the grant from Natural England was used. The terms of reference and objectives had yet to be defined and he would put these before Councillors when available. Councillors welcomed this initiative.

15/124 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. It was agreed that the Harvest Mouse Survey should be publicised on the website.

15/125 To note Risk implications: none to note.

Initials:

Date:

15/126 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.

15/127 Next Full Council meeting: 15th December 2015 at 7.30pm.
Next Planning & Environs Committee meeting: 1st December 2015 at 7.30pm

Signed: *Mark Evans*
Chairman

Date: *15th December 2015*