

**Minutes of Meeting of Ninfield Parish Council held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
at 7pm using Zoom**

**Cllrs Present:**

Chair K Williamson (KW); S Guard (SG); P Holland (PH); K Crittall (KC); G Pharo (GP); J Cheshire (JC); P Coleshill (PC); J Langley (JL).

**In Attendance:** J Scarff (clerk) & 5 members of the public

Members of the public are encouraged to come to the meeting and there is a 10-minute opportunity for them to address the council on matters on the agenda.

- 2485.** KW welcomed everybody to the meeting and ask members of the meeting to join her in observing 1 minute's silence to commemorate the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. KW let the meeting know that the clerk was sending a letter of Condolence to the Dule of Edinburgh's private secretary. KW reminded all attendees that with the forthcoming elections the meeting was being held in a time of Purdah and there could be no political comments or statements whatsoever.

**To receive reports from the County and District Cllrs and any questions on these reports.**

Apologies had been received from the District and County Councillors. Cllr P Doodes sent the following written report on behalf the District Councillors.

- During these difficult times I am pleased to report that Wealden has continued to deliver services under difficult circumstances, refuse collection has been regular and reliable. Land charges have been overwhelmed with work as a result of the property tax holiday but kept pace with enquiries. Resident's enquiries are responded to efficiently.
- Wealden is still working with a skeleton staff in the office as most members of staff are working from home. Unfortunately, this means there might be a short delay in responses to your enquiries. If you have any problems, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Ray
- One of the main focuses at present is the forthcoming elections. Electoral services are receiving help from personnel from other departments so have been able to keep abreast of the extra challenges thrown at them. Not only are they coping with the scheduled County Council elections, they also have to administer the Police Crime Commissioner election delayed from last year and 4 by elections, two in Heathfield and two in Hailsham. Whilst they are always responsible for the suitability of Polling stations, at this election they have the added responsibility of making sure the stations are Covid compliant.
- Burling Gap steps are closed until the end of the month for repairs which means there is no access to the beach at the present time. This is such a pity at a time when folk are venturing out and about as lockdown eases.
- From today, 12<sup>th</sup> April, the Council is resuming car park enforcement.
- For further details of the 'Shop and Dine Well in Wealden' scheme please

go to: <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/press-and-media/coronavirus-covid-19-latest/reopening-our-high-streets-safely/#>

**Pam**

- From a personal perspective as Chairman of the Council my role and responsibilities have, frustratingly, mostly been on line during lockdown. I have been pleased to respond to the many requests for 'Zoom' meetings from a wide range of groups and organisations – Lord Lieutenant, High Sherriff, neighbouring local authorities, various varied charities, businesses, schools, individuals and more. It is always good to meet and support the people of Wealden but, naturally, I would have preferred face to face encounters. I have attended a number of virtual afternoon tea sessions (very low calorie!). I have been able to support my official charity, DSES, (Dementia Sufferers East Sussex) and have enjoyed many of the online music and singing sessions staged for the sufferers of Dementia and their supporters and carers

**Ray**

- Holding the Housing and Benefits Portfolio during the pandemic has been extremely a busy time for Ray as he has reported to you at past meetings. Wealden is justly proud of the way we have supported our residents through these difficult times, be it through grant funding, housing and housing advice and general support. By working closely with our tenants and those in need of housing the housing department has managed the steer many through these troubled times. This work will need to continue for some time to come.

**To receive other reports**

**Schools**

IM reported that the school is closed for the Easter Holidays. They will continue with staggered starts and finishes and classroom bubbles.

**St Marys Church**

Online services are currently continuing supporting those who don't feel comfortable visiting the church at this time. It is appreciated that the clock is working now. The village society organised for the church bell to chime 99 times Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April in in remembrance of Prince Philip.

**2486. Public Questions**

Ten minutes are available for the Public to express a view or ask a question on **relevant matters on the following agenda.**

Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to stay and observe the rest of the meeting.

**2487. Apologies and reasons:**

Apologies had been sent and accepted from cllr S Collins due to technical difficulties.

Apologies received from District Cllrs P Doodles & R Cade, County Cllr B Bentley.

**2488. Disclosure of Interests:**

To receive Councillors' declaration of interest regarding matters on the agenda and consider and written requests for dispensation as a result. Councillors are reminded that changes to the register of interests should be notified to the clerk as

and when they occur.

SG declared an interest in the item 8e, regarding the Carnival Committee as a

member and the item 8i discussing a grant for the Memorial hall as a Trustee.

PH declared an interest in the item 8i discussing the Memorial Hall as he will be the project Manager and his wife is a Trustee.

KC declared an interest in the item 8e, regarding the Carnival Committee as a member

**2489. Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved,**

‘Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following agenda items of business 8m as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.’

**2490. Minutes**

**Resolved: the minutes of**

Full Council Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

KW proposed approval,

JC seconded and the minutes could be signed by the Chair as a true record.

**2491. Matters Arising from previous minutes – that are not already on the agenda.**

Nothing arising.

**2492. Matters for Discussion**

- a) **To discuss a proposal to submit an application to WDC to change the use class at Sparkes Pavilion and agree any actions required.**

A background explanatory paper had been sent out in advance.

KC proposed the change. KW seconded the proposal.

Resolved that the council would apply for the required amendments. KC offered to gather information required and PH offered to submit the application.

- b) **To discuss the proposal from Muddy Boots for the Use of Sparkes Pavilion and agree any actions required.**

KW explained that the start date would need to be deferred until after the planning application had been approved to allow the use.

- c) **To hear an update on the neighbourhood plan (NHP) and agree any actions required.**

The residents survey is currently live and will run until 22<sup>nd</sup> April. JC extended thanks to everybody who helped to deliver the questionnaires. John also thanked the volunteers who were helping to input the paper copies of the questionnaire. JC reported that he was hoping to have some preliminary data ready for a meeting with WDC planning officers to discuss progress on the neighbourhood plan on 26<sup>th</sup> April, he went on to explain that that the last meeting with WDC there was a lot of pressure on Ninfield to launch a call for sites and the feedback from residents would be very important in making decisions about this and other issues. JC also confirmed that he would be raising the issue with the settlement hierarchy again at the meeting with WDC. The character assessments are ongoing, areas within the development boundary are now completed. After a conversation with our NHP consultants these assessments will be extended out to the parish boundary with a view to enhancing the protection of the more sparsely populated areas. Documents will now be put onto the website so that residents can see them and give feedback. A subgroup of the steering group have been working on listing sn

describing Green Space areas in the parish and JC is assembling the results into a report. Another subgroup is working on a design guide, the group are using the AONB design guide to help. PC has found the WDC design Guide from 2008 which, because of its age, does not refer to sustainability. Ninfield PC are Planning to bring it forward once it is finished and ask WDC planning to use it when looking at any development in the village.

The clerk was asked to wait in the virtual waiting room will JC made a proposal to the cllrs.

19:22 the clerk made KC the meeting host and was put into the virtual waiting room. 19:25 the clerk returned and became meeting host.

The cllrs resolved to pay the clerk a bonus of 15 hours for the work done on the NHP questionnaire

**To receive reports from Parish Councillors including those requiring actions.**

- d) SG reported to the meeting that the cricketers want to park cars on the recreation ground from the next weekend. The footballers are still playing league matches and parked cars would affect the football pitch.

Resolved, there is to be no parking on the recreation ground, the decision will be reviewed once the football matches have finished.

- e) **To hear a request from the Carnival and Sports Association to use the recreation ground and Sparkes Pavilion Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and to facilitate the Horticultural Society Summer Show Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021.**

Resolved subject to govt guidelines in place at the time this is agreed.

- f) **To discuss the correspondence received regarding a forthcoming planning application for up to 65 houses on 20 Acre field and agree any actions required.**

KC commented that there was nothing that the PC can do at the moment.

Residents in the village have been contacted by the company promoting the site and asks for their views. KC suggested that it might be worth considering meeting with WDC and the promoter for a pre application discussion once the village views have been taken into account. There was an ensuing discussion.

SG asked a question regarding an email circulated to the cllrs about Probity in Planning following a reminder form WDC planners at cluster meeting that Parish Cllrs at the needed to take care that they could not be considered to have predetermined decisions on planning. If WDC felt this to be the case Parish Cllrs could be excluded from discussions about any related application. SG asked that if the local govt advice was relevant to Parish Cllrs a statement should be put out to residents so they understood why cllrs could not comment applications. JC commented that he had read the document and that her felt it was for the District Council councillors as the Parish Council are not decision makers. There was further discussion. KC highlighted that it is important to encourage residents to respond to the leaflet received. Cllrs agreed that it was really important to encourage residents to respond.

JL asked if the PC could get some advice to clarify how the document may or may not apply to Parish Cllrs. The clerk offered to email our planning consultant to what extent the document should influence the parish councillors.

**To discuss the telephone box project and any actions required.**

- g) SG asked when the current planning permission expires. GP has explored a sponsorship option. PH advised that the planning permission expires November 2022.

**Resolved to review the project on the next agenda.**

**To discuss ground works and the rhododendrons along the boundary of the**

**bowls club.**

- h) Resolved, the clerk to discuss with the ground maintenance contractor to get a quote ensure that it is cut back and the height lowered.

**To discuss the requirement to update the planning permission of one of the containers at the memorial hall carpark and agree any actions required.**

- i) The current planning permission for one of the containers expires in August 2021. The other container has permanent permission.  
Resolved that the planning permission be applied for.

**The discuss a request from the Memorial Hall to withdraw the current grant application and request a grant towards the improvements to the hall.**

- j) Resolved that the cllrs agree to grant the memorial hall £3000 towards the internal work for the building.

**To discuss requests from Muddy Boots and the memorial hall to use the carpark for storing items and for contractor parking and agree any actions required.**

2484.

- k) SG clarified that the contractors will be parking in front of the hall and would only use the carpark when necessary.  
KC commented that any damage to the surface of the carpark would need to be made good. PH commented that as project manager he will take photos of the carpark before the work starts.  
Resolved the cllrs agree to the request subject to making good any damage if there were to be any.

**Finance –**

**To receive the bank reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

- l) Received, noted and attached to the minutes. The face of the Lloyds Bank statement shows as balance of £79,036.39 and the Unity Trust bank statement shows a balance of £61,934.87 as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

**To receive the payments schedule for approval.**

JC proposed that the payments be made, GP seconded All agreed  
Resolved that the Payments are approved.

**To discuss quotes obtained for the gate on the recreation ground.**

The clerk explained that she had received a quote for £1150. PH asked if the middle post will be removable to allow bigger vehicles through for carnival etc.

**To discuss an update on the boundary review and agree any actions required.**

This item was confidential.

- m) **Correspondence** – to note for possible inclusion on next agenda  
Nothing to report

**It was noted that the next Parish Council meeting will take place on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 19:00**

**With no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 21:04 pm.**

Signed .....Date.....