

Telephone 07725 843 505

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Website <http://www.ninfieldpc.co.uk/community/ninfield-parish-council-15069/home>

Ninfield Full Council Minutes 16th September 2021

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 and 6 members of the public.

2493 KW welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

KW explained that NPC had received a joint report from the district cllrs which have been circulated to cllrs and are available for members of the public if they wish to have one.

KW also explained that Cllr Bowdler had also submitted a report that had been circulated and is also available.

KC read from the DC report that the cllrs have been visiting Manchester Road.

To receive reports from

Schools

Ninfield are sharing head teacher with Netherfield.

2494

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.

Qu re Gladwish Development.

The clerk responded that the case is going to court.

Qu re the seating at the bus stop.

KC explained the process and the regulations

2495

Apologies and reasons for absence in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 S 85.

District Cllrs P Doodes

2496

Disclosure of Interests

To receive any disclosure by Members of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of the interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Revised Code of Members Conduct.

[SG declared a pecuniary interest in 8h SG & PH declared a prejudicial interest in 8h.](#)

2497

Exclusion of the Public

To exclude the public for a particular agenda item the following resolution must be passed. '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 items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.'

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2498 **Minutes of previous meeting** to be agreed and signed as a true record
Meeting of the Parish Council 16th September 2021

2499 **Matters arising from previous minutes** – that are not already included on the agenda.
Nothing

2500 **Matters for discussion**

- a) **To hear an update on the neighbourhood plan and agree any actions required.**
To consider proposed recommendations for approval

A resident commented on the State of the Parish report asking that the newly formed Ninfield Football Club is added to the relevant section. SG added that s2.44 should be revised to acknowledge the doctor's surgery merger with Pebsham.

JC highlighted that there will be an exhibition at the Methodist Hall 9th October 2021 to gain feedback from people who aren't online.

JC explained that all the reports are on the website and that with the revisions discussed this evening he proposed that the parish council adopt the documents.

KC Proposed KW seconded. All agreed

- b) **To hear an update on the wildflower verges and grounds maintenance and agree any actions required.**

KC answered questions that had been posed by residents

Are there any restrictions around the grant on what we can do and who we can use?

We applied for the grant after the work plan had been agreed and included in our application the work we would complete and who we would work with. The grant has been approved on this basis

Have soil tests been completed to know exactly what mix of wild flowers will grow in each site?

There is a mix. Some areas have been identified as rich in wildflower mix but other areas will require soil testing before finalising the rewilding

How will the verges benefit the bee population? Surely there is a higher level of pollution on road verges and we would be better off encouraging them in our gardens?

All of the proposed wildflower verge locations are set back from the carriageway thus not a direct impact of pollution from road traffic. Pollutants (including car exhaust fumes) break down scent molecules emitted by plants making it harder for bees to detect food. This means they often have to fly further to find food and take it back to the nest. Wild flowers, like all plants absorb CO2 and pollution from the air, so having wildflowers along the roadside helps to combat the pollution. It would also be a fantastic idea to encourage residents to have wildflower areas in their gardens but we need to think about how the parish council could support this.

When are the 'wildflower' verges being cut (I've just seen that they were cut today)

Verges have been cut in the past week and there will be another cut in October. Next season the verges identified in the plan from Plantlife will be treated as per the plan and the rest of the village will receive its 6 cuts

When and how will the contractor be scarifying the nominated verges and raking up the 'hay'?

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The contractor will follow the Plantlife plan. Not all verges are being treated the same and not all need scarifying see response above re soil testing

Can the contractors confirm that they will be removing excess grass and not allowing it to clog up drains

If this refers to the wildflower verges as per the plan the verges will be cut (using a flail mower so the seeds fall to the ground and then left for a week following which I believe it will be collected. We will speak with the contractor about removal of excess grass from other locations. Waste rule require that a contractor MUST have a waste transfer licence and grass cuttings cannot be disposed of other than in places equipped to deal with them.

Of the verges we have taken over from ESCC, how often will they be cut

ESCC only cut 2 per year and only cut 1m in from the road on the 'rural cuts' we have up to 6 cuts per season.

Could Plantlife help us with a campaign to encourage residents to make their gardens more bee friendly

It would also be a fantastic idea to encourage residents to have wildflower areas in their gardens but we need to think about how the parish council could support this. If Plantlife do not have the human resources there is a lot of information on their website the village could use

Are Ingrams contractors going to 'put right' the damage they have made to verges – primarily the orchids covered over near the mem hall verge, but also at the top of Lower Street where there is now a lot of weed

Good point and we will follow this up with the contractor

Molly's corner is an example of where non removal of hay has resulted in an increase in weeds – how is this area going to be improved

Mollys Corner is a designated wildflower verge on the ESCC website already because of the Orchids. This area has always been left but not managed, but it is now part of the wildflower plan which should result in an improvement of what's already there.

Would it be an idea to get a team together to trim areas that become overgrown between cuts

The problem is that ESCC have strict regulations on anyone that works on the highways – including insurances. Perhaps a better option would be to encourage reporting to the clerk areas that are considered overgrown (preferably with photo evidence)

Re Ingrams and the ghost lane – is there any chance we can ask for compensation from the contractors?

We think this is a good idea and we should try. We can also ask our County Councillor to support us with this.

Can we have an 'adopt a triangle initiative'?

We could look at this but, as with our response to an earlier question, ESCC have very strict regulations and we need to look at how we could work within these and come back with more information at a later meeting

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c) To receive reports from Parish Councillors including those requiring actions.

PC explained that he had done some investigation about the acoustic cameras. There are trials going on in parts of the country but they would need to be in situ as well as speed cameras.

JC proposed that the current sign at Standard Hill coming into the village is replaced with one that shows drivers the speed they are doing. GP also proposed that the sign on the A269 coming into the village from Bexhill was also changed.

All agreed. The clerk was asked to apply to SSRP for a grant to cover the cost.

JL reported on the Health and Well Being Group. The group have received a grant to cover hall hire and showing films.

The book exchange café will become a weekly community café from 8th October which will start with free coffee and Danish. The Book exchange will be 1st Friday of each month.

SG explained that she is seeking the donation of a Christmas Tree which will be placed next to the Jubilee Garden on the recreation ground, lit up with solar lights.

SG highlighted that the Memorial Hall AGM 25th October. 6.30pm at Sparkes pavilion.

d) To discuss the Church Cemetery and agree any actions required

Rev Paul explained that there were approx. 12/13 burial places left at the churchyard. The church would need to find extra land. There are impacts on the Parish Council if the churchyard is closed.

After discussion with the diocese he will be able to provide more information.

e) To discuss the outcome of the proposal to donate £15,000 to the Memorial Hall and agree any actions required.

Having declared their interests at the beginning of the meeting SG and PH did not take part in the next item but remained in the room during the discussion.

There were no objections received by the clerk and 3 emails in favour.

It was proposed that the grant was agreed, cllrs voted 5 in favour, 1 abstention.

Resolved that the parish council will give a grant of £15,000 to the village hall.

f) To discuss the Telephone Box project and agree any actions required.

SG explained that she had had a quote to move the phone box, from Parker and Son, of £1800. A resident suggested asking Couzens Cranes if they could help. The History Group had approved the idea that they are gifted the phone box and there is the potential to apply for a grant when the required quotes are received.

g) To agree the details for wreaths and poppy's for Remembrance Sunday.

The clerk explained that a resident had been in touch to ask whether the council would consider purchasing some large poppies for lampposts along the High Street. The resident is prepared to buy 10 if the Parish Council would consider matching this. SG explained that she has 2 wreaths that could be used and proposed that the PC match the residents offer. SG explained that the plan for Remembrance this year was developed as the service on the recreation ground was so successful. 14th November 0930 there will be a Church service. At 1030 a procession from the Church to the Tommy on the recreation ground when Rev Paul will conduct an Act of Remembrance.

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SG commented that it was the 18th year anniversary of her first parish council meeting as a cllr this evening. Resolved that the PC will support poppies for the lampposts.

h) Finance Matters

To receive the bank reconciliations to 31st August 2021

The Unity Trust Bank reconciliation shows a balance of £65,091.92 as at 31st August 2021.

To present for approval the payments for the month.

Resolved that the payments be made as presented.

16/09/2021 BACS £32.78 32.78 Top Lawn Ltd

16/09/2021 BACS £32.78 32.78 Top Lawn Ltd

16/09/2021 BACS £1,560.00 Surrey Hills Solicitor

2501

Correspondence – to note for possible inclusion on next agenda

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REPORT TO NINFIELD PARISH COUNCIL FOR 16th September

2021

Housing

Over the past 4 weeks, the Housing Team has been extremely busy organising Wealden's response and contribution to the Afghan refugee emergency.

This began with us agreeing a package of support with the Government, when the Taliban was first on the move and the evacuation of Afghans and their families, who had helped British Forces, was being arranged.

Since then, of course, the situation deteriorated and the urgency significantly increased.

Our main challenge is locating suitable family accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). At the moment, it is a renter's market on top of the fact rents are historically high in the District. The Government support is only for 12 months, after which the refugee families are expected to be self-sufficient. So, we need to avoid creating a situation, where the family are left in an unaffordable rent position.

You will have seen our appeals to the PRS for suitable housing.

We are confident of our ability to effectively support the Afghan families due to the knowledge and experience gained by the Housing Team dealing with Syrian refugees over the past five years.

To date we have acquired a four-bedroom property in Crowborough and are expecting a refugee family to arrive on 10/9/21 We have the possibility of another two dwellings in the District.

This is a fast moving situation with the Minister of Defence, in the last few days, directly appealing to Local Authorities for their help in providing accommodation and support.

I am pleased Wealden District Council is playing its part to be involved with this very worthwhile project.

Benefits

All schemes are now closed and final payments have been made as follows;

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Grant Type	BEIS Application End Date	BEIS Final Payment Date	Total Value Paid out	Number of completed applications received	Number declined	Number approved / transactions	Incomplete Claims
SBGF & RHL	28/08/2020	30/09/2020	£38,590,000.00	3,784	456	3,328	0
Discretionary Top-Up	28/08/2020	30/09/2020	£2,651,000.00	409	164	245	205
LRSB – November	31/03/2021	30/04/2021	£1,540,168.00	1,053	54	999	299
LRSB – Tier 4	31/03/2021	30/04/2021	£459,438.12	868	30	838	62
LRSB – Dec Closed	31/03/2021	30/04/2021	£26,246.47	79	39	40	9
LRSB – Dec Open	31/03/2021	30/04/2021	£265,812.34	563	23	540	73
CSP (Wet-led pub)	28/02/2021	31/03/2021	£45,000.00	48	3	45	8
LRSB – Sector	31/03/2021	30/04/2021	£2,000.29	3	0	3	0
CBLP	31/03/2021	30/04/2021	£5,035,000.00	1,147	56	1,091	144
LRSB – Jan (6 weeks)	31/03/2021	30/04/2021	£2,518,329.00	1,147	56	1,091	144
LRSB – February	31/05/2021	30/06/2021	£2,642,743.00	1,148	56	1,092	144
ARG Discretionary Grants	N/A	30/07/2021	£4,663,891.00	1,828	236	1,592	307
Restart1	30/06/2021	30/07/2021	£770,063.00	271	19	252	96
Restart 2	30/06/2021	30/07/2021	£6,406,000.00	726	38	688	155
Totals			£65,615,691.22	13,074	1,230	11,844	1,646

Empty Homes Review

At the beginning of August, Liberata's Capacity Grid commenced an Empty Homes Review on Council Tax properties that have been empty for more than six months. There were approximately 500 properties. They will write to each owner to ascertain whether the property is still empty or has since been re-occupied. The findings will be updated by the end of September.

Academy Customer Portal

The Academy Portal is currently under review, but if agreed we will be aiming for a go-live date in mid-November. The portal will enable customers to view their Council Tax, Business Rates, Benefits and Overpayment details in one place and all landlords will be able to access their payment schedules online.

The portal will be further developed to deliver an e-billing solution as well as allow customers to set up direct debits, payment arrangements and to apply for benefits.

The Wealden Benefits team has received a further tranche of money from Government to support businesses to recover from the effects of the pandemic. We are waiting to determine the criteria for applications.

Refuse Collection

There has been no disruption to our waste collection service although we are aware advertisements have been posted for HGV drivers. This follows the trend of a shortage of drivers being experienced across all businesses country wide. However, the service is being managed well and so one hopes the quality service will continue.

News releases

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As always Wealden posts all Press Releases on the website, we recommend you take a look from time to time. Below we have listed two which we think will be of special interest:

Community Grants

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/news/wealden-invites-applications-for-community-grant-funding/>

Please see above the link to the news release regarding Community Grants. The closing date for applications for community grants is 30th November.

Collection of Wealden Walks

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/news/explore-the-latest-collection-of-wealden-walks/>

Please see above the link to the news release regarding the latest collection of walks in Wealden

Parish Bulletin

You may have noticed that the regular Parish Bulletin has a new, modern look. This publication contains a wealth of information. If there are any articles you would like to discuss please contact us

Manchester Road development site

Since 16th August we have been visiting the Manchester Road development site regularly, having made 9 visits to date. We meet regularly and have exchanged contact details with the site foreman and as we did with the person in charge of the demolition work. The neighbours have been given our contact details too so, should they have concerns, they can contact us without delay.

Local Issues

We have been involved with a number of local issues. As these involve personal concerns such as neighbourly disputes, access to benefits etc we are unable to share information. The reason for including a note about this in the report is to remind you that we are involved and happy to help/signpost when the need arises.

September 17th Roads meeting

Again, another reminder about the Roads meeting planned for tomorrow at The Reid Hall, Boreham Street, hall open at 1.30, meeting at 2.00. We do hope you will be able to attend and encourage residents to do the same.

Cllr Ray Cade

Cllr Pam Doodes

14th September 2021

ESCC - SEPTEMBER PARISH REPORT

Most members and officers at county are still working from home. We don't see a return to working to the pre pandemic work-pattern as the current arrangements are working well. We are looking to strike a balance between the two systems.

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Officers are currently involved in meetings regarding the numbers of refugees incoming from Afghanistan, however it has to be said that primarily it will be an issue for the housing authorities of our 5 boroughs and districts. It is going to be difficult as they are looking for larger properties

In the past few days we have taken a further 2 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children as part of the National Transfer Scheme, plus 2 more, and a baby, who presented from within East Sussex.

Our Looked After children, some 600 +, did very well in the recent exam results although exact figures are not yet available, but we believe they will be in line with the national trend. We do have 10 of our 16+ cohort of Care Leavers who are progressing to university and who will be fully supported by the council as their Corporate Parents.

We recently renegotiated several of our SEND home to school transport contracts. The contract was due to start on the 1 September for the new term. At the end of August we were informed that the contractor was not able to fulfil their obligation. Our new Director of Children's Services started work on the 1 September, which proved to be a baptism of fire as this was a serious problem which required immediate attention. I am happy to report that they all got to school on time, and more importantly they were all returned to the correct home at the end of the day.

During the school holidays the council provided just short of 6000 places at 86 venues for children who qualify for free school meals on our Holiday Activity and Food programme. I visited several of these, as did other members along with the Minister, Vicky Ford MP. The project was extremely well received and we hope to continue with it in the future.

- If you're not already aware, Horam High Street is scheduled for resurfacing towards the latter part of the year.
- The extensive highway upgrading of West End in Hurstmonceux is continuing, as a major portion of our annual budget. Thanks to local councillors for liaising with officers regarding sporadic issues.

Cllr Bob Bowdler
Wealden East Division