

**Minutes of Meeting of Ninfield Parish Council held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
at 7pm using Zoom**

**Cllrs Present:**

Chair K Williamson (KW); S Guard (SG); P Holland (PH); K Crittall (KC); G Pharo (GP); S Collins (SC); J Cheshire (JC); P Coleshill (PC); District Cllrs R Cade (RC) & P Doodles.

**In Attendance:** J Scarff (clerk) & 4 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.

**2467. To receive reports from the County and District Cllrs and any questions on these reports.**

**RC & PD were invited to give a report.**

RC repeated previous advice that the GOVT initiatives for businesses and individuals are constantly changing. He suggested that an eye is kept on the WDC website and to contact the benefits team if in doubt as they are complex. RC stated that anyone should feel free to contact him or PD. Since Nov WDC have distributed £5.4m in claims, mostly grants to businesses during the course of the second lockdown. Since the beginning of the first lockdown WDC had distributed £47m in total in grants and also given a discount in business rates to those struggling as well as helping low-income families with their council tax contributions. It is estimated that the cost of the pandemic to Wealden will be in excess of £2m.

Most of the council officers are working from home. Both planning and legal departments have got behind with workloads. RC has had complaints regarding the time needed to deal with land searches because of the pressure of the deadline for the stamp duty relief. In the housing department they are picking up lots of issues of anti-social behaviour. It is mostly neighbour disputes. There is still a big emphasis on protecting the retirement living courts from spread of the virus. The situation has vastly improved with the rollout of the vaccine.

WDC have managed to lease a property in Westham for a charity 'Aspire' that deals with people who have suffered spinal injuries to use to help rehabilitate patients.

RC has been part of a financial housing private assistance policy to assist hospitals with the discharge of elderly patients by visiting the houses and helping with cleaning/clearing or minor adaptations. It also applies to people suffering from dementia.

PD explained that she and RC had agreed between themselves RC would cover the main report. PD commented that electoral services are having a difficult time with the organisation of the forthcoming elections. They are awaiting final guidance from the cabinet office. Some of the centres they would normally use are being used as vaccination centres, so they are trying to find new Polling Stations and ensure risk assessments are in place. PD has received a couple of complaints regarding the lack of cleansing of payment pin pads at the supermarkets. PD has reported it to environmental health and they are responding.

JC commented that this is why there is hand sanitiser available and the risk is extremely low. PD replied that the people who had complained were worried that if this wasn't being done were all the health and safety rules being followed behind the scenes.

KW thanked PD and RC for their contribution.

Ian Moffat (IM) the Chair of Governors for Ninfield CEP school was asked to give a report.

The school are running with around 30% of children and all staff in school and awaiting more news regarding the 8<sup>th</sup> March re opening. IM commented that he hadn't forgotten about the email from KC regarding the outdoor lights being on at the school but has been trying to work the system out and will continue to deal with it.

Paul Frostick (PF) was invited to make a report on behalf of the church.

PF reported that he is continuing with online services. The boiler will be replaced shortly. It is possible there will be live services for Easter.

SG thanked PF for St Marys and the Methodist Church team who are continuing to do online services and commented that there are new congregation members as a result.

**2468. 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.

A member of the public commented on the amount of litter on the edges of the B2204 heading to Catsfield Stream and wondered if services were reduced.

RC Biffa is still working well and are prioritising the bins. PD commented that there is more litter being ejected from car windows. KW commented that it is mostly not takeaway litter but more substantial commercial litter.

A question about the Gladwish development.

The clerk updated the meeting that enforcement had reported that they had issued several enforcement notices and they were awaiting confirmation from the inspectorate that everything is in order.

**2469. Apologies and reasons:**

Apologies had been sent and accepted from Cllr J Langley (JL) & County Cllr B Bentley

**2470. 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.

**None**

**2471. Exclusion of the Public**

'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 9i as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.'

**No requirement to exclude the public.**

**2472. Minutes**

**Resolved: the minutes of**

Full Council Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021

KW proposed approval,

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

**2473. Matters Arising from previous minutes – that are not already on the agenda.**

No matters arising

**2474. Matters for Discussion**

**a) To hear an update on the neighbourhood plan and agree any actions required.**

JC reported that the next big action is issuing the questionnaire, every voter in every household should receive a questionnaire. We are actively encouraging as many people as possible to complete the questionnaire on-line. It is planned to send it out early March.

All cllrs have seen the questionnaire and their feedback has been incorporated into the final version.

All cllrs were happy for the questionnaire to proceed.

John commented that some of the properties in the village are more difficult to get to so it is proposed that these properties will receive their paper copies through the post.

All cllrs agreed that this was a good idea.

JC asked for cllrs to help to deliver the questionnaires. All cllrs agreed.

JC proposed that £100 of vouchers are bought for the prize drawn

All agreed.

JC has received the design code from Airs and will send a copy out to the team who have volunteered to look at this.

KC gave a vote of thanks to JC for all his work collating everything on the neighbourhood plan. This was echoed by all cllrs. JC also expressed his thanks to everyone who has helped.

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

KC gave a report about the Parish Cluster meeting. KC explained that there was no agenda for the meeting and that her expectation was that the meeting was to talk about the Wealden Plan but on the day Chris Bending said that participants could ask about anything to do with planning. KC will ask a question about enforcement at the next meeting as it feels like they are very stretched at the moment. The officers are still updating responses on the portal for the direction of travel document. Chris Bending reported that the team are very busy looking at policies for the plan for the beginning. KC asked if that meant that everything would be starting from a zero base including looking at categorisation and if so will they be consulting with the parishes which was reinforced by WDALC after Bob Standley had reported at a WDALC meeting that WSC would be consulting parishes on their categorisation. There was no date for this.

Unfortunately, there are no minutes. KC said it should be worth looking at the minutes from the WDALC meeting.

PC asked KC to ask how much time WDC have set aside to consult.

JC said that at the end of the 'state of the parish' document there was a comment that the settlement hierarchy will be reviewed. JC also ask that KC feedback again to WDC how bad the website is for users.

There was a brief discussion about the extraordinary fact that there is no agenda and no minutes from this meeting.

KC updated the cllrs on the latest situation regarding Ingrams. KC met with residents that are immediately impacted. The aim was to understand what real concerns that to be concentrated on.

1. the drainage
2. how the boundary will be secured
3. the section 106

KC has done some work on the drainage and explained her findings which will be written up and sent out to cllrs . GP asked about the work that was currently happening on site. KC reported that she had spoken to someone on site who had told her that they were working on the French drains.

The clerk was asked to contact enforcement and ask the LFA to reassure the PC that the drainage tests lead them to be sure that there will be no flooding of Lower Street.

KW thanked KC for all the work she had done ploughing through the documents, meeting with residents and highlighting the issues that are still a concern.

KC explained that she was trying to ensure that the residents who are directly impacted and need more information as well as trying to ensure that there are not so many emails from different people asking for information.

GP & KW offered to help, KC thanked them and said she would ask if she needed any.

c) **To receive a motion that Ninfield Parish Council declares a Climate and ecological emergency.**

JC explained that an important theme in the development of the NNP is the protection of the local environment. Many local residents have expressed concerns about this issue along with wider concerns about climate change. The southern part of Wealden District is undergoing large scale inappropriate and unsustainable development which is exerting pressure on the environment. Ninfield is experiencing increased traffic leading to poor air quality, greater demands on water and electricity supply and a gradual contraction of our green areas as farmland is used for building in preference to brownfield sites. Much of the new housing is approved and delivered with no sustainable measures to reduce energy and water consumption. Our green environment, bio diversity and precious dark night time skies are being compromised and flood risks are becoming more of a threat.

JC proposed the following motion:

Ninfield Parish Council now joins many other organisations (the Government, East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council) in declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency. Although our sphere of influence is limited, our council will do everything we can to assist our community to achieve nett zero carbon emissions by 2030. In addition, we will work with residents to protect and enhance green spaces and biodiversity across the Parish. We will conduct our business with these aims in mind at all times and do everything possible to raise awareness of these issues in the local community.

SG proposed that the motion be accepted.

KC clarified that it would mean that there are things that we need to be doing as a parish Council to lead us to zero carbon and adopt that within our practice. For example. to look at what we do with or purchasing, conducting meetings etc

JC clarified that the council would need to bear the principals in mind with any decision the council are making.

PC commented that the PC may want to consider an information campaign to residents.

PC seconded the motion, all cllrs agreed.

Resolved the motion was adopted.

d) **To discuss the date for holding the annual meeting of the Parish Council and agree any actions required. Background paper attached.**

The clerk had circulated a background paper explaining the details and recommended that the May meeting should take place W/c 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

Resolved that the meeting will be w/c 3<sup>rd</sup> May, date and time to be agreed.

PC expressed his opinion and used unsuitable language. He apologised to all in the meeting.

KC proposed that the meeting be scheduled for w/c 3<sup>rd</sup> May. All agreed.

Clerk to arrange.

SG highlighted that with social distancing in place it would be impossible for the council to hold its meetings at the Methodist Hall, The Memorial Hall would have to be the venue. SG suggested that if this was the case the PC should consider whether meetings are monthly or bimonthly until social distancing restrictions are changed.

e) **Finance –**

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

Received, noted and attached to the minutes. The face of the Lloyds Bank statement shows a balance of £79,177.40 and the Unity Trust bank statement shows a balance of £70,547.43 as at 31 January 2021.

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

SC proposed that the payments be made, PH seconded All agreed

Resolved that they Payments are approved.

**To seek permission to book the internal audit for the year ending March 2021**

Resolved that the clerk book the year end internal audit.

**To review a quote sent by the Memorial Hall for their projector project further to their request for a grant towards the project.**

SG declared an interest in this item as a member of the Memorial Hall Committee and did not take part in the discussion other than to clarify any questions.

The quote attached had been previously circulated.

KW commented she would like to see an itemised quote and would prefer two more estimates are obtained. KC agreed that there should be two more current quotes from the memorial hall committee.

After questions about the company who had quoted, being plumbing, kitchen and bathroom specialists, SG offered to clarify.

SG explained that the company is that of a committee member who can supply and fit the equipment.

KC suggested that it would also be useful to have some more detail showing that the committee member has the knowledge and experience to install the equipment.

JC volunteered to find out who runs the equipment at the pavilion in Bexhill to see if it was possible to get a contact for the company who do their sound systems.

**Correspondence – to note for possible inclusion on next agenda**

The clerk reported that she had received correspondence for the football club to say that they will lock the goalposts together on the recreation ground as the football pitch has deteriorated through the use it has sustained during lockdown. They would like to continue their residence at the pavilion after this

season.

SH commented that the ground has been in constant use by footballers who would seem to be teammates from somewhere and the ground is now in a terrible state.

The football club do not want to stop local children using the goals. There was a discussion regarding the use.

It was agreed that it would not be practical to keep unlocking the goalposts.

**It was noted that the next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 19:00**

**With no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20.42 pm.**

**Signed .....****Date.....**