

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Clapham Parish Council

**Held 'Remotely' via Zoom Software *
On Thursday 4th June 2020 at 7.30 p.m.**

*The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (Regulation 5)



Present: Councillors: Stuart Ray (Chairman), Jeff Klückers, Terry Gale and John Kelly
In attendance: Sarah Linfield, BSc (Hons), CiLCA (Parish Clerk/RFO)

2 members of the public

Apologies received from WSCC Councillor Deborah Urquhart

Arun District Councillor Mike Clayden joined the meeting to introduce himself, highlighting that he could be contacted by phone or email to support the parish and also referenced the regular COVID-19 briefing documents currently being provided by Arun District Council. He looks forward to joining future meetings. Councillor Clayden left the meeting at 7.40 p.m.

Arun District Councillor Paul Bicknell joined the meeting and confirmed that he had sent a copy of the 'Arun Newsletter' to the council for information purposes. The clerk has signed up for the council to receive these.

20.21/14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- at the discretion of the Chairman a member of the public spoke at the end of the meeting (9.10 p.m.) to thank the council for their support to secure the future of the school in the village.

20.21/15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- N/A, all councillors present.

20.21/16. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- None received.

20.21/17. MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 7th May 2020

- having been previously circulated (12/5/20) it was

Resolved - that these be approved as a true record of the decisions of that meeting and they could be signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Gale and by the unanimous agreement of all present.

20.21/18. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2019.20

The Clerk/RFO walked the council through the AGAR and associated documents and it was **Resolved** - to

18 (a) Note the Annual Internal Audit Report (all responses being positive)

(Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Gale and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

18 (b) Approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1), to be signed by Chairman and Clerk

(Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Klückers and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

18 (c) Approve the Accounting Statements (Section 2), which had been already signed by the Responsible Financial Officer before presenting it to the council, to be signed by the Chairman. It also approved the explanation of significant year-on-year variances and reserves statement.

(Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Klückers and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

18 (d) Approve the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited AGAR.

(Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Gale and by the unanimous agreement of all present)

Required paperwork to be posted to the parish council website 11 June 2020 and sent to the external auditor.

Prior to the resolution minuted under 20.21/18 the meeting was suspended between 8 p.m. and 8.05 p.m. to allow members to support Clapham's 'Clap for its Community'.

20.21/19. ANNUAL CONFIRMATION OF REGULAR PAYMENTS MADE FROM THE COUNCIL'S BANK ACCOUNT BY STANDING ORDER & DIRECT DEBIT

The council noted the regular payments, in line with its Financial Regulations, Section 5 (5.2) and it was

Resolved - to approve the continued use of regular payments to pay the clerk (monthly by standing order) and mandatory Information Commissioner's Office Date protection fee (annually by direct debit, with a saving of £5)

(Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Kelly and by the unanimous agreement of all present)

20.21/20 FINANCE REPORTS

Reconciliations - received and noted the latest bank account reconciliation as at 31/5/20 and previous reconciliation at 30/4/20 (Annex A). It was

Resolved - that statements be signed by 2 account signatories after the remote meeting. (Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Klückers and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

Payments and Receipts - received and noted the details with paperwork (Annex B) and it was

Resolved that - it be signed by Councillors Ray and Klückers after the remote meeting, with cheques being signed outside of a meeting due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. (Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Gale and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

20.21/21 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL STATUTORY CONSULTATION Proposal to close Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School

The parish council had submitted an email to the Regional Schools Commissioner outside a council meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to meet deadlines (Annex C). It was

Resolved - that the council retrospectively approve the comments already submitted to the Regional Schools Commissioner

(Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Kelly and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

20.21/22. CLERK'S LAPTOP

JNR Computer Services who are providing the new laptop have provided quotes (all ex-VAT) for the following

- a. **Secure Destruction of the old laptop** at a cost of £25 (as it is not suitable to be donated due to GDPR issues and its age)
- b. **Microsoft 365 Business Standard** (formerly Office 365 Business Premium) on the new laptop at a cost of £112.80 per annum
- c. **Webroot Secure Anywhere anti-virus protection** on the new laptop (to replace McAfee subscription which expires 14 July 2020) at a **cost of £30 per annum**
- d. **A.gov.uk. domain** at a **cost of £80 for the first year and £40 thereafter**. The domain claphamandpatching-pc.gov.uk has been identified as having a gsi-family domain registrant email address (claphamclerk@gmail.com) and the government is moving away from these domains in favour of .gov.uk. The council has been contacted by Domain management, Government Digital Service and asked to address this and must migrate its email service domain from gmail to a.gov.uk domain.

It was -

Resolved to approve the above (points a-d) at a total cost of £247.80 with the recurring annual cost of the.gov.uk domain at £40.

(Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Klückers and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

The possibility of .gov.uk council email addresses for councillors was raised by Councillor Klückers. The clerk confirmed that she was an advocate of council email accounts through Microsoft Office 365 using Outlook. It meant that if a councillor leaves or a device is lost, the account can be disabled immediately, protecting the council data. It is also important in accessing information where a 'Freedom of Information' request is received. The clerk advised

that the council had previously been quoted £45.60 per annum per councillor to provide email and online web applications through Office 365 Business and the question was raised as to whether a councillor could use an existing Microsoft Office account and if email access could be through the website domain. The clerk believed a separate council account was required and agreed to research this and report back.

20.21/23. RECREATION GROUND REFURBISHMENT

- i. **Adult Gym Equipment** - The council considered 2 quotes, one from Fresh Air Fitness (FAF) (@ £2902.60 + VAT) and another from Caloo (@ £3000 + VAT) to provide and install the 2 pieces of gym equipment (a bike and a cross rider/skier). Creative Play had been invited to quote for the council's revised requirements but had not done so. The councillors viewed both designs and on the basis that the cross rider through Caloo can be operated by 2 users independently, while the FAF design required users to work in unison, it was **Resolved** - that the clerk be authorised to accept the quote from Caloo. (Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Klückers and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

ii. **Install Path and remove old playground surface**

Smithers & Co had provided a separate quote for the path (@£3620 + VAT) and removal of the playground surface (@£1138 +VAT). These costs are based on hiring the digger to undertake both tasks at the same time.

Removal of old playground surface - eibe had quoted to remove the play area, which needs to go to a specialist site, at a cost £2450 + VAT.

Path - the council had sought 3 quotes in line with its Financial Regulations although only one had been received. The width of the path was discussed and at 1 metre is the accepted dimension for a single wheelchair with no room alongside.

<https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information/factsheets/outdoor-access-1-paths.html>.

Although only one quote has been received for the path, as permitted under Financial Regulations 11d), the council believes that it represents good value for money and will further provide reassurance that the path, which is a condition of the designated playground area on the Recreation Ground, will meet the exact specification (both in its design and location). The quote for the removal of the old play area was much lower than the one from eibe and there were savings to be made by Smithers & Co doing both tasks at the same time. It was

Resolved - that the clerk be authorised to accept the quotes from Smithers & Co. (Path quote - Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Kelly and by the unanimous agreement of all present, Play Area quote - Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Gale and by the unanimous agreement of all present).

The Clerk dropped out of The Zoom meeting due a technical issue at 8:58 p.m., re-joining at 9 p.m. Councillor Kelly temporarily left the meeting too.

- iii. **Central Climbing Structure and matting** - the council is using 2 contractors to complete the playground installation. Eibe is scheduled to complete by the end of next week and Infinite Playgrounds (providing the central Climbing Area) had yet to start due to the COVID-19 lock down process and the location of its manufacturing site in Newcastle which is understood to have a high R rate (COVID-19 re-infection rate) impacting its ability to restart work. Neither eibe nor Infinite Playgrounds quoted for grass matting under the climbing structure as part of the original tender, although eibe has now quoted £2250.87 +VAT and Infinite Playgrounds £4252 + VAT or £5520 + VAT for bonded rubber mulch. Whilst it was disappointing that Infinite Playgrounds had not been pro-active in keeping the council informed of its position and when manufacturing might start, the council acknowledged that

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these were exceptional times with staff being furloughed and agreed to review the position in 2 weeks' time to allow the directors to make contact as requested. A stop had already been placed on the 25% deposit cheque. In the meantime it was proposed that eibe be asked to provide examples of the type and cost of a similar structure on a no-obligation basis. **ACTION - Clerk**

- iv. Rotting Post and Rail Fencing** - the post and rail fence along the boundary with The Street had been dislodged during the playground delivery but it was acknowledged to already be in a bad state. Councillor Kelly undertook to explore the possibility of employing a local person to undertake the work.

Councillor Gale mentioned the incident on the Recreation Ground where the swing rope attached to the tree had broken whilst being used by a child (Tuesday 2 June 2020). The council had been alerted to matters by the playground contractors the following day and reported it immediately to its insurers. Councillor Ray removed both the tyre and the swing straight away, spoke to the contractors and, whilst it appeared the child, who was accompanied by an adult, had been upset but unharmed, Councillor Kelly undertook to try and identify those involved to check on their welfare.

It was agreed that Councillor Klückers would obtain an invoice from Charlie Smithers for grass cutting which had kindly been undertaken, with the council keen to ensure that he is not out of pocket.

20.21/24. Date of Next ORDINARY Meeting

- THURSDAY 30 JULY 2020 - all to note.

The meeting ended at 9.25 p.m.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

Dated

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Annex A (i) - Bank Reconciliation 30.4.20

Clapham Parish Council						Year to Date 1/4/20 - 30/4/20		YTD Actuals
						Receipts		£
								£
		£	£	Cash Book at 30/4/20		£		
Balances per bank statement at 30 April 2020				Cash Book at 30/04/20	BAL B/F 1/4/20	34871.69		
Community Acct Bal	37,045.25				ADD RECEIPTS	27021.17		Precepts £6,378.50
Community Instant Access Acct Bal	29,934.68	66,979.93			LESS PAYMENTS	16205.30		Bank Interest £11.07
					BAL C/F 30/04/20	45687.56		Grant £20,631.60
								VAT (PRIOR YR REFUND) £0.00
Add: outstanding receipts								Total Receipts £27,021.17
				Balances at 30/04/20	REPRESENTED BY			
					Community Acct Bal	37045.25		Admin costs £0.00
					Community Instant Access Acct Bal	29934.68		Clerk's salary – gross £520.73
						66979.93		Clerk "overtime" - gross £0.00
					Less cheques issued not presented as at 30/4/20	-21292.37		Defibrillator £0.00
Less: outstanding payments						45687.56		Electoral expenses £0.00
	800143	5,040.00						Expenses - Clerk £0.00
	800146	15,581.60						Expenses - Councillors £0.00
	800148	102.97						External Auditor £0.00
	800149	480.00						GDPR Compliance £0.00
	800150	87.80						General maintenance £0.00
			21,292.37					Grant /Donations £0.00
								Gritting £0.00
Net bank balances as at 30/04/20			45,687.56					Hall hire £0.00
(per cashbook at 30 April 2020)								Insurance £0.00
								Internal auditor £0.00
								Newsletter £0.00
								Playground restoration - new gym and play equipment and other infrastructure £12,984.67
								Recreation events £0.00
								Recreation ground (grass-cutting and maintenance) £0.00
Prepared by								Subscriptions £102.97
Sarah Linfield Clerk/RFO								Training costs £0.00
								VAT £2,596.93
								Waste bins on Recreation Ground £0.00
								Website (hosting and maintenance) £0.00
								Total Payments £16,205.30

Annex A (ii) - Bank Reconciliation

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31.5.20

(N.B. Total Payments are reduced compared with 30.4.20 as a cheque 800143 for £5040 has been stopped/cancelled, not yet reissued).

Adjustments made to expenditure recorded under Playground restoration and VAT.

Clapham Parish Council						Year to Date 1/4/20 - 31/5/20		YTD Actuals	
						Receipts		£	
		£	£						
				Cash Book at 30/4/20		£			
Balances per bank statement at 31 May 2020				Cash Book at 30/04/20	BAL B/F 1/4/20	34871.69		Precepts	£6,378.50
Community Acct Bal		21,264.56			ADD RECEIPTS	28309.32		Bank Interest	£16.77
Community Instant Access Acct Bal		29,940.38	51,204.94		LESS PAYMENTS	12012.07		Grant	£20,631.60
Add: outstanding receipts					BAL C/F 31/5/20	51168.94		VAT (PRIOR YR REFUND)	£1,282.45
				Balances at 30/04/20	REPRESENTED BY			Total Receipts	£28,309.32
					Community Acct Bal	21264.56		Payments	
					Community Instant Access Acct Bal	29940.38		Admin costs	£58.73
						51204.94		Clerk's salary – gross	£872.76
					Less cheques issued not presented as at 31/5/20	-36.00		Clerk "overtime" - gross	£0.00
Less: outstanding payments						51168.94		Defibrillator	£14.02
								Electoral expenses	£0.00
								Expenses - Clerk	£22.23
								Expenses - Councillors	£0.00
								External Auditor	£0.00
								GDPR Compliance	£0.00
								General maintenance	£0.00
								Grant /Donations	£0.00
								Gritting	£0.00
								Hall hire	£0.00
								Insurance	£351.00
								Internal auditor	£0.00
								Newsletter	£0.00
								Playground restoration - new gym and play equipment and other infrastructure	£8,784.67
								Recreation events	£0.00
								Recreation ground (grass-cutting and maintenance)	£0.00
								Subscriptions	£102.97
								Training costs	£30.00
								VAT	£1,775.69
								Waste bins on Recreation Ground	£0.00
								Website (hosting and maintenance)	£0.00
								Total Payments	£12,012.07
Net bank balances as at 31/05/20			51,168.94						
(per cashbook at 31 May 2020)									
Prepared by									
Sarah Linfield Clerk/RFO									

Annex B - Payments and Receipts

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2020/21 ACCOUNTING INFORMATION 4 -31 May 2020								
Community Account								
DATE OF PAYMENT	BENEFICIARY/PAYEE	TRANSACTION TYPE	Chq No.	NET AMOUNT	VAT	GROSS AMOUNT	STATUTE (UNDER WHICH PAYMENT MADE)	REASON/ MINUTE WHERE AUTHORISED
7.5.20	Came & Co Insurance	Cheque	800152	£ 350.00		£ 350.00	LGA 1972 s111	Annual Insurance - minute 20.21/6
21.5.20	eibe Play Ltd	Cheque	800153	£ 12,984.67	£ 2,596.93	£ 15,581.60	Public Health Act 1875 s164; Local Government Act 1972 s14 ss27; Public Health Acts Amendments Acts 1890 s44; Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10; Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19; Commons Act 1899	Replaces cheque no 800146 "lost in transit" between eibe and their bank Purchase of play equipment - minute 20/230
21.5.20	SLCC	Cheque	800154	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00	LGA 1972 s112	Training course - agreed by council by email, outside meeting due to covid-19
29.5.20	S Linfield	Standing Order		£ 352.03		£ 352.03	LGA 1972 s112	Clerk's salary period 2 Tax year 20/21
Totals				£ 13,716.70	£ 2,602.93	£ 16,319.63		
Income								
DATE POSTED	Account	PAYER	TRANSACTION TYPE	AMOUNT	REASON			
04.5.20	Community Account	HMRC	BACS	£ 1,282.45	VAT claim 2019.20			
29.5.20	Instant Access Account	Metro Bank	Credit Interest	£ 5.70	Credit interest			
Totals				£ 1,288.15				

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Department for Education

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith St

Westminster

London

SW1P 3BT

By email

1st June 2020

Dear Lady Berridge,

Clapham & Patching C of E Primary School, West Sussex

Clapham Parish Council understands that a decision on whether to close Clapham & Patching C of E Primary School will be made by you. It strongly opposes West Sussex County Council's resolve to close the school, based on the 'Good' quality of education it provides (Ofsted rating, November 2019), the unique and nurturing environment it offers and of its undoubted importance to the local community.

When the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee met in April it recommended that the school should stay open, a recommendation which has subsequently been ignored by the Cabinet.

Statutory guidance published by the Department for Education for proposers and decision-makers in considering school closures makes a 'presumption against the closure of rural schools'. Clapham Parish Council accepts that a presumption against closure does not mean a rural school will never close but equally it does not believe that West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) has adequately demonstrated that closure is the only option.

Clapham Parish Council believes it is unacceptable that WSSCC has resolved to close the school when the South Downs Education Trust has provided a viable alternative through a well-thought plan, carefully designed to support the needs of the pupils and parents. A high number of children at the school have either a SEN status or benefit from the special, nurturing environment it provides and to displace them during a pandemic when the situation could be managed through academisation makes no sense at all.

The school and the community are inextricably linked and it is just not realistic to suggest this can be bridged by others with a "strong interest in filling the gap". Community spirit is built up over years and through the generations, based on trust and understanding, shared experiences and special relationships and as such the school is integral to the community. The Community Impact Statement produced by WSSCC appears to have been undertaken merely as an exercise to demonstrate compliance with section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and so discharge its responsibilities in this regard.

Clapham Parish Council believes that WSSCC's resolution to close the school is flawed and it urges you to reject their proposal to discontinue Clapham and Patching C of E School in favour of an academisation order.

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Sent on behalf of

Cllr. Stuart Ray

Cllr. Terry Gale

Cllr. Jeff Klückers

Cllr. John Kelly

This is the council's response (the unanimous response of its councillors) which, due to unprecedented times and urgent timescales, has been formulated and approved outside a council meeting. The wording will be retrospectively approved when it next meets.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Linfield