



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Clapham Parish Council

Thursday 25th March 2021 at 7.30 p.m.

Held remotely using Zoom software.

under

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), Terry Gale, Emily Dodd and John Kelly.

In attendance:

Sarah Linfield, BSc (Hons), CiLCA (Parish Clerk/RFO).
West Sussex County Councillor – Deborah Urquhart
Members of the public – one

Minutes are to be prefixed by/relate to 20.21.

118. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Kelly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter of nominating the 'Assets of Community Value' in respect of The Junction.

119. Public Participation

Anti-social behaviour is an ongoing issue first impacting residents and now affecting visitors. A car parked in The Street had a notice attached using some type of adhesive and causing damage to the paintwork. Whilst matters are in the hands of the police there appeared to very little they could do in the absence of CCTV. The Clerk had been in regular contact with Arun District Council, although it was agreed that the Council should now escalate its concerns to Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

120. Apologies for Absence

N/A – all Council members present.

121. Minutes from the Council Meeting Held on 28th January 2021.

It was **Resolved** – to approve the minutes as a true record of the decisions of that meeting and the Chairman be authorised to sign them.

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

122. Chairman's Report

Councillor Ray had nothing additional to report beyond matters covered elsewhere.



123. West Sussex Council Matters

Councillor Urquhart spoke regarding -

- i. May elections – the Council was entering ‘purdah’ and she would be standing for re-election.
- ii. Household Waste Refuse Sites – a new booking system is now in operation to manage visitor numbers, with summer-time opening hours introduced a week early.
- iii. UK Power Networks – and the recent chaos, more particularly affecting Patching but spilling over into Clapham, her interventions had secured better signage to alleviate traffic issues.

124. Arun District Council Matters

There was no representation on this occasion.

125. Playground Inspections and Maintenance Programme

- i. Training Session
Date of training now revised to Saturday 24 April, to include the Clerk and three of the Council members.
- ii. Routine 4-weekly checks
Assigned as follows - Cllr. Gale (April), the Clerk (May) and Cllr. Ray (June).

126. Recreation Ground

- i. Refurbishment - prompted by the regular checks of the recreation ground, the Clerk had sought costings to undertake some refurbishment.
 - a. Extending the fence boundary at the rear of the recreation ground to incorporate a gate - it was felt that the cost could not be justified with Councillor Kelly offering to contact the landowner about installing a gate on the path to manage the risk of a child slipping away towards the main road.
 - b. Replacing the fence between the recreation ground and Tye House, repairs to the bench slats and gate locks and refurbishment of the Parish Council noticeboard. Councillor Kelly undertook to obtain 3 alternative quotes for the fence work to ensure best value for money and look at the other issues, most importantly the self-closing mechanisms on the gates.
- ii. New Path – no date had yet been fixed although with better weather on the horizon the works should soon be possible. The Council had been advised that some rubber matting might be a more effective alternative to a hard standing area by the gate which becomes worn through use and the Clerk undertook to contact eibe, the playground contractor.



- iii. Dog fouling and other matters – on several occasions a woman had been spotted using the children’s play area to exercise her dogs and whilst the existing signage stated ‘no dogs’, 2 further signs have now been placed by each of the playground gates as a reminder. Also, a dog bag dispenser and notice had been fixed to the rear of the noticeboard.
 - iv. Tree Matters
 - a. Hawthorn Tree

It was **Resolved** – to accept a quote from Barker Tree Surgery to reduce the crown of the hawthorn tree at the entrance to the recreation ground at a cost of £80, no VAT. (Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Kelly and by the unanimous agreement of all present)
 - b. Horse Chestnut

The tree surgeon originally asked to undertake the annual review had sought a second opinion, which is awaited.
 - v. Replacing the circular seat

The Clerk had spoken to the arboriculturist providing the second opinion on the horse chestnut, already known to her through another parish. He had advised against replacing the circular seat around the existing tree as it would effectively encourage people to sit somewhere with the potential for falling branches and other debris. If the tree were assessed as unhealthy at some point and then felled the seat could go around the stump.
- 127. Parish Design Statement and Neighbourhood Plan**
- i. Parish Design Statement

The Clerk clarified that although the last Parish Council newsletter had reported that the document was ready for submission to South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) there is in fact still much work to be done before the document can be submitted. This includes quite a bit of editing, compressing and more research before the SDNPA can provide advice, followed by the Parish Council’s approval and submission to the SDNPA.
 - ii. Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk explained that it had come to light that the ‘evidence base’ referenced within the neighbourhood plan had been stored on the server by the previous website provider and it did not appear that the documents had been stored elsewhere. The new website provider did not have access to the admin area of the previous site and was therefore unaware of their existence when the new site was set up. It was agreed that the Clerk contact the previous website administrator to find out the cost of obtaining these documents from backup records.



128. Risk Governance

i. Risk assessment (new)

It was **Resolved** - to approve the new risk assessment for mowing and strimming. to meet with the requirements of its insurance policy.

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

ii. Insurance

The Council had entered into a 3-year long term agreement from May 2020 (until May 2023) with Pen and the premium for 2021/22 had risen to £389.61 (from £301) due to index linking of items against loss or damage and the playground and adult gym equipment installed since last May. The Clerk highlighted that under the Insurance Act 2015 there is a new duty to provide a 'fair presentation' of the risk to insurers, which replaces the previous duty to disclose all material facts. Every material circumstance which should be known or ought to be known after a reasonable search and might influence an insurer's judgement over whether to take the risk and, if so, on what terms, must be disclosed. The premium for 2021/22 year would be £439.61 (including a £50 administration fee) and

It was **Resolved** - to continue this arrangement, the Clerk to confirm to Came & Co the insurance broker and issue a cheque for signature to pay for the policy.

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

iii. Pension Regulator

The Clerk confirmed that the re-declaration for re-enrolment had been completed and submitted and Councillor Ray as Chairman was authorised to sign the Council records.

iv. Internal Auditor

Whilst ordinarily a change of auditor might have been considered good practice there was no specific requirement to do so, the existing arrangement allowed for ease of delivery of paper as the country emerged from lockdown and with the cost unchanged at £100 (no VAT)

It was **Resolved** – to appoint Andrew Woolner as Internal Auditor for the financial year ended 31 March 2021.

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

129. Bank Account Mandate Changes

Councillor Dodd advised that the paperwork had been sent back and the Clerk undertook to contact Metrobank to confirm that the mandate had been updated.

130. Funding Request

It was **Resolved** - to purchase 6 litter picking sets each comprising a grabber, hi viz jacket and gloves at a cost of £11.99 each at a total cost of £71.94 plus delivery at £7.49 to be loaned out by the Parish Council.



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

131. Clerk's Update

i. Gigabit Voucher Scheme for rural broadband

The latest update was that the pledges were 24% of target (56 homes and 8 businesses), with the focus to get as many of those interested who had not yet done so to pledge. Patching Parish Council had invested a great deal of time in the scheme, including efforts to overcome the setback of finding that not all Clapham postcodes were eligible to participate and then include as many as possible.

ii. Cold calling

West Sussex Trading Standards had been contacted with regards cold calling in the parish, particularly affecting more vulnerable residents. Packs had been distributed to residents including window stickers to display advising that they do not deal with cold calling doorstep traders.

iii. Neighbourhood Issues

The Clerk had been in regular contact with Arun District Council although a revised approach is now proposed, refer minute 119.

iv. West Sussex Association of Local Councils

The Surrey and Sussex Association of Councils would be disbanded on 31 March 2021, the West Sussex Association of Local Councils had appointed a new board with Trevor Leggo as CEO. There would be continuity of services throughout the transition phase with further details supplied regarding future operations including training.

v. The 'Pocket Parks' Evaluation Report

The revised date for this was now 31 October 2021.

Councillor Kelly entered the waiting room.

vi. Assets of Community Value

The nominations were submitted in September 2020, and further contact with Arun District Council indicated that the current level of evidence for each was unlikely to be strong enough to ensure success although The Junction had the best chance. The Clerk had also learnt that even if the church nomination were successful that there would appear to be no added value as the 6-month moratorium would not be available.

It was **Resolved** - that the existing nominations remain unchanged, and that Arun District Council be asked to reach a decision based on the evidence already provided. (Proposed by Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Dodd and by the unanimous agreement of those present).



Councillor Kelly returned from the waiting room.

vii. 'Great British Spring Clean'

The Clerk would investigate the possibility of organising an event after last year's was cancelled due to the pandemic.

132. Finance Reports

i. Bank Reconciliation

It was **Resolved** - to note the reconciliation at 31 January 2021 and 28 February 2021 authorised for sign off outside the meeting, and to authorise sign off, prior to and subject to presentation at the next Council meeting (as at 31.3.21 & 30.4.21).

ii. Payments

It was **Resolved** - to approve the payment schedule and issue of cheques, to be signed outside the remote meeting due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

iii. Budget Planner

It was **Resolved** - to note actuals to budget at 28.2.21.

iv. Earmarked Reserves

HMRC had confirmed the Council's eligibility to claim VAT on the Government's Pocket Parks (PP) grant spend as set out in VAT Notice 749 and s33 bodies: recoverable VAT: donated funds, VAT element of £4167.04 reclaimed on Pocket Parks Funding spend of £25000.

It was **Resolved** - that this amount be ringfenced for playground maintenance.

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

The monthly finance and budget reports can be found on the Council website under 'Finance and Risk'.

133. Planning Matters

i. SDNP/21/00250/TPO

North House, The Street Clapham Worthing West Sussex BN13 3UU

T1 (Magnolia) - Reduce crown by 1m

T2 (Buddleia) - Reduce by 2m

T3 (Holly) - Reduce height by 1m and remove dead wood.

It was **Resolved** – to retrospectively confirm the Council's response of 'No objection' provided under its 'Scheme of Delegation' (SDNP/21/00250/TPO), and note a Decision of 'Approved'.

ii. SDNP/21/00656/TCA



To remove an overgrown hedge consisting of 13 leylandii trees
155-156 The Street Clapham BN13 3UU

It was **Resolved** - to note the outcome of the application with a Decision of 'Raise No Objection'.

134. Date of the Next Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Parish ordinarily takes place in Clapham in May although such a well-attended and interactive event did not lend itself to a 'Zoom' meeting. In the interests of the safety of residents the Council decided against organising a face-to-face event although it might be possible to arrange something later in the year. The Annual Meeting of the Council – dealing with its governance – would take place remotely under the legislation which runs until the 6 May.

The meeting ended at 21:07 p.m.

Signed as a true record of the meeting.

Chairman

Dated