

# SLAUGHAM PARISH COUNCIL



## Parish Council Annual Meeting MINUTES

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm – Sports Pavilion, High Street, Handcross

Sally Mclean - Clerk to the Council Email [clerk@slaughampc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@slaughampc.co.uk) Website: <http://www.slaughampc.co.uk>

Press and Public are welcome to attend - **Public attendance at Parish Council meetings** - The Parish Council is an open and transparent local authority and encourages public attendance at meetings. However, the Council is maintaining COVID precautions.

You should not attend a meeting in person if: -

- you have coronavirus symptoms: a high temperature, loss or change to sense of smell or taste, a new continuous cough.
- if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are waiting for a test result.

**Keeping us all safe:** When you attend the meeting, keep yourself and others safe by following the Government's guidance at all times.

The current Chairman of Council will be Chairman of the Meeting until the conclusion of Item 1. If there is no current Chair then the Clerk will take the meeting until Item 1

**Present:** Cllr's Julia Elliott, Eric Prescott, Lorette Holborn, Jane MacNaughton, David Dunn, Bob St George, Lesley Read, Philip Morris, Carole Steggle, Gary Marsh

**Others Present:** County Cllr Bruce Forbes, 3 members of Public

- To elect the Chairman of the Parish Council and receive declarations of office:** Cllr Julia Elliott  
Proposed Cllr Lesley Read Second Cllr Eric Prescott - Unanimous VOTE RESOLVED
  - To elect the Vice Chairman of the Parish Council and receive declarations of office:** Cllr Eric Prescott  
Proposed Cllr David Dunn Second Cllr Lorette Holborn - Unanimous VOTE RESOLVED
  - To receive Councillors Declaration of office and Register of Interests:**
  - Apologies for absence and declaration of interest from members in respect of any items on the agenda.** NONE
  - Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** Parish Council Meeting **27<sup>th</sup> April 2023** previously distributed Proposed Cllr Lorette Holborn, Second Jane MacNaughton
  - Co-Option** – Where there are not validly nominated candidates at the ordinary elections of a parish council those candidates who are validly nominated are elected. This occurs as a result of insufficient nominations for the seats available at the time of election. In these circumstances a person can be co-opted to fill a vacancy/vacancies at the discretion of the local authority (Parish Council).  
The nomination qualifications required of an applicant for either an ordinary or casual vacancy are the same in accordance with S79 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- Mr Gary Marsh** - Parish Councillor since 1998 and re-elected as District Councillor at the recent elections for the sixth time has a wealth of knowledge and experience within the entire district as well as locally. Part of the Slaugham Parish sits within his ward alongside District Councillor Eric Prescott and would seem advantageous for both the Parish and District for him to combine his roles and give support to SPC.  
Unanimous VOTE RESOLVED Cllr Gary Marsh joined the Parish Council at the table.
- Adjournment for questions from the public:** Council to consider adjournment of the meeting in accordance with Council's Standing Orders, to receive questions from members of the public in attendance in respect of items on the agenda.

Member of the Public (**MOP 1**) – Slaugham Village Green Benches

The Slaugham Society asked for the benches at the Green to be replaced. After sixteen months two concrete plinths were installed without consultation with the village or the Society at which time, they wrote to the Clerk to advise that these were unacceptable and unnecessary as the previous benches were only sitting on four small plinths below ground level. The recycled benches were installed and bolted to the plinth without consultation and look awful. They asked the Clerk to hold off the installation but that this request was ignored. They asked for a meeting with the Clerk and the Chairman to resolve the issues but that this was refused.

There is a "Caution" over the land and permission from the owners should have been sought ahead of the installation. The Clerk advised that she was discussing his requests and the permissible matters raised with the Council's legal team. It is MOP opinion that benches are totally out of keeping with the rural nature of this attractive village which is in a conservation area and ANOB. They require the benches to be removed and replaced with the similar benches to those that were there before.

**The Chairman** - The Council do not believe that any legal consultation was required and as a result of the member of public's enquiry we confirmed that. We have a response from the lawyers that we have considered and as far as we can tell the Caution is in respect of access rights and there is no requirement for the Council to have consulted on this matter. Which is what we understood before and we clarified it in writing as we are required to do when you ask us to. The Council did not, not look into it as it was our understanding that, that was the case.

In terms of the benches, it has taken a lot time to get there, there has been much discussion, it wasn't just the benches in Slaugham there were benches installed throughout the Parish.

**MOP 1** – Stated that there had been no consultation with the Slaugham Society with regard to the replacement benches. The representative for the village on the Council at that time did not vote for plastic benches. The village should have been consulted out or courtesy, the village are outraged.

**The Chairman** – Advised that none of the villages were consulted with, that the members of the Council are representing the villages.

**The Clerk** - Advised that during the initiation stages of the project, the bench by the Church which is on land that is in the ownership of the Council was included as part of the wider project. A member of the Council asked that the second bench be included due to its decrepit state.

The Clerk also advised that throughout the project the Council looked at various environmentally and maintainable products including hard wood, whilst also considering design, quality, longevity and sustainability alongside the costs, value for money etc. This took time to consider and identifying the most suitable product for each of the settlements. The concrete plinths installed are in accordance with the manufacturer's health and safety guidelines, that the previous installation would not meet today. The Council are not obliged to consult with the village on the design, how it is installed or fixed. The members of the Council are representing the village/s as a democratic body, if a member is not in agreement with the decision made, or vote taken they are asked to support the decision made, or its principles under the code that governs them.

**MOP 2** – It's not just the benches it's the fixings and design of the bench.

**District Cllr Gary Marsh** – The benches require a concrete base to secure them. The expenditure has been spent. The representatives on the Parish Council took the decision to install the recycled benches and most Parishes are doing the same.

**District Cllr Eric Prescott** - Advised that he had spoken to residents in the village and they were all very happy with the benches. They brought drinks and biscuits out for the contractors on site. They complimented the quality, design and how sustainable they are. The fixings will improve and tarnish over time.

**MOP 1** – Asked if the Parish Council would remove benches and not replace them.

**The Clerk** - Advised that the removal of the benches is a decision for the Council, however she can see no valid reason as to why they would. The bench by the Church is on the Councils land, the other bench on the green is within the Councils powers and duties as custodian to provide a replacement bench for the health and benefit of those that live, work or visit the area.

**District Cllr Eric Prescott** – Added that as a point of reference, the land under the ownership of the Council now has a tree planted on it with a plaque, under the Queens Green Canopy. This was planted without consultation with the Council ahead of planting.

**The Clerk** was asked if the Common Land was registered to the Parish.

The Clerk advised that the land registration for the Common Land and Village Greens can be complex. The Common Land is registered to the Parish and sections of the village green are also registered. The remaining land is unregistered but has a "Caution" against the first registration.

The Council are of the understanding that application was made by the previous land owner of the Old Rectory (or someone noted him as the owner) but for whatever reason the remaining part of the green was not registered. Presumably without a conveyance evidencing ownership they will have difficulty registering it, hence why there is a caution against registration to ensure that if and when anyone does try to claim the land, the right of access is registered against the title. The only point at which it is relevant to the owners of the Old Rectory is if the Council interfered with their claimed right of access. The caution does not remove the Council's powers as custodian.

To close this matter the Clerk asked that the MOP produce evidence from the village/s to substantiate the claims that they are outraged and would like to instigate the removal of the benches on the grounds previously mentioned. The Council have only received compliments on the day and since the benches were installed, they have not received any complaints apart from those present who state that they are speaking on behalf of the village and society.

**Cllr Eric Prescott** added that the benches were installed for the purpose of better enjoyment of the green for those that live and visit the area, so a survey further afield should be required to support their claim.

**MOP 1** Requested that it be noted that they want the benches removed.

8 **To appoint Standing Committees for the Year 2023/24** The Council is asked to confirm the membership of the standing Committees.

9 **Appointment of representatives to Committees for 2023/24** The Council is asked to confirm the appointment of its representatives on other organisations, the current list of members below is based on 2022/23 the minutes for this meeting will resolve those allocated for 2023/24

9.1 **Planning** – considers planning applications deals with Street Lighting, Highways (incorporating traffic calming, pedestrian safety, traffic management and highway lighting) and Emergency Planning:  
**Current Members:** Cllrs Eric Prescott (Chair), Bob St George, Lorette Holborn, Lesley Read, Gary Marsh and co-opted Member Ken Boyle

9.2 **Neighbourhood Planning Committee** - To develop a Neighbourhood Plan, for a sustainable and vibrant thriving rural community, driven by the needs and aspirations of the people in Slaugham Parish  
**Current Members:** Cllrs Eric Prescott (Chair), Bob St George, Lorette Holborn, Lesley Read, Jane MacNaughton, David Dunn, Gary Marsh and Julia Elliott

9.3 **Finance** – deals with finance matters, proposals for budgets, projects, financial policy matters etc:  
**Current Members:** Cllrs David Dunn (Chair), Bob St George, Jane MacNaughton, Julia Elliott, Eric Prescott & Gary Marsh

9.4 **Recreation** – deals with all matters concerning the Recreation grounds, Playgrounds and Allotments:  
**Current Members:** Cllr's Lesley Read (Chair), Julia Elliott, Lorette Holborn, Jane MacNaughton and co-opted members Ken Boyle, Sim Johnson, Martyn Lloyd, Andy Musgrove

9.5 **Appointment of representatives to other organisations for 2022/23** The Council is asked to confirm the appointment of its representatives on other organisations. Members each take a subject as their special interest and report to Council, currently we have the following:

- Disabled, Care in the Community: Cllr Julia Elliott
- Children and Youth Matters: VACANT
- Footpaths: Cllr Lesley Read
- Highways to Inc Bus Services: VACANT
- Charities / Funding: VACANT
- Community Centres: Recreation Committee
- Allotments: Cllr Lesley Read
- Trees: Cllr Bob St George - Appointed Tree Warden
- Emergency Resilience Planning: VACANT
- Crime Prevention: Cllr Lorette Holborn

**9.6 Parish Council Representatives with Outside Bodies** Council representatives on outside bodies will receive notice of meetings by email and may take forward any relevant comments from the Parish to those meetings and report back to Council.

**WSALC - Sussex Association of Local Councils** Protect and promote the interests, rights, functions and privileges of member councils. Assist Councils in the performance of their duties and to promote and develop the social, cultural and recreational life of towns, parishes and villages. Promote widespread and well-informed interest in Local Government. **The Clerk**

**Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils (MSALC)** - The MSALC is a group forum for all Local Authorities in Mid Sussex to enable the pooling of ideas, discussing items of mutual interest and where necessary, making representations to District and County Authorities). **The Clerk**

**Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS)** Provides help and advice to Local Authorities and Residents Associations on Local Action Plans, Village Appraisals and surveys. It highlights problems specific to rural areas and will try to create a climate in which rural businesses and communities can prosper). **Cllr Bob St George**

**Council for the Protection of Rural England** – Protects and concerns itself with inappropriate, or any, development of sensitive areas of the rural countryside. Campaigns inside and outside Parliament in the cause of Rural Conservation. Local Branches seek to influence planning and development control policies of public authorities and private developers. **VACANT**

10. **Matters from District & County Councillors:** to receive verbal reports from representatives of other authorities

10.1. **Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC):** Press Release/s *cc'd in advance*

District Cllr Gary Marsh – MSDC have just been through election, Gary is the Deputy Group Leader. They have a meeting tomorrow when they will have a better view on the next stages. They have their first planning meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

10.2. **West Sussex County Council County Local Committee (WSCC/CLC)** – Press Release/s updates *cc'd in advance*

County Cllr Bruce Forbes - Warninglid School – The department for education consent has been received which will allow the County Council to dispose of the site. County have engaged planning advisors who have submitted two formal pre-application proposals to the district planning team for

consideration. The first one is historic small building for conversion into two residential houses and the second one is a small-scale residential development of the neighbouring land. For the intention in due course to allow marketing of the site. There are two mature oak trees at the site that require protection from future development. Cllr Marsh to raise this with the planning team.

Handcross Primary School – Infrastructure S106 monies cannot be used for additional car parking spaces, funds should be directed towards mitigating impacts of additional children and vehicles. Any future works are on hold.

**11. Committee Reports:** to receive and note committee and advisory group updates

The Committee Chairmen will provide an update, Council to consider the RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 11.1. **Finance & Policy Committee:** To update members on current activities: To approve meeting minutes  
Cllr David Dunn – The first audit has been completed with the Internal audit planned for the 22<sup>nd</sup> May with a review meeting scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023.
- 11.2. **Recreation:** To update members on current activities: To approve meeting/note minutes
  - 11.2.1. New bench Installation updates – see item 7 – There have been no other complaints received with regards to the remaining benches installed across the Parish.  
MOP suggested that the benches may benefit from the installation of security screws, the Clerk to investigate.
- 11.3. **Neighbourhood Planning:** To update members on current activities: To approve meeting/note minutes  
Land at St Martin Close - The Neighbourhood Plan indicates that the site is suitable for development between 2017–2022 – No new updates the Committee are awaiting on the review appraisal.
- 11.4. **Planning Committee:** Members to consider updates and to approve meeting/notes minutes
  - 11.4.1. Letter received in relation to Land off London Road, Handcross - *Proposed allocation DPH 28 within the Mid Sussex District Plan for development within the review of the Mid Sussex Local Plan for 'specialist elderly accommodation. Developer asking the Parish to consider whether there is a need for standard housing. The Clerk to draft a response for review that confirms the Parishes position with regard to additional future housing provision.*

**12. Chairman's Report:** to receive verbal updates – Nothing new to add

**13. Clerks Report –** To receive verbal updates – Nothing new to add

**14. Finance Matters Payments and receipts** The Committee is asked to RESOLVE to approve: Bank Reconciliation for month April 2023 – DEFERRED

**15. Correspondence/Information Items/Publications/Consultations:** (*Correspondence cc'd in advance to members*)

- 15.1. Council to consider their response to the Regulation 19 Consultation of the Crawley Borough Local Plan. This is the next stage in producing a Local Plan that will guide development in the borough for a 16-year period. It contains strategic planning policies and principles which will shape the future of the town and will be used in the consideration of planning applications. Please follow the links below for the documents that are being consulted on or go to the main page <https://crawley.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-review>

The Local Plan and all of its supporting documents will be available to view online at [Local Plan Review | Crawley GOV](#)

The Clerk to draft a response to the consultation for review.

**16. Highways/Footpaths:** to review highways projects/items

**17. Police / NHW Report / Resilience Group Reports**

- 17.1. Crime Reports cc'd members – Updates issued to members in advance

**18. Any other matters that the Chairman wishes to raise for future discussion:**

Cllr Philp Morris raised concerns about the High Street and the loss of shops being the Spar, post office, the carpet shop and the tea shop. Leaving the Hardware Store and the newsagents, is there anything we can do support the shops in the High Street.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council can help with a community shop. They are unable to run it but can help support and secure funding for a village shop. There is funding available currently, they will be capital funds coming forward there is also the Plunkett Foundation who will assist with the management plan for a new shop etc

**Date of next meeting/s – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_