

SLAUGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting MINUTES

Thursday 28th September 2023 7.30pm – The Sports Pavilion, High Street, Handcross



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

Press and Public are welcome to attend - The Parish Council is an open and transparent local authority and encourages public attendance at meetings. The Council is maintaining COVID precautions. You should consider staying at home if you have tested positive.

Present: Cllr Julia Elliott, Jane MacNaughton, Lorette Holborn, David Dunn, Lesley Read, Bob St George,

Others Present: County Cllr Bruce Forbes, 6 members of public

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** To receive and accept apologies for absence. Cllr Eric Prescott, Cllr Gary Marsh
- 2. Declaration of interest from members in respect of any items on the agenda:** To record any declarations of interest.
- 3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting/s held on 27th July 2023** -To receive and accept the Minutes. Proposed Cllr Holborn, Second Cllr St George
- 4. Councillor Co-option:** To consider application to co-opt Councillors to fill the ordinary vacancies following the 4 May 2023 uncontested local election.

Ms. Adrienne Melville – Handcross & Pease Pottage Ward – The members unanimously voted in favor.

The successful candidate signed the declaration of office – The Local Government Act 1972 (Section 83(4) provides that a person elected to the office of Parish Councillor must make in the presence of a Member of the Council or of the Proper Officer of the Council and deliver to the Parish Council a declaration of acceptance of office and produce their register of interests (ROI) within the statutory timescales.

Cllr Adrienne Melville joined the members at 7.45pm

- 5. 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.

Item 7.3 Neighbourhood Plan: A member of the Slaugham Community Land Trust ask the following: Does the Council have an update on the negotiations with the developer; alongside the discussions around the Clarion covenant, as the CLT would much prefer to incorporate their preferred social housing provider, Aster. Cllr Bob St George would support Aster as the preferred Housing provider as there are several issues with their properties in Handcross and Pease Pottage.

In the absence of the Cllr Eric Prescott the Clerk advised that the Council's consultant is about to enter into negotiations with the developer on their offer for the Councils land. The Clerk will ask that the desires of SPCLT to include their preferred housing supplier are included in those discussions.

Resident of Slaugham attended on behalf of the Slaugham Community Interests Company (CIC), a company that is designed to raise funds for the capital assets in the village of Slaugham. So far, they have raised over £60k that has gone towards the provision of fibre broadband. There are reserve funds that can be spent on improving some of the other assets, such as the Grade II listed telephone box alongside some specific funding to replace the benches on the village green.

The CIC would like the Council to consider allowing them to replace the newly installed recycled plastic benches and relocate them elsewhere in the Parish, or preferably within the village, where they feel they would be more in keeping. Then allow the CIC to purchase replacement oak benches that will then be gifted to the Parish Council.

Cllr St George asked if the funding covers future maintenance etc. of the oak benches: The proposal is that the CIC gift them to the PC who would take on all future liabilities etc. Cllr Morris asked if they had an idea of costs/budget: The benches are £1.5k each, they would be engraved to commemorate the Kings Coronation in line with current benches so like for like but in keeping with conservation area. No costs to the Parish for the purchase and installation and re installation of the existing benches. Further questions were asked around the surveying of locals' views and the funding awarded by MSDC and Gatwick.

The Council were advised that the CIC have tried to canvass as many in the village as possible and so far, they have not received any objections to the newly installed benches being replaced. That the funding could be spent elsewhere if required.

The Clerk advised that the procurement of the benches across the Parish was a considerable project, that measured each location carefully, the style of bench their longevity, sustainability and environmental benefits not to mention future maintenance requirements and resources. The proposed removal and repositioning/procurement and installation of replacement benches are in the officer's opinion a misuse of public resources and likely to conflict with the principles used during the decision-making process of the project, not to mention the funding financial regulations. In addition to removing someone else's assets from land that is not in their ownership, or custodianship.

Ultimately it is the Parish Council's decision if they determine whether to allow the benches to be removed, reinstalled, and replaced considering all the comments made. There are several procedural steps required, the first would be for the Council to agree as to whether this is to be included for further debate at the next convenient meeting. Any evidence that supports the views of the benches removal from the village green would be helpful to further inform the members.

The Council and members acknowledged and appreciate the work that has been done by the CIC to achieve the funding, the broadband etc and work planned to make additional enhancements to the village.

19.55 Cllr David Dunn joined the meeting.

- 6. Matters from District & County Councillors:** to receive verbal reports from representatives of other authorities.
- 6.1. **Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC):** Press Release/s updates *cc'd in advance*.
 - 6.2. **West Sussex County Council County Local Committee (WSCC/CLC)** – Press Release/s updates *cc'd in advance*.
County Cllr Bruce Forbes advised:
Warninglid Primary School Site: After discussions with the planners WSCC will market the site as it stands for sale on the open market. He advised that whoever purchased the site would need to apply for change of use, conversion and or development.
National Trust Nymans – The Facilities and Support Services Manager for the National Trust at Nymans in Handcross is applying for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for an extension to the 30mph speed limit of approximately 300 meters, on the B2114 leaving Handcross down to just past our South Lodge exit on to the road. The members agree that this needs investigating. The Clerk advised that this has been researched previously and that it needs the Councils support.
Footpath - West Park Road/ Coos Lane to Covert Mead/Horsham Road – Overgrown, not passable in parts because the area has not been maintained. The Clerk to forward the details to Cllr Forbes
- 7. Committee Reports:** Council to consider the recommendations, receive and note committee and advisory group/updates: To approve meeting and or briefing notes received in advance of the meeting convened:
- 7.1. **Finance & Policy Committee:** To update members on current activities: To approve meeting/note minutes distributed.
 - 7.1.1. Members are asked to review and note any comments from the Annual Return External Auditors Report 2022/23 *cc'd in advance*
Noted **APPROVED RESOLVED**
 - 7.1.2. Members are asked to consider and approve the Mulberry Internal Auditors Engagement Letter: The letter of engagement proposes appointing Mulberry & Co as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the next three years at a fixed rate 2023-24, 24-25 and 25-26. *cc'd in advance* **APPROVED RESOLVED**
RECOMMENDATION: That Council AGREES to appoint Mulberry & Co as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. **APPROVED RESOLVED**
 - 7.2. **Recreation:** To update members on current activities: To approve meeting/note minutes from meetings held
 - 7.2.1. **Public Toilets:** Members are asked to consider and approve the appointment of a structural engineer to undertake a survey of the public toilets, recreation ground, Handcross £500-£1000.
RECOMMENDATION: That Council AGREE to the use of reserves to appoint a structural review that will assist in the determining the future of the building. **APPROVED RESOLVED**
 - 7.3. **Neighbourhood Planning: Land at St Martin Close** - To update members on current activities: To approve meeting/note minutes from meetings held: The Neighbourhood Plan indicates that the site is suitable for development –See item 5
 - 7.4. **Planning Committee:** Members to consider updates: To approve meeting minutes of meeting/notes *cc'd in advance*.
Reference: [AP/23/0038](#) (DM/22/2015) (DM/22/2015) Location: Land North Staplefield Road The appeal was dismissed and the application for an award of costs is refused. Cllr Marsh and Cllr Prescott worked assiduously alongside the officers to ensure that right result was achieved at appeal.
The Armoury Cllr Dunn asked if there were any updates and issues surrounding the highways consultee response to the access. The Clerk asked Cllr Forbes if the neighbours can challenge the report provided by highways. Cllr Forbes will investigate whether there is a route to challenge.
- 8. Chairman's Report:** to receive verbal report for the Chair:
St Catherines Hospice is close to completion the Chair of Trustees is hosting a reception planned for the 23rd November and would like to invite members of the Parish Council. Cllr Holborn and Cllr Read agreed to attend on behalf of the Council.
- 9. Clerks Report** – to receive verbal or written report from the Clerk:
- 9.1. To note Councils project list for information *cc'd in advance*. **NOTED** Members agree to a second session to consolidate the projects/ using the neighbourhood plan to meet the aims and objectives. The Communication project is a priority ahead of launching some of the other work discussed. Cllr Morris agreed to look at this with Cllr St George who is looking at the High Street enhancements project. The Clerk to set up another session with the members to review.
 - 9.2. Members to consider the Clerks enrollment to CiLCA – Certificate in Local Council Administration. The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) is a nationally recognised qualification that provides local council officers with a broader knowledge of all the aspects of a clerk's work: roles and responsibilities; the law; procedures; finance; and community involvement. It is a Level 3 foundation qualification, similar to an AS/A Level or Level 3 National Vocational Qualification and it is intended for local council officers and others working with local councils. A CiLCA qualified Clerk allows the Council to adopt the General Power of Competence. **APPROVED RESOLVED**
- 10. Finance Matters:**
- 10.1. **Payments and receipts** The Committee is asked to RESOLVE to approve: Bank Reconciliation for month July 2023 & August 2023 Approval in line with scheme delegation (*Ref: Bank Payments cc'd in advance*) **RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee approves the schedule of payments for August & September 2023 previously distributed. **APPROVED RESOLVED**

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount	Authorised	Transaction Detail
06/09/2023	Adobe Product	BACS	19.97		Adobe IT Support
06/09/2023	TSM Ltd	BACS	72.00		Wifi Mac Hall x 4
06/09/2023	Direct Technical Services	BACS	117.30		Street Light Repairs
06/09/2023	MacNaughton Hall Refunds	BACS	460.00		Hall Refunds
06/09/2023	West Sussex County Council	BACS	4,486.64		Staff Salaries August 23
06/09/2023	Parish Office	BACS	181.73		Parish Office
06/09/2023	Luke Garden Service	BACS	295.99		Grass Cutting Asset Facilities
19/09/2023	NPOWER Electricity	DDR	315.79		UMS Street Lighting Energy
20/09/2023	Society of Local Council Clerk	DC	52.30		Clerks Manual
27/09/2023	NPOWER Electricity	DDR	318.73		Mac Hall Electric Energy
28/09/2023	Three Mobile PPCC	BACS	10.79		Wifi Mac Hall
28/09/2023	Viking Office UK Ltd	DC	91.04		Stationary
28/09/2023	Moore Auditor	BACS	504.00		Moore Auditor
28/09/2023	West Sussex County Council	BACS	4,486.64		Staff Salaries Sept 23
28/09/2023	Netcom IT Solutions	BACS	118.08		Project Office
28/09/2023	Parish Office	BACS	174.25		Parish Office
28/09/2023	Broker Network Ltd Came & Co	BACS	5,465.39		Parish Council Insurance
Total Payments			17,170.64		

- 10.2. To review and approve the current year to date budget and expenditure for 2023-24 *cc'd in advance*.
RECOMMENDATION: The Committee approves the current year to date budget and expenditure for 2023-24 **APPROVED RESOLVED**
- 10.3. CiLCA – Members to consider the Clerks training CiLCA expenditure referenced item 9. The support programme is £365.00. SLCC registration fee of £450.00. This provides the Clerk with access to an online platform to submit their portfolio for examination. **APPROVED RESOLVED**
- 10.4. Members are asked to approve tree surgery works previously distributed:
 10.4.1. Common Land Coos Lane Footpath £1410.00 plus vat.
 10.4.2. Handcross Recreation Ground £865.00 plus vat
 10.4.3. Slaugham Furnace Pond £1250.00 plus vat
RECOMMENDATION: The Committee approves the use of the earmarked reserves for the surgery required. Proposed Cllr MacNaughton Second Cllr Dunn **APPROVED RESOLVED**

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

- 11.1. To receive an update on the Handcross Hardware, Community Shop Survey Results – This is a survey from the Handcross Hardware store to understand more about what people in Handcross and the wider Slaugham parish want from the shops in Handcross and whether there is a need for a community owned general store.
 Cllr Morris advised that the informal survey results have been shared with those that may be interested in starting a community shop. The results of that survey are available for anyone that wants them. The Clerk mentioned that the information may be useful as an evidence base for the current projects.
- 11.2. Gatwick Northern Runway Project – the development of consent order was accepted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate and will move to the pre-examination stage For further information on the progress of this project through the planning process please use this [link to the Planning Inspectorate website](#). NOTED
- 11.3. Rampion 2 application accepted for Examination by Planning Inspectorate for an offshore wind farm off the coast of Sussex, was accepted for examination by the Government's Planning Inspectorate - [Home - Rampion 2](#) NOTED.
- 11.4. Post Office Closure Update - Consultation Hub via the link below: [Consultation Hub – Handcross RH17 6BJ](#)
 The remaining shops do not feel that they have been engaged with specifically the newsagents who would have taken on the post office. This was a predetermined decision by the post office without adequate consultation.
- 11.5. Woodgate Community Shop launch a share offer to raise start-up fundings - You can read more about the share offer here: <https://plunkett.co.uk/local-community-aims-to-raise-50000-for-new-village-shop/> The share offer documents can be downloaded here: <https://woodgatecommunityshop.co.uk/membership>. NOTED

12. Highways/Footpaths: to review highways projects/items: see item 6.2

Pavement resurfacing the High Street, Handcross is not satisfactory, it is patchy and incomplete and now much worse than it was before the works. There were no clear instructions to the Community, signs were not put out early enough, the work did not start on the day they should off so it meant that people were parked in the way the day they did attend. Cllr Bruce Forbes to investigate.

13. Police / NHW Report / Resilience Group Reports

- 13.1. Crime Reports cc'd members – Updates issued to members in advance. Cllr Holborn is finding it difficult to report incidents etc she has spoken with the local PCSO who is happy to look into the more local issues with the Parish Council.

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

The Clerk asked that additional members of the Council co-opt into the Planning Committee to ensure quorum in the absence of Cllr Prescott and others for the next 2/3 months or when needed.

15. Date of next meeting/s – 9th November 2023 and 14th December 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____