



Slindon Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Slindon Parish Council

Held 'Remotely' via Zoom Software
On Monday 8th March 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Jan Rees (Chairman), Barbara Brimblecombe, Peter Fenton and Derek Thomas.

In attendance:

Sarah Linfield BSc (Hons), CiLCA (Parish Clerk/RFO/Proper Officer)
Katie Archer – National Trust, Lead Ranger
1 member of the public

155. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Rees declared a pecuniary interest in respect of a planning application for her property - 'Planning Applications' (minute 170 i).

156. **Public Participation**

A member of the public joined the meeting to clarify the arrangements for the flying of flags in the village. It seems that whilst the original agreement was to fly the flags on designated days only the one outside the Forge is now flying continuously. Whilst the Parish has discretion in this regard members agreed that it was important to recognise the significance of special days and further to protect the agreement the Clerk proposed the drafting of a flag-flying policy which would be shared with interested parties. It was highlighted that as well as the Union Jack flags the councils had purchased two Sussex flags and that the flagpoles could benefit from a clean.

157. **Apologies for Absence**

Not applicable, all Parish Council members present

158. **Minutes from the Council Meeting Held On 8th February 2021**

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

159. **Chairman's Report**

Councillor Rees spoke regarding –

- i. **The A27 Arundel Bypass Environmental Impact Assessment**– and the Parish Council's role as a consultee on the Scoping Report. It is an extensive document and with a deadline to reply by April 1 2021 an extra Council meeting would be necessary to confirm an opinion for submission.
- ii. **May 6 Elections** – and the decision by Arun District Council to restrict the number of polling stations as part of its COVID-19 risk assessment, but of the



opportunity for electors to register for a postal vote. The Clerk was seeking reassurance from the District Council that Coronation Hall would be used in post pandemic elections.

- iii. **Parking in the Village** - which continues to be an issue particularly as lockdown measures ease and with the advent of the bluebell season. There is no easy solution. The fields cannot be used for parking as lambing is in full swing and the farms will need the space. The Forge Field is leased to the Coronation Hall, and parking there would have to be with their consent, require fine weather and managed by a body of some sort. The National Trust does not have the capacity to do this. The National Trust offered their traffic cones to the Parish if they needed them and is concentrating their efforts on their existing car parks and trying to prevent people trampling the bluebells using post and rope fencing and signage in key places.
- iv. **Coronation Hall** – and its transformation, with refurbishments including removal of the false ceiling and new lighting to create a truly magnificent space.
- v. **Crime** – and the theft of several bags of concrete and metal fencing worth almost £600 from a Mill Road address, reported to the police and Neighbourhood Watch are also aware.
- vi. **Annual Meetings** - and the dates for holding these.
The Annual Meeting of the Parish ordinarily takes place in Slindon during March or April 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 has decided against organising a face-to-face event although it may be possible to arrange something later in the year.
The Annual Meeting of the Council – dealing with its governance – will take place remotely on Tuesday 4 May as the legislation which allows remote meetings ends on the 6 May.

160. **West Sussex County Council Matters**

There was no representation on this occasion.

161. **Arun District Council Matters**

There was no representation on this occasion.

162. **National Trust Matters**

Katie Archer, Lead Ranger provided an update on

- Property Refurbishments - Pumpkin Lodge is now complete with showings to prospective tenants underway, 11 Church Hill is undergoing some preparation work, stripping out continues at Courthill Farmhouse as does work at 2 Top Road with an application to be made in respect of the 2 Norway spruces.
- Tracks and Paths - reinstatement work continues, scheduled to take about 10 days.
- The Bluebell Season - welcoming any suggestions for managing the key issues of parking and damage to the flowers created by an influx of visitors that this time always brings, coinciding as it does this year with a relaxation of lockdown measures.



- Hedge laying on Mid Lane – the pandemic had impacted staff numbers, delaying work and unfortunately the window for completion this year had now passed.
- Park Lane Car Park – with work scheduled to repair the damaged tarmac.

163. Slindon Recreation Ground and Sports Pavilion

The Council continues to make good progress in respect of a negotiations with the Sports Association for their continued use of the Recreation Ground and the Council's solicitor had now provided draft wording for a licence agreement for overview by its members.

The Council had also written to the Sports Association on several matters, their response coinciding with the day of this Council meeting so members understandably needed more time to consider its content. In summary the Sports Association confirmed good progress with the pavilion refurbishments and that £2500 had been ring-fenced for future repairs, supplied training and fixture dates for this season's team matches and shared plans to engage with residents of Slindon on future access to sporting opportunities. The email also outlined the possible use of the pavilion for a 'home-schooling' type arrangement although more clarity would be needed in this respect.

It was observed that two groups had been using the Recreation Ground for dog training and there was other ad-hoc use reported. The Council acknowledged the importance of monitoring the situation with a balance between allowing casual use and regular organised activity.

The member of public left the meeting.

164. Finance Reports

i. **Payments**

It was **Resolved** - to note and approve payments, including any authorised outside the meeting under its Financial Regulations.

ii. **Bank Reconciliation**

It was **Resolved** - to note the budget monitor and Bank Reconciliation at 28 February 2021, to be signed by Councillors Rees and Brimblecombe.

iii. **General and Earmarked Reserves**

No changes were proposed pending the outcome of Recreation Ground discussions and CIL funding application.

iv. **Budget Monitor at 28.2.21**

The Clerk highlighted those areas where the spend had exceeded the budget by 15% including the cost of the legal work required post 2020 budget-setting to put the agreement for use of the Recreation Ground by the Sports Association on a sound footing and the provision of an accessible Parish Council website by September 2020 in compliance with relevant legislation.

v. **Bank Mandate**

Councillor Rees had been updated as a signatory to the account and a further signatory would be appointed post lockdown once it was easier to visit the bank.



vi. **Financial Regulations and Independent Check Requirements**

Councillor Thomas offered to undertake the independent check of the bank reconciliation at the end of the financial year (31.3.21), previously completed by Councillor Rees who is now a signatory to the account.

Finance reports are posted separately to the Parish Council Website as Monthly Reports under the Finance and Risk section.

165. **Risk and Governance**

i. **Insurance**

The Council had entered into a 3-year long term agreement from April 2020 (until April 2023) with Ecclesiastical and the premium for 2021/22 had risen only modestly to £558.98 (from £542.70) due to index linking of items against loss or damage. 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 Clerk clarified that the insurance spend in the current financial year might appear to be double the budget figure although this is due to the premium for both the year to 2021 and the renewal premium (2021-22) being recorded in this year's cash book.

The premium for 2021/22 year would be £608.98 (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.

ii. **Policies and Procedures**

The matter of a flag-flying policy had already been discussed during Public Participation and once drafted Councillor Fenton undertook to speak to the current Flag Officers and in the meantime also explore cleaning of the flagpoles.

Katie Archer left the meeting and there being no other attendees a resolution to exclude members of the public and press was not required.

iii. **Clerk's Laptop**

The Council reviewed the quotes to provide a replacement laptop and transfer of files and email content from the existing laptop and

It was **Resolved** – to accept the quote from Cloudy IT, delegating discretion to the Clerk on who would transfer the files and emails from the old laptop as it might be simpler for the Council's existing IT administrator to do this at approximately the same cost).

iv. **End of Year Finance – Appointment of an Internal Auditor**

It was **Resolved** – to appoint Andrew Woolner as the Council's internal auditor for a second year at a cost of £100 (no VAT).



166. Grant Applications

i. **Operation Watershed**

With the preliminary work now complete, the Council instructed the Clerk to invite 3 quotes from nominated contractors to undertake the report recommendations. West Sussex County Councillor Derek Whittington had been informed of the planned application.

ii. **CIL funding**

A decision was awaited on the Council's 'expression of interest' to replace some of the ageing play equipment on the Top Field and whether it would progress to the application stage.

iii. **Request for Funding**

Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance – a UK based charity registered under number 1021367 - had written to the Council to apply for funding towards the purchase of vital pieces of equipment to deliver best possible care and outcomes in a medical emergency. The Council recognised the importance of their work and it was **Resolved** – to donate £50 to the organisation appeal, under a power conferred by Local Government Act 1972, section 137 (3).

(Proposed by Councillor Fenton, seconded by Councillor Brimblecombe and by unanimous agreement of all present).

167. Highways Matters

West Sussex County Council had advised that there are five soakaways serving Meadway and it is possible that these have not been emptied for many years. It is hoped that once these have been cleaned this will make a big difference to the amount of water that finds its way across Reynolds Lane and to The Forge. However, they have also advised that if once the soakaways have been cleaned out, the problems persist they will look into what else can be done.

168. Tree and Hedge Work

i. **Fell the ailing ash**

The Clerk to approach Jonathan Rodwell who had been appointed to fell the willow tree for further advice.

ii. **Hedgework along the A29**

It had been suggested by a third party that this work might fall to West Sussex County Council, so the Clerk had approached the Highways Team to check their schedule – a response is awaited. Councillor Thomas pointed out that a timely decision was needed as the hedge cutting attachment on the tractor would be removed shortly with the changing season.

iii. **Tree Survey**

The Clerk shared the outcome of the tree survey for the Recreation Ground, and it was agreed that the contractor who provided the report quote to undertake the work prioritised as required within the next 6 months.



169. Clerk's Update

i. **West Sussex Association of Local Councils**

Councillor Rees and the Clerk would join a meeting on March 9 with other West Sussex Councils affected by the changes with the Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils now being disbanded. The new Board of the West Sussex Association of Local Councils was due to meet on Thursday March 10 and the outcome would be shared as soon as practical thereafter.

ii. **Allotments**

The Clerk clarified that it was the National Trust's decision to postpone construction of the new lease in April 2020 with pre-notice to be issued post COVID-19 along with the new lease agreement. Notwithstanding this the Allotment Society are able to use the area as usual and this has continued throughout various lockdowns. The annual rent specified under the Heads of Term provided to the Council in March 2020 was £260 per annum compared with £200 agreed in 2010 and which the Allotment Society are keen to maintain. The Clerk had written to the National Trust to enquire whether the rent could be maintained at £200 per annum and of the current position with the lease as the Council had not been invoiced for rent in the year to March 2021. The Allotment Society had informed Councillor Rees that they felt it only fair they pay £200 for the current year as they had not been on notice of a possible increase in rent.

The Clerk also explained that a solicitor was advising the Council on the execution of the lease and a formal agreement between the Parish Council as the lessee and the Allotment Society would be required so that all parties were clear on their responsibilities.

The Council is committed to a timely resolution to provide reassurance, clarity and certainty for all parties.

iii. **Playground & Adult Gym Inspections**

Councillor Fenton had replaced the missing nut cover on the seated leg press at the Recreation Ground and adjusted the gate on Top Field.

iv. **New Bins**

Councillors Brimblecombe and Rees were due to undertake a site visit with Daniel Cox from Arun District Council on Tuesday 9 March to discuss the installation of the new bins on order since last summer and the possibility of a dog waste bin for the Top Field.

v. **Casual Vacancy**

Arun District Council had confirmed that the Council could now fill the casual vacancy created by the resignation of Councillor Adamson by co-option.

vi. **May Elections**

The Clerk was seeking reassurance from the District Council that Coronation Hall would be used as a polling station in post pandemic elections.

Councillor Rees entered the 'waiting room'



170. **Planning Matters**

i. **Planning Applications -Retrospective Approval**

SDNP/21/00293/HOUS Hazelgrove Church Hill Slindon BN18 ORB Single Storey Extensions

It was **Resolved** – to retrospectively approve the Council’s response of ‘No Objection’ made under its ‘Scheme of Delegation’

Councillor Rees returned to the Council Meeting from the ‘waiting room’

ii. **Updates on previous applications**

SDNP/21/00280/TCA Slindon Pond Willow – Parish Council’s application to Dismantle and fell

Status – No objection raised – Decision was noted.

iii. **New applications**

SDNP/21/00833/TCA Slindon Allotments, English Oak – Fell

It was **Resolved** – to record ‘No Objection’

SDNP/21/00856/TCA Mill Lane House Top Road Slindon BN18 ORP, Tree works

It was **Resolved** – to record ‘No Objection’

SDNP/20/05126/HOUS 2 Eckington Cottages Park Lane Slindon BN18 0QY- Erection of a Shed

It was **Resolved** – to record ‘No Objection’

SDNP/21/00797/CND Mill Lane House Top Road Slindon BN18 ORP, Removal/Variation of Conditions

It was agreed that a site visit must be undertaken before a response could be provided, closing date 29 March 2021.

171. **Date of Next Ordinary Meeting**

The next ordinary meeting will take place on Monday 12th April 2021 although an extraordinary meeting would be necessary to include the response to the A27 Scoping Report (minute 159 i).

The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Dated