



**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Slindon
Held at Slindon Coronation Hall, Reynolds Lane, Slindon BN18 0QZ.
On Thursday 25th May 2023 at 7 p.m.**

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence
Councillor Rees. as Chair of the Parish Council, welcomed those assembled (52 people including Andrew Griffith MP Arundel and South Downs, five of the six Parish Councillors and the Clerk) and shared apologies for absence from Councillor Katie Vanneck- Smith, Mr John Pegler, Mrs June Pegler and Mrs Carolyn Coles.
2. Approval of the minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting 22nd May 2022
Councillor Rees signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting.
3. Public Participation (for those on the Electoral Register)
No matters to report.
4. Parish Council – Jan Rees - a brief report on the past year (Annex A).
5. Clerk to The Council - Sarah Linfield - South Downs National Park Authority's Parish Priority Statement (Annex B).
6. Reports for the Parish including those from Community Groups and Clubs in the Parish.
The following organisations were represented at the meeting, either speaking or providing a written update to be shared within the meeting minutes.

Caroline Wilson	Police Community Support Officer
Sotiria Vlahodimou	Head Slindon College
Peter Fenton	Slindon Pudding Club
Ian Wilson	Amberley and Slindon Community Bus
Trevor Colman	Slindon Life
Niki Adamson	The Parish Magazine and Slindon Horticultural Society
Rev. Peter Dyson	History Society, St. Mary's Church, for Slindon Primary School
Mike Imms	Coronation Hall and The Forge Society (Annex C)
Michael Audsley	The Allotment Society
Ed Moorhouse	Slindon Cricket Club
National Trust	Annex D
Stonepillow	Annex E
Knitwits	Annex F

7. Meeting Close.

The meeting finished at 8.25 p.m. and was followed by refreshments and the opportunity for informal discussions with Councillors and other organisations represented at the meeting.

Jan Rees

Councillor Jan Rees, Chair of Slindon Parish Council

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Annex A – Jan Rees

We said farewell to Barbara who, as you know, was a very long standing council member. We miss her smiles and her quiet and thoughtful approach to issues. We are very pleased to welcome Katie Vanneck-Smith and Tracey Wright who will benefit the Council enormously.

Sarah, our clerk, has worked wonders with the National Lottery and this year has seen the arrival in the parish of five commemorative seats, three new noticeboards, two accessible picnic tables and improved lighting for the village hall. Not bad going!

Some of the play equipment at the Top Field is around 40 years old, and we do need to begin a programme of repair and replacement. Despite Sarah's best efforts, National Lottery have let us know that this sort of funding is not a priority. We have a very limited pot of money and these pieces of kit are very expensive.

Sarah is also looking at financial support to upgrade facilities at the Pavilion. It has needed money to simply bring it up to the standard of a public building but it would be good to make really substantial changes especially as Slindon has such a historic connection to cricket and sport in general.

The floating island is now on the pond to ensure the survival of the ducklings. The National Park and The National Trust are paying for an interpretation board close to the entrance to the woods. This will bring Operation Watershed to a close. POND weed!

November saw some very heavy rainfall and sandbags were needed. Our thanks go to Martin Bailey and his wife Veronique who gave the Parish Council so much help in their distribution. They are no longer provided by District or County Councils, so we have purchased a stock as heavy rainfalls seem set to become the norm.

Road gritting in freezing weather is another responsibility that the Parish Council has to assume. To have roads gritted over a period of 3 or 4 days is very costly. We got away relatively lightly this year but that might not always be the case.

You will all probably know that the planned Grey Route for the A27 is now on hold until 2025. We've attended so many meetings and are a little disappointed that the information on the postponement is rather scant.

My thanks to my fellow councillors, Peter (who we've not quite released into the wilds of Arundel Council business yet), Derek, Patrick, Katie and Tracey. Even without any alcohol, our meetings are relaxed and friendly and always conducted in a positive light, even when opinions differ!

All our thanks to Sarah for the hard work she puts in on our behalf. She really wants the very best for this village and we are very fortunate to have her as our clerk. We're still looking for new members and we'd be very happy to chat to anyone interested.

The Parish Council is the smallest and lowest tier of government and I'll leave you with a quote from Voltaire.

"The best government is a benevolent tyranny tempered by an occasional assassination.

Annex B – The Parish Priority Statement

Background – what you need to know

In June 2022, the South Downs National Park encouraged those Parish Councils without a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which includes Slindon, to help with their own Local Plan Review rather than create one.

As part of that work the Parish Council has

- Completed a Settlement Facilities Study with the number and type of facilities and services provided in Slindon.
- Nominated the pond as a Local Green Space.
- Provided details and maps of publicly accessible green spaces in the parish.
- Allowed a local landowner to speak at a Parish Council meeting of their 'Call for Sites' submission to the SDNPA, proposing sites within Slindon and neighbouring Madehurst for development (early engagement).

What's Happening Now

Another way in which parish councils and the community they serve can contribute to this Local Plan review is through a 'Parish Priority Statement'.

A Parish Priority Statement is the South Downs National Park's version of the Neighbourhood Priority Statement introduced in the Levelling Up Regeneration Bill in May 2022.

This is an invitation to take part, an opportunity, it's not mandatory and at this stage we are looking to collect the views of as many people as possible who live, work or visit our parish before the next steps are agreed.

It means that the Local Plan can be informed by the views of the local community, they won't become part of the Development Plan but they will provide an evidence base to help with formulating planning policy.

The Parish Priority Statement is an alternative to a Neighbourhood Plan which is expensive and time-consuming to produce and the previous level of support through the SDNPA is no longer available.

The most important part is where YOU come in

This is about a vision for the future, a longer term plan for Slindon covering the next fifteen years...so we are looking

Overall - to identify three key changes you would most like to see.

Obtain feedback on 7 specific areas, although not all need to be covered.

1. Development and management of land – what could be developed, what needs to be protected.

2. Housing – the size and type of homes in any development, affordable housing, low-cost rents.
3. Design – importance of local character, which can be cross referenced to Slindon’s existing ‘Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan’.
4. The natural environment – opportunities to enhance.
5. Public spaces – views on these, sites for nature recovery and public realm.
6. Infrastructure - roads, parking, broadband, waste and water, community buildings.
7. Jobs.

If you would like to be involved as part of a working party please tell us.

So how will it work?

Our commitment - we want to reach as many people as possible and make it as easy as possible for everyone to participate. We need responses from all ages please too.

We will post details to the Parish Council website.

We will hand-deliver a copy of the survey to every house in the parish.

We will share via the Parish Magazine, SlindonLife and on our noticeboards.

There will be a range of ways in which you can share your views.

The final decision to submit the document will be made at a Parish Council meeting, informed by the feedback received.

When will all this happen?

It will start as soon as possible.

If a Parish Priority Statement is completed it must be submitted to the SDNPA by **20th October 2023** and once approved will be published on their website.

We anticipate a lot of information will need to be processed to provide a concise but comprehensive document which best represents the principal needs and prevailing views of the community.

We would also plan to share the final draft of the document before it is submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority.

Annex C - Coronation Hall and the Forge Society -Mike Imms

I'm here to talk about Coronation Hall and Slindon Forge Society

Uncharacteristically I don't have a lot to say this evening – time is tight and what I really want to do is exhort you to come to our Annual General Meeting. That's a *joint* meeting for both village organisations, one evening in a month or so,

and all the news will be covered then.

AGMs are important but dull – so we will cover the formal business properly but swiftly and then offer you a drink and, if all goes to plan, we will have a talk and demonstration from a 'demo dog' from Canine Partners who train assistance dogs to do tasks for people with disabilities.

This has nothing to do with halls or shops of course but we thought it would be fascinating and uplifting. As of now, the dog has yet to commit to a diary date, but we'll keep you posted.

In the meanwhile, here are a few snippets we wanted to share with you this evening.

Firstly. The Hall – I'm Chairman of Trustees

There are new classes here at the Hall – and we also wanted to mention that there are spaces on the Wednesday Tai Chi class – the BBC doctor Michael Mosely has recently been singing the praises of Tai Chi as a powerful way to a healthy, happy & long life...Heike is a great Tai Chi tutor and a lovely person.

Then we now have Martial Arts classes late in the afternoon on every Tuesday - with sessions for different age groups of children, and families/women, and also a Dance Movement class on alternate Thursday evenings, although that's a bit quirky, one way and another, so speak to me if you are interested.

Then lastly on the Hall we've been working with Tony Hudson who is a very experienced and talented local writer and director of amateur theatre and we are about to launch The Slindon Players, based here at Coronation Hall.

It's a bit of a risk, but we start with a launch event on Wednesday 28 June – an evening for budding actors of course, but also those interested in back-stage help and, importantly EVERYONE who is interested in the project and coming along to see the productions.

The launch evening will include a short small-scale performance, organised by Tony to entertain us.

If all goes to plan, the first casting sessions are on 14 July for the first production – that is scheduled to be Dickens 'A Christmas Carol' to be performed here on 8 & 9 December. It sounds ambitious but he has done it before.

Slindon Forge Society

I am also Secretary of the Forge Society and we wanted to explain what the Society is, because lots of people who have moved here in recent years may not know the background.

The Forge started out as a SlindonLife project to create a community shop and café and the Forge Society was formed in 2011.

The Society is the legal entity that holds the head lease on the Forge building (the freehold belongs to the National Trust) and the Society did all the planning & fundraising and commissioned and managed the building work – resulting in the opening of the Forge in October 2012.

Initially we also ran the Forge – with a paid manager but to cut a long story short, after 5 exciting years it all got WAY too complicated for the volunteer management team to cope with,

and we granted the tenancy of the Forge to Craig Ramus and as you know the day-to-day running of the Forge is now done by Craig and Jake – who are our tenants.

The Forge Society, and thus the Forge itself is owned by a large group of village shareholders and if anyone wants to join the Society, let us know.

The building has held up well over 10 years of heavy use but this summer we are embarking on some TLC to tidy it up a bit.

So, to recap, watch out for the date of the joint Hall and Forge AGM – and we hope to see you – and the demo dog- there.

Annex D - The National Trust

This year has seen us having to sadly, continue our Ash Die back safety work throughout the Estate along Slindon Bottom Road, Top Road and North Wood Junction. We have combined this work with harvesting Norway Spruce in Slindon Bottom woods to bring us closer to our long- term ambition for a more broad-leaved native woodland.

Other wood land work through the Estate has been the continuation of our coppicing work. We work with our wonderful volunteer team in coppicing hazel and sweet chestnut-the sweet chestnut is split into post and rail fencing while the hazel is converted to charcoal using our kiln and sold locally to individuals and the Forge Café.

We have entered the Sussex Heritage Trust Awards this year for our work on Littlewood Lookout. '2023 will be the 25th year of the Sussex Heritage Trust Awards, which are designed to recognise and reward the highest quality conservation, restoration and good design of newly built projects while encouraging the use of traditional skills and crafts.' Littlewood Lookout is the round wood timber framed building that is the centre piece for the Northwood Project. The building was part by the Slindon Ranger Team and volunteers using material mostly sourced from the Estate – Sweet Chestnut from the Common. Western Red Cedar from the Nore and Douglas Fir for the roof batons are from the Blackdown National Trust Estate near Haslemere. The judging was on the 24th May and the announcement is in July - fingers crossed!

Talking of Northwood – The Rise of Northwood Project celebrates its 10th anniversary next year, 2024, and we will be holding some activities and hopefully an event to mark this occasion. The woodland and wood pasture regeneration is going really well and it will be a

good opportunity for us to highlight the positive benefits of this fantastic project to the habitats and wildlife on the Slindon Estate.

The Slindon Estate office is our hub but from there the Ranger team manage 2000 acres of woodland, downland, heathland and coastline from Kirdford in the north, East Head in the south, Drovers in the west and The Warrens between Storrington and Washington in the east. This exciting mix of places means the Ranger team get to carry out vital conservation work for scarce and special species as well as facilitate access for people to explore the beautiful countryside of West Sussex.

Other news:

Gumber Bothy and Campsite are now back open again – being run by William and Lisa Tupper which is good news for walkers of the South Downs Way and Duke of Edinburgh Groups.

Courthill Farmhouse, which has been a mammoth task delayed almost a year by a late planning decision is due to be finished the first week of June. Once the snagging has been done the property will be marketed to rent.

The contract has been let to restore the gates to the original front entrance to the park, put in some parkland fencing and create two wildflower meadows. The gates take some time to be manufactured so we hope they will be in place for September.

Fontwell Field, which is the other side of the A27 was allocated for housing in the Walberton Neighbourhood Plan a few years ago. The Trust worked with Walberton Parish Council to agree the layout of the plot and the allocation. The Trust now plans to test the market and offer the land for sale later this month. Any funds raised would come back to Slindon.

Team News:

The Team is currently led by Lee, until September when Lisa will step in for six months as Lead Ranger. The rest of the team you should be familiar with but they are Lucy, Harry, Justin, Chloe and Ollie with Nikki in the office. Katie had a baby girl Zoe, in March and will return to us next year.

We have two new people joining us in June, Andreas who will be looking at deer and squirrel issues in the Western South Downs and Richard, who will be the new Countryside Manager. Although both will work across the South Downs they will be based in Slindon.

If you have any concerns or questions then as ever, please contact us on and in an emergency call

The office contacts details are 01243 814730 option1 or email southdownscentral@nationaltrust.org.uk

For tenants, the line for reporting issues remains: 0345 646 1311

Annex E - Stonepillow

Regular donations to Stonepillow began in October 2018 when Anne Jones and Jan Diamond were sorting out donations after the Harvest Festival that year. They realised that what Stonepillow really needed was regular donations rather than a once a year glut. Anne talked to Katherine Minchin who was very involved with the Charity and she suggested a collection for the first week of every month focusing on a particular item. During that first month Anne took 49 bottles of washing up liquid to Stonepillow! This was followed by, foil and cling film, bin bags, squash, and sugar. At that time there were collections at St Mary's, the Forge, The Rectory and Fairbourne in Bridle lane

The format has changed over the years and now there are one or two collections a month depending on the number of donations and I take these to the Hostel in Hunston opposite the Free school where they have a double garage kitted out with shelving where all donations are checked for dates and suitability and usually allocated pretty quickly.

Occasionally we are asked for specific items but usually the most valued are tea, coffee, sugar, cooking oil, cheese, tins of meat and vegetables and of course toiletries and cleaning materials.

Since the financial squeeze has deepened the demand for their services has increased. Families as well as single homeless people are supported and now some are part of the team themselves learning new skills and becoming independent again with the support of the charity.

Restore, which is now open daily is able to provide white goods ,and other electricals as well as furniture and almost everything needed to start a home.

The website has recently been revamped publishing a newsletter as well as offering opportunities for volunteers to take part. We are currently collecting from The Forge where Jake offers a bagged service as well as collecting other donations The Heys in Bridle Lane for those south of the A29 provides a further drop off point and I am happy to collect from people living in the village who are unable to get out.

A donation to their Just Giving page is also extremely valued if shopping poses problems. For several years now the Lent Lunches run from St Richards have raised over £1000 a year from the austerity lunches. These lunches are far from austere as they provide three/four varieties of soup ,a roll and apple and hot drink for a donation and have proved popular during the often bleak days in February and March.

I understand that the St Richards congregation are also regularly donating goods to Stonepillow.

As there is no apparent let up in the financial squeeze their work remains vital and donations are always welcomed by the whole team working across the district.

Carolyn Coles

Annex F - The Knitwits

Knitwits began in 2016 when Anne and Philip Jones first came to Slindon.

They introduced the idea of a Posada to tour the village during Advent when Mary, Joseph and the donkey would spend a night in a village home and move daily for a night in a different dwelling. To make it seem a bit more special The SLAGs were enrolled in knitting sheep and when the Posada moved to a different home a sheep was left behind. The sheep were all reunited with the rest of the flock at the Crib service on Christmas Eve and suddenly a new tradition was born.

Following this success the Knitwit group evolved meeting regularly at the Rectory and

before they knew where they were they were knitting chicks for Easter when £200 was raised and before long The Noah's Ark project began which had pride of place at the Craft exhibition at Madehurst.

Over the years we have produced hundreds of blankets , knee rugs, twiddle muffs for Dementia patients, woollen boobs, prem baby clothes ,hats and scarves galore for local charities as well as international disaster zones.

In 2018 we turned our attention to knitting 100's of poppies which were used in displays all over the village as well as in the Churches as we remembered those lost so young and so far from their rural homes.

During The Covid Crisis many of the group and others besides ,turned their attention to sewing scrubs and scrub bags from pillowcases, duvets and all manner of cotton items . The final tally was close to a thousand at a time when most people were feeling lonely, threatened and powerless in the face of an enemy we couldn't see which was particularly hard for those who were vulnerable or alone or both.

Coming up to date we will reuse the bunting we made for the Queens Jubilee for King Charles coronation.

Knitwits may be a low key event but our twice monthly get togethers do give people in the village a chance to hone a skill , natter and drink tea together and what's wrong with that!

Carolyn Coles