Clerk to the Council: Emma Fulham

Goods Yard House

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Present: Cllrs Horner, Eastwood, Colenutt, Norman, Nathan, Gunn, Burnett-Dick, Shaw, Sanders, Smith and Beare.

Absent: Cllr Reed.

In Attendance: Emma Fulham (Clerk) and Gail Finney (Locum Clerk to the Council).

**Minutes to the Annual Parish Council Meeting held in Goods Yard House at 7:30pm on 9th May 2022.**

Public: County Cllr Georgia Taylor and District Councillor Rachel Millward.

Cllr Taylor reported the following:

* The annual full Council meeting would be held on Tuesday with members being elected to Committees.
* Several complaints had been received regarding the erection of a wall at the back of a property on the Forest Way. This was an incursion on Forest Way land. Cllr Taylor advised ESCC would approach the landowner and request removal of the wall and replanting of plants.
* Cllr Taylor would continue to chase the Estates team regarding the Central Garage agreement.
* Ukrainian refugees - Cllr Taylor would send the Clerk information regarding accessing schools, funding, house checks etc. Wealden had received the highest number of refugees, with most settling in the north of the district possibly due to its proximity to London.

Cllr Millward reported the following:

* The Biffa wage strike was ongoing. Biffa had a waste collection contract with Wealden, who were negotiating with the Unions regarding the substantial wage increase. Collection of household waste continued but there was no collection of recycling and garden waste. Basic street cleaning continued. Daily updates were provided on [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)
* River Medway – an action group had been formed to address sewage in the river. A meeting with Southern Water Community Team was due to take place in a couple of weeks. Any issues should be reported to Cllr Millward or the Environmental Agency.
* Ashdown House – the old school library had been abandoned and the books would be split between Hartfield and Forest Row. The owners of Ashdown House plan to develop the property using existing structures. The main issues would be access to the development along the tiny lane, being on a corner and the number of dwellings. No planning application had been submitted yet.
* Parrock Lane and Sheperds Hill junction – a Roma Traveller family had settled on the land. Gates and temporary animal structures had been erected and a couple of caravans had been placed on the site. As it was within 400m of Ashdown Forest, a High Court Injunction had been sought to prevent further development. She was in communication with the family regarding the situation. Cllr Millward advised ESCC had a responsibility to assist travellers with finding suitable traveller sites. She had contacted a National Traveller Support Line to determine their rights and how she could support them with moving on. She wanted to ensure their rights were upheld and ESCC took responsibility for assisting the family. Cllr Millward was aware of more recent activity and would keep the Parish Council updated.

Cllrs Taylor and Millward left the meeting at 8.07pm.

1. To appoint Chairman 2022/23.

**Cllr Nathan proposed Cllr Horner and Cllr Beare seconded. Cllr Horner was unanimously appointed as Chair for 2022/23.**
2. Receive Declaration of Acceptance of Office from Chairman.

**This was duly signed in the presence of the Clerk.**

1. Election of Vice Chairman for year 2022/23.

**Cllr Colenutt proposed Cllr Eastwood and Cllr Beare seconded. Cllr Eastwood was unanimously appointed as vice Chair for 2022/23.**

1. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr Reed.

1. Declarations of pecuniary and disclosable interests in respect of matters to be discussed.

**The Chair reminded Cllrs to declare when necessary.**
2. To Approve Minutes from Parish Council meeting held on 11th April 2022.

Cllr Beare noted an amendment to the minutes. The road mentioned was the B2026 from Colestock crossroads to Edenbridge, not the A264 as minuted.

**The minutes had been circulated and were unanimously approved and signed as a true record subject to the above amendment.**

1. Matters Arising.

Sign advertising the school – Cllr Colenutt noted the sign had been re-erected. **The Clerk would contact the school and request the sign be removed.**

Playschool Pop Up Café – the Clerk advised that no response had been received. **The Clerk would follow up with the playschool to obtain more details and if they still wished to proceed with the café.**

April Minutes, Items for Reporting -

* Cllr Colenutt reported the security light at the pavilion on the Croft was still on constantly. He also reported a leaking tap. The Clerk advised that an electrician had been scheduled to repair the sensor switch and David Simpson would repair the leaking tap this week.
* Cllr Nathan re-addressed the concern over high water metre readings due to undetected leaks and water metres not being read for a couple of years. **The Clerk would add to Facebook advising parishioners to read their metres regularly to avoid any high bills.**

Hartfield Cricket Club - Cllr Nathan queried if Hartfield Cricket Club had submitted a grant application in support of the VAT expense. The Clerk advised she had received their application which would be reviewed by the Finance Committee at the next meeting.

Cllr Horner asked if the Croft padlock had been replaced. The Clerk reported it had not as the Cricket Club advised it was in working order.

1. To consider co-option to the Council.

**Deferred to a future meeting.**

1. Appointment of Committees and Representatives to other Authorised Bodies.

Planning: Cllrs Eastwood, Gunn, Norman, Beare, and Shaw.

Finance: Cllrs Horner, Smith, Eastwood and Shaw.

Strategy: All Cllrs.

TCPA: Cllrs Horner, Nathan, Colenutt, Norman, Smith and Sanders.

Highways: Cllr Colenutt.

WDALC: Cllr Nathan.

SALC: Cllr Nathan.

ESALC: Cllr Nathan.

Ashdown Forest Liaison: Cllr Sanders.

Fete: Cllrs Burnett-Dick and Reed.

**The Clerk would email Cllr Reed to confirm the Committee/s he would like to be appointed to.**

1. To approve the following Council documents:
2. Council Standing Orders.
3. Council Financial Regulations.
4. Code of Conduct.
5. Council published policies.

Cllr Horner asked if there were any changes to the above since last year. The Clerk advised there had been no changes other than to the Standing Orders. There was a small clause in the Procurement item regarding an EU regulation which would be added back to the documents.

The Clerk suggested that 1 or 2 policies be reviewed at each meeting going forward.

**All were unanimously approved.**

1. Correspondence.

The list had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Pedestrian gate and fence repair – the Clerk advised she was obtaining quotes to have all repaired.

Wealden CIL monitoring – the Clerk advised that she informed Wealden whenever CIL money was spent on a capital project.

1. Finance.
2. To receive and approve the internal audit report.

**Unanimously approved.**

Cllr Horner noted the comment regarding Financial Regulations and items in square brackets, which was done on the interim report. The Clerk advised these should be removed.

1. To approve the AGAR – Accounting Statements.

**Cllr Horner proposed approval of statements. This was seconded by Cllr Eastwood and unanimously approved.**

1. To approve the AGAR – Accounts 2021/22.

The Clerk advised that the approved AGAR, bank reconciliation and Explanation of Variances would be sent to the external auditor. The documents would also be posted on the website and noticeboards with a document regarding public rights. The public had a right to query the accounts.

**Cllr Horner proposed approval of the AGAR. This was seconded by Cllr Eastwood and unanimously approved.**

1. To approve the bank reconciliation for 2021/22.

Cllr Horner questioned if Cllr Eastwood had checked the bank reconciliations. The Clerk advised the internal auditor had approved the bank reconciliation. Cllr Eastwood approved the bank reconciliations at the meeting.

**Unanimously approved.**

1. To approve regular payment schedule and direct debits for 2022/23.

**Unanimously approved.**

The Parish Council were aware of the regular payments and direct debits.

1. To approve signatories and banking arrangements for 2022/23.

**Unanimously approved.**

The Clerk advised the Parish Council bank accounts were held with Barclays Bank and Unity Bank. The Clerk confirmed Cllrs Horner, Eastwood, Smith and Beare were signatories on the accounts. Cllr Gunn offered to be another signatory. **The Clerk would request mandate paperwork from Unity Bank.**

1. To accept the account summary 2022/23.

**Duly accepted.**

Cllr Horner noted a loss of £9k as the precept had not been received. The Clerk advised the precept and some rent had since been received.

1. To approve expenditure as itemised on the schedule.

**The list had been circulated and expenditure of £7,131.57 for 2022/23 was unanimously approved.**

1. To review update on the neighbourhood plan.

No further update.

1. To ratify Committee Minutes.
2. Planning

Proposed swimming pool at Coopers Wood – Cllr Eastwood advised more information was required before a decision could be made.

Garage conversion to annex at Heatherdene – the Parish Council supported the application.

Primrose Cottages – Cllr Norman advised further conditions would be issued soon.

1. Town Croft

Cllr Nathan noted the only outstanding item was spreading new bark within the playground. **The Clerk would order the bark as well as play sand and arrange for someone to spread it in the playground**. Cllr Nathan noted all benches were in good condition. The Clerk advised a new bench would be installed near the beacon. The Parish Council agreed to a plaque and a tree or shrub to be planted in memory of Anne Higgins. **The Clerk would contact Anne Higgins’s daughter for suggestions.**

Cllr Smith queried if the Croft water metre had been read recently. **The Clerk advised she would contact the water company to have the metre read.**

1. Finance

At the March meeting the Parish Council agreed to the 5% increase in precept. **Cllr Eastwood would investigate the cost of car charging points.** Cllr Eastwood advised he had updated the Risk Assessment. The Clerk would organsie the grants for Cllr Eastwood to review.

**All Committee minutes were ratified.**

**Cllr Horner left the meeting at 8.48pm. Cllr Eastwood assumed the role of Chairman.**

1. To report any final update to the Jubilee plan.

Cllr Burnett-Dick advised Cllr Smith would organise the bbq. The band was organised with time slots arranged through the evening. There would be a children’s disco at various times. The bar was organised although there currently were issues with staffing. Punch and Judy had been arranged. Cllr Burnett-Dick asked for volunteers. Marquees had been hired from Edenbridge Scout Group and would be erected by them. Tables and chairs would be allocated across the grounds. The pins, which would be handed out to all children, had been received. The Clerk requested all VAT invoices be sent to her. The Clerk would make payments to the various organisations on receipt of invoices. Laminated posters had been posted at the Croft and Corner Field advertising the event. **Cllr Smith would pass banner details to Cllr Burnett-Dick.** Cllr Smith asked for suggestions as to where profit from the bbq could be distributed. **The Clerk would add to the agenda for June/July to discuss further.**

1. To consider the fun run update and any associated expenditure.

Cllr Smith confirmed the fun run would be on Saturday, 17th September. Sports clubs would be approached to offer taster sessions. Plans would be finalised by the next meeting. Cllr Smith suggested donating a percentage of the fun run profit to the Forest.

1. Items for Reporting or Inclusion in Future Agendas.

Jean Hutchinson had requested putting a bench in memory of Ian Hutchinson on the Croft. **The Clerk would contact her to discuss.**

Cllr Colenutt queried a replacement for Anne Higgins. The Clerk advised she would review resumes in June.

Cllr Norman reported the Village Hall defibrillator was not lit. **The Clerk would speak to the Village Hall to have the light repaired.**

The Clerk advised she had requested a grant to install solar lights in all bus shelters.

**Dates of Next Meeting:**

6th June 2022.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm