

Clerk to the Council: Emma Fulham

Goods Yard House

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**Minutes to the Parish Council Meeting held in Goods Yard House at 7:30pm on 12th June 2023.**

Present: Cllrs Sanders, Nathan, Shaw, Smith, Cllr Burnett-Dick and Horner (Chair).

Absent: Cllrs Colenutt, Eastwood, Reed and Norman.

In Attendance: Emma Fulham (Clerk).

Public: No members of the public.

**Public Questions and Comments.**There were no members of the public present.

**Reports from District and County Councillors.**

Both had sent apologies and reports as follows which are minuted as exact copies of their written reports.

**Cllr Rachael Millward (Wealden District Councillor)**

**New Administration**The Alliance for Wealden continues to form with Lib Dems and Greens working well together. James Partridge and I are getting to grips with the work of leadership, and the new cabinet is briefed and working effectively. We will be working in depth on the Local Plan asap.
As a result of the first two motions brought to Full Council, we have invited ESCC members and officers to come to discuss the pothole crisis, and we have committed to exploring all possible ways of keeping Uckfield Leisure Centre open.  **Bin Strikes**GMB union have called another strike, this time not about pay but about allegations of bullying, although no case have been filed. A difficult situation, but it’s for Biffa and GMB to negotiate, WDC can only encourage swift resolution for benefit of residents. We aren’t sure what the impact of strike will be. Hopefully not too many runs will be impacted. It’s already been postponed/suspended due to round 1 of negotiations. Residents always ask about refunds on council tax, but the sums are such that it would cost the council more to administer such a refund than the value of the refund itself - which would be tiny.
**James Adler and Ashdown Forest Conservators**
As I’m sure we all are - I’m deeply saddened and shocked by the untimely death of the absolutely brilliant James Adler. As part of my new role at Council, I am now a Conservator of Ashdown Forest. My first meeting next week. I hope that together we will be able to continue his vision and bring people together to preserve and restore the natural wonder we are so lucky to enjoy.
**Perryhill Planning Applications**
Residents have asked me repeatedly for updates on these two applications. I’ve been chasing but the relevant officer has been away with health issues - I’m assured I’ll have an update soon.

**Cllr Georgia Taylor (ESCC County Cllr)**

**Highways repairs**
**Contract changes and potholes:** As you know there has been a change of the ESCC Highways contract and now Balfour Beatty are delivering the service. Whilst there appeared to be a bit of a hiatus, the team have now caught up and issues from the previous contract are being dealt with. Karl Taylor, ESCC Assistant Director, Operations, reports to councillors regularly on the progress of repairs to the roads. He has been visiting and reviewing some of the pothole repairs, and has reported that he is happy with the way they went about the repairs and with the quality of the repair. The pothole repair sub-contractor is new and is the same sub-contractor that Balfour Beatty use in West Sussex. The operatives are tasked with taking photographs before, mid-repair and after the repair so there is a full audit trail and photographic record of every pothole repair. Whilst ESCC focus on the quality of repairs Karl says he also pays particular attention to the health and safety of the operatives and the passing road users.  **Patching*:*** There is still the issue of poor road surface not being addressed when there might be multiple defects which don’t seem to reach the criteria for intervention. We are told that patching will be done, so please do continue to report these even if they do not hit the appropriate intervention level. And let me know so that I can follow up.
**Repair waste*:*** I know that there have been cases of repairs where rubble and repair waste has been left on the road, or thrown into drains or people’s gardens. I have complained about this and would like to know whether this is continuing and whether the contractors have cleared up the mess yet. If there are any drains still blocked please let me know as I have had some good action taken on drains in Forest Row this last week.
**A22:** Forest Row continues to have a terrible situation with the A22 on the way out of the village to the north, near the Tablehurst Farm turning. I give information about this as your residents also take this road on occasion. The previous Highways contractor has been asked to re-patch the road, and we are still waiting for a date and information about the repairs and re-patching that will take place. This is something I have been chasing for months.
**Road closures*:*** Priory Road in Forest Row is due to be closed again this summer from 17th July to 15th September for gas works. The section where works will take place is from Michael Hall up to Freshfield Bank, but the whole road will be closed.
**Road safety**A 20mph speed limit in Hartfield Rd in Forest Row is being assessed by the Road Safety team at ESCC. I will update as I get further news. I would like it to also extend to Chapel Lane and Priory Rd, but not sure if this will be possible yet.
I am chasing road safety also for Edenbridge Road in Hartfield (especially in relation to the development at Cherry Hill), and two areas in the Rotherfield Parish – Mark Cross and Eridge Green. Please let me know if there any developments in these areas.
I have been chasing road safety issues in relation to the development behind Station Road in Groombridge. I have not heard any updates yet, so will send more information as soon as I have it. Please do let me know if you have any information that I can follow up with.
**Central Garage**The land purchase by Central Garage to increase their parking spaces is likely to go through in July now once the land has been registered by East Sussex. I have Provided the Clerk with a form to apply for permission to plant shrubs or a low hedge on the verge opposite Central Garage, so that parking can no longer happen there and the verge can be revived. I receive regular photos from a resident showing the obstructive and dangerous parking directly outside Central Garage. I am following up with the road safety team to see if they have any advice (maybe bollards along the road?). I will also consult with the police.
**Public transport**There is a new Flexibus service started up in our area, which provides rides on demand and there is either a phone number of app that the rides can be requested from. [FlexiBus | East Sussex County Council](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/flexibus). You may already know about it, but I do think we should try to communicate to residents as this division is one of the worst served areas in terms of public transport.  **Learning and activities from other parishes in the division**The Forest Row Festival is this weekend and there will be a community cycle ride again for the first time in a few years. Please encourage residents from your parish to attend to encourage cycling confidence and to join in. Rotherfield parish has developed an emergency plan and is happy to share the process and plan with other councils. Given the cuts in water and electricity, and the snow and ice situations that have happened over the last 2 years I would recommend that all parishes consider this.

**Public Questions and Comments.**

None.

 ***Parish Council Meeting commenced at 7:35pm***

1. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllrs Colenutt, Eastwood, Reed and Norman.

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

The Chair reminded Cllrs to declare when necessary.

1. To Approve Minutes from Parish Council meeting held on 15th May 2023.

 **Unanimously approved and signed as a true record.**

1. Matters Arising.
A storage facility possibility near the Village Hall was explored briefly and deferred to a future meeting.
2. To consider co-option to the Council.
There were no candidates to consider and the item was deferred.
3. Correspondence.
All correspondence had been circulated.
The quote for the car charging point was highlighted and reviewed.

**The Council asked the Clerk to seek further clarification on some of the options and the agreement. The Clerk would also ask Forest Row Parish Council on their experience locally**.

1. Finance
2. To accept the account summary 2023/24
**Unanimously approved.**
3. To approve expenditure as itemised on the schedule.

**Unanimously approved the list totalling £5480.71**

1. To ratify Committee Minutes
2. Planning - **Unanimously ratified.**
3. To consider Tree report recommendations and quotes.

The Council considered the tree report and the quotes to reduce or fell the tree.

*Cllr Nathan left the meeting 8:30pm .*

**The Parish Council agreed the diseased beech tree should be felled. Whilst the tree surgeon had provided a possible option to manage the risk, decay was already present and the disease could not be removed. With the positioning of the tree next to the playschool, the decision was taken on safety grounds.**

1. To consider replanting application and quote – Upper Hartfield.
The Clerk outlined the possible planting scheme for the verge at Upper Hartfield.

The Council considered the options.

**The Council unanimously agreed to proceed with a license application and a hedge planting programme for smaller scale laurel hedging for an approximate cost of £1100 plus VAT.**

1. Items for Reporting or Inclusion in Future Agendas.

**For Reporting:**

Signage for Newbridge – This had been supported by HPC to ESCC and the Clerk had suggested the Newbridge Association be consulted on the location of the signage which was supported by the Council.

**For Inclusion:**

Co-option.

Fete update.

**For Action:**

Condolence letter to Forest Centre reference James Adler.

**Dates of Next Meetings:**

3rd July 2023.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm