

FAIRLIGHT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON Tuesday 22nd October 2024 AT 7.00 PM IN FAIRLIGHT VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllrs S. Baker, M. Clarke, Ms. L. Cooke, D. Pichard, G. Smith (Vice-Chair), S. Stewart (Chair) and Ms. Sarah Whiteman

District Councillors present: Cllrs. T. Grohne and A. Meir

Clerk for the meeting: Cllr Mrs. Stanford Icklesham Parish Council

24/226 Item 1 Apologies for absence (including Resolutions to accept reason for absence by Councillors: Cllr Millar

24/227 Item 2 Chairman's Report: Chairman thanked Cllr Mrs Stanford for clerking meeting and reported the appointment of a Clerk/RFO (Danielle Gould) and said the Parish Council were looking forward to working with her.

24/228 Item 3 Code of Conduct and Disclosure of Interests (a) to receive any disclosures by members of personal or prejudicial interest in matters on the agenda: Cllrs Ms Cooke and Pichard
Item 8 and 12

24/229 Item 4 Public Questions in respect of items on the agenda: Item 13 Ms Chetz said she would speak on behalf of Village People

24/230 Item 5 To approve the Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2024
APPROVED AND SIGNED.

24/231 Item 6 Matters Arising from the Minutes not otherwise on the agenda

Chair reported on 24/223 saying he had spoken to Sandy regarding dog poo. Also, the work on drain on Wood Field was commencing on 28th October. 24/224(b) Chair also reported that the new logo would be rolled out on the November Minutes. 24/220 Chair called for vote on sending the letter Cllr Baker had drafted to CEO of ESALC. APPROVED. Cllr Baker proposed that the letter be sent out on RFO email and not an individual councillor. AGREED Cllr Smith gave update on 24/222(f) reporting that they had permission to use phenolic plywood, and the repair and replacement of bark would take place in the next two weeks. Cllr Cooke reported hearing from Southern Water on the update of the pathfinder that the sewers are being relined with a fine lining and holes being cut to each home so effluent can be received by the sewage system. Cllr Cooke said the work was going well and they were almost finished on Lower Waites Lane and then they are starting on Rockmead at the top from Thursday. They were hoping that it would all be sorted out very soon.

24/232 Item 7 County and District Councillors Reports

Cllr Grohne reported on Market Garden site that he and Cllr Meir had taken Cllr Baker to a meeting with them at Rother DC last Thursday and thought it best to wait until Item 13 for Cllr Baker to report. Cllr Mier reported regarding the Rother budget and said that council were in a difficult position, and we would hear later on this. He said that Pett toilets were closed for the winter and that Pett PC were

consulted with residents as to if they were happy to increase the precept to allow the Pett PC to take over that facility. The edge of Warren Road has collapsed meaning that the dust cart cannot get up to empty bins. Rothers office has done sterling work with Biffa and the bins have now been emptied. Cllr Meir has reported drainage issue outside 33 Waites Lane and Highways have accepted there is a problem. Also he has reported a broken pavement where the pub sign is which has been liked that for 9 months.

Cllr Maynard confirmed that it does take time for these things to be done. He reminded everyone to report issues and not to think someone else has. He reported that the operational structure had change once again at County and he was playing catchup. Cllr Maynard said that budget wise it was a difficult time for County because of the increased costs of looked after children was astonishing. Adult care and travel were all pressure area, but the gaps are multi million pound. He said just to stand still they would be looking at a 14% tax increase, so these are serious times because of tremendous cost increases so they are going out to consultation, but no decisions have been made. He was hoping the government would make an announcement to save the day, but the funding adult social care was the thorny one. Cllr Maynard hoped to have better news at next meeting.

Item 8 to be combined with Item 12

24/233 Item 9 Financial Matters

- (a) To consider and approve the attached Schedule of Payments for October 2024** APPROVED
- (b) To consider and sign the monthly bank reconciliations.** Chair reported there are none at present because everything is not up and running yet. He said it was just £7.48 out which is VAT. APPROVED
- (c) Update on present position with bank accounts.** Chair reported that he had tried to arrange meeting with new RFO and previous Clerk on 5th November, but it was proving difficult.
- (d) To consider application for the Rother CiL money applying for Channel Way.** Chair suggested this also be moved to Item 12.

Date amended to 10th from the 19th. S.Stewart

24/234 Item 10 War memorial Steering Group.

Hayden Luke .said a report had been circulated but it was good news the foundations were in the ground the names had been inscribed on the granite face of the stone and the stonemason's installation was imminent so should be in place for the memorial on 19th November and its Fairlight's year for hosting that. The War Memorial Group will now meeting to devise, arrange and management the full scale dedication event which will be at 11 am Saturday 30th November in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant the list of invitees will include the men whose names are on the memorial, community leaders, members of local organisations, the Royal British Legion and the wider Fairlight community. It will blend secular and religious threads and will include appropriate readings, music and recollections this will conclude around 12 o'clock and there will be a ceremonial unveiling by the Lord Lieutenant. He said they would like to thank Parish Council past and present, the various organisations and all the donors who provided the necessary funds. Cllr Cooke asked about the list of donors Mr. Luke said that there was a list they have access to, but some wished to remain anonymous so it would not be a published list NOTED

24/235 Item 11 Market Garden Site

Hayden Luke said that he and Cllr Baker would progress the Freedom of Information Request in due course and that their initial request to Hastings was turned down and they suggested they approach Groundworks with the same request which they will do but the most recent informed about the Bale House is that they have a lovely programme for children coming up which it was designed for. They were not aware of any other issues except with boy racers at night in the car park that is being pursued with the Police and other relevant authorities. Cllr Baker confirmed that their FIR had been turned down by the CEO and all the officers they had approached on Hastings BC with the same response, effectively "none of your business". Cllr Maynard if the Leader of the Council had been written to

which might be helpful. He also offered help with tracking down family members for the War Memorial project. NOTED

24/236 Item 12 Channel Way and Fairlight Preservation Trust.

The Chair read correspondence he had received from a resident living in Channel Way saying that they had lived there for 8 years, and they are not aware of any water running down Gorsethorpe Way towards the cliff. There is obviously a problem with water damage to the surface of Channel Way and the junction of Gorsethorpe Way, but this is due to water running down Channel Way from the top end. Several years ago, it was felt the problem arose in the Country Park, but the drainage ditch has help elevated the situation. There was further exchange with them when they suggested contacting a Mr. Pulfer. There was another letter from Martin Usher saying drain was installed in early 2005 in response to plumbing problems in Shepherds Way and Channel Way on advice from Dr. Roger Moor of Halcrow Limited to the Fairlight Preservation Trust that water landing south of Channel Way was detrimental to the stability of the cliffs. FPT obtained quotes and FPC paid for the work with a contribution from FPT. There was a silt trap at the south side of the land belonging to FPC and discharges over the cliff. Initially the pipe went all the way down the cliff but is now broken and causing cliff erosion. This never meant to be a permanent solution but just a stop gap until connection to the drain in Shepherds Way could be negotiated. FPT has not stopped trying to achieve this since then and recently the committee when the drain was installed reminded us of the need to empty the silt trap and a group of volunteers including Martin himself removed 1.5 cubic metres of silt from the trap and has led to discussion by email between FPT, FPC and Rother DC and a consensus that a permanent solution needs to be found. This agreement is a turning point, and they ask FPC to put a motion to initiate achieving this end with all parties working together.

Chair asked District Councillors for comment. Cllr Grohne reported that he had invited Cllr Maynard to join them for a meeting last week and they showed him where the joins would be with Highways and the issues was connecting from private land but joining into Highways drainage which is an outstanding matter to be clarified as to whether or not that is as solution. Cllr Maynard reported that he had had informal discussions at high level at County. At the moment they are not keen due to the capacity of the storm drain and the danger that it would set up a precedent. He said there are other private roads that wanted to access Highways drains, He said that when given a negative answer he will not give up but it was an informal approach but there could be a formal approach. He said the normal answer was usually no when wanting to access Highways drains but because of the wider issues of environmental protection he thought it gave added pressure to try and deliver a solution because the potential damage to the cliff that you as a Parish Council would want to see. He thought there should be another on-site meeting with drainage team so that they can see what is required and why? Cllr Cooke reported that the owner of the land was amenable for access to get this sorted out.

24/237 Item 13 Market Garden Site

Cllr Baker reported that it was a fast moving issue with much of the information he was about to delivery occurring over the last 3-4 working days he said that he had been invited to a meeting by Cllrs Grohne and Meir at the District Council Planning Office where they were promised to be receiving a report on the Market Garden site and its efficacy and its approvability against plan. He said the report had not been delivered as requested and both Councillors had objected to that and asked for it in writing. They were given a verbal report which stated there are no planning violations of this site. That was the summary of a 2-hour meeting. He said because of the efforts of FPC and Village People the new MP had got involved and had written to the Chief Executive of Rother DC. So, because they say there is no contravention of any planning there is now a plan to get a third-party advisor in give guidance of violation of planning. By the end of this week there will be a third-party professional guidance as to whether there are violations or what actions can be taken. He said it was a decision by Village People what action they take and FPC had stated that it is going to be supporting Village People

but that was part of the budget discussions. There will be a written update not only to Village People but also FPC as soon as possible. The professional planner said he hoped to get it out by end of this week early next week. This is significant because Chief Planner Officer advised approval is imminent with the exception of two or three issues, but they would not specify what they were they have a good idea what they are. Cllr Meir said that what they were told was that the buildings comply with the plans in terms of their size and location, but he did not think they were saying there no infringements with regard to fencing and planting. Cllr Baker said FPC are now in the hands in the third party and that report would be coming fairly soon and then they would know what action to take. He praised Village People for the information and evidence that they have provided was both extent and detailed so that the third could say this is very good and we know what we are doing. Cllr Baker also thanked the District Councillors who were very vocal in their disapproval of not delivery what was promised by the Planning Office. Cllr Smith raised a question about whether there was or not an original written report. Cllr Baker said there was no written report provided they were told if they provided a Freedom of Information request, we would probably get it so Cllr Meir has written to them requesting this and they hope that it can be delivered. Cllr Grohne said what he had requested was an independent survey in the days before the meeting that they wanted to conduct via Teams, but he insisted it be a face-to-face meeting. They did not want to go to a meeting without. the report because they could not prepare and ask questions. They were told it was a technical report for the Planning Department but what had been requested was an independent survey for the residents of Fairlight. He said the crucial thing was to get an independent survey and do a like for like comparison and see if they gel. Cllr Meir said there was a laptop present at the meeting, but they could not see the screen. He said that it was the Head of Planning who raised the question of the Freedom of Information Act. He said that they as Councillors were entitled under Rother's Constitution to see any Council documents. Cllr Smith asked if the third party would be doing an on-site inspection – this was confirmed. Cllr Cooke raised the question of access to the site and Cllr Baker said that this had been raised. A member of the Village People (Chetz?) raised one question she said the fence had been erected on the west side of the site had originally been placed too far into the middle of the road and Glenselect? Did agree to move it back onto the site but they believe the distanced it was moved was not sufficient. She said on the plan it was clearly marked a new public footpath to go along Waites Lane. They believe it is not wide enough under the disability legislation and they have reported this to East Sussex Highways. Cllr Baker said that that point had been raised as an action point on disability law to the third party who is a professional planning officer consultant. He said that one of the problems faced in the last week was the number of times something was batted away as somebody else's responsibility. One classic was the risk of flooding or undermining one of the buildings that was batted away as a building control issue. Cllr Maynard said that it was the Local Planning Authority's responsibility to ensure that all planning conditions are adhered to. Cllr Cooke recommended that people view the excellent video that Village People have produced that does explain the issues very straightforwardly.

24/238 Item 14 Fairlight Pavilion

(a) To receive an update on this project

Cllr Smith reported an ongoing wrangle between Highways and Southern Water about connections. The first plan was the sewer run and Southern Water denied they had a sewer in Meadow Way then with the help of Pathfinder Project that they did have one there and it is on their plans. He said they had permission to connect sewage foul water to a point in Meadow Way but they will not accept the surface water so it is possible that they will run two separate pipes and join onto Highways surface drain in Meadow Way but there may be a problem of whether they allow that. They are not in a position to change Planning Conditions 5 and 6 which was all interconnected with the surface water and Item 14 will have to be resolved at another time. He has to know they can do a sewer run with those connections before they go any further.

(b) To resolve to transfer the residual pavilion funds to the new Lloyds Fairlight Pavilion Bank account as soon as the Nat West Bank account is accessible to the new councillors APPROVED

24/239 Item 15 DISH

(a) **To consider the suggestion from Fairlight Residents Association to take responsibility for DISH in the future and consider transferring the bank assets and future liability to FRA.** Cllr Clarke reported that he and Cllr Pichard were assigned to liaise with DISH. He asked if councillors were broadly in favour of transferring DISH to FRA subject to T & Cs? He said he would like to know who we would be negotiating with? The Chair reported that it would be the Chair of FRA. Cllr Clarke said the DISH seems to make a small profit or breaks even and is the management of the FRA aware of the money that they have available to them that has been ring fenced? Cllr Smith said he thought they were aware. Cllr Clark asked what use there would be for the possible £5,000 that was earmarked? Cllr Smith confirmed that the total in ear marked £4,096.90 unspent one of the requests from FRA would be to transferred all that money and that FPC continued to pay for village hall rent up until next April which works out at 22 weeks of £38 totally £836 so total grant would come out at £4,932.90. Part of the precept has been to cover hall hire since last April to date that figures total £2,700. The EMR has been from unspent grants and donations from the PC and outside the PC. The average hall hire per month is £163 the average donation tractable is about £170 is after purchase of food etc they could not be breaking even without further grants. If we relinquish the project, then we should relinquish the money. Cllr Clarke wondered what the £5,000 would be used for. Chair explained that the money was DISH's. Cllr Smith reminded councillors that it had been agreed to pay for the hall rent. Cllr Clarke said if it makes a slight project every week then what would the £5,000 be spent upon. Cllr Cooke said she suspected the FRA wanted to continue DISH because it was popular, and she was happy to pass over control and the funds ring fenced by them. She was not sure whether the hall hire should be continued to be paid by taxpayers. Cllr Smith said FPC should have some sort of security. Chair asked Chris Smart the Chair of FRA for his comments. He said that there was some £3,940 held in reserves. He said there were 22 weeks hall hire left this year and he asked if the parish council would cover this, He said the money transferred would be ring fenced in their accounts for DISH. He asked that FPC continues with the hall hire costs until 31st March 2025 from then DISH will be responsible for the hire of the hall. He said that anything raised through the project was spent on supplies for the project to provide meals for residents. Cllr Clarke confirmed that what was collected was not profit but used to finance the project and for the benefit of the community. Cllr Smith suggested that if the money was transferred it should be ring fenced by FRA for the DISH project and if the project falls flat then the money should be transferred back to FPC to be redistributed. Mr. Smart said they intended to have a small committee running the project and their Constitution say that if it fails then the money should be used for community projects. Cllr Ms. Whiteman said she was a supporter of DISH which was a wonderful idea, and they should have grant funding to continue to support the community without charging and they needed to keep going for people to have somewhere to go and be with people for the day. Chair confirmed they could apply for grants. Chair confirmed three areas of agreement. Transfer running of DISH to FRA, and transfer of funds to FRA and the commitment to hire the hall by FPC to 31st March. APPROVED

24/240 Item 16 Budget setting for 2025/26

It was agreed to defer this to 12th November meeting. APPROVED

Cllr Smith proposed that from this year on the NALC suggested way that councillors look at the two previous years, the year to date, the projected year end and anything up to three years projection going forward. We are hindered because of not having bank statements and balances. Cllr Grohne asked what happens with underspend. Cllr Smith confirmed underspend under NALC ruling goes into general reserves and there will be tracking to date. He said he would like to see the present parish council to an exact budget and expenditure at the beginning of each year, so the public know that we are on track with their money.

24/241 Item 17 Rialtas Accountancy Package

Chair confirmed that he had now made contact with them. Noted

24/242 Item 18 Training Meetings

Chair reminded councillors to take advantage of the Mulberry training programmes and book through the clerk.

24/243 Item 19 Training Meetings Scribe academy training

It was decided not to follow this up but stay with Rialtas

24/244 Item 20 Correspondence

Chair reported two planning applications both agreed subject to conditions 16 May Cottage Waites Lane which has been permitted subject to conditions and the other was The Barn which is retrospective against subject to conditions. Chair said he had had two phone calls one from Woodland Way there is a high tree overhanging his fence and there was a recommendation from the Knowle Wood Volunteers that they should call the Parish Council for advice. Cllr Picard to deal. The other call was regarding the tennis club entrance being waterlogged Cllr Picard has made a recommendation. Cllr Clarke said there needed a permanent solution and possibly having a different pathway by clearing vegetation. Cllr Ms Whiteman said that the pathway had no natural daylight, and she thought by opening it up and clearing everything and opening it totally up with a wildlife pond something more aesthetically pleasing. If you put any drainage, it would cause flooding to Knowle Wood with the water coming down the hill. Any hard surface will cause run off. Cllr Clarke said it will never dry out so trying to do something with the path is not a long-term solution. Maybe some form of steps at right angles so that you by-pass the path but that is an expensive solution. Cllr Cooke liked the sound of Cllr Whiteman's suggestion. Cllr Picard to look at it with the most cost-effective short-term solution with a project further down the line. Cllr Smith said that at the bottom of a wet field it is going to go soaking wet, and it has been like this since the tennis court was built because of the lie of the land. He thought Cllr Whiteman's idea was a good idea but taking away masses of vegetation goes not go down well with the public because of nesting birds. Cllr Picard and Chair to have further discussion to bring back to FPC. Cllr Cooke suggested a discussion with the EA and Nigel Powers. The final piece of correspondence was from the caretaker Beverley Price who had had to pay £79.09 Public Liability Insurance. It was agreed that the Parish Council would refund this amount to her. APPROVED

24/245 Item 21 Information and/or Future Agenda Items

Chair questioned this item appearing on the agenda because of the emails exchanged between meetings that form the next agenda. AGREED

Item 22 Date of Next Meeting. Tuesday 26th November 2024 @ 7.00 p.m.

Item 23 Close of Meeting 8.50 p.m.

12. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 22nd October 2024 – 7.00 pm

13. Close of meeting 8.45 pm

X

S.Stewart
Chair

