



Minutes of the meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council Monday, 1 February at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr John (Chair), Cllr Sheppard, Cllr Fenwick, Cllr Levins, Cllr Lawrence, Cllr McKenzie, Cllr Turnbull.

C Hayes (Clerk) Minutes

Public Gallery: Ward Cllr Fishleigh, John Bryant, Chris Davidson, Boyd Darling, Mike Sexton.

At the request of Cllr **John (Chair)** the meeting held a minute's silence in memory of those who had lost their lives because of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Public Questions:

John Bryant asked for the total projected spend for 2021/21 and questioned the level of underspend stated at paragraph 7 in the Precept paper before the Council to consider. He also asked for clarification on the assumptions made in calculating the spend for the final quarter of the financial year and available funds for 2021/22. **The Clerk** advised Mr Bryant that expenditure for 2021/22 had been estimated as £86,853 and the underspend mentioned in para 7 related only to the administration costs. **Cllr Turnbull** provided an explanation of how the overall expenditure and budget for 2021/22 had been calculated and which sums of money were to be ring fenced for current projects.

Chris Davidson said he had attended to answer any questions on the grant applications from Rottingdean Heritage for a cold frame for Kipling Gardens and village signs. **Cllr John (Chair)** said the grant for the cold frame would be decided later in the meeting but that the application for the village signs needed to be considered by the Village Community Advisory Group and would be progressed at the March Council meeting.

Ward Cllr Fishleigh raised the question of the poor condition of Whiteway's Lane and asked if the Parish Council would support her in efforts to lobby the City Council to undertake re-surfacing work. **Cllr John (Chair)** said this would be considered and the Council would follow up the matter up with Cllr Fishleigh.

1. Apologies for absence

Ward Cllr Mears

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Agreement of the minutes of the RPC meeting on 4 January 2021.

The minutes were agreed with the following correction by the Clerk to the cash in hand figures at paragraph 5 (ii) which should have read:

Nat West Current Account (cash)	£100.00
Nat West Reserve Account	£62,914.73
Unity Bank current Account (cash)	£500.00
Unity bank savings account	£33,858.88
C&C savings account	£91,034.62
Cash in Hand	<u>£188,408.23</u>

4. Matters arising

(i) Action Log - The following amendments were made to Action Log entries not on the agenda for discussion at the meeting:

- 1202 Two quotes had now been requested for a new path around the Village Pond adjacent to the Plough Public House
- 1101 Edburton Contractors had been asked for a quote to source, supply and place stones on the green opposite the Bowling Club to prevent parking
- 0901 Declarations of Interest had been received by all Councillors.

(ii) Lower High Street - **Cllr Turnbull** advised that a meeting had been held with Paul Dodd, from Urban Movement (UM) to discuss the development of a concept design based on the project brief. The work was to include some light touch design thinking on the terraces, focussing on accessibility and also on the A259 junction. The aim was for UM to start work on 8 February and complete the concept design by April or May. Payment would be made by three instalments 30% on appointment, 30% at the mid-point and the balance on completion. Cllr Levins had agreed to meet Paul Dodd to discuss accessibility issues facing people with sight impairment. **Cllr John (Chair)** added that a Project Board meeting was to be arranged in the near future.

(iii) Report from Governance Advisory Group - In addition to the note provided, **the Clerk** advised the meeting that following a discussion of a draft Website Policy and Clerk's Job Description the documents were to be updated and would be presented to Council for approval at a future meeting. **Cllr McKenzie** added that, as part of the discussion of a co-option policy, the Group had suggested it would be useful to construct a skills matrix to enable a skills audit of the current Councillors to be conducted that could help to identify any skills gaps that might be sought in the co-

option process. **Cllr McKenzie** said the Group had also proposed that Councillors might provide a pen picture and photograph for the website. This was agreed by Councillors provided that pen pictures did not suggest that particular qualifications or experience were prerequisite.

(iv) Report from Finance Advisory Group.

a. Terms of Reference, **the Clerk** took the meeting though the draft Terms of Reference for the Group that was to support the RFO in carrying out his/her statutory responsibilities and to provide the Council with some assurance on financial reporting. The following points were made in discussion:

- As the Group would be a Sub-Group of the Council, the Council Chair would be an ex-officio member
- It was important to bear in mind that the Group could not override the RFO's decisions given his/her statutory responsibilities

The terms of reference were proposed by **Cllr Turnbull**, seconded by **Cllr McKenzie** and agreed unanimously.

b. Budget changes 2020/21. The Clerk advised that the Group had considered virements within the budget for the final quarter of the year to account for previously unbudgeted spending. As this served no practical purpose, the Group proposed these should not be undertaken. This was agreed.

5. Co-Option Policy. **The Clerk** introduced the Co-option Policy paper that had been drafted following the meeting of the Governance Sub-Group and discussed by the Strategy and Communications Advisory Group. The following points were made in discussion:

- The 5th bullet point at paragraph 4 gave the impression that if a Councillor missed any external Council meeting during a 6th month period they may be disqualified.
- Paragraph 10 should include the work 'significantly' before 'underrepresented'.
- The policy as drafted would allow the Co-option Panel's recommendations to be overturned in a secret ballot, which could render the process susceptible to challenge on the grounds of discrimination.
- It was important to bear in mind that the Panel would be recommending appointment and not making an offer of appointment
- Most other Councils had adopted a process that invited applicants to a meeting to make their case for appointment in person following which each candidate would be voted on by a show of hands.
- The point of having a policy was to ensure that the process was transparent, fair and equal and not subjective. It would be important to make this clear in the advertisement for the vacant positions

Cllr John (Chair) suggested a way forward might be to propose an alternative voting arrangement to a secret ballot set out at paragraph 16 of the paper. In discussion, the following redraft was proposed:

“During the Co-option meeting, the Council will vote on the Panel’s recommendation by a show of hands. In order for the candidate to be co-opted to the Parish Council it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast.”

The new paragraph was agreed by majority of the Council who casted a vote **Cllr John (Chair)** and **Cllr Sheppard** abstained.

It was agreed to delay the co-option process pending the completion of a skills audit amongst Councillors to be conducted in correspondence and a recommendation made about skills gaps that would inform the co-option process. It was agreed that this work could be conducted by email and completed by Friday 12 February in order not to delay the co-option process unnecessarily.

Action: Over the next week, **the Governance Group** to look at the skills matrix that had been circulated and then arrange for a skills audit to identify gaps to be undertaken by correspondence. The Group should then provide a draft advert and selection criteria.

6. Finance Update - The Clerk proposed the following payments for authorisation:

(i) Payments for Authorisation

HMRC January	£ 499.93
HMRC (Underpayment Oct, Nov, Dec)	£134.67
Payroll Admin	£ 77.00 (+VAT 15.40)
C Hayes December Salary	£ 602.69
C Hayes Expenses (zoom + Phone top up)	£ 31.99 (+Vat £2.40)
Grant (Rottingdean Heritage)	£ 129.00

Total £1475.28

Cllr Fenwick said that, as the grant had already been agreed in principle and a revised form had been received, the Village Community Advisory Group would support payment. The payments were proposed by **the Clerk**, seconded by **Cllr Turnbull** and agreed unanimously

(ii) Income and expenditure - **The Clerk** advised the meeting that the balances at the end of January 2020 were;

Nat West Current Account (cash)	£100.00
Nat West Reserve Account	£62,705.89
Unity Bank current Account (cash)	£500.00
Unity bank savings account	£32,779.36
C&C savings account	£91,111.53

Total Funds available £187,196.78

The Clerk also drew attention to the Parish Council accounts for January that were agreed.

(iii) Precept Options for 2021/22 – **The Clerk** took the meeting through the precept options paper previously circulated that provided; an analysis of the funds needed for the agreed 2021/22 budget; central guidance and information on the prospects for inflation over the next 12 months; and the effect on the precept and the average council tax payer of; no increase, an increase in line with inflation of 1% to 2%, and an above inflation increase. The following points were made in discussion:

- It was important to bear in mind the impact that the proposed 4.99% increase in council tax by the City Council would have on village residents.
- An alternative approach could be to base the precept change on what was needed to ensure sufficient funds were available in 2021/22 to complete major projects, for example the Lower High Street, that could otherwise be delayed for some time.
- A rise based on expected changes in inflation would be viewed as prudent and still allow projects to be advanced during 2021/22 including those suggested in responses to the recent Village Survey.
- A 1.5% increase could provide a way forward.

A 1.5% increase was put to the meeting but not supported. A 2% increase was proposed by **Cllr Fenwick**, seconded by **Cllr McKenzie** and unanimously agreed.

The Clerk took the meeting through the draft press release circulated before the meeting. It was agreed that this should be re-drafted to make clear which projects the Parish Council budget was funding and circulated again for any final comments.

Action: **The Clerk** to redraft the press release and circulate for comment.

7. Planning - Cllr Graham Sheppard took the meeting through the planning applications considered by the Consultative Panel during January and drew attention to the fact that the Planning Report now included comments that the Panel had made on individual applications.

Ref	Address	Type	Detail	Objection	Comments
BH2020/03614	7 Knole Road Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7GR	Decking and roof lights	Erection of raised decking with glass balustrade to side elevation. Installation of 3no rooflights & 2no sun pipes to front roofslope and 2no rooflights to rear roofslope, addition of render and revised fenestration.	No	The raised decking with the glass balustrade is behind a hedge and will not overlook any neighbours just looking out on to Chailey Avenue and beyond. The rooflights will not raise the overall height of the building significantly .and the rendering is in keeping with the mixed housing in the neighbourhood .. 'no objection'

Planning Applications Received in January					
Ref	Address	Type	Detail	Objection	Comments
BH2020/03733	33 Grand Crescent Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7GL	Extension	Alterations to roof line to create additional storey with two storey extension to front and rear elevations, conversion of garage into habitable space, vehicle crossover and associated alterations	No	The proposed changes would not be out of keeping with other properties in the street and indeed would not negatively impact on the immediate neighbouring properties plus although the footprint would be enlarged this would be reasonably proportionate to the remaining surrounding space. However, we would like it noted that the proposed edge of the roofline is very close to the boundary of the adjoining property at number 35 and also if the plans were approved then the height of the roofline should be strictly adhered to.
BH2020/03819	20 Grand Crescent Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7GL	Extension	Extensions to existing dwelling incorporating raising of roof, erection of a two storey side extension, and first floor extensions throughout to form additional storey plus rooms in the roof. Revised external materials and fenestration including front balcony, formation of new vehicle crossover and associated landscaping	No	The Parish Council recognise that this is a substantial rebuild and that it will have a significant impact on the street scene, particularly for the neighbouring property to the south. We have some concerns regarding the addition of two floors. It would appear that none of the other existing houses in the road have 3 habitable floors and to facilitate this a small part of the roof appears to extend above the roof line of the neighbours in the street and would request that this is closely looked at. Apart from this the proposed development is not out of keeping with the mixed variety of buildings in this area. The front of the building is in line with adjoining properties and the proposed footprint of the new dwelling is proportionate to the size of the site.

8. Advisory Group Meeting Updates

(i) Strategy and Communications

- Neighbourhood Plan – **Cllr John (Chair)** advised the group that the Regulation 14 consultation was about to be launched subject finalising the Executive Summary that was expected to be completed this week. The Executive Summary would then be delivered to each household and the consultation process would be supported by a number of other publicity activities including two webinar events. **Cllr John (Chair)** said that this was, however, only the first of nine stages of the consultation process that would end with a referendum in October
- 2021/22 Meeting Timetable – It was agreed that the AGM should be held in August and the Village meeting in April as was customary but both would be conducted by audio/visual link if Covid 19 restrictions were still in place.

- Experimental Traffic Regulation Order - **Cllr Sheppard** advised that the Air Quality Management Area Group had met on 27 January to review traffic and air quality data and discuss the future of the ETRO. Although some reduction in the presence of nitrous oxide had been seen, given the abnormal circumstances over the last year, no clear conclusions could be drawn. In view of this the Group agreed to recommend an extension of the order for a further 18 months to the Transport Environmental and Sustainability Committee that was to meet on 16 March. The meeting also agreed that although there had been a number of objections to the measures in place, particularly the planter, to change any of the measures at this stage would corrupt the results of the whole experiment. **Cllr Sheppard** said that, in the meantime, BHCC were to look for ways to enhance signage indicating 'no right turn' at West, repaint the white 'Keep Clear' road markings at Park Road junction and the yellow hatching further south on the High Street. The following points were made in discussion:
 - There was a need to ensure that the available data were accessible to the public;
 - Better communication was needed about how each of the measures contributed to the experiment, particularly the planter as this had drawn the most criticism.
 - It would be important to adjust the data to compensate for the unique circumstances over the last 12 months to make a more accurate comparison with historic data on air quality.
 - The Parish Council should aim to host data on its website.
- **Cllr John (Chair)** said that SCAG had discussed vacancies on current Advisory and Working Groups and proposed the following:
 - Cllr Turnbull should chair the Natural Environment Advisory Group
 - Cllr Levins should join the Planning Consultative Panel
 - Cllr Lawrence should join the St Aubyns Working Group

These proposals were agreed.

- a) Natural Environment - **Cllr Turnbull** advised the meeting of a BHCC consultation on a proposal to develop a plan for Brighton and Hove's Downland Estate in relation to restoration, climate change, and cultural issues. **Cllr Turnbull** suggested that the Parish Council should provide a submission to ensure the interests of the village were taken into account.

Cllr Turnbull also advised that two quotes were in preparation for the new pond path to run adjacent to the Plough.

Cllr John (Chair) advised that the Beach Chalet consultation had been discussed by the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee that had agreed that absent renters would be asked to surrender their leases and current life-time leases would be converted to 8-year leases. The City Council were to receive annual updates on progress on the 30 Chalets on Rottingdean, 17 of which were life-time leases.

Cllr John (Chair) advised that the Beacon Hill Stewardship Group had had a very constructive meeting with the Beacon Hill Ranger, Nick Lane, about proposals for shorter grazing periods, controversial plans for fewer, but larger grazing compartments, that would cut across the bridlepath; and a permanent stock fence to run along the boundary between existing grassland and the North and South Wood. The Group had proposed an alternative arrangement of compartment that was under consideration and asked that the proposed stock fence be assessed by Sussex Wildlife to ensure wildlife could pass through unhindered. An information note for the public was being agreed with City Parks that would appear on the RPC website later this week.

b) Built Environment **Cllr Sheppard** gave the following update in addition to the note circulated.

- The illuminated 30 mph sign on Falmer Road had been repaired
- Resurfacing work had been completed on the west side of West Street
- Extensive work had been undertaken to fix the long-standing problem with the storm drain at the bottom of Dean Court Road
- The pot hole at the bottom of Steyning Road had been repaired
- The next phase of the Street Lighting project was being planned; a priority would be to install LED bulbs on the High Street lamps.
- A concept design for three new Village Gateway signs was being developed by a local artist
- Progress was being made with the owner of the land in front of the Sorting Office where new cycle racks were planned.

Cllr Turnbull advised the meeting that discussion had been underway with Rottingdean Heritage to consider if their proposals for new map signs around the village could be linked to the planned installation of new village notice boards.

The meeting ended at 21.36. The next meeting will be on 1 March 2021

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk

February 2021