



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting and May of Rottingdean Parish Council on Monday 13 May 2023

Present: Cllr Nixon (Chair), Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Levins, Cllr Evans, Cllr Poole, Cllr Cherrie.
C Hayes, Parish Clerk (minutes)

Public Gallery: Ward Cllr Earthy, Ward Cllr Fishleigh, Bernard Turnbull, Mike Haggard, Holly Benton, Sylvia Wilkinson, Graham Newby, Diane Stewart, Jonny Barr, Keith Benton.

Annual General Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of Parish Councillors interest in agenda items.

None

Elections

2. **Election of the Chair.** Cllr Nixon was proposed by **Cllr Levins**, seconded by **Cllr Cherrie** and duly elected Chair by unanimous vote

3. **Election of Vice Chair of Parish Council.** Cllr Lawrence was proposed by Cllr Poole, seconded by Cllr Levins and duly elected Vice Chair by unanimous vote.

Appointments

4. **To appoint the Deputy Responsible Finance Officer.** **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** proposed that Cllr Poole continue as Deputy Responsible Finance Officer which was agreed.

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5. **To agree Advisory Group membership and lead Councillors for 2024/25.** The following changes were agreed:

- a Chair and members of the Planning Consultative Panel. Cllr Poole to remain as Chair with Cllr Lawrence as a member
- b Chair and Parish Council members of the Beacon Hill Nature Reserve Stewardship Group. Cllr Nixon to remain as Chair supported by Cllr Evans as a member.

6. **To agree Parish Council representatives on Advisory Groups.** Project Boards and Working Groups for 2024/25. The following changes were agreed:

- a The built environment (BEAG) and natural environment (NEAG) groups to continue to meet as one group with Cllr Evans acting as the lead for natural environment issues.
- b The St Aubyns working group to continue until the transfer of St Aubyns when it would be disbanded. The Chapel and Pavilion would become the responsibility of BEAG, and the Field would be for NEAG to oversee. A new St Aubyns Stewardship Group would be formed led by the Parish Council with membership from community groups.
- c The Lower High Street Project had been paused given the shortfall in Councillors to allow the Parish Council to focus on St Aubyns.

Financial Regulations

7. **The RFO's Draft Annual Governance and Financial Report for 2023/24.** The Clerk advised that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) required the Parish Council to report on governance measures in place to ensure proper management of public funds and financial risks; and an accounting return report on income and expenditure for 2023/24. Both would be published on the Parish Council website. The Clerk proposed that the governance report be discussed at this meeting and the accounting return at the June Council meeting following the completion of the internal audit. The Clerk then took the meeting through the governance statement which was agreed by Councillors and signed by the Clerk and Chair.

Parish Council Governance

- 8. **Review of register of members' interests.** The Clerk advised that all Councillors had confirmed their declarations were up to date apart from Cllr Poole whose declaration required amendment.
- 9. **Review of asset register and insurance arrangements.** The Clerk advised that the Council insurance was in order and that at present the Parish Council had no assets, although would this change following the transfer of St Aubyns.

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10. **Review of standing orders and policies.** The Clerk advised that a number of Standing Orders and Policies required review. In discussion the following action was agreed:

- a Section 1 of the Standing Orders. The Clerk would review
- b Employee Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure. The Governance group would review
- c Grants Policy. Cllr Lawrence to review
- d Planning Application Scrutiny. Cllr Poole to review.
- e Website policy. The Clerk to review.

Cllr Nixon (Chair) asked that a timetable for each review should be provided to the next SCAG meeting on 31 May to enable progress to be monitored.

Parish Council meetings for 2024/25.

11. **Dates of meetings.** The dates for Council Meetings and the annual village meeting for 2024/25 were agreed and would be posted on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Nixon (Chair) closed the AGM.

Ordinary Meeting

At the start of the meeting any member of the public is welcomed to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes, Councillors aim to provide a response during the meeting if possible, and if not will endeavour to respond in writing within the month.

Questions from the Public.

Sylvia Wilson noted the Parish Council's objection to the installation of a 20-meter telecoms tower on land west of Westmeston Avenue and asked when the application would be decided and if a land visual inspection had been carried out. She also noted that the Council's objection had been listed under the Clerk's name and not the Parish Council. **Cllr Poole** advised that in general the right to put a telecom mast under 25 metres was classed a permitted development, but the siting of a mast could be objected to. **Cllr Poole** said that the Parish Council objection had been based on the Neighbourhood Plan policies that protected the green space and wildlife corridor where the tower, supporting structure and access road had been proposed. **The Clerk** said he would amend the listing on the South Downs National Park (SDNP) planning portal.

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Graham Newby asked if the Parsh Council could do anything more to prevent the tower being installed. **Cllr Poole** advised that the Council would continue monitor the progress of the application.

Diane Stewart asked if there was anything more that the public could do. **Cllr Poole** said that residents could encourage more residents opposed to the tower to submit objections to SDNP planning authority.

Keith Benton asked what weight the Parish Council objection would carry. **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** said that the Neighbourhood Plan had been supported by 89% of voting residents in the referendum and had now been adopted by BHCC and SDNPA. This put the Parish Council in a strong position. **The Clerk** advised the meeting that adoption of the Neighbourhood brought it in into legal force and that it now formed part of the statutory Development Plan for Brighton & Hove. Consequently, decisions in determining planning applications in Rottingdean Parish would be made in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise.

Jonny Barr expressed concern about the 'atrocious' condition of the High Street and asked what action was being taken. **Cllr Cherrie** said he had recently met with BHCC to discuss how the six-figure Section 106 funds for sustainable transport from recent development in the Parish could be used to repair the red paving and make the surface less slippery. And an engineer was to inspect the pavement and advise what could be done. **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** added that the state of the High Street had been raised by a number of residents at the recent annual village meeting, including the fact that road markings had faded and that there were now a number of buildings in disrepair and empty buildings. **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** said that this issue required an integrated plan that would require funding from various sources and much better coordination with BHCC, an issue that he had raised with the new BHCC CEO, Jess Gibbons, when she had visited the Village on the 10th of May.

Bernard Turnbull said he and Ward Cllr Earthy had been working with the Friends of Rottingdean Coast and Environment (FORCE) on their application to get Rottingdean beach designated bathing status which had now been agreed. **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** expressed his congratulations to all those concerned.

Ward Cllr Fishleigh reported that momentum was building up on the issue of congestion during school pick and drop of at Whiteways. She also said residents had raised the issue of parking on Park Road Crescent by people communing into Brighton and proposed resident parking permits but that, in her view, this would need to be a Village wide scheme to avoid just displacing traffic.

Ward Cllr Earthy said he continued to work up a report for BHCC on safety on the undercliff and he was working with Cllr Lawrence on a decarbonisation initiative where grant money was available for improving the energy efficiency of public buildings.

The Clerk advised that a resident, **Gavin Fitzgerald**, had provided a written question asking for an update on repairs to the wall at the side the Pond at the Plough corner and Kipling Gardens wall. **Cllr Lawrence** said she understood quotes were still being sought

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for the repair of Kipling Gardens wall but that the matter had been complicated by an insurance claim. She was to follow up the matter. **Cllr Cherrie** said that the Pond wall was on the BEAG list of projects and that former Council Turnbull who had worked on the issue had agreed to follow the matter up with the contractor who had been approached about the repair. **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** asked that a reply be provided to the resident before the next Council Meeting

Action Cllrs Lawrence and Cherrie to provide updates on the repair of the pond wall and Kipling gardens to the Clerk to enable a response to Mr Fitzgerald to be provided before the next Council meeting.

Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 8th of April. The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair

1. **Action Log.** The Clerk provided the following updates
 - i. 0103. Clerk to investigate the health and safety requirements for the infiltration basin. Advice had been received from the Health and Safety Executive that the need for barrier around an infiltration basin should be determined by a risk assessment carried out by the installer. A risk assessment had been carried out by Fairfax that had conclude a barrier was not required. Closed
 - ii. 1004. Clerk to send a note to Rottingdean Heritage (RH) informing them of the idea from a resident for a plaque to commemorate the Volks Railway Daddylonglegs at the Rottingdean Beach. A note had been sent on 10 April. RH had responded indicating that they were in touch with the resident. Closed.
 - iii. 0104. Cllr Cherrie, working with Ward Cllr Fishleigh, to approach BHCC about repair of the pavement outside 14,16,18 and 20 Marine Drive. BHCC had advised that they may be responsible for the repair. Cllr Cherrie would follow up. Carried forward.

2. **Matters Arising.**

None

3. **Finance Update**

- i. Payments and invoices. The Clerk sought authorisation for the following payments. He noted that the payment to Clamp Boxall had been authorised during April under paragraph 7 of the financial regulations and paid on the 2nd of May and was for the Council to confirm.

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VAT

HMRC April	£531.85	
C Hayes Salary April	£709.80	
C Hayes Comms (zoom)	£12.99	£2.60
C Hayes – Software Subscription	£59.99	
One Digital (Artistic Component Event Publicity)	£33.00	
Room Hire	£49.00	
Iexcel (Internal Audit)	£400.00	£80.00
Zurich (Insurance)	£261.50	
Clamp Boxall Payroll Services	£185.00	£37.00
Total	£2243.13	

Payment was proposed by Cllr Levins, seconded by Cllr Poole, and agreed by unanimous vote.

- ii. Accounts. In presenting the accounts the Clerk advised the meeting that a number of payments shown in the accounts were agreed during April

Via Correspondence with the full Council

• Woodberry Circular Bench	£607.50	(+ £121.50 VAT)
• Sustainable Furniture 2 Benches	£1900.00	(+ £380.00 VAT)
• Broxap 3 bins + fixings	£813.85	(+£162.77 VAT)
Total	£3321.35	

Under paragraph 7 of the financial regulations

• Colas Ltd - Inspection of Village Green Junction Box	£312.96	(+£62.41 VAT)
• Rottingdean Village News April/May Article	£110.00	
Total	£422.96	

The Clerk also advised Councillors that the first half of the precept, £29,200, was credited to the RPC account during April. The Accounts were agreed.

- iii. Bank balances. The Clerk advised Councillors that the balances at the end of April were:

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Unity Trust Bank Current Account	£	104.80
Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	£	60,196.06
C&C savings account	£	82,691.13
Cash at Bank	£	142,991.99

Co-option

4. **The Clerk** advised Councillors that an interview had been arranged on 31st of May with an applicant for the current Councillor vacancies. This would enable the panel to make a recommendation to the Council at the 3rd of June meeting.

Major Projects

5. **St Aubyns** The following progress updated was provided.
- Meetings had been arranged with two financial advice companies to discuss investment options for the one-off developer lump sum for future maintenance following which the finance sub group would provide a proposal for the Council.
 - The Clerk was in discussion with two insurance brokers to obtain building insurance for the Chapel, Pavilion.
 - Cllr Levins had drafted terms of reference for the St Aubyns Stewardship Group that had been discussed by the Working Group prior to presentation to the Council for approval.
 - Seeding of the Field had been delayed by wet weather that had prevented the soil preparation and was now unlikely to be completed before the end of May. This suggested that final transfer was unlikely until late June/early July. Close supervision of activities continued especially on progress in removal of stones and planting of suitably maturity trees.
 - An expression of interest for a Field maintenance contract had been sent to 7 landscaping companies, three had responded and had been sent a tender document for response by 31st May. The aim was for the Council to award the contract in time for commencement on 1st July. If necessary and extraordinary meeting of the Council would be convened to approve the contract.
 - **Cllr Lawrence** said 3 quotes had been obtained for 5 aluminium signs, powder coated and laminated with anti-graffiti material to be placed at the entrances to the Field. Cllr Lawrence would circulate the quotes with her recommendation for the Council to approve at the June Council. **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** said it would be prudent to check with BHCC if planning permission was required.

Action Cllr Lawrence to circulate the three quotes for the Field signs

Action Clerk to check with BHCC planning authority if planning permission was required

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- **Cllr Cherrie** advised that quotes were being arranged for polycarbonate protection for the stained-glass windows of the chapel. In addition, a proposal for Chapel electricity supply, rewiring of chandelier and placement of main board and sockets are being arranged with a local contractor along with a proposal for the electricity supply for the Pavilion. Once the proposal was received two other quotes would be organised.
- Due to the higher than anticipated cost of glass rocks the artistic component concept had been modified to include glass on the top layer only. This should retain the original concept and the link with the Burnes Jones Windows. The issue with the north-east entrance to the installation 'Sweeps' where the ground level was higher than the entrance had been resolved.
- The Working Group were considering holding an opening event in August although Bernard Turnbull advised against any events on the Field during this year and until the grass was fully established.

Planning

6. **Applications Received in April.** **Cllr Poole** said that the Council had objected to three applications provide the following update.
 - **BH2024/00632 14 Park Crescent Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7HN.** The panel considered this retrospective application for back garden fencing that exceeded 2 metres in height. The garden was mid terrace and the fence had been erected with large rolling bars along the top edges to keep a cat from climbing out of the garden. The fence and bars looked very top heavy and bulky from a distance. The panel structure was viewed from a neighbouring garden, and it was felt that the structure was overbearing because of its bulk, even though trellis had been incorporated into upper sections of the fence. The Panel considered the structure had a very negative impact on neighbouring properties and therefore objected.
 - **BH2024/00761 18 Newlands Road Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7GD.** The plans for the proposed extensions to this property had been examined and showed a four-storey contemporary style of building. Although some recently modernised properties in Newlands Road had a similar style, because of the height of this building and its relative narrowness on the plot, it was considered that the elevations looked out of proportion compared to the general street scene. It was also noted that a three-storey extension to the rear would have a negative impact on the next-door properties, particularly on the north side, with a loss of sunshine and natural light. For these reasons the Council objected to this application.
 - **SDNP/24/01472/PA16 Whiteways Lane BN2 8AJ.** The Council believed that a 20-metre-high mast at or near land within the South Downs National Park would have a very negative impact on sightlines from all directions. The proposed site that was within the Parsh Boundary would be in conflict with the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan policies (S2 and GOS3) to protect the green space around

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the Parish and its wildlife corridors. The Council considered that to allow the tower to be sited within this green space would be at odds with the South Downs National Park Authority's responsibility to conserve and enhance the South Downs natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage. The Parish Council objected to the application.

Advisory Group Meeting Updates

7. **Strategy and Communications.** Cllr Nixon provided the following update:

- i. Follow up from the annual village meeting. SCAG had discussed some actions to take forward on issues raised at the meeting:
 - Pavement repair. Development of a holistic approach to addressing High Street pavement repair. In addition, it might be useful to liaise with Ditchling Parish Council on their measures to protect paving
 - High Street Reporting listing building in a bad state of repair; a survey of freeholders of empty building to ascertain why they remained without tenants and undertaking a retail needs survey seeking views from residents on the types of businesses they would like to see in the Village.
- ii. Section 106 update. There was now a comprehensive list of S106 monies available to the Parish that included £55,000 for Beacon Hill and £17,000 for Kipling Gardens. This had been discussed with Rob Walker from BHCC. For Beacon Hill the priority was improved access where a project manager was to be found to develop a plan. For Kipling Gardens **Cllr Lawrence** reported that a plan was being worked up with the Friends of Kipling Gardens to submit to BHCC. There was also £200,000 for playing pitches as compensation for the loss of St Aubyns Field where Rob Walker had asked for a clear picture of the needs of the Parish. Cllr Lawrence was coordinating discussion and was to set up a meeting with Woodingdean and Rottingdean football clubs. **Cllr Nixon (Chair)** said that RPC could play a key coordinating role in getting people round the table to assess what the community wanted. He said this was big step forward that could make a real difference.

Cllr Nixon (Chair) also reported on the recent visit on the 10th of May to the Parish by the new BHCC CEO, Jess Gibbons, who had been shown the damaged pavement on Marine Drive, the Undercliff, the Lower High Street, and the High Street. Cllr Nixon had stressed the need for closer co-ordination with BHCC on planned repair work that would ensure BHCC and Parish Council funds were used efficiently and residents got what they wanted. Jess Gibbons had said she was a big supporter of Parish Councils and had agreed to set up a meeting with the Corporate Director, City Services, Donna Chisholm.

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8. **Village and Community.** No report
9. **Natural Environment No report.**
10. **Built Environment Cllr Cherrie** provided the following update.
 - Cllr Cherrie had followed up the issue of volunteers working in the Pond removing vegetation and replacing plants. He had spoken to the landlord of the Plough to inform him that the Parish Council contracted Peter Birchall to maintain the pond and so should be involved in any discussion about Pond maintenance. Cllr Cherrie was to arrange a meeting with the landlord and volunteers, and Peter Birchall.
 - Colas Limited had performed an inspection of the electrical junction boxes on the Village green. They had done some minor tidying up of the junction box on the tree and had provided a quote for work to make safe the junction box on the Green and to trace the bill payer.

The meeting closed at 21.39. The next meeting is on 3rd June.

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk

May 2024

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