



Minutes of the Meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council on Monday 4th of November 2024

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

Public Gallery: Robert and Angela Smithson, Paul and Caroline Lane. Ward Cllr Earthy.

Public Questions:

Paul Lane said he accepted that the Parish Council had undertaken a great deal of work in preparation for the transfer but was disappointed about the delay until Spring 2025. Mr Lane shared a number of concerns:

- His biggest concern was the brick path running from Newlands Road to the Twitten that was fenced off but still used as a public highway. He said that the fence posts bases caused a trip hazard that was compounded by some water seepage on to the path from the Field.
- He was concerned about access to the Field by unauthorised vehicles at the end of the bund wall.
- Mr Lane also said it appeared that the red brick path was within the boundary of the development and not part of the land to be transferred so for the management company to maintain. He wondered if the boundary had been drawn in the right place.

Cllr Nixon said the delay had been caused by very wet weather during Spring and early summer which prevented the heavy vehicle needed to remove stones from accessing the Field ~~could~~ because of the soft ground. This had delayed grass seeding and meant that the Field would not fully meet the agreed specification by the original transfer date which is why the Parish Council had agreed to the delay.

Cllr Nixon said that Fairfax will install a removable bollard in the gap at the end of the bund wall to prevent unauthorized vehicle access and a site visit was planned shortly to check the condition of the Field versus a detailed specification and that he would raise the issue of the safety of the brick path with Fairfax.

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Ward Cllr Earthy provided the following update:

- Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) were being lobbied to change the area where the Marina dredge material was deposited off the coast away from the nearby conservation. Resistance was expected from the contractors as they would need to transport the material to Shoreham or Newhaven.
- He was investigating why the bathing status signs for Rottingdean beach had been removed at the end of the summer season and was trying to clarify the timing of the water quality measurement and reporting.
- The local energy champions initiative had been re-launched with messages on social media and he was talking to Cllr Lawrence about organising something in Rottingdean.
- He was catching up with progress on the Undercliff safety initiative.

At the beginning of the meeting Cllr Nixon welcomed Cllr Snow to her first meeting as a newly co-opted Councillor.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Levins, Cllr Lowery and Ward Cllr Fishleigh

2. **Declarations of interest**

None

3. **Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 7th of October.**

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the October meeting.

4. **Action Log.** The Clerk updated the meeting.

0108. **Cllr Evans** to inspect the trees overhanging the Dene boundary wall and if necessary, take the matter up with BHCC. BHCC had been notified and were to prune the trees shortly. Closed
0109. **Cllr Cherrie** to seek advice from the BHCC Heritage planning team on how best to protect the Chapel windows. **Cllr Poole** advised that his research had suggested that polycarbon sheeting would be required but he was seeking advice from the Conservation Advisory Group (CAG). He also said that the Parish Council may need to pay for heritage planning advice unless an informal route was available. It was agreed that Cllr Poole would continue seek CAG advice and the Clerk would investigate the possibility of an informal approach to the Heritage planning team at BHCC. Carried Forward

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- iii. 0110. **Clerk** to arrange the induction to the Council for Sarah-Helen Snow. Completed on 17th October. Closed
- iv. 0210. **Cllr Evans** to follow up the Friends of Beacon Hill (FoBH) notice board proposal. Cllr Evans said this had been discussed at the recent Beacon Hill Stewardship Group Annual General Meeting and he was in discussion with the FoBH. Carried Forward.
- v. 0310. **Clerk** to draft a response to the complainants about the signage on the new business in Vicarage Lane. The Clerk advise that a response had been provided and BHCC were now taking enforcement action. Closed

5. **Matters Arising.**

None

6. **Finance Update**

- i. **Payments and invoices.** The Clerk sought authorisation for the following payments.

| | | VAT |
|---|-----------------|-------|
| HMRC August | £563.58 | |
| C Hayes Salary September | £745.13 | |
| C Hayes Comms (zoom) | £12.99 | £2.60 |
| Rottingdean Village News (advance payment | £475.20 | |
| Room Hire | £46.00 | |
| Pond Maintenance | £2900.00 | |
| | | |
| Total | £4742.90 | |

Authorisation was proposed by Cllr Poole, seconded by Cllr Cherrie and agreed by unanimous vote. The Clerk also advised Councillors that during October two payments were authorised under paragraph 7 of the financial regulations:

- Oakleigh Electrical (Chapel and Pavilion) £1650 + £330 VAT
- Royal British Legion – Poppy Appeal £25.00

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- ii. **Bank balances** The Clerk advised the meeting that as at the 31st of October bank balances were as follows

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Unity Trust Bank Current Account | £ | 106.25 |
| Unity Trust Bank Instant Access | £ | 70,806.63 |
| C&C savings account | £ | 84,546.57 |
| Cash at Bank | | £155,459.45 |

- iii. **October 2024 Accounts.** The accounts were presented and the Clerk noted that that the second half of the precept had been paid (£29,200) and a community infrastructure payment of £2185.93 received. The accounts were approved.
- iv. **The 2025/26 budget setting plan.** The Clerk summarised the plan circulated. The Clerk said that the proposal was to agree the operational and grants budget at the December Council meeting which would establish what funds were available for investment in infrastructure repairs and projects. Investment priorities would then be agreed at the January strategy workshop along with the level of the precept required. The overall budget and precept for 2025/26 would then be approved at the February Council meeting. **Councillors agreed this approach.**

Major Projects

7. **St Aubyns. Cllr Nixon provided the following update:**

- Completion was expected at the end of April 2025 subject to all specification requirements having been met and maintenance lump sum provided to the Parish Council.
- The working group would cease to operate shortly after completion the St Aubyns Stewardship Group would be formed from Councillors and community group representatives
- A site visit was planned at the end of November to complete the Pavilion Practical Completion and review the Field with Fairfax to establish any final works required to meet the specification.
- A letter box needed to be fitted at the Chapel as this would become the official Parish Council address.
- The work on the gabion stone and glasswork had been completed by CODA. Fairfax would complete the remaining groundworks and make good any gabion wiring before the site visit at end of November. A_warranty would be provided to RPC confirming safety for public use.

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Cllr Evans provided an update on plans for a Community Orchard.

- A Community Orchard concept had been developed with the support of BHCC and Brighton Permaculture Trust (BPT) to provide future shade, potentially seasonal colour and attract wildlife.
- The plan envisaged fruit trees planted in the north east of the Field area surrounded by shelter belt trees. The furthest north east corner would have some bigger trees that would also be planted at the west side of the Field with fruit trees placed near the playground and near the benches. The bottom corner of the Field near the twitten would be planted with some wind break trees and BPT had suggest some shrubs.
- Planting shrubs would imply a cost to the Parish Council in the region of £700-£1500, with an additional modest cost for pruning and maintenance thereafter.
- The size of the trees had been an important consideration. BPT had advised that because of the soil and prevailing weather conditions the larger of the canopy trees would be 3-4m high when planted, and wouldn't grow higher than building height. If some conifers were included in the mix for shelter trees, these would be 1-2m when planted, and again would not grow above building height. The orchard trees would be around 1m high when planted and will probably grow to about 3m high. This meant that no site lines to the coast or windmill should be lost.
- **Cllr Evans** proposed that the Parish Council adopt the plan as a working draft for consultation with residents over the next couple of months, once confirmation had of the award of the grant been received from BHCC, which was expected during November.

The following points were made in discussion:

- It would be important to confirm that a revised landscaping plan is required which would be for Fairfax to undertake. This should be clarified before any communication to the community. Cllr Nixon agreed to contact Fairfax

Action. Cllr Nixon to speak to Fairfax about confirming with the planning authority that a revised field landscaping plan was not required

- Cllrs Poole and Snow approved of the plan and Cllr Snow suggested residents could sponsor a shrub to subsidise the costs.
- **Cllr Nixon** said this was a sensible plan but was concerned that the shrubs may create areas hidden from view and provide the opportunity for loitering or prohibited activity. He also said that, unless BPT thought that shrubs were essential, it might be something to be considered in the future rather than in year one. **Cllr Evans** said he would check.

Action Cllr Evans to check with BPT if shrub planting was an essential or desirable part of the plan

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Councillors then agreed the plan and to consult the community once BHCC had confirmed the success of the grant application and the requirement for formal planning approval has been established.

Planning

8. **Applications Received in October.** In addition to the note circulated, **Cllr Poole** provide the following information.

BH2024/02132. 14 Nicholson Place Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7FZ. Loft conversion with rooflights to front, side and rear.

The property was in a small terrace of flint faced, newly constructed houses that form part of the St Aubyns development. The terrace was within the Rottingdean Conservation Area (RCA) where alterations to the roof of a dwelling house, including the addition of roof lights, would require planning permission because the appearance of the conservation area could suffer as a consequence. The proposed loft conversion would feature eight rooflights and six of these, two each pointing north, east and south would be clearly visible to surrounding properties as well as from Nicholson Place and from The Twitten, which runs alongside the property. Although there were properties within the RCA that had rooflights, this particular property was part of a set of six houses that had been built to a specific style. It was considered that the addition of rooflights to any of these properties would negatively affect the street scene in this part of the conservation area. In addition, the rooflights planned for the pitched roofs facing east and south would look out directly into the gardens of neighbouring properties, leading to a loss of privacy for those residents. **Rottingdean Parish Council objected to this application.**

BH2024/02276. 11 Bazehill Road Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7DB. Erection of ground floor rear infill extension, roof alterations including roof extension to side/rear, addition of 2no dormers to front roof slope, erection of pitched roof open porch, removal of existing garage and associated landscaping works.

The drawings of the proposed redevelopment were considered to fit in with the style, size and general character of other properties in this location. A site visit had been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed development on the street scene and neighbouring properties. However, this part of Bazehill Road was quite a steep hill and the residents of no. 9, the house situated on the lower side of no. 11, had contacted Rottingdean Parish Council to express their concerns about a loss of privacy that would be caused by a proposed patio, shown in the drawings to be

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constructed to the full width of the house and extending approximately 6 metres from the rear of it.

No. 9's rear garden had a 2.4 metre high wooden fence along the boundary with no. 11. Looking over the fence, it was apparent that the steep upwards slope of the land, would mean that the height of the proposed patio would be about the same level as the top of their garden fence. Although the nearest edge of the patio would be about 6 metres from the fence, as it extended several metres beyond the back wall of their house, anyone standing on the patio would be able to look down onto their entire garden and also into the ground and first floor rear windows of their house. The Planning Panel considered this would lead to an unacceptable loss of privacy for the residents. **Rottingdean Parish Council objected to the application.**

Advisory Group Meeting Updates

9. Strategy and Communications

- i. Advisory Group Membership. **Cllr Nixon** said that group proposed that Cllr Snow join the Village Community advisory group and the Natural Environment advisory group. This was agreed
- ii. Undercliff Safety. Cllr Evans summarised the note circulated:
 - The Parish Council had been party to discussions with a campaign group and Ward Cllr Earthy about improving safety measures on the Undercliff and had been copied a proposed note to BHCC by the group.
 - The campaign group's note offered a number of new ideas for safety improvements, particularly during the peak holiday season from May to September when the seafront stretch between Saltdean and Ovingdean was particularly busy. It also pointed out that if existing rules were better signposted and adhered to the risk of mishaps and accidents would be significantly reduced
 - Cllr Evans was proposing that the Parish Council should not be a signatory to the proposal but provide a response that could be attached to the paper sent to BHCC. The response would:
 - Support for better signage on existing restrictions including a clear rule that pedestrians have priority on the under cliff; a 10 mph speed limit and that dogs should be on leads and under close control at all times on the under cliff (and only off leads on the beaches when and where permitted)
 - Support for some additional measures proposed; moveable chicane-style barriers during the peak season before and after Ovingdean beach and Mollys

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café; the testing of rumble strips near to the seafront cafes at Ovingdean and Rottingdean and near to the Saltdean tunnel, and a ban on cycling on the down ramp from the lower High Street to Rottingdean beach at all times. In addition, he proposed the Council should propose that e-bikes should be subject to the same rules as bicycles.

- Propose that the following further measures proposed should be held in abeyance until the effectiveness of the others had been assessed; a ban on all cycling along the under cliff between the hours of 10:00-16:00 hrs; a “Speedwatch” style group be formed to publicise and monitor the enhanced controls.

The proposed response was agreed

10. **Village and Community.** No update provided

11. **Natural Environment. Cllr Nixon** said that the mechanical scrub removal that had been undertaken at the east of the reserve was more extensive than foreseen and had produced a much larger volume of risings than expected. The FoBH had held a number of clearing sessions, and more were planned. **Cllr Nixon** said that volunteers to support the work would be welcome.

12. **Built Environment. Cllr Cherrie** said he had recently been focusing in the Pond Path/Barrier project that proposed a pond path adjacent to the Plough and replacement of the barrier between the pond and the road. He had made a number of visits and spoken to a contractor about the work. The path was expected to cost round £7000, and the contractor had suggested that a design would be needed to for a replacement barrier at a cost of £550. **Cllr Cherrie** said that he had come to the conclusion that the recent clearing and resurfacing of the path by volunteers had made it sufficiently accessible and that the barrier only needed repair rather than wholesale redesign and replacement. He therefore proposed that only repair of the barrier should be pursued which would free up some of the £15,000 put aside for the work for deployment on other priorities. The proposal was agreed and **Cllr Cherrie** said he would take forward repair of the barrier and liaise with volunteer group about the pond path.

Action: Cllr Cherrie to liaise with the group of volunteers currently maintaining the pond path about the Parish Council proposal to discontinue to the pond path project.

The meeting closed at 21.30. The Next meeting is on the 2nd of December.

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk

December 2024

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