



Minutes of the Meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council on Monday 2nd of December 2024 at the Whiteway Centre

Present. Cllr Nixon, Chair, Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Poole, Cllr Levins, Cllr Evans, Cllr Lowery, Cllr Snow, Cllr Cherrie.

C Hayes, Parish Clerk

Public Gallery. Ward Cllr Fishleigh, Des McGuckian, Dirk Mitchell, David Kanes, Terry Rose, Caroline Lane, Lisa Collings, Rose Daley, Jane Mead, Bob McLellan.

Public Questions.

Caroline Lane asked for an update on the planting of the wildflower meadow on St Aubyns Field. **Cllr Nixon** said this would be covered later in the meeting.

Janice Daley asked when the unsightly boarding from the Chapel windows would be removed. **Cllr Nixon** said the Parish Council had agreed a single transfer date for all St Aubyns assets at the end of April 2025 when the Field would meet the full specification. In the meantime, responsibility for the Chapel remained with Fairfax who had boarded the windows to prevent damage. The Parish Council were however considering ways to protect the windows in a way acceptable on a Heritage building that would replace the boarding after transfer.

Rose Daley asked if there was any news on getting a pharmacy back in the Village. **Cllr Lowery** said he was in touch with the NHS in Lewis who managed local pharmacy service contracts. They had been unaware that the Rottingdean pharmacy no longer operated in the village as their licence had not been cancelled. The hope was that the previous pharmacy was looking for another premises in the village or that another pharmacist would be interested in setting up a business in the village, but this was out of the Parish Council's control. **Cllr Lowery** said he would continue to make enquiries.

Dirk Mitchell referring to a pre-meeting discussion about the planning application for 3G floodlit playing field at Longhill School, said outside his house there was a 100 metre hedge where he regularly saw bats feeding in the evening and was concerned at the impact of light and noise on their habitat if the application was successful.

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Mike Sexton asked for an update on Parish Council plans to help prevent parking on the verge adjacent to Sheep's Walk by repositioning the stones that had been moved to allow parking or replacing them with larger stones. **Cllr Evans** agreed to work with Cllr Cherrie to follow up the matter

Action: Cllr Evans/Cllr Cherrie to follow up the replacement or repositioning of large stones on Sheep's Walk to prevent parking in the verge.

Des McGuckian commented that there had been 137 public comments on the application for a 3G pitch at Longhill School of which 61 had objected and 81 were in support. He recognised that the real concerns of nearby residents about the impact but said that the pitch would benefit over 1000 local children. He said reports on the impact attached to the application had shown that light pollution should be no greater than that from street lighting and that the environmental impact had been taken into account in the pitch design including to measures to help reduce pollution from the rubber crumb used to form the playing surface.

Ward Cllr Fishleigh updated the meeting in the following issues

- Repair work had not yet begun on the Old Tea Rooms on the High Street. It was still the case in the New Year an enforcement notice would be issued.
- A planning application to change the use of the former Chinese restaurant on Neville Road to a short term residential let had been approved.
- The document proposing measures to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the undercliff would shortly be submitted to Brighton and Hove City Council

1) **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Ward Cllr Earthy

2) **Declarations of interest**

None

3) **Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 4th of November.** The minutes were agreed.

4) **Action Log.** The Clerk provided the following update.

- 0109. **Cllr Poole** to continue to seek the Conservation Advisory Group's (CAG) advice about the Chapel Window Protection. Mike Bennett, a co-opted member of the St Aubyns working group, had agreed to draft an email to the relevant member of CAG. Carried Forward.
- 0210. **Cllr Evans** to follow up the Friends of Beacon Hill (FoBH) notice board proposal. Cllr Evans was working with FoBH to investigate options for the most cost

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effective repair or replacement of the Notice Boards that would improve their longevity. Carried Forward.

- 0111. **Clerk** to investigate the possibility of an informal approach to the Heritage planning team about Chapel window protection. This would form part of the email to CAG mention in action 0109. Closed
- 0211. **Cllr Nixon** to confirm with Fairfax that a revised field landscaping plan was not required for the community orchard. To be discussed as part of a later Agenda item. Closed
- 0311. **Cllr Evans** to check with Brighton Permaculture Trust (BPT) if shrub planting was an essential or desirable part of the community orchard plan. BPT had advised that protective shrub planting around the trees was not essential but highly recommended. Closed
- 0411. **Cllr Cherrie** to liaise with the group of volunteers currently maintaining the pond path about the Parish Council proposal to discontinue plans to pave the path. Cllr Cherrie had advised the Plough Landlord who was a member of the group and was to speak to other members. Carried Forward

5) **Matters Arising.**

None

6) **Finance Update**

- **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
Room Hire	£26.00	
Total	£1347.70	

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

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- **Bank balances** The Clerk advised that bank balances at the end of November were.

Unity Trust Bank Current Account	£	106.25
Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	£	68,953.48
C&C savings account	£	84,853.02
Cash at Bank		£153,912.75

- **November 2024 Accounts.** The accounts for November were presented and agreed.
- **Operational and Grants Budget for 2025/26.** The Clerk provided the following summary of the key points of the paper circulated.
 - Operational expenditure had only risen slightly over the last three years, mainly driven by increases in contracted services e.g. IT, payroll support and Pond Maintenance. The Clerk had estimated that by March 2025 the Council would have spent £25,368, an increase on the £22,306 spent in 23/24.
 - The proposal for 2025/26 was a budget of £46,850 that represented a small increase of 4% to reflect increased operational costs, in particular the increase employer National insurance. An increase in the publicity budget was proposed to reflect recent expenditure and to allow for 4 ad-hoc articles in the Rottingdean Village News in addition to the regular Parish Council page.
 - The Operational budget proposal included £15,500 for St Aubyns maintenance (that would be drawn from the maintenance lump sum provided by the developer) and a general contingency of £5000.
 - Expenditure on grants in 2024/25 was estimated to reach £5525 by the end of March 2025 so the proposal was to retain the same budget of £7500 for 2025/26 but this could be increased in-year if necessary.
 - Overall, the Clerk sought approval of an operational budget of £46850 and a grants budget of £7500 that would commit £54,350 of available funds. The remainder would be allocated to projects, infrastructure repairs and other activities at the Councillor strategy workshop arranged for the 10th of January. The final overall budget and precept requirement for 2025/26 would then be formally agreed at the February Council meeting.

Approval was proposed by Cllr Cherrie, seconded by Cllr Levins and agreed by unanimous vote.

7) Major Projects

- **St Aubyns** Cllr Nixon provided the following update:

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- Handover of all St Aubyns assets was now expected at the end of April 2025. Plans for a Stewardship Group to advise the Parish Council on the maintenance and development of St Aubyns formed of community group representatives had been made. Arrangements to set up the group would get underway post transfer
- A Field site review took place with Fairfax on Tuesday 26th November. A short list of outstanding items had been identified including: a remedy for compacted ground on the South side of The Sweeps, replacement of hedge whips along Newlands Rd, extension of the bund along Vaughan Williams Way and installation of lockdown posts for controlled access. A general re-seeding would take place where needed at the beginning of March 2025.
- The Pavilion Practical Completion also took place on the 26th of November. A short list of points had been identified for rectification including, evidence of a leak along the North roof edge, installation of drain downpipes and some internal decoration finishing. A final inspection and sign-off would take place immediately before hand-over which would trigger a 12-month defects liability obligation on the developer.
- A plan for a community orchard to provide colour and shelter in the Field, that had been suggested during the consultation in 2022, was being progressed by Cllr Evans.

Cllr Evans provide the following update

- Formal confirmation had been received of a Forestry Commission Grant for 36 trees that would be maintained by BHCC for the first three years.
- The Parish Council were working with Brighton Permaculture Trust (BPT) on a planting plan for the Community Orchard and had sought their advice on the types of trees that could withstand the prevailing weather conditions.
- BPT had recommended a mixture of fruit trees and hardy shelter trees and shrubs that would be divided between the north east corner of the field and the lower part of the field near the play area and the infiltration basin.
- Fairfax had confirmed with the planning authority that a revised planting scheme for the Field would be required that would incur costs of about £700 for the drawings. Fairfax had asked the Parish Council to fund this. Cllr Evans considered this reasonable and sought agreement to incur this expenditure.
This was agreed by Councillors.
- In answer to the earlier question by Caroline Lane, Cllr Nixon said that planting of the wildflower meadow had been delayed but that this would take place soon.
- On Tuesday the 19th Rottingdean in Bloom volunteers planted 250 daffodil bulbs that they had donated in St Aubyns Field around the war memorial and Steyning Road entrance that would add a welcome splash of colour in spring.

Cllr Nixon said he would like the minutes to record the Council's thanks to the Rottingdean in Bloom volunteers for the donation and planting of the Daffodil bulbs.

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Planning - Applications Considered in November. In addition to the paper circulated Cllrs Poole and Lawrence provided the following update:

BH2024/0249. Installation of a new full size synthetic 3G pitch with floodlighting and fencing to replace the existing natural grass area. Cllr Lawrence made the following points.

- Cllr Lawrence had studied the application and read all the comments submitted to the planning authority that made it clear that the pitch was a much needed facility.
- The new pitch facility would enable Longhill pupils to play outside throughout the year. It would also help the school to better engage children in sport and include extra circular activities in a school where 50% of pupils were receiving free school meals.
- Cllr Lawrence had discovered that there are a number of schools in the area that had installed 3G pitches so there should not be the demand for the pitch to be in use late into every evening or during every weekend.
- Cllr Lawrence talked through the key points captured from the 30 minute public meeting dedicated to this subject prior to the RPC meeting including the concerns raised by residents living near to the playing field.
- The Council understood the legitimate concerns by expressed by nearby residents about the potential for disturbance caused by noise and light and thought it should be incumbent on the school to liaise with local residents to minimise the impact.
- After careful consideration of all the comments and issues raised by neighbouring residents and following a meeting with the school, the planning advisory panel recommended that the Parish Council support the application but request in their comments to BHCC that steps are taken to minimise the impact of this investment on adjacent residents. It is also requested that the school should take account of the neighbouring residents' concerns and liaise with them closely about the use of the facility.

The following points were made in the Councillor discussion.

- The noise and light issues were a real concern but had been well covered by the technical reports in the application in terms of the problems that might arise. There were very legitimate concerns from local residents about loss of amenity that the School would need to manage with them.
- The issues raised by local residents were not in themselves reasons to object to the application but perhaps conditions could be attached to the consent to mitigate them
- This was a complicated decision with powerful arguments for the social and local benefits of the facility to allow pupils an all-weather play area. This would enable Longhill School to come up to the same standard as surrounding schools.

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- Clarity was needed on the potential loss of amenity and some monitoring of the situation should be put in place to manage the noise and light impact.
- Some Councillors had been in two minds about the application and while they saw the arguments for the facility, they had great sympathy with the concerns expressed by the nearby residents.
- The Council response should ensure that residents' concerns were clearly articulated and taken into account by the planning authority.
- In summing up, the Chair said this had been one of the most complicated applications the Council had considered. There were a number of different perspectives and no easy answer but some consistency in a willingness to support the application given its importance to the school, in particular to enhance the mental and physical well-being of the pupils. But there was a clear recognition of the concerns of local residents that should be highlighted in the Parish Council's comments
- Councillors agreed that the Parish Council should therefore support the application but, in the comments, urge to planning authority to take into consideration the concerns of local residents and, where possible, apply conditions to minimise any impact.
- Cllr Lawrence agreed to circulate a draft response.

Action: Cllr Lawrence to draft and circulate for agreement a Parish Council response to the application from Longhill School for the installation of a new full size synthetic 3G pitch.

Land Rear Of 15 Dean Court Road Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7DH. Demolition of existing garage to facilitate the erection of a 4 no bedroom two storey detached dwelling (C3) with associated landscaping works. Revised plans.

The view of the planning advisory panel was that the planned development would lead to a loss of amenity with privacy and overlooking issues for both 15 Dean Court Road, the proposed new dwelling and neighbouring properties. The proposed dwelling would also lead to an increased density of housing in this area, particularly affecting properties in Northfield Rise. It also contravened critical parts of the Brighton and Hove City Plan 2 and the Rottingdean Parish Neighbourhood Plan. **For these reasons, the planning advisory panel proposed that Rottingdean Parish Council object to the application.** Cllr Poole said he had circulated a draft response to this application that Councillors had agreed. The response would now be sent to the planning authority. The application would be considered by the BHCC planning committee on the 4th of December. Cllr Lawrence was to attend the meeting and if possible, present the Parish Council's opinion, otherwise Cllr Fishleigh had kindly agreed to read out the Council's objections to the committee.

8) **Advisory Group Meeting Updates**

i) **Strategy and Communications Cllr Nixon gave the following update**

- Meeting with BHCC on the High Street. As a follow up to the discussion about the state of the High Street with the BHCC CEO in June, Senior Transport

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Officers visited the Village on 26th November. They made clear that there was pressure on funding and costs for any road repair would be very high not least because of the need to close the road and divert traffic. However, after a constructive discussion and visit to the High Street, they agreed to come back with a proposal for improvement within the next few weeks that would enable the development of a 2 to 3 year integrated plan for improvement drawing on BHCC and Section 106 funding. The Parish Council would also be considering if the work could be advanced by using Parish Council funds at a strategy workshop in January.

- The next 6 monthly meeting with the BHCC CEO was planned for the 6th of January. The discussion would follow up on the High Street work and progress on the deployment of S106 recreational funding for Happy Valley. Cllrs should let Cllr Nixon know of any other items that might be included on the agenda.
- The group agreed arrangements for the Strategy Workshop scheduled for the 10th of January
- The Clerk advised the meeting of two current consultations
 - The Government consultation on remote attendance at Council meetings. Temporary legislation was brought in during the Covid lock down to allow remote attendance and all RPC meetings were held via Zoom. This worked quite well, although some residents complained that they were unable to use the technology. However, public meetings with a mix of in-person and remote access would be more technically challenging. The consultation was to close on 19th of December. This was probably too late for Parish response, but Councillors might wish to respond individually.
 - BHCC were consulting on potential updates for the current City Plan to ensure it was appropriate for the City over the period to 2041, reflected the key aims of the Council Plan and the updated National Policy Planning Frame (NPPF). The consultation ran until the 25th of January 2025 and could be found on the 'YourVoice' consultation website. Cllrs Poole and Lawrence would be considering the key questions relevant to Rottingdean raised by the consultation and provide advice to the Council.

Action: Cllrs Poole and Lawrence review the proposal and advise Councillors at the January meeting of a recommended response.

- ii) **Village and Community (VCAG).** Cllr Lawrence provided the following update
- Cllr Snow had suggested that one of the things the Parish Council might try and do is engage with local schools. The Parish Council had been aware for some time that engagement with the three schools local to the Parish was limited. Cllrs Snow's membership of the VCAG provided an opportunity to approach the local schools and the group aimed to open a dialogue with them about what they would like to see in their local community. **Cllr Nixon** said it would be important to be clear about what the Council was offering for

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the schools and asked that this idea be discussed at the January Workshop as a proposed Activity for 2025.

- Cllr Lawrence had met with Clive Dixon who had designed a welcome pack for new residents moving into St Aubyns. This included information about local charities, the work of Rottingdean Heritage and other volunteer groups in the village. He handed these out to new residents and took the opportunity to invite them to become involved. In liaison with Clive, VCAG would aim to give the packs out to new residents and take the opportunity to have a chat and get a feel for what they might be interested in. The pack would include information about local pub events, local retailers, events in and around the village, and adult education and volunteering opportunities.
 - The group were working on ideas for a Volunteer Day for 14th of June on St Aubyns field with local community groups invited to set up stalls setting out their work and guided tours of the field and the chapel that would aim to identify leads for the Chapel and task them with recruiting volunteers.
 - Cllr Earthey had circulated details of a training session for energy champions on the 11th of December that Cllrs Poole, Cherrie, and Snow had expressed interest in attending. This would enable them to provide residents with information on the steps they could be taken, and the organisations they could contact, to help them make their homes more energy efficient.
 - Colin Duffy who donated the Christmas Tree had written to say that he was happy provide tree this year but would like a more robust plaque put next to the tree and had suggested warm white lights for decoration. The cost of the lights should be around £50, and Cllr Lawrence was seeking quotes for a sign from One Digital and Brighton Signs. Cllr Lawrence asked for approval to incur expenditure on lights and signs. **This was agreed by Councillors.**
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- **Natural Environment.** No update
 - **Built Environment.** Cllr Cherrie said he was having some difficulty obtaining quotes for the repair of the pond barrier. He was in contact with one company and would continue to try and obtain further quotes.

The meeting closed at 21.27. The next meeting is on the 6th of January 2025.

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk

December 2024

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Date