

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Brightling Parish Council held on  
Monday 11th May 2020 at 7.30 p.m. via Zoom video conference

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*The meeting was being held under the terms of the following Statutory Instrument: SI 2020/392 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020*

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Caroline Croft, Daniel Lambert-Gorwyn, Jane Oxenford, Dianne Mower, Judy Petty and Andrew Wedmore (Chair)

Parish Councillors absent: Cllr Rodderick Wrenn

District/County Councillors : RDC Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green, ESCC Cllr John Barnes

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Clerk to the Council  
3 members of the public

**1. Election of Chairman**

Waived – Chairman Cllr Andrew Wedmore continues in office.

**2. Election of Vice Chairman**

Waived – Vice Chairman Cllr Caroline Croft continues in office.

**3. Declarations of Acceptance of Office**

Not applicable.

**4. Apologies for absence**

Received from Cllr Wrenn

**5. Disclosures of interest**

None.

**6. Additional agenda items**

The Chairman approved the addition of the following agenda items due notice of which has been given to the Clerk on the day before the meeting by 12 noon:

Item 15 – Covid 19 update and Item 14.2.4.3 additional payment to authorise

**7. Adoption of Minutes**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of both the Ordinary Council Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 9th March 2020 and the Special Meeting of the Council held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as true and correct records.

**8. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

The date of the most recent review of Standing Orders was noted (November 2019). The most recent Financial Regulations (July 2019) had been previously circulated and Cllr Wedmore proposed they be adopted, a motion seconded by Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn.

**9. Asset Register of Council Property**

The Asset Register showing the value of assets as £3,672 and the associated Risk Assessment had both been previously circulated by email. They were approved by all members after being proposed by Cllr Wedmore and seconded by Cllr Croft.

**10. Appointment of members to serve on external bodies**

10.1 RALC – Cllr Petty was happy to continue to serve as representative of the Parish Council on this association of local councils.

10.2 Village Hall – Cllr Oxenford was happy to continue as the representative of the Parish Council on the village hall committee.

**11. Dates and times of future meetings**

Cllr Wedmore had previously proposed moving meetings from Monday to Wednesday evenings as Rother District Council had moved some daytime meetings to a Monday evening, thereby preventing attendance by the district and county councillors. Members adopted the following dates for meetings for the remainder of the council year:

2020: 8<sup>th</sup> July, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 11<sup>th</sup> November.

2021: 13<sup>th</sup> January, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 12<sup>th</sup> May (AGM).

**12. Date of the Annual Assembly**

Members set the date for 2021 as Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April.

**13. Open Forum**

13.1 RDC Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green reported on the following matters:

The Garden Waste service began again last week and had been halted whilst 20% of the workforce were absent through illness. The Planning Dept are putting up pink notices again this week – most of the department has been working from home and used the opportunity to catch up on a back log. Similarly, the Enforcement Dept should be back making site visits from next week. The Finance Dept have been very efficient in paying out loans to local businesses (£17 million) and most were received within 48 hours of application.

13.2 ESCC Cllr John Barnes reported on the following matters:

Broadband is still a problem but also still a priority. There has been a relatively low incidence of COVID cases in the county and no care home problems. Highways continue to work with individuals travelling to sites in their own cars and the Health & Social Care integration is also working well. The major problem going forward will be financial as current estimates show an overspend of £28 million. Members of the council were urged to look at the fire authority consultation – the FBU are contesting it but it is a redeployment of resources, and there will be no job losses. The Clerk was asked to publish the consultation document on the website and circulate it among councillors. It is open until 19<sup>th</sup> June.

13.3 Members of the Public

The matter of street re-naming was mentioned again as one resident wanted to register his disappointment with both the process and the outcome. He still felt the benefits were unclear and was concerned that his postcode may now change. Cllr Oxenford expressed sympathy, especially if his postcode required changing, and Cllr Croft felt that the matter had been publicised and discussed at several earlier opportunities. The Chairman stated that he was aware that not everyone had agreed with the process, but as the matter was now decided upon, it was probably time for the debate to end. Members of the public left the meeting.

#### 14. RFO Report and Governance

14.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) - This has been postponed to the July meeting in order to approve the internal audit after it has taken place on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

##### 14.2 RFO Report

14.2.1 The RFO had previously circulated the schedule of receipts and payments for March 2020, the final month of the fiscal year and members approved it.

14.2.2 The RFO had previously circulated the bank reconciliation for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and the Chairman advised that he had been online that day and verified the balances were correct as stated.

14.2.3 The end of year accounting statement (Income and Expenditure) against budget had also been previously circulated. The RFO reported that in the last financial year £270 of reserves had been spent leaving a closing balance of £4,120. The statement was approved by members.

14.2.4 The following payments were approved:

14.2.4.1 Tree Warden, funding for black poplar planting - £151.67 (Retrospective)

14.2.4.2 Donation to Bexhill Foodbank (Battle branch) - £100 (Retrospective)

14.2.4.3 GoDaddy Domain Name Renewal - £41.47 (Retrospective on credit card)

14.2.4.4 Annual subscriptions to NALC and ESALC Ltd - £119.92

14.2.4.5 Chairman's Expenses (printing) - £31.10

14.2.4.6 Zurich Insurance Premium - £257.60

14.2.4.7 Churchyard mowing, Jon Avery - £360.00

14.2.4.8 Amazon Web Services (monthly) - \$26.08 (retrospective payment on credit card)

##### 14.3 Governance

14.3.1 The requirement in the recently approved Standing Orders to appoint a Councillor as stand-in RFO if ever the RFO was unavoidably detained was duly satisfied by Cllr Croft.

14.3.2 The Complaints Procedure previously circulated by email was proposed for adoption by Cllr Wedmore and seconded by Cllr Petty. The Clerk agreed to publish the document on the website.

#### 15. Covid-19 Update

The 3 councillors who had spearheaded support in the Parish confirmed that apart from some shopping, no residents had requested any help. The Emergency Plan is still a work in progress and will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### 16. Community and Business Development

##### 16.1 Broadband

Cllr. Wedmore reported that broadband contract 3 had finally been agreed and announced in March 2020, which was 11 months behind schedule. The completion date was now December 2021, which was 21 months behind the previous plan. At the end there would still be approximately 15 properties in Brightling without superfast broadband. There were no specific plans or budget allocated to these "Final few". Cllr Wedmore noted online at

<https://esussex.org/Home/About> that the Council "*is also developing some ideas about how it can continue to work with communities, including potentially using match-funding on local projects. We'll keep you updated as these plans develop.*"

That statement was made two months ago, and so he felt it reasonable to ask for an update. Cllr Wedmore asked Cllr Barnes to facilitate this process of working with communities, as he remains very keen to work constructively with the broadband project to bring decent broadband to the whole of Brightling.

#### 16.2 **Crime, Anti-Social behaviour & Police relationships**

Motorbikes were reported in the woods again on Saturday and many people had gathered outside against current social distancing rules. A suspicious van had been reported and the Chairman suggested that whenever possible a number plate should be recorded and reported on the 101 website.

#### 16.3 **Defibrillators**

The Clerk reported that the insurance policy does cover the defibrillators in the event of theft. They are currently both in good working order.

#### 16.4 **Footpaths & Bridleways** - Nothing to report

#### 16.5 **Highways, Hedges & Potholes**

Cllr Petty reported that the white line repainting had now been completed, and some spray patching repairs carried out on the Brightling to Robertsbridge road, However, they are not very satisfactory as sections are left undone. Cllr Oxenford said it was totally unacceptable that verges had been cut already, so much earlier than usual. Cllr Barnes asked that her remarks be put in writing to present as evidence at the upcoming Scrutiny Committee meeting.

#### 16.6 **Phone Box**

No status change. Cllr Wedmore suggested an appeal for help with painting could be publicised in The Messenger.

#### 16.7 **Refuse Collection**

No problems or interruption, despite current conditions.

#### 16.8 **Signposts**

All fingerposts are in a good state of repair.

#### 16.9 **Trees**

Black poplars are planted – Cllr Oxenford asked if there was a map to show their locations. The Clerk noted that the Annual Report supplied by the Tree Warden said he was imminently preparing details of where the poplars had been planted.

#### 16.10 **Utilities** - Nothing to report.

#### 16.11 **Village Hall** - Nothing to report.

#### 16.12 **Website**

Cllr Wedmore reported that the parish website is currently hosted on Amazon Web services. Earlier this year, Rother District Council migrated to a new and (generally) improved web platform. The plan was for 4 parish councils that were being hosted by Rother to move their websites to the new platform, ie hosted by Rother. Having looked at the new websites they are much improved; however Cllr Wedmore intends to contact the clerk at each of these parish councils about the experience before making further recommendations.

#### 16.13 **Welcome Packs**

Cllr Croft reported some new people had moved into Brightling and Cllr Oxenford said she would email or drop off a welcome pack.

**17. Planning Matters**

Cllr Mower had previously circulated a presentation from an online planning training that had been unsatisfactory as the video technology had been poor. However, there was some useful information in the accompanying slides. Cllr Kirby-Green was asked to probe for further training for parishes in AONB's and for listed buildings.

**18. Highways Matters**

The next SLR meeting in June has been cancelled but the Clerk was asked to find out if it could happen by video conference instead.

**19. Training**

None

**20. Correspondence received**

Rye Harbour Discovery Centre's request for a donation was deemed to be located too far out of the parish. Cllr Barnes removed himself from the discussion as he is a member of the appeal board.

**21. Parish Councillors' Forum**

Having previously circulated his proposals on the Draft Environmental Strategy, Cllr Wedmore asked for any comments from other members. Cllr Barnes mentioned that light pollution could be included, and the other members agreed. Cllr Wedmore is going to publish the document on the village website for comments by members of the public.

**22. Circulation Folder**

None

**23. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items**

- Grass cutting programme
- Emergency Plan

**24. Next meetings**

24.1.1 Meetings of the parish council will be in Brightling Village Hall at 7.30pm.

24.1.2 The following are the remaining dates for council meetings in the current council year:

2020: 8<sup>th</sup> July, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 11<sup>th</sup> November.

2021: 13<sup>th</sup> January, 10<sup>th</sup> March, (14<sup>th</sup> April Annual Assembly), 12<sup>th</sup> May (AGM)

..... Signed (Chairman)

Date .....