

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Brightling Parish Council held on
Wednesday 9th September 2020 at 7.30 p.m. in the Brightling village hall

Parish Councillors present:	Cllrs Caroline Croft, Daniel Lambert-Gorwyn, Rodderick Wrenn, Judy Petty and Andrew Wedmore (Chair)
Parish Councillors absent:	Cllrs Jane Oxenford & Dianne Mower
District/County Councillors:	RDC Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green
In attendance:	Gilly Lowe, Clerk to the Council 3 members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence**

Received from Cllrs Mower & Oxenford

2. **Disclosures of interest**

None

3. **Additional agenda items**

None

4. **Adoption of Minutes**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 8th July 2020 as a true and correct record.

5. **Open Forum**

5.1 RDC Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green reported that a housing company had been set up by Rother DC to deliver on social housing and other housing requirements. The Civil Parking Enforcement, affecting Robertsbridge, begins on 29th September. There is a minimal amount of paid for parking. There was no update from ESCC as Cllr John Barnes was absent.

5.2 Members of the Public

Simon Tayler said he wished to make the case for a review following the recent changes to street names and postcodes. He had the following points and questions. 1. Both Rother and Royal Mail say that decisions are not irrevocable. 2. "Does every "street" have its name; must every "street" use its name? 3. Who knows what a locality postcode is? 4. The "consultation" offered an invalid binary choice 5. Grove could be a separate word, eg Oak Grove, Birch Grove, Linden Grove, Ash Grove, Hollin Grove 6. Where is Twelve Oaks? 7. Tautology, eg Hollingrove Barn, Hollingrove Cottages, Twelve Oaks Cottages 8. Ordnance Survey (lack of co-ordination) 9. Database conflict and lack of synchronisation 10. Lack of communication between Rother and Royal Mail 11. Emergency

services ability to find properties can be addressed in other ways, eg through the "What three words" system 12. Hollingrove is not equal to Twelve Oaks.

6. Finance and Governance

6.1 RFO Report

6.1.1 The bank reconciliation to 31st August 2020 was previously circulated and the Chairman confirmed that having checked the bank account online, the balances were correct.

6.2 Receipts and Payments

6.2.1 The RFO had previously circulated the schedule of receipts and payments for July and August 2020. This was confirmed to be correct.

6.2.2 Cllr Wedmore proposed the motion to increase the Clerk's salary according to the NALC Pay Award and backdated to 1st April 2020. A one-off payment of £42.00 would be made to cover the months April – August, and the increased rate of £10.44 p/hr would apply from September onwards. Cllr Croft seconded the motion and it was duly approved and adopted.

6.3 Governance

6.3.1 Cllr Wrenn handed the Clerk a completed Register of Members' Interests for the Clerk to update the website as necessary and submit the form to the Monitoring Officer.

7. Consultation on the planning system

Cllr Wedmore reported that there are currently 3 government consultations about reforms to the planning system that are open to comment. Cllr Petty continued saying that BPC had been invited to work alongside some other nearby councils to formulate responses as the subject matter is technical, confusing and very detailed. Largely there is widespread opposition to these government proposals. Cllr Wedmore suggested that a further meeting via Zoom be held on 16th September to finalise and approve the response from the Council after further information from neighbouring councils. This was duly arranged.

8. Rother District's Local Plan Update

8.1 Cllrs Mower and Wedmore have put together a draft response to the 'Early Engagement from Parish Councils' survey and this was previously circulated via email. Cllr Wedmore proposed that it be submitted as Brightling's response and Cllr Croft seconded this proposal. Other council members approved the motion and the Clerk was asked to submit the survey online.

8.2 A second part of the survey was the completion of Settlement Studies – a survey about services in distinct 'areas of built form' within the parish. The Clerk had previously circulated the completed surveys for any additional comments or information from members. The surveys were approved once the information from Cllr Croft could be included and the motion to submit them was proposed by Cllr Wedmore and seconded by Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn. The clerk confirmed that she would submit the surveys online after adding the information from Cllr Croft.

9. Brightling Environmental Strategy

Cllr Wedmore reported that the response had been updated to include comments from the public and the final draft had been circulated previously via email. Cllr Wedmore proposed to adopt the strategy and Cllr Croft seconded the motion. Cllr Lambert-Gorwyn commented that the final draft was much improved.

10. Postcodes changes within the parish

Cllr Wedmore reported that it had come to light that there had been some postcode changes within the parish (see item 5.2) and in neighbouring parishes also. There are many different repositories of data that don't all concur such as the National Street Gazetteer (NSG) and the Postcode Address File (PAF) not to mention Ordnance Survey and Google Maps. The voting register and Council Tax billing system often don't agree with PAF or NSG to further complicate matters. Cllr Wedmore stated that the Council was not responsible for these changes and that they have not necessarily come about as a result of the street re-naming as some properties unaffected by re-naming have nevertheless been issued with a new postcode. Cllr Petty commented that it would be interesting to know if the Post Office had a reason for the changes and had acted within their remit? The Clerk was asked to co-ordinate with neighbouring parish clerks and investigate the matter.

11. Grass cutting programme

Cllr Wedmore reported that a resident in Brickyard Lane has been working on an application form to designate Brickyard Lane as a wildlife verge, and it will hopefully be ready to bring to the November meeting of the parish council. Meanwhile Mountfield PC were putting forward an application to protect their verges from the A2100 all the way through to Twelve Oaks by applying to ESCC to have them designated as "wildlife verges", meaning that ESCC would only cut them between the beginning of September and the end of February. Part of this route falls into Brightling Parish and he wanted to propose that Brightling Parish council should support this part of the application. Cllr Wrenn commented that he felt it would make the lanes even narrower, and Cllr Croft was also concerned about visibility and safety. Cllr Petty asked if any other parishes had experience of leaving verges un-cut for a significant period of time through the growing season. Cllr Wedmore felt that visibility was impaired more by hedges not being cut than verges. Cllr Wedmore proposed a vote to agree Mountfield PC's application but exclude the approaches to the triangles at Twelve Oaks and Hollingrove where three way junctions required maximum visibility. The vote was carried with 4 in favour of the amended resolution.

12. Community and Business Development**12.1 Broadband**

Cllr Wedmore had nothing further to report since the last meeting, although there was a possibility of a grant from ESCC. He will report further at the next meeting.

12.2 Crime, Anti-Social behaviour & Police relationships

Cllr Croft reported that there have been quite a few thefts although none in the parish recently, and a recent report from the PCSO advised that heating oil could be a target in the near future, and that keeping things secure wherever possible was good practice.

12.3 Defibrillators

Nothing to report

12.4 Footpaths & Bridleways

Nothing to report

12.5 Highways, Hedges & Potholes

Cllr Petty reported that East Sussex Highways were going to be carrying out a tree survey over the next 3 years on non-30mph roads to identify trees that may require work to ensure motorist safety. If the trees are on private land, the owners would be contacted about carrying out the work.

The work on the drains at Oxley's Green has been carried out, although the resident at the Jack Fuller's believed that further works were due to be carried out by South East Water. The sinkhole in Penhurst Lane was recently inspected by the Highways steward. He made sure that the barrier was still secure, but there is no date yet for the repair to be carried out.

12.6 Phone Box

Nothing to report in Cllr Oxenford's absence.

12.7 Trees

Nothing to report.

12.8 Utilities

Nothing to report.

12.9 Refuse Collection

Nothing to report.

12.10 Village Hall

Cllr Petty reported on behalf of Cllr Oxenford that the village hall was open for business again with Covid rules in place. Rother had provided a grant to cover bills etc during the period when income generating events had been cancelled.

12.11 Website

Cllr Wedmore reported that further to his recent update about Rother taking over the running of the website, he had that day received an email apologising that they would now be unable to do so due to technical difficulties and a lack of experienced staff. Cllr Kirby-Green asked for further information and offered to look into the matter. Cllr Wedmore will also speak to the Digital Transformation department and report further at the next meeting.

12.12 Welcome Packs

Nothing to report in Cllr Oxenford's absence.

13. Planning Matters

13.1 RR/2020/1055/P and RR/2020/1056/L – Becket House, Brightling TN32 5HH

Planning permission granted with conditions.

13.2 RR/202/1021/P - Browns Oak Cottage, Brickyard Lane, Oxley's Green

Planning permission granted with conditions.

13.3 RR/2020/599/P - Land to the rear of Fir Tree Cottage, Netherfield

Planning permission refused.

14. Training

No current proposals.

15. Parish Councillors' Forum

15.1 Cllr Wedmore enquired about the status of the Emergency Plan. The Clerk confirmed that most details had been updated and the final version would be circulated for approval before publication on the website.

15.2 Cllr Wrenn asked if anything was known about the traffic survey carried out over the last 24 hours at the northern end of Long Reach, outside Bleak House. No one had seen the equipment or knew anything about it, but Cllr Kirby-Green said she would make enquiries.

16. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

A date to note is the "Rother Parish Conference on Climate Change" on Wednesday 21st October at 3pm via Zoom. Further information to follow and a draft programme was circulated via email.

17. Future meetings

17.1 Meetings of the parish council will be in Brightling Village Hall at 7.30pm or via Zoom dependent on government advice.

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

2020: 11th November.

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

.....
Signed (Chairman)

Date