



# Maresfield Parish Council

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

## Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council meeting held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 @ 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllr Martin Craddock (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Sheila Cumming, Cllr Dr Penny Handley, Cllr Trevor Lewin, Cllr Mrs Lolita Reeves, Cllr Dr Birgit Smith, Cllr Alan Strevens, DCllr Peter Roundell and Mrs Claire Goossens (Clerk).

*The Clerk stated the meeting would be recorded to assist with the production of the minutes.*

**There was one member of the public in attendance.**

### A. Public session.

The member of public made the following comments:

- The new website looks fabulous, it is far clearer and more user friendly than its predecessor. There is clearly scope for the addition of more local sports and leisure information. The Community will be pleased to engage with the Parish Office to provide content for the new website.
- Village Masterplan and Nutley War Memorial Trust CIO – what is the involvement and level of support afforded by the Parish Council having regard to previous Parish Council Minutes and in the context of the Chairman's November newsletter?
- The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council and Nutley War Memorial Trust are not connected and whilst the Chairman of the NWMT was previously a Parish Councillor he resigned some months ago. The Parish Council's position regarding what is called the Nutley Community Project is set out in the January 2020 Full Council minutes and states amongst other things that it would be in agreement with a business plan and that evidence of community support would be required. There has been no recent communication with the NWMT and the Parish Council's position has not changed in the intervening months. The Parish Council is not legally able to directly financially support a pre-school but would look favourably at supporting a community project.
- The member of the public stated that the project has been published as a "village masterplan". There is an independent study being carried out – looking at recreational facilities and housing – well beyond the scope of what was originally discussed.
- The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council has not been consulted regarding the proposed "village masterplan". As a Nutley resident he has registered to join the CIO and his joining was acknowledged by email but to date he has received no further communication from the organisation.

The initiative on planning for the whole of the Parish is in the hands of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, which is working hard and hopes to start an assessment of the various sites which have been put forward in Maresfield Parish as possible sites for Wealden to consider for development. There is nothing to say that these sites will be developed or attain planning permission. There appear to be three such sites in Nutley and these do not include land owned by the NWMT.

- The member of the public responded that a resident who contacted the CIO asked specifically whether the (squash and tennis club) site had been submitted to the SHELAA register and they were told that it had been. The land is owned by the NWMT.
- Chairman – the Parish Council would be concerned if there were threats to facilities such as the tennis and squash club. No proposals have been put forward to the Parish Council and we have not been consulted. NWMT is responsible for the village hall and wants to liberate it by constructing a new pre-school. It has not currently got the funds to facilitate the construction of the new pre-school.
- Member of the public: The CIO has a new website full of references to "accountability" and "transparency" but difficult for residents to engage with NWMT particularly during COVID pandemic. Many residents have expressed an interest in attending meetings to listen to plans and



# Maresfield Parish Council

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

proposals and to debate any pros and cons but there doesn't seem to be a process to enable such engagement at present.

- Chairman – the NWMT is an independent body in the village which has acted on its own initiative. The Parish Council would be keen to hear what the CIO's plans are and looks forward to seeing future information. The Chairman invited the member of the public to write to the Parish Council suggesting what it should do in this circumstance, Councillors will of course consider such requests/suggestions. Her views and frustration are understood.

**3594. To approve apologies for absence and to note other non-attendance.**

Cllr Mrs Laura Stevens-Smith, Cllr David Watson. CCllr Roy Galley hoped to join the meeting later in proceedings.

**3595. Declarations of Interest.**

Cllr Lewin and Cllr Mrs Cumming – Members of Maresfield Conservation Group.  
Cllr Dr Smith – Governor – Nutley Primary School.

**3596. To receive written requests for new DPI dispensations. None.**

**3597. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020:**

1. For adoption.

The Clerk requested that for the sake of clarity, item 3587.1.iv be amended to include the text in italic bold as follows: "The Chairman proposed the Clerk and Assistant Clerk be awarded a salary increase of one point on the NALC Pay Scale, ***new SCP 23 to 24 for the Clerk and New SCP 6 to 7 for the Assistant Clerk***, this was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **Agreed** unanimously."

The minutes as amended were **Agreed** as a true and accurate record.

2. Matters arising from these minutes not elsewhere on the agenda. None.

**3598. Reports by and questions to:**

1. County Councillors. None.

2. District Councillors.

DCllr Roundell reported as follows:

- Wealden District Council's Local Plan initial consultation document has now been sent out to Parish Councils. There was today a meeting of the Local Plan Sub Committee which Cllr Galley sits on.
- The consultation draft was to be considered by the LP Sub Committee – this is a very weighty and interesting read which sets out the vision of Wealden from all aspects. The main concern to us is the planning issues, and of particular concern, the vacuum we are in until a draft plan is submitted. In terms of planning policy, we are back with the 1998 Local Plan which is quite out of date and the 2013 Core Strategy which is a very general document.
- We await news as to what the Government will do as a result of the consultation on the White Paper.

**3599. Parish wards – issues, needs & Councillors' reports:**

1. Fairwarp Ward.

Fr John has asked that his appreciation for the recent grant from the Parish Council to refurbish the War Memorial be noted.

The support network in Fairwarp offering assistance during COVID 19 Lockdown 1 has stepped back into action during the current lockdown. The pub is once again offering a Takeaway service.

2. Maresfield Ward.

Cllr Stevens confirmed that he laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at a very pared down Remembrance Service at St Bartholomew's in Maresfield on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Recent roadworks in Batts Bridge Road appeared to be undertaken without temporary traffic lights causing some disruption.



# Maresfield Parish Council

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

Cllr Mrs Cumming reported that the recent drainage works outside the Village Hall in Batts Bridge Road appear to have remedied the frequent flooding. During the recent heavy rainfall over the weekend, there was a small gathering of water at the time, but this quickly dissipated.

Cllr Lewin reported that the temporary signage at the North end of Nursery Lane advising against HGV access appears to have been "removed".

3. Nutley Ward.

Cllr Dr Smith reported that the village seems to be functioning well during the current lockdown with the shop and petrol station both being well stocked. The large pothole on the carriageway outside Whitewood Stores has now been repaired.

What is the status regarding repairs to the car parks on Millbrook Hill – both East and West being in a terrible state? **ACTION:** Clerk to chase ES Highways.

Cllr Craddock confirmed that despite the Conservators cancelling the organised Remembrance Service at the Airmen's Grave, he did lay a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council on Remembrance Sunday. There were a number of people present on the day, but all were respectful of social distancing requirements.

**3600. Council bodies - To receive minutes and decisions, followed by reports from Chairmen and questions:**

1. **Finance & Administration Committee:**

- i. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November. Noted.
- ii. Month 7 2020/21 Accounts to be noted. Noted.
- iii. To note External Auditors completion of AGAR return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Noted.
- iv. Adoption of NALC Model Financial Regs.  
The Clerk confirmed amendments had been made to align MPC's existing Financial Regulations with the Model Financial Regs as circulated for consideration e.g. expenditure authority levels for Clerk, Chairman, Committees and Council, respectively. A number of items as highlighted in yellow were discussed. The Chairman proposed adoption of the NALC Model Financial Regulations as amended. This was seconded by Cllr Dr Handley and **Agreed** unanimously.
- v. To Approve recommendation that the following policies be Adopted: Co-option, Council Representation on Outside Bodies & Grievance. It was noted that whilst Co-opted members cannot claim allowances, they can be reimbursed for expenses incurred whilst carrying out Council business as outlined in the Expenses Policy. Babysitting costs for example could not be reimbursed.  
The Chairman proposed **Adoption** of all three policies. This was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **Agreed** unanimously.

2. **Planning Committee:**

- i. Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October.  
This was a straightforward meeting without any contentious applications. It was noted however, that a sand school as supported at a previous meeting by the Parish Council Planning Committee was refused by WDC Planning.
- ii. Report from Chairman.  
At the Planning Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November (for which the minutes are not yet available), a reserved matters application at Mill House Farm Maresfield was considered. This application was for between four and nine dwellings. The Parish Council Planning Committee recommended refusal based on the site being cramped with



# Maresfield Parish Council

## REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

nine dwellings and that there are no garages and insufficient parking for both residents and visitors.

A previous application for a dormer window to a bungalow in Nether Lane which would have overlooked the neighbour was withdrawn by the applicant.

The Chairman of Council reported that he has had an approach from one of the landowners of the site to the south and west of Park Farm (Site D), the largest single site between Maresfield Village and the A22. Mr Clare has asked if he can make a presentation to the Parish Council of his proposals. The Chairman proposed the Parish Council does not at this stage receive a presentation from Mr Clare and his colleagues unless there is undue delay by the NDP SG in carrying out its assessment of this site in the SHLAA exercise.

The NDP Steering Group was quite successful four or five years ago in looking at proposed sites for development and the top three sites which they assessed as being

suitable for development were endorsed by the Parish Council and all subsequently had planning applications which were passed.

**ACTION:** Clerk/Chairman to write to Mr Clare declining invitation at present but stating that if within 2/3 months the SG has not completed its assessment then the Parish Council would be happy to receive a presentation.

DCllr Roundell reported as follows reference the recent WDC Cluster meeting:

- If the Government goes forward with its proposals to grade/categorise land for development, one category will be “protected” and there will be another called “renewal”, the likelihood would be that any land categorised as “renewal” will automatically have received outline planning permission. If the Government produces new planning laws which stipulate such graded/categorised areas Wealden will have no option but to fall in line. This is not likely to come into effect for at least two years. “Renewal” sites may include some green fields due to the huge pressure to build houses. Objectively assessed housing needs stand at 1220 per annum in Wealden but there is the possibility/hope/aspiration that this may go down to the 950 as stated in the withdrawn Draft Local Plan.
- The recently refused application at Millwood Lane has launched an appeal. This application was for a single dwelling on the Eastern side of Maresfield close to the A26, totally outside any previous development boundary.

### 3. **Environment Committee:**

- i. Report from Chairman. The question of Climate Emergency and further discussion surrounding the Parish Council’s response to this will be discussed at the next Committee meeting to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> December. Proposals will be brought to Council at its December meeting.
- ii. Road Safety – Report from Chairman.  
A number of recurring issues were discussed at a recent SLR meeting, but it is not anticipated that any action will be taken by East Sussex Highways due to budget constraints.

### 4. **Neighbourhood & Community Development Plan Steering Group.**

- i. Report from Chairman.  
The Draft F&A Minutes as circulated with the meeting papers outline the proposed future activities of the NDP Steering Group. They will be carrying out an assessment of all sites as submitted to WDC in its



# Maresfield Parish Council

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

recent SHLAA. There is a very useful interactive map that can be accessed through the Wealden website. **ACTION:** Clerk to send link.

*DCllr Roundell left the meeting.*

**5. Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.**

i. Report from Chairman.

The following points were noted:

- Parking on training/match days has been much improved with no recent complaints from local residents.
- Pavilion refurbishment is expected to commence February 2021.
- The financial vulnerability of MRG was noted although the Parish Council underwrites the financial security of the Trust.
- Income has understandably been of a lower level this year due to the COVID pandemic and subsequent restrictions. There are no significant financial liabilities looming.

**3601. Outside bodies matters.**

1. To consider Parish Council ongoing response to COVID pandemic.
  - The Parish Council website continues to have a COVID dedicated page with links to both East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council's COVID pages which both provide a wealth of useful information.
  - The Chairman continues to advertise in the monthly Parish Magazines that the Parish Council can be contacted in the event of a call for non-emergency assistance.
  - The Clerk is in regular contact with the three village "coordinators", all of whom report that as of last week they have had very few calls for assistance. It appears that most Parishioners have trusted support networks in place.
  - There are reportedly 7 cases of COVID currently in the Parish as at 16-11-20.
  - **ACTION:** Cllr Dr Smith to remind Parishioners via Twitter and Facebook to remain vigilant and continue to adhere to Government guidelines.

**3602. To receive a report from and put questions to, the Chairman.** None.

**3603. To receive a report from and put questions to, the Clerk.**

The Assistant Clerk is working with PS Tech to set up generic Councillor emails. This information can then be included on the Councillors page of the new website.

**3604. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.** None.

**3605. Date of next meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020.**

*The member of the public left the meeting.*

All Councillors agreed that this member of the public, would be a brilliant candidate to fill one of the existing Councillor vacancies. **ACTION:** Clerk to communicate with member of the public to ask if they would be interested in becoming a Parish Councillor.

**The Parish Council Meeting closed at 20.55 and reconvened as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground.**

*Cllr Mrs Reeves left the meeting.*

**3606. Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).**

1. Annual Financial Statements to be Agreed and signed by Cllr M Craddock and Cllrs Mrs L Stevens-Smith  
It was noted that whilst the operational committee for the Recreation Ground is financially vulnerable it is solvent. The ownership of the Recreation Ground is not vested in the Parish Council as a Parish Council but is invested in the Parish Council as Trustee. To change this would be a lengthy and expensive exercise. The accounts are in order. The Chairman proposed that he and Cllr Mrs Stevens-Smith sign the accounts on behalf of the Trustee. This was seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.58.*