

MARESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY AND FAIRWARP

DRAFT Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 7.30pm in Maresfield Village Hall

Present: Cllr M Craddock (Chair), Cllr Mrs S Cumming, Cllr R Hunter, Cllr T Lewin, Cllr Dr B Smith, Cllr Mrs L Stevens-Smith, Cllr A Strevens, Cllr D Watson, CCllr R Galley, DCllr P Roundell and Mrs C Goossens (Clerk)

A. Public session

There were two members of the public in attendance who wished to thank Councillors for their support and assistance regarding the retrospective application and enforcement issues relating to Forest Glenn, Courtlands, Nutley.

Councillors noted the following:

- this retrospective application was for an ugly outbuilding erected in a garden within the AONB
- there was a detrimental impact on both the neighbours and a nearby Public Footpath
- WDC PCN unanimously agreed to refuse the retrospective application
- a decision notice has today been issued by WDC
- the most appalling and concerning aspect is that Officers were notified at an early stage of the building works and the need for planning permission yet took no action to prevent continuation of the build
- the Chairman thanked both CCllr Galley and DCllr Roundell for their assistance in this matter

The public meeting closed.

3746. To approve apologies for absence and to note other non-attendance.

Cllr Mrs L Reeves, Cllr Dr P Handley and Cllr J Lewis. Cllr Dr E Worrell was also absent.

3747. Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Dr Smith – Governor, Nutley Primary School

Cllr Lewin and Cllr Mrs Cumming – Members, Maresfield Conservation Group

Cllr Watson – Member, Nutley Bowls Club

3748. To receive written requests for new DPI dispensations. None.

3749. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th October 2021: -

1. For adoption. The minutes as circulated with the meeting papers were **Agreed** and **Adopted** as a true and accurate record.
2. Matters arising from these minutes not elsewhere on the agenda. None.

3750. Reports by and questions to: -

1. County Councillors.

CCllr Galley reported the following:

- ESCC has an extra £8million capital expenditure of which £3million has been allocated to Climate Change and the remaining £5million to Roads. The Lead Member is keen on patching including whole sections where required. Cllr Galley is campaigning for additional funding for roads next year as many roads are in an unprecedented bad condition.
- There is no news yet about likely precept increase from ESCC but it is likely to be in line with the 1.5% increase last year plus 2% for social care.
- Cllr Watson expressed thanks on behalf of residents of Nursery Lane for CCllr Galley's assistance in efforts to get ES Highways take steps to make the junction of this road with the A22 safer for users. CCllr Galley noted the "Keep Clear" had been repainted but was disappointed that no further remedial action/measures were approved and this remains an unsafe junction.

2. District Councillors.

DCllr Roundell reported the following:

- things are moving regarding the Local Plan and housing numbers
- WDC is currently looking at the precept – DCllr Roundell and DCllr Galley will do their best to keep any increase as low as possible as WDC is very well reserved.
- The crematorium contributes £200,000 per annum, Sussex Weald Homes is progressing well and the net profit from Hailsham Aspires is £450,000. All these figures are built into the budget.

3751. Parish Wards – issues, needs and Councillors' reports: -

1. Fairwarp Ward. None.

2. Maresfield Ward. Cllr Strevens reported he laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Service, which had been superbly organised by Mrs Angie Welton. The village looked wonderful having been decorated with poppies. A number of the Royal Signals regiment were again in attendance, and they helped during the course of the weekend with work around the village.

The Chairman reported that he had laid a wreath in East Grinstead on behalf of the Rotary Club. Cllr Mrs Stevens-Smith laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Airman's Grave. The issue of overgrown trees/hedges adjacent to the carriageway was discussed. Any issue should be reported directly to East Sussex Highways or via the Parish Office.

3. Nutley Ward. None.

3752. Council bodies - To receive minutes and decisions, followed by reports from Chairmen and any questions: -**1. Finance & Administration Committee**

The Chairman reported that Councillors had been sent supplementary papers including updated budget and precept documents and the draft minutes of the F&A Committee meeting held on 11th November which included details pertaining to the items for discussion below.

- i. Month 7 2021/22 expenditure and accounts to be noted. Noted. The only item of significance is the receipt of CIL monies of £31,608. CIL is a levy from WDC on all new retail and residential development and is calculated according to square metreage. The Parish Council receives 15% of the total amount levied for expenditure on infrastructure projects within the Parish e.g., recent refurbishment of the Maresfield Recreation Ground Pavilion.
- ii. To consider and approve recommendation for Clerk and Assistant Clerk salary increases. It was noted that the detail is to be found in the draft F&A Minutes, but that the F&A Committee recommend the Clerk receives an increase from salary point 24 to salary point 28 on the NALC 2020-21 National Salary Award Scale and that the Assistant Clerk receives an increase from salary point 7 to salary point 12. The justification for these increases being as follows:
 - i) the Clerk and Asst Clerk both had extremely good appraisals and are doing a very good job
 - ii) MPC may have possibly been previously under paying and
 - iii) there is currently a shortage of good clerks in the district and the Parish Council does not want to be in danger of losing its staff because they feel they are being underpaid and could attain a higher salary elsewhere.

The Chairman proposed salary increases be adopted as outlined above. This was seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously. **ACTION:** Clerk to inform Assistant Clerk.

iii. To finalise and agree the 2022/23 Budget and Precept Requirement of £95,084.

The following points were noted:

- The proposed precept requirement is a 1.49% increase on last year.
- The budget reflects the new rates of pay as does the forecast for the current year.
- There are general reserves of £41,000 which is approximately 40% of the precept. This figure is sufficient to cover inflation.
- The biggest single cost is salaries.

The Chairman proposed approval of the **budget for 2022/23 of £93,490**. This was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **Agreed** unanimously.

The Chairman proposed approval of a **precept requirement for 2022/23 of £95,084**. This was seconded by Cllr Dr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.

iv. To consider and approve recommendation re grant for Nutley Bowls Club.

The following points were noted:

- The last F&A Committee was not quorate to make a recommendation as Cllr Watson is a member of the Nutley Bowls Club.
- The grant application from NBC is for assistance with costs related to a requisite re-wire of the club building costing £3000.
- Approximately four to five months ago when the initial request for funds was made, the F&A Committee raised several questions.
- In the meantime, an anonymous donor has come up with 50% of the money.
- NBC has decided to proceed with the works but its reserves of £4000 will subsequently be significantly reduced.
- The informal feeling of the F&A Committee is that this is worthwhile cause and that support at a level of £1000 would be appropriate. This money would come out of Parish Council reserves.

The Chairman proposed NBC be awarded a £1,000 grant. This was seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously.

Cllr Watson expressed his thanks for the financial support and extended thanks on behalf of NBC members.

2. **Planning Committee.**

i. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October and Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 8th November. Noted.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- Retrospective planning applications seem to be becoming more prevalent. At a recent ESALC Planning Training Course this was discussed, and the feasibility of financial penalties considered.
- A recent outline planning application for which MPC Planning Committee recommended refusal was for 2-5 homes on the extended garden of the listed Park Farm Barn. Grounds for refusal were based on difficulty to access the site along Park Farm Lane and the proximity to a listed building. It is hoped that our District Councillors will support the Parish Council in this regard.
- Cllrs Strevens and Craddock attended a Zoom meeting with a Adam Light from SIGMA homes, the developers of Site B, 25 homes to the South-West of Wellington Gate with access through Bloomery Way. This meeting was to discuss proposals for the triangle of land North of Maresfield Recreation Ground (Site A) which is to be gifted to the Parish Council and held in perpetuity. The process of agreeing the layout etc of this land and its subsequent transfer to the Parish Council has been a drawn-out process, mainly because over the last six years the site has been under the successive control of three different developers and dealt with by at least three different WDC Case Officers. Cllrs Craddock and Strevens raised no objections to the plan tabled by SIGMA which includes 8-10 allotments.

AL to submit the plan as tabled to WDC and engage with the Case Officer. It is anticipated that the development will be completed in the next 8 months and that the land will be transferred to the Parish Council when the market housing element is 75% occupied.

3. **Environment Committee.**

i. Update from the Chairman. None.

ii. To consider MPC response to Ashdown Forest Car Parking Consultation.

The following points were noted:

- There are three options, all of which include an annual season ticket likely to be advantageous to anyone visiting at least twice a week.
- Management and “policing” of car parks will be subcontracted to an external provider.

- Concern regarding potential for “displacement” parking on verges etc.
 - The Parish Council has advertised the consultation with posters on all four noticeboards, and has published details on the Parish Council website and on Twitter and Facebook.
 - Whilst Councillors were encouraged to make personal responses, the it is proposed that the Parish Council will make no formal response.
- iii. Update from Cllr Strevens on Road Safety.
The Clerk is currently trying to arrange an SLR meeting to take place prior to Christmas.
ACTION: Clerk to chase ES Highways.
- 4. Neighbourhood & Community Development Plan Steering Group.**
- i. Update from Chairman.
- The Steering Group is active carrying out assessments on the sites submitted in the recent SHELAA.
 - A Zoom meeting was this week held with Kelly Sharp and James Preece, who are confident that the Draft Local Plan will be out for consultation in late Spring 2022.
 - The NDP SG is keen to know how many houses are likely to be allocated to Maresfield.
 - The next meeting with WDC will be on 11th January.
- ii. Report on recent survey of Maresfield parishioners.
- Not as many responses were received as had been hoped for.
 - The responses received didn't really tell us much that we didn't already know.
 - The last survey was in 2013, so this recent survey updated the NDP SG's evidence base.
- 5. Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.**
- i. Update from the Chairman. Nothing to report. The next meeting will take place on 23/11/21.
- 3753. Outside bodies matters.** None.
- 3754. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Chairman.** None.
- 3755. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Clerk.** None.
- 3756. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.** Details of the budget and precept will be outlined in the Chairman's newsletter to be included in the January Parish Magazines.
- 3757. Date of next meeting – 21st December 2021**
The Chairman and Cllr Dr Smith gave their apologies for the next meeting.

DCllr Roundell, CCllr Galley and the two members of the public left the meeting.

The Parish Council Meeting closed and reconvened as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground

- 3758. Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).**
1. To agree and approve expenditure on two new large capacity bins with flap lids for Maresfield Recreation Ground to replace existing.
The Clerk gave a precis of the ongoing issue of overflowing bins at MRG and easily accessible bins for vermin etc. Several alternatives have been investigated and emptying costs etc have been discussed with WDC. The Chairman proposed authorising expenditure of £1500 for two new bins to be selected according to suitability by the Clerk. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Cumming and **Agreed** unanimously. **ACTION:** Clerk.
2. To note expenditure of £313.80 on supply and installation of new side door for Pavilion.
It was noted that Cllr Craddock and Cllr Mrs Stevens-Smith approved expenditure of £313.80 on a replacement door for the pavilion. The existing was beyond repair and the amount was within the £500 expenditure limit of the MRG Committee, therefore not requiring Council approval.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.34