



Maresfield Parish Council

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council meeting held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 7.30pm

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

A. Public session.

3607. To approve apologies for absence and to note other non-attendance.

Cllr D Watson.

3608. Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Dr B Smith – Governor, Nutley Primary School.

Cllr Mrs S Cumming – Member, Maresfield Conservation Group.

Cllr T Lewin – Member, Maresfield Conservation Group.

3609. To receive written requests for new DPI dispensations. None.

3610. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th November 2020:

1. For adoption. The minutes as previously circulated were **Agreed** as a true and accurate record.
2. Matters arising from these minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.
Cllr Dr Smith enquired as to when the website will have its “hard” launch. The Clerk reported that generic emails would go live in early January and a communication would be sent to all Councillors about this. The website can then be advertised on Facebook, Twitter, noticeboards, Uckfield News and Uckfield FM towards the end of January.

Cllr Mrs Reeves joined the meeting.

3611. Reports by and questions to:

1. County Councillors. *CCllr Galley to join meeting later in proceedings.*
2. District Councillors. DCllr Roundell reported as follows:
 - WDC has agreed not to increase its share of Council Tax for 2021/22.
 - WDC’s share accounts for 12% of the Council Tax bill.
 - Council staff will not receive a pay increase if paid above £24k per annum.
 - Officers have recommended approval of the proposed electric charging forecourt on the Uckfield bypass, despite opposition from all surrounding parishes and strong opposition from Uckfield Town Council.
CCllr Galley has requested a deferral from the 17th December WDC PCN meeting.
There remain a few unresolved issues in relation to this application including pedestrian access across the A22, but none which Officers consider to be insurmountable.
There are no policy grounds to resist this application.
DCllr Roundell will at the PCN meeting represent as strongly as he can the views of local Parish Councils.
 - The Chairman reported that he continues to await a response from WDC with assurance that the provision of the approved community facility will be enforced by a S106 agreement. **ACTION:** Clerk to forward to DCllr Roundell correspondence with WDC relating to application for 25 homes on Straight Half Mile, Maresfield.

3612. Parish wards – issues, needs & Councillors’ reports:

1. Fairwarp Ward. No report.
2. Maresfield Ward. Cllr Stevens-Smith has reported several streetlights being inoperative in the village these have not yet been fixed. The Parish Council pays for streetlighting and maintenance. **ACTION:** Clerk to follow up.



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3. Nutley Ward.

The Chairman reported that there is disquiet in the village regarding the lack of information relating to plans for the Nutley War Memorial Trust estate. There is widespread speculation regarding the apparent threat to the Nutley Tennis and Squash Club. Whilst not the direct concern of the Parish Council, it has been brought to our attention that there is disquiet about the timetable for the consultation. It is felt by some that the consultation period is relatively short especially considering the current pandemic. Councillors noted the concern of some parishioners but understand that a communication from the CIO is imminent and the Council awaits this with interest.

3613. 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 8th December. Noted.
- ii. Month 8 2020/21 Accounts to be noted. Noted.
- iii. To Adopt recommendation That the NDP SG continues with the Neighbourhood Development Plan and in particular site assessment work, but the Parish Council does not at this stage allocate further funding in the 2021/22 Budget. Should any additional funding be required the NDP SG can request this from Council who would meet it out of reserves if approved.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- The effect of the proposal is that any significant expenditure would need to come before Council for approval rather than the Steering Group spending against an allocation as has been the case historically.
- It was anticipated prior to the withdrawal of the Wealden Draft Local Plan that the £10,000 allocated to the NDP in last year's budget would be sufficient to complete the project.
- There is a remaining balance of £3,000.
- A tremendous amount of work has gone into this project over several years and barring any further obstacles the NDP is nearing completion.
- A Housing Needs Survey will need to be carried out and the lowest estimate for this at present is £4,000. This is a repeat of the survey carried out in 2013 which is now unfortunately out of date.
- Site Assessment work is to be carried out as soon as possible. It was noted that this is not a costly exercise as the work will be undertaken by the NDP Steering Group members.

The Chairman proposed **Adoption** of the recommendation. This was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **Agreed** unanimously.

Cllr Galley joined the meeting.

- iv. To finalise and Agree the 2021/22 Budget and Precept Requirement of £93,688.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- The proposed budget for 2021/22 is £100,010 against a budget for 2020/21 of £100,979.
- There will be no reduction in Parish Council services, in fact, we have increased the number of visits from the Forest Row Maintenance team to two visits a month all year round.
- The Parish Council continues to use reserves which it is recommended should sit at between no more than 1/3 to 1/2 of the annual budget.
- The level of General reserves will be maintained.
- £5000 of Road Safety reserves will be carried forward



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- £5000 will be added to the existing reserve of £5000 for the future refurbishment of the Fords Green Play Area.
- The proposed precept of £93,688 means a 10% increase on last year, which equates to less than 10 pence per week per band D property.
- The precept if set at this level remains 8% below our budget due to the continued use of reserves.

The Chairman proposed setting a budget of £100,010 for the financial year 2021/22. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Reeves and **Agreed** unanimously. The Chairman proposed setting the precept at £93,688 for the financial year 2021/22. This was seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously.

The meeting reverted to item 3611.1.

Cllr Galley reported as follows:

- He will be lobbying ESCC not to increase Council Tax at this time.
- Junction of Nursery Lane with A22:
 - this is undoubtedly a difficult junction.
 - the matter was looked at by Highways 2 or 3 years ago.
 - the suggestion of a bollard has numerous disadvantages.
 - there is signage in place already when heading southbound warning of the upcoming junction.
 - the installation of a mirror on the opposite side of the road could assist drivers exiting the junction. The Parish Council would fund the cost of a mirror subject to the home-owners agreement.

ACTION: Cllr Galley to follow up with Highways.

ACTION: Parish Office to ascertain owner of property opposite Nursery Lane.

2. **Planning Committee:**

- i. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November and Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December. Noted.
- ii. WDC Local Plan – Direction of Travel Consultation Document – to discuss and Agree how the Parish Council should respond.

It was **Agreed** each Councillor would take one or two chapter(s), formulate a response to be returned to the Clerk by 4th January 2021 which will then be collated and submitted to WDC. **ACTION:** Clerk to send list confirming which Councillors are assigned to which Chapters.

3. **Environment Committee:**

- i. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 1st December. Noted.
- ii. Update on proposed Climate Change Action Plan. There are 8/9 people registered to join a Climate Change Interest Group and it is proposed that the first meeting is held remotely in January 2021. In the meantime, we continue to keep abreast of Government led

initiatives

and advertise these via our website etc.

4. **Road Safety:**

- i. Update from Cllr Strevens. It was noted that there was recently a Police presence in Buxted and this would be welcome in Maresfield Parish to assist with the issue of speeding. Cllr Dr Handley reported the Police were present on the B2026 carrying out Speed monitoring at the end of last week.
- ii. Speedwatch. 371 letters have been sent by the Police to motorists as a result of Speedwatch operations in Maresfield Parish between July and November 2020.
- iii. Junction of Nursery Lane with A22 in Nutley. As discussed earlier in the meeting.

Cllr Galley and DCllr Roundell left the meeting.



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5. **Neighbourhood & Community Development Plan Steering Group.**
 - i. Report from Chairman. As discussed earlier in the meeting minuted at 3613.1.iii.
 6. **Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.**
 - i. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November. Noted.
 - ii, To Approve recommendation that a tree survey be carried out at the cost of no more than £400.00. **ACTION:** Clerk to ascertain ownership of Eucalyptus trees along Southern boundary of recreation ground. Cllr Mrs Stevens-Smith proposed that a tree survey be carried out on the trees along the boundary with School Hill, and along the Southern boundary (if found to belong to MRG), at a cost of no more than £400.00. This was seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously. **ACTION:** Clerk.
3614. **Outside bodies matters.** None.
3615. **To receive a report from and put questions to, the Chairman.** None.
3616. **To receive a report from and put questions to, the Clerk.**
Councillor generic emails will come into use in early January, a communication will be sent to all from the Parish Office. It was noted that Cllr Mrs Reeves has had problems with the migration and has been communicating with PS Tech to find a resolution.
ACTION: Clerk to ask PS Tech to expedite matter.
Cllr Lewin will not be migrating to generic email and will sign disclaimer as required.
ACTION: Clerk.
- 1. To note final report from WDC Independent Remuneration Panel.**
It was noted that the relevant portfolio holder was at a recent Wealden Cabinet meeting recommending not to accept the IRP proposed 2% increase and that the allowance for 2021/22 should be frozen in respect of District Councillors. The Chairman proposed acceptance of the schedule of allowances as set out in the report as circulated with the meeting papers. This was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **Agreed** unanimously.
3617. **Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.** None.
3618. **Date of next meeting – 12th January 2021.**

The Parish Council Meeting closed at 21.01 and reconvened as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground.

3619. **Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).**
None.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.03.