

# MARESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY AND FAIRWARP

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## Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council Meeting held at Fairwarp Village Hall on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllr M Craddock (Chair), Cllr Mrs G Balchin, Cllr Mrs S Cumming, Cllr R Hunter, Cllr Mrs P Penfold, Cllr G Shaw, Cllr Dr B Smith, Cllr Mrs L Stevens-Smith, Cllr A Strevens, Cllr P Taylor, CCllr R Galley, DCllr I Tysh and Mrs N O'Hanlon (Clerk)

- A. Public session.** Five members of the public attended in connection with item 4032.5.ii. Four of the members of public addressed the Council; Mr Fred Taylor, Mrs Maureen Turner, Mr Robert Smith and Mrs Valerie Taylor. The Council was given some background information; Fred Taylor, Maureen Turner and Robert Smith have all been co-opted members of the MPC NDP Steering Committee for many years and part of the Site Assessment team. Much work has been done over the years by the committee, in recent years overseen by Mr Lindsay Frost, an external NDP Consultant, but the plan has not been able to be brought to fruition as the previous draft WDC local plan was withdrawn and to date no new draft plan has emerged and housing numbers have not been announced. All four members of the public who addressed Council expressed their deep dismay at the motion brought in item 4032.5.ii and feel it shows a complete lack of respect and no understanding of the breadth of work carried out over the years. They were particularly upset that this motion was brought without any attempt to meet and talk to the members of the NDP Committee. Fred Taylor said that at a recent public meeting he felt he had been verbally attacked by the two Councillors bringing the motion in item 4032.5.ii and he believed they were implying he had been secretive and in collusion with developers during meetings he had attended as part of his site assessment team brief, which Mr Taylor stated was just not true. Mrs Valerie Taylor, who was not on the NDP committee but had in the past been a Parish Councillor considered that the treatment of both Councillor and non-councillor members of the NDP Committee was disgraceful and the amount and benefit of work they had contributed over the years was being disregarded and disrespected.

**4025. To approve apologies for absence and to note other non-attendance.** Cllr R Brickle, Cllr Dr P Handley, Cllr T Lewin, Cllr Mrs L Reeves.

**4026. Declarations of Interest.** None.

**4027. To receive written requests for new DPI dispensations.** None.

**4028. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023: -**

1. For adoption. The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023, as circulated with the meeting papers, were **Agreed** to be a true and accurate record. Cllr M Craddock proposed **Adoption**, this was seconded by Cllr Mr A Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously.
2. Matters arising from these minutes not elsewhere on the agenda. None.

**4029. Review and Agree Remits.** The Remits were reviewed and subject to them being reworded to make them gender neutral at the suggestion of Cllr. Smith Cllr Martin Craddock proposed they are **Agreed**, this was seconded by Cllr B Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.

**4030. Reports by and questions to: -**

1. County Councillor. CCllr Roy Galley advised that a recent peer review of ESCC, carried out by people from other County Councils produced a very positive report with regards to processes, services and management. A couple of areas were flagged as needing improvement: the vision

statement and climate change emergency strategy.

Cllr Galley reported that he is very disappointed with the recent School Hill road repairs in Maresfield and he has contacted the appropriate people to register his concern.

Cllr Alan Strevens asked if there is an improvement in road repairs since Balfour Beatty took over the contract. Cllr Galley said the signs so far are encouraging but it will be monitored.

2. District Councillor. DCllr Ian Tysh reported that the Local plan is progressing slowly with presentations starting next week for Councillors including of sites being put forward for development.

DCllr Tysh advised that 33 waste collection and street cleaning vehicles used in the district are now powered by hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) saving 1800 tonnes of Co2 per year.

Lastly Cllr Tysh reported that 3 representatives from South East Water attended a Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer questions about the unacceptable outages in June. It appears that plans had not been put in place to deal with outages of this scale and there was a lack of infrastructure and they will plan an increase in the number of tankers they have. Apparently England is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest user of water in Europe on a per capita basis.

**4031. Parish Wards – issues, needs and Councillors' reports: -**

1. Fairwarp Ward. None.
2. Maresfield Ward. Under Hill bridge repairs are due to commence soon.  
Cllr L Stevens-Smith reported that there has been concern in the village about dogs being walked off leash and the possible attacks that could occur to people or other dogs as a result. **ACTION:** Cllr Craddock to put a paragraph about this in the next Chairmans newsletter.
3. Nutley Ward. The Fords Green play area refurbishment is finished and has had some excellent reviews. Thanks were given to Cllr B Smith for all her hard work on this project.

**4032. Council bodies - To receive minutes and decisions, followed by reports from Chairmen and any questions: -**

**1. Finance & Administration Committee**

- i. Review Months 3 and 4 2023/24 accounts. Noted.
- ii. Update from Chairman. Consideration of grant applications and budget setting will commence in October. If any Councillor has budgetary proposals please advise the Clerk. It was agreed that the meeting would be held in the evening.

The Assistant Clerk has had to step down because of personal reasons but has agreed to carry on as Planning Clerk, on an hourly paid basis, looking after the Planning and NDP Committees. A part-time clerical assistant will be recruited.

**2. Planning Committee.**

- i. Minutes of meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> July and 7<sup>th</sup> August and Draft Minutes of meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September. Noted.
- ii. Update from Chairman. Dates had been changed because of holiday commitments which made the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September a busy one with 9 applications being considered. There are still some WDC decisions outstanding such as the Straight Half Mile, Maresfield application.

**3. Environment Committee.**

- i. Update from Chairman. None.

**4. Road Safety Committee.**

- i. Update from Chairman. Cllr Strevens had nothing to report but will hope to schedule a meeting in the near future.

**5. Neighbourhood & Community Development Plan Steering Group.**

- i. Update from Chairman. Cllr M Craddock reported that at the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> August only one councillor was present and therefore the meeting was not quorate. The non councillor members would have been co-opted at that meeting but without the meeting being quorate this was not possible.

Cllr Craddock advised that a copy of the draft NDP had been sent to Troy Planning & Design Co. and they had responded with a quotation to carry out a health check on the NDP. Funds are available if it is decided to go ahead with the health check.

A meeting has been arranged for Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September between the PC Chairman, the NDP Site Assessment Team and the promoters of the land to the south and west of the Maresfield Recreation Ground. The promoters have agreed to discuss their proposals on a confidential basis including the provision of community benefits.

- ii. Motion Proposed by Cllr G Shaw and seconded by Cllr P Penfold:

Motion

In light of:

Wealden District Council now being actively engaged in developing a new Local Plan, and their considering how to make the pre-planning application process more transparent for larger developments.

Other wards within the District developing their own neighbourhood plans, the Parish Council now wishes to establish a formal sub-committee focused on developing our own Neighbourhood Plan. This sub-committee will replace the current Group, which will now be dissolved.

We thank the current group for their work and will expect the new sub-committee to learn from their experience.

We ask members interested in joining the Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee to make themselves known, with a view to an early meeting to agree its chair and draft its terms of reference, to be agreed by the full Council as soon as practicable.

Cllrs Shaw and Penfold explained that they have brought this motion as they would like to see more transparency within the NDP Committee with more reporting and communication with Parishioners.

They refute that they are being disrespectful in bringing this motion; that was not their intention. They also rejected that they had insinuated at the public meeting that Fred Taylor had acted in a secretive way or colluded with potential developers.

**Cllr M Craddock Proposed an amended Motion which was seconded by Cllr L Stevens-Smith:**

In light of:

Wealden District Council now being actively engaged in developing a new Local Plan, and their considering how to make the pre-planning application process more transparent for larger developments.

Other wards within the District developing their own neighbourhood plans, the Parish Council now *appoints Cllr. Shaw to replace Cllr Craddock as Chair of the NDP Steering Committee and also appoints Cllr Penfold to the Committee.*

*The Parish Council thanks the current committee members and the non-councillor volunteers for their work and will expect the new committee members to learn from their experience.*

We ask members interested in joining the Neighbourhood Plan committee to make themselves known, with a view to an early meeting to agree its *remit* (terms of reference) *which is to be approved* by the *Parish Council* as soon as practicable.

Councillors were asked to vote on the amended motion: There were 2 votes in favour, 3 votes against and 5 abstentions. **The amended motion did not carry.**

Councillors were then asked to vote on the original motion: There were 4 votes in favour, 5 votes against and 1 abstention. **The original motion did not carry.**

Cllr M Craddock resigned as chairman of the NDP but as Chairman of the PC will continue as an Ex Officio member of the Committee.

Cllr G Shaw resigned from the NDP Committee.

Cllr M Craddock proposed the appointment of Cllr G Balchin and Cllr P Penfold to the NDP Committee; this was seconded by Cllr P Taylor and **Agreed** unanimously.

Cllr Craddock suggested the new NDP Committee should consider getting the health check, as per the Troy Planning quotation, carried out soon as it would give them a good idea as to the current status of the draft NDP. They might also like to consider if all 3 parish wards should be included in the NDP.

DCllr Tysh stated that the Government may repeal the Habitat Regulations which would have an impact on our NDP as well as Wealden's Ashdown Forest policies.

**ACTION:** Clerk to convene a meeting of the new NDP Committee and a copy of the draft NDP and the Troy Consulting quotation would be sent to Committee members.

## **6. Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.**

- i. Update from Chairman. Cllr L Stevens-Smith reported that the relaying of the paths and patio around the pavilion have been completed. Thanks were given to both Cllrs Cumming and Stevens-Smith for their hard work on this project.

Cllr Stevens-Smith also reported that so far the new parking protocol seems to be working well with no complaints having been received.

## **4033. Outside bodies matters.**

### **1. Consider request from Wealdlink for help in funding new Saturday bus service.**

Cllr Craddock proposed that the new bus service is supported with funding of approximately £1050 per annum. This was seconded by Cllr A Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously.

## **4034. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Chairman.**

Cllr R Hunter asked if Site A has been legally transferred to MPC yet. Cllr Craddock advised that the transfer has not yet happened as there are still outstanding work for Sigma to complete.

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**4035. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Clerk.** None.

**4036. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.**

The issue of dogs being walked in Maresfield village and causing concern amongst residents will be addressed by the Chairman in his next newsletter for the Parish Magazines.

**4037. Date of next meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Maresfield)**

**The Parish Council Meeting will close and reconvene as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground**

**4038. Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).** None.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm.