

# MARESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY AND FAIRWARP

## Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council Meeting held at Maresfield Village Hall on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllr M Craddock (Chair), Cllr Mrs S Cumming, Cllr Dr P Handley, Cllr R Hunter, Cllr . Koeppen, Cllr T Lewin, Cllr Mrs L Reeves, Cllr Mrs L Stevens-Smith, CCllr R Galley, DCllr I Tysh and Mrs N O'Hanlon (Clerk)

**A. Public session.** Five members of the public attended.

**4186. To approve apologies for absence and to note other non-attendance.**

Cllr Dr B Smith and Cllr P Taylor.

**4187. Declarations of Interest.** None.

**4188. To receive written requests for new DPI dispensations.** None.

**4189. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024: -**

1. For adoption. The minutes as circulated with the meeting papers were agreed to be a true and accurate record. Cllr Craddock proposed **adoption**. Cllr Cumming seconded this and it was **agreed** unanimously.
2. Matters arising from these minutes not elsewhere on the agenda. None.

**4190. Reports by and questions to: -**

1. County Councillor. CCllr Roy Galley reported as follows:

He is having a catch up meeting with Balfour Beatty on Thursday of this week and will ask for updates on the following issues;

- Drainage outside the Maresfield Village Hall – The Water company is carrying out a camera survey of their system as well.
- There are investigative works to be carried out in Maresfield High Street, does this include School Hill.
- Gatehouse Bridge, Underhill. – Under consideration as proposed repair is very costly.

CCllr Galley also reported that the County Council is in a difficult financial position and potentially cuts will be necessary or an increase in council tax.

Cllr Handley asked if there are road resurfacing plans for the A26 at Herons Ghyll. CCllr Galley thought some of this had already been carried out but Cllr Handley advised that the surface has been badly worn away. This will be brought up at CCllr Galley's meeting on Thursday.

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Cllr Stevens-Smith asked if Balfour Beatty could be made aware, at the Thursday meeting, that much of the flooding outside Maresfield Village Hall appears to come from run off from the car park.

Cllr Craddock had seen a proposal for all country roads without centre white lines to be made 40mph. He asked for CCllr Galley to get Highways response to this proposal at the meeting on Thursday. Cllr Reeves advised that this is on the WDALC agenda for its meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> September.

2. District Councillor. DCllr Ian Tysh reported as follows:

The Government has commenced a consultation about the new National Planning Policy Framework. DCllr Tysh has been working on WDC's response and looking into the effect it would have on their draft Local Plan.

Because of the gap between housing numbers in the draft Local Plan and the requirement in the new NPPF, the draft Local Plan will have to be reviewed.

There is money left in Wealden's share of the Rural Business Fund although applications will close soon.

**Action:** Clerk to put the opportunity on the PC website with a link to the application page.

### **4191. Parish Wards – issues, needs and Councillors' reports: -**

1. Fairwarp Ward. Cllr Reeves reported that following the Clerk's letter to Mims Davies, the MP for East Grinstead and Uckfield, she had met her in person and the MP had confirmed she will be looking into the Fairwarp mobile phone mast issue.
2. Maresfield Ward. Nothing to report.
3. Nutley Ward. Cllr Taylor had submitted a report to be read out in his absence. The family picnic held recently at Fords Green was well attended and enjoyed by all.

### **4192. Council bodies - To receive minutes and decisions, followed by reports from Chairmen and any questions: -**

#### **1. Finance & Administration Committee**

- i. Review Month 4 and 5 2024/25 accounts. Noted.
- ii. Review and Agree revised Contracts of Employment. The contracts of Employment have been updated in line with the new NALC template. Cllr Craddock proposed the new contracts are adopted; this was seconded by Cllr Koeppen and **agreed** by all.
- iii. Agree 2025 Proposed Meeting Dates. The proposed meeting dates for 2025 were noted.
- iv. To Note: External Auditor Report 2023/24. The external audit report, which was signed off with no comments, was noted.
- v. Update from Chairman. Cllr Craddock advised that grant applications for 2025/25 would be considered at the October F&A meeting.

**2. Planning Committee.**

- i. Minutes from meetings held 15<sup>th</sup> July, 5<sup>th</sup> August and draft minutes from 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024. Noted.
- ii. Update from Chairman. Cllr Craddock advised that the Planning Clerk had drafted comments about the new draft National Planning Policy Framework and subject to a couple of amendments had been asked by the Planning Committee to submit them.

**3. Environment Committee.**

- i. Consider offering a commitment to Fords Green residents for MPC to contribute to the upkeep of the lane next to Fords Green if adult exercise equipment is installed by the children's play area.

Cllr Craddock proposed that MPC commit to contributing up to £50 or a sum equal to that paid by other contributors (not to be more than £50 without Council's prior agreement). This was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **agreed** by all. This offer of a contribution is conditional on the exercise equipment being installed.

**Actions:** Clerk to check with insurers if contributing to the lane upkeep would give us any liability. Cllr Reeves will clarify the parking rules for the lane with the Ashdown Forest Conservators at the next meeting.

- ii. Discuss additional surface requirements at Fords Green play area. The Clerk explained that a trip hazard has been identified between the bonded rubber surfaces around the play equipment and the loose fill wood chip on the rest of the play area. A toddler recently had an accident that required hospital treatment when tripping where the two surfaces meet. All such accidents cannot be prevented but the current wood chip has been in place for some years and has degraded.

A quotation had been obtained to replace the woodchip with bonded rubber consistent with the surface around the equipment but at circa £15k this is expensive. **Action:** Clerk to obtain quotes for replacing the woodchip surface.

- iii. Update from Chairman. Nothing further to report.

**4. Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.**

- i. Draft minutes from meeting held 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Noted.
- ii. Update from Chairman. Cllr Stevens-Smith said that the MRGC was particularly pleased to have welcomed Tracey Coe, from Maresfield Conservation Group, onto the Committee.

Three quotes had been obtained for tree works required at MRG. Two of the quotes were similar the third was very much more as the contractor had identified that School Hill would have to be closed whilst the work over the carriageway was carried out and this added a significant cost.

**Action:** Clerk to consult with Wealden Tree Warden to get his advice on this.

Cllr Stevens-Smith reported that MDJFC are using the old bowling pavilion and have started making necessary improvements to the building and grounds.

**4193. Outside bodies matters.** None.

**4194. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Chairman.** None.

**4195. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Clerk.** None.

**4196. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.**

- The Chairman put a request for more Speedwatch volunteers in the next parish magazine newsletter.
- WDC Rural Fund for Businesses application details to be put on MPC website.

**4197. Date of next meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (Nutley)**

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

CCllr Roy Galley left the meeting.

**4198. Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).**

1. Consider quotation for marking out MRG boundary with Park Farm Lane.  
A quotation for £540 + Vat was received from Aworth Survey Consultants for marking the boundary between MRG and PFL. Only one quotation was sought as Aworth are specialists in this field of work. They have done work previously for the PC in connection with the MRG/Park Farm Lane boundary to a high standard and are a local company with an excellent reputation. Cllr Craddock proposed the quotation be accepted; this was seconded by Cllr Hunter and **agreed** by all.
2. Review and agree final drawings for proposed MRG parking scheme. Cllr Craddock proposed that the drawings, as circulated with meeting papers, were agreed in principle though they could still be subject to amendment. This was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **agreed** by all.
3. Review and agree revised terms of the agreement for the Maresfield Dynamos Club House. Cllr Craddock proposed that the terms of agreement which had had been only slightly amended from the previous draft and as circulated with meeting papers, be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr Stevens-Smith and **agreed** by all.

4. Resident's communication regarding MRG proposed parking scheme. The points raised in the communication received from a local resident and circulated with meeting papers were discussed. It was agreed that contrary to the views of the resident, parishioners had had ample opportunity to find out about the proposed parking plans for the MRG and that the Maresfield Conservation Group were well aware of what was being proposed and had professed to be in agreement with the plans.

Councillors felt that the aesthetics of the area would not be affected by the proposals and they advised that other feedback from parishioners had been positive.

Despite the feeling that residents had every opportunity to find out more about the parking proposals if they were interested it was agreed that information about it and a plan of the proposed changes would be put on the Maresfield noticeboard and on the MPC website asking for comments.

Action: Clerk to prepare an informative notice to be placed on the Maresfield noticeboard and on the website.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.25*