

# 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 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllr M Craddock (Chair), Cllr Mrs S Cumming, Cllr Dr P Handley, Cllr Dr B Smith, Cllr T Lewin, Cllr Mrs L Reeves, Cllr Mrs L Stevens-Smith, Cllr P Taylor, DCllr I Tysh, Mrs L Mitchell (Clerical Assistant) and Mrs N O'Hanlon (Clerk)

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

**4224. To approve apologies for absence and to note other non-attendance.**

Apologies from Cllr R Hunter, Cllr A Koeppen and CCllr R Galley.  
Cllr Dr B Smith had advised she would be late arriving.

**4225. Declarations of Interest.** None.

**4226. To receive written requests for new DPI dispensations.** None.

**4227. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024: -**

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

**4228. Reports by and questions to: -**

1. County Councillor. None.
2. District Councillor. DCllr Tysh reported:
  - Following a recent Climate Change Strategy meeting a consultation has started asking for people's views, ideas and comments. The consultation can be found on [letstalk.wealden.gov.uk](http://letstalk.wealden.gov.uk).
  - A resubmission of the application for land adjacent to Limestone Way has been received asking for four fewer houses and this was discussed at the Parish Planning Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024. Cllr Tysh advised that he will be opposing this application based largely on the totally unacceptable access plans for construction traffic.
  - Wealden District Council have resolved to write a letter to central government asking for the withdrawal of the winter fuel payments from so many people to be reconsidered and making some suggestions on amendments.
  - A consultation is expected to come out regarding the devolution of District Councils whereby a consideration will be given for "abolishing County and District councils and replacing them with mayors".
  - A discussion paper has been received about more planning reforms including taking powers away from Planning Committees and more powers/control being given to Planning Officers.**ACTION:** DCllr Tysh to send to Clerk who will circulate the paper to councillors.

Cllr Dr B Smith joined the meeting.

**4229. Parish Wards – issues, needs and Councillors’ reports: -**

1. Fairwarp Ward. Nothing to report.
2. Maresfield Ward.
  - It was reported that the festive meal for the lunch club was a great success with over 60 in attendance, with also a visit from Bonners C of E Primary School choir.
  - The Christmas Tree Lighting went ahead despite the bad weather from Storm Darragh although it was decided to cancel the closing of the road.
  - The resurfacing of School Hill is now complete and lots of comments have been made as to its improvement.
  - Due to recent bad weather the road along nursery lane is breaking up at the sides and there are a number of overgrown hedges causing obstruction.  
**ACTION:** Clerk to report to Highways.
3. Nutley Ward.
  - The minutes of the recent SLR meeting were shared with the Crowborough Road action group, who are very concerned about the amount and speed of traffic along the road, in particular lorries. It was asked if the Parish Office had the capacity to write to the companies whose lorries were reported to be over the 30T weight limit. The Clerk advised that as long as the office were given the relative information this wouldn't be a problem.
  - It was also asked if the Clerk could write to Katy Bourne, Police and Crime Commissioner to ask for her support with reducing the weight limit from 30T to 7.5T on Crowborough Road.  
**ACTION:** Clerk to write a letter.
  - The Clerk reported that at her recent visit with Enforcement, rumble strips were suggested. Because rumble strips add to road noise Cllr Smith was asked to take this suggestion back to the residents for their views.  
**ACTION:** Cllr Smith to speak with residents.

**4230. Council bodies - To receive minutes and decisions, followed by reports from Chairmen and any questions: -**

1. **Finance & Administration Committee**
  - i. Review Month 8 2024/25 accounts.

The month 8 accounts were noted and in particular the Chair brought councillors attention to a newly created bank account containing the sum of £5,000. This bank account was opened in readiness for the receipt of S106 monies which Wealden requires be kept in an interest-bearing account. The £5,000 used from PC funds to open the account will be returned to the PC once the S106 monies are received.

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- ii. Consider and Approve proposed 2025/26 Grant awards.  
Councillors considered the proposed grant awards recommended by the F&A Committee, as per the schedule circulated with papers. After some clarifications it was proposed that the proposed grants to the value of £16,890 be approved. This was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.
- iii. Consider and Approve 2025/26 Budget and Precept.  
Councillors considered the proposed 2025/26 precept figure of £111,958 recommended by the F&A Committee, as per the spreadsheet circulated with papers. This precept figure represents a 3.7% increase on the 2024/25 precept. Councillors were happy with the proposed precept figure and it was proposed the 2025/26 precept amount of £111,958 be approved; this was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.
- iv. Consider proposed amendments to section 2.6 of Financial Regulations.  
The F&A Committee considered the proposed amendment at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and agreed to recommend approval to Council. After considering the amendment, as per the copy circulated with meeting papers, it was proposed that the words 'or a cheque signatory' be removed from section 2.6 of the Financial Regulations. This was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.
- v. Review proposed amendments to the following policies.
  - 1. Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme
  - 2. Co-Option Policy
  - 3. Council Representation on Outside Bodies.The F&A Committee had considered the proposed amendments for all 3 of the above policies at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and had agreed to recommend the changes to Council. The changes, as detailed in the copies circulated with meeting papers, were considered and it was proposed that all changes be approved. This was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.
- vi. Update from Chairman. Nothing to report.

### **2. Planning Committee.**

- i. Draft minutes from meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Noted.
- ii. Update from Chairman. At the Planning Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024, the main focus was on the resubmitted land adjacent to Limestone Way application as reported on earlier by DCllr Tysh. The main problem with this application is the totally unacceptable site access route proposed for construction traffic.

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

- i. Review and approve new Parklands lease.  
Councillors had studied the new draft lease supplied by Wealden DC, as circulated with meeting papers. It was noted that the original 20-year lease with Wealden expired in January 2024. It was a simple and straightforward document which was 4 page long.

The new draft lease is for a reduced 10-year period, is 26 pages long and includes clauses which are irrelevant to a Parish Council. There is no doubt that the Parish Council would like to continue to lease the Parklands Play Area but it was proposed that the Chairman and Clerk are given the authority to liaise with WDC to try and simplify the new lease before signing. This proposal was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.

**ACTION:** Clerk to write to Wealden District Council.

- ii. Update from Chairman. Nothing to report but the next meeting due to take place on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 has been postponed due to the delay with the Site A transfer and a number of items having already been discussed at the recent SLR meeting.

#### **4. Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.**

- i. Draft minutes from meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Noted.
- ii. Update from Chairman. The recent committee meeting was well attended by all sports clubs. Maresfield Dynamos Junior Football Club has made vast improvements to their Dynamos Clubhouse, creating a great social atmosphere for the club and a safer playing space for the younger members.

The Maresfield Pavilion doors are now showing extreme weathering and will need to be replaced in the new year.

The trees on the recreation ground have recently been inspected by the Clerk and a Tree Inspection Officer from ESCC. The result being that no work is considered as urgent but some work will have to be carried out over the next three years.

Buxted Cricket Club have applied for a grant from Wealden District Council for a hybrid wicket.

It was noted that Wealden DC are offering sports grants and the Clerk advised that this has been circulated to all sports clubs.

#### **4231. Outside bodies matters.**

- It was reported that the 10:07 from London to Uckfield train has been reinstated.
- The Parish Liaison Meeting held by the Ashdown Forest Conservators is due to be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- Cllr Reeves continues to campaign for a mobile phone mast for Fairwarp. The siting is being reconsidered once again at the entrance to The Street. She will be looking for an update from Mims Davies' assistant.
- The Parish Council is looking into having a Village Gateway on Crowborough Road. The Clerk advised that the protocol is currently being rewritten by ESCC and we are awaiting to hear what the new request process is before applying.

**4232. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Chairman.** None.

**4233. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Clerk.** None.

**4234. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.** None.

**4235. Date of next meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 (Nutley War Memorial Hall)**

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

**4236. Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).**

1. Review and agree Maresfield Recreation Ground Charity accounts for 2023/24.  
After consideration it was proposed that councillors approve the accounts and the draft Letter of Representation as circulated with meeting papers and they be signed as necessary; this was seconded and **Agreed** unanimously.
2. Update on new parking scheme proposal.  
A number of quotations have now been received but are above the price level expected. The specification will be reviewed and the companies asked to resubmit their quotes in line with the revised specification, which can then be considered in the new year.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.26*