



Pett Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Pett Parish Council duly convened and held on 16th January 2024 7.30 pm, Pett Village Hall

Present: Councillors D. Penfold (Chairman), J. Case, A. Dunlop, A. Norcott, D. Tasker and J. Tomalin.
In attendance: County Councillor K. Glazier; District Councillors T. Grohne and A. Mier; Clerk M. Philo.
Members of the public: Five.

Formalities

3400. Quorum

The council was quorate.

- LGA 1972, sch. 12, 12

3401. Apologies and Reasons for Absence

Councillor Crouch.

LGA 1972, s.85

3402. Declaration of Interest and Dispensation

None.

(Code of Conduct)

3403. Agreement of the Previous Minutes

It was resolved to agree the minutes of the 19 December 2023 as a true record.

LGA1972, sch. 12, para. 41

Councillor Dunlop arrived.

The meeting was adjourned for Public Time. 7.33pm

Report from County Councillor Glazier

The recent road closure at the bottom of Chick Hill was to raise kerbs and put in gullies. No work was carried out on the bridge itself.

Works to Pett Level Road to Winchelsea Beach remains scheduled but are not high priority.

Residents were requested to report potholes. B and C roads are only inspected annually. The county council has a fixed contract with Balfour Beatty including returning to repair fixed holes.

Budgeting for the next year (council tax) continues. The increase in the living wage has added £6 million to the county's care costs for vulnerable people. The provisional government settlement of 6.5% is dependent on the council raising taxes by 4.9%. The predicted £20 million yearly shortfall will lead to reserves falling below the minimum level.

Report from District Councillor Mier

Rother District Council (RDC) would be upgrading its current 30-40 year old planning software as it is no longer supported. It was hoped that it would make processes less manual and make the Planning Authority (LPA) side

compatible with other LPAs, opening up an option to pool information with other LPAs. RDC has changed how they consider councillor interests.

Report from District Councillor Grohne

The district council current year's planned expenditure had been exceeded and reserves would be covering this. A scheme to save £3 million a year is planned to move the council towards a secure financial position but this would mean the closure of facilities e.g. public conveniences. About 76% of the budget is spent on vulnerable care and homelessness.

Public Questions

A member of the public noted that the parish council was meeting with Guestling Parish Council Working Party looking into the potential affordable housing for the land behind Allards and Fairview. It was confirmed that the group had asked to meet to learn the history of events with regard to Pett Parish Council.

The meeting was reconvened at 7.58pm

Governance

3404. Risk Assessment Policy

It was resolved to agree a Risk Assessment Policy as a foreword to the Risk Assessment Schedule.

3405. Council Priorities and Action Plan

It was suggested that a mission statement would fit well within council priorities and plans. A brain-storming session was proposed.

Planning

3406. Enforcement and Appeals

No new information. The Amos Sunview appeal was still ongoing.

3407. Planning Decisions Notified

RR/2023/1623/P Peach Tree Cottage, Pett Road: Proposed agricultural barn. Approved conditionally.

RR/2023/2292/O Nine Acres, Pett Road: Replace with modern fence between Swallows Chase and Nine Acres. Certificate of Lawful Development. Refused. Councillor Case noted that, although he lives at Nine Acres, the application was not submitted by him, but by his neighbour.

RR/2023/2353/P Cliffend Fort, Pett Level: Proposed double bay garage with first floor accommodation and associated ground works. Approved.

RR/2023/2352/P Cliffend Fort, Pett Level: Proposed studio/beach hut. Withdrawn by the applicant.

RR/2023/239/P New Homestead Cottage, Pett Road: Proposed single storey rear extension. Approved.

3408. Applications Considered

RR/2023/2449/L Meadow Sweet, Pett Road: Replacement of non-historical poor condition windows. It was resolved to support.

Parish Matters

3409. Marsham Brook Lane Flooding January 2023 – December Developments

The meeting was adjourned for the Flood Warden's Report. 8.12pm

The group of land owners of the upper basin area, continue working on a program to slow the water traveling from their land down the basin. Southern Water has given £20,000 to launch the scheme.

The Environment Agency has investigated the culvert/bridge at the bottom of Chick Hill and found that the base of the culvert is 2 feet higher than the river bed on the upstream side. Therefore the reed bed is always holding water. The reed bed would overflow across the road with lower rainfall than originally expected. It has been acknowledged that the bridge culvert is a pinch point.

One potential solution is to cut another aperture through the bridge to reduce turbulence. The sewer from the bridge to Toot Rock is being checked for any damage and also to ensure that there will be no potential downstream consequences. The cost of the works will fall to East Sussex County Council but Southern Water ought to contribute as Southern Water plans to increase the sewage plant capacity and the sewer has to be able to deal with additional water.

Councillor Dunlop held the view that the best solution would be to clear the sewer and increase the height and strength of the bank on the other (west) side of the reed bed. The flood warden would pass this on to authorities to consider.

The Marsham Brook flood warden team of 10 had now drawn up an action plan to warn residents of dangerous water levels and were receiving training from the Environment Agency to be able to start one pump having had the EA's direction to do so.

The meeting was reconvened at 9.00 pm

3410. Pett Level Public Toilets Temporary Closure

The council reviewed the Rother District Council offer to share the cost of running the facility with Pett Parish Council for the period March to September 2024 and the clerk's report regarding the visit to review the cesspit with a waste removal contractor. The brief inspection revealed two fast drips into the cesspit although the facility is closed. It was resolved to respond as per the draft letter amended to include the site cesspit review. Among various points the letter made reference to the requirement for the reopening to be for the full year; the omission on the part of Rother District Council to include the previously mentioned £15,000 available for work on the facility and the parish council requirement that the facility is working efficiently and cost-effectively. **It was resolved to agree the amended letter.**

3411. 80th Commemoration of D-Day was deferred.

Parish Matters

3412. Highways

- i) Bollards for Chick Hill – The licence fee has been paid.
- ii) Jubilee/Coronation Tree for Hyde Park. Highways officers have received the request and asked for the neighbours to be consulted. The neighbour has been contacted.
- iii) A resident's complaint of speeding endangering their safety as they walk along Pett Road, where there is no footpath, had been responded to by County Councillor Glazier advising of the requirements for a flashing speed sign to be installed. Pett roads did not meet this criterion. Following enquiries, the clerk had also ascertained that it was no longer possible to loan a temporary speed indication device from Speedwatch/highways.

3413. Footpaths

- i) Jubilee Way leaflet is ongoing.
- ii) Information boards. Deferred to next meeting
- iii) A broken and loose squeeze gate was reported on the tow path joining the Military Canal close to the Pett and Winchelsea boundary. Clerk to report to Public Rights of Way.

3414. Recreation Ground

The contractor has removed the swing basket as the rusty universal joint had to be replaced.

3415. Village Maintenance

i) There followed a discussion of: fly tipping at bins; full dog poop bags being left in bushes; it was also noted that Rother District Council (RDC) would only empty bins very close to the road. It was suggested that it was put to RDC that red recreation bin by the play area could be moved to the bus shelter outside the recreation ground to replace the broken green bin there. It was also suggested that the small roadside bin between Lunsford Farm and Cuckoo Cottage should be removed to deter fly tipping. Clerk to action. Furthermore, a more prominent advert/poster to be included in the magazine to remind people to take their dog poop bags home or put them in the bin.

ii) Highways had advised that the cutting of rural verges was changing. It was resolved to opt for the Environmental Enhancement Service (reduced rural service) - Excluding single track lanes, the first cut at start of season to be only visibility cuts for safety at junctions and on the inside of bends where sight lines between road users may be obscured by vegetation. The second cut later in the season will be visibility plus a 1 metre wide swathe along the verge.

3416. Allotments

The allotment society had not found anyone in the village ready to offer land as yet. They had provided an approximate size of the current allotments. Nothing had been heard from the landlords about a few months extension to allow the plots to be used in the final year of the lease.

Finances

3417. Bank Balances

Current account balance as at 31st December £54,587.36 (including any unrepresented payments).
Project Remember remains unchanged at £ 1,458.50

3418. Receipts for December

£8.00	Magazine Sales
£110.00	Magazine Advert: Robin Hutt
£55.00	Magazine Advert: Wandedale Pest Control
£8.00	Magazine Sales

3419. Additional December Payments

The following payment was altered to include 50% of the back pay agreed at the December meeting
£ 1,130.47 Staff: Salaries

3420. Payments Authorised

£1,130.47	Staff: Salaries
£55.02	M Philo: Office and travel
£354.03	Impression IT magazine print invoice 16023
£20.00	Pett Village Hall October room hire, invoice 1129
£19.03	EE limited: Clerk's Mobile Phone (vat £2.61)
£36.00	Maiden Accountancy: January to March 2024 Payroll (vat £6)
Charge Card – Nil	

3421. Setting the precept for 2024/2025

Holding the precept at £23,000 would mean the average council tax property (band D) would pay £ 49.37 a year. Increasing the precept by £3,000 to £26,000 would mean the average council tax property (band D) would pay an additional £6.44 a year.

It was resolved to set the annual precept for 2024-2025 at £26,000. Based on the tax base of 465.84, the average council tax property (band D) would pay £ 55.82 a year (£1.08 a week).

3422. Clerks Subscription to the Clerk's Society

It was resolved to fund a share of the Clerk's subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerk £87.02 (full amount £229).

3423. Reports

i) Village Hall – The hall committee are investigating solar panels. The hall was happy to liaise with the chairman or clerk to the council.

ii) East Sussex association of Local Councils – At the last meeting the following was highlighted:

- ESALC was looking to set up an independent mediator to deal with parish councils in difficulties.
- Civility and Respect training is available from Nimble.
- It is important to retain good clerks; recruitment is becoming more difficult.
- The Police are planning to drop the Police Focus Groups; it was agreed to try to persuade the police to retain them
- Traffic calming measures –even in villages humps can be installed as long as they are lit.
- Regarding potholes and a possible additional precept for roads, a meeting with County Cllr Claire Dowling would be arranged.

3424. Information for Councillors

The Residential Development Seminar 11th January was attended by the clerk.
Cllr Tasker is attending A Carbon Literacy Training on 25 January 2024

3425. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday March 19th, 2023 7.30pm, Pett Village Hall or Tuesday 20th February if planning applications need to be considered.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.

Signed By Chairman Date.....