

# ICKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**A local council for the peoples of Icklesham, Winchelsea, Winchelsea Beach and Rye Harbour**

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7:15 pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at Winchelsea Beach Village Hall**

**Present:** Councillors: J Justice, I Mann, I McConnochie, T Moore D Smedley (Vice Chair), Mrs J. Stanford (Chair), H. Sutton, Mrs A. Thomson, P Turner and N. Warren

**In attendance:** Jenner Sands (Clerk and RFO), members of the public were also present

**23/01 Item 1. The Chair opened the meeting at 7.15 pm. The Chair invited comments or questions from members of the public on matters relating to the business of the Council.**

Justin Lyward of Winchelsea Beach spoke regarding item 6 of the agenda. He said that he and his family have been plagued by the tankers ever since they have moved and more damage has been done to the pavements and to the roads. He said that the tankers are doing whatever they like whenever they like, sitting with their engines running all night long. He said that they have complained to Southern Water and they are now complaining directly to MTS. They have been pumping for 24 hours a day for weeks and weeks. He said that ever since they have moved the tanker everyone is getting flooded, it is worse now than it has ever been. He said that he knows we have had a lot of rain this year but we also had a lot of rain in 2013 and 2007. He said that something needs to be done as it clearly isn't working.

Rob Brown of Winchelsea Beach also spoke to item 6 of the agenda. He said that a lot of money has been spent making it so the tankers aren't blocking the Highway anymore he said that he is concerned that this has now become a permanent arrangement. He attended a meeting 8 years ago when Amber Rudd was MP and residents were told then that it was all going to get sorted. He said that the average size of a sewer pipe is 4 inches which goes into the sewer in Donald way which is 5 inches. He said that if you talk to the subcontractors from Southern Water, they will tell you that it does not matter how many leaks they fix around here the infrastructure is completely inadequate.

Andrew Hodgson of Winchelsea Beach also spoke about item 6 of the agenda. He said that he has sewage coming up in his back garden. Recently a Southern Water contractor came to check the pollution levels and then another contractor who was more qualified came along and measured and the pollution was off the scale. He said the following day somebody from a university turned up to do the same test and again it was off the scale. He said that sooner or later he is going to want to sell his house and he thinks that Southern Water should have some sort of responsibility for the loss on the asking price for his property due to the property 'blight' the sewerage has caused.

Stephen King of Winchelsea Beach spoke about item 6 of the agenda. He said that he spoke to Michael Foster the local MP in 2007 with exactly the same problem. He said that it has not been resolved since then.

Dirk Van Dijn of Winchelsea Beach also spoke about item 6. He said that in March this year the Chief Executive of Southern Water came to Winchelsea Beach Village Hall and said that they were lining the pipes which would solve the problem. He said they needed a few dry months and then it would be done. Now we have been told they have only done 50% of the pipes although we had the driest summer in decades. He also raised that the CEO has now retired. He said Winchelsea Beach needs new infrastructure, they cannot solve the problem with tankers. He said that anyone who has a tanker outside their house should receive £100 per day because of the stress it causes. He said in the meantime planning has got to stop authorising applications for 100s of caravans who pay no council tax.

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Carol Tooth of Winchelsea Beach also spoke about item 6. She said that they have lived in Winchelsea Beach since 1988 and their toilet backs up every time it rains. She said that they were watching the Southern news this afternoon about Hellingly who had a petition about the tankering. She said that the pumping stations in Winchelsea Beach are not fit for purpose, and it is about time somebody did something about it.

Gill Blackwood of Winchelsea Beach spoke about item 6. she said she wants to know is where is this going to go from the Parish Council as she feels all of the relevant agencies should be involved at a senior level.

Graham Tooth of Winchelsea Beach also spoke about item 6 of the agenda. he raised that there was an article in The Times which said water companies had pots of money available to spend on infrastructure. Southern Water had £200m available for 2022/23 and has spent £50m. That means they have enough money to sort out Winchelsea Beach and Hellingly which is suffering from the same problems.

Charlie Woodright from Pett Level Road also spoke about item 6. He said that when he first moved to Winchelsea Beach about 4 years ago he had problems with the drains. He bought rods to try and shift it all but it just came back time after time. He said that the engineer from Southern Water who comes to fix it is very helpful and fast. Every time the engineer comes he says the system is completely inadequate.

The Clerk then read a letter from Mrs Claire Clare of Winchelsea Beach who complained about the green tarpaulin and portaloos round the side of the tanker which makes it very difficult to pull out onto the main road.

Janet Eccleston of Winchelsea Beach spoke about item 6. She said that many years ago we had all of the Southern Water bosses and Amber Rudd here and nothing happened. She said that it never goes anywhere. She said that Rother Planning Department are still letting applications in Winchelsea Beach go through.

Justin Lyward said that he had a meeting with Southern Water a few weeks ago where the Clerk was present and Southern Water said that Rother Planning Department do not speak to local engineers.

Frank Langrish of Winchelsea Beach spoke in relation to items 6 and 13c of the agenda. He said that they had a high pressure pipe burst on the farm about three weeks ago and it took Southern Water 5 days to get round to do something about it. He said that the problem actually started when they allowed the caravan parks to be open all year round. In relation to item 13c, he is concerned that there is a flyer that has gone around to some people about the National Trust plans for the land they own in Winchelsea. The tenant has given up most of the land there and there is around 700 acres of land which the National Trust are going to do something with conservation. There is a national policy at the moment where they are taking land out of production and the term 'rewilding' is effectively what they want to do. His concern as a neighbouring farmer is that some of the land hasn't been grazed at all for about 18 months, especially on the North side of Winchelsea. It is now full of thistles and ragwort. He said that this not only degrades their own land but also the adjoining land and the additional costs of this. The National Trust refuse to dig out some of the ditches which causes flooding on his land. He has written to them two or three times and he actually offered to take on some of the land to put it in good order but they do not want that done. He said that he thinks the people of Winchelsea should be very concerned as this will not look a particularly attractive landscape in a few years' time, it will be all brambles and thistles and he feels that is wrong in an area of outstanding natural beauty and SSSI. He said that the National Trust appear to be using the Parish Council as a vehicle to legitimise this as the flyer said that the meeting was in partnership with the Parish Council. The parish council confirmed that they were not involved with this project but would be attending the meeting.

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Andrew Hodgson of Winchelsea Beach supported what Frank Langrish said and said that if you go along Morlais Ridge you would see exactly what Frank has just been talking about and as far as he was concerned it posed a massive fire risk this summer amongst a very populated area.

## **23/02 Item 2. To receive reports and ask questions of the County Councillor Keith Glazier and the Rother District Councillors concerning County Council and Rother District Council matters. (10 minutes)**

Cllr Glazier said that the problem we have is the acceptance of the problem by Southern Water has never been final.. He thought that when we had the previous CEO along here we may have gotten somewhere because there appeared to be a clear plan and in Sally-Ann's words it was 'going to be an exemplar of what Southern Water can do'. He said that he will assist wherever he can.

The second problem is the cold snap before Christmas and the way this has affected the roads. He said that it created potholes that they couldn't even have planned for. He said that it is really important that residents and Councillors report potholes. He said that James Kelly the Highways Steward is out day and night and they have taken on another load of teams to try and get the pot holes filled.

He said he is having his first meeting with colleagues tomorrow about setting the budget for next year. They have now received the Government settlement from the Government which is slightly better than they expected it to be however when looking at the spending power it includes levying on the tax payers of East Sussex a 2.99% increase on Council Tax and an additional 2% on adult social care which would mean an increase in Council Tax of 4.99%. The alternative would be to make £15m worth of savings.

Cllr Turner made a comment in relation to the Winchelsea Beach Sewage and said that one answer might be is for Cllr Glazier to co-ordinate across the County a petition on the Government website to get enough signatures to get parliament to debate it.

Dirk Van Dijn made a comment and said that he has never doubted Cllr Glazier's desire improve East Sussex and that he recognises how hard he works. The Chair agreed with this and thanked Cllr Glazier for trying his best and for always coming to our meetings.

Cllr Justice asked why Rother District Council looking at this as an Environmental Health issue Cllr Glazier confirmed that this question would be better directed at Cllr Hacking who was present from Rother District Council.

Cllr Warren asked if they are anticipating any more money coming into social services to help with the current pressures on the NHS. Cllr Glazier confirmed there are plans in place however the problem is that buying beds is not the answer as you have to actually service them.

Cllr Hacking of Rother District Council confirmed that the main topic she would like to raise with the Parish Council is about the planning application for the Windmill Park Caravan site. She said the application is being recommended for approval with certain conditions. She said that if the application is called into the Planning Committee, she thinks it would be really good if somebody from Icklesham Parish Council came to give representations as well. The Chair confirmed that Icklesham Parish Council are against this application and any other planning applications for additional properties in Winchelsea Beach. The Chair confirmed that Icklesham Parish Council Planning Committee make this very clear with every application they consider but the problem is Rother Planning do not listen to the Parish Council. Cllr Warren requested that the application was called into Committee and that he would be happy to go and represent the Parish Council with the Clerk.

Cllr Hacking also raised the fact that Southern Water have a fund for struggling communities and in some cases Southern Water have paid peoples water bills or have paid to do something in an area.

Cllr Hacking responded to Cllr Justice and confirmed that she would be happy to follow up the issue with Environmental Health.

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**23/03 Item 3. To record any apologies for absence.** *Apologies received from D Kitteridge, Mrs. C Rice and S Tollett.*

**23/04 Item 4. Disclosure of Interests** - to receive any disclosure by members of personal interest required under the Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any written requests made by members for dispensation to allow them to participate in, and vote on, an agenda item for which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. Members are reminded a) to repeat their declaration immediately prior to commencement of the item in question and b) complete the declaration of interests form.

*Cllr Mann declared a personal interest in relation to item 16 of the agenda.*

**23/05 Item 5.** To consider and approve the signing by the Chair of the attached minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022. **RESOLVED:** the Minutes were approved and signed.

## **Matters requiring a Decision by Council**

### **23/06 Item 6. Winchelsea Beach Flooding and Sewerage**

a) To receive the Clerk's Report and Complaints Log.

**RESOLVED:** the report and complaints log was noted.

b) To consider the Clerk's recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** the Clerk's recommendations were approved. Clerk is to also upload the Ofwat letter on to the Parish Council's website. Clerk is also to investigate with Rother District Council whether the tankers constitute a statutory nuisance.

### **23/07 Item 7. Financial Matters.**

a) To receive the list of items paid to date in November and December and items for payment to date – available at the meeting. **RESOLVED:** approved.

b) Receipts and Payments report (budget vs actual) – available at the meeting. **RESOLVED:** approved.

c) To receive and approve the third quarter bank reconciliations. – available at the meeting. **RESOLVED:** approved.

d) To consider Grant Applications received from the following:-

i. Winchelsea Beach Community Association - £1,725 annual grant towards running costs. **RESOLVED:** approved.

ii. Church of the Holy Spirit, Rye Harbour - £600 annual grant towards maintenance of churchyard. **RESOLVED:** approved.

e) To consider amending Financial Regulations to allow Clerk to transfer funds between bank accounts to ensure Council funds are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (maximum £85,000 per account). **RESOLVED:** approved.

### **23/08 Item 8. Interim Audit**

To receive the interim internal audit report. **RESOLVED:** the report was noted.

### **23/09 Item 9. Rother District Council Health and Well-being: Leisure Facilities Strategy Consultation.**

Rother District Council would like the Council's views on their proposed strategy for outdoor and indoor leisure facilities and services across Rother – covering the next ten years. The Consultation and draft strategy can be accessed online here: <https://www.rother.gov.uk/consultations/health-and-well-being-leisure-facilities-strategy/> **RESOLVED:** clerk is to write to Rother to highlight concerns over the closure of Rye swimming pool and the fact that the strategy does not make any reference to this.

### **23/10 Item 10. Open Spaces Committee**

a) To note the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November. **RESOLVED:** the minutes were noted.

b) To consider the Committee's recommendation for Darren Kitteridge to carry out maintenance work for the Parish Council. **RESOLVED:** it was agreed that Darren Kitteridge could carry out work for the Parish Council and submit quotes for consideration. Going forward quotes will not be published online and given to Councillors to consider on the night of the meeting.

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## **23/11 Item 11. Replacement Swing Rye Harbour Playground**

Baby swing was replaced in May 2022. This has now been damaged again. A replacement will cost around £150 plus VAT. Council to consider whether to replace the swing or to remove it. It was suggested it could be a fox causing the damage. **RESOLVED:** Leave the swing as it is for now. Clerk is to post a picture of the swing on Facebook to see if any residents have seen anything. Clerk is also to look into wildlife/ CCTV cameras.

## **Matters for Information or Noting**

### **23/12 Item 12. Programme of Works.**

**RESOLVED:** Noted.

### **23/13 Item 13. Correspondence.**

- a) Email response received from Cllr Keith Glazier regarding Dogs Hill Road, Winchelsea Beach. **RESOLVED:** noted.
- b) Email from Winchelsea Beach Community Association thanking the Parish Council for the Christmas Tree. **RESOLVED:** noted.
- c) Email from Winchelsea Beach Resident regarding National Trust property. **RESOLVED:** Cllr Turner is going to write an article for the Winchelsea Magazine to make it clear that the Parish Council are not involved in the National Trust's plans. Cllr Smedley merely helped them to organise the meeting in order to keep residents informed.

**23/14 Item 14. Reports from Councillors on meetings they have attended.** Councillors to update Council. Nothing to report.

### **23/15 Item 15. Items for Consideration for Future Agendas.**

Nothing to note.

### **23/18 Item 18. Date and venue for next meeting.**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 7.15 pm at Winchelsea New Hall.

**The Council then resolved to go into private session to discuss confidential items.**

***Agreed as a true record of the meeting***

**Signed .....** **Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023**

**Cllr J Stanford  
(Chair)**