

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 11th September 2023 at Icklesham Memorial Hall

Present: Councillors: C Chappell, Ms. N Eldridge, J Justice, D Kitteridge, Mrs. S Lyward, I Mann, I McConnochie, A Rixon, Mrs. A Thomson, D Smedley (Vice Chair), Mrs J. Stanford (Chair), H Sutton, and N. Warren

In attendance: Cllr Tim Grohne (RDC) and Cllr Keith Glazier (ESCC).

23/107 Item 1. The Chair invited comments or questions from members of the public on matters relating to the business of the Council.

A resident from Winchelsea spoke on behalf of the Winchelsea Residents' Association. He thanked the Parish Council for their hard work for getting the traffic calming to this stage over the last three years. He said that this is now a landmark opportunity to progress to the next stage to eradicating the rat running through Winchelsea. He said that it is not just about traffic calming but above all, protecting the children and the elderly from drivers who are racing through the town when they should be sticking to the main A259. National Highways, East Sussex and residents have all agreed that road closure of Strand Hill is the only workable solution to eradicate the rat running through the town. He said that it is undisputed that thousands of cars drive through the town in order to avoid the A259. He said that they have all seen the letter from East Sussex County Council and curiously, rat running is not mentioned once in the negative note from the East Sussex County Council officer who is based in Lewes and has probably never seen the place. He merely pointed out the procedural obstacles and avoided any mention of the issue. Since 2018 East Sussex County Council recognised that rat running is a problem in the Town. East Sussex have suggested more consultations than is necessary which is nonsense because they have not done their homework and the officer is probably unaware of the extensive research and investigations undertaken both by the Parish Council, the Residents' Association and the consultants and this can all be provided to the County Council and the planners as part of the planning application. Secondly, he makes the point that there is no certainty of the result, there is no certainty in any planning application. The Residents' Association would happily assist the Council in compiling the existing material necessary for the application. Thirdly the letter mentions cost, there is no cost falling on the Parish Council in promoting the scheme to the County Council. If there is a shortfall in the ring-fenced money that the Council has then individual residents have indicated their willingness to contribute towards any shortfall.

The Chair corrected the resident and confirmed that, although Mr Skelton is based in Lewes he was not office bound and he had visited Winchelsea on more than one occasion to attend meetings in Winchelsea regarding the traffic calming.

A Winchelsea resident spoke in relation to item 7 of the agenda. He confirmed that the Winchelsea Residents' Association have the following observations in response to East Sussex County Council's letter: we can only repeat that the vote demonstrated significant majority for action, twice as many as those who voted for no change. It cannot be acceptable to suggest that this situation can be ignored. There is no precedent or requirement for a higher level of support and the Residents' Association ask IPC to support the proposal to East Sussex County Council and to work with East Sussex County Council on any practical issues.

A Winchelsea resident spoke in relation to item 7 of the agenda. She read a letter from the Head Teacher of St Thomas' Primary School in Winchelsea dated 23 June 2023. "Dear Residents' Association, we are writing to you today as the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors of St Thomas' Primary School in Winchelsea to express our support to implement a traffic scheme to stop speeding cars speeding through Winchelsea. The majority of parents picking up and dropping off their children at the school park their cars at Monks Walk and use the recently installed gate to walk through Jubilee Playground. Monks Walk is a popular route for rat runners who use it to avoid the A259, often ignoring the 30-mph limit. This is extremely dangerous, especially for our youngest pupils who are not yet confident road users. Many parents express their concern about the speed of cars passing through the town and ask that something is done about it before there is an accident. We believe that the proposed traffic schemes would go a long way to deal with these concerns and would

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make Monks Walk a much safer place for our pupils and parents. Thank you for your time and consideration.” The Chair asked if IPC had received a copy of that letter and the resident gave a copy to the clerk before leaving the meeting.

23/108 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 confirmed that he is pleased to report that the drainage issue on Sea Road has at long last been completed and he thanked Cllr Justice for his persistence and hard work. Cllr Glazier confirmed that he believes Balfour Beatty are beginning to make a difference on the roads however there is still a long way to go. He was pleased to report that the road going through to Ore has also now been resurfaced. In relation to Pett Level Road, he had a meeting with Pett Parish Council and the Highways Steward and there is a timeframe set for repairs for Pett Level Road. Cllr Glazier said that the Clerk may have been contacted about the poor parking down on Pett Level Road on Sunday as it was almost impossible to get through. It was one of the hottest days of the year and there was a sign on the top of Rye Hill saying that Camber was full and telling people to go to Pett Level. Cllr Glazier confirmed that the Camber full sign is still there but there is now nothing on the sign saying to go to Pett Level or Winchelsea Beach. Cllr Glazier was also forwarded a letter from Cllr Osborne about the bad parking on Dogs Hill Road, evidently there were cars on both sides of the road making access very difficult.

The County Council is now a ‘no overall control council’. They are continuing to work together to deliver the best services they can to East Sussex. At the next Council meeting there will be a report from the Local Government Association who have recently conducted a review of East Sussex which will be made public. It concludes that East Sussex are providing good services and are in a good position.

The Chair thanked Cllr Glazier for attending the Parish Council’s meetings.

Cllr Grohne confirmed that the financial report for the first quarter was given at the last cabinet meeting and the deficit position is now at £8,800,000 which is an increase of £600,000. The reserve funds are now down by £1,700,000 compared to last year. A major contribution for this is temporary accommodation and emergency housing. There is also a forecast deficit of over £300,000 for democratic services and elections of which £250,000 was as a result of not budgeting for the Council’s District Elections which is a concern. One a more positive note there is a Community Grant Scheme, the first round of which £19,000 was granted to applicants and round two closes on 1st October and there is £90,000 remaining and he urged community groups to apply for the match funding.

23/109 Item 3. To record any apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllrs Chappell, Lyward and Kitteridge and RDC Cllrs Creaser, Mier, Osborne and McGurk.

23/110 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 Warren declared a personal interest in item 9 as he is on the Icklesham Parish Community Land Trust
Cllr Thomson declared a personal interest in item 9 as she is on the Icklesham Parish Community Land Trust
Cllr Mann declared a personal interest in item 11 as an allotment holder.

23/111 Item 5. To consider and approve the signing by the Chair of the attached minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 10th July 2023. **RESOLVED:** the Minutes were approved and signed.

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Matters requiring a Decision by Council

23/112 Item 6. Financial Matters.

- a) To receive the list of items paid to date in August and September and items for payment to date.
RESOLVED: approved.
- b) Receipts and Payments report (budget vs actual) **RESOLVED:** approved.
- c) To consider Grant Applications received from the following:-
- Rye Harbour Sailability - £358 to purchase a single speaker with two microphones. **RESOLVED:** approved.
 - Rye & District Community Transport - £3,000 towards the running costs of the Dial a Ride service. **RESOLVED:** approved.

23/113 Item 7. Traffic Calming

- a) To note the results of traffic calming consultation meeting held on 22nd July.
RESOLVED: The results were noted, and it was highlighted that the level of support received for any scheme did not meet the necessary threshold.
- b) To consider the attached letter from the Winchelsea Residents Association.
RESOLVED: The letter was noted. Given the advice received from East Sussex County Council, it was agreed that there was not enough support from residents for either scheme for the Parish Council to take the project forward.
- c) To consider response from East Sussex County Council.
Standing orders were suspended so Cllr Glazier could participate in the conversation.
Cllr Glazier confirmed that the County Council's role is to take forward a scheme that has merit and is based on evidence. He stated that he was quite offended by earlier remarks by a resident and confirmed that Nick Skelton has attended Winchelsea on three separate occasions and has actually met with members of the Residents' Association. Cllr Glazier confirmed that Nick Skelton is an officer of the Council and is employed to be honest. If the residents do not accept that then there is no point in having any further conversations. Cllr Glazier confirmed that traffic calming in Winchelsea is not a priority for the County Council because there are schemes like this all across the County that are based on evidence of accidents, injuries, near misses and the severity of injury. Cllr Glazier confirmed that Winchelsea does not fit that criteria. Cllr Glazier confirmed that this is a Parish Council/ Residents' Association led scheme and that officers would treat that exactly the same as if it was a County Council led scheme. Cllr Glazier confirmed that Nick Skelton is trying to be helpful in his letter by explaining that if we put in what we have now, we have no chance of getting the scheme agreed. He is trying to say that we need to get some more evidence and some more people to support the scheme. The Chair remonstrated with the Residents' Association representative for being inaccurate in his assertion regarding Mr Skelton when addressing the Council as he should have known that Mr Skelton and met in Winchelsea with the Residents' Association. An apology and retraction was given.
There was then a general discussion between residents and Councillors regarding the level of support required.
RESOLVED: As the level of support for closure of Strand Hill did not meet the required threshold, the Clerk is to contact St Thomas' Primary School and ask whether the school children would consider designing signs in the hope that this may have an effect on drivers. Clerk is also to write to National Highways and East Sussex Highways requesting why they are so against traffic lights on Strand Hill.
- d) To receive Clerk's report following meeting with Christopher Cannon of Sussex and Surrey Police regarding speeding throughout the Parish.
RESOLVED: The report was noted.

23/114 Item 8. Winchelsea Beach Public Meeting

- a) To note the public meeting with Southern Water has been organised for Saturday 23rd September at 10.00 am at Winchelsea Beach Community Hall and to approve the draft agenda.
RESOLVED: the agenda was approved. The Chair confirmed that she is unable to attend but Vice Chair David Smedley will Chair the meeting. (The clerk reported that she had not heard from the Environment Agency, but that Rother DC were not sending a representative from Environmental Health.)

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- b) To consider the attached response received from Southern Water to the Parish Council's letter dated 9th February. **RESOLVED:** the response was noted. It was also agreed that the Clerk and Councillors who wish to attend the meeting, meet beforehand to discuss what questions are to be asked.

23/115 Item 9. Affordable Housing in Icklesham Parish

To consider the attached request from Icklesham Parish Community Land Trust to carry out another housing needs survey at a cost of £5,842.56 plus VAT. **RESOLVED:** the Clerk is to respond to the Icklesham Parish Community Land Trust suggesting that they try and approach Rother District Council in the first instance as there is currently community match funding available.

23/116 Item 10. King Charles III England Coast Path - improvements to public access around the Rother Estuary

- a) To consider the email received from Natural England regarding plans to propose a route for the King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIIECP) around the Rother Estuary between Rye Harbour and Camber Sands. **RESOLVED:** the email was noted.
- b) To respond to the consultation. **RESOLVED:** Clerk is to respond supporting the proposal and requesting that they follow the Saxon Shoreway as much as they possibly can.

23/117 Item 11. Allotment Committee

- a) To note the attached draft Minutes of the Allotment Committee meeting held on 14th August. **RESOLVED:** the Minutes were noted.
- b) To consider the Allotment Committee's recommendation to amend the Allotment Rules to ban the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides. **RESOLVED:** Clerk is to amend allotment rules to state "use of chemical herbicides and pesticides is prohibited by anyone other than by Council approved and employed licenced contractors".
- c) To consider the Allotment Committee's recommendation to install a pathway at Pear Tree Marsh Allotments. Quote received from New Timber in the sum of £820 plus VAT (on the basis that the Parish Council provide the road plainings). Clerk has also applied for grant funding. **RESOLVED:** the item was deferred until the next Full Council meeting.
- d) To consider the Allotment Committee's recommendation to plant 3 x willow trees outside plot RH2 in Rye Harbour in order to improve the walkway flooding. **RESOLVED:** Cllr McConnochie is to research whether willow trees or eucalyptus would be the most suitable.
- e) To consider the Allotment Committee's recommendation to clear compost heap in Rye Harbour. The following quotes have been received:-
- i New Timber - £560 plus VAT
 - ii Darren Kitteridge - £600

RESOLVED: Darren Kitteridge's quote was accepted. £330 left in Allotments budget – surplus is to be taken from reserve funds.

23/118 Item 12. Media Working Group

- a) To note the attached draft Minutes of the Media Working Group Meeting held on 30th August. **RESOLVED:** the Minutes were noted.
- b) To consider the attached amended Terms of Reference. **RESOLVED:** the amended terms of reference were adopted.
- c) To consider the attached quotes received from DotGo and Netwise for building and hosting Parish Council website. **RESOLVED:** the quote from NetWise was accepted. It was agreed to use reserve funds for this as there is no budget provision for the website.
- d) To consider the draft Media Policy **RESOLVED:** this was deferred to the next meeting. Councillors agreed to have one policy covering both media and social media.

23/119 Item 13. Invitation to Rural Market Town Group

- a) To receive the attached email received from Rural Services Network **RESOLVED:** noted.
- b) To consider joining the Rural Market Group for free 6 month trial. **RESOLVED:** Clerk is to join for the free trial and to diarise when free trial lapses.

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23/120 Item 14. Ward Walks

To agree dates for Parish Ward Walks. **RESOLVED:** Cllrs are to liaise with the Clerk regarding possible dates for ward walks.

23/121 Item 15. High Fords Allotments

To consider the attached Clerk's report and Southern Housing's offer to gift the High Fords Allotments Land to the Parish Council on the proviso the Parish Council pay for Southern Housing's legal fees in the sum of £1,500. **RESOLVED:** the offer was accepted.

23/122 Item 16. Locking of Icklesham Recreation Ground Car Park

Clerk explained there has been some difficulty in agreeing times for the locking of the car park. Cllr Warren proposed that the car park be closed at 8.00 pm October to March and then closed at 10.00 pm the rest of the year. This was not seconded. Cllr McConnochie proposed that the car park be open during day light hours. Majority vote in favour. Cllr Warren voted against. **RESOLVED:** it was agreed that the car park would be closed after daylight hours. The hall's booking secretary to give the code to hall hirers and the gate locking should be included in any hiring agreement.

Matters for Information or Noting

23/123 Item 17. Correspondence. (Any late received correspondence will be tabled at the meeting).

- a) Email received from Winchelsea Beach resident regarding Rye Bay FC and Harbour Field. **RESOLVED:** noted.
- b) Emails received from Icklesham resident regarding Icklesham Recreation Ground. **RESOLVED:** noted.
- c) Email received from Winchelsea Beach Community Association regarding Community Hall Extension project. **RESOLVED:** noted. Clerk is to write to the Winchelsea Beach Community Association explaining that if the project does not go ahead WBCA will have to refund the grant monies to the Parish Council.

23/124 Item 18. Programme of Works. Consider and update where necessary. **RESOLVED:** noted.

23/125 Item 19. Reports from Councillors on meetings they have attended. Councillors to update Council.

The Chair confirmed that she attended HORAC which was a very good meeting.

Cllr Mann attended a meeting with the Sussex Wildlife Trust who were very complimentary with the work that has been done in the car park.

Cllr Warren gave notice of a meeting happening at 7.30 pm on Friday at Icklesham Memorial Hall regarding the proposed upgrade of the pavilion.

23/126 Item 20. Items for Consideration for Future Agendas. Open Spaces will deal with the cess pit at Harbour Field. Cllrs are to contact the Clerk with any future items.

The Council will consider a resolution to go into private session on the grounds that the following business would disclose exempt matters.

23/127 Item 21. Update regarding Winchelsea Toilets

RESOLVED: The updated was noted.

23/128 Item 22. Electric Vehicle Charging Points

RESOLVED: the item was deferred to the next agenda

23/129 Item 23. Date and venue for next meeting. Monday 13th November 7.15 pm at Winchelsea New Hall.

Agreed as a true record of the meeting. Signed **Dated 13th November 2023**
Cllr Mrs. J Stanford