

Hooe Parish Council

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Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 14th March 2022

Attendees: Cllr Peter Hayward (PH), Cllr Ross Clifton (RC) and Cllr David Constable (DC)

In attendance: District Councillor P.Doodes (PD), Paul Frostick (PF)

46 members of the public present. Meeting opened at 7.00pm.

1. The Chairman's welcome to member of the public

The chairman welcomed all to the meeting. Chairman's report, see appendix 1

2. Disclosure of Interests

Interests in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Council code of conduct.

To receive councillors' declarations of interest regarding matters on the agenda and consider any written requests or dispensation as a result. Any changes to register of interests should be notified to the clerk.

No interests declared.

3. To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to consider the suitability of the candidate/s to fill the existing vacancies by the co-option procedure.

- a. Introduction from candidates wishing to become Parish Councillors to the parish councillors (members), to give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Parish Council. There were seven applicants for four vacancies.

b. Exclusion of the Public

To exclude the public for a particular agenda item the following resolution must be passed.

'Under the public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.'

There was not requirement to pass this resolution.

Each applicant was considered in alphabetical order by surname. Each applicant had the opportunity to speak for two minutes, and questions were asked to each applicant by councillors. All applicants were asked whether they would consider re-applying should a vacancy become available if they were unsuccessful, all applicants confirmed they would. An open vote was carried out in accordance with standing orders by a show of hands. The vote was carried out in two rounds, those applicants who received the maximum of three votes were selected first.

Votes Recorded for each Applicant for Round 1

D. Carey S. Crawhurst M.Green N.Harding A.Loyd S.Page P.Yeeles

2 3 1 2 3 1 2

Results of First Round: S.Crawhurst and A.Loyd were selected with the maximum number of votes

M. Green and S.Page were deselected as they received the least number of votes

Votes Recorded for remaining Applicants for Round 2

D. Carey N.Harding P.Yeeles

2 1 2

Results of Second Round: D.Carey and P.Yeeles were selected with the highest number of votes

N. Harding was deselected receiving the least number of votes

The chairman (DC) announced the successful applicants were Steve Crawhurst, A.Loyd, D.Carey and P.Yeeles.

The meeting was paused for the signing of the declaration of office. Steve Crawhurst (SC), A.Loyd (AL), D.Carey (DC1) and P.Yeeles (PY) joined the meeting.

4. **Apologies and reasons for absence** in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 S85 (3)
County Cllr B Bowdler (BB) and District Cllr R Cade. (RC1)

5. **DC closed the meeting to receive Reports.**

- a. DC confirmed apologies were received from BB and a report has been submitted as set out in appendix 5a.
- b. PD gave apologies for RC1 absence. PD noted the report submitted as part of last month's meeting had not been re-circulated by the clerk for this meeting. The clerk responded by stating she had not received a report to circulate for this meeting. PD ask the public to get in touch if they would like a copy of the report.

PD advised there awaiting instructions to be published as to what the district council can do. PD reported she would send details to the clerk to circulate to the public. The district council will be receiving £10,500 per individual to help with rehousing and a number of people have put themselves forward to rehouse people in their own homes and it is believed a payment of £350 per month will be paid.

- c. PF reported the bells were refurbished, but there had been a delay obtaining the steel from Ukraine to make the frame to strengthen the tower. It was explained there is movement in the tower, although not dangerous. The meeting was informed a spring clean of the church and church yard is to take place on Saturday at 10 o'clock and if anyone could spare an hour to help. It was reported some tiles had come off the roof due to the storm but would be covered by insurance.

DC re-opened the meeting.

6. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** to be agreed and signed as a true record.

Proposed by PH and seconded by RC. **Resolved that the minutes of the 28th February 2022 to be signed as a true record.**

DC stated a member of the public had forwarded a statement relating to the minutes. The person reported that "PH only agreed with the proviso that it be returned to its usual position after the co-option process" and can this be put forward for amendment ?. DC stated the parish council's response is it is for the parish council to decide the accuracy of the minutes not the public. Having checked the recording, the statement made is not correct, and the word co-option not used. The words legal notices were used which includes agendas that are publicised on the notice board and not just the co-option process.

7. DC requested the opening of a Unity Trust bank account to run the day to day finances of the parish council and to include David Constable, Peter Hayward and to nominate a third signatory to the bank account and to seek permission to add one payment to the payments list for authorisation to Unity Trust Bank. The cheque to be written to Unity Trust Bank for £500 to open the bank account.

AL agreed to put her name forward as the third signatory.

Proposed by RC and seconded by PH. All agreed. Resolved to open a Unity Bank account, to include David Constable, Peter Hayward and Ann Loyd as bank signatories and to approve a payment of £500 to open the Unity Trust Bank account.

8. DC requested amendments to the budget headings 2022/23 to improve budget monitoring and financial reporting. The proposed headings and associated budgets to be recommended:

Add New Heading	Office Allowance	£480
Transfer Heading Audit Fee and Budget	Allocate to Legal / Professional Fees	add £ 180
Add New Heading	IT Support	£900
Add New Heading	Members Training	£400
Remove Heading	Contingency	£00.00
Add New Heading	Water Rates – Village Hall	£250
Add New Heading	Water Rates - Sports Pavilion	£250

Add New Heading
Add New Heading
Add New Heading
Add New Heading
Add New Heading

Water Rates – Allotments £500
Electricity – Village Hall £ 500
Electricity – Sports Pavilion £500
Cleaning – Village Hall £1,200
Cleaning – Sports Pavilion £1,200

Proposed by PY and seconded by RC.

Resolved to accept the budget headings and budget allocated as written.

8. DC recommended a reduction to the monetary values set out in Section 4.1 to £750 and Section 4.5 to £500 of the Financial Regulations.

Proposed by PY and DC1. All Agreed.

Resolved to accept a revision to Section 4.1. of £750 and Section 4.5 to £500 of the Financial Regulations as written.

10. DC confirmed two quotes had been submitted to build a website for the parish council. One quote provided by Cloudy IT, specialist parish council service provider, cost £984.99 + VAT. The second quote provided by Uniserve, also a specialist parish council website designer at a cost of £695 + VAT.

Proposed by RC and seconded by SC. All agreed.

Resolved to accept the quote submitted by Uniserve at the cost of £695 + VAT.

11. DC updated the meeting on the progress of work commissioned to advise:

The asbestos sheeting had been removed from the shed on the recreation grounds.
The village hall kitchen water heater has been replaced and working.
The water risk assessment is taking place on the 16th March 2022.
The building / land surveys are taking place on the 29th March 2022.
The new email addresses for councillors are due later part of this week.

12. DC recommended that a direct debit be set up to pay Eslip, the payroll service provider

Proposed by RC and seconded by AL. All agreed. Resolved to set up a direct debit with Eslip

13. **Financial Matters for Consideration and Resolution**

DC reported the bank reconciliation had not been produced, as new bank statements had not been received since the last parish council meeting.

DC noted the payments for consideration and approval.

Village Hall Cleaner	£	86.16	
HMRC – PAYE	£	174.61	
Amestech Asbestos Removal Ltd	£	264.00	
Mulberry &		£1,171.44	
G. Pont	£	150	
JR Kay Plumbing & Heating	£	318.00	
J.Scarff	£	272.00	
JR Plumbing & Heating	£	490.80	
Clerks Expenses	£	180.94	(includes recorded delivery letter cost / 12 x postage stamps/ mobile phone top up/ health & safety signs for VH/ Accident Book for VH/ New Kettle – existing kettle failed PAT test/ printer cartridges)
EDF Energy	£	57.26	

Proposed by PY and seconded by SC. All agreed. Resolved to accept all payments submitted for approval.

14. **Matters to be brought forward for consideration to the next meeting**

PH wished to comment on the procedures directed by the auditor and the East Sussex Association of Local Councils to be followed regarding receiving questions or comments from parishioners. The current procedures mean that parishioners can only comment on items on the agenda that evening. PH said that he is concerned we are endangered in losing the valuable input of parishioners who are the eyes and ears in the village e.g. if Neil had something to say the top road is flooding, if it is not on the agenda, he can't say anything, writing to the clerk to put on next agenda in a month's time, the floodings now gone and there is nothing to say.

DC replied by stating the parishioner can contact the clerk, and the clerk can do what is necessary immediately. This is why money is set aside for these situations.

PH stated the person reporting the matter has first hand knowledge, it is second hand knowledge when given to the clerk to the councillor. PH stated he has been a councillor for 25 years having relied on input from people, who take the trouble to come along to the meetings. If the parish council is only here to dot the i's and cross the T's, the auditor and East Sussex Association of Local Councils do not recognise we are ignoring people here and I question why we are here in the first place.

PH said that it is not a criticism of any parish councillor past or present, it is the system is wrong.

DC1 said the problem has only arisen recently, I've been told I've not been a very good chairman as I allowed parishioners to speak during the meeting, so if it is completely ruled out, a good idea is to start discussion groups in the village hall outside the parish council where voices and opinions can be heard if there are enough people are saying it, they will have to listen.

DC said it is not that we are not listening, we have to run by the rules, and we do want to hear any issues there may be. DC stated it is a parish councillor's duty once the agenda has been published to go and seek views from the public or the public to come to see them. DC suggested the issue be put on an agenda for further discussion. DC stated he did not disagree with DC1.

15. **DC to suspend the meeting to receive questions from the public**

Please note: Only matters may be raised for public discussion that are listed on the agenda, any other question should be put in writing to the clerk in advance of the next meeting. Questions raised for items listed on the agenda that cannot be answered at the council meeting will be brought forward to the next council meeting for response.

DC advised that two questions were sent in by a member of the public for response. DC read out the questions and answered as follows:

Question 1

Given the exhaustive consultations which have previously taken place in the village from which the majority of responders were in favour of a new village hall being constructed, and the positive comments from Wealden Planning with regard to the siting of a new hall in the non-playing corner of the recreation ground where Straight Lane and Mill Lane meet, what plans does the Parish Council have to proceed with this project?

A. The parish council will bring the matter forward for discussion at a future council meeting now the parish council has a full complement of councillors.

Question 2

A sum of approximately £90,000 pounds derived from grants, precepts raised specifically for the new hall and advertised to the parishioners as such, individual donations from members of the public, and various community fund-raising events, was placed in a separate "No.2 account" earmarked and specifically set aside for a new village hall. Can the Parish Council confirm that these monies will be used to part-fund a new village hall?

A. To date the parish council has not chosen to allocate the funds of the council on to the accounts as reserves or earmarked projects even though it is audit requirement to do so. The failure to allocate the funds were noted by external auditor on last year's audit report as a concern. The parish council will be undertaking this task once the end of year accounts has been completed and the exact figures are known, whereby a decision to allocate the funds will be made at the next parish council meeting on the 11th April 2022.

Q. Surely the money does not belong to the parish council, it was raised by the local people and put into a separate bank account.

A. DC asked would you like me to read it again, the answer is quite specific ?. DC asked the clerk to clarify the position in regard to the external auditor's remarks. The clerk advised that it is an audit requirement for all monies held over and above the day to day running costs to be allocated into reserves and earmarked projects, and the parish council had not done that to date, hence a note was made on the external auditors report in 2021. The clerk reported she will be compiling the accounts to identify the funds available for the parish council to allocate at the next meeting in accordance with the audit requirements.

Q. Do you accept there is a bank account set up for all grants, precepts, coffee mornings, donations and so on ?.

Q. We are looking for commitment from the parish council that those monies will be direct towards a new hall ?

A. The clerk acknowledges the bank account but for accounting purposes it is not reported that way, all additional funds held will be required to be allocated by the parish council once the end of year figures are known.

Q. The bank account 2, if it £9,000 or £90,000, if that amount is added to and nothing is taken out, the whole amount should be there?

Q PD stated that the precept were amounts specifically for the new hall and not for general use, so each year £15,000 was specifically for the hall. I have quite a lot of records I provide to you.

A. DC stated that PD at the last meeting you chaired, you were quite specific because you challenged me about the precept and you corrected me to say it was either for refurbishment of this hall or a new village hall, so please do not change the rules. DC re-iterated that the previous council members did not allocate this money nor did they minute anywhere that this money was for a particular project and we have to pick up the pieces and put them right and do what the auditors are looking for us to correct to avoid the funds being taken away. By increasing the annual precept value by £15,000 towards the project, a residents council tax D band are paying up to twice the amount of council tax they need to pay.

Q PD if you look back in the various minutes there were various sums of money specifically allocated to the village hall project. PD has real worries if you are saying you can use it for anything you like as if you can change your mind, I don't think that is correct. The clerk stated the parish council can choose to direct the precept funds as they feel fit and this has been confirmed by the auditor.

A disagreement broke out with members of the public, so the chairman (DC) closed the meeting at 8.04pm.

In accordance with The Data Protection Act 2018 all attendees of the meeting are hereby notified that the meeting will be recorded as an aide memoire for the clerk when compiling the minutes. The recordings are held securely and are deleted after the resolution that the minutes are a true and correct record. Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council or one of its committees or sub-committees will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present. A person or persons recording the parish meeting are reminded that the "Public Session" period may not be part of the formal meeting and that they should take legal advice

Appendix 1

Chairman's report 14th March 2022

Welcome

Ukraine

The Ukraine flag on the flagpole is rather a good reminder of what is going on in the world and reminds us but for the grace of God we could have similar troubles.

It's good to see that locals are undertaking events to raise money for Ukraine by way of the recent coffee morning and the cream teas on the 7th April here in the hall. A lorry is leaving Northiam school this Wednesday with supplies for the people of Ukraine, some of which have been donated by local people.

Football

It is wonderful to see that Hooe under 14's won their first league having won 13 out of 14 games and coming from the bottom to be crowned the winners.

Co-options

We have four places to fill and seven applicants which is most rewarding and a first for the parish indicating that there is a willingness to be involved in the parish and they can see a positive future which they wish to help with, I wish them success.

It is rewarding to see the majority of applicants are already complying with various procedures and regulations in their respective careers. All councillors have to comply with standing orders set out by NALC to ensure we run efficiently and legally and deliver a good service to you, the parishioners.

It is also great to see a number of the younger generation looking to become council members as there continues to be many younger families moving into the village. Therefore, we need to pro-active in supporting all generations in village life.

Appendix 5a

**Members' Update - East Sussex County Council
February 2022
Cllr Bob Bowdler**

Adult Social Care

Accessible online safety video launched

A new video has been created to help adults with learning disabilities stay safe online, as part of a competition commissioned by East Sussex County Council and managed by Lewes-based arts charity Culture Shift to develop an adult-appropriate online safety resource.

The winning film, titled 'Safety Net', was designed by Rhiannon Barton, a graduate student from the University of Brighton. It is specifically aimed at people who have autism and/or a learning disability and can be used as part of conversations and training about internet safety.

The film is available to [watch on YouTube](#) and tackles issues such as not sharing or watching things which are inappropriate or unpleasant, keeping personal information private, and how to ask for help. It was created in collaboration with learning disabled adults and the soundtrack was provided by local band Delta 7.

Funding to support domestic abuse victims announced

East Sussex is set to receive additional funding to deliver their Domestic Abuse Act duties in 2022/23.

A further £125million will be allocated to local authorities, with East Sussex County Council receiving £1,072,232. This funding is to ensure safe accommodation spaces, such as refuges and shelters, can provide victims with support services such as health care, social workers, and benefits – meaning anyone who flees their home gets the help they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

More than £4million to support care providers

Over £4million of funding is being shared among East Sussex care providers to ensure support remains available for those in need.

East Sussex County Council was awarded £4.982million from the Government Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund (WRRF) to support providers who are facing unprecedented challenges in retaining their workforce. The funding will be used to provide support in people's own homes and care homes, help to prevent hospital admissions, and boost providers' capacity to deliver more hours of care.

Plans for distribution of the funds were approved last month, following discussions between independent care providers and East Sussex's Lead Members for Adult Social Care and Health.

The grant is the second instalment from a pot of £162.5m distributed to councils.

Communities, Economy and Transport

Economy-boosting access road opens to traffic

The Newhaven Port Access Road, an integral part of the Newhaven Enterprise Zone, has officially opened to traffic and will provide a crucial boost to the town's economy.

The new road creates direct access to East Quay and allocated development land, opening up 80,000 square metres of business space and allowing the creation of new jobs.

The road was funded by a £10 million grant from the Department for Transport and £13.2 million from East Sussex County Council's capital programme – money set aside for one-off projects.

In July 2021, the new cycle path and footway that runs alongside the road opened, providing pedestrian access to Tide Mills and the beach. The new path also links with existing footpaths north and south of Mill Creek to create new circular walking and cycling routes.

Funding agreed for 'community' road works

Plans to make more money available for road safety works in East Sussex have been approved by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

Around £750,000 of unused money from the council's Community Match programme will instead be spent on a wide range of road improvement projects which would not usually meet funding criteria, such as traffic islands or dropped kerbs.

Chosen works will address safety concerns, cost no more than £40,000 and be identified by considering a range of issues and specific site characteristics. Funding for these works will be made available in the coming months.

Plans to extend local wine estate are approved

Plans to expand the Ridgeview Wine Estate, near Ditchling Common, have been approved by East Sussex County Council's planning committee.

The proposals include a new building to provide al fresco dining experiences and an extension to the existing winery building. This extension would accommodate a tasting room, a small café, a retail area, and a meeting space. The proposals were brought to the council's planning committee as the site falls within the boundaries of both Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.

Cllr Bob Bowlder
Wealden East Division
7 March 2022