

**Minutes of Funtington Parish Council Meeting**

**held at St Mary's Church Hall, Funtington on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 at 6:30pm**

Present:

Cllr J Mottershead (Chair), Cllr D Ash, Cllr C Donnelly, Cllr R Littler, Cllr B Mousley, Cllr E Paris

In Attendance: none

Members of the Public: There were 8 members of the public present, including a representative from Waterloo Farm

*The meeting commenced at 6:32pm*

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Jack Mousley, Cllr Victoria Cathie, and District Cllr J Brookes-Harmer and County Cllr J Joy.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None received

**3. To Receive and Confirm the Accuracy of the Draft Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023.** Cllrs noted that Southbrook road should be added under item 9.c

**4. Open Forum** - a member of the public noted that Funtington Farm shop will close after 60 continuous years of service. The owner's intention is to let the premises as a shop or other commercial operation

**5. Planning and Licensing Applications -**

a) FU/23/02484/FUL at Cheesmans Lane. The planning group expressed concern regarding the large number of containers planned for a very visible site on the edge of the National Park. The Parish Council OBJECTS to this application due to the absence of any landscaping or screening planting sympathetic to the rural location

SDNP/23/03669/HOUS – 1, Lynch Down – NO OBJECTION

SDNP/23/04941/LIS – 4, Church Lane – NO OBJECTION

Cllrs also commented on a proposed height restriction barrier at the car park at West Stoke, noting that this should serve to help reduce crime and long term camping issues, although the barrier should be unobtrusive to complement its location.

Cllrs will continue to lobby for a clear indication from the CDC planning department on the definition of 'dominance' in the community in relation to gypsy and traveller sites at West Ashling.

b) Enforcement. Cllrs noted breach of condition notices FU/103 and FU/104 served by CDC regarding Land to the S. of Tower View Nursery, West Ashling Road, Hambrook, Funtington, PO18 8UD.

c) There were no further updates on proposals at Broadley Copse

d) On the invitation of the Parish Council, a representative from Waterloo Farm in West Ashling presented plans for future development at the site. He noted that a pre-application submission had already been made for the two main buildings to form 2 large and 4 medium sized units, intended for light industrial or storage use. 70 storage containers will also be added, single height, to a brownfield area on the site. There is expected to be a biodiversity net gain for the surrounding land and solar panels will be reused. He noted that expected traffic levels would be similar to when the

farm was operating as an active egg producing unit. Cllrs expressed concern regarding traffic on Southbrook Road which is single track, has a weak bridge and suffers from flooding issues. The route is used regularly by pedestrians; a popular footpath ends here and walkers travel back to the centre of West Ashling village via the road which is devoid of grass verges to either side. There was also concern that SatNav systems would route drivers heading to the farm through the centre of West Ashling village. The presenter remarked that traffic issues would be considered more carefully at full planning stage and that customer facing businesses were not envisaged at the site. The Chair thanked the presenter for speaking at the meeting

6. Reports received from District and County Councillors will be added to the Parish Council website
7. There were no general matters for decision

**Financial Matters for Decision**

a) To agree the [Parish Council precept request](#) for 2024/25. The RFO presented an analysis of current spending and a breakdown of statutory and suggested costs for the coming year. Calculations based on the council tax base showed that the precept was significantly below national levels, but that the amount of facilities available to the community should be taken into consideration when making comparisons with other parishes. Specifically, Cllrs considered the following cost centres: donations and grants to local organisations, increasing parish maintenance costs (keeping everything tidy esp. overgrowth on paths etc, repairs to equipment such as speed indicator devices and defibrillators) and continuing to work effectively on planning related issues such as enforcement and appeals. Cllrs agreed unanimously to increase the precept to £43,430, making the contribution from a BandD property £52.61. It was reported that the national average was £79 in 2023.

It was noted that the Parish Council would actively seek out grant funding for specific improvements across the parish in the coming year such as flood prevention and new fencing.

- b) Cllrs agreed unanimously to accept the schedule of payments for January
- c) Report on Council’s Bank Accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, for acceptance - The clerk presented the bank reconciliation for December 2023. The reconciled current account balance is £25,877.92 and savings account balance is £67.25

**DECEMBER 2023**

<b>Method</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Reason</b>
IBT	£405.00	Longmeadows	Initial works and 1 x playground
IBT	Redacted	Parish Clerk	Clerks Pay and pension month 9

IBT = Interbank transfer

**8. Matters for Discussion**

a) Volunteers to take over running the West Ashling and Funtington Speed Indicator Devices were still being sought. The current custodians will write a brief summary of the requirements of the role which involves moving the SIDs every 3 weeks to several different sites around the villages. Further information will be provided on the Parish Council website and noticeboards. An active and supportive traffic awareness, SID and Speedwatch group is needed across the parish rather than relying on lone individuals with little support.

b) To consider the next steps for Funtington Neighbourhood Plan – Funding will be applied for as soon as it becomes available.

c) To receive an update on flood issues in the Parish – serious issues continue across the parish at

identified sites. Notable issues have arisen at Watery Lane where Southern Water has been conducting regular water quality checks. The parish council encourages residents to complain individually as many complaints will carry more weight than a single complaint from the parish council in this instance. Cllr Mousley suggested obtaining the results of the water quality inspections at Watery Lane via a Freedom of information request.

d) Grant applications update – grant applications from the Rural England Prosperity Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund had been submitted for replacement fencing at The Dell and a parish and community website. Applications were being requested by SDNP for CIL funding for 2024. Application deadline is 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The clerk to circulate funding criteria to Cllrs for consideration.

#### 9. **Matters for Information**

a) Summary of Parish Correspondence. Several items of correspondence were noted including:

(i) The replacement memorial tree at Heather Close has now been planted

(ii) A complaint was received concerning a roadside sign in East Ashling. This was reported to CDC planning by the clerk

(iii) The 96 Flex bus service has commenced in the Parish Area. Further details on the [WSSC Book A Bus website pages](#).

(iv) Comments were received from two parishioners concerning the December minutes including views on possible misunderstandings regarding neighbourhood plan funding which Cllrs have been made aware of. They also requested details of the clerk's pay, which Cllrs agreed, in consultation with the internal auditor, should remain out of the public domain. Those present were reminded that the clerk's pay and contract had been agreed by the Parish Council at a previous, closed meeting. Staff costs are statutorily reported annually at the end of the financial year.

(v) Flood issues continue to affect the road with no name leading to West Stoke. Cllrs noted that the absence of a Cllr from West Stoke on the parish council meant that issues affecting this part of the parish may be missed and that they were actively seeking to co-opt a new Cllr.

(vi) a member of the public present at the December meeting noted that comments regarding the cost of printing neighbourhood plan information had been omitted from the December minutes along with the brief discussion regarding the possibility of the Parish Council making a loan for these costs which was not considered feasible.

b) Repairs and maintenance across the parish – Works completed by Longmeadows have been reviewed and Cllrs report a high level of satisfaction.

11. **AOB** – there was no further business

12. **Date of Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 in The Church Room, St Mary's Church, Funtington

*The meeting closed at 19:35*