

MINUTES OF SELMESTON PARISH MEETING
ALCISTON & SELMESTON VILLAGE HALL – Wednesday 25 May 2022 at 7.15 pm

Present: David Quysner (Chairman)(“DQ”); Paul Birch; Brigitte Chandless; Michael Cotton; Laura Francis; Chris Harris; Janie Jellings; Jill Muggleton; Ruth Nares; Hilary Pogge von Strandmann; Lindsay Quysner; Valerie Shaw; Hilary Stewart; Andrew Thomas; Mairi Thomas; Elliot Vaughan; Gilly Walder; Michael Weller; Margaret Wilmot; Ann Howard (Alciston)

SPM/2022/1 Apologies: Maria Caulfield MP; Cllr Nick Bennett (ESCC)(“NB”); Cllr David Watts (Wealden)(“DW”) ; Colin and Thea Buckthorp; John and Linda Champion; Stephen Cowin and Stephen Rooke; Margaret Hughes; Mathew Jellings; Lewis and Stephanie Lewis-Grey; Karen and Chris Mitchell; Graham and Helen Shaw; Susan Wadbrook; Sandy Thomas (Alciston)

SPM/2022/2 Minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2021 had been circulated by email and had been posted on the website. They were duly approved.

SPM/2022/3 Matters Arising:

Matters arising were addressed elsewhere in the agenda.

SPM/2022/4 Reports from ESCC and Wealden Councillors

Neither Nick Bennett nor David Watts was able to attend on this occasion. NB had sent a brief overview of some measures that have been taken to support Ukrainian refugees in East Sussex: 230 Ukrainian children have now been allocated school places and are being given free laptops. More than 650 Ukrainian refugees are now being hosted in East Sussex.

DW had sent a note on current issues: Cllr Ann Newton has been elected as Leader of Wealden District Council; she and the former Leader recently met with housing Ministers to seek a reduction in the number of houses that central Government has “allocated” to Wealden; the clock is ticking on the requirement to remove the canopy at the garage; and the bin strike continues.

SPM/2022/5 Reports

SPM/2022/5.1 A27 Committee

DQ gave an update on this issue. He said that the consultants appointed by National Highway were continuing their review of possible routes for a dual carriageway between Lewes and Polegate. A number of virtual “stakeholder” meetings had been held, but these provided little information and it would be well into next year before any details for further consultation were announced. A committee, to be chaired by Bryan Stevens is being set up so that we can be as well prepared as possible to respond to any proposals. The committee is looking to collaborate with other parishes and a recent meeting of the Chairs of local Parishes was well attended. The intention is also to work with the South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment (“SCATE”) recognising that their interests may not always be wholly aligned with those of the Parish.

SPM/2022/5.2 Planning Committee

There had been no Planning applications since the previous meeting. As noted above, the garage has been instructed to remove the canopy that was erected without prior approval.

SPM/2022/5.3 Parish Plan

DQ gave an update on the steps being taken to establish a new Parish Plan. A questionnaire had been circulated to 70 households and there had been a satisfactory level of response. Once the data has been fully reviewed, it will provide the basis for a special meeting at which key issues can be discussed and an action plan developed.

SPM/2022/5.4 Website and Social Media

Laura Francis has kindly taken on the management of the village website, the hosting of which has now been moved, with a substantial saving in costs. She has taken steps to refresh the website so that it has more of a community feel. Some of the historical data that was previously present has not currently been included but key items will be added. There was discussion about setting up a Whats App group, for which there had been considerable interest in the Parish Plan questionnaire. Jane Jellings will take this forward.

SPM/2022/5.5 Village Hall

Michael Weller ("MW") has now retired as chairman of the Village Hall Committee and has been succeeded by Helen Shaw. DQ thanked Michael for his many years of service. The Village Hall had thrived under his leadership (and that of Margaret).

MW briefly described a theatrical event that is going to take place in the autumn. Mairi Thomas (MT) gave details of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations that will take place at the Village Hall on 5 June. Tickets are still available and are free.

SPM/2022/5.6 Footpaths and Bridleways

Andrew Thomas gave an update on footpaths and bridleways. He has cleared the majority of paths in the area and is liaising with the various landowners. It was agreed that where minor repair works are required (for stiles etc.) the village should press on and carry out the work. He is also liaising with a group called The Monday Club (sic) who may be able to assist. Anyone interested in helping should contact Andrew.

SPM/2022/5.7 Tree Warden

There is currently no tree warden. DQ said that it was important to find someone to take on the role, particularly because of concerns that trees may be being felled without permission.

SPM/2022/5.7 Housing

There are no plans for new housing developments in the parish. DQ referred to a meeting organised by Chiddingly, which we had supported and which was aimed at developing a

coordinated approach amongst Parishes in Wealden to lobby Government on housing issues with a particular focus on changing the basis on which housing numbers have been allocated.

SPM/2022/6 Treasurer's Report

In L-LG's absence, DQ gave a brief update on the financial position. The year to 31 March 2022 began with a bank balance of £1,763. There was minimal income in the year and, after expenditures of £548, the year-end bank balance was £1,215. These are the principal figures reported in the Accounting Statement that forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return ("AGAR") that we are obliged to complete each year.

For 2022/23 a precept of £800 has been reinstated. Budgeted expenditure for 2022/23 is £815, so that the financial position at the end of the year should be little changed.

The meeting noted and approved the following documents relating to the AGAR:

Certificate of Exemption from requirements for an external audit;
Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22;
Annual Governance Statement 2021/22;
Accounting Statements 2021/22
Notice of Public Rights and Publication of AGAR

DQ undertook to publish the above as required by the relevant legislation.

SPM/2022/7 British Heart Foundation- short film: "What is a Defibrillator?"

MT gave a short explanation about accessing and operating the defibrillator which is kept outside the Village Hall and introduced the short film 'What is a Defibrillator?'

SPM/2022/8 Election of Chair

There were no new nominations for the role of Chair of the Parish Meeting. DQ said that he was happy to continue for the current year, but would welcome interest from other residents. He was re-elected for 2022/23.

SPM/ 2022/9 AOB

Valerie Shaw highlighted the need for financial contributions to fund the production of the Parish News. Details of how contributions can be given are contained in the magazine.

DQ gave an update on solar farms in the area. The most significant development is that the proposal from "Riding Sunbeams" to lay cables under the road from the Cuckmere Community farm to the sub-station at the level crossing, which would have meant significant disruption, will not now go ahead. AT commented on the poor management of the community meadow which is part of the Wick Street solar farm.