

MINUTES OF SELMESTON PARISH MEETING

ALCISTON & SELMESTON VILLAGE HALL – Wednesday 17th November 2021 at 7.15 pm

Present: David Quysner (Chairman) (“DQ”); Councillor Nick Bennett – ESCC; Paul Birch; Colin Buckthorp; Thea Buckthorp; Brigitte Chandless; Michael Cotton; Finn Curry; Nancy Davy; Laura Francis; Chris Harris; Stephen Hyland; Paul Kenner; Lewis Lewis-Grey (“L L-G”); Stephanie Lewis-Grey; Jill Muggleton; Ruth Nares; Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann; Hilary Pogge von Strandmann; Graham Shaw; Helen Shaw; Valerie Shaw; Peter Smart; Hilary Stewart; Susan Wadbrook; Michael Weller; Margaret Wilmot; Simon Taylor (Alciston); Brian Hill and Bill Rogers (SCATE East Sussex).

SPM/2021/14 Apologies: David Watts (Wealden) (“DW”); Fred Berwick; John Champion; Linda Champion; Simon Muggleton; Lindsay Quysner; Bryan Stevens; Andrew Thomas; Mairi Thomas; Alan Walder; Gillian Walder; Sandy Thomas (Alciston)

SPM/2021/15 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2021 had been circulated by email and had been posted on the website. They were duly approved.

SPM/2021/16 Matters Arising:

Riding Sunbeams (Cuckmere Community Solar Farm)

DQ reported that the Riding Sunbeams proposals to lay cable from Wick Street to the Selmeston level crossing had been approved by Wealden on 21 September. The approval is subject to a Construction Management Plan being agreed between the developers and Wealden. This should include “details of public engagement” but we have not to date been approached.

Parish Plan

DQ gave an update on proposals to develop a new Parish plan, the first step in which would be to establish what issues are of importance to residents. A new Parish Committee is being recruited. and will oversee this process.

Simon Muggleton has decided to step down as a Committee member and as Vice Chairman of the Parish Meeting. Simon has provided invaluable help and support for the chairman in recent years and has made a major contribution to the community for many more. DQ thanked him on behalf of the whole Parish Meeting.

SPM/2021/17 Reports from Maria Caulfield MP and Nick Bennett (“NB”), Deputy Leader of ESCC and Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change.

A report from Maria Caulfield had been circulated prior to the meeting. DQ noted her comment that the Government intends to bring in changes to the planning system to prioritise brownfield sites for new homes and that she will fight against proposals to build on greenfield sites locally.

NB reported that he has been working on environmental issues across the county and will be involved in setting priorities and budgets in these areas. With regard to his former brief of roads

and transport, he was pleased to report that an additional £5m had been allocated to road improvements. Potholes were a widespread problem and any more than 40mm deep should be reported to ESCC.

In response to questions, the whole subject of the A27 was opened up. NB commented that, as we knew, the possibility of a new dual carriageway was still under consideration by National Highways as part of the RIS3 pipeline. He said that he was not in favour of the idea of an off-line road but confirmed that ESCC would support such a proposal if it were put forward as a preferred option by National Highways.

SPM/2021/18 A27 and Traffic Issues

i. A27 Lewes to Polegate: letters from National Highways (“NH”)

Most of the people present at the meeting had received letters from NH requesting access to their land for an environmental survey relating to work on a possible “A27 Improvement Scheme”. Letters had also been sent to Ripe, Arlington and other villages to the north of the road. The tone of the letters was insensitive and had caused unnecessary alarm and concern. DQ had written to Tom Rankin at NH and received an anodyne reply to the effect that there are currently no specific proposals and that we will be duly consulted if matters progress.

NB noted the concerns which had been raised by the letters. He commented that people were free to withhold permission to access their property but that, ultimately, this could be enforced.

Representatives of SCATE East Sussex outlined their objections to any “off-line” route proposals for the A27. A number of attendees also questioned the concept of any significant expansion of the capacity of the A27 in the light of the recent COP 26 meeting.

DQ encouraged residents to look at the SCATE website and consider joining their email list.

ii. Other traffic issues.

Simon Muggleton has been looking into the possibility of ‘gateway’ signage at the entrance to the Village, to help manage traffic speeds. This will be discussed further in the context of the Parish Plan.

DQ and Graham Shaw will be attending the ESALC Annual Conference (by Zoom), where one of the topics is the possible introduction of 20mph speed limits for residential streets.

SPM/2021/19 Status reports

SPM/2021/19.1 Planning Committee

i. Glamping

Finn Curry reported that he and other neighbours affected by noise from glamping at Stonery Farm over the summer had not so far succeeded in establishing a dialogue with the organisers. The consensus was that a face to

face conversation would be the best way of addressing the concerns in the first instance.

ii. Garage Canopy Planning Appeal

Raina Brody and Margaret Wilmot had attended a Planning Appeal held on 8th November and had been able to convey some of the concerns of residents. DQ and Margaret had subsequently visited the garage with the Planning Inspector. It is expected that a decision from the Inspector will not be available for several weeks.

SPM/2021/19.2 Village Hall

MW gave an update on the Village Hall. Work is planned to allow for the parking of 30 cars in the field. The management committee is hoping to get earlier notification of the schedule of cricket fixtures, which would help the planning of wedding and other function bookings. The Christmas supper is scheduled for 18th December. Details will be shared with residents shortly.

SPM/2021/19.3 Footpaths and Bridleways

i. Footpath warden

Andrew Thomas has taken over as footpath warden. He has already done some excellent work, with help from Simon Muggleton and ESCC, to clear the principal footpaths and bridleways.

ii. Dog Walking

DQ had been asked by Keith Winter to mention a noticeable increase in the number of people walking their dogs around his fields. Many dog-walkers are not local residents but it should be noted that there is no public right of way on his property other than the public footpath and bridleway between Selmeston and Berwick.

PM/2021/19.4 Tree Warden

We do not currently have a tree warden. A volunteer would be welcomed

SPM/2021/20 Treasurer's report

SPM/2021/20.1 Budget for year to 31 March 2022

L L-G tabled a schedule showing year-to-date income and expenditure, the budget and forecast for 2021/22 and a budget for 2022/23.

SPM 2021/20.2 Current status

The bank balance at 5 November 2021 was £1,263 and was forecast to be at a similar level at the end of the financial year on 31 March 2022.

SPM/2021/20.3 Budget and Precept for 2022/2023

The budget indicated expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2023 of £1,138 including £500 for a possible upgrade to the website and £100 to replace some timbers lost from the back of the War Memorial site. There had been a Village precept of £800 pa for several years but none had been raised in the past two years. It was suggested that a precept of £800 should be reinstated for 2022/2023. After budgeted expenditure, the bank balance at 31 March 2023 would be £925.

After discussion, it was agreed that a precept of £800 would be sought for 2022/23.

With regard to the War Memorial, it was noted that this had been maintained by Mathew Jellings for several years and he was thanked for continuing to do this.

AOB

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 8.45pm.