

**MINUTES OF SELMESTON PARISH MEETING**  
**ALCISTON & SELMESTON VILLAGE HALL – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Present:** David Quysner (Chairman)(“DQ”); Paul Birch; Colin Buckthorp; Thea Buckthorp; John Champion; Linda Champion; Jonathan Coleman; Nancy Davey; Laura Francis; Lewis Lewis-Grey; Stephanie Lewis-Grey; Chris Harris; Colin Horswell; Jane Jellings; Mathew Jellings; Simon Muggleton; Ruth Nares; Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann; Hilary Pogge von Strandmann; Graham Shaw; Helen Shaw; Megan Smith; Bryan Stevens; Hilary Stewart; Andrew Thomas; Mairi Thomas; Michael Weller; Margaret Wilmott; Ann Howard (Alciston); Nick Bennett (“NB”)(ESCC); David Watts (“DW”) (Wealden)

**SPM/2022/10**      **Apologies:** Finn Curry; Margaret Hughes; Raina Thompson-Brody; James Fowler; Jan Matthews-Moulding; Chris Thomas; Karen Thomas; Rosemary Weir.

**SPM/2022/11**      **Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022** had been circulated by email and posted on the website. They were duly approved.

**SPM/2022/12**      **Matters arising:** These were all dealt with in the Agenda.

**SPM/2022/13**      **Reports from ESCC and Wealden Councillors:**

A report on ESCC activities by NB had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This included reference to: the Council’s Bus Service Improvement Plan, for which substantial funding from central Government has been received; support being provided for families who are hosting Ukrainian refugees; and a range of funds and schemes to support people currently affected by the cost-of-living crisis. The report also mentioned a public consultation on a new Local Transport Plan, in which residents can participate via the Council’s website. There were a number of questions raised with NB particularly relating to ESCC’s policy on speed limit reductions, which are reported in these minutes under the “Traffic and Roads” heading.

DW said that Wealden was in the late stages of drawing up a new Local Plan and hoped that this would be published in January. He said that the previous Plan had been rejected for a deemed failure to engage with other councils and for not meeting new housing number obligations. The continuing absence of an approved Plan provides an unwelcome opportunity for speculative developers. If a Plan is not approved, the Planning Inspectorate will take over the planning role, which might have adverse consequences for Wealden residents.

**SPM /2022/14**      **Committee and Other Reports**

**a. Parish Plan**

A copy of the final draft Parish Plan had been circulated in advance of the meeting and copies were available. The Plan highlights issues that are important to residents. The most important aspects of the Village and Parish that residents want to see retained and preserved are: its peaceful, rural environment; conservation area status; and a strong sense of community. Of the things that cause most concern, speeding traffic on local roads, safe access to the A27, perennial uncertainty regarding the A27 and poor public transport are the key issues. Actions to address some of these issues are set out in the Plan, and progress will be monitored at future meetings.

Adoption of the Plan was proposed and duly approved.

## **b. Traffic and Roads Committee**

Bryan Stevens is chairing a Parish committee that is looking at issues relating to local roads and traffic, with particular focus on the A27 and on speeding on local roads.

### **A27:**

National Highways (“NH”) is continuing to look at routes for a dual carriageway A27 between Polegate and Lewes, including “off-line” routes that would cut across local countryside. The committee believes that effective opposition to any such proposals will be most effective if NH is challenged on the basis of its own policy objectives and is gathering data on which to do this. It is considered that a response to any NH proposals will be more powerful if it is based on the combined views of several local communities. To this end, a meeting was recently convened that involved representatives from neighbouring Parishes at which our MP, Maria Caulfield was present. She said that she would not support an “off-line” proposal and has agreed to write to her constituents to this effect.

### **Speeding:**

Speeding on local roads, particularly through the village has been of concern for many years. We now have more children in the village than previously and more traffic because of the garage and other factors. A number of residents recently participated in a “20’s plenty” video conference and were keen to explore the possibility of a reduced speed limit, particularly on The Street. It appears that ESCC is not very supportive. NB said that there are insufficient resources to deliver comprehensive 20mph schemes, which have to be prioritised against other requests for transport improvements. Typically, requests for 20mph limits do not score highly on ESCC’s evaluation criteria unless there is a history of personal injury crashes where speed has been identified as a contributory factor or there is third party funding available.

Alciston has installed some 20’s plenty signs on private property and NB confirmed that this was perfectly legal. He did not, however, believe that 20mph limits were effective for long or that they would reduce accidents. When challenged, he said that evidence for these views came from the Transport Research Authority. He added that there are no resources for policing compliance.

DW suggested that the Parish might obtain data on current levels of speeding by a speed gun exercise on The Street. We last did this several years ago but despite some high speeds being recorded, nothing was done and financial support for “Speed Watch” was subsequently withdrawn. DW said that there is some money now available and offered to provide us with contact details at Sussex Police, which he has subsequently done.

After further discussion, a vote was called for as to whether efforts should be made to press for a 20mph limit. On a show of hands, there was almost unanimous support for this. It was suggested that we might write to ESCC and our MP to register our concerns about speeding traffic and this will be added to the agenda of our Traffic and Roads Committee.

## **c. Planning Committee**

The only significant planning applications since the May meeting related to Stonery Farm, which we supported.

#### **d. Village Hall Committee**

Helen Shaw said that there was a very active committee but that further representation from Alciston would be welcome. Work was being done to update the website and online booking system and Wi-Fi had been installed, which permitted payment by card. Tea and cakes would be served after the Remembrance Sunday service on 13<sup>th</sup> November.

The latest play performed in the Hall ("Is that A Bolt in Your Neck?") had been very well received. Michael Weller was thanked for arranging this, which was the 25<sup>th</sup> event of this kind that he has organised.

#### **e. Footpaths and Bridleways**

Andrew Thomas said that footpaths were generally well maintained and he had arranged for some new signposts to be installed. He was looking at the possibility of cutting steps to improve access to the stile to the east of The Green House and between the churchyard and Slubby Lane.

#### **f. Tree Warden**

We did not currently have a tree warden but DQ had received an expression of interest in this role, which he would pursue. He hoped that two or three others might be interested in forming a committee to look at other aspects of the Parish's ecology.

#### **g. Treasurer's Report**

A Financial Statement as at 4<sup>th</sup> November, together with a forecast for the full year and a budget for 202/23, was tabled at the meeting. The Treasurer said that we currently had a bank balance of just over £1,600 and that this was likely to remain the case at 31<sup>st</sup> March, our year end. The budget for 2022/23 envisaged £750 of expenditure on repairs to the War Memorial, the Notice Board and the nearby bench. After normal expenditure on insurances and other small items, total expenditure was expected to be approximately £1,100. Maintaining a precept for the year at £800 would result in a year-end balance of some £1,300.

On the basis of the proposed budget it was agreed that the precept for 2022/23 should be set at £800.

#### **h. Police Coverage**

One of the issues noted from the Parish Plan was the absence of any police presence in the Village. DQ had been in touch with Sussex Police and the Police Community Support Officer ("PCSO") responsible for Selmeston would welcome the opportunity to meet residents and explain how the PCSO system works. This will probably be arranged for our meeting in May next year.

#### **SPM/2022/15 Election of Chairman**

DQ reminded the meeting that he would not be standing for re-election at the May meeting and asked residents to consider who might take over the Chairmanship.

#### **SPM/2022/16**

There was no other business. The next meeting will be at 7.15pm on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023.