

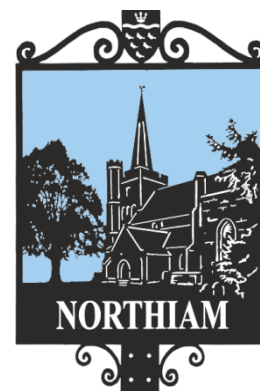
Minutes of the Zoom Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.00 pm on Thursday 11th March 2021

Northiam Parish Council

Parish Office, Village Club, Main Street
Northiam, East Sussex TN31 6LP

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1. **APOLOGIES** received from Cllr T Ganley, RDC who was attending Ewhurst Parish Council meeting.
2. **ATTENDEES:** Councillors Pete Sargent (PS) Chairman, Tony Biggs (TB), Penny Farmer (PF) Vice-Chair, Jacqueline Harding (JH), Dean Johnson (DJ), Robert Maltby (RM), Debby Pratt (DP), Sue Schlesinger (SS), Anthony Wontner-Smith (AWS) and County Cllr Ms. A Davies (AD) and District Cllr Martin Mooney (MM). There were 16 members of the public and Mrs Valerie Ades, Clerk for Beckley PC, took the minutes.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None.
4. **ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS** - To consider such other items as the Chairman decides are urgent and due notice of which has been given to the Clerk by 9:00am on the day of the meeting:
5. **REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: - Maximum of 15 mins.** ♦ A resident reported support for planning application RR/2020/2261/P Mill Corner Stables and the applicant detailed her background and what she wished to do. ♦ A resident objected to the proposed development and reiterated other objectors' comments stating traffic management issues, the ANOB, it was outside the Northiam development plan and a business where no other businesses exist. ♦ Mr Paul Redstone introduced himself saying he was standing at the conservative candidate for northern Rother in the forthcoming May elections when he hopes to be elected as a County Councillor serving Northiam parish when, sadly, Cllr Ms A. Davies has decided to stand down and he hopes he will be able to serve Northiam as well as Cllr Ms. Davies has.
6. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 11th February 2021:** RM referred TB's comments below item 15 and asked how many members had supported TB's request that PS reconsidered his intention to stand down and he would like this recorded in the minutes. A show of hands in support of this was requested and the clerk recorded *6 of the 8 members supported the request. 11b Those attending the tree inspection should read 'PS, TB and SS'* The minutes were amended then agreed and signed by PS.
7. **REPORTS BY PARISH, COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:**

PS said he had attended Peter Hayman's funeral which had received an excellent turnout as restrictions permitted. Also, Colin Cross in the afternoon. A round robin email had been circulated about the damp and mould in the bungalows at SFF together with the cost for the works and as the majority of members had agreed the work is now in progress. Trevor Gilbert has been installing the new dog and litter bins, but is self-isolating and will continue the work in a couple of weeks' time. The dog bins are much appreciated by dog walkers. A new hard drive for the computer has been purchased for £55.00 as current the one is almost full and it will also act as a back-up, which is required. A CIC zoom meeting took place two weeks ago and matters are moving along, albeit slowly on the legal front. Johnathan Strong of CIC has been given RM and JH's email addresses to contact regarding negotiations on the management contract. PS/TR/SS had met with a third man to show him the trees which require surveying and an estimate is awaited. Mervyn leaves the village next Wednesday and PS asked Terry Ayling if he would do a drawing of Rose Cottage as a token of appreciation from the PC and village for all the work Mervyn had done in the village and Terry has done a drawing which PS showed to members. of Rose Cottage. PS said the PC would pay Terry for his work, but if anybody wished to make a donation it would be welcome.

PF reported cold calling in the village and she had reported this to the PCSO who are looking into it. Advice is you should email or telephone Sussex Police if you experience cold callers.

TB has contacted the badger man, but he appears not to have contacted those concerned. TB will chase him up. He visited Cooks Farmhouse regarding their planning application and the owners asked what he was doing as they had seen unusual movements of vans around. He advised the owners to contact the PCSO as dog thefts are increasing.

DM said more suspicious vans have been seen in the area and Hawkhurst and Sandhurst.

DP advised she would have to resign from the council due to other commitments. PS expressed his sorrow and requested she confirm her resignation to the clerk. DP.

SS confirmed she had carried out the playground inspections. Lid on litter bin requires replacing. There is a hole in the ground which requires filling. SS said she would take some sand to carry out the repair.

AD's report had been circulated and she added that Covid-19 infection rates continue to fall in Rother and vaccinations are now being given to the under 65's. Children's services are pleased with the number of children back in school.

AWS thanked AD for all the hard work she has carried out for the village. This was supported by councillors.

8. PLANNING:

- a. **RR/2020/2261/P** Mill Corner Stables, New Road, Northiam TN31 6HR - Construction of an 'Earth House' comprising an Eco-Dwelling in conjunction with associated rural business, incorporating conversion of Stables into therapy and treatment rooms and a permaculture and smallholding business. SS felt it was excellent and ecologically friendly, but was in the wrong place, which other members supported. Further discussions followed and **members voted 6 against the application and 3 abstentions**. PF offered to put a report together for the clerk to submit to planning - as follows:-

The original status of the land was 'agricultural' and acquired a change of use, by the previous owner, to a 'private equestrian facility' to allow stables to be built, but not as a business, and not permitting a residential dwelling.

The land is within the AONB and as such is awarded the highest status of protection in law. It is also outside the development boundary of Northiam and as such has never proposed for development.

Only under exceptional circumstances a 'modest dwelling' might be allowed on agricultural land and it must be demonstrated that the family's whole income is derived from the agricultural business on the land i.e. farming. Policy RA3.

The entrance is almost opposite the quiet junction to Mill Corner and despite the applicant stating that the traffic flow would be 'staggered' this would still represent a substantial increase in the use of the motor vehicle to the quiet hamlet of Mill Corner.

Therefore, we request that this application is refused and due to the strong neighbours' objections have requested, via Cllr Mooney, that it should be 'called in' to committee.

- b. **RR/2020/2527/P** Cooks Farmhouse - Land Adj, New Road, Northiam TN31 6HS - Construction of a detached holiday let building and associated change of use of the land. **Provided the holiday letting be tied to the farm house members voted 6:3 in support.**
- c. **RR/2021/9/P** Paxhaven, The Plat, Main Street, Northiam TN31 6LU Change of use of garage to living accommodation, first storey extension above garage, first storey infill extension at rear of house, new windows to front and rear elevations and detached single storey outbuilding in rear garden. **Members voted 9:0 in support.**
- d. **RR/2021/130/P** Baytrees, Ilex Close, Northiam TN31 6DW -Erection of dormers to front and rear elevations to replace rooflights. **Members voted 9:0 in support.**
- e. **RR/2021/372/TN** Thomas Transport, Coppards Lane Industrial Estate, Northiam TN31 6QR – **Advisory notice.** Installation of 1 x 0.6m dish to be mounted on existing support poles fixed to the tower at 25m. Installation of 2 x outdoor units (ODU) to be installed behind the new dish. Minor upgrade works within the existing O2 equipment cabin.

9. ALL PLANNING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS:

10. OTHER PLANNING MATTERS:

11. VILLAGE MATTERS

- a. **Clerk Interviews.** Out of 14 applicants none had previous clerking experience. Four applicants have been selected for interview and PS will arrange a Zoom interview with PF, JH, TB, Valerie Ades and himself to sit on the interview panel. Ideally, we would like somebody to start early April
- b. **Risk Assessment update.** PS said this is required annually and said password backup, to be held securely, was also required. Members were asked to read the document and report any comments to him within 24 hours.
- c. **Air Ambulance funding request. Members unanimously agreed a donation of £500 - 9:0.**

d. **Tree Survey update.** Estimate awaited.

12. CORRESPONDENCE OTHER THAN THAT ALREADY CIRCULATED:

13. FINANCE:

- a. **External Audit report.** Due to the purchase of SFF the turnover for 2019-20 increased from £50K to almost £2M and as a result the external audit fee increased from low to intermediate which makes the fee more expensive. Due to the clerk's absence this made completing many areas of the AGAR difficult resulting in the auditors asking many questions. The accounts have been signed off and will be published on the website within the next few days. Turnover should decrease next year and we should see lower fees.
- b. **Investment plan.** With more than £100K in the bank we are legally required to have an investment plan which PS said unless anybody volunteered, he would try to put something together. **PS.**
- c. **Asset register update.** This is required by both the internal and external auditor. PS asked for a volunteer to go through the register and check on where everything is to bring the register up to date. **JH/RM.**

14. FINANCE, OTHER MATTERS:

TB asked about water charges on the SFF. PS said there is only one water supply at present so it would be difficult to make individual charges. The bungalows have separate meters and they will be charged for water in and out and the same will apply for the stables. Many meters will be required in the future.

15. CHEQUES FOR SIGNATURE: Payment were agreed and PS will arrange to have the cheques signed.

16. Date of the next meeting - Thursday, 8 April.

The meeting closed at 8.22pm.

See next page for ESCC and RDC councillors reports as submitted

ESCC Report for Parish Councils - March 2021

ESCC agreed a balanced budget on 9th February at Full Council. There have been no further savings this year (beyond those identified a year ago) and core services are protected. The county council is fully aware of the pressures on many families, individuals, and businesses. Council tax for services provided by the county council will increase by 1.99% plus a 1.5% social care dividend which amounts to £1 per week for a band D property from April.

Community support is still available and is being continued this year. If you need help to get food, medicines or essentials, or you are lonely or isolated, you can contact your Community Hub in Bexhill.

East Sussex is holding local elections on May 6th 2021 for county councillors and some district/borough councillors, and the PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner). Polling stations will open as normal but people are being encouraged to vote by post. Apply for a postal vote GOV.UK(www.gov.uk) or contact the electoral office at RDC.

Residents over 60 in Rye, Robertsbridge and surrounding villages, are being asked to share their experiences of rural life. **Healthy Ageing through Innovation in Rural Europe (HAIRE)** is a research and community action project, funded by Interreg 2 Seas and the EU's European Regional Development Fund. This is a community research project enabling older people to define what support they need in rural areas in order to reduce loneliness and improve Health and Wellbeing. Please contact Sue Dunkley, Project Support Officer, HAIRE, 07783847944 Sue.dunkley@eastsussex.gov.uk project runs till 2022.

Organisations and businesses are being invited to submit proposals for a holiday food and activity programme set to launch across East Sussex at Easter. ESCC is requesting interested providers to submit proposals by Friday March 5th. This is a government funded scheme for the Easter break, which will be free for disadvantaged children (children receiving free school meals, or who are on income related benefits). Priority areas include Bexhill, Eastbourne, Hailsham, Hastings Newhaven and Peacehaven. **The Holiday Food and Fun programme** will run for 6 weeks across Easter, summer, and the Christmas holidays for children and young people up to the age of 16. Interested providers should contact ESCC via: haf@eastsussex.gov.uk - or submit proposals on <https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/childrens-services/haf-expression-of-interest-application-form-easter/> Deadline for Easter is March 5th, and for summer and Christmas proposals Friday April 23rd.

A free mobile app aimed at protecting children against online dangers has been launched in East Sussex. The **Safer Schools app** will provide information and advice for maintained schools and families about sexting, bullying, mental health, media literacy, gaming, and sexual exploitation online. Police received 92 reports in April 2020, 40% more than the same period in 2019. www.oursaferschools.co.uk

Two road safety intervention projects have started to show promising results. Pilot schemes have been designed to inspire a change in driver behaviour which have started to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads. Using one off funding from East Sussex Public Health, county has worked with the Behavioural Insights Team, Sussex Police, and other partners from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership to try to address high rates of serious collisions which result in injury or death. New national figures show that 9 in 10 incidents are caused by driver behaviour. Three different pilots were set up. Analysis of results will be available later in 2021.

Attacks on officers enforcing parking regulations in Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, and recently Rother, have become more common and serious. Council bosses have called for an end to unacceptable behaviour towards enforcement officers. Incidents have risen since the end of January, with 2 officers requiring hospital attention in one week alone. Last year there were 22 incidents requiring police involvement, including 8 physical assaults, as well as 18 separate incidents where an officer needed urgent help from a colleague. Civil

enforcement officers play an important role in ensuring that people park safely and sensibly. Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadandtransport/parking

Angharad Davies East Sussex County Councillor Northern Rother

Northern Rother District Councillors' Report March 2021.

Additional Restrictions Grant – Discretionary Business Grants.

Using the remaining balance of £1.9m in the Discretionary Grants Scheme it is proposed to make such grants available to the following businesses: B & B's, Market Traders, Holiday Accommodation, Hospitality & Leisure Supply chain, Arts & Entertainment,

Home-based "in person" businesses and Shared Spaces (businesses operating in shared office space that do not have their own rating assessment).

Additional information is available in the agenda for the Cabinet meeting of 1 March 2021. Here is the link: <https://rother.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=512&Ver=4>

Food Hygiene Nearly 99% of Rother food businesses are broadly compliant with food hygiene standards, scoring three out of five or higher. In addition, nearly 76% of food businesses have been awarded the top score: five out five. There are 989 food businesses in Rother from cafes, takeaways, pubs and restaurants to your local grocery shop, supermarkets and even care homes and they are inspected by our Environmental Health team.

Fly tipping We have had 783 fly tips reported to the Council between April and December 2020. This is already more than 40% more than all of 2019/20 and the highest amount for years. We detected 36 fly tips, by finding evidence during our investigations that helped us take action to prevent further offences.

Car Parks We are undertaking a review of car parks in light of the introduction of civil parking enforcement in Rother in 2020. Due to lockdowns it has been more difficult to gather data on the impact on our car parks so work will continue in 2021.

Cllrs Martin Mooney & Tony Ganly