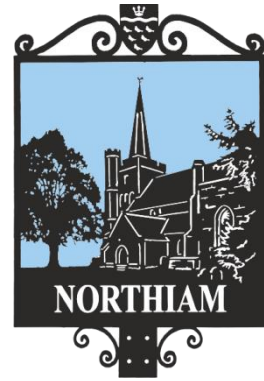


# NORTHIAM PARISH COUNCIL



## Minutes of the Parish Council

Meeting held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021

at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Councillor Sue Schlesinger, District Councillor Martin Mooney
2. **ATTENDEES:** Councillors Jacqueline Harding (JH) Chair, Tony Biggs (TB) Vice-Chair, Penny Farmer (PF), Dean Johnson (DJ), Robert Maltby (RM), Anthony Wontner-Smith (AWS), Jon Streatfield (JS), County Cllr Mr Paul Redstone (PR), District Cllr Tony Ganly (TG), Mrs R Smolska, Clerk, (BS), Mr Keith Robertson (guest speaker), Mr Tom Warder (guest speaker) and 8 members of the public.
3. **ELECTIONS: appointment and allocation:**
  - a. **Co-option of new Councillor** – There were applications from Mr Tony Wadie and Mr David Green. Both applicants gave a brief verbal introduction including their suitability for the role. Mr David Green was proposed by TB and seconded by RM, members voted by 3:6  
Mr Tony Wadie was proposed by DJ and seconded by PF, members voted 3:6. The Chair had the casting vote and after a brief explanation, Mr Tony Wadie was co-opted as a new Parish Councillor. The Chair thanked both applicants for their interest.
4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None.
5. **REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: - Maximum of 15 mins.**
  - Sarah Giles confirmed that the SFF footpath would be officially opened by the NPC Chair, on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July at 4.00pm. There would be balloons showing the entrance and JH would cut the ribbon. It was noted that the kissing gates near the dentist are at one entrance and the other is at Beales lane. There would be signs displayed and a map produced to show routes in advance of the 18<sup>th</sup> of July footpath opening event. SG also mentioned that the pop-up pub would open on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July and hoped that many would come along. As conservation Chair, SG discussed the orchard, reporting that that the Jubilee Nuttery would be within the triangle, they also have plans to grow cider apple trees.
  - Keith Robertson, Chair of Catsford Parish Council had been invited to attend the meeting to speak about the Black Cat Radar System. This system had been installed in Catsford as a 6-month trial to solve speeding within the village. Keith explained about how the system created data, which could be shared with the police and highways as they accepted data from the black box as evidence and then provided monthly speed enforcement. Keith reported that approximately 50% of drivers appear to speed i.e. driving at over 35 mph and he felt that this system was helpful in reducing speeding. It was noted that a licence from ESCC was required for installation, and that the device can be moved around and placed in different areas. The cost of the radar system was £450.00 per week to rent and approx. £2,500 to buy, there was also the option of villages sharing the system and therefore the costs. After discussion, JH noted that the system could be useful to Northiam if the lollipop lady leaves at the end of the year as we were not entitled to a zebra or pelican crossing, so this system could be a consideration. Members thanked Keith for attending the meeting and providing the information.
6. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021:** These were approved and signed by the Chair.
7. **REPORTS BY PARISH, COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:** (County and District Reports, as written, are attached).  
**PF** – No report

**DJ** – reported that we are currently refurbishing or replacing the roundabout which was now taped up and not in use. The roundabout to be kept in situ until a decision to repair or replace it, dependant on assessment and the quotes gathered. The Clerk to check the playground budget and to also confirm if the annual playground inspection had been completed this year – **ACTION CLERK**. DJ then mentioned the two bus stops that were covered with overgrown foliage and asked that O’Conner’s be contacted about removing this and tidying them-up – **ACTION CLERK**

**JS** – No report

**A W-S** – noted that there were approx. 30 businesses in Northiam and ESCC had written a letter to them concerning road safety in the village and mentioning the lollypop lady would need to be retired in December due to lack of funding.

A W-S would post the letters to all local business, and it was hoped for a good outcome and some donations to enable the lollypop lady to remain in post for longer. The Chair thanked A W-S and PR also mentioning that we had received 2 donations but had not had a donation from the school, noting their funds were short.

**TB** – confirmed that there was no PCSO Meeting this month to report on, but he had been in contact with police concerning the horses on the triangle at the top of Dixter Lane. The gentleman with the horses was known by police and after the police visit, it appears the man and his horses have moved on. TB then mentioned that he had seen the new matting underneath the zip wire, and it all looked exceptionally good. He felt a notice should go up stating “Zip wire use is for under 16’s only”, this was agreed by members – **ACTION CLERK**

**RM** – said he was concerned about the overgrown hedges/trees opposite Will’s bakery, the lime trees belong to NPC and members agreed that the clerk would contact O’Conner’s to get these trimmed back as they had become a safety issue – **ACTION CLERK**

**County Councillor PR** – the County report had previously been circulated to members, but PR reminded members of the need to let him know by the 31<sup>st</sup> October if the lolly pop lady will continue after 19<sup>th</sup> December. PR then confirmed that a sign will be put on the school railings and on a board in the village green, with names of any sponsors as recognition of their donation and support.

**District Councillor TG** – the district report had previously been circulated to members. TG passed on apologies from MM. He reported to members the problems and backlog within RDC’s planning department stating that planning is currently taking 100-150 days to deal with. RDC have now signed up with Capita to add support, but the felt this should have been done months ago.

## 8. PLANNING:

### a) RR/2021/570/P – Thorndale, Main Street, Northiam, TN31 6LS

Erection of proposed garden office. Removal of existing fencing and replace with new wall. Relocation of existing double access gates. **This went to the June meeting and was therefore an error on the agenda.**

### c) RR/2021/977/0 – Merrilees, Station Road, Northiam TN31 6QJ

Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed rear extension. **This was refused by RDC**

All Planning decisions have been previously circulated to councillors.

## 9. OTHER PLANNING MATTERS: None

## 10. VILLAGE MATTERS:

- a) AIRS Presentation and discussion: Tom Warder from Action in Rural Sussex (AIRS) spoke to members about the housing survey which Northiam will undertake, this being a pre cursor to identify local housing needs. He then spoke further about community-led housing which within agreement with local authorities, provided affordable local housing, keeping the community in control of the end product. Community led trusts were set up by communities for communities and any resident could become a member. Discussion followed and Tom was thanked by the Chair for his talk and providing this information.

- b) CIC Contract: Jackie Beard updated members on behalf of Jonathan Strong who was not present. She mentioned the contract had taken longer than expected and they were now finalising the wording with the lawyers. JB noted that the CIC cannot take over the management until the contract is signed; she suggested a meeting of NPC and CIC via zoom before August, to approve the contract – members agreed, and JH and Jonathan Strong would decide on a suitable date for this meeting – **ACTION JH/JS**. The blocked drains at SFF were also discussed and although the drains had now been cleared, a full investigation of the cause was required. Members agreed that the CIC would gather the 3 quotes required before this work could be undertaken – **ACTION JB/CIC**
- c) Queens Jubilee Event: JH gave a brief update, PF had visited the marquee company and explained the situation and was waiting for a response, the Clerk had sent a letter to the entertainers asking for the original deposit back and was also awaiting a response. JH also noted that she was considering the entertainment for this event, perhaps music through the decades, and that this should be discussed with the committee of JH/PF/SG/Keith NVHT. JS offered to visit the marquee company to chase up, which was agreed by members and the clerk will follow-up with a further letter to the entertainers - **Action JS/CLERK**
- d) Additional Memorial Bench on Playing field: This bench requested by the Mann family and to be placed on the playing field near the bowling green, was agreed unanimously by members, with the understanding that the family purchase and maintain it. An additional memorial bench to go on the village green in memory of Pete Hayman and Ray Harrington-Lowe would be provided by NPC – members agreed unanimously – **ACTION CLERK**
- e) Jubilee Beacon: It was confirmed that this was owned by NPC, PF had a colleague (Joan) who would help with this as there would be a timetable to follow – **ACTION PF**. PF also noted that we had previously received funds from RDC in 2011 and in 2014, in the form of a Beacon grant and the clerk would investigate into applying for this grant again – **ACTION CLERK**
- f) To purchase dog bin in cemetery plus a spare bin: This was agreed unanimously by members.

#### 11. CORRESPONDENCE OTHER THAN THAT ALREADY CIRCULATED: None

12. (*Minutes number 12*) **AGAR: Annual Return to the external auditor for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021** – All paperwork had been forwarded to the Council and was asked to approve by resolution: -

- a) **Annual Governance Statement** - to review the system of internal controls and authorise signature by the Chairman and Responsible Finance Officer. The questions were agreed, and the form was **signed by the Chairman and Responsible Finance Officer**.
- b) **Accounting Statements** – the preparation including the statement of accounts, bank reconciliation, explanation of variances, summary of receipts and payments signed by the clerk **was confirmed and signed by the Chair**.

#### 13. FINANCE, OTHER MATTERS:

- a) Extension from External Auditors to the submission deadline to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021: was noted.
- b) 106 Monies for Cemetery: It was resolved officially to ask for the release of the section 106 funds in respect of Donsmead, Station Road, Northiam, in order to provide an extension to Northiam Cemetery of one acre. Members voted unanimously to approve this.

#### 14. CHEQUES FOR SIGNATURE:

15. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS: 2 minutes each member of the public:** Jackie Broad explained that she knew the Mann family, Leslie Mann was a local plumber who used to own Woods Garage opposite the school. The family visited regularly and always walked in the playing fields, so a memorial bench placed there would be very fitting.

A W-S told members that he would be away until 29<sup>th</sup> July – this was noted by the Clerk.

The Meeting closed at 8.58pm

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Reports, as written, from ESCC and RDC councillors are attached.

### ESCC Report to Parish Councils July 2021

Cllr Paul Redstone, Email: [Cllr.Paul.Redstone@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Paul.Redstone@eastsussex.gov.uk)

This is the monthly second report, following on from the report entitled 'May 2021' which was dated 25<sup>th</sup> May and intended for Parish Council meetings in June. This caused confusion – hence the change in title!

As a reminder, I am happy to receive feedback on which topics should be included, though preferably not those which are easily available on the ESCC web site or other sources.

This report is for all 7 parishes in Northern Rother. I may on occasion add parish-specific supplements.

### **COVID update**

As of 25<sup>th</sup> June, East Sussex has a continued low rate of 152 new cases in the previous 7 days, slightly up from 14. In terms of cases per 100,000 population, East Sussex is 27, the South East 58 and England 101. I understand that hospital cases from COVID in East Sussex are very low - in about mid-June there were only two cases and I am told these were discovered only by testing of patients admitted for other reasons. This aligns with national figures which suggest that vaccinations are reducing the proportion of COVID patients admitted to hospital. However, the national trend is upwards due to the Delta variant.

Government funding has been provided to local authorities including county councils, unitary authorities and district councils. At ESCC government funding for COVID-specific costs of just under £100m has been received up to April 2021 (the end of the financial year), £63m for specific departments and £37m for general funding. Of this £46m was spent on adult social care, mostly on infection control; £13m on children's services, for example helping schools to manage outbreaks; and smaller amounts in other areas, with the balance carried over for COVID costs this year.

### **Council Monitoring**

At this time of year, the council reviews performance for the previous financial year. This report is 77 pages long and is being reviewed by cabinet in the next few days and then by full council in July. It is publicly viewable, for example in the agenda papers for Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> June. It follows a programme called Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR).

For those not wishing to read 77 pages there are some useful graphical summaries, in particular showing which targets have been met, which not, and which have been carried over as they are expected to be met, the latter particularly due to the pandemic which has caused some delays. Of 52 targets, 36 were met, 9 not met and 7 carried over. Targets are also 'RAG rated' which uses a traffic light system of Red, Amber or Green which makes it easy to see areas of concern and the details for that.

### **Cases**

Each month I will give summaries for a sample of current cases across the Division.

- **Grass Cutting.** There is some dissatisfaction with grass cutting in several parishes. Most parishes pay for an additional 4 cuts by county making 6 in all. Typically, this has included cuts in April, May, July and August. June seems to be omitted, perhaps because in a typical year June is drier and has less growth. This seems not to be the case this year. I have meetings with Highways to discuss this and other areas and will report back. If there are urgent grass or hedge issues, in particular causing visibility or other safety issues, please let me know but also report them at <https://www.eastsussexhighways.com/report-a-problem>.
- **Northiam School Crossing Patrol.** In a policy set more than 5 years ago, ESCC only pays for these where traffic meets certain criteria, which has not been the case in Northiam for many years. For the last 5 years this has been funded by Persimmon under an agreement which runs out in July. I am working with the Parish Council to raise funds to extend this. The PC has agreed to provide some funding and we are seeking sponsorship for the balance.

Cllr Paul Redstone

### Northern Rother District Councillors' Report, July 2021

**Caravan sites - Fit and Proper Persons policy.**

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It is proposed to adopt a policy that managers of caravan sites must be fit and proper persons to be running such sites and that a register of such persons be established. The Council believes a fit and proper person assessment and/or checks will take between 120 and 150 minutes to complete. On that basis the initial application fee would be set at £70. To cover the additional cost of monitoring the scheme, an additional annual fee for registration would be set at £0.50 per unit, to a maximum of £50. No fee would be charged for smaller sites. Charges would commence on 1 April 2022.

#### **Potential Planning Appeals costs.**

It is proposed to set aside £300,000 from earmarked reserves to cover potential appeal costs in respect of applications:

1/ RR/2020/1822/P Strand Meadow, Burwash and

2/ RR/2020/151/P Pett Level Road, Fairlight Cove.

Both applications were refused by the Planning Committee against officer recommendations.

These costs do not include our legal services costs.

If the appellants win their appeals no New Homes Bonus will be received. It is estimated that grants of £200,520 (Burwash) and £287,412 (Fairlight) would be lost.

#### **Protecting Discretionary Services.**

These are:

Parks and Open Spaces, Public Conveniences, Museum Buildings, Bus Shelters, Christmas Special Lighting, off-street public parking spaces, currently free to use.

The first objective is to protect these Services. The second objective is to reduce the Council's net spend on discretionary services which account for about £1.4m yearly, mainly in maintaining the asset in a reasonable and usable condition.

A small team has been established to look into transferring some/all of these assets to organisations that can raise sufficient funding to ensure continued public access to these services such as:

Parish & Town Councils and Charitable Organisations.

#### **Disposal of land at Pages Gap, South Cliff, Bexhill.**

Pages Gap consists of a sloped pathway leading down to the splash deck fronting the beach. The owners of the adjoining property, 43 South Cliff, have offered to buy the verge to the west of the path, about 7 metres in width, which has no special ecological significance. The offer is subject to no objections being made to the Public Notice advertisement which is a requirement under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

This sale would give a capital receipt and a small saving on maintenance.

#### **By-election 6 May 2021.**

The Returning Officer reports that Ms. Lizzie Hacking (Conservative) won the Rother District Council - Eastern Rother - seat vacated by Councillor Mrs. S. Hart who was elected MP for Hastings and Rye.

#### **Private Sector Leasing Scheme.**

RDC has over 100 households in temporary accommodation for an average of 66 days at a cost of £2,500 each.

This scheme would provide the Council access to properties for a fixed period and property owners would be guaranteed a fixed monthly payment. Properties would need to meet or exceed defined national standards and the property owner would retain full responsibility for the management, maintenance and repair of the external fabric of the building. At the end of the lease period, the property would be returned to the owner in the same condition as at commencement of the lease (except for an allowance on reasonable wear and tear).

#### **Councillors Martin Mooney and Tony Ganly.**

DRAFT