



Meeting of the SFF Committee to be held in the Jenkins Room, Northiam at 5.30pm, Thursday 28 April 2022

**Members of the Public and Press are welcome and encouraged to attend.
There will be an opportunity for questions from members of the public.**

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: From the CIC – Jacky Broad, Sarah Giles & Jonathan Strong. From the Parish Council: Cllrs Biggs, Wadie & Schlesinger and the Clerk and 3 members of the public. The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Tony Wadie.

1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None

2) PUBLIC QUESTIONS: None

3) MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr Wadie (TW) proposed that the minutes from the previous meeting on 31st March 2022 be approved as a true & correct record, and all attendees agreed.

4) MONIES TRANSFERRED / BANK ACCOUNTS – AN UPDATE

Cllr Biggs (TB) confirm that monies have been transferred to the newly opened Barclays Bank account. This includes the precept portion for the loan repayment (£25,000), the April rents from the stables & bungalows (£2,173) and the remaining balance of the kick-start fund. (£13,920). The Clerk confirmed that new bank details had been provided for the direct debit instructions, and Moloney's had confirmed the amendment. The Clerk had not received confirmation from the tenant at the stables. Jonathan Strong (JVS) asked about the reserve fund. TB confirmed that approximately £76,000 remained (held across the Unity & Nationwide accounts). The Clerk confirmed that she was in the process of transferring the Unity balance to the Nationwide, but signatories needed updating first. JVS further asked about the £1000 rental deposit that had been paid at the beginning of the stables tenancy, and the Clerk confirmed that a completely separate deposit account needed to be opened first, and she would then transfer the security deposit. TB said this would be the last of the monies associated with SFF to be separated from the Co-op bank account, and in the future all income & expenditure for both the village and SFF would be clear. Jacky Broad (JB) asked if the clerk could provide an income & expenditure report for SFF for the previous financial year and the new year to date. The Clerk confirmed that she could provide this in due course, together with the balance sheet showing the kick-start funds remaining. TW asked if the kickstart balance was held by the CIC, could they use it for match funding? JVS said potentially in the future, but that is another matter.

ACTION: The Clerk to send I & E report on SFF and Excel spreadsheet showing kickstart fund balance to JB

i) METERS / METER READINGS

Pete Sargent is reading the water meter on the main site weekly and providing the readings to JB who is collating the information to monitor usage. This will be used to calculate invoices for the stables tenant.

ii) SEWAGE CHARGES

JB had received another email from Business Stream who still do not understand the situation at SFF, and she has sent her 'phone number and suggested an on-site meeting. Sarah Giles (SG) suggested going to the CEO. JB will keep the committee informed of any progress.

5) LETTER OF INTENT

JVS confirmed that the body of the letter of intent previously circulated had been drafted into a letter on SFF letterhead, and was ready for signing. The Clerk had neglected to bring a hard copy to the meeting, but the committee approved the Chairman of NPC to sign on behalf of the parish council once the letter was available.

6) STABLES LEASE – AN UPDATE ON FINAL COPY & SIGNING

The Clerk reported that the final hard copy had been received from the solicitors. This had been approved at the parish council meeting of 14th April and the Chairman duly signed the lease where required, witnessed by Steve Pratt, member of the public. JVS will visit Lauren Sapstead for her signature, and then return the document to Gaby Hardwicke.

JVS made the suggestion that in the future, the CIC become the main and only point of contact with the tenant and will report back to the parish council as and when necessary. To that end, he further suggested that no parish councillors should get involved or see Lauren Sapstead other than socially, and TB agreed that as managing agents for SFF this made sense. Other members of the committee agreed.

JVS then raised the previously circulated request for approval of expenditure of £465 + VAT for pre-application advice, to include a site visit from Highways. TW asked if it was worth using a consultant to submit the planning application and had seen an approximate cost of £3,000. SS said that would be an additional cost where the CIC are doing it for free. TB said that as Highways approval is the first and most fundamental point for the planning application, he felt this was a necessary cost. Steve Pratt asked if the on-site visit was for both accesses including the entrance for the burial ground. JVS confirmed that it would include all highways issues for the whole site. The committee approved the expenditure.

JVS also reported that the CIC have received a letter from an enforcement officer at Rother stating that there is an open enforcement case relating to the stables at SFF. It was received with surprise, and may have been picked up by enforcement from the planning department or it may have been reported. SG said there was no need to be alarmed about this. We need to establish the reasons for the letter and to explain the background and steps being taken (Highways visit etc.) and historically, the Clerk at the time had tried to get in touch with Rother's planning department about a change of use, but the pandemic had prevented progress. JVS confirmed that matters are in hand. JB said it was strange that the notice had been addressed to the CIC and mentioned their Facebook page, and RDC should be made aware that the CIC is the Managing Agent for SFF and that the letter should have been addressed to NPC. SG felt it would save confusion to let JVS deal with it and speak to Enforcement Officer as he was undertaking the change of use application anyway. JVS to report back after making enquiries.

7) MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT – NEW PROPOSALS

JVS asked about legal advice in relation to proposals for commercial activity which the PC currently cannot enact as it doesn't hold the General Power of Competence. The Clerk suggested Ian Davison who advises ESALC, and offered to check his costs. TB felt that this needed to move along, so that there are some concrete plans for the Hub when the membership of the CIC opens up and volunteers are required for specific tasks. The Committee approved expenditure on fees, if necessary, under its delegated authority.

ACTION: JVS to liaise with the Clerk about legal advice and the Clerk will confirm associated costs. This item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

8) SHEDS FOR BUNGALOWS – AN UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed that the account at Jewson's was now open. TW said that he had been quoted a 14-day lead time for delivery, and had been told that the quote may not still be valid as the price of materials may have changed. SS offered to check with Skinners Sheds for a comparable quote as TW will be away.

9) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed as **Thursday 26th May at 5.30pm**. Meeting closed at 6.37pm