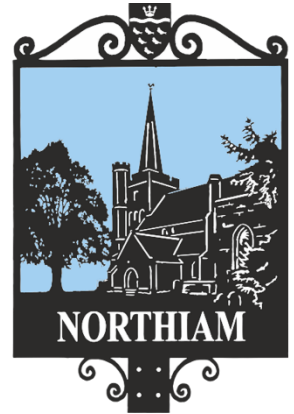


# Northiam Parish Council

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## **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024, Northiam Village Hall - Jenkins Room**

**Present:** Cllr Fairbrass (Chair), Cllr C Biggs, Cllr Fenton, Cllr Harding, Cllr Luckett, Cllr Russell, Cllr Sargent, Cllr Schlesinger, and Cllr Wadie.

**Also Present:** Mary Philo Locum Clerk - Cllr T Biggs (RDC), Cllr Ganly (RDC), Cllr Redstone (ESCC) and approximately 20 members of the Public

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- FC24/376 Election of Chair**  
It was unanimously resolved to appoint Councillor Fairbrass as Chair until the next annual meeting. Acceptance of Office of Chair was signed. Proposed Councillor Schlesinger and seconded Councillor Russell.
- FC24/377 Election of Vice Chair**  
Councillors Schlesinger and Wadie were proposed and seconded. It was resolved by majority to appoint Councillor Schlesinger as Vice-Chair until the next annual meeting. Proposed Councillor Biggs and seconded Councillor Fenton. Votes for 5; against 2; abstention 1
- FC24/378 Apologies for Absence**  
All parish Councillors were present. District Council Ganly had sent his apologies.
- FC24/379 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillors Fenton, Luckett, Sargent and Schlesinger held a prejudicial interest in the item regarding permission for Northiam Bonfire Society mid-summer festival to be held on the playing fields.  
Councillors confirmed their register of interests remain unchanged.
- FC24/380 Minutes**  
Following amendment, it was resolved to unanimously approve the minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> February as a true record.
- FC24/381 Working Group Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation**  
It was unanimously resolved to agree the terms as presented for the following:  
Finance and Human resources Working Group  
St Francis Filed Working Party with the addition that the group would report at the monthly council meeting.  
It was unanimously resolved that Scheme of Delegation remained as per 2023
- FC24/382 Appointment of members to Working Groups 2024-2025**  
It was unanimously resolved to appoint councillors as follows:

Finance and Human Resources Working Group – Councillors Biggs, Harding, Sargent and Wadie. Ex-officio Councillor Fairbrass.

St Francis Field Working Group – Councillors Fairbrass, Wadie, Harding, Lockett, and Russell.

Appointments for the Natural Burial Ground and Playground Working Groups to be made at the next meeting.

**FC24/383**

**Policy Review**

It was unanimously resolved to agree the following as presented:

1. **Standing Orders** – correcting the time a member of the public can speak to three minutes; adding that those speaking at the meeting shall when directing their comments to the chair, shall address the chair as ‘Chair’ and noting the change in thresholds for public work contracts and the change of the Finance and Human Resources Committee to Finance and Human Resources Working Party. The latter would mean that the council would have to hold an extraordinary meeting when finalising disciplinary and grievance issues.
2. **Financial Regulations** – Confirming a member other than the chair or bank signatory is to verify bank reconciliations, that the draft budget should include a forecast for one year; the formal tender process threshold is £30,000; emergency spending of £1,500 for the Clerk or in their absence the RFO; the clerk to authorise fund transfer up to £25,000 to cover the Public Works Loan payments; usage of the debit card to be checked; there is no petty cash; the council is not VAT registered; held no funds for a charitable Trust; held no stores; and the removal of the section regarding charities.
3. **Model Publication Scheme** – update to clerk’s email.
4. **Complaints Procedure** – deferred by the Clerk.
5. **Freedom of Information Policy** - update to clerk’s email.
6. **Privacy Notice** - update to clerk’s email.
7. **Data Protection Policy** – addition of clerk’s email.
8. **Data Protection Breach Management Plan.**
9. Employment policies to be reviewed at the next Finance and Human resources Working Group.

**FC24/384**

**Review of Arrangements with Local Authorities, Not for Profit and Businesses**

1. St Francis Field - Management Agreement with St Francis Field CIC to 1st August 2026 and thereon annual renewal – the terms of communication/management agreement is currently under discussion.
2. Northiam Bowls Club - 21 years lease fee £80 for first 7 years, £100 for the next and £120 for the last 7 years. Start date of lease to be verified.
3. Allotment Agreement ongoing yearly from 1<sup>st</sup> April. The agreed date to advise of any increase of charges for 2024 year had passed. A review at the start of the calendar year would be more effective and allow for consideration of costs covered by allotment holders and costs to the council. It was resolved to review the charges annually. Clerk to write to the Allotment Association.
4. St Francis Field Stables Lease currently under discussion.
5. SSE Business – Electricity rolling contract for parish office.
6. Castle Water – Ongoing contract for cemetery, bungalows and stables on St Francis Field.
7. John O’Connor Groundworks contract (grass cutting) 12 months as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, £11,258. Councillors asked to review all the areas and verges cut with the aim of tendering the contract in September.

8. Rother District Council – Dog Bin Emptying – automatic renewal, 15 bins at £1.73 a week per bin.

**FC24/385 Representatives on External Bodies 2024**

It was unanimously resolved to appoint as follows:

1. Rother Association of Local Councils – Councillor Harding to report after quarterly meetings.
2. PCSO Liason – Councillor Schlesinger to report back after each meeting.

**FC24/386 Review of Asset Register and Insurance**

It was noted that the insurance renewal date is 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and that the Asset Register needed reviewing.

**FC24/387 Council Subscriptions**

The following were unanimously agreed:

1. East Sussex Association of Local Councils/NALC membership £678.74
2. Information Commissioner Office – Data Handler registration £40
3. Parish Online (no longer as part of the RALC membership) estimate £40
4. Rother Association of Local Councils (RALC) membership estimated £40
5. Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management membership estimated £100

The council would consider a request for funding a clerks society subscription.

**FC24/388 Schedule of Meetings**

It was unanimously resolved to meet on the second Thursday of the month at 7pm at Northiam Village Hall, except for August.

**FC24/389 Public Session**

**It was resolved by majority to no longer hold the public session at the end of the meeting.** The chair opened briefly to the public for their thoughts. Votes in favour 6; votes against 2; abstentions 1

**Commencement of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council**

**FC24/390 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair had omitted to thank Northiam Community Speed Watch group at the Annual Parish Meeting, but would be expressing the council's thanks in the village magazine.

**To adjourn the meeting to enable members of the public and Councillors to address the meeting. This is a 'for information' session only and no action can be taken upon those items raised.**

*The meeting was closed at 20.05*

*The Chairman introduced the two clerks assisting with the meeting. The Council was in the process of seeking a clerk and advertising the position.*

*The Brian Banks was thanked for his work improving biodiversity on St Francis Field. He would be attending the East Sussex County Council Development of a Nature Recovery Strategy online sessions. It was highlighted that some of the wildflower meadow area would need protecting during the Beacon lighting for the 6<sup>th</sup> May 80<sup>th</sup> D-Day Commemoration but it was possible to cut an area to allow for residents to stand and view the lighting.*

*The owners of Pond House provided background information regarding their request being considered by the council.*

*A reminder was given that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were outstanding as well as that a challenge had been made to the External Auditor about the 2022-2023 accounts.*

*Business rates were now being paid for the stables and sand school on St Francis Field. A member of the public expressed their dissatisfaction, with the Rother District Council's approval of the weighting reversal of the infrastructure funds dedicated to the playing fields, from the Donsmead Development, from pitch improvements to changing facilities improvements. They were keen for the funds to be spent on the playground.*

*The meeting was re-opened at 20.15*

**FC24/391**

**Report from County Councillor**

Cllr Redstone reported that Balfour Beatty had increased the number of gangs working on pothole repairs to twenty-six, at their own cost. Balfour Beatty had also let go a sub-contractor that was failing standards. There would be emergency water road works closure in Ewhurst from the 23-28 May. Cllr Redstone participates on the Committee for Looked after Children and advised they were looking for work experience places for those around 18 years old. He is also a member for the board for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service which as a result of increasing costs may be consulting on the future of the Mayfield Fire Station. The results of the County Council Survey on its Proposed Long Term Transport Plan 4 should be out shortly.

**FC24/392**

**Report from District Councillors**

Three incidents had been reported by the PCSO: theft of a Range Rover, suspicious van, caravan theft which had been recovered on the M25. Northiam has a new PCSO. A café had been fined for poor cleanliness.

**Planning**

**FC24/393**

RR/2023/2533/L – Sandgate House, Main Street Demolition of single storey rear extension, internal alterations, creation of a glazed link between main house and utility, alterations to fenestration and landscaping to a grade 2 listed property. It was unanimously resolved to support.

**FC24/394**

RR/2024/543/P Sandgate House, Main Street Demolition of existing garden boundary retaining wall and construction of new retaining garden wall and steps. It was unanimously resolved to support.

**FC24/395**

RR/2024/446/P 20 Cricketers Field, Northiam Single storey rear extension. It was unanimously resolved to support.

**FC24/396**

The remaining infrastructure funds from Donsmead for the playing fields, held by Rother District Council stood at £170,000. Any remaining funds would be returned to the developer after 15 years from sale of first house, being approximately 2036. The anticipated cost to refurbish the pavilion to include football (as principle user) and other users was estimated at £300,000. Grants and or match funding would have to be applied for to be able to build a new pavilion. Applying for funding required an approved planning application. A submission was ready. It was unanimously resolved to proceed with the submission of a planning application for a new sports pavilion. Estimated cost £2,300 to be covered from council funds. If planning is not given then all the funds may have to be spent on the pitch.

**Finance**

**FC24/397**

March Payments and Receipts were noted.

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount Gross</b>
John O'Conner	£1,082.50
NVHT	£26.00
SSE	£420.44
HMRC	£714.41
Staff	£1,890.90
N Ideson – Admin costs	£3.90
Jewsons	£1620.00
Playdale	£324.34
GCI Network	£13.40
P. Sargent	£13.40
Castle Water	£105.82
EDF	£103.00
<b>Payor</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Allotment Association	£1,60.00
Unity Bank Interest	£182.59
Nationwide Bank Interest	£1,841.51
Hodge Bank interest	£363.07
Moleny & Partners	£1,183.00

#### **April and May Payments Authorised**

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount Gross</b>
<b>APRIL</b>	
John O'Conner	£1,082.50
NVHT	£26.00
NVHT Library	£678.74
HMRC	£1033.28
Staff	£1,447.31
RDC	£386.30
RDC	£290.83
Jewsons	£25.85
ESALC	£96.00
Huck Nets Ltd	£243.60
J Lockett – refund map for planning	£47.99
Business Stream	£174.21
RDC	£2,691.00
D & S Chestnut – hedge around allotments	£360.00
R Spencer	£65.00
SSF c/o P Herridge	£454.89
<b>MAY</b>	
John O'Conner	£1,125.79
NVHT	£52.50
NVHT	£192.14
Staff	£1,295.67
RDC	£384.00
Playdale	£162.17

BT	£204.56
SSE	£672.68
P Sargent refund	£21
Annual Parish Meeting	£154.85
ICO	£40.00
P Sargent refund Cemetery	£36.99

FC24/397

**Unity Bank Mandate**

It was unanimously resolved to ratify Councillors Lockett, Schlesinger and Wadie as signatories for Unity Bank.

**Parish Matters**

FC24/398

**Bonfire Society Mid-Summer Festival 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2024**

It was resolved to grant permission to Northiam Bonfire Society permission to use the playing fields for the Mid-Summer Festival. It was further resolved to allow parking on St Francis Field stables field on the condition that the group organised the area to be rolled. (Councillors Fenton, Lockett, Sargent and Schlesinger did not vote)

FC24/399

**80<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of D-Day 6<sup>th</sup> June.**

The beacon would be lit at 9.15pm and the chair would read the tribute. It was resolved that the council would write to the Bonfire Society to manage the lighting of the beacon. The clerk would produce a risk assessment and advise the insurers.

**St Francis Field**

FC24/400

**Advice on possible commercial use of the stables**

It was unanimously resolved to contract Batchelor Monkhouse on the revised quote basis for advice regarding the demand and nature of demand for stables in this area. This is necessary to understand how the facility might be used to plan the future sustainability of St Francis Field and for any planning applications relating to that. Cost £1,500 plus vat and disbursements.

FC24/401

**Phase 2 Testing for the Cemetery**

Phase 2 is the monitoring of the water table at the site. Cost is approximately £5,000 and will be covered by the funds held for the burial ground extension. With submission of the planning application for permission to create a natural burial ground it will become evident if the monitoring will be needed sooner.

FC24/402

**Christmas Tree Planting in Field 1**

Having considered any impingement on neighbouring properties, it was unanimously resolved to plant Christmas trees to be grown for sale on the condition that they are not allowed to grow over 6 foot.

FC24/403

**Pond House Boundary with St Francis Field**

The meeting was adjourned briefly to hear from the owners. The boundary runs across the pond itself but the owners of the property have been looking after the banked area around the pond forming part of the St Francis Field. Various owners over time have maintained the area. It was unanimously resolved to confirm that the Parish Council is happy for the situation to remain as it is for the time being on the understanding that the residents and any of their guest do so at their own risk.

FC24/404

**Items for the next agenda**

Response to Local Plan out for consultation till 23<sup>rd</sup> July -possibly an extraordinary meeting.

Bank Reconciliations for January to April 2024

Asset Register at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024



**Adjournment for Public Session 9.25pm**

A resident advised that the CIC 'Pop-Up Pub' sign had been stolen from the green on Dexter Lane.

The installation of bollards in front of Jempsons had been taken on by the Conservation Society and these would be installed in the coming week.

A resident was unhappy about the expenditure of S106 funds on grass matting for the parking at the recreation ground being considered pitch improvements.

A member of the public raised concern about the deep ruts along the edge of verges and suggested that these were filled.

**FC24/405**      **That in view of the confidential nature of the business (employment) about to be transacted, it was resolved under the provisions of Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1,2 and 3 that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.**

**FC24/406**      **It was resolved to agree to appoint Mary and Ian Philo as Locum Clerk (job share) for 3 months. Hourly rate £23 plus travel at 45p per mile.**

The meeting closed at 21.55 pm

Signed.....

Date.....