

Chiddingly Parish Council  
[www.chiddingly.gov.uk](http://www.chiddingly.gov.uk)

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20 January 2021

Minutes of the Chiddingly Parish Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 1930 hours via Zoom conferencing.

Present: Cllr Richards (Chairman), Cllr Mikelis, Cllr Welsh, Cllr Marchant, Cllr Luke, Cllr Newham, Cllr Tolhurst, Cllr Draper, Cllr Bennett, Julie O'Donnell (Clerk)

1 member of the public were present online at this meeting.

Minutes

1. Enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting and ask if any member of public present has any objections to being filmed by a third party.  
The member of public present confirmed they did not intend to film.
2. Apologies and reasons for absence.  
Apologies from Cllr Best and Cllr Allan
3. The Chairman will invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in the following agenda items.  
No interests declared.
4. Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 Parish Council Meeting to be agreed and signed as a true record.  
**Resolved:** Minutes were agreed and will be signed by Cllr Richards

*It was agreed to discuss agenda item 8 with the member of public present as it was an item received from them.*

5. Clerk and Councillor reports arising from the minutes 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 not covered elsewhere in the agenda: None
6. Councillor Reports:
  - 6.1. Cllr Draper (WDC).  
Nothing specific. WDC are working on the Direction of Travel document and he encourages all Parishes to respond. There is an outstanding planning application in Chiddingly which is currently with the Planning Officer. He will discuss this with the Planning Officer and if it is rejected then Cllr Draper will look to discuss it at the Planning Committee South meeting.
  - 6.2. Cllr Nick Bennett (ESCC)

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Next week the budget is being set by ESCC for the year. There will be no additional cuts if their request for an increase of 1.99 or 2% increase in council tax and they can take the adult social care precept over 2 years is accepted. This would mean a council tax increase of 3.5% overall if this is agreed. It still needs to go through council and cabinet yet.

Vaccination roll-out is continuing, GP led centres are in Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Seaford, Bexhill, Crowborough, Uckfield and Etchingham goes live this week. There are bigger centres at Brighton Racecourse and the District and General Hospitals. ESCC are looking for pharmacies to also provide the service, Boots and Superdrug plus independent pharmacies if they can. It is working well. Housebound patients are referred to the district nursing services, and the vaccination will be administered at the patients' home. Figures are starting to come down which is expected with the current lockdown measures in place.

Cllr Mikelis raised the poor state of the roads particularly Stalkers Lane and the junction of Smithlands Lane. The promised repair has not been done properly and there is still a huge crater at the edge of the junction. Cllr Mikelis remarked how dangerous it is and needs immediate attention. Cllr Bennett asked that the clerk emails him, and he will raise it with the Highways manager and report back to the Parish Council.

Cllr Newham raised the fact road closed signage is being left up long after the work has been completed. Cllr Bennett explained that often utility companies are used for the road repairs but again if the clerk emails the issue, he will raise it with the correct department.

7. Correspondence:

None received.

8. Tree warden report – to discuss the report received from Andy Barnes, Tree Warden (previously circulated) and consider his advice and suggestions.

The Chairman thanked Andy for taking the time to attend the meeting and asked him to go through the report with the council. Andy explained that he has looked at all the current initiatives available and listed what could be appropriate for the Parish. Included are all the tree council initiatives and some of his own ideas that he feels would be beneficial to the parish.

He would like to produce an inventory of the Parish owned land and what tree planting there is on each area of land. He would also like to involve private parish land-owners in the tree planting initiatives. He has in the past worked with private land-owners and it has worked extremely well, rejuvenating the Black Poplar species as an example.

Andy would like to find out what finances are available to the council from other organisations or if any free planting schemes are available to the council.

Cllr Welsh suggested a possible bereavement or memorial planting area for parishioners, we could use part of Jubilee Field or Jubilee Garden for this.

***Cllr Marchant asked if agenda item 13 could be discussed as part of this agenda item, this was agreed.***

Cllr Marchant advised he has 210 plants being delivered in March for the rewilding and would like Andy's help. It is very muddy, but Cllr Marchant has been able to clear some more of the area. Cllr Marchant has been asked by the Sussex Wildlife Trust to submit photographs and details of the project and they will be able to send further advice. He also wrote to Highgrove who are unable to help but gave details of other organisations. Cllr Marchant will liaise with Andy regarding the project and planting of the area. Andy was upset that he had not been contacted prior to the commencement of the project but was informed that an article had been written for the Parish News and it has also been documented in the Parish Council meeting minutes. Cllr Marchant explained that he has only cleared a small area of goat willow from the pond as it was clogging up the pond area.

Cllr Richards suggested that Cllr Marchant is the main contact for Andy and Cllr Marchant agreed. This would ensure information is passed between the council and Andy.

The school could be involved in planting through initiatives being offered. Andy is keen to get the parish involved and he is looking to encourage private land-owners to replant and be involved in some of the projects. Cllr Mikelis suggested he write an article for the Parish News. Andy agreed and will send a copy to the clerk for circulation on the parish mailing list and the parish website.

Cllr Newham mentioned a project from a few years ago. The parish council received many saplings for planting. He planted roughly 50 in the centre of Jubilee Field on the scrub area. He suggested clearing this area of bracken and perhaps a working party could be organised to do this. This could be a possible site for the memorial area.

**Resolved:** Cllr Marchant will be the contact for Andy. Andy will write an article for circulation. A working party will be organised once lockdown is over to clear the middle area.

Cllr Marchant and Cllr Newham will meet Andy at Jubilee Field to discuss the project.

9. Parish maintenance quotes – to consider the quotes received and confirm the Parish contractor for 2021.

A comparative quote report had been sent to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The clerk had requested and received quotes from Vince Fisher, Countrymans and Chaffin Works. One of the quotes received was significantly more than any previous agreed contract. The two remaining quotes were discussed at length and no decision was made. The clerk has been asked to confirm the pricing with one possible contractor and make sure what has been quoted for is what the council requires. The item is to be discussed again at February's meeting.

**Action:** The clerk to contact potential suppliers to ensure accuracy of quotes and report back to council for next month.

10. Website accessibility audit and IT contract – quote received to correct the accessibility issues and clerk to update regarding IT support contract.

The clerk advised that she is still awaiting further details but has spoken to three suppliers at length regarding the requirements of the council. The current IT contract expires at the end of January and although not ideal the clerk could manage some of the IT herself. The subscription for the hosting and back-up facility is still in place and will still run as it does now. There is an issue of email archiving, but she is looking into this. Once all the information has been received, she will arrange a meeting with the IT working party. The potential suppliers have all confirmed they would attend a Zoom meeting to talk through the contract and answer any questions if needed.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange meeting as soon as all quotes have been received.

11. Jubilee Fields play park check – Cllr Newham to report any issues.

Nothing new to report, the small piece of fencing still needs repair but due to lockdown this has not happened.

12. Jubilee Field play park path – Cllr Newham suggested CIL funds are used to make a clear path from the entrance of the field to the park. He suggested hexagonal matting so the grass can still grow. Councillors to discuss.

Councillors agreed that this was a good idea, and that hexagonal matting should be used rather than a hard standing surface. Cllr Newham confirmed he has looked at the cost and thinks it would be around £250 in materials. He will manage the project and arrange purchase of the materials and laying the path. The council will use CIL monies to fund this.

**Resolved:** Unanimous agreement to lay pathway and for Cllr Newham to manage the project.

13. Jubilee Field rewilding project – Cllr Marchant to update.

**Resolved:** This was discussed under agenda item 8 as agreed.

14. Donation of Peace sculpture – Clerk to update.

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The clerk has contacted the sculptor but at the time of this meeting had not heard anything from him. Agenda item to be included in next month's meeting.

**Action:** Clerk to contact sculptor again and inform the council at next month's meeting.

## 15. Financial Matters

15.1. To approve the Bank reconciliations for December 2020.

**Resolved:** the parish council unanimously agreed to approve the current account reconciliation and the savings account reconciliation for December 2020

15.2. To approve and authorise accounts payable for January 2021 (as detailed on the payment list).

**Resolved:** the parish council unanimously agreed to approve the accounts payable, cheque numbers 102553-102558 totalling £2543.41

15.3. To acknowledge the RBS reports circulated by the Clerk – Summary Receipts and Payments and Cash and Investment Reconciliation.

**Resolved:** the parish council acknowledged the RBS reports circulated by the clerk and no questions were raised

15.4. To review the EMR changes made by the clerk as agreed at the December meeting.

**Resolved:** the parish council acknowledged the RBS report detailing the changes to the EMR (Ear Marked Reserves)

## 16. Car park fencing – any update Cllr Welsh and Cllr Newham

The council discussed the fencing need of the car-park and agreed to use the leftover church fencing for the small twitten and will use normal post and rail for the rest of the car-park. Cllr Newham will ask Jakk furniture to quote to supply 4 end posts or possibly look to adjust the centre posts that the church has left over. Cllr Newham advised 4 posts would cost roughly £50-60 per post, this is on top of the costs to purchase the remaining wood from the church. The council agreed that the fencing should be the same as the church fence. The church is a focal point in the village, and it would look better to be matching. CIL money would be used to fund the fencing.

The issue of the broken fingerpost was raised by the clerk. As the clerk had not been able to confirm any repairs with the previous contractor Cllr Welsh contacted Jakk Furniture for a quotation. Most of the council had agreed for Jakk to repair at a cost of £48 and the clerk wanted to check the council was happy to go ahead. Cllr Newham advised there are two other damaged fingerposts, one on the junction of Swansbrook Lane and one at the junction of Sheepecote Lane. Cllr Newham will go and look at the posts, he could not find one of the arms so we would need to replace it. He thinks the one in Golden Cross will need full post replacement. If that is the case, we would request the 50% grant from ESCC for this one. Cllr Newham will discuss with Jakk and get back to the clerk with details.

**Action:** Cllr Newham will obtain three quotes for the full car-park fencing in post and rail and report back at the next meeting.

Cllr Newham to inform the clerk of the costs to repair the two broken fingerposts.

## 17. WDC Direction of Travel response – Cllr Tolhurst. To give final ratification of comments from councillors sent during email discussion. To discuss any questions for the next planning cluster meeting with Chris Bending on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Cllr Tolhurst advised that the agreed comments had been submitted to WDC from the council. The council agreed that they were happy with his comments. The cluster group have tried to do a joint response, but this has not been accepted.

There is a cluster group meeting with Chris Bending next week which Cllr Tolhurst will be able to report to at the planning meeting.

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He asked if anyone had any comments or questions, they would like put forward to Chris Bending at the meeting.

Cllr Welsh asked about the actual need for all these houses. Has there been a study showing that there is the need for all of these houses? Cllr Welsh had heard from an Uckfield resident that the developers have not been able to sell the houses at Ridgewood and that a proportion of these had been sold to a London Borough to move their social housing out of London.

Cllr Tolhurst has also heard of housing near Ringmer that has been finished for over a year that still has only sold 70%.

The housing figure is imposed on the Districts and Boroughs by Central Government. Cllr Draper confirmed Cllr Tolhurst's comments and advised the figures are being dictated by Central Government and the issue of the non-sale of new builds has been blamed on Covid.

Cllr Welsh asked why ribbon build is being allowed on greenbelt land, why is this being done instead of small clusters of houses. Could they not allow small clusters of houses rather than huge estates? The cost of infrastructure is better when building a large development, it can be costly to put in infrastructure for little pockets of housing.

Cllr Mikelis believes we should oppose the figures and proposal; the whole thing is a travesty. Future generations will look back at what we have done and not believe it. We will have concreted from here to the coast by then!

The cluster group has discussed putting pressure on the local MP, but he has heard that she has pushed it back to WDC and has not really commented on it. The MP representing Rother has taken comments on board and is raising issues with the minister, the Lewes MP has also been raising issues with the minister.

**Action:** Cllr Tolhurst will put the questions to Chris Bending and report back at the planning meeting.

Cllr Marchant raised the issue of a very muddy slippery footpath in Muddles Green leading to Hoads Wood. Clerk to contact Footpaths to report it.

Meeting closed 21:14

- *The next virtual parish council Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7.30p.m. via Zoom conferencing.*
- *The next virtual planning meeting Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.30p.m via Zoom conferencing.*

### **For information.**

Below is a note of items that are under consideration by the council prior to Covid19 lockdown. These are currently underway or have been discussed for action by the council previously. This is not an exhaustive list but enables council members to see what is going on and members of the parish to see and make comment should they wish.

- Stream Mill bridge
- Speedwatch
- Mobile Phone Mast
- Tree planting
- Lighting at entrance to the village car park
- Maintenance of Bus shelters
- Play park entrance
- Spring Clean – postponed until further notice
- Funds for Chiddingly Primary school outside area match funding

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