

Chiddingly Parish Council

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

Chairman

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Clerk

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19th May 2020

Minutes of the Chiddingly Annual Parish Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 1930 hours via Zoom conferencing.

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

Two members of the public were present online at this meeting.

Minutes

1. The Election of the Chairman of Chiddingly Parish Council.  
**Resolved:** Cllr Richards was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council. This was proposed by Cllr Newham and seconded by Cllr Allan and approved by the council members present.
2. Election of Vice Chairman of Chiddingly Parish Council.  
**Resolved:** Cllr Mikelis was elected as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. This was proposed by Cllr Mikelis and seconded by Cllr Welsh and approved by the council members present.
3. Election of Planning Committee Chairman  
**Resolved:** Cllr Tolhurst was elected as Chairman of the Planning Committee. This was proposed by Cllr Richards and seconded by Cllr Newham and approved by the council members present.
4. Election of Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee  
**Resolved:** Cllr Newham was elected as Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee. This was proposed by Cllr Newham and seconded by Cllr Richards and approved by the council members present.
5. Apologies and reasons for absence.  
None received
6. The Chairman will invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in the following agenda items.  
No items of interest were declared.

*At 1948 hours the meeting was suspended for the Public to express a view or ask a question about any item on the following agenda. No questions were raised  
The meeting reconvened at 1949 hours*

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## 7. Councillor Reports

### 7.1. Cllr Geoffrey Draper (WDC)

Cllr Draper advised that it is a horrendous time for planning at WDC. The developers are taking advantage of the fact there is no Local Plan in place which has seen a rise in applications. He has two planning meetings in East Hoathly next week and confirmed there is nothing currently planned for Chiddingly. There is a WDC planning meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and two further meetings planned for the following month. If there is anything planned for Chiddingly Cllr Draper will inform the Clerk and Cllr Richards as soon as he knows.

Cllr Draper confirmed he has asked the Heritage Officer to look at the base erosion of Stream Mill Bridge. Due to Covid19 lockdown she has been unable to visit but now the sanctions have been lifted slightly WDC are allowing cautionary visits for Planning and Heritage purposes. Cllr Draper will contact the Heritage Officer to arrange an inspection of the bridge. Cllr Mikelis advised that his neighbour thinks there has been further deterioration of the bridge since the last meeting back in February and stressed the importance of asking the Heritage Inspector to come and inspect the bridge. The erosion may look worse as it would not have been seen before due to the high water level. Cllr Newham confirmed he will take some new photographs and Cllr Draper asked that these are forwarded to him. Cllr Newham will liaise with Cllr Mikelis and confirm when he is going to do this.

Cllr Richards asked if there was any further information regarding the Nash Street Industrial development. Cllr Draper advised at this stage there is not and as soon as he hears anything differently, he will advise the Parish Councils in his ward. ESCC Highways are improving signage and road markings on the A22 but this has nothing to do with the proposed development.

**Action:** Cllr Newham to take photographs of Stream Mill Bridge and send to Cllr Draper

### 7.2. Cllr Nick Bennett (ESCC)

Cllr Bennett discussed the effect Covid19 has had across ESCC and its offices. Every office is under enormous pressure from social care right through to schools. A huge amount of procurement is underway to provide PPE. Cllr Bennett wants people across the Parishes to understand and be assured that there is a huge amount of work going on at ESCC.

ESCC is currently £25m over their annual budget but is receiving grants from Central Government to subsidise this. There are also reserves set aside which will be used when needed.

Cllr Newham asked with regards to the overspend of ESCC budget, has extra money been received yet by Central Government. Cllr Bennett confirmed yes but a lot of it has gone to the Districts and Boroughs due to loss in Council Tax and Business Rates. The total cost of Covid-19 to ESCC and the Districts because of the set up of the Community Hubs is £49m, Central Government have given £26m leaving a £23m deficit. A huge amount of the spend is around PPE and adult social care, every single aspect is affected.

8. Correspondence: None

9. L03-20 | THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (CORONAVIRUS) (POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUMS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020.

9.1. A Notice of Vacancy has been issued by Wealden District Council. If less than 10 electors contact WDC and request an election the council's Co-option policy will take effect, if requested, as soon as is practicable.

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**Resolved:** Cllr Richards advised that the NOV had been issued, if 10 or more electors ask for an election the election will not be held until May 2021. If less than 10 the council's co-option policy will take effect if the council wishes. The council will know the outcome of this after 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The vacancy will be advertised locally for 3 to 4 weeks, possibly longer, the council will then know how many people apply and go from there.

9.2. To confirm current council members and duties remain the same until the next election is held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Cllr Richards explained that there is a current list of responsibilities he has looked through and asked that the council make any comments or changes if required. He also asked the council to look at the list of current projects they are dealing with and comment or change.

**Action:** Clerk to circulate both current responsibilities and current projects and take any comments or changes if required. Neighbourhood Watch and Lachelle link can be decided at a later date.

## 10. Financial Matters

*Due to the current Covid 19 situation, the end of year audit has been delayed. Until this process is complete, we are unable to provide RBS reports for the current financial year.*

*Until the financial year end procedures are completed, any payments for the new financial year cannot be input to RBS, so there will be a Word document of payments, and not an RBS payment report*

10.1. To approve and authorise accounts payable (as detailed on the Word document payment list)

**Resolved:** the parish council reached a unanimous decision to approve payments of cheques number 102464 to 102481 totalling £5236.53. This includes grants agreed last year.

Cllr Tolhurst advised that CVHMC did not want their grant yet as the repair and maintenance costs are not known. Due to Covid19 the structural engineer has not been able to assess the hall. CVHMC may ask for further CIL money in time.

Cllr Newham advised we should use CIL money for the agreed village hall grant. The guidelines are fairly loose as to what CIL can be spent on but they do include village halls as an example. Cllr Newham's view is to give the village hall money from the CIL fund and if there is any issue with it this will be raised at the end of year CIL review.

**Resolved:** The council agreed to use this approach

Cllr Allan raised the question of can we use CIL money to pay for grants. Is it acceptable where a project can potentially earn or take money? Cllr Richards advised the new guidance does list many examples but how the guidelines are read is down to interpretation. The council must make sure the money is used for the benefit of the village.

The guidance also reminds the council that the CIL money must be used within 5 years of receipt otherwise it needs to be paid back.

Cllr Mikelis asked that the payment list when not from RBS is issued on a spreadsheet with a total. This allows reconciliation when completing RBS with the payments made.

**Resolved:** Clerk to issue further payment lists in spreadsheet format.

The two new signatories on the bank accounts cannot be set up yet. Cllr Richards and Cllr Mikelis need to attend a Barclays Branch in person with identification documents which is not possible due to Covid19.

The Clerk has all the necessary documentation to do this but to make any account changes the paperwork needs be signed by Cllr Richards and Cllr Tolhurst as authorised persons to make changes. This is not possible due to social distancing.

Cllr Newham suggested the council investigates changing to electronic banking and asked the Clerk to research what is available. You can have two signatories electronically with several banks. Cllr Tolhurst suggested Natwest and Lloyds bank both offer this service but to also check with Barclays too.

**Action:** Clerk to research electronic banking options and report back to council.

Cllr Mikelis asked what record do we have of keeping track of CIL income and CIL expenditure? How do we know when we are close to the 5 year mark?

**Action:** Clerk to speak to Wealden Planning and previous clerk to determine whether there are reports in RBS.

**11.** Parish council policies to review and approve the following policies/documents, these policies have been approved and adopted by the Council for the last year without any changes:

- Publication of documents
- Recording of Public Meetings
- Co-option policy
- Code of Conduct
- Procedures regarding gifts and hospitality
- Response to consultation requests
- Document Retention policy
- Fixed asset Register
- FOI request Template
- FOI requests
- GDPR policy
- General Data Protection Regulations
- Grants Policy
- Media Policy
- Model Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations - updated
- Risk Assessment
- Statement of Internal Controls

**Resolved:** Documents reviewed and approved by council

11.1. To adopt the updates from NALC to the Financial Regulations Policy

**Resolved:** New updates approved and adopted by council.

**Action:** Clerk to upload to website

**12.** Consideration of using CIL funds to replace village car park fencing – Cllr Newham

Cllr Newham recommends the fencing is rotten in places and needs replacing. He suggests the council should use CIL funds for this. Cllr Welsh agreed to obtain quotes for the work and report back. The council agreed the car park repairs are within CIL expenditure guidelines.

**Action:** Cllr Welsh will obtain quotes for the replacement of the fence.

**13.** Exercise equipment – update from Cllr Newham

Cllr Newham has been in discussion with Fresh Air Fitness, he has tried to make price comparisons, but it seems each company is different making it hard to make a fair comparison. He will speak to his contact at Fresh Air Fitness and discuss it further with him. He advised the council may not get match funding due to the financial effect of Covid19. Cllr Newham suggests we go ahead assuming there is no match funding available. The rough estimate of costs is between £7-£10k. There has

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been no feedback or comment from the Parish regarding the proposed exercise equipment, so all council members agreed to continue with the project.

**Action:** Cllr Newham to liaise with Fresh Air Fitness to finalise plans and costings and report back to council.

14. To agree the cost of the annual play park maintenance inspection £68.50 plus VAT

Resolved: Council approved the cost

15. Items that are under consideration by the council

- Stream Mill bridge
- Capital projects expenditure – Electric car charging point
- Speedwatch
- Mobile Phone Mast
- Tree planting
- Lighting at entrance to the village car park
- Village shop committee and Parish council liaison
- Potholes at the entrance to the village car park – to consider a more permanent repair and obtain quotes for this work to be carried out during the drier weather
- Maintenance of Bus shelters
- Saturday market – postponed
- Play park entrance –
- Spring Clean – postponed until further notice
- Funds for Chiddingly Primary school outside area match funding
- Placement of Jose bench – Members of MOSAG and the Community Orchard are dealing with this.

The list of projects was put together by Cllr Richards of projects that 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. Cllr Richards asked that the councillors go through the list and add or remove any items.

Action: Councillors to let Clerk know of any changes to the list.

Cllr Welsh raised the issue of the resurfacing of the entrance to the village car park. There are several potholes that need repairing. The use of CIL was suggested for this and Cllr Welsh will obtain quotes and report back.

**Action:** Cllr Welsh to obtain quotes for the repairs and report back.

AOB

Cllr Best asked if there had been any discussion with Mrs Shirley Strong regarding a memorial for Ray. Cllr Richards and Cllr Welsh have both seen her and she has confirmed nothing will be done until after the lockdown.

Cllr Richards confirmed an article has been submitted to Parish News for inclusion in the next edition.

There have been questions to some council members from the Parish regarding the removal of the mathematical tiles on Ash Cottage. The Clerk and Cllr Tolhurst have been in touch with WDC planning who confirmed this is being done appropriately with the supervision of the Conservation team and a specialist company removing the tiles correctly. They will be put back in place.

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**16.** Any items for inclusion on next month's agenda:

- Village Hall grant - to discuss whether the council agree surplus money granted for the toilet refurbishments at the village hall can be diverted to the Hall's maintenance fund.

Meeting closed at 2043 hours

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