

Minutes of the Meeting of Eynsford Parish Council held on Thursday 21st March 2024, at the Parish Office, Priory Lane, Eynsford, at 7.30pm.

9121 PRESENT

Members Present

Mr M Barker
Mr A Cooke
Mr J Griffiths
Mrs J Laird
Mr V Robson (Chair of the Council)
Mr O Young

Others Present

Mrs P Penny
Mrs H Sim

Clerk in Attendance

Mrs N Wintour

9122 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr D Naylor
Cllr R Gough

9123 CHAIR'S REMARKS

None

9124 CLERK'S COMMENTS

None

9125 GOVERNANCE

a) Co-option

This item is to be moved to 2nd April meeting due to a second candidate needing to be interviewed.

RESOLVED: That the item is brought back to the next meeting.

b) Declarations of Interest

None

c) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last full council meeting held on 15th February 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes are accepted as a true and complete record and that the recommendations are approved.

d) Finance Notes

The clerk submitted a list of accounts, and a budget report, for February 2024, as per Appendix A and a schedule of payments.

RESOLVED: That the accounts are approved, and that the payments are made.

e) Outstanding Actions

Councillors were asked to review any outstanding actions. Mrs J Laird advised that she has reviewed them but no updates currently. Mr M Barker requested the co-opting a new councillor and Fence at F&ELHS are removed as they are completed.

RESOLVED: That the information is noted.

f) Village Hall update

Mr A Cooke provided an update on the village hall project, confirming that the development committee has agreed to proceed with the construction of the new hall by the end of this year, pending the raising of £300,000 in funds. The car park works will be deferred to allow for more time to raise funds. Discussions are ongoing regarding the amount the parish council will contribute towards the car park, with some funds already set aside. There is still work to be done to secure the outstanding amount, as the original contractor has withdrawn, necessitating consideration of the next bid which may increase costs by approximately £61,000.

Efforts are also being made to secure grants, including the COF grant, with hopes of receiving £200,000. However, incorporation of the trustees is required before the grant application can be submitted. Questions were raised about the sale of the old hall, which has been valued at £700,000 by estate agents, compared to the previous valuation of £500,000. It was clarified that the old hall cannot be demolished until the building contract for the new hall is signed.

Discussions are ongoing with contractors, unfortunately, the local contractor that Mr Cooke wished to use had a higher profit & overhead costs of around 15%, whereas others were priced at 7 or 10%. Suggestions were made to explore additional funding sources, such as CIL money and community sponsorship initiatives like sponsoring a brick. Trustees are also considering online initiatives to track fundraising progress.

RESOLVED: That the information is noted.

g) Clerks & Councils Training Budget

Councillors were advised that the Clerks & Councils training budget is over budget by £195.90, councillors were asked to consider reallocating funds from the contingency budget to cover this short fall and to hold off booking any further training courses until the next budget year.

RESOLVED: That funds are reallocated from contingency budget to cover the shortfall of £195.90.

h) 2024/2025 Clerks & Councillor training course budget

Currently there are 9 training courses councillors wish to book for 2024/2025, costing a total of £449.51 + VAT. The current budget for 2024/2025 is £600.00. Councillors were asked to consider the training courses that councillors wish to book or consider allocating more money for

this budget from the contingency budget. Currently the contingency budget is set at £3000.00 for 2024/2025 budget year.

RESOLVED: That another £1500.00 is reallocated from contingency budget to the Clerk & Councillors training budget.

i) Legal Fees for Village Hall Project

The council needs legal representation for the Village Hall Project. Quotes were obtained from seven firms in Kent with commercial property experience. Cllr A Cooke and Cllr J Laird had compiled a shortlist of three firms, which had been circulated. The council is now tasked with agreeing on which firm to appoint and approving the quoted fee. Mrs J Laird provided rationale for this necessity, citing the need for a lease quote and advice on building the contract. However, Mr A Cooke contended that legal advice for the building contract was unnecessary. Quotes received were similar in price. Mrs J Laird proposed selecting Thomas Snell & Passmore, offering £3975.00 for the lease and agreement. All members of the council agreed to this proposal.

RESOLVED: That the council appoint Thomas Snell & Passmore

9126 PLANNING

a) Notifications of Planning Consents/Refusal

51 Eynsford Rise 24/0005/House – Granted
Littlecroft & annexe at Littlecrof 24/00021/FUL - GRANTED

RESOLVED: That the information is noted.

c) Pedham Place

Councillors were asked to consider the possibility of providing matching funding alongside Farningham Parish Council for opposing the Pedham Place development. Farningham Parish Council has designated one councillor to engage with the Bees not Wasps group (now known as Protect our Greenbelt Together) and allocated a budget of £500.00 for this purpose, intended to cover legal fees. Mr V Robson suggested that while the council agrees in principle to provide funding, a decision should be deferred until details regarding the allocation the allocation of funds and the specific legal fees become available. A discussion ensued regarding the group's requirements with emphasis on the recommendation to enlist an expert to assist with the Regulation 19, the forthcoming stage of the consultation process.

RESOLVED: That we agree to the £500 donation, but do not donate until we know what the funds are for. That agreement is made later as to what budget the money would come from.

d) Planning Application 24/00291/FUL – 2 Partridge Cottages, Lullingstone Lane, Eynsford

Plans relating to a conversion of 2 agricultural buildings to 2 detached dwellings; demolition of a stable building and erection of a detached dwelling; landscaping and associated works were tabled for discussion.

RESOLVED: That no objection is made.

e) Planning Application 24/00401/WTCA – Crayfish Cottage, High Street, Eynsford

Plans relating to fell a tree were noted. Tree Warden had commented to SDC with no Objection.

RESOLVED: That the information is noted.

f) Tree application 24/00539/W5DAY – 7 Malt Shovel Cottages, High Street, Eynsford

Plans relating to a 5-day emergency tree work to dismantle a tree were tabled for discussion

RESOLVED: That no objection was lodged.

g) Planning Application 24/00216/LDCPR – Akib House, Station Road, Eynsford

Plans relating to car port were tabled for discussion.

RESOLVED: That no objection is made.

h) Request for a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

After a recent request to SDC for a TPO on the trees at Pedham Place (Fountain Hoy woodland) SDC have now concluded that it would be appropriate to serve a TPO on these trees.

RESOLVED: That the information is noted.

i) Light Pollution, Pedham Place Golf Course

The council has been made aware of increasing use of flood lighting at Pedham Place since November 2023. Councillors were asked to agree what action, if any, to take. Light pollution has an effect on bats and other nocturnal animals. Mr M Barker noted that this had been brought to the attention of the enforcement team and SDC are now looking into this.

RESOLVED: That we keep a watching brief, and that we support FPC should they require it.

9127 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

a) Fernbank Project

Councillors were asked to discuss a potential project to improve access at Fernbank. A quote of £4800.00 + VAT had been received to clear back the grass areas and replace with 'grasscrete' and re-fill/sow. Permission would need to be obtained from Kent Highways before any work was undertaken. The flower borders would be kept.

RESOLVED: That work to create a path is undertaken at the next summer school holidays. That we write to the residents, put signs up to warn of work and to offer alternative parking on the council's car parks. That permission is sought from KHS. That grants are looked at for this project.

c) Damaged Street Light, Sparepenny Lane

Following the agenda item last month (9117 c) about replacing the damage streetlight on Sparepenny Lane, it has been clarified that the streetlights are not covered by the council's

insurance. Therefore, the council is liable for the replacement. The costs are £1275.00 for a new lamppost and UKPN price is £2699.00 + VAT totalling £3944.00 + VAT.

RESOLVED: That the streetlight is fixed using the streetlight replacement rolling fund budget.

d) Feasibility Study – A225 Crossing

Councillors were asked to consider paying for a pedestrian survey, which is part of the feasibility study for the installation of a crossing point on Station Road. The cost would be approximately £900.00.

RESOLVED: That we pay for a pedestrian survey, using the Highways General budget.

9128 COMMUNITY

a) Police & Crime Report

The Clerk provided details of crime statistics. In January there were 14 crimes were reported as follows:

Lullingstone Park	3 x Bicycle Theft
	3 x Criminal Damage/ arson
	3 x Vehicle crime
	3 x Other Crime
Saddlers Park	1 x ASB
Pollyhaugh	1 x Criminal Damage/Arson

RESOLVED: That the information is noted.

b) St Botolph's Churchyard Maintenance

Councillors were asked to consider a donation to St Botolph's church for the churchyard maintenance. £200.00 had been budgeted.

RESOLVED: That a donation of £200.00 is made. That agreement is given to allow the Clerk to pay this before the end of the current financial year.

c) UK Prosperity Fund

Councillors were asked to put forward costed items for physical community assets that could be installed in the next budget year. £1954.77 is available, but we need to confirm how it will be spent by the start of the budget year.

RESOLVED: That the full grant is applied for to fund the landscaping costs of the chalk mound at Harrow Meadow.

d) Donation to West Kent Mediation

Councillors were asked to consider giving a donation to West Kent Mediation, a community mediation service that offers a mediation service free of charge to communities across Kent. They have in previous years provided this service to residents in Eynsford, although no active cases in Eynsford. They have also come to Anthony Roper Primary school to teach years 5 and 6 mediation skills. An average mediation case costs £450.00 and a school visiting costs £350.00.

RESOLVED: That a donation of £350.00 is made (currently there is £870.00 left in the donation budget). That councillors agree the payment to be made before the end of the budget year.

e) Donation to F&ELHS

Councillors were asked to consider giving a donation to F&ELHS towards the cost of transferring some cine film onto DVD/USB. They have been donated several cine films from an Eynsford resident, and the cost of transferring them into an accessible format is £1,665.00. They then hope to be able to show them at future events. In 2021 EPC kindly gave a donation of £150.00 and F&ELHS are asking if this could be repeated.

RESOLVED: That £150.00 is donated. That councillors agree that this is paid in this budget year.

9129 **OPEN SPACES**

a) Use of Common Meadow by Eynsford Cricket Club

Councillors were asked to consider whether the Council needs to formalise the use of Common Meadow by Eynsford Cricket Club. It has been reported that cricket balls land in the adjoining Riverside Club grounds and the reporting of this raised the question of what agreement with the Cricket Club states about range of play and safety nets. It has transpired that no formal agreement exists. The council discussed approaching Eynsford ricket club for a discussion about safety issues and entering into a formal agreement for use and a potential fee for use.

RESOLVED: That we formalise the agreement between ECC and EPC, Mrs J Laird to start a draft a formal agreement. That we meet with the Chair of ECC with Mr Robson to discuss health & safety issues, prior to the cricket season starting.

c) Use of Parish Land form.

Councillors were asked to approve the updated form for request to use parish council land.

RESOLVED: That the form is approved.

d) Weekly Playground Inspections

Following Mrs Haxby's resignation, a volunteer is sought to help the weekly playground inspections.

RESOLVED: That all councillors to join a rota to take on the playground weekly inspections.

e) Annual Playground inspection

Councillors were asked to agree to booking the annual playground inspection, usually carried out in July, costing approximately £78+ VAT. Councillors were also asked to consider booking for 'automatic' annual inspections in the future.

RESOLVED: That we book the inspection and that we use the automatic annual inspection in the future.

e) Grounds Maintenance Contracts.

Councillors were asked to review quotes, and the actual tender, as per the Agrostis, advised that Harrow Meadow should be cut 33 times prior to anyone being able to play on the pitch, and to discuss the overall maintenance of the village, and award contracts.

Contract A1 is given to Lothlorien

Contract B1 is given to given to the ECC

Contract B2 is given to given to ECC. That the riverbank is included in this contract, to a specific length.

Contract C is given to G F Garden Maintenance.

Harrow Meadow needs to be cut 33 times prior to anyone can play on the pitch, Mr A Cooke went back to the Agrostis who advised that they would tell when the pitch is able to play on, not until likely to be until end of August.

Mr V Robson noted that the contractor, who laid the pitch, is contracted to cut the pitch 5 times, but we would require further cuts prior to the grounds maintenance contracts starting. That we contact the Agrostis again to advise of our proposed 14 cuts.

RESOLVED: That contract B1 & B2 given to ECC, That Contract A1 is given to Lothlorien, and contract C is given to GF Garden Maintenance. That we contact the Agrostis again to advise of our proposed 14 cuts prior to playing on the pitch.

f) Tree at Common Meadow

There is a damaged tree at Common Meadow that requires to be raised to the ground, SDC has given permission, and the contractor who will be doing the other works at Riverside (Aspen Tree Care) has provided a quote of £250.00 to do the works, ECC's groundsman Stewart has also advised that he can remove the tree at a cost of £100.00. Councillors were asked to agree for the works to be done.

RESOLVED: That the work is done using Aspen Tree Care, from the tree maintenance budget.

g) Allotment Review

Councillors were asked to agree to setting up a working group to look at the current allotment agreement and policies.

RESOLVED: That a working group set up, Mr M Barker Mrs J Laird. Mr A Cooke and Mrs N Wintour.

At this point, 9:00pm, the meeting was opened for questions from the public (see Appendix Q). The meeting resumed at 9:07pm

h) Condition Survey – Changin Rooms

Following the decision to get an independent survey at the last meeting, several companies were contacted to quote for the work. Only one has been received so far from FB Surveying for £850.00 + VAT. The condition survey will only give the condition on walls, roof, door but not plumbing or electrical work. The company would not give costs on how much it would cost to get the works fixed.

RESOLVED: That we approve the quote for FB Surveying and that Mr A Cooke will meet him on site to discuss. That the cost is taken from the HM Changing rooms refurbishment budget.

The meeting ended at 9 :15pm.

Chairperson: 18th April 2024