

Cuckmere Valley Parish Council

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Minutes of the Cuckmere Valley Parish Council meeting held at Litlington Village Hall on Tuesday 16th January 2024, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr Mark Lamb (Chairman)
Cllr Richard Brown
Cllr Nick Giles
Cllr Georgina Stevens
Cllr Jo Thornhill
Cllr Duncan Ellis

In attendance: County Councillor Stephen Shing
District Councillor David Greaves
Julie O'Donnell (Clerk)
1 member of the public

Public questions/observations

1124. Chairman's welcome.

Cllr Lamb welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1125. Apologies for absence, for noting.

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Rowlands.

1126. Declarations of Interest and any changes to the Register of Interests.

No Declarations of Interest were declared and there were no changes to the Register of Interests.

1127. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 17th October 2023, for approval.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 17th October 2023 were approved by all and signed by Cllr Lamb as a true record.

1128. Clerk's Report on Matters arising from the Minutes.

Email accounts - The clerk advised that she was still experiencing problems applying a forwarding address from the old email account to the new one but as soon as this was resolved the parish council should start to use the new accounts. The clerk will advise the parish council when this is done.

1129. Report from District Councillor David Greaves on matters affecting the parish.

Cllr Greaves was present but had also provided a written report which was noted by the council.

Cllr Stevens asked regarding the use of HVO by WDC as it would be useful to obtain further details for the CCB. Cllr Greaves advised to contact Chris Bone at the council for further information. Cllr Stevens agreed to report back once she had more information.

Cllr Stevens was also interested in the community orchard grants available from WDC; however, the parish council does not own any land for which the orchard could be planted on. Cllr Stevens will contact WDC for further information regarding the terms of the grant donation. The pond area in West Dean was suggested however permissions would need to be obtained so further consideration is needed.

Cllr Brown commented that WDC has been incredibly supportive to the WLMB in supporting the endeavours of the group and pushing the Environmental Agency on its Cuckmere/Pevensy Levels strategy. Cllr Greaves advised that WDC has also been in contact with Eastbourne Borough Council regarding the issues.

1130. Report from County Councillor Stephen Shing on matters affecting the parish.

Cllr Shing reported that the ESCC budget and precept proposal will be presented to Full Council for consideration shortly. There has been an incredibly high demand for Adult Social Care and Children's services across the district which has led to a £16m overspend up to October 2023. He advised that there would be no cuts to any services this year. He advised that extra money has been allocated to Highways due to the condition of the roads around the district.

Cllr Shing is now a member of the East Sussex Fire Authority, this is a new role for him, and he is looking forward to working with the Authority. They will be organising open days for schools and children to attend.

1131. Report from the South Downs National Park Representative Vanessa Rowlands on matters affecting the parish.

Cllr Rowland was not in attendance.

1132. Reports by Parish Councillors

a) Cuckmere River and Estuary

Cllr Brown gave an update on the current situation. The repaired embankment has been overtopped since the first phase of the works, however the objective of this first step was to stop the embankment from completely failing during a wet winter. The embankment was not washed away so this work met its objective. Phase 2 will be carried out in March/April and will remove the silt from the left bank of the Cuckmere. Phase 3 will be a full repair of the embankment, including raising levels to those agreed with the EA. This will be carried out late August/September and as a stipulation of the EA must be completed within a year of Phase 1.

The EA has confirmed that the river mouth is working as it should and shingle will only be removed when necessary.

WDC has been helpful in supporting WLMB and the situation with the Cuckmere River. Cllr Brown would like to thank Chris Bending for his help and suggested a further meeting with WDC and interested parties later this year.

b) Highways

Nothing to report

c) Countryside and Rights of Way

Cllr Lamb raised the issue of the forest track at West Dean. Historically residents have been given access to the track, but Forestry England has proposed that this cease. This would mean that on occasion with severe flooding the village would be completely inaccessible. Cllr Lamb is currently in email discussion with the land agent and is hoping to meet with representatives from FE. Cllr Lamb will keep the council updated.

d) Public Transport

Nothing to report

e) Planning – to consider any planning applications received after the agenda was sent out

Nothing to report.

Concerns were raised regarding the wedding venue Follers Manor in Alfriston. This venue may cause noise pollution across the valley and increase traffic. The clerk will contact SDNPA for advice.

f) Police Safety Action Group Meeting

Nothing to report

g) Any other report

Cllr Stevens is keen to investigate the orchard funding so will report back at the next meeting. Cllr Stevens is also very interested in the Southern Water stakeholder meetings organised by WDC. Cllr Greaves confirmed he would find out more and inform the council with further details.

1133. Finances – Councillors unanimously resolved

a) To receive and approve the latest Finance Report including the Bank Reconciliation.

b) To agree the latest invoices for payment as listed in the Finance Report, including any contractual payments made outside of the meeting.

The payments are as follows

HMRC	PAYE	£333.00
SLCC	Annual subscription	£47.36
Novuna Business	Fingerpost repairs	£476.64
Vision ICT	Website	£161.26
Vision ICT	Email accounts	£172.80
J O'Donnell	Salary (Oct, Nov, Dec)	£1361.37

c) Acknowledge the 6-month budget review and approve the budget set by the clerk for 2024-2025

d) Agree and approve the precept request for 2024-2025

The precept request for 2024-2025 was agreed as £10,249. This equates to an increase of approximately 29p a month per Council Tax Band D Property. This will allow a reserve to be built up to cover future election costs.

e) To consider using the remaining CIL funds of £1020.65 towards the remedial work required along the riverbank/footpath in the parish.

Following discussion, the council agreed to allocate the CIL funds to the Cuckmere Community Bus service. The council felt that the money would go further and have a

more beneficial effect on the bus service than putting it towards the remedial river work.

Clerk to check that this proposal falls within the CIL rules.

1134. Parish Priority Statements – to receive an update from the Working Party

The working party will get together and circulate the update to the council

1135. To agree the format and identify any potential speakers for the Parish Assembly

It was agreed that the parish council will invite Cllr Greaves to give a brief update report from WDC.

Cllr Ellis agreed to give a briefing on regenerative farming practices.

The village hall will be invited to present the village hall accounts.

Cllr Brown will give an update on the River Cuckmere and Estuary.

The clerk to purchase wine and nibbles.

1136. Dates of future meetings;

Council resolved the dates as follows

Parish Assembly Tuesday 16th April 2024

Annual Meeting Wednesday 22nd May 2024

Full Council Meeting Tuesday 16th July 2024, Tuesday 15th October 2024 and 21st January 2025

All meetings will take place in Litlington Village Hall and will commence at 7pm except the meeting in July which will be held in All Saints Church in West Dean. Each meeting will be preceded with Public Questions from 6.50pm

1137. Date of next meeting of CVPC – Parish Assembly Tuesday 16th April 2024 in Litlington Village Hall, commencing at 7pm

The meeting closed at 8.55pm