

# Cuckmere Valley Parish Council

[www.cuckmerevalleypc.org.uk](http://www.cuckmerevalleypc.org.uk)

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## Minutes of the Cuckmere Valley Parish Council meeting held at Litlington Village Hall on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024, commencing at 7.00pm.

**Present:** Cllr Mark Lamb (Chairman)  
Cllr Richard Brown  
Cllr Duncan Ellis  
Cllr Vanessa Rowlands

**In attendance:** District Councillor David Greaves  
Julie O'Donnell (Clerk)

**Public questions/observations**  
No members of the public were in attendance

### Annual Meeting

1138. Election of Chairman

Cllr Brown **proposed** Cllr Lamb for election to the office of Chairman, this was **seconded** by Cllr Ellis and **agreed** by all present.

1139. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Lamb **proposed** Cllr Brown for election to the office of Chairman, this was **seconded** by Cllr Ellis and **agreed** by all present.

1140. To re-adopt the Code of Conduct

Councillors resolved re-adopt the Code of Conduct introduced by Wealden District Council under the Localism Act 2012.

1141. Register of Members' Interest

Councillors present confirmed there were no changes to their Register of Interests

1142. To adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils.

Name

Signed

Date

Councillors resolved to re-adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The clerk advised that an updated version of the Financial Regulations had been published but she had not had time to go through it. The updated regulations will need to be adopted at the next Annual meeting.

1143. Apologies for absence

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Giles, Cllr Thornhill and Cllr Stevens

1144. Approval of the Annual Governance and Accounting Return for the year to 31st March 2023

Copies of the Cuckmere Valley Parish Council accounts for the year to 31st March 2023, audited by Nigel Butten, were circulated before the meeting.

a. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

**Resolved:** Cuckmere Valley Parish Council resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023 - 2024.

b. Approval of the Accounting Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

**Resolved:** Cuckmere Valley Parish Council resolved to approve the Accounting Statements to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

c. To vote to approve the Exemption from External Audit certificate

**Resolved:** Cuckmere Valley Parish Council resolved it is exempt from an External Audit for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 because its receipts and payments were each less than £25,000.

d. To confirm the dates for the Exercise of Electors' Rights

**Resolved:** The council confirmed the dates for the Exercise of Electors' Rights as 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 to 12th July 2024

e. To confirm the Risk Assessment, Asset List and Statement of Internal Controls

**Resolved:** Cuckmere Valley Parish Council resolved to approve and adopt the Risk Assessment, Asset List and Statement of Internal Controls 2023-2024.

f. To consider the Internal Audit Report and approve the Internal Auditor for 2023-2024.

**Resolved:** Councillors considered the Internal Audit Report and noted the recommendations made.

1145. To approve the Parish Council's subscriptions to the following bodies;

The following were approved by all;

- a. Wealden District Association of Local Councils
- b. East Sussex Association of Local Councils
- c. Information Commissioner's Office

1146. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

- a. Wealden District Association of Local Councils - Cllr Giles
- b. East Sussex Association of Local Councils – to be decided once the AGM date is announced
- c. Cuckmere Community Bus - Susan De Angeli / Cllr Stevens
- d. Verges for Wildlife - Cllr Brown
- e. Tree Warden (3 representatives, one for each village)

Name

Signed

Date

Lullington - Cllr Ellis

West Dean – Cllr Stevens

Litlington – Barney Coleman or Joe Carden if Mr Coleman is unable to.

- f. Police Liaison Committee - Cllr Giles
- g. Cuckmere Flood Forum - Cllr Brown and Cllr Lamb
- h. Seven Sisters Stakeholders Group – Cllr Lamb

### Ordinary Meeting

1147. Chairman's welcome

Cllr Lamb welcomed those present.

1148. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to be approved and signed as a true record.

**Resolved:** The minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

1149. Clerk's Report on Matters arising from the Minutes (if any)

No reports

1150. Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – for noting.

The minutes of the Parish Assembly were noted.

1151. Report by the County and District Councillors on matters affecting the Parish.

Cllr Greaves was present at the meeting and read his report. The report is attached at the end of the minutes.

1152. Report from the South Downs National Park Representative

Cllr Rowlands reported the following;

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Date

- Cllr Paul Bevan from Piddinghoe has been elected as the Parish Council Representative on the SDNPA Board.
- SDNPA are holding their Green Finance Summit on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Details can be found here <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/renature-credits/green-finance-summit/>
- The Local Plan Review is now underway and sites are being reviewed and allocated, numbers are still to be confirmed. It has been noted that most parishes in the park want affordable housing allocated in their areas. Parish workshops will be organised once the draft is published.
- The parks Partner Management Plan is underway, The Plan is the single most important policy document for the National Park. It consists of a vision, three linked strategic themes and 10 outcomes which set where we would like to get to by 2050. The themes and outcomes work together and have equal importance. Details can be found here <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/about/>

### 1153. Reports by Parish Councillors

#### a. Cuckmere River and Estuary

Cllr Brown reported that 75 people had attended an action group meeting recently and that there is widespread support for the work being undertaken by WLMB and Cuckmere Valley Parish Council. Cllr Brown would also like to talk to other parishes further up the Cuckmere River including Hellingly and Berwick. The clerk will contact these parishes and put Cllr Brown in touch with them.

Maria Caulfield MP has organised a remote meeting with various stakeholders including representatives from the EA. Cllr Brown will report back to council.

It has been confirmed that the work planned for February will now take place in July and September this year and it is hoped that this will improve the problems experienced over winter.

Cllr Brown re-iterated the importance of Wealden District Council supporting the parishes effected by the floods.

#### b. Highways

Cllr Rowlands advised that a meeting will be held between various stakeholders to discuss the installation of a pedestrian crossing to link the two car-parks at the country park. A feasibility study will need to be performed with costs estimated to be £60,000. Cllr Rowlands will keep the council updated.

#### c. Rights of Way

No reports

#### d. Public Transport

No reports

#### e. Planning – to consider any planning applications received for commenting on including any received after the agenda was published.

No reports

#### f. Any other report

No reports

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Date

1154. To discuss and appoint one councillor responsible for the monthly checking of the defibrillator outside The Plough and Harrow. The councillor responsible will then report to the clerk for logging onto The Circuit system which is linked to Southeast Ambulance Service.

**Resolved:** Cllr Thornhill had previously volunteered to take on this responsibility and perform a monthly check of the equipment.

1155. To appoint the insurer for 2024-2025 – see clerk report

**Resolved:** The council unanimously agreed to change the insurance provider to Zurich from Clear Councils for 2024-2025 with an annual premium of £300.

1156. To discuss the issue of verge parking in and around Cuckmere Valley but particularly up towards Litlington.

**Action:** Following a long discussion, it was agreed that painted lines would not be welcome, that it would urbanise the rural nature of the parishes and it was likely to not be policed effectively.

Cllr Rowlands has emailed the Seven Sisters Park asking that the parking is managed in a much better way. It was explained that there is currently work taking place in the car-park which is limiting spaces, but this is due to finish in June.

CVPC would like to see signage encouraging better parking and explaining that the carpark fees go back to the park to help improve services.

A stakeholder meeting is being organised and Cllr Lamb agreed to attend to explain the problems and frustrations experienced in the parish.

Cllr Brown suggested that flyers are made up that can be placed on windscreens to try and discourage anti-social parking. The council agreed and Cllr Ellis confirmed he would also be able to help with the production of the leaflets.

**1157. Date of next meeting of CVPC – Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July at All Saints Church, West Dean commencing at 7pm**

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Date

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Date

## **Cllr David Greaves Report 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**

### **Southern Water - failings**

Southern Water (which is responsible for wastewater and sewerage treatment across the Wealden district) had agreed to attend a meeting arranged to address concerns across Wealden including flooding, sewage seeping into people's homes, gardens and roads, the ongoing problem of discharges into rivers and waterways and the inability to deal with additional development. Shortly before Christmas Southern Water officials withdrew their agreement to attend the meeting

Wealden District Council and two dozen other local authorities have pledged to keep the pressure up on Southern Water and to hold it to account for constant failings.

A new web page has been created to provide information of how WDC are trying to resolve the issues, which includes press releases, letters to and from the government and meetings.

Residents can access the information via the webpage link below <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/southern-water-stakeholder-group/>

OFWAT has pledged to work closely with Local Authorities to hold Southern Water to account and ensure that infrastructure pledge are actually honoured.

### **Wealden Community Sports Hub given planning permission**

Full planning permission for the development of a new sports hub facility in Hellingly has been given the green light.

The new 20 acre sports hub will include two full size floodlit artificial pitches, two multi-use games areas (MUGAs) (containing four dual floodlit tennis/netball courts), two padel tennis courts, skate park, play facilities and a sports building providing changing rooms, toilets and café, alongside parking, landscaping, drainage, ancillary works and vehicular access via the A267.

The state-of-the-art hub will also accommodate 206kWp solar array of photovoltaic (PV) panels over the parking spaces in the main car park - 60 spaces will have the ability to provide electric car charging with 20 spaces fitted with active chargers from the outset with the remaining 40 passive spaces being capable of being brought into use as and when demand requires to plan for future increase in uptake.

The sports hub will be accessible by a new pedestrian and cycling access, which will also connect the site to the Cuckoo Trail. Bus routes will be enhanced to provide public transport links to the facility.

As I have mentioned before the original £5m or so costs projection has now been topped up with some £8m from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies but the project has not been fully costed and total costs are not known. I have no doubt that they will escalate beyond £13m

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Date

The full application, with a layout plan outlining the proposed development is available below.

<https://council.wealden.gov.uk/documents/s85815/WD20232100DC%20-%20LAND%20AT%20KNIGHTS%20FARM%20EAST%20LOWER%20HORSEBRIDGE%20HAILSHAM.pdf>

### **Draft Local Plan**

At an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February it was decided that the draft local plan be released for public consultation. This will commence in March and run for 8 weeks. There will be a virtual exhibition and drop-in sessions. The link is <https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kse/>

The plan allows for 15,729 new homes to be built by March 2040

The Consultation end date was on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Council Tax**

The WDC element of the Council Tax Increase was approved at 2.99% for 2024/25 (the maximum permitted and the same as last year). The Council receives 9% of Council Tax collected..... this pays for refuse and recycling collections, planning, street cleaning, environmental protection, and 'free car parking' (a strange statement by the Council ..... possibly a precursor to the introduction of parking charges across WDC ??)

The remainder of the Council Tax Bill is shared to pay for a wide range of services provided by ESCC (Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services and local town and Parish Councils etc)

### **Business Support Programmes**

Two programmes providing support and training to local businesses are available in East Sussex.

Called 'Ready to Grow' and 'Big Ambitions' there is £447k available within East Sussex.

The 'Ready to Grow' programme is for early stage business owners who have been trading for less than 3 years. There are workshops and masterclasses, one to one support and networking opportunities.

The 'Big Ambitions' programme provides up to 18 hours of expertise to businesses who are growing and likely to need to employ extra staff in the next 6 to 12 months and includes one to one action planning and specialist support.

The programmes are being managed by ESCC on behalf of local authorities. Delivery is through a business support company called Digital Islands and the programmes will run until March 2025

The free content event is an opportunity for early-stage businesses in the Lewes district to access expert marketing advice. Visit [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ready-to-grow-free-content-event-lewes-tickets-840221293507](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ready-to-grow-free-content-event-lewes-tickets-840221293507) to find out more and book a free place.

More information about the 'Ready To Grow' and 'Big Ambitions' programmes and how to sign up can be found online at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/support/organisations](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/support/organisations).

### **Fly Tipping Intervention Grant**

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The Council have been awarded £20,000 to fund an engagement project to ensure that residents are well informed about the use of unlicensed waste carriers. We should see information coming through in this respect in due course.

### **Cliff Collapses**

The Council have issued warnings about the dangers of people going close to cliff edges along the South coast. Local Councils have teamed up with HM Coastguard and landowners to launch a campaign reminding people of the risk posed by unstable chalk cliffs. The risk is not just with the cliff edges but also at the base of the cliffs.

The joint campaign to raise awareness of cliff dangers is being promoted by HM Coastguard, The National Trust, South Downs National Park Authority, Sussex Wildlife Trust, East Sussex County Council, Seaford Town Council, Wealden District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council.

### **Climate Change**

Wealden District Council have released surveys to find out residents' opinions on climate change. This is with a view to creating a new climate change strategy and action plan based on those opinions.

To complete the surveys, visit [Climate Change | Let's Talk Wealden](#). The survey will be open for eight weeks and closes at 12 p.m. on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024. For more information residents can contact the Climate Change team at [sustainability@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@wealden.gov.uk)

### **Food Waste Collection grant**

Wealden District Council have received a grant of £1,637,844 to support Food Waste collection (capital) costs from 2023-24.

### **Postal Votes**

Changes took effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024:

Ban on political campaigners handling postal votes (there are certain exclusions but also strict controls)

Limits on the number of postal votes that can be handed in at a polling station (limit to be 5 plus their own)

Completion of postal vote documents form (incomplete forms = postal vote rejection and the voters will receive a letter following the election telling them why).

Handing in postal votes to the Returning officer - same restrictions as above. Any such votes must be handed in personally at the Elections Office (in Hailsham).

Secrecy requirements apply as per requirements at Polling Stations

Anyone dealing with Postal Votes needs to check out the new requirements to ensure compliance with the Elections Act 2022.

In the recent elections the new arrangements for receiving postal votes seemed to work well as did the need for people to provide photographic evidence.

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Date

## **Net Zero workshops**

Wealden District Council have partnered with Brighton University to deliver one-day courses to help businesses across the District to cut their carbon footprint and save money on energy and waste bills.

The session is to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> June at the Horsted Place Hotel near Uckfield and are open to micro, small and medium sized businesses including not for profit businesses and charities.

## **New funding available to help community spaces and facilities**

The Wealden Community Infrastructure and Spaces Funding Programme to help partners improve local rural green spaces and community infrastructure within the district is being launched by Wealden District Council.

The council is inviting organisations such as Not for Profit organisations and town and parish councils to apply for grants between £1,000 and £20,000 for projects that will help Wealden residents improve and enhance green spaces and community assets, and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. A total funding pot of £120K is available.

This will be a rolling programme and applications will be processed on a first come first served basis. The fund closes in autumn 2024, or sooner if all funds are allocated.

The funding programme has been made available through the government's Rural England Prosperity Fund. The England-wide initiative is a new £110million, two-year capital fund from the Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs, complementary to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - run by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities. It will enable the council to support projects in rural areas of the district.

Further details about the grant scheme and information on how to access the application can be found at <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/information-for-businesses/economic-development-and-growth/rural-england-prosperity-fund/wealden-community-infrastructure-and-spaces-fund/>

For organisations wishing to register their interest, please contact the council via email on [communitygrants@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@wealden.gov.uk).

## **Change in Wealden Council Leadership**

The Annual Meeting of the Full Council on 15th May saw a new Leader of the Council elected (Cllr Millward - Green). Alternating Leadership is a feature of the Alliance agreement. A new Chair (Cllr Hulbert) and Vice-Chair (Cllr Blake-Coggins) were elected.

## **Cuckoo Trail**

Outdoor gym equipment is being installed on the Cuckoo Trail in the stretch between Polegate and Hailsham. Completion was due by 17<sup>th</sup> May. Two cycle repair stations have been installed. They consist of giant air pumps and a stand with various tools including tyre levers as well as screw drivers and allen keys. One set of tools has been stolen already (a cost of £200). The initiative has been funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other improvements include improved picnic area, new signage and replacement of many of the benches.

## **Hailsham Swimming Pool**

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Date

Work to replace the pool surround was scheduled to be completed by

20th May

### **NHS Health Checks**

'One You East Sussex' is offering free NHS Health Checks to residents living in Wealden after the popularity of a similar programme delivered last year.

One You provides a free holistic lifestyle service for residents of East Sussex, helping people make simple changes that can lead to a longer, healthier, and happier life. The service delivers NHS health checks to residents, helps residents to lose weight, be smoke free, move more, eat well and drink less.

Please book your NHS health check in advance as spaces may not be available on the day, by contacting:

[sam.bentley@oneyoueastsussex.org.uk](mailto:sam.bentley@oneyoueastsussex.org.uk).

Appointments take between 30-40 minutes and your results will be discussed with on the day.

**Local Date and location** Thursday 30 May - Hailsham, Vicarage Lane car park

### **Proposed cycleway linking Uckfield / Lewes to be explored**

A new cycle and pedestrian route which would run alongside the old railway line between Uckfield and Lewes is currently being explored.

This could provide an off-road surfaced route, similar to the existing Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way for walking, cycling and wheeling.

The nine-mile route will potentially link the two towns of Uckfield and Lewes and create an alternative cycling route to the A26 between the two towns, joining Isfield and Barcombe directly. The Greenway would form an important "green link" between the towns and villages along the route and support leisure journeys as well as commuter journeys, linking tourism hotspots such as the Lavender Line, The Laughing Fish, Barcombe Mills and the Anchor Inn on the River Ouse.

The former Uckfield to Lewes train line opened in 1858 to goods and passenger traffic, with stations at Isfield and Barcombe Mills but was closed in 1969 south of Uckfield. The route is safeguarded by protective policies within the current Local Plan that prevent any development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of the former railway line to Lewes in the future.

However, at the Full Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May there was strong opposition because of the £15,000 cost of the feasibility study for a scheme which many Councillors felt would never get off the ground.

Name

Signed

Date