

Cuckmere Valley Parish Council

www.cuckmerevalleypc.org.uk

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Minutes of the Cuckmere Valley Parish Council meeting held at Litlington Village Hall on Wednesday 17th July 2024, commencing at 7.00pm.

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

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

Public questions/observations

Most members of the public wished to speak regarding the West Dean Forest track.

It was confirmed that most households had responded to the questions raised by Cllr Lamb and Julian Martyr, agreement on what to do with the information collated now needed to be confirmed. West Dean residents need access to the track when the main route is closed and are happy to contribute modestly towards the cost. Cllr Lamb confirmed he has been corresponding with FE regarding this but due to restructuring it was difficult to obtain consistency. However, he will continue to raise the issue and press for a meeting with FE.

A member of public wished to raise the Cuckmere works, he asked whether the works at Alfriston will help the parishes of Cuckmere Valley during elevated levels of rainfall. Cllr Brown confirmed it would as the newly built-up bank would not over-top nearly so much, and the de-silting will allow the water to flow more freely. This maintenance will much reduce, but not fully prevent the overtopping events.

A question was asked regarding pipes under the A259 which may be blocked stopping free flow. Cllr Brown confirmed he would find out whether there are any pipes or sluice gates under the A259. Richard Dann (WLMB) subsequently informed that he was unaware of any operative pipes under the A259 Causeway although a sluice is marked on an old map at Exceat in the eastern corner of the field.

1158. Chairman's welcome
Cllr Lamb welcomed those present.

1159. Apologies for absence, for noting
Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Stevens and Cllr Rowlands

1160. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 22nd May 2024 to be approved and signed as a true record.
The minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd May 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

1161. Clerk's Report on Matters arising from the Minutes (if any)
The clerk reported that the defibrillator was now in the guardianship of the parish council and had been cleaned and new pads purchased. Cllr Thornhill is happy to demonstrate how to use the defibrillator to anyone in the parish. A session has already been held which was quite well attended.

1162. Report by the County Councillor on matters affecting the Parish.
Cllr Shing reported that ESCC had agreed an extra £1m to be spent on Highways repairs, including resurface work and potholes.

£13m has been allocated to bus service improvements including the Flexi-bus service and £2 journeys. QR codes have also been published at bus stops to show services available.

Ofsted has inspected and rated the Child Services provided by the County as Good. There is considerably strong support provided. Child Services is one of the biggest spends for the County Council.

The recycling centre are offering free usage and revised opening hours. This applies to both Newhaven and Eastbourne tip.

The Exceat Bridge improvements are delayed due to further issues with the compulsory purchase order. There is no further information at this time.

1163. Report by the District Councillor on matters affecting the Parish.
Cllr Greaves read from his report. The report is attached to these minutes.

1164. Report from the South Downs National Park Representative
Cllr Rowlands was absent from the meeting.

1165. Reports by Parish Councillors

a) Cuckmere River and Estuary

Cllr Brown confirmed that the work planned to rebuild the bank is now in progress. The de-silting will take place in September. The works need to go well to prove that the river can be managed effectively at local level.

Cllr Brown is in contact with parishes effected by the Cuckmere and is hoping to rally support for WLMB to carry out the maintenance of the Cuckmere. WDC seem supportive and Cllr Brown will continue to work with them.

b) Highways

Nothing to report although the potholes were discussed. It was hoped that the new funding available from ESCC will improve the roads and ensure a much better standard of repair.

c) Rights of Way

Nothing to report

- d) Public Transport
Nothing to report
- e) Planning – to consider any planning applications received for commenting on including any received after the agenda was published.
No applications received.
- f) Any other report
None

1166. Friston Forest Track, West Dean – Cllr Lamb to update

Action: Unfortunately, no representative from Forestry England could attend the parish council meeting. Cllr Lamb has been working with Julian Martyr, West Dean resident to collect the views of the residents who would need to use the track in West Dean. The response has been exceptionally good with most houses in West Dean responding.

Cllr Lamb suggested the following

- An annual licence type arrangement should be agreed for Westdean residents only,
- The cost to be in the region of £2k pa, to be collected by CVPC and paid by them to FE.
- No direct link between the licence and maintenance costs/programme.
- Access to the track to be triggered when/if the Litlington road is impassable from Westdean in both directions from any cause.
- Discussion as to whether the route beyond Forest Barn should be direct onto the A259 or along the level track to Friston pumping station.

The members of the public from West Dean agreed this as an acceptable solution. Cllr Lamb suggested he would write to the FE again for a preliminary meeting to discuss how feasible the suggestions would be.

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed with this approach. Cllr Lamb to contact FE and to update the council in due course.

1167. South Downs Local Plan Review – Council to consider how to respond to the survey
Details can be found here <https://sdnpalocalplanreview.commonplace.is/>

Resolved: Cllr Giles will review the survey and put together a response for review by the council

1168. Finances - The parish council 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 clerk will make the following payments -

HMRC	PAYE	£297
Julie O'Donnell	Salary (May, June)	£872.32
Wel Medical	Defib door sticker	£22.74
Wealden District Council	2 nd ½ of Election cost (2023)	£1004

c) To consider the grant applications 2024-2025.

Applicant	Requested 2024-2025	Agreed
Litlington Village Hall	£500.00	£500.00
Wealden Citizen Advice	£150.00	£150.00
Cuckmere Community Buses	£250.00	£250.00
Cuckmere Flood Forum	£80.00	£80.00

1169. **Date of next meeting of CVPC – Tuesday 15th October 2024 at Litlington Village Hall, Litlington commencing at 7pm**

Meeting closed 8.50pm

Clr Greaves Report – Cuckmere Valley PC - Wednesday 17th July 2024

Expenditure of over £1m to improve Wealden's sports facilities

In the last twelve months almost £1.5 million has been committed by Wealden District Council to improve outdoor sports provision and secure community use at educational facilities.

Funding is being made available from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies and aims to help to improve the quality, accessibility, and protection of community-use sports facilities at educational sites. Hockey facilities at Hailsham Community College will be improved after Wealden District Council agreed to fund up to £216,406 towards improvements.

The works will comprise improvements to be made to the sand-based artificial grass pitch, used for competition hockey at the college, and replacement of the flood lights with energy saving ultra-low glare LED floodlights – which are estimated to give annual savings of £7,900 in utility costs. The total project cost is £291,406. (HCC presumably adding £75,000 to the project)

This funding is in addition to £311,000 being previously agreed in 2023 to improve the hockey pitch at Beacon Academy, Crowborough, in the north of the district. A further £300,000 has been allocated towards supporting the installation of a new 3G football pitch, at the Academy

I think that this expenditure (some £800,000 detailed here) is totally inappropriate as Academies can apply to the ESFA's (Education and Schools Funding Agency) 'Condition Improvement Fund' to assist with expenditure of this sort (scarce funds I know). The ESFA decide on funding allocation for valid projects each year.

I have found out, however, that this is 'within the rules' and I can't challenge it. However, in my view better use could be made of CIL monies. It should be used for capital projects that will benefit significant numbers of the tax-paying population for essential projects – not a limited number of keen field hockey players. About 166,000 people in the UK participate in this sport on a monthly basis - clearly a minority sport. The assets are owned by the Academy Trusts and should be maintained by them and not WDC.

The first round of the annual grant funding programme will be opened later this year and be available to local sports partners and organisations.

It will provide much needed financial support to deliver the priority projects listed within the Wealden Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy & Action Plan, agreed by sport's governing bodies and Sport England, and adopted by the Council in December 2023.

Sports that could benefit from the funding programme include football, rugby union, tennis, cricket, lawn bowls, hockey, netball and stoolball.

I shall look out for and notify Parish Councils about these 'grant funding programmes' when I come across them in case it is of interest. An allocation in this area would surely be appropriate.

Cuckoo trail to temporarily partially close in the summer Sections of the trail will be closed in June and July so essential work can be carried out before the start of the summer holidays. The work is already underway and should be completed by 20th July. Bypass routes and diversions will be made available where possible. It might be an idea to check on the progress with this project before embarking on a visit.

Hailsham Swimming Pool

Work to replace the pool surround was completed by 20th May. Further problems have, however, been uncovered and further closures will be required. I have no information regarding the works required or the dates that this will be carried out but shall look out for this and feed back information once known.

Third round of funding available for physical activity groups **Organisations within the Wealden district are being encouraged to apply for funding**

East Sussex Public Health has released funds to Wealden District Council to deliver a third round of grant funding to support organisations which specifically work towards reducing inequalities and aim to deliver better health outcomes within the district. The funding can support existing projects or new ideas, which provide direct support to the local community. It includes anything from gardening clubs to seated exercise sessions and more.

Previous rounds of funding over the past two years have provided funding to 11 organisations within the district. They include programmes to increase fitness levels through exercise for over 65s; Conservation Volunteers (TCV), which provides residents with practical conservation activities to increase mental wellbeing through a Green Gym project, and Rotherfield St Martin which has used the funding to support hydrotherapy sessions helping those with arthritis, stiffness of joints and those recovering from hip or knee surgery.

To apply for funding, email wellbeing@wealden.gov.uk.

Allocations will be prioritised in order of the ability to deliver activities and interventions to Wealden.

Applications open from 8 July 2024 and must be submitted by 3 September 2024 and can be made for amounts between £1,000 and £15,000.

New funding STILL available to help community spaces and facilities

Funding is still apparently available for the below (as mentioned at the May'24 meeting):

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 £110 million, 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.

For further information please contact:

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Cllr David Greaves

17th July 2024