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## Minutes of the Thirty-Six Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30pm on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Present:** Mr A Burton (Chairman), Mr P Ceccherini, Mr J Dickie, Mrs A King, Mrs F Laing, Mr S Oversby-Powell, Mr M Sheldon, Mr A Symonds and Mrs J White

**In Attendance:** Mrs S Heynes (Parish Clerk)

### **FC001 To elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Cllr Burton presided for this item. Nominations for the office of Chairman of Council were called.

Cllr Symonds proposed and Cllr King seconded that Cllr Burton be nominated as Chairman. There being no further nominations, Cllr Andrew Burton was elected as Chairman to the Parish Council for the Council year 2021/22. Cllr Burton thanked Council for their vote of confidence.

Nominations for the office of Vice Chairman were called. Cllr Symonds proposed and Cllr White seconded that Cllr Andrea King be nominated as Vice Chairman. There were no further nominations and Cllr King was duly elected as Vice Chairman to the Parish Council for the Council year 2021/22.

### **FC002 To receive Declarations of Acceptance of Office of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Declarations of Acceptance of Office and to observe the Code of Conduct were acknowledged by the Chairman Cllr Burton and Vice Chairman Cllr King and would duly be signed in the presence of the Proper Officer.

Cllr Burton then took the chair for the meeting and welcomed members to the thirty-sixth annual meeting of Cuckfield Parish Council.

### **FC003 To receive Apologies for Absence**

Mr A Podmore offered his apologies, which were accepted.

### **FC004 To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda**

None.

### **FC005 To report any changes to Councillors Register of Interests**

Cllr White would update her Register of Interests to reflect her recent marriage. The Clerk was instructed to provide a new form for completion.

### **FC006 To re-adopt the Code of Conduct for the forthcoming year**

The Code of Conduct was reviewed and adopted.

### **FC007 To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

### **FC008 To review and (re)adopt Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

Council resolved to change Section 7 Urgent Business to allow the Vice Chairman of a

committee to form part of the Urgent Consultation Panel in the absence of the Chairman. Also, Section 29 Special COVID Conditions was added as follows:

'In compliance with HM Government's COVID-19 Roadmap for England, for the period from 7th May 2021 to 20th June 2021, members of the public may make representations in writing to be considered by the Council in their absence, provided those written representations are received by the Clerk by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. If the dates set out in the COVID-19 Roadmap for England should change, then the period during which written representations may be received shall be adjusted accordingly.'

The Financial Regulations were re-adopted without change.

**FC009** To appoint members to serve on the following Committees for the Council year 2021-22, and to elect Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of those Committees, and review their terms of reference:

- a) Assets, Community and Environment Committee:  
Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr Dickie and seconded by Cllr Sheldon as Chairman.  
Cllr Sheldon was nominated by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr White as Vice Chairman.  
Cllrs Ceccherini, Dickie, Laing, Podmore and White were additional members.
- b) Community Buildings:  
Cllr King was nominated by Cllr Laing and seconded by Cllr Symonds as Chairman.  
Cllr Laing was nominated by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr Symonds as Vice Chairman.  
Cllrs Oversby-Powell, Podmore, Sheldon, Symonds and White were additional members.
- c) Planning Committee:  
Cllr Oversby-Powell was nominated by Cllr Burton and seconded by Cllr Sheldon as Chairman.  
Cllr Sheldon was nominated by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr Oversby-Powell as Vice Chairman.  
Cllrs Ceccherini, Podmore and White were additional members.
- d) Roads & Traffic Committee:  
Cllr Dickie was nominated by Cllr White and seconded by Cllr Ceccherini as Chairman.  
Cllr White was nominated by Cllr Ceccherini and seconded by Cllr Dickie as Vice Chairman.  
Cllrs Ceccherini and Oversby-Powell were additional members.
- e) Human Resources Committee:  
Cllr Burton was nominated by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr Oversby-Powell as Chairman.  
Cllr King was nominated by Cllr Oversby-Powell and seconded by Cllr Burton as Vice Chairman.  
Cllr Oversby-Powell was an additional member.
- f) Finance & General Purposes Committee:  
Cllr Laing was nominated by Cllr Symonds and seconded by Cllr King as Chairman.  
Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr Laing and seconded by Cllr Burton as Vice Chairman.  
The remaining members of the Finance Committee were therefore noted as Cllrs Burton, Dickie, King and Oversby-Powell.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were ex-officio members of all committees.

The Clerk would prepare and circulate a Committees list and the terms of reference to all Members.

**FC010** To confirm membership of the following Working Groups for 2021-22:

- a) Whitemans Green Allotments:  
Cllrs Sheldon and Symonds would continue to work with other nominated members of the public.
- b) Cuckfield Village Hall Redevelopment:  
Cllrs King, Sheldon and Symonds would continue to work with other nominated members of the public.
- c) Christmas Street Festival  
Cllrs Ceccherini, Laing and White.
- d) Angela Fox Nature Garden  
Cllrs Burton, King and Symonds.

**FC011** To appoint representatives to and agree arrangements for reporting back from:

It was **resolved** the following representatives were appointed to outside bodies and would report back via email or at the next appropriate meeting:

- West Sussex Association of Local Councils: Cllrs Burton and Sheldon
- Cuckfield Museum Trust: Mrs S Burgess and Mr P Mantripp would be offered the option to continue to represent the Parish Council. The Clerk would write to them formally regarding this.
- Blunts Wood Steering Committee: Cllr Dickie
- Emergency Planning Liaison Group: Cllr Symonds
- County Local Committee: Cllr Dickie
- Neighbourhood Watch: Cllr White
- Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils: Cllr Sheldon
- Town & Parish Strategic Liaison Group (two representatives): Cllr Sheldon & Clerk
- Speedwatch: Cllr White

The Clerk was instructed to add these outside bodies to the agenda every 6 months to receive feedback, and specifically to add Neighbourhood Watch to the next ACE committee agenda; Cllr White would investigate local activities in this matter within the village.

**FC012** **Authorised Signatories:** The authorised signatories of the Unity Trust Bank Account would be Cllrs. Burton, King, Podmore and Sheldon. It was resolved to add Cllr Symonds as an additional signatory, the Clerk would arrange for forms to be completed.

**FC013** **To reconfirm eligibility and approve the continued use of the General Power of Competence (GPC).**

The Clerk confirmed that the Council still met the criteria for the GPC as defined in S8 of the Localism Act 2011 (having an appropriately qualified Clerk and at least two thirds of the Council being elected), and Council resolved to continue to adopt the General Power of Competence.

**FC014** **To approve the continuation of the current delegation arrangements to committees, staff and other local authorities in like with legislation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Terms of Reference**

Council noted the arrangements and resolved they should continue.

**FC015 To approve the continuation of the current arrangements (including legal arrangements) with other local authorities, not for profit bodies and businesses.**  
Council noted the arrangements and resolved they should continue.

The Clerk was instructed to combine the above items FC014 and FC015 into a single document for the next annual meeting.

**FC016 To consider the Internal Auditor for the year 2021/22**  
The Clerk advised Council that it was good practice to consider appointing a new Internal Auditor every 3 years, however Council resolved to appoint Andrew Sturgeon as Internal Auditor to the Council for 2020/21.

**FC017 To review and confirm arrangements of the following items:**  
a. Inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment  
b. Insurance arrangements in respect of all insured risks

Council reviewed and resolved to accept all arrangements in place for the above items. The Clerk would review the fixed assets list and amortise IT equipment over 3 years old. The Chairman noted the exclusion of COVID related losses in the insurance policy.

**FC018 To receive written reports from the District and County Councillors**  
No reports were received.

**FC019 To receive a verbal report from the Chairman**

The Chairman expressed his congratulations to all contributors to this year's Chairman's report which would be published in full in the May edition of Cuckfield Life.

Cllr Burton was disappointed that the online council meetings were unable to continue beyond 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and hoped that English legislation in this matter would soon be amended in line with that already changed for Wales and Scotland. In the meantime, the Clerk was looking into reinstating physical meetings in the Council Chamber, alongside live streaming of meetings so members of the public could join remotely.

Progress with the Angela Fox Nature Garden Queen's Hall garden had been disappointing, but work was due to start imminently.

**FC020 To note the Full Council Action List**  
The action list was reviewed and noted.

**FC021 To note and approve the Internal Auditor's Report**  
Council noted and accepted the report.

**FC022 To note and approve the effectiveness of the Audit Plan and the Council's Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures**  
Council noted and approved the effectiveness of the Audit Plan and the Council's Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures.

**FC023 To ratify the recommendation made at F&GP Committee to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2021, Section 1 – Annual Governance Statements 2020-21**  
Council reviewed and resolved to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2021, Section 1 – Annual Governance Statements 2020-21.

**FC024 To ratify the recommendation made at F&GP Committee to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2020, Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020-21**  
Council reviewed and resolved to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2021, Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020-21.

**FC025 To review the Business Plan and resolve what changes to make to the priority of**

**existing items, and whether to include additional initiative considering the income loss caused by COVID-19**

The Clerk was instructed to add this item to the next Full Council meeting for discussion.

**FC026 To receive a verbal update regarding Angela Fox Nature Garden and ratify the cost of £7,297.92 ex VAT to install pathways throughout the garden**

Council resolved to ratify the costs for the pathway to proceed. Work due to start w/c 4<sup>th</sup> May on the pathways, details of the planting scheme and an updated garden plan to share online were outstanding.

**FC027 To ratify the grant payment to Cuckfield Preschool of £5,508.30 over council year 2021-22, made via 3 termly payments**

Council resolved to ratify the grant payments to Cuckfield Preschool.

**FC028 To consider the formation of a Working Group to explore ways to improve the economy within the village**

Council discussed what support they could provide to the business community on the High Street, and reflected it was heartening to see business returning to the pubs as per current guidelines. Cllrs Burton, Ceccherini, King, Laing, Sheldon and White volunteered to form a working group; a meeting would be arranged to agree the Terms of Reference and next steps.

**FC029 To receive an update from the Cuckfield Village Hall Redevelopment Working Group outlining current proposals and next steps for approval**

Council were impressed with the progress and plans formed to date, however felt the costs were likely to be too high to proceed with. Funding options would need to be explored, including potentially seeking donations from local residents and engaging the community in the idea of a modern, new hall.

Council resolved to proceed with the architect quote of £x to get to outline planning stage.

**FC030 To consider the following changes to the meeting schedule for 2021-22:**

- a) Cancel the Finance & General Purposes meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021
- b) Cancel the Full Council meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and move the HR meeting from 27<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Council resolved to accept both changes, and further resolved to add the option of a Full Council meeting on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

**FC031 To note items arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chairman agrees to take as urgent. Such matters will be for noting only or deferral to a future meeting only**

Council noted that legal challenge lodged by the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and Hertfordshire County Council in the High Court that sought a continuation of local authority remote meetings beyond 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 had been unsuccessful. As the Parish Council did not have the facility to offer hybrid meetings at this time, the next meetings scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 would take place online to allow public to join in like with COVID restrictions, and any recommendations taken would be delegated to the Clerk to implement as per the Scheme of Delegation.

Meeting closed 9.25pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_