



The Queen's Hall
High Street
Cuckfield
West Sussex
RH17 5EL

01444 451610
01444 454276

Parish Clerk: Sam Heynes
clerk@cuckfield.gov.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council held at 7.30pm on 19th January 2023

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

In Attendance: Mrs S Heynes (Parish Clerk)

Public Question Time: Two members of the public attended the meeting to express their dismay that the hoardings at Whitemans Green were still in place. The Equality Act 2010, which subsumed the Disability Act 1995, stated it was illegal to obstruct pavements, suggesting that WSCC had legal powers to enforce the removal of the hoardings. Obstructions were defined as objects blocking rights of way, which included building materials.

FC129 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Potts offered her apologies which were accepted.

FC130 To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware, during the meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it

None.

FC131 To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24th November 2022

The minutes of the meetings held on 24th November 2022 were approved and signed.

FC132 To receive reports from the District Councillor and County Councillor

Cllr Salisbury provided an update on behalf of MSDC. The budget had been completed for 2023-24 and a 2.99% increase would be implemented. A forecast £600k deficit would need to be overcome in 2025, increasing to £3.2m the following year. No grants were received from the government so ways to manage this would need to be identified internally. Income had been hit hard due to the cost of living crisis.

Potholes were recognised as a particular issue around the county. The WSCC Highways budget had been cut significantly over the years and due to the contract in place there was no motivation to make proper repairs to the roads.

The National Planning Policy Framework had been reissued by the government. 95% of the document remained the same as the previous version, however the duty to co-operate had been watered down. The Planning Inspectorate have had their powers reduced, meaning where there was a reasonable district plan in place the

Inspector would no longer be able to insist housing requirements were raised exponentially. If the area under review was deemed to be special (no definition had been included for this) the defined housing numbers could be reduced in exceptional circumstances. The target housing numbers in place would remain.

Places for Leisure were struggling as a result of the pandemic and consequently were examining their business model, however MSDC needed to maintain facilities as they were. Cllr Salisbury assured the Council that the leisure facilities were going to continue, there were no closures planned.

The Levelling Up Fund bid to fund the regeneration of Burgess Hill had failed again. MSDC would be looking at other ways of trying to encourage New River Retail to take action to improve the town.

No progress had been made with the transfer of land at Buttinghill, due in part to the poor weather making it hard to complete the maintenance required.

Cllr Salisbury was asked to support making improvements to the pathway at Cuckfield recreation ground to prevent the flooding, and was advised of an offer by Cuckfield Society to fund repairs to the pathway. Cllr Salisbury was also asked to assist with the cost charged for parking discs in the Broad Street Car Park, as businesses were selling these at a loss due to credit card machine charges; and finally was asked to assist with enquiring whether it would be possible to lease this car park on occasion for special one-off events.

FC133 To receive a verbal report from the Chairman

Most items had been covered in Cllr Salisbury's update, however the issue of the hoardings at Whitemans Green and the temporary loss of the post box at this location was a particular problem for the community.

The Parish Council was aware of community upset regarding this matter, and would contact W&S Building Contractors to ask what had caused the delay in removing the hoardings. If there was no progress in this matter, Council instructed the Clerk to share the details of the builders on social media to encourage residents to contact them directly with their concerns. Furthermore, a banner would be purchased and put up naming the builders and expressing the upset of the village as this ongoing situation.

FC134 To note the Full Council Action List

The action listed was reviewed and noted.

FC135 To approve Bank Reconciliation Statements for Unity Trust, NS&I and CCLA accounts for November and December 2022

The bank reconciliation statements were reviewed and approved.

FC136 To review and approve the current year to date budget and expenditure for 2022-23

The budget was reviewed and noted. A VAT claim of approx. £15k had been submitted for October-December 2022 which would reduce the forecast overspend by approx. £10k for the financial year.

FC137 To consider the budget and precept for 2023-24:

i. Approve and adopt the proposed budget for the financial year 2023-24, including the fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2023

Council reviewed the budget proposals and resolved to increase precept for Band D residents by 7.5%, which equated to an increase of £10.75 per year.

ii. Issue a precept demand to the collecting authority, Mid Sussex District Council

Council instructed the Clerk to submit the precept demand of £260,450 for 2023-24 to MSDC.

FC138 To consider the costs to install a living roof bus shelter in Cuckfield, and whether to proceed with a trial installation

Council reviewed the costs for living roof bus shelters and resolved not to proceed at this time. The existing bus shelters were still in good enough condition that there was no need to replace them, especially when cost of living increases were so high. These would be reconsidered in the future when it was necessary to replace an existing bus shelter.

FC139 To consider the contract from Mid Sussex District Council to take over responsibility for the flagpole in the Broad Street Car Park

Council resolved to accept the contract to take over responsibility of the flag pole, the Clerk was instructed to formalise this agreement with MSDC.

FC140 To consider holding a Coronation-themed Scarecrow competition to recognise King Charles III's coronation, and a Christmas Advent Window competition during December within the village

Council resolved to proceed with both events for 2023.

FC141 To review progress made against the Business Plan for 2022

Cllr Burton had reviewed the business plan, and expressed his pleasure that many of the items had been addressed over the Council's time in office. The Clerk was instructed to document the additional community events that had been implemented to the annual schedule to demonstrate the progress made in this area. The communications strategy had been initiated with Breakthrough Communications, further updates would be available shortly.

The websites What's On Cuckfield and Visit Cuckfield had both been launched, and a new Cuckfield map was being designed. The Clerk was instructed to revisit research to establish how to arrange for a brown tourist sign to be installed directing visitors to the village.

FC142 To consider the new Early Day Motion for Civility & Respect and resolve to write to Mims Davies MP to ask she backs the motion to have this discussed in parliament

Council resolved to write to Mims Davies MP regarding the Early Day Motion. The Clerk would draft a letter.

FC143 To review the grant application received on behalf of Cuckfield Nuclear Bunker and resolve whether to award the funds

Council reviewed the grant application and instructed the Clerk to check with the Council insurers to see whether the bunker, contents and open days could be included on our policy for Public Liability Insurance. If it is not and cannot be

included, the Council resolved to pay the grant.

- FC144 To receive a progress update regarding the Angela Fox Nature Garden, and consider the proposals for the next stage of garden development**
The designers had been away for the winter and had now returned, the Clerk was still awaiting a response from them regarding feedback provided. The stage 2 planting was outstanding, and until this was completed there would be no further payments made relating to stage 3 which was currently considered to be too costly and would need to be scaled back. The working group had met to discuss the plans, and required the hard landscaping to be removed from the proposals, and reverted to a more cottage garden style area with raised beds.
- FC145 To consider the outcome of the Communications Strategy meeting and next steps**
This item would be deferred to a later date as no feedback from the meeting held on 12th January 2023 had been received to date.
- FC146 To consider the format for the Annual Parish Meeting in March 2023, guest speakers, publicising the application process for new Councillors to be elected and initiating the process to become a Fairtrade village**
The Clerk was instructed to commence planning and invite local organisations and sports clubs to attend the meeting. Council felt that an environmental theme would be appropriate and would invite speakers who could fit this remit. We would also invite input from residents attending to have a say in what should be included in the Council's environmental strategy.
- Other matters to be included would be promoting the upcoming Council elections and the need for residents to put themselves forward to stand as Councillors in May. The proposal to apply to become a Fairtrade Village would also be included on the agenda.
- The Chairman's Annual Report would need to be completed, the Clerk would initiate this with all Councillors.
- FC147 To consider whether to organise an event to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III**
Council resolved to explore hosting a picnic in the park as an option to celebrate the coronation, and a working party of Cllrs Burton, Podmore, Sheldon and Symonds was formed. The Clerk was instructed to contact MSDC to find out when Cuckfield Rec would be available to use for this event over the bank holiday weekend.
- FC148 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**
None.

Meeting closed at 10.15pm

Signed _____

Future Meeting: 30th March 2023