



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING of Hadlow Down Parish Council
Held in Hadlow Down Village Hall, Hadlow Down
at 7pm on Tuesday 2nd July 2024

Present: Councillors: Michael Lunn (ML) Chair (+WDC), Peter Weston (PW) Vice Chair, Ben Floyd (BF), Stephen Lester (SL), Damon Wellman (DW) and Alan Hobbs (AH).

In attendance: Vicki Rutt (Clerk), and 4 members of public.

75. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A resident raised that they had not seen any enforcement update regarding the caravan at Wander Down, ML confirmed it is on the Parish Council enforcement log and WDC have recently updated the Parish Council that the matter is with their legal department. The access point at Stonehurst Lane was also raised, ML updated that this has been reported to Planning Enforcement at WDC, who have also reported it to ESCC and there is active dialogue. They have received updated pictures of the fence being installed today. The resident asked about the 4m of land they have acquired under article 4, ML will look into this. **Action 1.** ML updated that an emergency motion by the Parish Council to take action was considered but advice obtained by WDC and a recommendation from the Clerk suggested that the action would have been unlawful, and therefore this could not be actioned. HDPC are doing all they can do within their limited power. The resident asked about the historic building on there from 1750, how do you get a preservation order on the frame. ML will liaise with WDC. **Action 2.** Resident asked about Drakes Head Den, no enforcement is happening, Clerk reported that is with the Planning Inspectorate and until such time the application is heard there is nothing the Parish Council can do, but ML confirmed that additional works had been included into the upcoming appeal. A resident raised that he heard WDC Planning could go into special measures, Cllr Lunn as WDC District Councillor responded that that District Councillors have received a warning from planning officers regarding major applications, that if things are recommended for approval by officers and they get refused, there is a formula which the planning inspectorate apply to review overturned refusals and in simple terms there is a tipping point which Wealden District Council is close to, which would result in the planning inspectorate placing them into special measures. This would not affect smaller applications, HDPC will continue to get consulted on all applications, but the decision-making process and special measures has not been acted upon, it is just a risk. A resident stated that the planning application 80.1b would be a positive move to assist the drainage and traffic flow. A resident reported that the traffic Police have been outside Wilderness Wood a lot recently and doing a fantastic job with several tickets each time.

76. APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE – Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Munday and Cllr Standley (ESCC).

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – BF declared a personal interest in agenda item 85.

78. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on the 4th June 2024 was recommended for approval and signed as a true record (previously circulated).

79. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Action Log 2024 Clerk reported from the action log which is available on the village website. It was noted that within Cllr Standleys report that the Bridleway running through Waste Wood is due to be repaired to remove ruts to make the Bridleway safe specifically during winter months.

b. Clerks report This was noted (previously circulated).

80. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

80.1. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. WD/2024/0588/F for HUGGETTS FARM, STONEHURST LANE, HADLOW DOWN, TN20 6LL

Two storey side extension

The PC voted: 4 in favour and 2 against. They have listened to previous comments and reduced the size.

b. WD/2024/0972/F for HARVEST HILL FARM, RIVERSIDE, BLACKBOYS, UCKFIELD, TN22 4EX

Alterations to the existing driveway to allow for a safer entrance to riverside

The PC voted: 6 in favour due to the positive impact this will have on drainage and traffic flow.

c. WD/2024/1220/F for SCHOOL HOUSE, SCHOOL LANE, HADLOW DOWN, TN22 4JE

Single storey rear extension. Garage conversion including alterations to roof over

The PC voted: 0 in favour and 6 against due to scale being borderline, dark skies policy and breaches of EN27, EN6 and DC19

d. WD/2024/1487/FR for NEW FARM HOUSE, STOCKLANDS LANE, HADLOW DOWN, TN22 4EA

Part retrospective application for the demolition of part of existing unauthorised balcony to create an access platform to accommodate newly installed bi-fold doors (re-submission of previously approved application WD/2023/2084/fr
The PC voted: 0 favour, 4 against and 2 abstained. Cllrs objected due to it being intrusive to neighbouring properties and in an AONB.

80.2. APPROVED APPLICATIONS

a. WD/2024/0725/F for JASONS KEEP, FIVE ASHES, MAYFIELD, TN20 6JL

b. WD/2023/2130/F for WILDERNESS WOOD, MAIN ROAD, HADLOW DOWN, TN22 4HJ

80.3 REFUSED APPLICATIONS

a. WD/2024/0702/F & WD/2024/0703/LB for BRICK KILN FARM, HADLOW DOWN, TN22 4EJ

80.4. ENFORCEMENT UPDATES:

a. Lynx Barn: Clerk reported that she has received a response from Enforcement stating that no retrospect planning application is now needed as it has been confirmed that no horse boxes, as part of the business, will be kept on site and the remaining units have been sold or are in the process. The only horseboxes remaining are associated with the approved use of site. However, it was noted by Cllrs and residents that the site still appears to be used and the clerk was asked to escalate again.

b. Access point down Stonehurst Lane: ML stated, as mentioned earlier in public question, the Parish Council are aware and it is being closely monitored. DW stated the enforcement process is hopeless and we sadly see it every time. It is frustrating as residents have zero confidence in Enforcement and the PC who have no power.

81. REPORTS FROM CLLR.BOB STANDLEY, ESCC & CLLR MICHAEL LUNN, WDC - written reports had been submitted and are published on the village website.

Cllr Standley could not attend the meeting, but he did submit a report which is on the website. This is a short report as we are currently in purdah due to the upcoming election. No report from Cllr Lunn due to purdah.

82. HIGHWAYS:

a. Update from recent Highways drive around meeting – DW updated on a recent meeting he had with the Clerk and 2 members of the Highways team where the village was driven around, and issues raised. Whilst this was a positive meeting at the time, there has been silence from Highways since. Clerk will chase again, and this item will be deferred for further discussion to the next meeting when Cllr Standley is present.

83. COMMUNITY CENTRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – UPDATE

a. Discharge of conditions for WD/2024/0658/CD - ML updated that the Advisory Committee was formed so all the checks could be done to ensure the paperwork was submitted correctly. The discharge of conditions has been approved by WDC, with the building control application being split so the pre-commencement control application has been submitted. This has all been approved and Hadlow Down Community Centre have achieved extant permission, so it is a live site now. It was agreed that the Advisory Committee would re-convene in due course as a clear project plan needs to be drawn up to identify next steps for delivery to cover the issue around Governance, Leases, Fundraising, Building Control application and the timeline. Clerk will arrange this. **Action 3.**

84. UPDATE ON CURRENT VILLAGE HALL – ML updated that he met with members of the VH committee along with PW and the Clerk. They discussed challenges that the hall is facing such as potholes, grants and the roof. ML stated that the Parish Council have a duty to meet with the representatives of the Village Hall committee to discuss proposals in order to maintain the hall until the new Community Centre is in place. ML said it was really important that the Parish Council have a timeline to work to, and the Chair expressed unknowns of whether we are looking at 3, 5 years or longer.

Standing Orders dropped.

Paul James explained about the concerns raised with the roof and that surveys have said the same. He is going to send the 3 surveys to the Clerk. ML suggested that once the reports are received, a Cllr should look at the reports and see if they all agree or whether the PC need to do an independent survey. ML said it would be useful to have a Parish Council report based on the surveys with different scenarios and options to better advise and guide the Parish Council and also to support the Trustees of the Village Hall. Paul James reminded ML that whilst the Parish Council are the landowner, the lease holders are the Village Hall Committee. DW stated that there have been concerns raised that a resident, as a trustee and a landowner of land around the Village Hall, could have a vested interest so it was agreed that the sensible way forward is for DW and AH will look at the surveys and report back to the meeting next month on next steps. **Action 4.** Communication with the Village Hall Committee will take place once this exercise has been completed. Paul James thanked the Parish Council for this but did state it should be a full retro fit and not a patch up and if not done imminently, the hall will close.

Standing Orders reinstated.

85. TO DISCUSS WILDERNESS WOOD – DW stated that two meetings ago a resident mentioned amplified music coming from Wilderness Wood and the number of events that are being held are increasing, although their planning permission only allows 6 events per year. The owners consider a wedding to be an event, the others are workshops. It was agreed that the Clerk will arrange a site visit for ML, PW and DW to attend to discuss the issues raised. **Action 5.**

86. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

a. Email re Green burial site – A request was raised from a Cllr at Buxted Parish Council who asked if Hadlow Down had any interest for a green burial site. It was explained that a green burial site is an environmentally friendly form of burial that doesn't involve any chemicals or concrete. It was agreed that the Parish Council had no interest, the Clerk will report back. **Action 6.**

b. Response from UKPN regarding power cuts – The Clerk sent an email to UKPN asking a number of questions about the ongoing power cuts. The Q&A will be put on a report on the Parish Council website under this meeting so it can be viewed by residents, however one of the questions was how many blackouts either unplanned or planned, have affected Hadlow Down Parish in the last 5 years. The response was 57 power cuts, this is an average of 11 per year. They have agreed to attend the meeting on the 3rd September to discuss the matter further. It was noted that the Parish have experience 4 more power cuts since the communication from UKPN. The Chair expressed that this matter should not be dropped and was having a significant impact on residents. There was a comment about some upcoming works, so the Clerk is going to go back to UKPN and ask for more information on this and explain since his response received, there have been a further 4 power cuts. **Action 7.**

c. Letter from resident re Lynx House – A resident has asked for an update on the enforcement at Lynx Barn, it was agreed that the Clerk will send her the recent enforcement update as mentioned in agenda item 80.4a. Action 8. The resident also asked if the Parish Council could write to the owner asking if the large horseboxes could use the School Lane/Five Chimneys Lane route to get onto the A272 to prevent blocking the traffic again and causing hazards to the school children. It was agreed that the comments will be sent to the Enforcement team rather than the owner at this point. **Action 8**

d. Email from resident re school sign opposite St Marks Field – A resident has reported that the school sign opposite St Mark's field has been damaged and is now being blocked by an overgrown hedge. The issue has been reported to Highways by the Clerk.

87. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS (COUNCIL MATTERS AND OUTSIDE BODIES):

PW circulated his traffic report and on there was a suggestion that a 3rd pole was purchased for the SIDs to ensure movement is safer and easier. DW proposed that PW purchased what he needed and was reimbursed, this was seconded by ML. PW will arrange this. **Action 9.** DW stated that following the recent drive around with Highways as mentioned earlier, the word 'monitoring' does not mean the same for Highways and they admitted that issues are not monitored like you would expect. DW stated that there is still a static home at the Old Dairy down School Lane.

88. RISK ASSESSMENTS:

a. Assign quarterly inspection – It was agreed that PW will undertake the inspection.

b. Confirmation of wobble test completed – AH confirmed this was completed and all are ok.

c. Assign fingerpost annual inspection – It was agreed that SL will undertake the inspection. PW will assist with the locations.

89. BURIAL GROUND:

a. Update on clearing the extension to the burial ground – ML expressed his thanks to Paul, Nathan, Ben, Guy, Olly and the Clerk for all the recent work done on the extension burial ground. ML also worked tirelessly on this. It has been a long time coming but the extension burial ground is now clear. There are two huge piles that need to be burnt but it was agreed these would be managed with controlled fires in the coming weeks, taking note of the local wildlife. There are significant stumps that will need to be removed in due course. It was agreed the site would be added to the maintenance contract next year, with suggested 6 monthly strims to keep it tidy and clear of trees. **Action 10.**

b. Discuss boundary fencing – It was agreed that the boundary fencing needs replacing, not repairing. This will be done after the debris burnt and the site is completely clear, however it was agreed that 3 corner marker posts will be put in and AH agreed to do this. **Action 11.**

c. To discuss process to deal with the removal of excess soil from graves – It has been identified that the excess soil from graves has been deposited in this area and often clay. Although this has been flattened the Parish Council can't allot excess spoil to be placed in this area as it will affect the use of the site long term. This can't continue. The Clerk will liaise with other Councils to see what their policy is. **Action 12.**

90. UPDATE ON DRAINAGE WORKS AT PLAYING FIELD – RECEIVE REPORT WITH COSTINGS

ML reported that the Clerk had circulated a report which shows the costings relating to this project, it has come to just under £6,000. This is a lot cheaper than the quote from one of the consultants who had quoted a similar amount just to do some drawings. Therefore, the Chair felt that this had been done in a cost effective way saving thousands for the residents and solving a long-standing issue. The Parish Council passed on their thanks to Paul and Nathan for their work on this project. It was agreed that the silt trap in the inspection chamber will be added to the quarterly inspection list. It was also noted that the headwall of the inlet pipe will need to be checked especially in the autumn months to clear debris and leaves.

91. CLERKS MATTERS:

a. Clerks hours June 2024 – The hours were approved. It was noted the Clerk has been doing extra hours most months due to ongoing projects. The Clerk was thanked for her hard work.

b. Agree proposed changes to Clerks Standing Order payment – The Clerk had circulated a report to Cllrs asking them to consider changing the standing order payment for the full standard monthly amount each month and any overtime,

expenses and mileage will come to the meeting separately. This was agreed unanimously. Clerk thanked Cllrs and will make the necessary amendments. **Action 13.**

92. BANK RECONCILIATION – TO BE SIGNED - Both bank recs for 31st May 2024 and 30th June 2024 were approved and signed by ML and PW.

93. OTHER FINANCE MATTERS:

a. Payments for ratification – DD for the PWLB repayment for £567.07. Reimbursement to Vicki Rutt for renewing the 2yr LCN service for £244.36 + VAT £48.37. Reimbursement to Michael Lunn for digger hire and diesel £797.59 + VAT £159.51 - This was approved and noted.

94. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT - ML and PW will authorise.

- a. Vicki Rutt salary July 2024 via SO - £1216.02
- b. Vicki Rutt – June 2024 salary after SO - £296.02
- c. Lucy McConachie Play area inspection June 2024 - £40
- d. East Sussex Pension Fund – June 2024 - £338.97
- e. HMRC Tax and NI for June 2024 - £143.87
- f. Crowborough Town Council – heras fence hire - £24 + VAT £4.80
- g. Crowborough Town Council – heras fence hire final - £12 + VAT £2.40
- h. R A Waters – Grass cutting - £120
- i. Hadlow Down Village Hall – hall hire for June 2024 - £40
- j. Paul James Building Services – drainage hole project - £1630
- k. Grant to Citizen Advice Bureau - £200
- l. Grant for Hadlow Down Village Hall - £210
- m. Grant for TN22 Club - £100
- n. Grant for HD Playing Field Committee - £2,500
- o. Grant for parish magazine - £700

95. CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 Section 17 – nothing raised.

96. DEFIBRILLATOR BATTERY – this had been checked on 2nd July 2024.

97. ITEMS TO GO ON NEXT AGENDA:

- Q1 figures and notes.
- Community Centre, 5-year project plan.

The meeting closed at 20:41.