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|  | PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL  *Working together for a better future* |

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

**HELD** **ON THURSDAY 17th OCTOBER 2024 AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Ellis-Brown (Chair), Campbell (Vice-Chair), Clarke, Court, Curd, Esdaile, Hare, Hunt, Labuschagne Lee, Marcusson, Martin & Riddle

**OTHER:** Harry Quenault (Clerk) & 1 members of the public

***The meeting opened at 7:28pm.***

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received as follows:

Cllr Trembling (Personal Commitment)

Cllr Capelin (Illness)

Cllr Kenyon West Sussex CC (Work Commitment)

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest made. There were no changes to the Register of Interests.

1. **MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL**

The Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting from 19th of September 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and these were duly signed by the Chair.

1. **COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes, Reports and Recommendations of Committees (other than separate agenda items) as follows:-

**PLANNING & SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the Meetings held on 5th of September and 19th of September 2024.

**FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th June 2024.

**RECREATION & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th September 2024.

1. **ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There was one public speaker.

A representative from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group provided an update on the current plan, which is approaching its conclusion. Horsham Council is now finalising their Local Plan and will be asking for community input and gathering data to assess the needs of the village, particularly with regard to its changing demographics. One of the main concerns is the significant decline in the proportion of younger people living in the village, while the number of older residents, particularly those over 65 and 80, has increased. This shift in population is affecting the social needs of the village and the representative is keen to gather data that will help understand how these trends will impact services over the next 10 years. This includes looking at how many children are attending primary school and how those numbers are likely to change, as well as how the increasing number of elderly residents will affect the demand for care services and domestic support. The representative stressed the importance of gathering accurate and justifiable data, as unreliable information will not be accepted by decision-makers. Housing is another critical issue. There is a pressing shortage of housing, especially affordable and social housing, and there are ongoing discussions about the village's fair share of housing in comparison to nearby areas such as Crawley. The proportion of new housing allocated to Pulborough must be considered in relation to the needs of the wider region. However, there are concerns about the location of these sites and the impact on existing village infrastructure. The state of the village’s drainage and sewage systems was also highlighted as an area of concern. Southern Water has been asked to provide detailed data to ensure that the systems are not overwhelmed, especially during heavy rainfalls, which are becoming more frequent due to climate change. There are ongoing issues with sewage overflows and the capacity of the pumping stations and it is essential to collect accurate sewage and water data to address these problems effectively. In terms of transport, the layout of Pulborough, as a cross-shaped village, creates particular challenges for traffic and road management. Issues such as the narrowness of roads like Lower Street and the A283 were raised, and the representative emphasised the need for detailed transport data to help guide future improvements and address these long-standing issues.

The Chair thanked the representative and mentioned that this would be an agenda item for the next council meeting. He expressed satisfaction that the current Neighbourhood Plan was nearing its conclusion. He emphasised the importance of keeping the plan up-to-date, as it needs to be less than five years old. As soon as the current plan is finalised, work on the new plan will begin. The next step will be a consultation in January, followed by a full council meeting at Horsham District Council (HDC) in April. The Chair also highlighted that having a made Neighbourhood Plan provides protection against speculative planning applications.

1. **DISTRICT & COUNTY REPORTS**

**West Sussex County Council Report:**

The County Councillor was not present.

**Horsham District Council Report:**

The Horsham District Council (HDC) Local Plan is currently under examination, with hearings scheduled to take place this month. In other news, HDC won gold for the South East in Bloom initiative for its parks. A recent job fair in Horsham, put on by HDC, was also noted as a successful event.

On the subject of affordable housing, efforts are underway to increase housing availability in rural areas, with the County focusing on rural housing initiatives. Section 106 (S106) funding is being reviewed, with discussions about how these funds should be spent. One project, Carpenters Meadows Play Park, is undergoing a redesign as part of a joint venture with local wardens. Work is continuing.

Our Neighbourhood Plan has already gone through consultation on water neutrality, receiving nine comments, none of which raised serious objections. A referendum is planned for January, with a Full Council in HDC meeting at Horsham expected in April.

In terms of parking, fees in Horsham are set to increase, with additional charges for Sunday parking and overnight stays being introduced to help cover a budget shortfall.

Lastly, the Community Climate Fund is now live and open for applications.

A member commented on the issue with parking, mentioning that the card machine on Lower Street has failed to work on two occasions. When they tried to call for assistance, they only reached an answering machine. The member suggested that if parking charges are going to increase, the level of service should be improved as well.

Members **NOTED** the District & County Reports.

1. **COMMITTEE RESHUFFLE**

The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the committee changes as per Appendix A.

1. **WARDEN REPORT**

One member raised a concern about the current working schedule, suggesting that the wardens’ administrative duties could be concentrated on one day rather than be spread across the week. They proposed increasing coverage by reallocating admin time so that while one warden was working on admin the other was on patrol. However, a Councillor added that, for safety reasons, it is preferable for wardens to work in pairs. The original member clarified, their point, that splitting admin time to two different days could be a potential solution to provide more effective coverage.

Andrew Smith, head of the Community Team at HDC, was mentioned during the discussion. It was noted that the job specification for wardens would be provided, as the wardens have also expressed interest in reviewing the job description.

The issue of wardens’ enforcement capabilities was also raised. One member suggested that wardens should have the authority to issue minor parking fines or address parking issues. However, it was pointed out that, legally, Horsham District Council (HDC) wardens are not authorised to issue penalty notices.

Concerns about patrol hours were expressed, with one member noting that the lack of reported infractions might either indicate that the scheme is very successful or that issues are simply not being reported. Another point was made about antisocial behaviour in the village. It was noted this typically decreases in August.

There was discussion about expanding enforcement powers for HDC wardens, but HDC have shown reluctance in granting them. The cost of maintaining full-time wardens, estimated at around £100,000 per scheme, was highlighted, with the village unable to support this expense due to budget constraints.

There was also a question about whether more Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) could be brought in, though it was noted that this decision rests with Sussex Police.

The Clerk shared his gratitude for the wardens, mentioning how they had helped him in a difficult situation and provided valuable support to the village. He also pointed out that wardens are not permitted to document visits to vulnerable individuals, which limits their report.

One member commented that traditional policing is what’s truly needed, but the policing budget doesn’t allow for it. They questioned whether the village is truly benefiting from the current scheme and raised concerns about the level of influence the Council has over what the wardens do. They emphasised the need for clarity in the wardens’ job descriptions and responsibilities. This point raised some debate in defence of the warden’s job.

The final point was about the possibility of obtaining small enforcement powers for the wardens. The question remains whether this is feasible and the steering group intends to follow up on this issue.

The Council **NOTED** the August & September Neighbourhood Warden Reports.

1. **STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Clerk explained the changes made were highlighted yellow in the document attached to the agenda.

A member had a concern, on page 22 whether there was a conflict over point 6 and point 10. The Clerk would clarify this with the auditor, however, other Council’s do have clauses for exceptions for capital building work.

The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the standing orders & financial regulations as per appendix C.

1. **TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE**

Cllr Clarke led the discussion.

There was a discussion about the removal of street markings, which Highways Officer opposed, particularly due to concerns about heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) using the road and amount of traffic, would mean it wouldn’t be feasible. While local trucks are the main issue, the perception of speed remains a concern. By changing the speed limit to 20mph Sussex for Safer Roads Partnership warned this could lead to the loss of speed cameras. The idea of moving Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) around the parish was suggested as beneficial, with the Councillor explaining the positive impact this could have. There were also talks about traffic calming measures, such as planters on Lower Street but ensuring to find appropriate location was key.

The A29 was discussed, with agreement that it wouldn’t be a huge job to move the 30-mph speed limit down from Arun Garages to the junction with Broomers Hill/Black Gate Lane. A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is being considered to reduce the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph at a junction,. Additionally, 30 mph roundels were suggested to be painted on the road.

The idea of 20 mph zones was brought up for areas like Glebelands and New Place Road, though it was noted that these zones are likely unenforceable. It was mentioned that parked cars serve as the best form of traffic calming. Spinney was mentioned in relation to a Community Highway Order, but there’s uncertainty about its success, so the decision was made to leave it for now.

There was a brief mention of the ongoing legal challenges involving the A29, which are still in court.

Plans were also discussed for the creation of a footway along Stane Street near Sinclair Drive, as well as safety improvements for the junction of Hill Farm Lane and Sinclair Drive. The member emphasised the importance of making these areas safer and considering how best to protect pedestrians.

The potential for 70 new houses in the general area was mentioned, highlighting the need for better infrastructure planning.

Ongoing talks about the level crossing (PROW 2230), particularly in light of a fatality on the railway the 2230 crossing. There is ongoing work involving footbridge footings being scoped out. This is likely for a stepped footbridge, though the Parish Council will continue to push for a ramped bridge.

Drainage issues remain a major problem in areas such as Swan Corner and Broomers Hill, both of which need attention, while Stream Lane has had some repatching recently. Network Rail has made improvements by reducing the size of a puddle under the railway bridge, making it easier to cross the road.

The County Council has updated the potential transport document, and once finalised by a meeting in November, it will be brought to the Full Council for adoption.

Council asked some questions.

Several councillors discussed various transport-related issues, starting with the concern that the speed camera would be removed if the 20-mph speed limit is implemented. This was reportedly stated by Sussex Safer Roads Partnership. Despite the speed being enforceable, Sussex Police do not have the resources to carry out regular enforcement, as confirmed by studies mentioned during the meeting. The Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) are having a positive impact, with the average speed recorded at 23 mph, which shows some success. Pulborough Parish is one of the few Councils meeting regularly with WSCC to address transport infrastructure issues.

It was explained that changing the location of the SIDs could be beneficial, and there was a proposal to install new posts around the village to relocate the SIDs. There was further mention of working with Highways to possibly install posts near lampposts, which would allow for more flexibility in placing the SIDs.

A suggestion was made to add a boulder near St. Mary’s School for safety purposes, with confirmation needed from Highways. There was also an ongoing issue with a cracked wall on Rectory Lane. This was suggested that the homeowner should pursue this with WSCC.

The recurring problem of an accumulating puddle near Tesco’s Garden was raised.

The A29 continues to be problematic while the legal battle continues. However, one benefit is that HGVs are now programmed to avoid the road. Long-term solutions, such as improving pedestrian access once the slopes, have been addressed.

There was a question over whether the speed camera on the A29 near Harwoods was operational as there were no speed measure markers.

Pulborough Parish Council is eager to update its transport plan as the current document is outdated. The new document will be submitted to both the County Council and Horsham District Council, which will be used a supplementary planning document.

Environmental concerns were also discussed, particularly regarding the high levels of pollution caused by heavy traffic, with over one million vehicle movements per year expected on the A29. It was suggested that measuring devices that monitor air pollution could be beneficial.

Electric vehicle (EV) charging points were briefly discussed, with the Councillors noting that the existing charging stations are often full. It was stated that the ones in Rivermead are an experiment by WSCC install more EV charging points in rural places with housing developments.

Council thanked Cllr Clarke for his report.

1. **COMMITTEE MEETING LOCATION**

The Clerk spoke on the matter and made it clear this was an option not a recommendation. It was mentioned that the space in the committee room was quite restrictive. It was challenging to take any public speakers within the space.

One Councillor had major concerns over the sound quality of the Rother Hall and the lack of a hearing loop.

During discussions about the allotment meetings, it was suggested that the village hall should not be rewarded due to the lack of a functioning hearing loop (T-loop). There was also mention of holding remote meetings, but it was pointed out that legally, this is not possible.

However, one councillor could potentially join a meeting via Teams while others are present in person, but it was noted that improving the T-loop system would be a better solution. Many attendees have struggled to hear clearly during meetings held in the village hall, highlighting the need for this improvement.

The Council **RESOLVED** to continue using the committee room at the sports pavilion for committee/subcommittee meetings.

1. **REMEMBRANCE DAY UPDATE**

The Clerk explained that it was looking for the Council to have more involvement in Remembrance Day.

The idea would be that a parade takes place with the Scouts and Cubs from the memorial garden to the Church.

The original idea was to close the A29, but due to the traffic implication and the other road closures WSCC have refused the application. As a result, the Clerk is looking to see whether Church Place can be closed for the duration of the event. The parade would require crossing the A29, which would need volunteers.

The Clerk explained that this road closure would cost the Council £100.00.

The Council **RESOLVED** that they would close Church Place, under County’s approval and pay for the cost of the road closure.

Cllr Lee raised the idea of purchasing four additional "fallen soldier" silhouettes for the village. While similar figures were displayed in the past, they were stolen. Given the large number of ex-servicemen in the village, it was suggested that upgrading the village's Remembrance presence would be fitting. The plan would involve placing the silhouettes at four key points—north, south, east, and west—at the entrances to the village, symbolically marking the village's respect for the fallen.

The need to secure the new silhouettes was emphasised, and careful thought will be given to their placement.

Overall, it was agreed that last year's Remembrance event was excellent, with a strong turnout on a lovely day. However, having the silhouettes in place ahead of time could add even more significance to the lead-up to the event.

The Council **RESOLVED** that 4 new additional fallen soldiers will be bought.

1. **PULBOROUGH TIME BANK**

Cllr Clarke led the discussion.

The discussion turned to the idea of implementing a time bank system in Pulborough, particularly with the involvement of the wardens. In a time bank, members exchange time instead of money for services, which fosters self-help and strengthens community cohesion. For example, someone might offer their skills, like updating a computer or fixing a car and instead of being paid, they would receive an hour of service in return, which they could "spend" on something else they need. The closest existing time bank to Pulborough is in Hampshire. It was suggested that finding a volunteer to lead the initiative locally could help get it started.

The system would need some initial supervision, potentially from the office or Clerk and would require a small grant for the necessary software. Once set up, it could run self-sufficiently, with central or local government grants available to help support the scheme. The scheme would be supported by the national time bank network, which would provide guidance and resources to help the wardens and administrator organising it, acting as a broker and overseeing the administration.

A councillor expressed concerns about the administrative burden, noting that managing the time bank could be labour-intensive. There was also discussion about how the value of an hour would be determined and whether it might lead to disagreements over how to assess the worth of certain tasks. The goal is to promote self-worth and community cohesion but some wondered how it would impact the Clerk’s office and its other activities. Another question raised was whether everyone in the community would be expected to participate, or if the scheme would be optional.

Concerns were also voiced about the possibility of complaints and the complexity of administration, with some feeling that it might be too difficult to manage. On a related note, a new position for a neighbourhood watch coordinator was mentioned, with interest in whether this was more important. There were concerns about how people would be able to "pay back" their time if they were unable to physically contribute.

The Council **deferred** the matter to allow the Wardens to produce a comprehensive document on how this would work in practice and how it would impact the Parish Council more clearly.

1. **REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

At a recent Pulborough Community Voluntary Forum (PCVF) meeting, around 20 attendees from various groups like Age Concern, Horsham District Council (HDC) and PDCCA gathered to discuss key topics. A new bereavement group aimed at fostering social connections and combating isolation has been set up. Their goal is to create a friendly and chatty environment. Additionally, "The Silver Bullet Club," which focuses on helping men overcome isolation by offering a place to meet and socialise, was highlighted. This group plans to hold gatherings at Macklin’s. Freddy, our social prescriber from P&G, mentioned that Monday mental health walks have been beneficial. There's also a drop-in service at the village hall supported by the Friends of P&G. Lastly, there was a call for more community bus drivers, as the PDCCA is facing a shortage. The Parish Council was asked to see if they could assist with this need.

During the Gatwick Annual Meeting, the new noise management framework set to begin in 2025 was discussed. Although well-attended by Gatwick groups, there was a poor turnout from local noise groups. The newly established Independent Noise Community Forums' oversight board was introduced, though it currently lacks a community representative. The Chair of the board is an academic from Liverpool University, who will likely attend remotely. Cllr Hare was at the meeting and while opinions on the effectiveness of the new board are still undecided, APCAG (Airports Parish Councils Advisory Group) has signed up to be on committee.

There was also mention of the upcoming WSALC AGM, which the chair and clerk will attend.

At the PDCCA meeting, there was a discussion about the need for more information regarding the community café, as well as concerns about the economic impact of the closure of Lower Street on local traders. Parking and the development of an economic plan were also highlighted as key issues.

Finally, Pulborough Parish Council gave an update at the Climate Network Group which was well-received and is beginning to inspire action in other parishes. The Council is preparing to launch new climate action initiatives in the near future.

The Council **NOTED** all reports above from outside bodies.

1. **COMMUNITY HUB – SPORTS & SOCIAL BUILDING**

The Clerk gave a full update on the current progress.

To clarify, the vote is focused on approving the concept in principle, not the finer details such as design materials. The building design is modular, which comes with several advantages. Some aspects of the design were explained after further clarifications were sought. It was noted that, given the circumstances, this is a fantastic opportunity, as sometimes one cannot afford to be too selective.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the design in principle of the new community hub that will replace the sports pavilion**.**

**The Clerk read up the following update “*Pulborough Parish Council is working with Thakeham to explore the feasibility of redeveloping the community building on the recreation ground to provide a modern and functional space to serve the needs of the local community. Further updates will be shared as matters progress."***

**The Chair expressed how significant this news was and how important this is for the community.**

1. **PAYMENTS**

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| Fred Bushby | £9.00 |
| Burgess & Randall | £224.99 |
| WSCC | £10,421.46 |
| Mulberry | £54.00 |
| LASER | 49.14 |

***The meeting closed at 9.19 pm.***

……………………………………..Chair

………………………………………Date