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

 PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

**HELD** **ON THURSDAY 16TH MAY 2024 AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Ellis-Brown (Chair), Clarke, Court, Curd, Esdaile, Hare, Hunt, Martin, Marcusson, Mote, Riddle & Trembling

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Mr H Quenault (Clerk)

 Mrs B Nobbs (Deputy Clerk)

***The meeting opened at 7:30***

1. **Introduction by the Chair of the Parish Council**

The Chair welcomed attendees and introduced the meeting.

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1. **Special Reports**

Due to Maria Lee being absent, the report was read out by the Clerk.

The report summarised the overwhelming community support of the Pantry which has now helped an extraordinary amount of people who were and are in need while also battling food waste.

1. **Minutes**

Members **RESOLVED** to agree and approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th May 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and the Chair signed them.

1. **To receive the Parish Council Annual report**

Members and attendees received the Parish Annual Report presented by the Chair of the Council.

Annual Report by the Chair of the Parish:

The Parish Council has accomplished a great deal this year, thanks to the immense contributions of everyone involved. The Chair expressed thanks to all the volunteers, Council Members and staff for their dedication. Although the coming year may be slower whilst we take stock, it is crucial to continue working together. We have finalised the plans for replacing our MUGA work is due to commence in August 2024. The New Sports Pavilion is progressing well, and work is due to commence in April 2027. Following the remarkable success of last year's Christmas Fair, we plan to hold a similar event again this year. Our Community Allotment is also making substantial progress; volunteers have collected wooden pallets, and new raised beds are ready for composting. Cllr Esdaile kindly organised an afternoon for children to learn about our trees, which was an enormous success.

Recreation & Open Spaces Report by the Chair of Recreation & Open Spaces:

This year has been challenging, especially with Sussex Clubs for Young People folding and leaving us without youth support. Despite this, we successfully organised a skate event during the February half-term. Cllr Hunt has been conducting after-school cookery classes and has secured a new oven as a donation for the classes. Progress on the community allotment is going well, with volunteers working diligently and two companies now sponsoring a raised bed. The Memorial Garden won the RHS award for the best community garden. The BT Garden is now well-established and Horsham District Council has granted permission to re-wild the verges of Lower Street car park, leading to much upcoming work. We are planning an open day for all our gardens within the next month.

Planning Report provided by the Clerk:

This year has been exceptionally challenging. Horsham has noted significant improvement in our Parish's strength and the quality of our comments, thanks to training that helped us better understand the decision-making processes of the Horsham District Council. Earlier this year, we expanded the Planning Committee, resulting in a broader range of perspectives. The Clerk expressed thanks to the Planning Committee for their hard work. The Clerk also mentioned the lack of progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Finance Report provided by the Clerk:

With the Clerk's experience, we have carefully managed our finances, and the Clerk is pleased with the current state of our accounts. We are now up to date with everything, and the detailed accounts have successfully passed the internal audit, along with the risk register, asset register and within the time allotted. Last year, we saw an increase in expenditure and income, so we ended this year with a balanced budget. Notably, we had to increase the precept on Band D by 5.74%, which amounts to a rise of ten pence.

The Chair thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their commitment and work.

The Clerk reported that the work will commence around April 2027 for the new Sports Pavilion and that a new Muga would be built around August 2024.

1. **Question & Answer Session**

The Chair opened the question & answer session.

A request was made for an announcement to be made for the late Chair Lawrie Ellis to be remembered at the next appropriate meeting – *This would be facilitated at the beginning of the next Full Council Meeting*

Why has no mention been made lately regarding the Pulborough Pier. - *This is a PCP initiative and when they have any further developments they have confirmed it will be brought before Full Council.*

Payments over £500 have not been updated on the website. - *The Clerk will update the website with all the payments over £500 by next week.*

A Council Member made a statement regarding the vague mention of the previous Clerk and wanted her to be acknowledged for the work which she did.

A Council Member made a statement acknowledging that one of the key aims of the new group was to produce a new Emergency and Resilience plan. It was asked why this had not happened. - *The Chair advised there is not a new Resilience Plan in place, and this will come back to Full Council to work on.*

A statement was made surrounding potholes in Church Place being repaired; the situation has worsened. There are now 2 deep holes, with additional crack appearing. Alarmingly, at the bottom rats have taken up residence, the signage is regularly vandalised and the risk of falling posing a significant safety hazard. - *The Clerk has confirmed that the issue has been documented with photographs and reported to WSCC, and that Cllr Clarke has just emailed the Chief of Highways to hopefully get this matter resolved.*

What is the status of the neighbourhood plan and the village design statement? Planning South committee members have said it's outdated. In 2018 the plan was reviewed so that buildings cannot be built in conservation areas, this seems to have been ignored by HDC Planning Department. Concerns are growing that the neighbourhood plan will fail.

The status of the neighbourhood plan and village design statement has come under scrutiny. Planning South committee members have deemed it outdated, despite a review in 2018 intended to prevent construction in conservation areas—a directive seemingly ignored by the HDC planning department. Concerns are growing that the neighbourhood plan may fail. While some neighbourhood plans are advancing smoothly, our plan is encountering unique challenges, particularly regarding water neutrality. We might reach Regulation 16, which requires submission to HDC and an examiner's review. - *We are prepared for a public vote, and the Chair has announced that a meeting on the neighbourhood plan will be scheduled with HDC soon.*

St Crispin’s is the subject of a planning application to be decided by Planning South Committee at HDC on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. There is deep concern regarding this. - *Dr Andy Tilbrook and Cllr. Esdaile will attend the meeting to make comment on the development and bring attention to the concerns.*

Parishioners are concerned about the prominent buildings in the village which are covered in graffiti, it was asked if the PPC can put any pressure on the District Council to tidy them up. – *The Clerk has contacted the developers. The Clerk is happy to contact compliance to put pressure on the District Council regarding the state of the buildings.*

A statement was made that it was disappointing that Cllr. Kenyon was not present. A question was asked about any progress regarding the work on Church Hill – *this is currently stalled due to legal issues with the landowners. However, it was noted that the presence of fewer HGVs due to the traffic lights has been beneficial.*

***The meeting closed at 8:21.***

 ……………………………………..Chairman

 ………………………………………Date