



Chailey Parish Council
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Minutes

A Meeting of Full Council was held on Tuesday 19th January 2016 in the Reading Room, Chailey Green, commencing at 7.50pm

Present: Cllr. P.Olbrich (Chairman).
Cllrs. S. Avery, K. Jordan, K. Matthews, J. Millam.

Public present: none

In attendance: S Treharne (Clerk) Cllr J Sheppard

16/001 Apologies for absence: Cllrs. P Atkins, R Barnard, M. Evans, V Harrison, P. O’Conor, A Scott.

16/002 Declarations of Interest: none.

16/003 Questions/comments from members of the public: none.

16/004 Items considered as a matter of urgency:

At Cllr. Olbrich’s request the Clerk explained that he had received a telephone call from Cllr Harrison indicating her intention to resign as, after consulting her family, she was not confident that she would be able to devote sufficient time to attending Council meetings. She had not yet formally resigned. Cllr. Millam advised that he had spoken to Cllr. Harrison but could not add anything further. Councillors regretted Cllr. Harrison’s decision and the Clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangements.

The Clerk advised Councillors of a request received for a better path to be provided over the grass to the war memorial. This request had been prompted by the difficulties experienced by some older residents because of the “stepping stone” nature of the present path. Councillors agreed to survey the area concerned and the Clerk was asked to look into the possibility of grants being available for this sort of work. The matter would be discussed again at the next meeting.

16/005 To agree the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 15th December 2015: the minutes were approved without amendment and were signed by the Chairman.

16/006 To receive financial reports: Cllr. Olbrich referred Councillors to the financial report for December 2015 circulated with the agenda.

The Clerk reported that in December receipts totalled £10 and payments for the month were £1,211. Receipts for the year to date (excluding the precept and support grant totalling £48,840) were £2,998 and payments £40,275. Councillors' attention was drawn to the analysis of payments by category shown in the financial report, to the detailed breakdown of the receipts and payments for the month and to the bank reconciliation attached.

Cllr. Jordan proposed and Cllr. Olbrich seconded a resolution that the financial report for December 2015 be approved and this was passed unanimously.

The Clerk reported that he had been handed a recent electricity bill for the windmill. Cllr. Avery explained that the Friends of the Windmill hold very little in the way of funds, mainly because they had previously passed over to the Council accumulated funds which they could not bank because they do not operate an account. It was agreed unanimously that the present bill of £41.62 should be paid by the Council and that the Clerk should make arrangements for all future electricity bills to be sent to and paid by the Council.

16/007 To consider a letter received from the East Sussex Pension Fund: Councillors considered the letter and noted that all the Council's arguments had been rejected.

Councillors discussed the way forward and the possibilities of (1) there being a Council employee in the pension scheme in the near future and (2) paying by instalments. They also discussed whether advice should be sought because of the technical nature of the letter received, and the Clerk was asked to make enquiries in order to locate an appropriate adviser. He was also asked to send a holding letter to the Fund.

16/008 To consider the budget for the financial year 2016/17 and to set the precept for 2016/17: the Clerk referred Councillors to the revised budget papers circulated with the agenda.

He explained that with one exception the papers were updated versions of those considered at the meeting on 15th December 2015. He explained that the revisions had been made to the estimated outcome for 2015/16 which resulted in the forecast reserves as at 31st March 2016 being £1,796 higher than previously forecast. He also explained that six revisions to the budgeted costs for 2016/17 had increased expenditure for that year by £2,840. He referred Councillors to his supplementary report dated 12th January 2016 which set out the details of these changes.

The Clerk referred Councillors to the new schedule which set out the history of the precept over recent years and to the revised format of the schedule which set out the effects on both residents and the Council's finances of setting different levels of increase in the precept.

Councillors discussed the level at which the precept should be set for 2016/17. It was noted that the reserves would be significantly reduced by planned expenditure and that a precept set at the same level as 2015/16 would not raise sufficient funds to cover the routine running costs of the Council, leading to a further reduction in reserves. It was agreed that the precept should cover the expected running costs after allowing for the small amount of rental and other income that the Council

receives. In view of the anticipated depletion in reserves, Councillors considered that the amount raised should also be sufficient to begin the process of rebuilding the overall level of reserves.

Councillors considered the possible increases in the precept. They noted that a 9.5% increase in the amount paid by residents would increase the annual amount paid by a household in council tax band D by £3.53p per annum to £40.68p per annum. This equated to an increase of under 30p per month. Households in lower bands would see a smaller increase and those in bands E to H a higher increase, with the maximum at band H being an additional £7.06p per annum. A rise in the precept of this amount would increase the amount raised to £51,867 which would be sufficient to cover the net expected costs for 2016/17 and make a small contribution of about £2,000 to reserves.

Cllr. Avery proposed and Cllr. Jordan seconded a motion that the draft budget set out in Document 4 enclosed with the Clerk's supplementary report should be adopted as the Council's budget for 2016/17. The motion was passed unanimously.

Cllr. Jordan proposed and Cllr. Avery seconded a motion that the precept for 2016/17 should be set at £40.68 for a band D household raising a total of £51,867. The motion was passed unanimously.

The Clerk suggested that he should circulate for comment a draft of a document to be put on the website informing residents of the setting of the budget and the precept and explaining why the precept had been raised. Councillors agreed that this should be done.

Cllr. Jordan asked that the minutes should record Councillors' thanks to the Clerk for his work and the clear way in which the figures had been presented.

16/009 To consider a letter received from The Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited: the Clerk explained that the letter was the next step in the process of change relating to the appointment of external auditors to smaller authorities. Councillors noted that the fee structure suggested that there may be some saving in costs.

16/010 To consider a note of the meeting with ESCC Highways and correspondence on the speed of vehicles in South Street: Councillors noted that the meeting with Highways had been informed of the decision made that the Council did not have the funds to commit to the proposed pedestrian refuge. The Clerk asked any Councillor who wishes to see the statistics prepared following the speed surveys in South Street to let him know.

16/011 To receive a report on the relocation of the parish office to other Reading Room and to agree estimates for electrical work: Councillors discussed whether permissions would need to be sought in relation to the replacement of the window in the new office and the move of the office generally.

The Clerk reported that he had asked the contractor for a sketch of the proposed new window so that Councillors could be content that what is proposed is in keeping with the other Reading room windows and an improvement on the existing window. Councillors discussed the position and concluded that no permission was necessary. As regards the move generally, it was noted that no planning history of the Reading Room appeared to exist, but there was no doubt about the use to which the building

had been put over very many years and the siting of the parish office in the Reading Room was incidental to its existing use. The relevant certificate of use could be obtained but this was not a requirement. Cllr Olbrich proposed and Cllr. Millam seconded a motion that replacing the window and installing the office should go ahead without seeking any permission as this was not necessary. The motion was agreed unanimously.

Councillors considered the estimates received from CH Electrical and Building Maintenance for electrical works at the Reading Room. The estimate of £757.50 (to including LED rather than fluorescent lighting) was agreed, as was the estimate of £173.35 to supply and install a heater.

Councillors also discussed installing an emergency lighting system and concluded that this should be done. The estimate from CH Electrical and Building Maintenance of £328.00 to undertake this work was agreed.

Councillors noted the proposal that the outside light above the main entrance to the Reading Room should be replaced. Whilst the present light could be replaced with something more effective, they considered that the new fitting proposed could provide too bright a light. It was decided to reconsider this matter at the next meeting and the estimate was not accepted.

16/012 To receive reports:

- (1) **The Sports Pavilion:** no report was available.
- (2) **The Neighbourhood Plan:** Cllr. Jordan reported that the date for a public meeting had yet to be fixed but he thought it would now take place in April. There had been delays (due to illness) in taking forward discussions with AirS. It was agreed that the Clerk should be involved with grant applications and budgeting, but until the way forward is mapped out following the public meeting it is too early to lay definitive financial plans.
- (3) **Brush clearance at Rowheath:** Cllr Olbrich reported that he is waiting for the Youth Club to indicate what they would like to be done.
- (4) **The new website:** Cllr Avery reported that the new site went live as planned. A meeting had been held with the Clerk to begin the handover of the administration to the Clerk and a target date of 31st March had been set for this process to be completed. Work is continuing to tidy up content on the site and to ensure it is complete and up to date: this will take some time to finish. A request has been made via the site for photographs so that a photo gallery can be established and he reminded Councillors to let him have photographs of themselves so that these could be included on the site.

Cllr. Avery further reported that he had made enquiries about adding Twitter and/or Facebook and he had been told that this could easily be done. However, Councillors agreed that this should wait until the existing updating work has been finished. Cllr. Matthews expressed concern at the amount of time that administering and monitoring social media can take.

Councillors again thanked Cllr Avery for all his hard work in bringing the new website into being.

The Clerk advised Councillors that, where a Parish Council has a website, it is a requirement that Councillors' Registers of Interest should be published. He is making arrangements for this to happen.

(5) **Toad Hall:** The Clerk advised Councillors that he has made arrangements to visit Lewes District Council now that they have located their file. He will report to Councillors on that meeting.

(6) **The allotments:** The Clerk reported that the waiting list has been updated. One of the three vacant plots has been let and he is working with Chailey Allotments Association to let the other two.

16/013 To consider items of correspondence for noting and response: The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to correspondence which had been received, a list of which was circulated. Cllr. Jordan noted the request for Parish Councils to join in with the celebrations for the Queen's 90th birthday in April.

16/014 To note Risk implications: none to note.

16/015 Confidential information – exempt matters: Cllr Olbrich advised Councillors that it was not necessary this month to consider a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2) in order to discuss any items due to their confidential nature.

16/016 Next Full Council meeting: 16th February 2016 at 7.30pm.
Next Planning & Environs Committee meeting: 2nd February 2016 at 7.30pm

Signed: *P Olbrich*
Chairman

Date: *16th February 2016*