



NUTHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 17th January 2024, at Mannings Heath Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllr N Bryant, Cllr D Cotton, Cllr C Kenny (Vice Chair), Cllr V Court, Cllr K McGovern, Cllr M Oswell-Penton, Cllr S Catterall, Cllr W Bayley and Cllr Sara Maynard.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Louise Shaw (Locum Clerk) and 23 members of the public (MOP).

APOLOGIES: District Councillor Dennis Livingstone

1930hrs

301-23/24 **ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted apologies were received in advance of the meeting from DCllr Dennis Livingstone

302-23/24 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

2.1 The resignation of the outgoing Chair was noted and accepted by the council.

2.2 Vice Chair Cllr CK addressed the meeting and asked for nominations for Chair. Cllr NB nominated Cllr CK. Cllr SC nominated Cllr DC. Cllr MO-P seconded the nomination for Cllr DC. Cllr CK was asked if he wished to stand for Chair, to which he confirmed he didn't. Cllr CK asked for a show of hands in favour of Cllr DC, **6 For and 1 Abstention. Motion was carried.**

Before the new chair signed the declaration of office, Cllr NB wished to explain his reasons for resignation. Cllr CK stated that it would be a decision for the new chair to make.

Cllr DC took his place at the high table and signed the declaration of office in front of the Clerk and members of the meeting. Cllr NB asked if he could speak regarding his resignation. Cllr DC declined Cllr NB's request.

303-23/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Sara Maynard declared an interest in planning application DC/23/2290. No further declarations were made.

304-23/24 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Cllr KM mentioned the typos and handed the Clerk the minutes with the amendments on.

Cllr CK mentioned under Item 3.2 that he had now forwarded the item on to Highways and is currently awaiting a reply. And further went on to mention that the minutes did not include the fact that he had reminded the Council that following his discussion with ACAS there was an alternative way of handling the matter of the previous clerk. He stated this should have been included to show that NPC is open and transparent in all its dealings and that it looks to resolve items with as much information as possible.

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 22nd November 2023.

305 – 23/24 COMMITTEE MINUTES / REPORTS –

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the: Staffing Committee 10th January 2024
Staffing Committee 1st December 2023 to be considered under Part II Confidential.

306 – 23/24 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr DC thanked the outgoing Chair (Cllr NB) and Cllr CK for stepping into fill the gap while a new chair came in. Cllr DC further thanked the members of the council and the MOP's for their patience.

307-23/24 PUBLIC SESSION

One MOP addressed the meeting in relation to a comment made by the previous clerk at the last Full Council meeting about the Local Plan and NHP (Neighbourhood Plan). The MOP stated that the NHP runs until 2031. The plan currently meets all the criteria do the District and NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and they reminded the meeting that the current NHP cost in the region of £16k and therefore could not justify the expenditure. The MOP stated caution and patience and to wait for the Local Plan to be adopted before revising it. The Chair also confirmed that this would be the case.

Another MOP of the public addressed the meeting stating the same as the MOP prior. Again the Chair confirmed that the council would not be revising the NHP and are in full support of the Plan.

A MOP addressed the meeting in relation to Item 12 – Playground and the FOI that was submitted. The Chair confirmed that the FOI (Freedom of Information) would be sent out imminently and that the Item will be discussed in full on the 31st January.

Another MOP spoke about the playground and stated that the dispute had now carried on over a year with no resolution in sight and wished that the council could find a resolution swiftly without spending any more public money.

One MOP spoke about Item 10 – Deer Population – and wanted justification on the culling of the Deer within Nuthurst. The item is up for discussion later.

MOP mentioned that they were very upset about the information being leaked by Cllr NB online and wanted to have discuss this further. Cllr DC stated that everything related to the Playground will be discussed at the meeting on the 31st January. Cllr DC went on to thank the MOP's for their patience on the Playground.

308 – 23/24 DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

No reports present

309 – 23/24 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr NB is replacing the defibrillator items that need replacing.

Cllr DC had conducted an inspection of the playground. Cllrs had been sent the report prior to the meeting and asked that it be a standing item on the agenda.

310 – 23/24 DEER POPULATION

Cllr DC informed the meeting that the Golf Course has received a licence to kill/cull, which has now been implemented. Cllr WB mentioned the report from DEFRA and the expansion of the deer population nationally. Cllr CK requested that the Clerk seek further information from HDC and WSCC about what they are doing to manage the

issue. Cllr VC stated that this item should be put on an action list for the Clerk to manage.

311 – 23/24 **ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

Cllr WB spoke to the meeting about the new impact of the houses in Lower Beeding and Partridge Green will have on the A272 and asked whether there could be any conditions/policies actioned on these new developments. Cllr DC acknowledged that these developments are not within Nuthurst Parish but would be willing to work in collaboration with other neighbouring councils to try and implement safer roads.

ONE MOP LEFT THE MEETING AT 8.10pm

312 – 23/24 **PLAYGROUND**

18.1 To agree an agenda for the extra full Parish Council meeting to address the concern of the Playground. Cllr DC stated that he was unable to attend the meeting and duly asked the Vice Chair Cllr CK to attend and chair in his place.

18.2 NOTED

18.3 MOP's are invited to email the Clerk no later than 24 hrs before the meeting with their questions or comments, which will be answered at the meeting. It is noted that there will be no questions taken at the meeting, all questions need to be in prior to the meeting. The council's statement of facts will be issued with the agenda.

THREE MOP's LEFT THE MEETING AT 8.20PM

THREE MOP's LEFT THE MEETING AT 8.21PM

313 – 23/24 **PLANNING MATTERS**

DC/23/2290 – Woodlands Winterpit Lane Mannings Heath
Enlargement of existing rear dormer.

Response: It was noted that the application had passed the date of response and therefore no need to discuss or reply.

DC/23/2289 – Woolmers Brighton Road Mannings Heath
Erection of a two storey side and rear extension.

Response: The Council recommends refusal of this planning application. It was noted that the application was not in keeping with the local surrounds and questions were raised about the materials being used and design of some aspects such as windows, tiles and design been reconsidered and brought more in line with surrounding buildings.

FIVE MOP's LEFT THE MEETING AT 8.33PM

314-23/24 **FINANCES**

1. It was **resolved** to approve the Nat West bank reconciliations for NOV/DEC 2023. Cllr SC thanked Cllr DC for his help and input with the accounts. An action was put forward to go through the cheque book and reconcile with the bank account.
2. It was **resolved** to approve receipts and payments for.
3. It was **resolved** to approve schedule of payments. Cllr VC raised a comment about the Defibrillator batteries and the rise in cost. Cllr NB mentioned that the last purchase was faulty and therefore had to be repurchased.
4. It was **resolved** to approve the Budget FY24/25 with an increase in Precept of just under 10% leading to £57,516.00 and will include additional lines for Defibrillator and for cover from a Locum Clerk until April or May 24. It should be noted that approximately 50% of the budget was made up of costs of the clerk and so increases in salaries made nationally, increases in the estimate of hours required by the parish council, and the need for a locum were the main reasons behind the increase in budget.

The Locum Clerk notes that cheque payments will be made until the Council has multiple signatories on the bank account. The Locum Clerk does not have access to the online banking system.

Cllr NJ spoke at the meeting and apologised for being later. He stated that he had attended the Southwater PC meeting and that was why he was running late. He mentioned about the budget for WSCC and will be presented to WSCC in February 2024. He stated that WSCC supports national living wage worker in places such as care home and that with the increase in living wage this year to £11.44, it has added to the increase of tax council. The tax council proposal will go up by 2.99% and in addition another 2% for adult services due to the rise of the aging population. In overall there will be an 5% increase in council tax bands. For a D band – this will be an increase of £6.80 per month. Cllr DC mentioned about the hole in the budget as stated by Cllr NJ at the last meeting and asked if this had been rectified. Cllr NJ stated that WSCC will provide a balanced budget for the next financial year 24/25 but that are difficulties laying ahead for next year.

316 – 23/24 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting Extra Parish Council Meeting will be held on 31st January 2024, at Mannings Heath Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm. Cllr DC gave his apologies for this meeting and asked Cllr CK to chair this meeting.

Meeting closed at 20.52hrs.

Part II CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING MATTERS

317– 23/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **resolved** to exclude the press and public from the meeting to discuss recommendations made by the Staffing Committee.

It was **resolved** to approve the Full Parish Council Meeting Part II only 22nd November 2023, Extraordinary Meeting – Staffing 1st December 2023 and Staffing Committee 10th January 2024 minutes. Cllr CK mentioned again that the minutes did not include the fact that he had reminded the Council that following his discussion with ACAS there was an alternative way of handling the matter of the previous clerk. He stated this should have been included to show that NPC is open and transparent in all its dealings and that it looks to resolve items with as much information as possible. Cllr NB stated that he wasn't happy with the minutes, with Cllr DC stating that there was nothing that can be done about it as that was the representation of the meeting.

It was **resolved** to approve the recommendations made by the Staffing Committee at the meetings on the 1st December 2023 and 10th January 2024.

Staff recruitment was discussed and advice sought from the Clerk, who advised that the council will need to put in some groundwork into improving the council before going out to recruit a new clerk. The members agreed.

Cllr VC spoke to the members and reminded them all that confidential items are not discussed outside of council and that all councillors should refrain from speaking about any item that is confidential.

There were no further staffing matters raised since the publication of the agenda.

Meeting closed at 2123hrs

Signed.....

Dated.....