



LAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st February 2024 at 7.30pm at Laughton Village Hall

Present:

Chairman: Cllr Alison Wilson, Cllr Jane Alford, Cllr Holly Hallam and Cllr Sally Huggett

Four members of the public attended

The Clerk was also in attendance

1. PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the Dangerous Traffic on Shortgate Lane Working Group gave a resume of the traffic issues on Shortgate Lane, and the difficulties for vulnerable road users. A speed study, and feasibility study have been carried out by ESCC. ESCC has provided updated costings for the various options. Details of the criteria for a Community Match Funding application were given, including consultation with the community.

Agenda item 11.5 Dangerous traffic on Shortgate Lane

The general format of draft community consultation document was **agreed** by Councillors, Laughton Parish Council will provide support with printing and distribution of documents. It was **agreed** that an agenda item for the Annual Parish Meeting on 15th May 2024 would form part of the consultation, information could be provided on the Parish Council website and at Councillors' surgeries.

Following discussion it was **agreed** that Laughton Parish Council would be prepared to support the Community Match Funding bid but funding will need to be investigated, it was noted that not all options in the feasibility report could be delivered.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from East Sussex County Councillor Nick Bennett

3. TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH JANUARY 2024

The minutes were **agreed** and signed accordingly.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. TO RECEIVE NOTICES OF DECLARATIONS, PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL, IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

Cllr Alford declared an interest in agenda item 9a) i) Laughton Place. Cllr Alford is associated with the applicants.

5. MEMBERS TO AGREE CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA FOR THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no confidential items on the agenda

6. EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORTS

Wealden District Council –

Cllr Alison Wilson told Laughton Parish Council of the following:

- Wealden District Council has published the draft Local Plan, there are no allocations for Laughton, but there is a windfall allowance of 8 dwellings. The Strategic House and Economic Availability Assessment has been updated (SHELAA 2024) and this shows the sites locally which have been rejected.

- There had been a full Wealden District Council meeting earlier in the day, the 24/25 budget and a Council Tax increase of 2.99% were approved. It should be noted that Wealden District Council receives 9% of the Council Tax collected and that helps pay for refuse and recycling collections, planning, street cleaning, environmental protection, and free car parking. The remainder of the Council Tax bill is shared to pay for a wide range of public services provided by East Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue and local town and parish councils.

East Sussex County Council –

Cllr Nick Bennett provided a report:

- Eight million people on means-tested benefits will receive a cost of living payment in February.
- ESCC has welcomed funding that will help boost clean skills and support the county's move to net zero.
- In the face of extraordinary demand and pressure ESCC continues to provide vital services.
- There will be a Council Tax increase of 2.99% and Adult Social Care Precept of 2%, a total of 4.99% (equivalent of £1.62 per week for a band D property).

7. Co-option of Councillor to Laughton Parish Council

One application had been received, following review of the application form it was unanimously **agreed** to co-opt Robert Bishopp to Laughton Parish Council. Cllr Bishopp signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was welcomed to the Council and joined the meeting table.

8. Councillor Resignation

- a) The resignation of Mike Massingham was **noted**, Mike was thanked for this work during his time as a member of Laughton Parish Council.
- b) It was **agreed** to appoint Cllr Bishopp to join the Dangerous Traffic on Shortgate Lane Working Group.

9. Planning and Licence Applications

a) Planning applications received

i. Application WD/2024/0077/LB

Laughton Place, The Old Castle, Cow Lane, Laughton. BN8 6DA

Following discussion it was **agreed** that:

Laughton Parish Council supports this application which relates to the repair and preservation of an important historic building.

ii. Application WD/2023/3078/FR

Harbens Farm, Mill Lane, Laughton. BN8 6AJ

Following discussion it was **agreed** that:

Laughton Parish Council supports this application which is in accordance with the previous application.

c) Other planning matters – to discuss or note any other planning matters brought to the attention of the Parish Council.

None

d) No Licence applications have been received.

10. Financial Matters

Authorisation of payments of accounts – To approve accounts for payment – a schedule of receipts & payments was presented at the meeting

- a) Bank reconciliation January – **approved**
- b) February payments – **approved**
- c) Direct debits – **approved**

11. ITEMS FOR DECISION AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

11.1 Village Maintenance

11.1.1 Ditches/Flooding – Shortgate Lane has recently been flooded during heavy rain, the situation will be monitored and reported accordingly.

11.1.2 Bus shelters – A contractor has inspected the bus shelter on The Green, it was **agreed** the contractor would be appointed to carry out the repairs for the sum of £925 to include timber treatment. Volunteers who have agreed to carry out the works to the bus shelter on the B2124 Lewes Road are waiting for suitable weather conditions.

11.2 Rural Grass Cutting Options 24/25 – The meeting was reminded that Laughton had taken part in the trial of the Environmental Enhancement Service (reduced rural service) in 23/24. Following discussion it was **agreed** that the same service would be requested in 24/25, the first cut at the start of the season will be visibility cuts for safety at junctions and on the inside of bends where sight lines between road users may be obscured. Safety issues will be reported to East Sussex County Council.

11.3 Wealden District Council Draft Local Plan - It was **noted** that the Wealden Draft Local Plan has now been release, and consultation will begin in early March, and will continue for an eight week period. Members **agreed** that Laughton Parish Council should comment on behalf of the village. It was **agreed** that a working group would be formed, a number of residents are willing to take part, offering a wealth of experience, and represent a range of age groups. Details and participants to be **agreed** at the Parish Council meeting on 20th March 2024.

11.4 Community Engagement - It was **agreed** that the next Drop-in Surgery would be on 16th March 2024 (*Following the meeting it was decided this drop-in session would take place at a later date, to be agreed*).

11.5 Dangerous Traffic on Shortgate Lane - This item was covered during public questions

11.6 Pelham Field/Playground

11.6.1 Update on goal/basketball hoop – it was **noted** that the repair work has now been completed.

11.6.2 Playground reports – The Clerk has spoken with LDC regarding the recent reports. It seems that, due to data connection issues, the reports have not always been updated when the inspector has been on site. The Clerk will continue to monitor the reports and request that all remedial works carried out are updated on the report. It was **agreed** that the Clerk will order replacement bolt caps.

11.7 Defibrillator for the Parish - The village shop committee will be meeting in March and it is hoped that siting the defibrillator at the shop will be discussed. Councillors asked the Clerk to write to the pub to ask if they are willing to have the defibrillator there.

11.8 Community Speedwatch– it was **noted** that four volunteers have now completed the first stage of training, the Clerk will organise the next stage with Sussex Safer Roads, more volunteers are still needed.

11.9 Parish Emergency Plan – it was **noted** that Cllr Alford is continuing to work on the plan, and is compiling and “Elderly and Vulnerable Persons” list.

11.10 Laughton Fete – it was **noted** that the working group continues to meet regularly. Cllr Huggett was thanked for her detailed notes. Cllr Hallam suggested a stool ball match, Cllr Hallam will also ask Laughton Community School about the availability of wi-fi connection.

11.11 Climate Literacy Course – Cllr Alford provided a report. It was **noted** that emails, surprisingly, also have a carbon footprint. Course organisers felt the provision of a cycle rack to enable linked travel with the bus route was an excellent idea.

11.12 Cycle Rack/Rail at The Green, Laughton – The Clerk had been informed by Wealden District Council that provision of a cycle rack on The Green would be classed as Permitted Development. The Clerk was asked to provide a report detailing the various options for consideration.

11.13 Social Media Policy - The Social Media Policy was **agreed**. The Clerk will set up a Laughton Parish Council Facebook page.

11.14 Action in Rural Sussex – Housing Enabling Service – Councillors **noted** the contents of the letter from AirS, the lack of starter/affordable homes in the village is a cause for concern.

11.15 Civility and Respect Pledge – It was **noted** that Laughton Parish Council signed up to the pledge in October 2022. Councillors revisited the pledge documents and will undertake any training or seek outside help in the future should that ever be required. Laughton Parish Council continues to work constructively and no problems have been identified.

12. REPORTS (by leave) NOT FOR DECISION:

It was suggested that a working party is formed to carry out cleaning of the infant playground surface. This will be an item on the next agenda.

It was **noted** that the Wealden Parish Conference takes place on 14th March 2024

The meeting closed at 21.45pm