



LAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on
15th November 2023 at 7.30pm at Laughton Village Hall**

Present:

Chairman: Cllr Alison Wilson, Vice Chair: Cllr Austin Young, Cllr Mike Massingham, Cllr Jane Alford and Cllr Holly Hallam

East Sussex County Councillor Nick Bennett

The Clerk was also in attendance

One member of the public attended

1. PUBLIC SESSION

Agenda Item 9.6.3 - A member of the public asked the Council if they were aware that a number of villages offer tennis facilities however Laughton does not have such facilities. It was considered that this is a facility that is in demand locally and school use could be permitted by arrangement. The court would be administered by the Community and there would be a nominal charge for membership. Various funding options are available and there would be no cost to Laughton Parish Council. Pelham Field could be a suitable site. Covenants would need to be reviewed. Planning Permission would also be required.

It was resolved that Cllr Wilson will review the covenants relating to Pelham Field.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Sally Huggett.

3. TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETINGS HELD ON 18TH OCTOBER 2023 AND 1ST NOVEMBER
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 Massingham declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.6.1 Goal/Basketball Hoop Repair.

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

None

6. EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORTS

East Sussex County Council –

- Cllr Bennett has sent details of other Parishes who have submitted Community Match Funding bids for road safety improvements to the Dangerous Traffic on Shortgate Lane Working Group. A Teams meeting has been offered by ESCC officers.
- Cllr Bennett reminded Laughton Parish Councillors of the increasing demands of Adult Social Care and Looked After Children which will have a very significant effect in future years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of Looked After Children.

Wealden District Council –

Cllr Wilson reported that the Draft Local Plan will be presented to the Full Council on 8th February 2024. This will be followed by a formal consultation period and residents are encouraged to respond during that period. Residents are also encouraged to sign-up to the Consultation Portal. The absence of a Local Plan can lead to speculative planning applications, which is why the administration at WDC has decided that finalising the Local Plan is a priority.

The Alliance for Wealden Council Strategy vision and mission statement to be put to the Full Council later this month:

- *Wealden is a place where people and nature thrive together.*
- *Wealden District Council is to be an enabling and enterprising council working alongside our communities to create a greener, fairer, and kinder district for present and future generations.*

7. PLANNING AND LICENCE APPLICATIONS

a) Plans

No plans have been received since the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 1st November 2023.

b) Planning applications approved, refused, withdrawn or appeals.

It was noted that:

WD/2023/1925/F – Erection of two dwellings, access, landscaping and associated infrastructure – Chelwood, Pound Lane, Laughton, BN8 6BE has been **REFUSED**

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

• Enforcement Issues

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/C23/3330411 and 330418 The Briars, Church Lane, Laughton – appeal against enforcement.

Appeal Ref: 3330411 Following discussion Laughton Parish Council considered that this was in effect an appeal against the original planning application. The Parish Council does not agree with grounds (b), (c), (d) and (f) as breaches of planning control have taken place. It is not too late to rectify the situation and the steps required to restore the site are not excessive.

Appeal Ref: 3330418 Laughton Parish Council considers that the Enforcement Notice dated 14th September 2023, giving six months notice from the effective date of 20th October 2023, is more than adequate to comply with the Enforcement Notice.

• Formation of a Planning Committee

It was agreed that a Planning Committee would not be formed, Extraordinary General Meetings will be called if extensions for planning responses are not granted.

d) No Licence applications have been received.

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

- Bank reconciliation October – **approved**
- November payments – **approved**
- Direct debits – **approved**
- Draft budget – members reviewed the draft budget presented, the budget will be discussed at the next meeting.

9. ITEMS FOR DECISION AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

9.1 Village Maintenance

9.1.1 Ditches/Flooding – The flooding experienced in Church Lane during the recent heavy rain was very concerning.

9.1.2 Bus shelters – Cllr Alford reported that a volunteer was happy to supervise repairs to the bus shelter close to Laughton Lodge. A budget would be set at the next meeting. Cllr Massingham has inspected the bus shelter on The Green and reported that he found no issues. The Clerk will recirculate the RoSPA report and Cllr Wilson will also inspect the bus shelter.

9.2 Business Plan – Cllr Hallam stated the Laughton Parish Council Mission Statement:

- To create and facilitate a social, supportive and sustainable parish community that is inclusive for all in the village.
- To organise or assist in the facilitation of diverse parish community events
- To communicate in a transparent and effective manner
- To create a safe environment for parishioners to enjoy the village

9.3 Community Engagement – the drop-in surgery held on 4th November had not been well attended. It was agreed that earlier advertising was necessary. Cllrs Hallam and Young will attend the surgery on 2nd December 2023.

9.4 Christmas Lighting of the Tree – Cllr Wilson will carry out the risk assessment, this will then be forwarded to the Clerk to be kept on file.

9.5 Dangerous traffic on Shortgate Lane – Cllr Massingham said there was nothing further to report. Cllr Wilson will investigate possible funds available through the Police and Crime Commissioner for traffic safety measures.

9.6 Pelham Field/Playground

Cllr Massingham left the meeting.

9.6.1 Update on goal/basketball hoop – a second quotation had been received and following discussion it was **agreed** that GW Ironworks Ltd would be appointed to carry out the repairs.

Cllr Massingham returned to the meeting.

9.6.2 Urgent repairs to infant playground fence – it was agreed that two posts causing most concern should be replaced at a cost of £245. It was agreed that the fence should be inspected again in the New Year and possible replacement considered in the long term providing funding can be secured.

9.6.3 Encouraging leisure use of Pelham Field by Laughton residents – covered during public questions.

9.7 Defibrillator for the Parish – the Clerk was asked to write to Laughton Village Shop Association Ltd to regarding the possible siting of the defibrillator on the building. The funding options were re-visited.

9.8 Community Speedwatch – Cllr Hallam was planning to complete the training shortly. All volunteers would need to undergo training. Laughton Community Speedwatch is registered with the Speedwatch portal.

9.9 Website/Email – it was **resolved** that all councillors will begin using the new email addresses from 1st December 2023.

9.10 Parish Emergency Plan – a Deputy Co-ordinator was still required.

9.11 Deer Warning Sign – the Clerk will contact East Sussex Highways for an update.

9.12 Climate and Ecology Bill – The Climate & Ecology Bill, a private member's bill currently before the House of Commons, seeks to address the challenges that climate change poses by creating a whole-of-government approach to deliver a net zero and nature positive future. Following discussion it was **resolved** that Laughton Parish Council would support the Bill, Cllr Wilson will write to Nus Ghani MP to inform her of our support, as requested by the promoters of the Bill.

9.13 Urban Grass Cutting Options for 2024 – following discussion and review of the areas covered Laughton Parish Council **resolved** to accept Option 1, two cuts per year.

9.14 WGod – correspondence from WGod to Wealden District Council was circulated prior to the meeting. The frustrations detailed in the correspondence were understood, it was considered that clearer communication regarding the Wealden Council Strategy would be helpful.

10. REPORTS (by leave) NOT FOR DECISION: None

There were no reports

The meeting closed at 9.07pm