

**Minutes of the Meeting of the East Dean Parish Council AGM
held on Monday 17th April 2023 at 7.00 pm
at East Dean Village Hall**

Present: Neil Georges (Chairman)
Sarah Peirson (Vice Chair)
Peter West
John Holt
Josh Collins
Sam Hook

In attendance: Jeremy Hunt – West Sussex Councillor
Parish Clerk – Alexia Ward
7 Parishioners

Apologies: Henry Potter - Chichester District Councillor

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th April 2022

The Minutes were approved.

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman's Report had been circulated to the council before the meeting and was then read to the meeting by Neil Georges.

4. Election of Officers

Chairman: Neil Georges (proposed by John Holt, seconded by Sam Hook)

Vice Chair: Sarah Peirson (proposed by Sam Hook, seconded by Peter West)

5. Financial statement

The Accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022-2023 had been prepared and were circulated by email to the council for approval at the meeting. The return was approved by the Parish Council at the meeting. Alexia added that when Chris Tyas audited the accounts, he suggested that the interest rate could be improved on the Helen West legacy account. Alexia said she would contact Lloyds Bank and make enquires.

The precept for the 2022/2023 financial year was £1,145.00. Other income included HM VAT 126 reclaims of £2,301.23 and £1,013.40 made on behalf of the village hall refurbishment which was then forwarded to the village hall, a payment of £2,000.00 from Sussex Martyrs Film Company for filming part of the Burning Girls in the Village, and interest £37.66 Helen West legacy account. Outgoings included payments for work on the pond, mowing and verge cutting, repayment of HM VAT126 claim, payment to CDC for bin emptying on Pond Green, a payment to Zurich Insurance for the parish policy, and a donation to the Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice Centre.

The total in the bank accounts on March 31st 2023 was £23,804 with £19,897.49 in the Active Saver H West (legacy) account and £3,907.39 in the Lloyds current account.

6. Any Other Business

7. Date of Next Meeting – 15th April 2024

Chairmans Report

East Dean Parish Council 2022/23

It has been a challenging year for all, with inflation currently running at 10.1% at the time of writing this. Household monthly budgets have been squeezed with both fuel and heating costs souring. The challenge of living and running businesses in a rural location such as East Dean, are not to be overlooked.

Never should we take for granted our wonderful Village Hall and Church which will also have endured the huge increases in overheads, with declining income streams that make running these enterprises ever more challenging. The Parish Council acknowledges the fine work of the Village Hall Committee and Parish Church Volunteers and I ask wherever possible, for everyone to support the events and fundraising opportunities that are undertaken support them.

It's wonderful to see local businesses busy with customers and seeing the Star and Garter being supported by locals which is vital. However, it's more impressive to see the innovative ways in which Jim and Julie have diversified to generate interest and revenue. From T-shirts to Milkshakes and Wood products, our local and rural businesses will, more than ever, continue to need our support and each will in turn enhance our lives in this village.

The village clear up continues to be a success and it's great to see new faces joining the group. However, I would urge anyone out walking and enjoying the village to continue the efforts, on a daily basis, by picking up any litter they may see.

We owe much to the relentless help from Tim, Martin and Glenn for their hard work by way of cutting, mowing, strimming, fixing, and lighting (the bonfire); if we had to fund these efforts, it would amount to a significant expense, impacting on the funds available to invest in our thriving village.

They have gone on to set up with the Parish Committee a working group/ subcommittee, which formalises the work that they do in a compliant way. We are however, going to need new volunteers who can start to learn some of the tasks the subcommittee complete year in year out.

Turning to the Parish Council, we set the precept in 2022-23 at £1,145 this was the twelfth year in a row that the Parish Council were able to freeze the funding requirement and I am pleased to report that for 2023-2024, we have been able to set the precept at just £1139.

The impact of such a freeze is that the cost of the East Dean Parish Council to the taxpayer continues to be one of the lowest in West Sussex. Without wanting to be a stuck record this can only happen as a direct result of the efforts of a small group of people, who give up a huge amount of time to ensure the smooth running of the village. Should this not be possible in the future, the precept would have to rise significantly.

We must also at this point thank Alexia for clerking the Parish Council, with her meticulous efficiency. We also thank Max Davies, for his continued support with the amazing Fireworks, the display last November was enjoyed by all and was by far the envy of many villages.

The speed watch group ran a good number of successful sessions over the course of the summer of 2022 headed up by Sam Hook. The groups were out at various times of the day, in various risk assessed locations around the village. Whilst the sessions only caught one speeding motorist, the group presented as a significant deterrent effect, with many motorists observed to slow down significantly as they approached. We are sure that this sends a "warning" and hopefully makes people think about the speed at which they drive through our village.

The Parish Council have continued to work on the following matters:

- Engaging with West Sussex County Council's Highways team to ensure work is carried out on the potholes on East Dean Hill.
- Working closely with the subcommittee to ensure maintenance and works are completed.
- Working with the filming company and location agents to negotiate extra income, which paid for the desilting of the pond.

- Attending other Parish Council meetings to understand their strategies for Speeding and traffic calming.
- Regular village walks and leaflet drops.
- Organising the “Guy “competition and the erecting of the Christmas Tree on Pond Green.
- Organising the return of bonfire night, with the Sub committee
- Organising the village clear up’s.

The Parish Council are very grateful for the support of the village, and I would like to thank my fellow councilors for all their efforts and hard work over the past year.

I repeat that which I wrote last year, please give a little time, it doesn’t have to be a lot, so we can all enjoy living in this wonderful village and the privilege of being custodians of East Dean; is one that benefits all of us.

Neil Georges

Chairman East Dean Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of East Dean Parish Council
17th April 2023 at 7.30pm
Held at East Dean Village Hall

Present: Neil Georges-Chair, Sarah Peirson –Vice Chair, John Holt, Sam Hook, Peter West and Josh Collins

Apologies Henry Potter-Chichester District Council
Sara Hutton-Potts had offered her resignation to Neil Georges which had been accepted and is with immediate effect. Neil thanked her for her work as a councillor.

In attendance: Jeremy Hunt-West Sussex County Council
Alexia Ward - Parish Clerk
Seven Parishioners

Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 16th January 2023 were reviewed and approved.

1. Matters arising from Minutes

- Neil Georges confirmed that Clive Jackson would be taking on the role of footpath warden in the Valley and a press release had been sent to the Valley Diary by Alexia. The position is overseen by West Sussex County Council who provide training and insurance. The Parish Council thanked Jill Mountford again for her time spent in the role.
- Neil Georges said that he had spoken with the trustees of the Helen West legacy account and he confirmed that the legacy was to be for the purpose that it was intended the bus shelter and relevant benches.
- To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III the Village Hall and Parish Council have invited the parish to join them at a Royal Tea on the afternoon of 7th May 2023. The council agreed to provide up to £50 to go towards prizes.
- Neil Georges said that the proposed subcommittee to help in maintaining the Village areas had provided him with an outline of works, through to the autumn. This was emailed to the parish council for their approval. The parish council also agreed a sum of £50 to be spent on painting of the BT phone box.

Neil Georges expressed his best wishes to Mary Stevens who had taken a fall in her garden which resulted in a broken hip. On behalf of the Parish Council, he wished Mary well and a speedy recovery.

2. Update from District and County Councillors

Jeremy Hunt sent his report by email to Alexia who circulated it to the Parish Council. Jeremy had followed up his request to highways regarding safety issues at the Pilley Green crossroads and he was awaiting further information from them. Jeremy's report is at the end of the minutes.

Henry Potter sent his report by email which was circulated to the Parish Council before the meeting. Henry said that there were two main issues to report. The first being that the Department of Transport had announced that all works to improving the A27 bypass at Chichester have been shelved and will be reintroduced in the Roads Infrastructure Strategy 4 which is scheduled for 2030-2035. This aligns with a similar announcement regarding the bypass at Arundel which has also been deferred.

Secondly, the Council agreed, almost unanimously, to press ahead with a Compulsory Purchase Order to forcibly buy the disputed access into the Tangmere Strategic Development Land which lies to the west of Tangmere. This will allow the development of 1,300 new homes to proceed in a controlled manner rather

than three separate landowners to develop their holding with conflicting issues regarding the roads network, open spaces, additional shops, increased medical facilities and much more. The entire scheme is expected to spread over fifteen years from the start for which there is no firm date fixed yet!

Yet again for the third month in a row, the Agenda for Wednesday's Planning Meeting has only four applications two of which refers to one property, and no multiple developments. This may be a good indicator of property development in the District particularly considering the uncertainty about the restrictive Highways strategy.

Finally, at the March Full Council Meeting, the Budget for the coming year was agreed and an increase of just 2.99% in the CDC Precept will be implemented for '23/ '24 which amounts to 10 pence per week. Not bad in these times of austerity.

3. Financial Report

Alexia Ward said that the balance of the Lloyds Current account was £3,861.39 and a payment to Tim Calloway had been made of £46.00 due to an under payment for his mowing fuel the previous month. The CDC precept payment was due on 21st April 2023 and again in September. The Helen West Legacy Account balance was £19,910.08 with an interest payment of £12.59.

4. Correspondence

Neil Georges said he had received a letter from a parishioner who was concerned about creating a wild flower area on the Pond Green. In her letter she said that the area should remain mown and available to all to use for games, picnicking or playing as it had been for many years.

5. Update on Flooding and Sewerage

Neil said he had been in contact with Southern Water re removing the pumps and filters from the Pond Green. The pumps will be removed after the threat of the springs rising again has gone. Jeremy Hunt WSSCC added that he was keen to arrange a meeting to meet Southern Water in relation to the flooding and sewage in the Lavant Valley.

6. Update on Highways

Neil Georges said that he would continue to report potholes and asked anyone else to report the on the West Sussex website.

7. Update from Parish Councillors

Sam Hook said that she had returned the speed awareness kit. She also thought that it may be beneficial to choose some other sites in the village. Sam said that she will be able to borrow the kit from Midhurst Police in the future.

Sarah Peirson said she had no contentious planning applications.

Neil Georges had been asked by a parishioner if there was any pruning to be done on the new trees planted along Charlton Road. Peter West said that other than ensuring they had enough water and the area below the trees was kept clear they will be ok for now.

8. Any Other Business

- Alexia Ward had been approached by Richard Pailthorpe to see if East Dean would be interested in having an information board similar to the ones that have been erected in Charlton and Singleton to have some continuity through the valley. Alexia showed a picture of the Charlton board to the Parish Council and a rough sketch by Richard of what could be the centre part of the board. The local history can be sourced from East Dean archive. Alexia explained that the boards in the other villages had been funded by

donations, advertising and a grant from the South Downs National Park. Alexia offered to find out more information and report back at the next meeting if the Parish Council were agreed in principle to the idea. The Parish Council agreed that Alexia should find out more.

- Sarah Peirson asked if the Church notice board at the entrance to the church path could be repaired as it was falling apart. Peter West offered to look at it and quote accordingly.
- Tim Calloway thanked John Holt for cutting the hedge along Butchers Lane which was difficult to do with the springs having run for so long this year.
- The Village Clear up day will be 13th May 2023 between 10.00 and 12. Alexia Ward said she would put up notices and put on village WhatsApp group.

Date of Next Meetings

17th July 2023 at 7.30pm

16th October 2023 at 7.30pm

At East Dean Village Hall

Jeremy Hunt's Report - WSCC Performance Update

At our last Public Cabinet, on 14th March, we considered the Quarter 3 Performance and Resources Report, which sets out the County Council's performance, including a financial update, for the period from **1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022**. I thought it might interest you to learn a little more about the wide range of the work undertaken by the county council in order to support our residents. I have therefore reproduced an excerpt from the report, which sets out our performance update by the our five Key Priorities. The full Quarter 3 report is available as part of the cabinet Papers which can be found at:

<https://westsussex.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g3301/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2014-Mar-2023%2010.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Overall Performance Summary

17. During this period, the key focus has been on the ongoing global energy crisis, cost of living and inflation which is impacting operations across the council. The County Council has no additional resources to address the impact and is anticipating additional cost and demand pressures in many services. The County Council with focus on partnership working, continues to help those most in need to access the range of support that is available.

Priority 1 - Keeping People Safe from Vulnerable Situations

18. As in previous quarters, the health and social care system in West Sussex continues to experience significant pressure and this dominates the work of the Adults Social Care Service. The reasons for this are complex but include high demand from our partners, in particular our NHS partners requiring support in the timely and safe discharge of patients from hospitals within the county.

19. Performance within the Children and Young People and Learning and Skills Portfolios continues to be focused on maintaining a strong trajectory of improvement as we prepare for the imminent Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by Ofsted. Recent activity has focused on individual teams where the overall level of performance has fallen below the standard we expect. The service has therefore maintained a strong focus with staff and managers on providing evidence of the impact of our improvement activity at a child and family level. The Children First Transformation programme continues to provide a strong framework for service delivery and is on track with the implementation of Phase 2 of the Family Safeguarding model and the implementation of the Phase 2 Fostering Service Redesign. Both will support the improvements in practice and performance in readiness for a full Ofsted inspection.

20. To ensure we are ready for the ILACS, the Practice Improvement Plan has been reviewed and supports activity across all service areas within children's social care and early help. This activity remains closely aligned to performance reporting and is reported to the independent Improvement Board monthly. The Improvement Board has acknowledged the hard work being undertaken and that there is evidence that the service is maintaining the trajectory of improvement.

21. During the third quarter, we have continued to see levels of high demand within the areas of early help and social care, and the service has managed this well. Recruitment remains a high priority the successful recruitment of 35 qualified social workers from the South Africa programme are now being inducted into the service from January 2023.

22. Teasel Close children's home in Crawley, which is run by the County Council, received an Ofsted rating of 'good' in all areas following an inspection in November 2022. This means the five Council run children's homes that are currently open are rated good or outstanding.

23. Working closely with district and borough councils and charities, the County Council is using its £4.8m Household Support Fund from Government, to provide a package of financial and practical assistance to people over the winter.

The Community Hub continues to offer direct support to vulnerable households, providing essentials such as food and supplies, as well as grants to those who are eligible. The Council used some of the Household Support Fund to provide food vouchers for every West Sussex child who receives benefits-related free school meals over the October halfterm and the Christmas school holiday. Over 17,000 children were given a £15 supermarket voucher for October and a £30 voucher for Christmas supporting around 10,000 households.

24. Library staff are on hand to help and advise people on a range of topics, from money management to energy saving, job seeking and benefits guidance. Regular library events such as 'Story Time' are free for families of young children. The 'Here To Help - Cost Of Living' webpages, also have practical advice and information about how to apply for extra local and national support.

Priority 2 - A Sustainable and Prosperous Economy

25. With more than three-times the average rainfall in November, the highways network in West Sussex experienced significant flooding. The teams have been working hard with contractors to keep the roads open and repair any subsequent damage to the carriageways that has been caused by the water.

26. A total of £7.4m worth of road surface improvement schemes were completed at 197 sites countywide in the six months to October. 138km of road were either completely resurfaced or had surface dressing or micro-asphalt treatments. Approximately 22,000 potholes were filled. Three programmes of work include 38 resurfacing schemes, totalling approximately 25km in length and representing a total investment of £3.4m. The new road surfaces are more durable and resilient to potholes and the material used has 11% less carbon emissions than traditional methods. Micro-asphalt treatment was used at 113 sites, with a total of 44km roads treated and representing a £2m investment and 46 sites, totalling 69km of road, received surface dressing treatment, representing an investment of £2m.

27. Construction is also progressing well at three Active Travel Fund schemes in West Sussex which will all provide improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. Findon/Findon Valley involves construction of a 2km-long shared cycleway/walkway route, the A283 Steyning Road in Shoreham includes construction of a crossing for both pedestrians and cyclists to access the river-side footway and cycleway and improve connectivity for schoolchildren. The A259 Drayton, near Marsh Lane will provide improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers

28. Bus services are still recovering from the impacts on patronage from the pandemic, therefore, a national 'BusIt' campaign has been launched to attract older people with free bus passes to return or start to use buses again. Additionally, a national £2 capped bus fare launched on 1st January 2023.

29. Bidding as part of a South-East consortium, the council has been successful in securing funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to deliver the Create Growth programme across the county to provide support for high-growth potential businesses in the creative industries. The consortium has been awarded funding of £1.275m to deliver business support as part of the programme, over three years. The programme will work to develop the network of investors in the region and build their understanding of the benefits of investing in this sector. This will increase the ability of creative businesses in the South-East to access private investment in the future. The programme is being set up now and will launch in January 2023.

Priority 3 - Helping People and Communities Fulfil Their Potential

30. Recent events to help residents stay safe include free electric blanket testing, free kitchen fire safety events at Worthing and the relaunch of the road safety show 'Safe Drive Stay Alive'. Biker Down workshops run by firefighters have also taken place, which teaches vital skills that could save a life in the event of a road traffic collision involving a motorcycle. A new free online interactive home fire safety check tool has also been launched.

31. Outbreaks of avian bird flu in captive birds, both domestic and commercial, were confirmed in West Sussex for the first time. Working with DEFRA's Animal and Plant Health Agency, 3 km control zones were established around premises in Billingshurst (October), Arundel (November) and Horley (December) and Trading Standards Officers conducted doorstep visits within those areas to identify keepers of birds and ensure that they were being suitably housed whilst DEFRA vets dealt with the outbreaks.

Priority 4 - Making the Best Use of Resources

32. *Ongoing investment in low carbon and renewable energy by the County Council continues to help towards offsetting the increase in the authority's own energy bills and to lead by example in demonstrating the importance to invest in clean energy. The County Council also works with a specialist energy partner to market the energy it generates and operate its batteries to deliver the best financial return.*

33. *The County Council's draft Budget and Council Plan for 2023/24 was published and subject to review by the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee in January, an all-Member Day and budget and Council Plan session with key stakeholders. The Cabinet is proposing that the Council will spend £1.86 billion (gross) next year to deliver vital services to a growing population of 882,676 residents and 37,400 businesses across West Sussex. Final decisions on the budget are to be made at the Full Council meeting on 17th February.*

Priority 5 - Responding to the Challenges Posed by Climate Change

34. *A new zero-carbon school in Burgess Hill has been approved that will generate its own energy and offer excellent educational facilities to 900 local children. The County Council has approved capital funding of £57m to build the secondary school. Its position will provide maximum sunlight to nearly 1,000 solar photovoltaic panels generating an estimated 296,000 kWh of energy a year. The LED lighting will be controlled automatically by daylight and movement detection. The main building will have fresh air ventilation, keeping the school a comfortable temperature, even in extreme heat. The school will include a Special Support Centre enabling children with special educational needs and disabilities to be supported to learn in a mainstream school.*

35. *Government funding of up to £1.8m has been awarded to the West Sussex Chargepoint Network, which is providing electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints for residents in areas which have no off-street parking. Working with district and borough council partners this will help fund up to 450 on-street chargepoints and 100 in public car parks to encourage people to consider making the switch to electric vehicles.*

36. *Around £0.250m of funding was secured to undertake studies at 37 schools, which will identify site specific measures to decarbonise these sites. Within the next few weeks, we expect to have sufficient information to plan a future programme of school decarbonisation works and be ready to bid for funding to undertake the works.*

37. *The County Council has approved a £7.7m investment in solar PV and battery storage systems for schools and corporate buildings across the county. This investment builds on the council's existing portfolio of solar PV assets delivered through the Solar Power for Schools Programme. The PV and battery systems will help to reduce energy costs and contribute to achieving net zero operation. Following approval, the Energy Services team has started a procurement exercise to commission an installer to deliver the programme over the next three years.*

Other Updates

Highways Update

As you will be aware, following the weather events we have experienced over the last year, we are now tackling a large number of issues on the network. We continue to see exceptionally high numbers of customer reports, in March this was just under 8,000 enquires, this is double what we would normally expect at this time of the year and this trend continues. In January the number of enquiries exceeded 11,000. The impact on the Highways teams has been significant. The teams are incredibly busy and the volume of work is unrelenting, including the significant incidents at the A29, Midhurst and Wiston, which have also added pressure to the workload. I would like to assure you we are doing all we can to manage the workload; officers are working over-time and we have successfully recruited new staff but they need support and training to become fully operational. Our contractors' gangs are also working twilight shifts and Saturdays to manage the increased number of jobs. We are also looking to increase the number of gangs further but as I am sure you will appreciate; this is common to the entire south-east and nationally, so sourcing additional gangs at this time is very difficult. Our 3 Jet Patchers are now in operation so this will help. In order to enable the Highway Teams to effectively deal with the volume of safety issues being

reported, we will be pausing non-statutory activities for a period of 4 weeks as we did in January. We will extend our response times to customers on general enquiries from 10-20 days. We appreciate your support and understanding at this very busy time.

Just to clarify, the proposed temporary measures (from April 17th up to 12th May) are:

- Extend SLA for customer responses – up to 20 days
- Pause non-essential licensing activities (e.g., residential Vehicle Crossovers, Standard Forms of Consent for activities like licensing banners or planters).
- Pause responses to general enquiries, including Community Highway Schemes
- Add pop ups to the webpages to advise members of the public of paused activities
- Amend the wording on the corporate complaints acknowledgment
-

Local Issues.

Signage - Pilley Green Cross Roads - Further to my update in January our highways teams have been flat out (see report above) so I am still waiting for someone to come back to me on this. I will keep chasing and as soon as I hear anything I will update you.

Finally, please don't forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

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