

ROWLANDS CASTLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FULL COUNCIL 08.01.24

Monday 8 January 2024 at 7.00pm

The Meeting Place, Church on The Green, Rowlands Castle PO9 6AB
These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Council at its next Meeting

PRESENT:

Cllr C Stanley (Chairman), Cllr F Ball, Cllr S Donald, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr Y Haggard, Cllr I Moore and Cllr B Wilson.

Mrs G Whatley (Admin Officer) was also present, as were Ms C Newman (Facilities Officer), C Cllr M Harvey and D Cllr C Maines in part.

MINUTES:

Taken by Ms L Walker (Clerk to the Council)

THE CHAIRMAN'S SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE

1. To Receive and Agree any Councillors' Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and agreed from Cllr V Matthews due to illness.

2. To Receive any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point.

3. To Receive and Confirm the Accuracy of the Draft Minutes of the Council Meeting on 4 December 2023, together with a Written Update on the Progress of Resolutions from Meetings

The Minutes (circulated previously) were unanimously CONFIRMED as an accurate record of the Meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk's Update on the Progress of Resolutions (circulated previously) was received and NOTED and a copy will be kept with these Minutes.

4. To Receive Reports from County & District Councillors, and other delegates, if appropriate:

County Cllr Marge Harvey Cllr Harvey summarised and added to her written report (circulated previously a copy kept with these Minutes) on the following Hampshire County Council (HCC)-related matters:

- Advice for residents during periods of inclement weather;
- A recent incident of fly-tipping near Finchdean involving asbestos;
- Changes to allow some DIY-related waste to be disposed of free of charge at local amenity waste sites;
- Trading Standards clamping-down on illegal sales after increase in under-age vaping;
- Risks involved in drivers not heeding the closure of Woodberry Lane due to flooding;
- Consultation (8 Jan to 31 March) on expenditure following budget shortfall of £132M by April 2025.

In discussion with members, the following was noted: The increase in parking enforcement in the village was praised, though it was noted disabled bays needed to be re-marked to be visible; Salaries of some senior HCC officer; Further issues with the closure of Woodberry Lane indicating a more permanent solution must be sought eg barriers or gates which could be brought into service when necessary.

District Cllr Charlene Maines Cllr Maines summarised and added to her written report (circulated at the Mtg, a copy kept with these Minutes) on the following East Hampshire District Council (EHDC)-related matters:

- Support/assistance for rough sleepers and advice for residents identifying anyone in this predicament;
- Lack of provision of some information to district cllrs in time for discussions on draft Local Plan prior to forthcoming Consultation (beginning 22 January);
- Involvement in extended Household Support Scheme and information thereon;
- Forthcoming round-table meeting re concerns over at least one plot at Comley Hill;
- Her enquiry re potential for recycling waste scheme in public places upon which she awaits a response.

In discussion with members, the following was noted: The Article 4 Direction on the Comley Hill plots had not been included in EHDC's otherwise helpful Interactive Map; Concerns that district cllrs had not been given sight of important documents (eg the Policies Map) prior to or during discussions on the draft Local Plan; Lack of action to date re 2 vehicles parked in vicinity of The Green, seemingly abandoned and taking up valuable parking space, with recommendation to involve the Hampshire Police & Crime Commissioner.

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5. OPEN FORUM – Limited to 15 minutes in total and a max 3 mins for each individual speaker

A resident expressed concern at recent flooding on Lower Links Lane, affecting the Parish Hall, and the lack of action by a relevant authority. There was some discussion during which the following was noted:

- The storm drain a little further up from the Hall was wholly ineffective and the main reason the Hall flooded during heavy/prolonged rainfall; HCC had taken no significant action despite reports over the years;
- The Hall Management Committee had introduced measures to try and cope with such weather but its members were still often called upon at short notice to deal with the consequent flooding of the Hall;
- This has led to queries as to whether HCC could be held liable for damage to the Hall from flooding;
- A regular programme of drain clearance was badly needed for the Parish, especially as some drains are only soakaways and inadequate during heavy rainfall, but HCC budget restraints may curtail this;
- Other property owners on The Green and Bowes Hill had taken considerable mitigating measures to protect their properties but they still flooded during heavy/prolonged rainfall;
- C Cllr Harvey provided the names of a relevant HCC cllr and officer;
- Query as to what measures are in place for those elderly/vulnerable people who are fearful of flooding but unsure what to do and do not have the ability to go on-line to learn more;
- Environment Agency's continuing lack of action due to severe budget constraints.

Action: C and D Cllrs to report issues to relevant HCC/EHDC portfolio holders and/or officers

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: To Consider and Agree Action on the following, if appropriate

NB: Council's full comments on these and all other relevant Applications can be read via EHDC's website: <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-application-process/search-and-comment-planning-applications> or a similar page on SDNPA's website.

26978/021 Application for Consent for Works to Trees Subject to a Tree Preservation Order -
For Note Only 20% COPPICING OF (GROUP 1) AND (GROUP 2) (E.H. 122) SWEET CHESTNUT
TREES TO GROUND LEVEL (TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 1983)
Spire Portsmouth Hospital, Bartons Road, Rowlands Castle, Havant, PO9 5NP

It was noted the Admin Officer had reviewed this Application, circulating her comments thereon. With members' agreement, a response of NO OBJECTION had been submitted by the deadline of 18 December.

26064/005 FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION TO THE SIDE, SINGLE STOREY REAR AND SIDE WRAP
For Note Only AROUND EXTENSION, GARAGE CONVERSION INTO GUEST ROOM. ASSOCIATED
CHANGES TO ROOF LINE, AND AMENDMENT TO PORCH FOLLOWING
DEMOLITION OF EXISTING CONSERVATORY AND RECEPTION ROOM
90 Bowes Hill, Rowlands Castle, PO9 6BW

It was noted the Admin Officer had reviewed this Application, circulating her comments thereon. With members' agreement, a response of NO OBJECTION had been submitted by the deadline of 20 December.

29094/018 Notification of Intention to Carry Out Works to Trees Within a Conservation Area: T1
For Note Only HORNBEAM - REDUCE CROWN BY 2-3M TO LEAVE FINISHED HEIGHT OF 6-7M
AND FINISHED SPREAD (RADIUS) OF 5M. T2 COPPER BEECH - REDUCE CROWN
Y APPROX 2-3M TO LEAVE FINISHED HEIGHT OF 6-7M AND FINISHED SPREAD
(RADIUS) OF 5M. T3 BAY - REDUCE CROWN BY 2-3M TO LEAVE FINISHED HEIGHT
OF 2.5M AND SPREAD (RADIUS) OF 1M
North Lodge, Manor Lodge Road, Rowlands Castle, PO9 6BA

It was noted the Admin Officer had reviewed this Application, circulating her comments thereon. With members' agreement, a response of NO OBJECTION had been submitted by the deadline of 22 December.

52401/033 THE PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE REMOVAL OF UNDERGROUND
For Note Only TANKS AND JET WASH, PROVISION OF SALES BUILDING EXTENSION AND NEW
BIN STORE; NEW UNDERGROUND TANKS AND MINOR FORECOURT CHANGES;
PROVISION OF EVC HUB AND CAR PARKING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS
Shell Whichers Gate, Whichers Gate Road, Rowlands Castle, PO9 6BB

It was noted Cllr Wilson had reviewed this Application, circulating his report thereon. With members' agreement, a response of OBJECTION on several grounds had been submitted by the deadline of 4 January.

22289/005 SINGLE STOREY INFILL SIDE EXTENSION & FIRST FLOOR SIDE ROOF
For Note Only ALTERATIONS
66 Redhill Road, Rowlands Castle, PO9 6DF

It was noted Cllr Edwards had reviewed this Application, circulating his report thereon. With members' agreement, a response of NO OBJECTION had been submitted by the extended deadline of 3 January.

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The following concerns were also raised by officers/members:

- Previous plans are often removed from EHDC's public on-line planning records in favour of amended versions, making it difficult to compare and accurately assess the changes;
- There is a lack of consistency as to whether parish councils are notified of amendments to current planning applications or not;
- EHDC's next steps re the Enforcement Order on 16b The Green.

D Cllr Maines noted these and undertook to investigate, whilst noting that EHDC's Planning Dept had experienced some staffing issues but this was due to be rectified in February/March 2024.

7. GENERAL MATTERS FOR DECISION: To Consider and Agree Action on the following:

a) Draft Documentation for Invitation to Tender for Council's Grass Cutting Contract from 2024 – Members noted the Instructions and Specification of the Tender (circulated previously) drafted by the Clerk, assisted by the Admin Officer. It was AGREED the contract would: Be from 2024 to 2027 inclusive, subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period in the first year (*since set at 4 months*); Include the Parish Hall Garden and Recreation Ground, as assets of the respective CIOs for which Council is sole trustee; Include a maximum ceiling for bids (*since set at total cost per cut*); Require bids to be submitted by 5pm on 26 February with the successful contractor to be decided at Council's Mtg on 4 March 2024.

It was unanimously RESOLVED to finalise the documentation on the basis of the above and progress the publishing and advertising of the Invitation to Tender in accordance with Council's Financial Regulations, particularly Standing Orders 78 to 81 inclusive.

Action 1: Clerk to finalise and publish documentation and advertise Invitation accordingly

Action 2: Parish Office to collate tender bids to be opened in presence of at least one cllr

Action 3: Review of Tender Bids to be included on the Agenda for March 2024 Mtg

b) The Recreation Ground:

▪ **As Trustee of a CIO: Review of Report and Accounts for Recreation Ground CIO to 31 March 2023** – Members noted the Report and Accounts (circulated previously), drafted by the Admin Officer and since amended in line with some members' comments. It was unanimously RESOLVED to adopt the amended Report as that of the Trustee of the CIO, and signed by the Chairman before submission to the Charity Commission by 31 January 2024.

Action: Admin Officer to finalise and submit the Report and Accounts to the Commission

▪ **Review of Major Repair/Replacement of 2 pieces of Outdoor Gym Equipment** – On the advice of the Finance Working Group, members reviewed Council's decision (taken at its Meeting on 4 September 2023) to defer works to 2 pieces to 2024/25. This was on the grounds that the budgeted £2,000 grant to the Recreation Ground for 2023/24 had not been necessary. It was unanimously RESOLVED to commission Fresh Air Fitness (the original manufacturer) to:

i) Undertake the recommended repair to the double air skier at a cost of £854 + VAT;

ii) Remove the damaged double rower and replace it with varied-height chin-up bars, re-located to a safer place nearby, with a budget of max £1,500 + VAT.

Action: Facilities Officer to liaise with Fresh-Air Fitness accordingly

▪ **Replacement of Deteriorating Litter Bin at North-East Corner of Ground** – Members noted the Admin Officer's paper (circulated previously) on the options available. It was unanimously RESOLVED to replace the deteriorating bin with the same Broxap model as outside the Pavilion ie the Derby E Double Recycling bin (2 x 120l capacity) in black with pyramid top at a cost of £469 + VAT, plus any required fixings. It was noted that whilst the waste in public bins is not currently recycled, this may change in the future and the Council would like to encourage this as soon as possible.

Action: Facilities & Admin Officers to purchase bin and liaise with Handyman over installation

c) Replacement of Community/Parish Council Noticeboard on Finchdean Green – Members noted the Admin Officer's paper (circulated previously) on the options available. It was unanimously RESOLVED to replace the deteriorating noticeboard with a standard multi-contemporary aluminium one in green from Greenbarnes at a cost of £1,582.58 + VAT and Delivery, subject to EHDC's agreement as landowner.

Action: Admin Officer to liaise with EHDC and purchase noticeboard accordingly

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8. FINANCIAL MATTERS FOR DECISION: To Consider and Agree Action on the following:

a) **December 2023 Schedule of Payments, for authorisation** – Cllr Donald stated he had reviewed and confirmed the relevant invoices. It was unanimously RESOLVED to AUTHORISE the Schedule (circulated previously), which was then signed by all 3 signatories.

A list of payments is included below (incl VAT where appropriate, which is reclaimable by the Council):

Method	Amount £	Payee	Reason
DD	269.34	HS Administrative Services Ltd	Monthly pension contributions + admin fees
DD	101.26	Focus Group	Monthly fee for Office phone and broadband
DD	20.40	Vodafone Ltd	Monthly fee for Facilities Officer's mobile
DD	13.20	Three Business	Monthly fee for CCTV SIM Card at Pavilion
IBT	288.00	Society of Local Council Clerks	Clerk's annual membership for 2024
IBT	250.00	Rowlands Castle URC	Grant for Meeting Place boiler replacement
IBT	250.00	Homestart Butser	Grant for running costs
IBT	270.00	HAGS-SMP Ltd	Operational inspection in 2021
IBT	4,512.00	ESP Scotland Ltd t/a ESP Play	Bin + Part-balance payment for Playpark Project
IBT	8,028.00	G & T Door Access Solutions	Replacement doors for public WCs at Pavilion
IBT	186.00	Voxit Ltd	Website: annual hosting, domain renewal + edits
IBT	1,080.00	Good Directions Ltd	50% Balance for 2 x benches for The Green
DD	11.30	Managed Print Partners Ltd	MFD charges incl supplies, maintenance etc
IBT	340.00	MM Maintenance Ltd	Ditch clearance, Comley Hill plot, to ease flooding
IBT	54.60	Prospect Gas Ltd	Repairs to tap in Groundsman's Shed
IBT	58.64	Viking Payments	Parish Office consumables
PP	20.38	Nisbets Ltd	New, compatible soap dispenser for public WC
IBT	176.00	Hampshire County Council	S178 Licence Application Fee for speed cameras
IBT	32.30	RC Parish Hall	Hall Hire: Council Mtg
IBT	1,160.25	Exterior Living Rooms Ltd	Grass cutting, Handyman + Lengthsman servs
IBT	8.55	Cllr C Stanley	Travel expenses
IBT	9.25	C Newman, Facilities Officer	Reimbursement of consumables for Rec
IBT	26.20	L Walker, Clerk	Travel expenses + reimbursing voucher.
IBTs	8,690.44	Staff salaries including HMRC, PAYE and NIC + additional hours + pay increase	
Total	£25,856.11		

IBT = Inter-bank Transfer, Council's main payment method now it is registered for online banking.

DD = Direct Debit SO = Standing Order Chq = Cheque PP = PayPal

Action: Clerk to make any remaining payments according to Schedule

A list of receipts in December 2023 is included below:

Method	Amount £	Payer	Reason
IBT	50.00	Resident	Donation towards bench maintenance
IBT	4,653.06	EHDC	Further release of s106 funds for Parish Hall's Fire Alarm System
IBT	25,000.00	EHDC	Supporting Communities Fund grant for Playpark Project
IBT	1,050.00	EHDC	Further release of s106 funds for pitch improvements to date
IBT	22,605.64	EHDC	Release of s106 funds for Playpark Project
IBT	12.00	Focus Group	Cashback on Facilities Officer's mobile phone contract
IBT	2,845.00	Zurich	Insurance payout for repair/upgrade of Pavilion public WC door

b) **Report on Council's Bank Accounts as at 31 December 2023, for acceptance** – Members noted and ACCEPTED the Report (circulated previously).

Account	Balance
Current	£67,526.36 (Reconciled balance of £64,295.03 accounting for payments not yet made/direct debits not yet take/cheques not yet presented)
95-day Notice Account	NIL (Balance withdrawn for Playpark Project)
100-day Notice Account	NIL (Balance withdrawn for Playpark Project)
2-Yr Fixed Rate Bond	£15,240.66
Public Sector Deposit Fund	£25,333.33
In total, Council currently holds reserves (restricted and unrestricted) of c £84,558 including under-spends from previous years on specific projects and developers' contributions released to RCPC.	

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c) **Quarterly Review of Budget and Actual Payments & Receipts to 31 December 2023** – Members noted and ACCEPTED the Clerk's Update Report (circulated previously).

Action: Clerk to publish Update on Council's website

d) **Quarterly Review of Council's Asset Register to 31 December 2023** – Members noted the following since the last review in September 2023: Acquisitions – New Playpark equipment, 2 new benches for The Green, 2 new doors to public WCs at Pavilion, Disposals – 2 old benches, when replaced.

Action: Clerk to ensure specified changes are recorded on Register

e) **Review of Restricted Funds and Management of Reserves** – Members noted the current Restricted Reserve Funds (circulated previously) held by Council and AGREED various changes, releasing some funds back into General Reserves.

Action: Clerk to make agreed changes to Restricted Funds and release funds as appropriate

f) **Finance Working Group's Recommendations re Budget for 2024/25** – Members noted the Group's detailed Proposed Expenditure recommendations, identified major priorities for the year together with a forecast of very little change in the Council Tax Base (all circulated previously). They also noted parish and town councils are obliged by law to set their precepts by 1 March prior to the start of the next financial year, and continued advice to delay setting precepts until February to allow for a clearer idea of inflationary pressures and Govt assurance that Council Tax capping will not be extended to such parish and town councils for the forthcoming year. It was unanimously RESOLVED to ACCEPT provisionally the Proposed Expenditure Budget of £149,520 for 2024/25, subject to confirmation at the next Council Mtg.

g) **Setting of Provisional Precept for 2024/25** – Further to discussions under Item 8 f) above, it was unanimously RESOLVED to AGREE a provisional Precept of £149,520, subject to confirmation at the next Council Mtg. Members acknowledged this would represent a sizeable increase on the previous year (c £20 for the year on a Band D property) whilst noting inflationary increases affecting many Council services plus there was no guarantee external funds (eg grants, developers' contributions) would be available for planned projects such as the much-needed refurbishment of the Pavilion, the second phase of Playpark Project for provide facilities for older children, the purchase of further devices to tackle speeding and the management of them thereon.

Action: Clerk to include Confirmation of Budget and resultant Precept on Agenda for February Mtg

9. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION:

a) **Summary of Residents' Dealings with Parish Office in December 2023** – The Admin Officer's Summary (circulated previously) was noted, a copy of which will be kept with these Minutes.

b) **Update from RC Flood Action Group on Flood Alleviation Measures for Winter 2023/24** – Cllr Donald reported the Group had worked well and prevented flooding, where possible. Signage for the closure of Woodberry Lane remains an issue, now flood water was flowing across the ford (see Item 4).

c) **Report on SDNPA's Local Plan Review – Hampshire Parish Workshop on 6 December** – Members noted Cllr Ball's report of the Workshop which he and Cllr Wilson had attended (circulated previously and details of which are available upon request).

d) **Report on EHDC's Land East of Horndean Development Panel on 11 December** – Members noted Cllr Wilson had been unable to attend due to illness and awaited the minutes of the Mtg of the Panel.

10. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION:

a) **Schedule of EHDC's and SDNPA's Planning Decisions up to 1 December 2023** – The Administrative Officer's Schedule (circulated previously) was noted. A copy will be kept with these Minutes.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 5 February 2024 in the Small Parish Hall, 11 Links Lane, Rowlands Castle

The Meeting ended at 9.30pm

During the course of the Meeting (both part and whole) there were 2 members of the public and no members of the Press in attendance.