



## **ARDINGLY PARISH COUNCIL**

Parish Clerk: Bernadette Cox  
c/o The Post Office, 37 High Street, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TB  
Tel: 01444 226 209 Email: ardinglypc@hotmail.co.uk

### **Minutes of the Remote Ardingly Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm on the Microsoft Teams Platform**

#### Present

Councillor D. Stutchbury (Chairman)  
Councillor C. Hotblack (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor R. Chalk  
Councillor L. Davis  
Councillor J. Horsman  
Councillor J. James  
Councillor K. James  
Councillor M. Meldrum

In Attendance Mrs. B Cox (Parish Clerk)  
Mr. R. Wheatley (RFO)

**Two minutes silence were observed in memory of HRH Duke of Edinburgh**

#### **1684.1 Public Questions**

David Port updated the Parish Council on the Youth Cricket Training Sessions that are being facilitated in conjunction with ACC and St Peters.

He asked if he could work with the Clerk to reopen the Pavilion using the “live” Risk Assessments as a starting point.

He also directed a question to Councillor Chalk in ref to a previous comment she made around talking to villagers about the “Mary Puckle” fund. He asked her who she spoke with specifically. Councillor Chalk explained she spoke with Caroline Steer and Rachel Cowling amongst others. David Port explained he also knew Mary Puckle well as did his wife who was Vice Chair of the Council when Mary was Clerk should any further information be needed in relation to “her wishes” in terms of the fund.

<p><b>0121</b></p>	<p><b>Procedural Matters</b></p> <p><b>0121.1 Election of Chair</b></p> <p>Councillor Stutchbury expressed an interest to remain as Chair, Councillor Strutton seconded his expression of interest. All Members were asked if they wished to stand, All declined. The Council unanimously voted for Councillor Stutchbury to remain as Chair of the Parish Council for the year 21/22</p> <p><b>0121.2 The Chair to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b></p> <p>Councillor Stutchbury signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and held the signed document up to the camera.</p> <p><b>0121.3 Election of Vice Chair</b></p> <p>Councillor Hotblack expressed an interest to remain as Vice Chair, Councillor Strutton seconded his expression of interest. All Members were asked if they wished to stand, All declined. The Council unanimously voted for Councillor Stutchbury to remain as Chair of the Parish Council for the year 21/22</p> <p><b>0121.4 The Vice Chair to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b></p> <p>Councillor Hotblack signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and held the signed document up to the camera.</p> <p><b>0121.5 To accept apologies for absence</b></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence received.</p> <p><b>0121.6 To accept any declarations of interests</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p> <p><b>0121.7 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2021</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 were duly <b>APPROVED</b> by the Council and the Chairman will sign a copy of the same as a true and Accurate record of the proceedings once the government restrictions in place for Covid19 are lifted.</p>	
<p><b>0221</b></p>	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>0221.1 To review and approve Committee Memberships for 2021</b></p> <p>The Committee Memberships for 2021 were reviewed.</p> <p>In relation to Chair of Finance two members expressed an interest in this role. A vote was taken for the Chair of Finance role and a casting vote required. Councillor Stutchbury as Chair of the Parish Council used his casting vote to vote for Councillor Chalk and as a result she was elected by majority as Chair of Finance.</p> <p>The Committee Memberships for 2021 were approved.</p> <p><b>0221.2 To review and approve representatives on outside bodies for 2021</b></p>	

	The representatives on outside bodies were reviewed and approved for 2021	
<b>0321</b>	<p><b>Clerks Report</b>  <b>0321.1 To receive the Clerks Report</b></p> <p>Members had been supplied with a copy of the Clerks Report prior to the meeting. The contents of the Clerks report were accepted and <b>APPROVED</b></p>	
<b>0421</b>	<p><b>Finance</b>  <b>0421.1 To receive and approve the schedule of payments since the last meeting</b></p> <p>The RFO explained the significant payments were £2984.94 on salaries for March and £2692.42 for Apr salaries.</p> <p>He advised that the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the precept had been received and totaled £43,491</p> <p>He explained that £220.00 for Village Voice advertising was received as income.</p> <p><b>0421.2 To receive the Finance Report</b></p> <p>The RFO updated the Council on the “charge” cards and explained that the cards had not been received and he would chase as they application was made over 6 weeks ago.</p> <p>He also explained that he will be submitting the VAT return for £3051.92 which covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> Jul to 31<sup>st</sup> March last year (2020)</p> <p>The RFO advised that the End of Year Accounts are largely complete and the Internal Auditor has confirmed a “clean audit” The End of Year Accounts now need to be approved by Full Council for submission to the External Auditor.</p> <p>He explained there had been a reduction in the Internal Audit fee as this was completed quicker than expected.</p> <p>The May Finance Report was accepted and <b>APPROVED</b></p> <p><b>0421.3 To receive and review the End of Year Accounts</b>  <b>0421.4 To receive and sign the Annual Governance Statement</b></p> <p><b>Items 0421.3 and 0421.4 were discussed as “one” item as they are linked.</b></p> <p>Councillor J James raised that he felt that “we” are saying we have maintained internal financial controls when he is aware of at least three unauthorised spends and therefore “we” have not as we have identified at least three gaps in these controls in one year.</p> <p>Councillor J James felt we should be ticking the “no” box on the return indicating we do not have adequate controls and adding a note to that effect.</p> <p>The RFO explained that ticking the “Yes” box means we have made adequate arrangements to protect the Public purse and “we” have. We have Financial regulations e.g. controls.</p> <p>Councillor J James explained he felt that if “we” are aware of three gaps in those controls we cannot tick “Yes” unless we have tested and remediated those controls.</p>	

	<p>Councillor Stutchbury asked Councillor J James what the benefit was of raising this issue.</p> <p>Councillor J James said he did not feel comfortable making a false statement on a statutory reporting element.</p> <p>There was discussion amongst Councillors J James, Stutchbury and Hotblack around the unauthorised spends and the motivation to disclose them to the auditor.</p> <p>The RFO explained that he felt that it was not usual to highlight particular items to the auditor and that to tick “No” was dangerous it suggests that “we” don’t have any controls in place.</p> <p>Councillor Hotblack suggested ticking “Yes” and then adding a note explaining that a weakness in the controls had been identified and corrected.</p> <p>Councillor J James challenged Councillor Hotblack’s suggestion and advised unless we have tested and remediated “our” controls we cannot say we have.</p> <p><b>The RFO stated that he believes the Parish Council do have robust internal controls and that he felt this was echoed by the Internal Auditors statement, he suggested that the three referenced instances were simple errors of judgment and/or misunderstanding of process.</b></p> <p>The Chair of Finance (Councillor Chalk) then asked the Clerk directly if the expectation was that no public money could be spent without resolution of the Council and the Clerk replied yes, public money cannot be spent unless there has been a resolution of the Full Council or the Scheme of Delegation has been used in place of a resolution.</p> <p>After prolonged discussion The Parish Council unanimously voted to instruct the RFO to Draft wording to be included in the AGAR/Annual Governance Statement for the year 20/21 specifically point 2 of section 1 that is to explain that the Parish Council have identified weaknesses in its internal controls during the reporting year 20/21 and that the Parish Council have addressed these weaknesses or words to that effect. It was also AGREED that the Draft wording would be reviewed by all Members on email and if there was no contention the wording would be approved using the Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>The RFO left the meeting at this point</p>	
0521	<p><b>Planning Committee</b></p> <p><b>To consider planning applications as below and any others which may arise in the meantime</b></p> <p><b>0521.1 DM/21/1378 Renovation of family Home. Works include roof top extension a new bay window at rear of property , new window insertions, new single storey toilet and demolition of tool shed, Little Strudgates Paddockhurst Lane Balcombe Haywards Heath</b></p> <p>After discussion it was agreed that a comment of NO OBJECTION be submitted</p> <p><b>0521.2 DM/21/1296 Demolish existing boot room and construct two storey rear Extension, 40 College Road Ardingly Haywards Heath West Sussex</b></p>	

	<p>After discussion it was AGREED that the Clerk will contact the Case Officer at MSDC and arrange a visit as it was felt a visit was required before a comment is submitted.</p> <p><b>0521.3 DM/21/1660 Trees in a Conservation Area, T1 Cupressus tree – remove, Rocklands Church Lane Ardingly Haywards Heath</b></p> <p>After discussion it was agreed that a comment of NO OBJECTION be submitted</p>	
<p><b>0621</b></p>	<p><b>General Matters</b></p> <p><b>0621.1 To receive an update from the Pavilion Working Party</b></p> <p>Councillor J James circulated the meeting notes from the Pavilion WP and explained that the Pavilion WP had been through the proposal "line by line"</p> <p>He said the noteworthy changes to the proposal viewed at the April PC Meeting were the Cleaning Cupboard and the Water Fountain.</p> <p>He asked members if they had any questions.</p> <p>No questions were asked and Councillor J James explained the Pavilion WP wanted approval to send the drawings to the Architects to create a spec for tender of the works.</p> <p>There was a brief conversation on whether gas or electric should be used in the Pavilion and the Clerk reminded the members that the WP had made the decision that electricity was more sustainable.</p> <p>The Parish Council unanimously voted to approve the Pavilion Working Party's recommended proposal and to instruct the Clerk to send the proposal to at least three Architects to quote for the works as per APC Finance Regulations.</p> <p>The Parish Council unanimously voted to approve an up to budget of £3000 excl VAT for the Architect to produce a specification for the Tender process.</p> <p>After discussion the Clerk was asked to approach the preferred Phase 1 contractor for a timescale in relation to the Phase 1 works.</p> <p><b>0621.2 To receive an update from the SA25 Working Party</b></p> <p>The Full Council was advised that Ardingly Parish Council were listed to make representation at the Oral representation and that it was assumed the PC representatives would present, however it seems it is more that the PC representatives will contribute to the debate. They Inspector has asked for New Material to be provided by the 14<sup>th</sup> of May.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be appropriate to meet with outside agencies such as AONB, Natural England and CPRE prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> of May/ the submission of any "New" information.</p> <p><b>0621.3 To receive an update and recommendations from the Maintenance Contractor review panel</b></p>	

	<p>The Clerk advise the Full Council that there are three identified contractors, who have provided references and proof of PLI (where held) and the panel will be meeting with them the week commencing the 10<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>She explained that before any “offer” is made it must be approved by Full Council and then said “offer” would be subject to references</p>	
<b>0721</b>	<b>Matters of public urgent importance or for future inclusion on agenda</b>	
<b>0821</b>	<p><b>Future meeting dates</b></p> <p><b>0821.1</b> The next meeting of the Parish Council is to be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2021 at 7pm</p>	