

CATSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Assembly notes

Tuesday 14th May 2024

32 residents were in attendance. Cllr Keith Robertson welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that this is not a Parish Council meeting, this is a meeting for residents to ask questions and receive updates and key reports. *The meeting will not be minuted but notes will be made available.*

Key points from Cllr Keith Robertson, Chair of Catsfield Parish Council

- The Parish Council need more Councillors, please spread the word. We can't keep going with just 4 Councillors. It was agreed that something would be put into writing which more details on the role of a Parish Councillor. **Action.**
- Catsfield have been overwhelmed with planning applications i.e. Brooks Field, Norman Hurst and land behind the White Hart. A lot have been seen off and withdrawn but concerns over what is next.
- The new Rother Local Plan is coming out. They are coming to present at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 18:30 in the main hall, all are welcome.
- There was a flood in the Pavilion in February 2024. It is now drying out and awaits re-decoration in due course.
- The Council are now on their 3rd Clerk since November 2023. This is a tough time and there needs to be consistency. The new Locum Clerk, Vicki Rutt, was introduced and it is hoped that she will remain in post as the permanent Clerk.
- Neighbourhood Plan, it would be good to do one but would be a lot of work and don't have enough Cllrs at the moment to spread the workload.
- July 2023, a survey went out to residents. This is on the website, is open to all and still is available for completing. The questionnaire is to find out what residents think of Catsfield and the future.
- The Council are working with East Sussex County Council and Highways to look at introducing speed reductions in the village.
- A finance update was given for 2023/24 and the figures can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Questions for Cllr Robertson:

Q. Does Catsfield need EV charging points? *A. There are a lot of questions and options still to be looked into but it is a way of encourage visitors to the village and grants are available to cover cost of the install.*

- Q. Could the streetlight go solar?** *A. The answer is not known but the Clerk will take this as an action to look into. **Action.***
- Q. Allotments were mentioned earlier, can't the Recreation Ground be used?** *A. The Recreation Ground can't be used as it is an open space. The Council will need to look to see if they could purchase or be given land to provide this service, if there is a need.*

Report from Cllr Pearce, Rother District Councillor

- Have had to make difficult and controversial decisions recently.
- Parking ticket machines have gone contactless.
- Council Tax increase of 2.9%.
- Budget consultation has commenced. RDC have a 3.8mil budget deficit.
- Temp accommodation for homeless, the need has now tripled.
- Financial resilience plan, work being done to see if it is fit for the future.
- Please engage in the Local Plan.

Report from Cllr Field, East Sussex County Councillor

- The County Council's portion of the Council Tax will rise by 4.99%. This includes a 2% precept for Adult Social Care.
- The Government's view was that any shortfall in Councils' budgets should be met from reserves. This was done in the sum of £9m but this is only a one year fix.
- Children's Services has been inspected by Ofsted and has been judged good with outstanding features. The outstanding features are services to Looked After Children.
- The County Council is short of foster carers and is looking to recruit.
- The County Council in its role as corporate parent is looking to help Care experienced young people by finding work placements, experience etc.
- The Director of Children's Services retired at the end of April. Carolyn Fair has taken over.
- Adult Social Care is due a CQC inspection and has been peer reviewed by the LGA as preparation.
- Since the last Assembly a new highway contractor has been appointed, Balfour Beatty. Many thousands of potholes have been repaired, but not enough. 30 gangs are out working which is many more than usual.
- Rother has a pot of £60k for Rother Business Energy Efficiency Grants. This covers LED lighting, air source heat pumps, double glazing, solar panels, insulation, energy efficient machinery and equipment. Businesses can apply for £5k with a minimum contribution of £1k. It launched on the 7th May. It is first come first served.

Details are on Rother website:

www.rother.gov.uk/regeneration/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/

Reports from Groups and Clubs of Catsfield

Wombles

Victoria Robertson reported that this started in 2020 as a way of getting out and about in Covid times, have a nice walk and socialise whilst cleaning up the village. The demand for litter picking has increased. There are 8 wombles in total. They do one hour sessions and fill around 11 large bin liners each time. Wombles is not a Parish Council group but it is supported by the Parish Council and they provide some equipment. The areas covered have been risk assessed. The Wombles always need more people so please contact Victoria if you are interested.

Catsfield CE Primary School

The full presentation can be found on the Parish Council website.

Q. With the new housing developments, is there capacity to extend the school? *A. This would be a County Council decision but there is capacity to extend on the grounds so it could happen.*

History Group

The group continue to maintain the archives. They recently had their computer updated which make things easier so thank you to the Parish Council for that. They are about a quarter of the way through, and they are always happy to receive more. They always need more storage space!

Cricket Club

Activities in 2023

Basically playing, or trying to play cricket. In 2023 there were 16 fixtures on the list, of which four were lost to weather, four not played due to opposition unable to field a side and thankfully none not played due to Catsfield unable to field a side. Catsfield CC therefore played eight, of which four were won, two lost and two drawn. The Five Villages Sunday Cricket Tournament, first played in 2022, continued in 2023. The final tournament positions for 2023 were:

5th Sedlescombe - minus 12 points

4th Crowhurst - 18 points

3rd Catsfield - 18 points

2nd Brightling Park - 19 points

1st Ashburnham - 22 points

Individual cricket awards for the 2023 season were presented at the AGM at the White Hart in the village back in March. The M. Davies Cup for batting was won by Harry Strugnell. The K. Taylor Cup for bowling went to youngster Sam Barden, in his first season with the club. The Martin Gurr Cup for fielding, in recognition for everything Martin has done for the club over the years and continues to do so, was shared between David Taylor and Harry Strugnell.

Our late friend, former club chairman and village stalwart, the much loved and still very much missed, Mike Davey is remembered by the club in the form of the 'Clubman of the Year' award, an award that Mike would have won on numerous occasions had it been around, in recognition of his services to the club, both on and off the field. The cup is voted for at the AGM and Annual Dinner by people both directly and indirectly associated with the club. Honorary Vice President, Anne Davey, presented the cup, for the third year in a row to Keith Cook. It's not all about cricket. The club managed the car park for Catsfield Horticultural Society at the somewhat curtailed Annual Flower Show and Fete on the first Saturday in August last year. The club has offered its car parking services in 2024 and the offer has been accepted by Wendy Goodliffe, the society's chair.

Activities in 2024

There was a time not that long ago when each season's fixture list would be exactly the same as the previous season. However, with a number of clubs folding in recent years, other clubs failing to fulfil their fixtures on a regular basis plus the increasing cost of travel to away fixtures, the compilation of a fixture list for the season has become more challenging in recent years. The inception of the Five Villages Sunday Cricket Tournament has gone a long way to stabilising the fixture situation with the consensus among the clubs being that the format of the tournament remains unchanged for the 2024 season. There has however been a change in the clubs taking part in the 2024 tournament, with Mountfield CC coming in to replace Sedlescombe CC, the latter having withdrawn from the tournament. One non-tournament fixture versus Sedlescombe CC will remain on our list for 2024. However, a lot of time has still had to be spent since last September in trying to establish the list for the 2024 season. One Sedlescombe fixture has gone and new fixtures established, first an early season one with a Bexhill Development XI, second new ones versus Northiam and Beckley Park and third, a second fixture versus Hurst Green late in the season. The 2024 season will extend into September to try and take advantage of favourable early autumn weather and there are currently 20 fixtures on the list and one spare date at time of writing. See the Parish News for a full list of home fixtures and a list will be posted at strategic points around the village.

Votes of thanks

The club wouldn't be a club without the support of non-players from the village and beyond. Sincere thanks must again go to Catsfield Parish Council Chairman, Keith Robertson, retiring Parish Clerk, Alexander Sharp and the committee of the Parish Council for actively supporting the village cricket club by providing grants to purchase new equipment to enable a good playing surface for the season, namely top-quality mowers in April last year and March this year to replace existing life expired equipment. Thanks also to Catherine, editor of Catsfield Parish News, for continuing to publish a short piece each month about the club's activities. The monthly piece in the Parish News is also posted on social media, ie the village Facebook page, both by Kathryn Taylor and the Parish Clerk. We'll wait and see if these have any positive effect of the number of players from the village. Our thanks must go to the tea ladies, without whose work, cricket at the Rec' on a Sunday afternoon wouldn't be the same.

Work that is much appreciated by both club players and our oppositions. Club Chairman, Martin Gurr, presented gifts to the ladies as a vote of thanks from the committee and players at the AGM back in March as well as to Margaret and David Pratt for organising the AGM. Thanks also go to Barbara Cook for being the scorer. It is of particular note that the 2024 season will be her 20th season as scorer for the club. Thanks must also go to John Berryman for keeping the scoreboard ticking over at each home match and some local away matches as well – a vital role for the benefit for all out in the field, fielding captain, batsman and umpires alike. Martin presented both with a small gratuity on behalf of the committee and players. Thanks must also go to the Sussex Cricket Foundation for its grant from its volunteer reward fund as well as Stephen Hardy at the Rural Rother Trust for its grant from its fund for equipment.

In conclusion, the season started on Sunday 5 May with a home tournament fixture versus Ashburnham and the club hopes to see many people from the village at future home matches as well as a number of villagers coming forward as players.

WI

The WI meet in the Village Hall 12 times a year, they have 30 members and are hoping to recruit more. They meet the first Thursday of every month at 2pm.

Football Club

We finished up third in Division 3 and await to hear how the Football League divide up the teams for next season as to whether we go up into Division 2, but are happy to remain in the third division. We won two cups this season played at the Pilot Field in Hastings and although we beat league leaders Parkfield in one of the cup finals, they beat us convincingly in the final game. Afterwards we consoled ourselves by sitting in the sunny garden of The White Hart with the cups proudly displayed. We love playing at our Playing Field where we can enjoy parking on site, in the beautiful setting and if the pipes in the pavilion don't freeze over like this winter, our cups will be full!

Horticultural Society

There is a show on the 3rd August. Thanks to the Cricket Club who assisted with the parking last year. Really need good weather for it. Contact Wendy via email if you need further.

100 Club

This group was set up by the Horticultural Society. They are registered with the RDC lottery. They have 128 members, can have up to 200 members. They have agreed to cap members to 130 and they have a waiting list.

Social Club

The Social Club meets every Wednesday, 7pm-10pm. They have a cupboard full of board games, table tennis etc. Weekly cost of £2. Taster evening is free.

Village Hall

After 33yrs, Ann is no longer the Chair. It has been a busy year with both planned and unplanned maintenance. The fire alarm system was installed. Water process in place for Legionella. Thank you to Parish Council for a £6,000 grant. They have upgraded the safety locks. ESCC are being approached to assist with installing solar panels. The Hall have taken over the broadband from the Parish Council. The heating is now controllable via phone which will assist in bookings. The dartboard is up in the snooker room. WI husbands crew sorted out installation and painted the floor so thanks to them. They have updated the electrical system, a roof leak in the passage and general DIY and fixes. The planned future items are a complete redecoration in the summer holidays and repositioning the projector in due course.

The meeting ended and residents were encouraged to stay for refreshments and speak to Parish Councillors.

Appendix A

FINANCE UPDATE 2023-24

Income

precept	£32,000
CiL funds (into reserves)	£10,631
Other	£ 650
Total	£43,281

SPENT

Admin:

Staff, Tel/broadband, insurance, IT etc..	£17,511
Consulting on planning apps. White Hart	£ 1,200

Recreation Ground

Grass £2.0K, Pav £2.1K, Mowers £1.9K, Dog Bins £0.6K	£ 8,427
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Facilities and Outdoor spaces

Streetlights £3.4K, Car Park £2.0K, Churchyard £0.4K	£ 6,654
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TOTAL SPEND	£33,792
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Net surplus	£ 9,489
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RESERVES

Reserves Bfwd from 31-3-23	£89,648
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Add surplus for the year (Cil)	£ 9,489
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Reserves C fwd as at 31-3-24	£99,137
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Of which:

CiL Funds	£64,497
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Other Earmarked reserves	£17,840
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General Reserves	£16,800
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£99,137

The precept for 2024-25 was held at £32,000