



# CATSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Catsfield Parish Council Meeting  
held On Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 18:30

in the Village Hall, Church Road, Catsfield, TN33 9DR

In attendance: Cllr Keith Robertson, Cllr Sharon Harris and Cllr Sarah Jacques.  
Also in attendance: Mrs Vicki Rutt – Locum Clerk and 42 members of the public.

Locum Clerk & RFO: Mrs Vicki Rutt  
The Village Hall, Church Road  
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| PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |            |
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| Item                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |            |
| 1.                             | <b>To receive apologies for absence.</b><br>Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Holgate and Cllr Field.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |            |
| 2.                             | <b>To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024</b><br>RESOLVED: The minutes were approved and signed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | ALL        |
| 3.                             | <b>To receive declarations of interest on agenda items.</b><br>There were no declarations of interest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |
| 4.                             | <b>Public Questions relevant to items on the agenda</b><br>There were no public questions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |
| 5.                             | <b>To receive reports from County Cllr Kathryn Field (ESCC) &amp; District Cllr Chas Pearce (RDC)</b><br>Apologies received from Cllr Field. Cllr Pearce updated that they are currently in purdah due to the general election, but he confirmed that the new Chair is Mr Richard Thomas and the new Vice Chair is Mr Andrew Meir. The reshuffle will be going to cabinet in July 2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |            |
| 6.                             | <b>Planning and Enforcement</b><br>There were no planning applications to discuss.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |            |
| 7.                             | <b>To receive and consider the Clerk's Report</b><br>The Clerk's report was received, and updates noted by Cllrs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Clerk      |
| 8.                             | <b>Finance, Audit and Legal</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Clerk / KR |
| 8.1                            | <b>To approve the accounts payments and finance pack to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024</b><br>RESOLVED: The accounts and finance pack to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2024 and the following payments were reviewed and approved as shown in <a href="#">Appendix A</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |            |
| 8.2                            | <b>To receive and approve the bank statement, reconciliation and balance sheet to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.</b><br>RESOLVED: The bank statement, reconciliations and balance sheet to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2024 was reviewed and approved.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |
| 9.                             | <b>Recreation Ground (Playing Field, Playground and Community Pavilion)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |            |
| 9.1                            | <b>To receive the summary of recreation ground inspections through May 2024.</b><br>The rota was discussed, and the Chair will be look at this next week with the Clerk. <b>Action.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |            |
| 9.2                            | <b>To consider a request for the recreation ground for regular football training</b><br>The request for boys associated with or friends with the Stoolball club to use the Rec for a "kick about" while stoolball events were in play was discussed, and it was agreed that the recreation ground could be used for July and August at stoolball events on the basis that the boys are within the umbrella of family and friends of the Stoolball team who already have the right to use the recreation ground at those times. Clerk to let the resident know the outcome. <b>Action.</b>                                                                                                         |            |
| 10.                            | <b>Community Engagement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | SJ/SH      |
| 10.1                           | <b>Action plan for communications going forward</b><br>Cllr Robertson explained that there are 7 seats on the Parish Council, we are quorate with 3 Cllrs and we currently only have 4 so it can be difficult at times. We need new members in order to be able to carry on working for the Community. If you value the Parish Council, please join us. You can liaise with the Chair or Clerk for further information. Cllr Robertson asked residents what their preferred option of communication was, it was agreed that the Clerk would look at setting up an email distribution list, Whatsapp group and will also see if could put information up on the Church noticeboard. <b>Action.</b> | ALL        |
| 11.                            | <b>Road safety and Policing</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |            |
| 11.1                           | <b>To receive an update on the request for speed limit charges to the North of the village</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Clerk      |

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|                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Cllr Robertson reported that a new speed limit has been applied for to change from 60 mph to 30 mph, in the locations of North of the Village by Stone Cottage and along Powdermill lane near to the Littlewoods yard. The speed data has been compiled and now we are waiting for the feasibility study to be completed. He also reported that Speedwatch sessions are going to start again, and they need more volunteers so please let the Clerk know if interested. A request was made for the black box to be used to record speeds in Church Road. Cllr Robertson is going to look into the criteria for this. Action. He explained that the black box is owned by the Parish Council and it records traffic speed so the data can be used as evidence to send to Sussex Police and ESCC.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |           |
| <p>12. Staffing</p> <p>12.1 To agree the terms of the employment of the Locum Clerk to the permanent Clerk from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024</p> | <p>Cllr Robertson reported that the Locum Clerk has agreed to stay on as the permanent Clerk. The terms of her employment and draft contract had been circulated to all Cllrs ahead of the meeting and all the terms were agreed at the meeting. Cllr Robertson will sign the contract with the Clerk. <b>Action.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>KR</p> |
| <p>13. Items for referral to next agenda / reports / future agenda items / correspondence.</p>                                                   | <p>Safety warning signs regarding horses were raised. It was agreed this will be raised at the next SLR meeting that the Clerk is trying to arrange with East Sussex Highways. <b>Action.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |           |
| <p>14. Presentation from Rother District Council on the Local Plan</p>                                                                           | <p>Holly and Ben from Rother District Council [RDC] gave a 10 minute power point presentation on the draft local plan, key points from this were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft Local Plan is for 2020 – 2040.</li> <li>• The plan contains policies on how planning applications are reviewed by.</li> <li>• The consultation launched at the end of April for a 12-week period which ends on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July.</li> <li>• It is a draft document, so it is subject to change and improvement. RDC are keen to get as many comments as possible.</li> <li>• The chapters of the draft Local Plan are vast, there are a number of new policies in each section. The HELAA [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment] is a comprehensive assessment of nearly 1,000 sites across the district, it assesses the suitability and whether they are available.</li> <li>• The Government have given RDC a target of 14,000 new dwellings by 2040. RDC need to demonstrate that this is not achievable.</li> <li>• How to comment – Go onto the RDC website, all the supporting documents are on there and you can comment directly, or you can send an email or write a letter. Hard copies of the Local Plan are available in all libraries or the Town Hall in Bexhill.</li> <li>• Timescales for next steps are the consultation runs till 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024. Until Dec 2024 they will prepare new documents. In Spring 2025, pre submission version of the Local Plan is published. Summer 2025, submission to Secretary of State for examination. Summer 2026 adoption of the Local Plan.</li> </ul> <p><i>Following the presentation there was a lengthy Q&amp;A session held, they are shown below but are not verbatim.</i></p> <p><b>Q – It is a large document, it is hard to comment on everything. The Council will want to comment on specific sites, how do we do that correctly and refer to the correct policies.</b></p> <p>A – To be clear, other than the 1 site that is already on the current Local Plan, any of the new sites have been proposed but not yet assessed as suitable or available. In regard to suitability, they will look at the site itself and whether the village could accommodate it. They would also look at landscape impact, Highways impact whether there is safe access, impact on woodland, resident amenity and proximity to services.</p> <p><b>Q – Is size of scale a criteria?</b> In Rother, we need to be very sensitive as have High Weald Landscape, we are conscious of the historic settlement pattern.</p> <p><b>Q – In principle, things we could comment, are going to be similar to the objections we had for the application behind the White Hart. Could end up with having houses on the wrong site, or possibly not getting any at all when there is a need.</b></p> <p>A – If you think there are more suitable sites, let RDC know. The call for sites is also still open so landowners can submit sites.</p> <p><b>Q – Could the current allocation in the current plan be overruled?</b></p> <p>A – It is possible but unlikely, would need to be a significant reason to deallocate it.</p> |           |

**Q – How have you identified the sites for possible inclusion?**

A – RDC have looked at over 900 sites in Rother, the sites in Catsfield have been looked at from an assessment completed in 2013, some subject to planning applications, some submitted brown field land register, and some submitted by land owners. It does say in the plan under each site, how it was identified.

**Q – How can you see that the infrastructure or surrounding facilities can manage the new dwellings?**

A – This is a very common comment and valid, RDC need to liaise with infrastructure providers, they are required to tell RDC whether the current infrastructure could cope or whether improvements would be needed.

**Q. Are comments really looked at?**

A - They have the data and RDC are reliant on them to get their opinion. If concerned about a particular road/area or infrastructure, put that in writing to RDC please.

**Q – RDC policy is AONB and heritage, however both areas are AONB and across the 1066, how have they been proposed?**

A – The sites are published as proposals, not been allocated yet. Once the sites have been looked at, more will be known. It is inevitable that development will happen in AONB as Rother do not have enough brown field sites, RDC just need just to ensure it is sensitive and will not have a negative impact.

**Q – When you are considering a planning application and the housing targets that you need to fulfil. Do you think about the type?**

A – It is a balancing act, we know that we need affordable house and need smaller dwelling for first time buyers and older people to downsize into, however the development needs to be viable. We can't request all but can allocate a proportion to be smaller dwellings and/or affordable.

**Q – Does Catsfield have a Housing Need Survey?**

A – She does not know is there is one, this would usually be Parish Council led and you would work with Action in Rural Sussex to compile one. Parish Councils usually do one to see what the need is, and the type of dwellings needed.

**Q - How relevant would it be if we had one?**

A - You can identify exception sites.

**Q – Affordable houses on current sites, what is the max you can request on a site and how do you enforce that?**

A – The current Local Plan in rural areas, states 40% on schemes of 6 dwellings or more. It is set out in the National Planning Framework. A developer could say that can't meet 40% and they would need to do a survey, at their cost, to show why and this could be amended.

**Q – We can't afford to repair the highways, drainage and sewage. How are you going to service them to ensure they can cope with more?**

A – It is a common concern and should put it in writing. If common issues are identified in the village, they need to be reported to RDC. Officers are reliant on comments and information from infrastructure providers. Flooding constraints are mapped, and planning officers do come out and look at geographical maps.

**Q – I don't understand why the proposed site can't be connected to main drainage?**

A – Holly did not know why. A resident believed there is a theory to get away from main drains.

**Q – With the allocated site that is in the current Local Plan, this had a recent application which was withdrawn but it was about to be refused anyway. The document from the planning officer stated the site was not suitable.**

A – It would be difficult to say that site is not appropriate, it has been withdrawn but the planning officer objected with the planning details contravened, not the site itself. It states that the site contravenes the planning policies. Allocations look at the principle, an application looks at the detail.

**Q – Going to allocations, what about a site in a tree prevention area?**

A – It depends on the extent of the amount of tree prevented.

**Q – Church Road plot, this was accepted by Highways but not anyone in the village. They don't have a concept of the traffic on this road and the amenities around the site behind White Hart – bus stop, shop, pub, zebra crossing etc.**

A – Please submit these comments in writing as RDC need to know. It is relevant for assessment; Highways are spoken to as technical experts, but residents will know more on the ground information.

**Q – In the draft it mentions wind turbines as potential sites but no more detail?**

A – There was a desk top study on this, it has been identified as on paper that it could work but not sure if available or suitable. The Government have been very strict on wind turbines and can only be done if the whole Community supports it.

**Q – Lots of villages across Rother, however Catsfield seem to have a large number of houses, but others don't.**

A – This needs further work, as the number might not be appropriate. They are just potential sites at this time.

**Q – Infrastructure of the village is tidy, they are not coping, what is going to be done? Can't walk to school, no pavements, no doctors etc.**

A – We have to work with the infrastructure providers to see if the needs can be met. Need to plan for the new development to meet the infrastructure.

**Q – There are discussions about schools merging, bit short sighted.**

A – Don't know anything about that, again this is where we rely on the infrastructure providers.

**Q – Highways don't look at the aspects correctly. Highways made comments about the land behind White Hart application, they said it may result in a traffic increase, but it would be totally fine.**

A – This is noted and please submit comments, so RDC are aware.

**Q – Why do small houses not count towards the dwelling need?**

A – Local Plan gave targets, that number included 6 dwellings and more.

**Q – Call for sites, how do they align with this time scales?**

A – So far below the Government targets, need to demonstrate that we have tried everything that we can so the call for sites will remain open for the next few months, no official deadline put in place as yet.

**Q – How does the general election leave the local plan consultation depending on who gets through?**

A – RDC are working on the basis that there is still a need for Local Plan, so it is business as usual.

**Q – Is there more chance of a response from RDC if instead of doing individual responses, we did one large collective response?**

A – Possibly but we would respond to each comment and need to do all the research behind each comment made so this could result in a lengthy delay and a response is not guaranteed.

Cllr Roberston stated that there are a lot of issues to make comments on. Need to find a way to come together in groups to pull some comments together to submit to the Local Plan as one collective response so please let the Clerk know if you would like to be involved in the groups.

Holly stated that Local Plan workshops are being held across the District, the information can be found on their website and comments can be emailed direct to [draftlocalplan@rother.gov.uk](mailto:draftlocalplan@rother.gov.uk)

The Council will set up meetings in the Village Hall over the next 2 weeks so that residents can meet to establish for each of the key areas of objection what we as a community wish to say to the RDC about the draft plan. This we hope will strengthen the messages. We will support wherever possible our views with evidence. Details and dates for meetings to be confirmed soon. Residents can still log their own personal comments directly with RDC.

**Meeting closed at 20:30**

Next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July at 19:00.

Signed:

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Chairman

Dated:

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## Appendix A

### Finance report for May and June for 18th June 2024 PC meeting

| <u>Payments by Debit Card paid pending authorisation</u> |                            |                                                                      |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Payment Date                                             | Payee                      | Payment Details                                                      | Amount    |
| None                                                     |                            |                                                                      |           |
| <u>Payments Bank Transfer paid pending authorisation</u> |                            |                                                                      |           |
| 24.05.24                                                 | Zurich Town and Parish     | Insurance renewal                                                    | £1,291.15 |
| <u>Payments by Bank Transfer pending authorisation</u>   |                            |                                                                      |           |
| Payment Date                                             | Payee                      | Payment Details                                                      | Amount    |
| 18.06.24                                                 | East Sussex County Council | Speed surveys x 4                                                    | £1,545.60 |
| 18.06.24                                                 | Pat Buckle                 | Internal Audit for 2023/24                                           | £200.00   |
| 18.06.24                                                 | Rialtas                    | Close down for 2024                                                  | £1,041.60 |
| 18.06.24                                                 | Victoria Rutt              | Locum Services May 2024                                              | £1,745.70 |
| 18.06.24                                                 | John O'Connor              | Grass cutting for May 2024                                           | £211.63   |
| 18.06.24                                                 | Keith Robertson            | Reimbursement for Parish Assembly and dehumidifier for Parish Office | £236.70   |
| 18.06.24                                                 | Catsfield Village Hall     | Approved grant application                                           | £6,000.00 |
| 18.06.24                                                 | Balfour Beatty             | Feasibility Study on speed reduction                                 | £600.00   |
| 18.06.24                                                 | Satswana                   | DPO services for 2024                                                | £180.00   |
| <u>Payments by direct debit for authorisation</u>        |                            |                                                                      |           |
| Date                                                     | Payee                      | Payment Details                                                      | Amount    |
| 17.05.24                                                 | Castle Water               | Water at Pavilion                                                    | £6.06     |
| 27.05.24                                                 | JM Waste                   | Monthly charge May 2024                                              | £76.44    |
| 28.05.24                                                 | N-Power                    | Streetlights electricity                                             | £233.55   |
| 29.05.24                                                 | e-on                       | Electricity at Pavilion - April 2024                                 | £62.88    |