



Laughton Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th December 2024 at 7.30pm at Laughton Parish Hall

Present:

Cllr Alison Wilson (Chair), Cllr Jane Alford, Cllr Sally Huggett, Cllr Kay Syrad and Cllr Stephen Whiting

Wealden District Councillor Alison Wilson

The Clerk was also in attendance

There were three members of the public in attendance.

1. Public Session

A member of the public asked the following questions:

- Have Councillors been in contact with Wealden District Council regarding the works being carried out at Kiln Lodge? In response the Chair reported that contact has been made with WDC and has been informed that the new package treatment plant is being installed as the existing is not fit for purpose.
- What actions have been taken regarding the works being carried out at Chelwood? In response the Chair informed the meeting that the Enforcement Team at WDC has been contacted, and in response was informed that the owner had been advised to submit a Certificate of Lawfulness application regarding use of the outbuilding. A second email was sent to the Enforcement Team concerning the recent works which include more excavation to the rear of the site, the Chair is still awaiting a response and will report back at the next Parish Council meeting.
- Has ESCC been contacted regarding the culvert barrier in Shortgate Lane as this is extremely dangerous and a number of traffic near misses have been witnessed? In reply the Clerk said that ESCC have been contacted, considerable correspondence has taken place over many months. In mid-November a commitment had been made that the repairs would be carried out within 28 days. The Clerk continues to follow this up.
- Is there any news on the missing sign on the B2192 indicating access to Laughton via Shortgate Lane. The Clerk advised that contact has been made with ESCC.

A member of the public raised the following points regarding agenda item 10.4 - Proposed Sports/Tennis Court on Pelham Field.

- As one of the neighbours who will be most affected by the proposal they wished to state they were completely against the proposal. Pelham Field is slowly being cut-up into sections, such as the infant and the junior playgrounds, the basketball hoop. They are concerned that even more green space will be lost.
- There was a tennis court on the playground, the facility is still there if nets were purchased.
- There are a number of tennis/sports facilities in nearby areas such as Ringmer and East Hoathly and there is a new facility being constructed at Boship Roundabout. Large sums of money will be spent on sports facilities already catered for.
- What measures will be in place for safeguarding, toilet facilities and maintenance?
- Traffic will increase and they have concerns that this will be an accident waiting to happen.
- Questions the need to spend vast amounts of money on a facility which will be used by an elite few when the money could be spent on other areas of the Parish.
- There is no understanding of the impact on neighbours.

Another member of the public raised the following points:

- The consultation leaflet was misleading. The markings on the court depicted would be confusing for those using the facility. It was not a great time to carry out the consultation.
- The facilities for young children are very poor.

In response to the points made the Chair informed the meeting that no decision has been made on where the court will be sited should it be resolved to go ahead with the proposal. The consultation had commenced in June 2024 and is ongoing until 31st December 2024.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from ESCC Cllr Nick Bennett. All members of Laughton Parish Council were in attendance.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20th November were agreed and duly signed.

4. Declarations of interest and notification of any changes to the Register of Interests

There were no declarations of interest or changes to the Register of Interests

5. Confidential items on the agenda for the exclusion of the press and public

It was RESOLVED that there were no confidential items on this agenda.

6. Report by Wealden District Councillor Alison Wilson

The NPPF has been published and takes effect immediately. Officers will give training to WDC Councillors and Cllr Wilson will pass this on to LPC Councillors. With regard to devolution and Local Government re-organisation, the Government is writing to all two-tier authorities to invite proposals for unitary local government. There are concerns that the tier closest to residents will be lost, there are also concerns that this will benefit urban areas but not rural areas. There will be fewer Councillors representing more people. However, this will not be an overnight change.

7. Working Groups Reports

a) Broadband provision in the Parish

Email addresses of working group members have been exchanged.

b) Sewage issues in the Parish

CPRE has published their findings from the recent survey. LPC will conduct its own survey in February.

c) Footpaths

Details of footpaths requiring attention have been sent to the Clerk who will forward to the Rights of Way team.

d) Laughton Summer Fete

The date is confirmed as 7th June 2025, one meeting of the working group has taken place. The next meeting will be on 13th January 2025.

8. Planning and licence applications

a) Planning applications received

No applications have been received.

- b) **Planning application received between the date of publication of the agenda for this meeting and the meeting date.**

WD/2024/1785/F Stone Cross Business Centre, Lewes Road, Laughton, BN8 6RN

Proposed external works to provide external refrigeration extension, staff shelter, bin/refuse, recycling/general storage building and enclosure for 3 No. Calor gas tanks with associated works including provision of screen planting to southern boundary.

Following review of the documents and discussion it was **RESOLVED** that Laughton Parish Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

- c) **Planning applications approved, refused, referred withdrawn or appeals**

WD/2024/2109/FR - HAWTHORN COTTAGE, 203 LAUGHTON PLACE, COW LANE, LAUGHTON BN8 6DA

Retrospective application for change of use of existing annexe to mixed use as ancillary accommodation and holiday let - **Approved**

WD/2024/2216/F - TOM THUMB BARN, LEWES ROAD, LAUGHTON BN8 6BN Change of use from approved equine/agricultural barn to provide 2 bedroom self build dwelling, retention of existing stable block - **Approved**

WD/2024/1590/F- CHELWOOD, POUND LANE, LAUGHTON, BN8 6BE

Erection of single storey porch and installation of solar panels to rear roof of garage -

Withdrawn

WD/2024/2142/LB - CHELWOOD, POUND LANE, LAUGHTON, BN8 6BE

Erection of single storey porch – **Withdrawn**

APPEAL REF: APP/C1435/W/24/3341189 BARN GATE MEADOWS, LEWES ROAD, LAUGHTON BN8 6BN

Proposed three pitch settled gypsy accommodation site – **Dismissed**

- d) **Other planning matters brought to the attention of the Parish Council**

Dealt with during the Public Session

- e) **Licence applications**

None

9. Financial Matters

- a) Bank reconciliation for November – **Approved**
- b) December payment schedule – **Approved**
- c) Direct Debits – **Approved**
- d) Grant Applications – none received
- e) Draft Budget 25-26 – following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the proposed budget would be increased by £300 for maintenance works to Pelham Field

10. Items for decision and allocation of resources

10.1 Village Maintenance

- 10.1.1 Flooding and drainage issues** – the survey document will be circulated in February 2025, the Clerk will format the documents produced by Cllr Syrad
- 10.1.2 Bus Shelter** – The Clerk has been in contact with ESCC who have advised that measures must be taken by contractors holding NRSWA/SWQR certification, as the footpath will need to be closed. The Clerk will ask neighbouring parishes for details of possible contractors and contact ESCC Cllr Nick Bennett for assistance.
- 10.1.3 Village Gateways** – The contractors used previously to refurbish the gateways have been contacted to provide a quotation which to date has not been received.

10.2 Defibrillator for the Parish

Cllr Alford informed the meeting that the defibrillator has been installed and registered with The Circuit. Cllr Alford was thanked for her work on this project.

A training event is planned for 8th February 2025, for all residents on the use of the defibrillator, neighbouring parish residents will also be invited to attend.

10.3 Parish Emergency Plan

Cllr Alford will make a presentation at the January meeting.

10.4 Tennis/Sports Court

To date 41 responses have been received, with the majority in support. As previously stated the consultation period ends on 31st December 2024.

10.5 Tree Warden Report

Nothing to report

10.6 Pelham Field/The Green

10.6.1 Itemised costing for repairs – the Clerk reported that a contractor has agreed to provide an itemised costing for repair, this is still to be received.

10.6.2 Wealden Sports Infrastructure Fund in relation to Pelham Field – Cllr Wilson reported that this could certainly be of benefit to Pelham Field, possibly with regard to drainage. It was agreed that a working group should be formed to include people who were not necessarily councillors but had expertise in drainage and/or sports field maintenance.

10.6.3 Cycle Posts on The Green – the Clerk reported that unfortunately the bid for funding to The National Lottery had not been successful. The feedback provided stated that there was insufficient evidence with regard to demand for the facility. The Clerk will look for other funding sources.

10.7 Christmas Tree/Winter Lights

It was noted that the Christmas Tree lighting event had been considered very successful, it was agreed that there needs to be improved communication between the various groups involved and that formation of a working group would assist. Councillors thanked all those involved in providing such an enjoyable event.

10.8 Parish Council Website

The Clerk reported that the new website was almost complete, www.laughton-pc.gov.uk, and new email addresses have been provided but these will not be used until the Sports Court consultation period has ended.

10.9 Wealden District Council Climate Change Conference held on 3rd December 2024

- Cllr Wilson attended the conference - an interesting and inspiring day. Much activity is being undertaken by small local organisations.
- Withyham PC's website details their initial projects, a Climate and Ecology Advisory Group has been set up.
- Contact was made with solar energy experts, particularly community based projects. The concerns around nature and biodiversity regarding the proposals at Colbrans Farm were discussed, it was noted that Solar UK has carried out research around this topic and there is good evidence that, properly designed, solar farms can enhance biodiversity as they are areas of land that remain relatively undisturbed.
- The results of the earlier Wealden business and resident survey, which included questions around climate change, along with a number of research reports, have

been used to produce a green paper on how the district can address the pressing challenges of climate change. The green paper can be accessed on the Let's Talk Wealden website. The deadline for responses is 12th February 2025.

10.10 Active Travel England proposed off road right of way/cycle path to Ringmer -

Cllr Wilson has been approached by a resident regarding the initiative to provide an off road right of way/cycle path to Ringmer. Active Travel England have been tasked with improving active travel by 2030, this could be very beneficial for Laughton. More information is required but it was **RESOLVED** that Laughton Parish Council **SUPPORTS** the initiative.

10.11 Planning Training via ESALC.

Cllr Syrad highlighted two points on the excellent planning training.

- Do we engage sufficiently with the community with regard to planning?
- Can we develop relationships with planning officers?

11. REPORTS (by leave)

Agenda items for the next meeting –
Transport for the South East Consultation
Co-option – how to engage with a wider audience

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on 8th January 2025, items for the agenda need to be with the clerk by Friday 27th December 2024