



Laughton Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19th March 2025 at 7.30pm at Laughton Parish Hall

Present:

Cllr Alison Wilson (Chair), Cllr Jane Alford, Cllr Sally Huggett and Cllr S Whiting
East Sussex County Councillor Nick Bennett
Wealden District Councillor Alison Wilson
Julia Shelley, Locum Clerk
There were no members of the public in attendance.

1) Public Session

No public session required.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr K Syrad.

3) Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2025 were agreed and duly signed.

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

There were no changes to the Register of Interests. Cllr Alford declared an interest in 8a) WD/2025/0401/F as she knows the applicant through the Village Fete Working group.

5) Confidential Items on the agenda for the exclusion of the press and public

It was RESOLVED that there were no confidential items.

6) Report by East Sussex County Councillor Nick Bennett

Cllr Bennett had attended a briefing on the proposed devolution arrangements, there will be a one year "shadow" period of the district and the unitary authorities working in tandem. Cllr Bennett could confirm that the Parish Council role will remain and may be expanded. A ministerial response to the regional proposed devolution plan should be available for the April Parish Council meeting.

Report by District Councillor Alison Wilson

There has been a full debate on the devolution process. It was confirmed that the Local Plan process will continue with a short Reg. 18 consultation in the autumn to allow comment on changes which will need to be made to the Draft Local Plan because of government changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, increased housing targets and any new nominated sites. A final version should be adopted in Spring 2027.

Cllr Wilson highlighted a successful defence of the Grampian Condition (in this case that no occupation could occur until Southern Water and Wealden District Council have signed off the sewage arrangements. The Planning Inspector upheld Wealden's position against the developer, the data provided by the Rivers Trust was important evidence in the case.

7) Working Groups

a) Broadband provision in the Parish.

A resident is trying a Vodafone connection via external aerial to see if this is a potential solution to the poor Broadband provision.

b) Sewage and flooding issues in the Parish.

Following testing and some minor changes the questionnaire will be circulated late March 2025.

c) Footpaths

Clearance of brambles and undergrowth around the stile where the path behind the Church meets Cow Lane.

d) Laughton Summer Fete

The working party is at full strength and all the main plans are in place, minor details being finalised.

e) Training

Cllr Huggett attended the ESALC training session on Insurance, they will provide a short report on content and key issues.

8) Planning and licence applications

a) Planning applications received

WD/2025/0442/PO4 – Little Cleavers Farm Barn, Mill Lane, Laughton

It was RESOLVED there was no OBJECTION to this application

Laughton Parish Council Laughton councillors feel that the both the scale of the development and the size of the individual properties would provide a positive residential development for the parish. The four, smaller, properties would be suitable for first time buyers or downsizing local residents. The only point to note is that the Transport Report presented is now out of date as it was produced in 2022.

WD/2025/0492/LDE – Land adjoining Marlie Farm, The Broyle, Lewes, Ringmer.

It was RESOLVED there was an OBJECTION to this application. The comments made by Laughton Parish Council in August 2024 still stand as there is no material change to the information presented by the applicant. These comments are included below.

*Comments on previous application WD/2024/1719/LDE, use as B8 Storage and distribution
Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to make the following comments regarding this application:*

Laughton Parish Council does not feel that the applicant's evidence is clear and unambiguous and has the following observations:

- 1. The polytunnels which formed the basis of planning consents WD/1999/0291 and WD/2004/1894/FE have apparently never been built;*
- 2. A building on the site was permitted, provided it was required and used in connection with agriculture. The PC notes that enforcement action was taken against a large storage barn on the site in 2021;*
- 3. The fact that the applicant can only show invoices for storage in 2019 does not provide clear and unambiguous evidence of the land being used for storage from 2009 onwards;*
- 4. The PC notes that there is currently a caravan/mobile home on the site which appears to be lived in; and*
- 5. The explosion and fire in 2006 does not account for why there is no or very little paperwork relating to the use of the site, whether for storage or not, since that time.*

The Parish Council has assisted residents to contact their relevant planning officer so that further representation can be made.

It was RESOLVED there was no OBJECTION to this application.

Planning applications received between the publication of this agenda and date of the meeting: None.

b) Planning applications approved, refused, referred withdrawn or appeals

None

c) Other planning matters – to discuss or note any other planning matters brought to the attention of the Parish Council

None

f) Licence applications received

None

9) Financial Matters

a) Bank reconciliation February 2025 – Deferred

b) February payments – None

c) Direct Debits – February 2025

28/02/2025, Team4, Payroll - £12.00

d) Grant applications – none received

10) Items for decision and allocation of resources.

10.1 – Village Maintenance

10.1.1 Flooding and drainage issues

None.

10.1.2 Bus shelters

The public liability insurance has been clarified and the contractor is re-pricing the work to the shelter west of the village to reflect any increases in material costs since the quote last year, and to include the additional Perspex panel for the shelter on =The Green. It is hoped that repair work will take place in April or May 2025.

10.1.3 Village gateways

The quotes for Village Signs were reviewed and a decision will be taken on how many to purchase after the weekend's working party work.

10.1.4 Noticeboard

It was confirmed that the noticeboard is in adequate condition. No action required for the time being.

10.1.5 Defibrillator

The defibrillator is checked on a weekly basis and the cabinet contains clear usage information. The Circuit (a network that records the location of all defibrillators) has been updated with details of the Laughton machine.

Action: Permanent clerk to purchase spare set of pads.

10.2 Emergency Plan

Cllr Alford continues to develop the content of the Emergency Plan. They are in contact with Dave Kennaird and plan to arrange a meeting with them. New issues to consider Martyn's law, sink holes and the impact of a significant fire. Cllr Alford has familiarised themselves with the Community Risk Register for Sussex 2023/2024.

10.4 Tennis/Sports Court at Pelham Field

A small working party to be created to create a business plan.

Action: Cllr Wilson to share details of interested parties with Cllr Whiting.

10.3 Tree Warden

Cllr Whiting reported that a dead hedge is being created in the churchyard to provide a wildlife corridor and minimise the material needed to be burnt. Advice provided on the future of a number of trees overshadowed by the yew hedging. Any unwanted hazel or chestnut posts for the dead hedging work would be appreciated as would any additional volunteers.

10.4 Pelham Field/The Green

10.4.1 Playground Equipment

A discussion took place regarding on going maintenance of play equipment.

Action: Clerk to review most recent reports and estimate monthly requirement to complete repairs and maintenance.

Action: Add proposal for budget for ad hoc maintenance to April agenda.

Action: Clerk to share playground safety report with Mr Herdman.

10.4.2 Wealden Sports Infrastructure Fund in relation to Pelham Field

Action: Cllrs Whiting and Wilson will set a date to measure the recreation space.

10.5 SLR meeting Laughton Parish Council.

A meeting will be held on the 2nd May 2025 for Laughton Parish Council. It was agreed to divide the Parish roads as follows;

Cllr Whiting – Shortgate Lane & Brickhouse Lane

Cllr Alford – Common Lane & Cow Lane

Cllr Huggett – Church Lane, Main Road & Mill Lane

Cllr Wilson – Park Lane & Broomham Lane

Action: Collate information gathered above and send to SLR administrator prior to meeting.

10.8 Parish Council Priorities for the year ahead

The priorities list was reviewed and the following items, scored by councillors as most important, will be focused on.

Recruitment of councillors

Increased community engagement with working groups and practical activities

Village Fete 2025

Two priority activities have been completed; speaker for May AGW and drafting of sewage/flooding questionnaire.

Action: Allocated time scale to remaining priorities.

Action: Create a flyer with paragraph on working group highlighting the activity of the groups and asking for volunteers. Use on the web, at the AGM and the MP's visit in the summer.

10.9 Co-option of Parish Councillors

No expression of interest regarding the vacancies have been received

10.10 Resignation of the Parish Clerk/RFO

Permanent clerk to start in late April. Handover session booked for 25th April 2025.

11) Reports (by leave) not for decision

No reports received.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

The next Full Council meeting will be held on the 16th of April 2025.