



**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council
Wednesday 3 March 2021
7pm**

Present, via ZOOM.

Cllrs Paul Berry (Chairman), Graeme Acraman, Barry Barnes (from Minute 26/21), Edna Benger, Sandy Duck, Craig Gale, Dave Homer, James Marchant, Roy Margetts, Ken Peters, Caroline Beresford Pratt (from Minute 39/21), Doug Waller, and Sarah Wilson.

In attendance, via ZOOM.

G Burt, Clerk to the Council

Dis Cllr Nigel Jupp

Cty Cllr Amanda Jupp

Julie Green, Neighbourhood Warden

Aaron Barton, Operations Manager, Billingshurst Surgery

Judith Butler, Executive Manager, Billingshurst Surgery

Mark Snelgrove, Billingshurst Tennis Club (BTC)

Rob Falkner, BTC

20/21 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman reported

- a. *I wanted to express the Council's sympathies to the family of Cliff Griffin, who passed away in January. Cliff served on Billingshurst Parish Council and the former Rural District Council for many years and was a well know character in the parish.*
- b. *Our next meeting in May will be the Parish Council's Annual Meeting, which of course we did not hold last year. For the first time we will not only be choosing the members of the Council's committees but the chairs of those committees too, as well as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council. So prior to the May meeting, please give some thought as to who you would like to see undertake any of these roles. Please consider if you yourself would like to try your hand as a chair or vice chair. Please also consider if you are able, to act as a council representative on an outside body as we often struggle to fill all the positions.*
- c. *We have a lot to get through this evening. Can I please remind Councillors to use their voting slips to vote or to get my attention? Please mute your microphones when not speaking, and please wait to be asked to speak so we are not talking over each other.*
- d. *The meeting was being broadcast over the internet.*

21/21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Garry Commins and Mary Wild (prior engagements). On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Ken Peters, **RESOLVED** that the reasons given be accepted.

22/21 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.

- Cllr Graeme Acraman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute 31/21 as Chair of the Scouts & Guides.
- Cllr Sandy Duck declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute 31/21 as a Trustee of the Scouts & Guides and also as a Member of the Billingshurst Show Cttee.
- Cllr Paul Berry declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Min 37/21 as his wife was an employee of the Council and there could be staffing implications.

*Adjournment for***23/21 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).**

The public had been offered the opportunity to either join the meeting to ask a question or have the Clerk read out a question submitted in advance. No such requests or questions had been received.

24/21 To welcome the new Neighbourhood Warden, Julie Green.

The Chairman welcomed Julie who had started last autumn. She was very much enjoying the role.

25/1 To receive a presentation from Aaron Barton, Operations Manager, Billingshurst Surgery and Judith Butler.

The Chairman welcomed Aaron Barton and Judith Butler. They had advance notice of questions submitted by Councillors.

On the COVID vaccination program, they advised that each surgery grouping had been invited to suggest one surgery to dispense the vaccine. The vaccine could not then be shared out again to other surgeries in the grouping as it would not *survive* further travel. Staffing was not an issue in not using Billingshurst, as they had approximately 15 volunteers who had come forward to assist. At Billingshurst Surgery the following % of each group of patients had been vaccinated to date.

GROUP	%
1	88
2	98
3	96
4	94
5	92
6	74

As more and more patients got vaccinated, the process would *slow down*. They explained that as the vaccine came in packs of so many vials, if there were any left at the end of the day, they had to be destroyed, hence sometimes they may have been able to vaccinate someone who just happened to be available at short notice, who wasn't currently on a priority list. Conversely, occasionally if some patients hadn't shown up for their jabs, rather than say therefore use only half a pack of vials and have to throw the residue away, they may cancel some appointments so as to not waste the vaccine.

On the subject of capacity, they reported that an additional partner joined the practice in September; the extension had been built to add considerable capacity (and there was room for a further extension); they had also taken on extra support staff. The new car park would take the total number of spaces to 86 including disabled spaces. They asked for any support planners could give to ensure that S106 monies were secured for future improvements. They stressed the need for residents to fully register with the surgery if they hadn't already. On the subject of contacting the surgery, there were 3 people usually answering direct calls. Most appointments were now either telephone or via video; they said there was not a bottomless pit of funds to keep improving the level of service, as much as they would like to. Booking appointments online wasn't straightforward as although some consultations took a few minutes, others took much longer.

They hoped to start up the long-talked about Patient Participation Group (PPG) in due course but wanted to ensure it was truly representative of patients / the community.

The Chairman thanked the guests for what had been a most informative presentation and for all their team's hard work at such a difficult time, on behalf of the whole community

26/21 To receive written reports given in advance from District and County Cllrs, and for them to take resulting questions.

District Cllr Nigel Jupp having liaised with his two colleagues, reported the following: HDC hoped to be holding Neighbourhood Plan referendums on May 6 along with other local elections. The Draft Local Plan would be going to Cabinet in late May and Council in June. The Library Car Park had been re-lined and HDC was aware of the pothole. Work on creating the new car park to the rear of Lloyds Chemist was progressing slowly. He suggested that any s106 funds for an additional Tennis Court sought from HDC, may be conditional upon assurances about non-member access / affordable rates for minors. S106 priorities for the parish, as set out in the SPD may need to be revised to reflect changed Parish priorities.

County Cllr Amanda Jupp provided the following report:

Billingshurst Household Waste and Recycling Site:

WSCC has decided to pilot a booking system at 5 sites in the county, including Hop Oast at Horsham and the site in Crawley. This is a consequence of problems caused by queuing on the highway at these sites when they were first opened during the pandemic and to manage the anticipated surge during the next few weeks. Residents will be able to book online or by phone. The following press release was issued by WSCC:

COVID-19 precautions at West Sussex's Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRS) to maintain social distancing have unavoidably reduced the number of visitors safely on site at any one time.

This has led to significant congestion and queueing on our Highway Network at certain sites and at times the police have advised closure of sites for road safety reasons.

It is likely that lockdown measures will be eased just at the time that the annual "spring surge" in demand to use sites picks up. West Sussex County Council is therefore considering a trial of a booking system at five sites across West Sussex.

Residents would be able to go online or call to select a specific time slot to visit the sites which will reduce waiting times and prevent queues on nearby roads and inconvenience to neighbouring residents and businesses.

The proposal is for the trial to cover the Bognor Regis, Crawley, Horsham, Littlehampton and Shoreham-By-Sea sites from mid-March. The proposal will be scrutinised by the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 3 March.

The introduction of a booking system will reduce pressure on the selected HWRSs when lockdown restrictions are lifted. At the moment, residents are asked to only visit the sites for essential reasons, where they are unable to safely store recycling or waste at home. As the restrictions ease, it is anticipated more people will want to use the sites.

Residents have been encouraged to make full use of their kerbside collections, run by the District and Borough Councils, some of which also allow for small electrical items and textiles to be collected with your regular collections, but the use of HWRSs has continued at almost the same levels as before lockdown.

Deborah Urquhart, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Environment, said: "A booking system would allow us to provide a fair and equal service to all residents and also help reduce pressure on HWRSs as lockdown restrictions are lifted. Similar booking systems have been implemented in other areas, such as Hampshire, and have successfully improved the experience of using HWRSs for residents, as well as helping to manage the demand on the system.

"It should also have a positive impact on those living or operating businesses close to a Household Waste Recycling Site. Traffic would be more evenly spread across the day rather than peaking at certain times. Reduced queues would also help to reduce the environmental impact of vehicles visiting the sites and mean a smoother and quicker visiting experience for residents. Traffic from the sites can impact on local roads and residents, as well as having a detrimental impact on air quality due to vehicles queuing with engines running. The trial is designed to see how well the system works to reduce these." More information is available on our website: www.westsussex.gov.uk/recycling Or sign up to the West Sussex Recycles newsletter: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/email-alerts/>

Billingshurst Children and Family Centre:

A decision was taken by the West Sussex County Council Cabinet at their public meeting last month to begin the consultation on the proposals to redesign the Council's Early Help service which supports children and families. The proposal involves plans to enhance the services provided to the most vulnerable children and families, closer working between the Early Help service and Children's Social care and strengthening work with schools. The proposed changes will significantly reduce the number of buildings that services are delivered from, many of which have limited opening hours and are not used by those children and families in the greatest need.

The priority of our Early Help service is to work with the most vulnerable children and families. We want to ensure that we have a modern service that is responsive and works in a preventative way to give families the support they need to reduce the need for more serious interventions in the future. Rather than expecting vulnerable children and families to come to us our plan is for our staff to go to them. These proposals are about doing the best we can for vulnerable children and families.

A summary of the proposed changes are as follows:

- Increase the support and targeted response to vulnerable children*
- The reduction of children and family centres, from 43 to 11 and ceasing delivery from Youth and Find it Out centres*

- Strengthen support to school*
- Closer working between Early Help and Children's Social Care so that all children and families are accessing the right help and protection from the most appropriate part of the service*
- Cease delivering group work*
- Reduction in staff related to the reduction of children and family centres and group work*
- Deliver the £1.95m savings already identified in the council's financial plan*

The consultation on these proposals will start on Monday 8th March and will be a period of 10 weeks. All residents are encouraged to take part and to do so, please click on the link as follows:

www.westsussex.gov.uk/earlyhelpredesign

Flooding Plan:

You have attached the details of the Flooding Plan which is on your agenda for discussion and I am sure we would all like to acknowledge and show our appreciation for all the diligence and effort that was put into this by Mrs Lesley Wilding. Whilst you will be discussing this in greater depth, I would just like to mention that landowners as riparian owners have a role to play in managing flood risk and are responsible for maintaining the watercourse that borders or runs through their property, ie clearing the ditches and ensuring that the flow of water is not obstructed.

Landowners are also responsible for cutting back their hedges on the highway and should do so annually between September and the end of March in order to avoid the bird nesting season.

East Street:

As you are aware there have been works on East Street for a few weeks now and the road has been closed between since Monday 1st March from 9.30 am to 3.30 pm and is due to be finished by the end of the week. These works are the completion of the Phase 4 S278 agreement (East Street). The work is to widen the existing footpath on the north side, install a new section on the south side in front of the church, to improve pedestrian access to Silver Lane and the schools beyond and, as a consequence of the widening works, reduce the carriageway width down to 5.5m, all in line with the approved S278 scheme.

New Link Road:

I have followed up on the signage for this new road and have been assured that it is all in place and have checked myself driving around. I am concerned that some cars and trucks are currently parking on the hill at the eastern end of the road which could create problems at times. I am told by the Highways engineer that if the PC has any concerns about this or feel there should be additional double yellow lines, etc, to let me know so that they can look at any further requirements.

Several Councillors commented on the need for a change to the speed limit on the new Spine Road in addition to double yellow lines. Also suggested were *All Through Traffic* signs and maybe a Weight Limit to deter traffic from still going through the village centre. Improvements to the footways at the former NatWest junction as part of wider traffic calming was also suggested.

Cllr Sarah Wilson asked Cllr Amanda Jupp if she could bring any pressure to bear, as she understood that HDC improvements to the bypass running track could be dependent upon funds being released by WSCC. Cllr Amanda Jupp said she would enquire and also look to see if the improvement project could attract *Operation Watershed* funding.

27/21 To receive reports from Council representatives on outside organisations, plus on any training recently attended.

- Cllr Craig Gale had attended *Effective Councillor* and *Chairmanship* courses by SSALC. Also, a NALC Course on how to attract new Councillors and to better reflect the make-up of your community.
- Cllr Graeme Acraman had also attended the *Chairmanship* course by SSALC. Both he and Cllr Sandy Duck had attended the WSALC AGM the previous week.
- Cllr Doug Waller had also attended the *Effective Councillor* course by SSALC.

All reported that they felt that hearing what happened in some other Councils, made them appreciate how lucky the Parish was to have such an overall good team, Councillors and staff.

*Resume Meeting***28/21 Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6 January 2021.**

On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Graeme Acraman **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6 January 2021, previously circulated, be approved and signed accordingly.

29/21 Matters Arising – that are not separate agenda items.

None.

30/21 To agree not to hold an Annual Parish Meeting of Electors in 2021.

The Chairman reported that Councils had been permitted to not hold this meeting in 2020 due to the first lockdown. As the lockdowns would not have been lifted sufficiently to enable the meeting to be held again this year, on the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded

by Cllr Graeme Acraman **RESOLVED** not hold an Annual Parish Meeting of Electors in 2021.

Cllrs Acraman and Duck left the meeting.

31/21 To consider request for landlord's consent to allow construction of further Tennis Court at Billingshurst Tennis Club, Lower Station Road Recreation Ground – details previously circulated. (DEFFERED from Property Committee of 18 February 2021)

This had been deferred as only four Cllrs were present during consideration of this item by the Property Committee. Since that date, the Council had invited comments from residents; these had been collated and circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The majority of comments received were in favour of a fifth tennis court, but others including the Scouts/Guides and the organisers of the Billingshurst Show Committee who use the site, were against the proposed location. Many suggested revised locations. Councillors largely shared the concerns expressed. Representatives from the Tennis Club were present to answer questions.

On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Ken Peters **RESOLVED** that the request be declined but the Tennis Club be encouraged to resubmit revised proposals following consultation with the Scouts & Guides and the Billingshurst Show Committee (being the most affected parties).

Cllrs Acraman and Duck rejoined the meeting.

32/21 To consider RECOMMENDATION from the F&GP Committee of 27 January 2021 that the Council's Corporate Risk Assessment be approved. (Minute 13/21 refers)

On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Dave Homer **RESOLVED** that the Council's Corporate Risk Assessment 2020-21 be approved.

33/21 To receive the External Audit Report for 2019-20, consider any issues and refer to F&GP Committee if appropriate.

On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Edna Benger **RESOLVED** the External Audit Report for 2019-20 be received but that on this occasion there was nothing for F&GP to consider.

34/21 To receive the report of the External Auditor following a complaint and refer the matter to the Working Practices Committee for resolution.

On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Ken Peters **RESOLVED** to receive the report of the External Auditor following a complaint and refer the matter to the Working Practices Committee for resolution accordingly.

35/21 To receive Minutes as approved by the following Committees:

- a) On the proposal of Cllr Dave Homer seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the **Planning & Environment Committee** of 3 & 16 December 2020 and 7 January 2021 be received.

- b) On the proposal of Cllr Ken Peters seconded by Cllr Craig Gale **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the **F&GP Committee** of 16 December 2020 and 27 January 2021 be received.
- c) On the proposal of Cllr Barry Barnes seconded by Cllr Dave Homer **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the **Property Committee** of 18 November 2020 be received.

36/21 To note receipt of response from HDC regarding Cedar's Orchard and consider further action as appropriate.

NOTED

The Vice Chairman took the Chair.

37/21 To consider the following request from the Billingshurst Flood Action Group.
Further to my request of 6th March 2019, and the copy of the Billingshurst Flood Plan (V1) received from HDC in November 2020 would the Parish Council update this version and add it to Council documents, as a stand-alone plan until such time as the Parish Council progresses an Emergency Plan?

The Clerk suggested that whilst the aims of the Plan were admirable, he did wonder if by taking ownership of the Plan, the Council was setting itself up to deliver something that the Council currently had neither the technical or physical capacity in terms of staffing, to deliver. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Ken Peters, seconded by Cllr James Marchant, **RESOLVED** that the matter be referred to the Council's Flooding Committee, for which members were sought.

The Chairman resumed the Chair.

38/21 Co-options - to consider applications to fill one vacancy.

The Council had widely publicised the casual vacancy. Written submissions from 1 candidate (Caroline Beresford Pratt) had been circulated to all Councillors. The candidate had been invited to attend this virtual meeting then briefly spoke in support of her application. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Craig Gale, **RESOLVED** Caroline Beresford Pratt be co-opted to the Council accordingly.

Cllr Caroline Beresford Pratt then signed the *Declaration of Acceptance of Office* in front of the camera and formally joined Councillors.

39/21 To review appointments to committees, etc.

On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry, seconded by Cllr Barry Barnes **RESOLVED** the membership of Committees and outside appointments be amended as set out in Appendix A.

40/21 To receive Wardens' Reports for January & February.

NOTED. Members appreciated the comprehensive reports.

41/21 Any other matters for information only.

- a. Cllr Craig Gale asked if there was any update on the proposed Youth Council? Cllr Sarah Wilson reported that it had been a *COVID victim* but would enquire with those who were trying to set it up.
- b. The Clerk thanked those watching online, advising anyone with questions to e-mail Councillors or Officers.

42/21 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 5 May 2021 7.30pm
Meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Chairman

Date

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL**COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES****2020-21**

(The Council has set the max. membership for Committees to 10 members.)

COMMITTEES	
Planning & Environment	GA, EB, GC , DH , JM, SW, DW
Property	BB , PB, GC, SD , DH, RM, CG
Finance & General Purposes	GA, BB, EB, PB, DH, RM, KP , CG
Working Practices	PB, DH, RM, MW , DW, SD
Billingshurst Centre	GA, KP , SW , SD, CG, RM
Flooding	
Complaints (5 members Max)	PB, SD, RM
Complaints Chairman	SD
WORKING PARTIES	
Neighbourhood Plan	SD, MW
Emergency Planning	GA, EB.
Internal Audit	GA, DH, RM
East St Traffic Calming	PB
Youth Liaison	RM, MW, SW
Jubilee Skatepark WP	BB, PB, DH, CG
CCTV	PB, GC, RM, GA
Local Plan	DH, BB, GA

***Bold** indicates Chairman/Vice Chairman*

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES	
Allotments Society	EB
Adversane Traffic WP	
B'hurst Sports & Recn. Assn. (BSRA) x4	GC, SD, CG
Friends of Station Road Gardens x1	BB
HALC (H'ham Assn Local Ccls)	GA + SD
N'hood Warden Steering Group x2	GA, SD, PB, Clerk
Public Art Steering Group	Clerk
SPD Working Group	SD + Clerk
Trustee of Adversane Hall x1	PB (SD reserve)
Trustee of Dauxwood Pre-School x1	MW
West Sussex Association Local Councils (WSALC) AGM x2	SD, GA
Youth Council	MW
B'hurst Flood Action Group	GA