

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Isfield Parish Council held on Monday 24th May 2021. This meeting was held at Isfield Village Hall.

1. Present

Cllrs G Sambrook, R Levett, A Keys, K Meakin, S Crammond and T Mitchell-Cobb.

County and District Councillor R Galley, Alison Stevens (Clerk) and one member of the public were also in attendance.

2. Election of Chairman

Councillor Keys proposed and Councillor Cramond seconded Councillor Sambrook for the role of Chairman to Isfield Parish Council. All were in favour.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Sambrook proposed and Councillor Mitchell-Cobb seconded Councillor Keys for the role of Vice Chairman. All were in favour.

4. Representatives of the Parish Council

Councillors resolved that the list of representation on outside committees is as follows;

Wealden District Association of Local Councils (WDALC)	Alison Stevens and Cllr Mitchell-Cobb
Tree Warden	To be confirmed
Isfield Village Hall Committee	Cllr R Levett
ESALC AGM Ltd	Vacant
Parish Planning Cluster Meetings	Cllr S Cramond

5. Payment of Annual Subscriptions

Councillors resolved unanimously to pay the following subscriptions for 2021-2022;

Wealden District Association of Local Councils
Sussex Association of Local Councils
Information Commissioner's Office

6. Meetings

It was resolved that the Parish Council will meet on the following dates;

2021

July	26th
September	27th
November	26th

2022

January	24 th
March	28 th
May	23 rd
July	17 th

These meetings will take place in Isfield Village Hall, assuming Covid-19 restrictions allow them to.

7. Bank Signatories

The signatories for the bank accounts will remain Councillor Sambrook, Councillor Keys and the Clerk.

8. Code of Conduct

Councillors resolved to accept the Code of Conduct introduced by Wealden District Council under the Localism Act 2012.

9. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Isfield Parish Council resolved to adopt the Standing Orders (2021) and Financial Regulations (2021) as recommended by NALC for the ensuing year.

10. General Power of Competence

Isfield Parish Council resolved that it meets the prescribed conditions for the General Power of Competence.

11. To approve the Annual Governance Statement (i) and Annual Accounts (ii) for the financial year to 31st March 2021

Councillors resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement, the Receipts and Payments Account, the Bank Reconciliation, the Asset Schedule, the Annual Return, the Risk Management Document and the Internal Control Arrangements for 2021-2022. Peter Frost will remain the Internal Auditor.

Barcombe Landscapes was added to the payments list dated 24th May 2021 as a late invoice, the payments list was then also approved.

The Clerk agreed to bring an update on the S106 situation to the next meeting.

The meeting was then suspended.

12. Report from County and District Councillor Roy Galley

County Councillor R Galley circulated the County Council's election results before the meeting and said;

- The first Full Council Meeting of the new Council is taking place on the 25th May. District Councillor Galley will be elected Vice Chairman.
- Litter remains a priority with the District Council. The Great British Spring Clean will take place between the 28th May and the 13th June. There is now a system in place to keep the A27 and A259 clean.

Councillor Sambrook said the Parish Council complained to the Chairman of the Planning Committee North about comments made by one of its members in the meeting where the Electric Car Charging Points application was decided. The member stated that none of the statutory consultees objected to the application, when both Fletching Parish Council and Uckfield Town Council did. The comments were subsequently picked up by, and quoted in a, local newspaper which put both Councils in a difficult position with their residents. Isfield Parish Council's complaint seems to have been rejected so District Councillor Galley said he will take the matter up with the Leader of Wealden District Council.

13. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public on this occasion.

The meeting was then re-opened.

14. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meetings held on 22nd March 2021

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 22nd March 2021 were read, confirmed and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

15. Clerk's Report on Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

All matters arising were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

16. Disclosures of Interest.

There were no disclosures of interests on any items on this agenda.

17. Reports

- i: Safety Report – It was noted that some potholes in the parish have been marked out for repair by Highways.

Councillor Levett said two slats have been have been kicked out of the back of a bench at the Recreation Ground. The Clerk will arrange for them to be repaired.

- ii: Village Hall Report – Councillor Levett said the hall has a 'full order book' once again. He also asked the Parish Council to pay for some new double glazed windows for the hall and said although it was the Parish Council's duty to replace them the hall would contribute the net cost. The Clerk said she felt as Custodian Trustee this wasn't the case and it could look like tax evasion. Councillors resolved to pay for the windows as suggested by Councillor Levett and claim back the VAT.

The Midsummer Fair is to take place on the 25th July 2021. Artwave will be from the 10th September.

- iii: Recreation Ground Report – Councillors asked Councillor Levett to get prices to;
- Fit a removable height barrier at the entrance to the car park.
 - Put a gate in the fencing between the pavilion and the cricket nets.
 - Provide drainage and mesh on the left hand side of the entrance.
 - Fill the holes in the existing car park and resurface it with Type 1 (a granular material).

- iv: Parish Cluster Meeting – The next Parish Cluster Meeting is being held on the 25th May.

Members have been asked to comment on a Sustainability Study and bring their thoughts to the meeting.

Councillor Cramond said the study is disappointing and is very much taken from an urban viewpoint.

Councillors discussed their discontent with the current planning situation and in particular the effect it has on people's lives (planning blight). They said no one seems to be getting the message and agreed to send the following letter to the MP, and copy in District Councillor Roy Galley, District Councillor Peter Roundell, Fletching Parish Council and little Horsted Parish Meeting;

'Frustration and irritation with the Government's planning objectives and modus operandi have been simmering for a considerable period but have been brought to the fore by comments from Tory councillors in Sussex, after the local elections. It is not for parish councils to engage themselves in party politics but it is appropriate for them to express the views of the communities they represent and expect to be heard. Therefore, the latest expressed intention of the Government to further strengthen centralisation of planning appears to be another retrograde step in the over-development of South East counties and alienation of voters.

As you know, the rejection of the Wealden Development Plan has left this area in a state of limbo over several years, yet to be resolved. Although Isfield Parish Council is consulted on planning matters our view is that we are not given sufficient support at district council level, largely because we think that Wealden believe appeals will generally be in favour of developers. Contrary to the trend we have recently been supported in rejecting four applications that lacked merit and were a reflection of the feeling among developers that it may be 'open season' in this area. It will be interesting to see whether there are appeals in these cases and how they will be treated.

There is a very strong view emerging that the nature of rural Sussex is being threatened by aggressive top-down planning and the alienation is starting to surface in the polls. The balanced discussions that should be taking place at local level are overhung by the evidence that local views will have little influence on decisions. As a parish council we face a range of proposals up to an extreme of turning Isfield into a medium sized town, which is a wholly unsatisfactory situation. The residents of the village settled here as a rural lifestyle choice. They and the Parish Council have accepted a substantial amount of housing development in recent years, some good, some less so because we support consideration for others. However, we also believe it is for the State to recognise the needs and aspirations of the existing residents and not turn Isfield into another suburban area, which nobody wants.

Whilst recognising the need to provide homes such development must be sympathetic to the general ambience of East Sussex. However, we are already seeing development which is seriously straining many facets of the infrastructure, which are known to you, so do not need to be laid out here. Our view is that the planning debate locally should be reset to enable a proper, open exchange of views to meet the full range of relevant needs in Wealden with the intention of achieving planning outcomes that will carry the confidence of the community and we hope we can rely on your support in developing that agenda'.

18. Allotments

Councillor Keys is the Parish Councillor responsible for collecting the allotment rents which average £2.50 for each allotment. He then passes the rent on to the landowner.

Councillor Levett said historically the money came to the Parish Council who would take a nominal fee and give the balance to the landowner.

No changes were made to the existing arrangement or to the allotment agreement.

19. Planning Applications, to include any received after the agenda has been sent out, and: Details of planning applications can be found on the Wealden District Council website.

WD/2021/0767/F - 2 The Retreat, Station Road, Isfield, TN22 5XG - Demolition of existing single storey extension and construction of new part 2-storey, part single-storey extension and including new on-site parking provision for 2 cars – Isfield Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

20. Questions from Parish Councillors

There were no questions from any Parish Councillors on this occasion.

There was no further business and this meeting closed at 8.35pm.