



ISFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk & RFO: Anita Emery CiLCA
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Doc No: 242505

Council meeting – 22nd January 2025

Minutes of the Council meeting of Isfield Parish Council as above, held at Isfield Village Hall, TN22 5XG at 19:30.

Present: Cllrs G Sambrook (GS) (Chair), A Keys (AK) (Vice Chair), P Roundell (PR)

Absent: Cllrs Mitchell-Cobb (TM-C) and Cramond (SC).

In attendance: A Emery Clerk and RFO; Cllr Coleman (WDC); Cllr Galley (ESCC); 0 members of the public.

Press & Public are invited to attend. Meetings are open to the public and could be filmed or recorded by broadcasters, the media or members of the public.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

To **RECEIVE** any apologies.

- Cllrs Mitchell-Cobb and Cramond tendered their apologies and reason for absence accepted.

2. Declarations of interest/Request for dispensations

To **RECEIVE** any declarations of interest. To **RESOLVE** to grant dispensations where appropriate.

- None received

3. Public Participation

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. Any member of the public, who so wishes, may speak at this point of the meeting on items within the remit of the Council. No previous notice need be given. The Council are happy to receive comments but responses will be made outside meetings should they be necessary. Time limit to speak with the discretion of the Chair.

- Nothing to report

4. District and County Councillors' reports

- **County Cllr Roy Galley (ESCC)** – sent note about devolution and background on Government white paper regarding Unitary Authority. A discussion took place on how the concept of a Mayor would work and how County and District felt about it.
- Update on County Council financial position will balance budget but taking from reserves again. 6% additional spending power. 53% adult social care increased in a year. Children 116% increase also. Cuts to statutory services i.e. highways etc.
- Cllr GS asked Cllr Galley to relay IPC's view about what is happening – would like to see more vocally opposed by County.
- **District Report – Cllr Coleman (WDC)**
- Just before Christmas, the Labour Government released a White Paper outlining their vision of devolution. While in theory devolution is a good idea - giving greater power to local communities - what is proposed in the White

Paper looks more like centralisation and a blatant power-grab. The proposal is to get rid of District Councils and create a Mayoral Combined Authority. Instead of being represented by your District Council that answers to approximately 160,000 residents (and your ward Councillors who serve around 4,000 residents) you will be represented by a Mayor who presides over more than half a million residents. Labour committed to devolution in their election manifesto, but failed to mention that they would abolish District Councils and impose Mayoral Authorities. Furthermore, they have made it clear that one of the key drivers for removing District Councils is that they want to “back the builders not the blockers” and therefore reduce the ability for communities to have a say over what gets built in their local area.

Even more worryingly is the lack of discussion and the speed at which changes are likely to take place. The information that this creation of a Mega council was happening was shared a few days before Christmas. There was no consultation or engagement with fellow councillors, let alone residents.

Only leaders of top tier authorities were consulted. Keith Glazier, the Conservative Leader of ESCC has made it clear that he, together with the Conservative Leader of West Sussex and Labour leader of Brighton and Hove, have decided to go for the fastest possible route to a Mayoral Combined Authority (known as the priority programme). This means a fast-tracked Local Government Reorganisation to create a mega-authority combining East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove (1.6 million people). How three County Council leaders get to decide our fate seems extraordinary.

By signing up to the priority programme, the County Council leaders can also request a suspension of the upcoming county council elections. A number of District Council Leaders - who were not consulted - have signed a letter to request that the local elections are not delayed. They are concerned that the creation of a mega-Council would be un-democratic.

The request to sign up for the priority programme has been passed by the leaders of ESCC, B&HCC and WSCC to Jim McMahon, the Minister for Local Government. We are expecting a response as to whether Sussex has been accepted onto the priority programme by 28th January.

Increased regional powers can be a good thing, particularly around public transport, climate action, skills, energy, and spatial planning, but the indecent haste that this government seems to want to move this forward and the undermining of local democracy is unacceptable. England's 164 District and Borough councils provide local services valued by residents: we empty the bins; clean the streets; look after green spaces and playgrounds; oversee the planning process and provide leisure centres and a host of other services – all for around the price of a cup of coffee each week. This is incredibly good value and happens at a local level so that District and Borough councillors are connected to residents.

There are concerns that a single mega-council risks diminishing local representation, with decision making that is remote from the communities that local government should serve. The UK is already the most centralised country in the democratic world.

We believe that the elections should go ahead in May and plans for devolution and local government reorganisation should be made by the new administration. This would give two years to ensure local government reorganisation is shaped in consultation with residents, local businesses and interest groups. The White Paper is clear in its aspirations but leaves much uncertainty. Regardless of what the decision is on the 28th, there is much work to do in drafting proposals for Local Government Reorganisation. I will do my best to keep Parish Councils fully informed as the situation evolves and help to support them through this process of great change.

5. Full Council meeting minutes: 20th November 2024

To **RESOLVE** that the of the meeting as above having been previously circulated, be taken as read and approved.
[2024-11-20 Minutes DRAFT.pdf](#)

- Unanimously agreed – Chair signed to that effect.

6. Matters arising from previous minutes

- See Clerks Report

7. Clerks Report [Clerks Report Jan 2025.pdf](#)

- Unanimously agreed for the Chair, Vice Chair to sign in front of the Clerk the S106 indemnity agreement with WDC to enable the drawdown of funds for the walking track expenditure at the Recreation Ground – **Clerk to action.**
- Remaining report noted.

8. To note correspondence received [Dec-Jan 2025.pdf](#)

- Duly noted

9. Planning Applications

To ratify the following applications

WD/2024/2532/LB THE BOATHOUSE, LEWES ROAD, ISFIELD, TN22 5TY

Description: TO REMOVE THE EXISTING PLASTIC GUTTERING AND DOWNPIPE FROM THE UTILITY EXTENSION. REPLACE THE GUTTERING AND 1 NO. DOWNPIPE USING TRADITIONAL BLACK PLAIN HALF ROUND CAST IRON GUTTERING (100MM) AND BLACK CAST IRON 65MM DOWNPIPE [eCon Isfield Parish Council The Boathouse.pdf](#)

Decision: No objection

WD/2024/2341/FR THE STABLES, OAK TREE BARN, STATION ROAD, ISFIELD, TN22 5XG

Description: RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION TO RESIDENTIAL LET. [eCon Isfield Parish Council The Stables.pdf](#)

Decision: No objection

- Unanimously ratified.
- Additional planning application received after publication of the agenda.

WD/2025/0063/DC

4 Northfield Cottages, Isfield TN22 5XN

Installation of an air source heat pump whereby 1 air source ius already installed at Flat 3 (directly below)

Decision: No objection.

Decisions to note

Application No. WD/2024/2221/O PROPOSAL FOR THREE DETACHED HOUSES, LANDSCAPING AND PARKING. OAKS FARM, HORSTED LANE, ISFIELD, TN22 5TX. **REFUSED.** [eCon Isfield Parish Council Oaks farm REFUSED.pdf](#)

New House Farm Appeal - [202 - Turn away late appeal - C Wojtulewski - 11 Dec 2024.pdf](#)

- Duly noted.

10. Schedule of Payments

To **RESOLVE** to ratify the December payments as represented on the attached schedule - [Expenditure Dec 2024.pdf](#)

To **RESOLVE** to approve the January payments as represented on the attached schedule - [List of expenditure Jan 2025.pdf](#)

- Clerk reported that there was an additional expenditure item for hedge cutting of £253.50.
Duly ratified December payments totalling £1533.10.
Unanimously approved January payments totalling £1136.76
Chair signed to that effect.

11. Bank reconciliation

To **RESOLVE** to approve the bank reconciliation and corresponding bank statements for IPC and Recreation Ground.
To be provided at the March meeting.

- Clerk advised of the Barclays situation – and that she was still awaiting the card reader and authentication card.
Complaint had been submitted to Barclays on how they have handled the situation.

12. Finance Regulations

To adopt finance regulations which now include online banking. [IPC - Financial Regulations 2024.docx](#)

- Unanimously approved – **Clerk to update website.**

13. To **RESOLVE** to approve Playdale quotation for replacement of bearing on the roundabout. To follow.

- IPC happy for Clerk to contact Foster Landscapes for a second quotation – **Clerk to action**

14. Accounting Software

To **RECEIVE** recommendation from the Clerk to consider quotes for Parish Council Accounting Software. [Accounting software recommendation to IPC Jan 2025.pdf](#)

- Unanimously agreed to go with Easy PC Accounts at £9 per month starting with 3 month free trial. **Clerk to action.**

15. Update: EV Charge Points

To **RECEIVE** as above from Cllr Cramond. – No report received.

- Clerk advised that she had emailed Dawson Hart regarding an update on the current situation – but no response received. Clerk advised that the land needs to be registered under the parish councils name and unsure why individuals need to go into the solicitor. Clerk requested to speak to Surrey Hill Solicitors as more set up for Parish Council legalities. Duly agreed. **Clerk to action and report back.**

16. Reports from Council representatives

To **NOTE** verbal reports from Councillors – e.g. Recreation Ground, Village Hall.

- Cllr AK – not much to say. Path is now finished and paid for and has been well received.
- Need to address some trees against fences – and ditch areas. Assess later/discuss in the year.

- Cllr PR - attended round table discussion on 'How to build a new town'. Promoted privately and was presented by Julian Glover.

17. Notification of meeting/Suggested items for next agenda

To **NOTE** any suggested items for the next meeting.

- None received.

Meeting closed: 20:23

Date of next meeting: 26th March 2025 – 19:30