



CLERK’S REPORT

Full Council Meeting – 8th November 2023

Biodiversity – the Council has a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and must consider what policies, objectives, and action it can take, consistent with the exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, s.40 & Environment Act 202, s.102

Number	Item
1.	<p>Apologies for absence & housekeeping*</p> <p>At the time of writing, no apologies have been received.</p> <p><i>*In accordance with The Data Protection Act 2018 all attendees of the meeting are hereby notified that the meeting could be recorded as an aide memoire for the Clerk when compiling the minutes. The recordings are held securely and are deleted after the resolution that the minutes are a true and correct record. Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council, or one of its committees or sub-committees, will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film, or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present. Persons who record the parish Council’s meetings are reminded that the “Public Forum” period may not be part of the formal meeting and that they should take legal advice themselves as to their rights to make any recording during that period.</i></p>
2.	<p>Disclosure of Interests</p> <p><i>(As defined under the Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011, Chapter 7 ss.26 – 37 in relation to matters on the agenda).</i></p> <p>At the time of drafting this report, no disclosures of interests have been received from any Member. If a Member becomes aware of an interest in any agenda item, they must notify the meeting (either at the beginning of the meeting, or before the agenda item is discussed).</p> <p>Members have a positive duty to consider the agenda and notify the meeting if they, or their partner, have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI), or other interest in any matter listed. If a Member, or their partner, has a DPI, or any other interest, they are prohibited from participating in the discussion and/or voting. However, a Member can apply in writing to the Proper Officer (Clerk) for dispensation to participate and/or vote in the</p>

	<p>matter. It is a criminal offence for any Member to withhold disclosure of a DPI without reasonable excuse and/or participate in debate and/or voting (in the absence of dispensation from the Proper Officer).</p>
3.	<p>Minutes</p> <p>Approval of the draft minutes of the full Council Meeting held on 11th October 2023. The draft minutes are published on the website and were circulated to Members, via email on 23rd October.</p> <p>Approved minutes shall be signed by the meeting Chair via Secured Signing – a secure and legally recognised digital signing software package - in accordance with Standing Order 12(g). The signed minutes will be published on the website.</p>
4.	<p>Public Forum</p> <p>In accordance with Standing Orders (SO) 3(e) the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions, and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. However, public participation shall not exceed 10 minutes, unless otherwise directed by the Chairman (SO 3(f)). A speaker is limited to 5 minutes (SO 3(g)). The Council is not required to respond and/or debate a matter/question raised during public participation and the Chair can direct a response to be provided (oral/written) by either a Councillor or the Clerk (SO 3(h)). Only one person shall speak at a time and if more than one person wants to speak, the Chair shall direct the order (SO 3(k)). A record of the public participation session shall be included in the minutes (SO 3(t)).</p> <p>The business of the meeting will resume immediately following the public forum.</p> <p>***</p> <p>The Council will hear from Ms Angela Palmerton of Natural Gardens, the consultant currently instructed by the Parish Council to support the Ifold bus stop conservation area; and Mrs Sarah West, a volunteer offering to take over the management of the area, without charge to the Parish Council.</p> <p>The lack of volunteer support means that the Council must pay for the area to be maintained. Although maintenance is limited, the area does require some oversight. The Council currently budgets £500pa for professional spring and autumn support. The project model was for Ms Palmerton to upskill a team of volunteers who would undertake the minimal management of the area. Sadly, this has not materialised. Calls for volunteer support has failed to yield take-up.</p> <p>Mrs West is currently studying for a diploma in Habitat Management and Conservation. Mrs West is willing to take over the complete management of the area for free and support any volunteers who may come forward in the future; her previous work experience as a senior teacher means that she has the required experience.</p>

Ms Palmerton and Mrs West believe that the area could receive accreditation and grant funding support. Likewise, sponsorship from local businesses could offer financial aid to install signage and information boards.



The presence of professional signage to explain the purpose of the area can help to inspire community understanding and confidence. Sadly, some residents have made negative contact with Ms Palmerton due to their misunderstanding about the nature of the area and how to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

The Parish Council's website has 2 infomercials about the site ([here](#)), which provide the background to the project and the work already undertaken. The space has been invested in by national charity Butterfly Conservation.

5. **To receive reports from [County and District Councillors](#)**
Reports provided in advance of the meeting are published alongside the agenda on the Parish Council's [website](#) and circulated to Members, via email, for advance consideration.

6. **Neighbourhood Plan**
On 9th November the Clerk and Chairman will have a meeting with Colin Smith Planning Ltd to discuss the practical arrangements for the public consultation meeting on 7th December, Winterton Hall between 7pm – 9pm.

The Council has been awarded technical support for both the Design Code aspect of the Plan and Housing Needs Assessment. A meeting with both AECOM Teams will take place on 14th November. The Clerk and Chairman will attend.

The meeting with the Design Team seeks to bring them up to speed on work done to date and see whether there are any useful background documents that can be used. AECOM have received the draft Village Design Statement for consideration and use where applicable. The Team will explain the process and nature of the Design output. They will follow up with a further meeting and visit to the Parish, when more detail can be discussed about what makes the area special.

The meeting with the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) Team will consider the Parish's housing issues, agree to the scope of the research, and explain the HNA process. The following will be addressed: -

1. The end date of the Neighbourhood Plan (these often align with the end date of emerging Local Plans)
2. Your local authority contact
3. Your housing requirement figure from the local authority
4. What you would like to be referred to as in the report (e.g., Parish Council, Steering Group, Working Party, Advisory Committee)

	<p>The Council is asked to consider: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Parish’s housing issues - the scope of the HNA research required - Any other relevant information and/or documentation to be considered for the design code.
7.	<p>Meeting minutes & reports</p> <p>The Council is referred to the minutes and resolutions therein of the following Committees: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finance Committee, dated 11th October 2023 (here) - Winter & Emergency Plan Committee, dated 10th October 2023 (here) - Northern Parishes meeting, dated 19th October 2023 (here) – Councillors are asked to consider their response to the proposed joint letter to CDC regarding the All Parishes meetings, drafted by Wisborough Green Parish Council and circulated to Members on 03.11.2023. - WSALC AGM, dated 20th October 2023 (here). Attended by Cllr. Price on behalf of the Parish Council. - APCAG meeting, attended by Cllr. Denyer on behalf of the Council. <i>"Not much to report back apart from the usual that Gatwick won't be pinned down on any detail and continue to be vague on matters/objectives so that they cannot be held accountable. Some of their plans for 2024 include over 50% single straight line departure/arrivals where all aircrafts follow the same route, which will impact some (Plastow & Ifold) people greatly, rather than spreading it out. Apparently the consultation meetings that Gatwick have run are appallingly organised and frustrating as not true consultation is permitted."</i>
8.	<p>Policies</p> <p>The Council is recommended to consider and adopt the following policies: -</p> <p>Legionella</p> <p>To note the requirement to temperature test the water fortnightly between May – September. Recommended by Cllr. Price further to attending Legionella training. This policy enacts the Council’s legal requirements and actions further to a risk assessment of the Cricket Pavilion, completed by a water consultant in 2022, and Council training.</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>This sets out the Council’s legal requirements under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. This duty was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021.</p>

At the time of drafting the Tree Policy is still in progress. It will be circulated to Councillors in due course.

9.

Ifold Conservation area

The Chairman may agree for this agenda item to be considered out of order, to allow Ms Palmerton and Mrs West to support the Council's decision making.

1. To consider and approve, in principle, an annual biodiversity budget for 2024/25

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, s.40 & Environment Act 2021, s.102 requires public authorities in England, including Parish Councils, to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Parish Council has a duty to consider what policies, objectives, and action it can take, consistent with the exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective. It has until January 2024 to put in place a plan / policy on how it is going to meet this duty.

The Council already does quite a bit to conserve and enhance biodiversity - from its biannual litter pick; the two conservation areas (Ifold bus stop and under the Sessile Oak on the village green) and tree planting. The Council can also achieve 'easy wins' such as installing bird boxes to the back of the two new bus shelters (when build). The Neighbourhood Plan can also incorporate many of the required biodiversity policies and practices, including a Design Code which addresses light pollution, pollinator corridors and close board fencing etc.

There are many innovative examples being pursued by Parish Councils to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It is strongly recommended that the Parish Council sets an annual biodiversity budget to support the community in this regard and the Biodiversity Policy reflects this. The Council has the General Power of Competence, which means it can do anything lawful a natural person can do. An annual budget will allow the public and Councillors to suggest ways to conserve and enhance biodiversity throughout the year, which the Council is able to support; whether this be bird boxes, promoting a hedgehog recovery programme, providing public talks, tree planting etc.

If the Parish Council agrees, it is recommended that the Finance Committee consider an appropriate annual biodiversity budget when preparing the 2024/25 budget for the Council's consideration and approval in January 2024.

2. Appoint a biodiversity Lead Councillor

It is recommended that the Council appoint a Member to be the 'biodiversity champion', who can work alongside the Clerk to ensure the Council remains up to date with its legal responsibilities and promotes other ideas and budget requirements to allow the Council to proactively engage and address environmental matters and issues.

The Council has two Councillor vacancies. This is considered below under Clerk's Updates. It is recommended that the Council considers a targeted 'recruitment drive' to appeal to those in the community who have a specific skill set / interest that would be helpful to the Council e.g., someone who would like to promote biodiversity, conservation, and climate change within the Parish. The results of the Priorities and Funding Survey will highlight which issues are community priorities and what additional skill set(s) the Council may require.

3. To consider and approve increasing the Ifold Conservation area budget for 23/24 to allow handover

Please refer to the information above under 'Public Forum'. The Council is asked to consider increasing the 2023/24 budget to allow Ms Palmerton to train Mrs West to take over the area management. The £500 annual budget has been exhausted. Works to the area are likely to be needed before 31.03.2024 e.g., to plant some annual flowers to inject colour and provide the area with some 'after winter support'. Ms Palmerton will advise the Council on likely costs and answer any questions. Once Mrs West takes over the general management of the area, the Council can remove altogether a site-specific budget requirement.

The Council budgets a £2,000 Village Maintenance Reserve Fund and a £5,000 Community Reserve Fund. There will be underspends in some budget areas e.g., 'Chairman's Allowance' budget - £200, spend at the end of quarter 2 £10; 'Other Expenses' budget - £610, spend at the end of quarter 2 £0 (although the uncontested election costs will come out of this pot at some point).

4. To consider and approve the need for signage

It is recommended that the Council consider this matter in principle and consider including it within an annual biodiversity budget for 2024/25. Equally, Mrs West can research and present to the Council (in due course) possible available grant funding and local business sponsorship. Ms Palmerton and Mrs West will advise the Council on the benefits of having information boards and signage in the area.

5. To consider and approve hosting a community biodiversity talk

It is recommended that the Council consider this matter in principle and include it within an annual biodiversity budget for 2024/25. The Council has previously used its Newsletter and Facebook to galvanise volunteer support for the area. Given the Council's duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and considering central Government guidance on ways to do this, which includes educate, advise and raise awareness it is recommended that the Council consider hosting a community talk on conservation and wildlife gardening. This topic is currently 'in vogue' and likely to be well attended. Rather than 'preach' to Ifold about the virtues of the bus stop conservation area within a leaflet/newsletter etc, inviting residents to attend an event where they can listen to an expert speaker and can take away practical tips which they can employ directly in their own gardens, will not only serve to educate regarding the conservation area itself, but also support biodiversity in the Parish

generally and can be another vehicle for the Neighbourhood Plan consultation etc. Such an event might yield new volunteers to support the area. A ‘temperature test’ of the ongoing Priorities and Funding Survey indicates that holding community engagement and social events is well supported by the community.

10.

Plaistow Playing Field

Please refer to minute reference [C/22/159\(3\), 14th December 2022](#)

A meeting of the Management Trustees of the Plaistow Playing Field (Parish Council; School; Church; Youth Club; Football Club) will take place on 8th November at 6:45pm to resolve to appoint the Parish Council as the Sole Trustee. The matter is being supported by Action in Rural Sussex (AIRS) who has drafted the resolution ([here](#)). A verbal update will be provided by the Clerk at this juncture of the meeting. The amendments to the Governing Document (the 1951 Trust Deed) can be found [here](#).

Background: -

In 1951, Mr George Hope of Common House in Plaistow gifted land in the centre of the village – now known as the Plaistow Playing Field (the part with the cricket pavilion) – to the Parish Council.

In 1951, Kirdford Parish Council included the geographical area of Plaistow and Ifold. However, since this time, a separate Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council has been formed, which assumed local government responsibility for the Plaistow and Ifold area, including Trusts made prior to its inception, but relate to Parish assets e.g., the Winterton Hall, Coxes Pond and Plaistow Playing Field.

The 1951 conveyance forms the Trust Deed, which puts the land in trust for the benefit of the local population for recreation (physical and mental wellbeing). The land is well used annually by local organisations and forms a central and integral part of the Plaistow and Ifold Parish identity.

The Trust Deed specifies that the general management and administration of the trust property i.e., the land, vests with the Management Committee, which is made up of not more than 13 members - the Trustees.

8 local organisations are listed in Schedule II of the Trust Deed, which are permitted to allocate one of their number to sit on the Management Committee as a Trustee of the Plaistow Playing Field. Some of the organisations have since ceased e.g., the Plaistow Cricket Club and Plaistow Women’s Institute.

At some point in the past, the Parish Council has assumed the role of Sole Trustee. It files the annual return with the Charity Commission and manages the land (e.g., grass / tree maintenance). Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council are also listed as the Sole Trustee by the [Charity Commission](#) Unless known otherwise, there has not been a Management Committee, made up of representatives from the 8 organisations listed in the Trust Deed, in living memory.

Despite the fact that even the Charity Commission believes the Parish Council to be the Sole Trustee, it is important that the official Trust Deed is lawfully amended to reflect

	<p>this reality. Otherwise, the trust itself is at risk and ultimately the land, which needs to be legally safeguarded for future generations and the preservation of the integrity of Plaistow village.</p> <p>The Parish Council now wishes to formally (and lawfully) amend the Trust Deed to accurately reflect the current reality – that Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council is the Sole Trustee of the Plaistow Playing Field charity - and has sought professional advice from AiRS.</p> <p>In order to complete the relatively simple paperwork / procedure, there needs to be a properly constituted Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Management Committee to agree to amend the Trust Deed.</p> <p>This EGM must be made up of trustees appointed by the remaining 8 organisation. Thereafter, the nominated member from each organisation will cease to be a Trustee and there will be no further liability and/or requirement from either them, or the organisation.</p>
11.	<p>Winterton Hall & Youth Club CIO</p> <p>In accordance with the Council’s resolution to support the Winterton Hall to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and pay for the support of Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) to realise this, the public meeting of the hall takes place on 8th November 2023. The benefit of a CIO is that the liability of Trustees is limited and the Charity can hold legal title to land. It will alleviate the Parish Council responsibility as the hall’s Custodian Trustee and the land will vest with the CIO. The Plaistow Youth Club will merge with the CIO once formed. This will enable both the Winterton Hall and Youth Club to support one another, due to their common interest in the Winterton Hall and Youth Club buildings which are interdependent.</p>
12.	<p>Tennis Court</p> <p>In April 2023, the Finance Committee considered the Youth Club’s application for grant funding (£3,480*) to resurface the tennis court. The Parish Council has previously resolved to fund the annual tennis court cleaning cost and vegetation management (as part of its ongoing grounds contract). However, regarding the resurfacing cost the full Council agreed that it be included in the 2023/24 annual budget, subject to the following conditions: -</p> <p>The Parish Council requires that the Youth Club puts in place a strategy to increase the tennis courts use within the community, to be agreed by the Parish Council before the money is paid. The Parish Council must be shown how the tennis court will meet these costs in the future. The Finance Committee noted the Youth Club’s concerns regarding the increase in electricity costs to floodlight the tennis court in the winter months and the need for new, efficient lighting. This is a further cost, which should be borne by the tennis court itself. The tennis court represents a sporting facility within the community which is not well used, or even known about. Therefore, better publicity is required and diversity of use of the facility e.g., netball / 5-side football / use by the schools / use by other clubs / community membership scheme.</p>

The Youth Club have now been in contact with the Parish Council to advise: -

“ we had a long discussion at our last PYC meeting and as a group we feel that we can’t take on the promotion and running of this as a separate entity. We currently give so many hours to the Youth Club, both the running of it and all the behind the scenes admin, that we simply don’t have the time to take on anything else. I am not sure how this leaves things with the Parish Council and the court maintenance, but it will need addressing in the near future.”

The Council is asked to consider the maintenance requirements of the tennis court, the position of the Youth Club and the tennis court as a wider sporting community asset. The tennis court is owned by the Youth Club, but built on Luttmann-Johnson owned land subject to a lease which is due to expire in the next few years.

**£3480 to fully pressure wash the tennis court surfaces and apply moss and algae treatment. Carry out minor repairs to the court surface using 2mm resin stone if needed. Colour spray the tennis court surface dark green applying three coats of non-slip acrylic sports paint. Paint white tennis lines to the surface. Two football circles. One set of netball lines.*

13.

Financial Matters

See Clerk’s Report

1. Financial Reports for October – November 2023 (Payments and Receipts Analysis)

To follow before the meeting.

2. CIL

Community Infrastructure Levy: The Council will receive £9,935.91 in April 2024 in relation to planning application 18/02939/FUL, Gatliff House (formerly Valtony), Loxwood Road, Plaistow, RH14 0NY.

3. Fingerpost signs

The recent Asset Audit indicated that 3 fingerpost signs require work. Councillors assessed that the one along Dunsfold Road required work in 2023/24 and the other two in Plaistow village in 2024/25. Quotes have been sought from Ralph Restorations – a specialist West Sussex contractor who restores and repairs historic items of street furniture such as telephone boxes, fingerpost signs, post boxes and village signs etc: <http://www.ralphrestorations.co.uk/> Financial Regulations 11.1(ii) states that for ‘specialist services’ 3 quotes do not need to be obtained. Restoration of conservation signs is specialist work – one of the reasons WSCC Highways no longer maintain them. Searches for other

specialist contractors have identified a company in Cumbria ([Signpost Restoration](#)). Ralph Restoration is based in West Sussex and workmanship is known, as the company previously restored the Ifold telephone box.

Financial Regulations 11.1(h) states: -

“When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services [...] the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations [...] where the value is below £3,000 and above £500 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.”

Financial Regulations 10.3 requires the Council to achieve value for money at all times.

Tim Ralph has looked at the 3 fingerposts and made notes about them. At the time of drafting this report his quotes are pending. Tim has advised that he will need to think carefully about the best way forward for them. He found a few issues with the 2 signs within Plaistow, which could do with addressing but they don't really justify a full restoration yet. However, a repaint to “freshen them up” isn't as simple or as effective as it sounds. The sign by the junction with Shillinglee Road does require more work and is more urgent.

4. Winter & emergency kit list

To follow before the meeting.

5. Parish defibrillators

Cllr. Price has been in touch with Secamb about the Kelsey Hall defibrillator. Secamb are not happy for it to be serviced, as it is over 10 years old and advised that the Parish Council should buy a new one! Secamb might eventually replace it, but unlikely to be anytime soon because of money. They won't let BEAT take it on because of its age. Cllr. Price suggests that the Parish Council seeks grant funding to purchase a new one and then BEAT could take it on.

To note, many grant funding applications require matched funding, and the cost is around £750. This would be unbudgeted but could be realised in underspends and community reserve fund. However, Ifold is one of the biggest population centres in the Parish and would only have one serviceable defibrillator (The Drive, Ifold bus stop by the shop).

6. Community minibus

Please consider [Cllr. Brown's update](#) regarding this matter and his recommendation that the Council does not pursue a minibus scheme.

7. Councillor Planning Training

The Planning Committee seeks Pre-Application training to allow the Council to engage with developers at an earlier stage, in accordance with the National

Planning Policy Framework. The Council is approached by developers who wish to engage with the Council prior to submitting their planning application. There is an expectation that the Council participates in these discussions. However, it needs to understand how to do this correctly and to have policy in place. The Planning & Open Spaces Committee will consider quotes at its meeting on 7th November and update the Council at this juncture regarding their preferred trainer and the cost. The Council has a Councillor training budget of £882 and at the end of quarter 2 the expenditure was £60.

8. Council phone contract

The Council is asked to resolve upon the preferred virtual local number (VOIP or 'Voice Over Internet Protocol) for the Council: -

All prices are ex. VAT (as the Council can reclaim its VAT).

1. Smart Numbers

- A rolling 30-day agreement with option to change number or package any time
- Basic divert to mobile number using a local number is £7.13pm. This includes a voice messaging service which emails messages to you.
- If you want to make outbound calls 'disguised' as your chosen local number, then it's an additional £4.95pm. Total: - £12.08pm / £144.96pa

2. Telecoms World

- Use via an app on a mobile phone or on the PC laptop
- Local area phone number
- 2000 mobile and 5000 landline calls included in the price per month
- Voice messaging service
- Time of day setting (to receive calls)
- £22.99pm / £275.88pa
- Inbound calls only £9.99pm (4000 in bound minutes)

3. Air Landline

- £9.99pm flat rate
- Additional £7.99pm to make unlimited disguised' outbound calls to both landlines and mobiles from 1 mobile and 1 laptop.

Smart Numbers is the cheapest monthly package at £12.08 (with outgoing calls included).

If the Council did not want to pay for the 'disguised' outbound calls (on all three options) it would be cheaper. It is possible to hide caller ID and/or remember to dial 141 in front of an outgoing number. However, it is worth considering that people don't like to answer withheld numbers. Whilst voice

	<p>messages can be left and people can call back, it then risks a protracted 'phone tag' situation. Food for thought.</p>
14.	<p>Highway Matters None to note at the time of drafting this report.</p>
15.	<p>Clerk's update & items for inclusion on a future agenda The Clerk will provide a verbal update at the meeting, regarding: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting You event (Tuesday 7th November) 2. Newsletter, including website availability & Priority & Funding Survey 3. Litter pick 4. Playpark 5. Police meetings 6. Home Start Chichester District AGM 7. Councillor vacancies (x2)
16.	<p>Correspondence None to note.</p>
17.	<p><u>Date of next meetings</u> Dates of forthcoming meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Open Spaces Committee, 29th November 2023, Kelsey Hall, Ifold - 7:30pm • Planning & Open Spaces Committee, 12th December 2023, Winterton Hall, Plaistow - 7:30pm • Finance Committee, 13th December 2023, Winterton Hall, Plaistow - 7:00pm • Full Parish Council, 13th December 2023, Winterton Hall, Plaistow - 7:30pm
18.	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public Due to the confidential nature of staffing matters, the Council is advised to resolve to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during the consideration of item 19, in accordance with s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.</p>
19.	<p>Staffing matters A separate and confidential Report will be circulated to Members before the meeting.</p>