

CLERK'S REPORT

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

- | Agenda
Item # | Item |
|------------------|--|
| 1. | Apologies for absence & housekeeping
Cllr. Bushell may join the meeting late due to work commitments. |
| 2. | Disclosure of interests
None received in advance at the time of drafting this report. |
| 3. | Minutes
<i>On the website.</i>
Circulated to members on 7th April. |
| 4. | Public participation
No requests to address the meeting have been received at the time of drafting this report. |
| 6. | Financial Matters <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Order for Payments
Financial Reports for Year End (31.03.2022) and for April (up to 06.04.2022). Includes income and expenditure since the March 2022 Council meeting on 09.03.2022. The final Order for Payment for 2021/22 was presented to the Finance Committee on 7th April.2. 2021/22 Year End and Finance Committee Meeting
Please refer directly to the Finance Committee meeting minutes and Clerk's Report here. The content of which should be self-explanatory.

Page 4 of the Clerk's Report provides an explanation of the 2021/22 Budget Forecast Comparison spreadsheet at Quarter 4 / Year End.

Pages 2-3 provides guidance regarding the lawful expenditure of grant awards authorised by the Finance Committee. |

3. Interim Internal Audit Report

The Clerk met with the new Internal Auditor, Mr. Mike Platten, on 9th March. The Internal Audit has highlighted the following areas for note/improvement: -

- All future contracts for expenditure above £25,000 must be advertised on the Contracts Finder website in accordance with the requirements within Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- The Council should apply for a debit card on the Council's bank account.
- The Clerk should attend RBS accounting system training to make better use of the available system.
- The Council must state that it is the sole trustee of the Plaistow Playing Field Charity (charity 305404) on its Annual Return.

The interim report has been published on the Parish Council's website [here](#).

The full and final Internal Audit for the 2021/22 accounts is scheduled for 26th April.

4. 2022-2023 Final budget

Please refer directly to the Finance Committee meeting minutes and Clerk's Report [here](#). The content of which should be self-explanatory.

The Finance Committee considered the amended draft annual budget for 2022/23 and recommends the document to the full Council for adoption.

Budgets are 'living' documents. The Council's Finance Committee reviews and amends (where necessary) the budget on a quarterly basis and reports to full Council. However, the agreed budget provides a benchmark against which the quarterly movement can be judged and provides financial parameters for known / anticipated expenditure, whilst maintaining both ringfenced and general reserves to support unforeseen and longer-term expenditure/ financial planning.

5. Winterton Hall, Trust and landownership legal investigation

The Winterton Hall Management Committee (WHMC) have asked

the Parish Council to consider becoming both the Custodian and Management Trustees of the charity. The Chair and Treasurer of the WHMC are stepping down at the AGM in June and, to date, have not identified anyone willing to take over these roles. Generally, the WHMC are finding it harder to 'recruit' new committee members and the general running of the building (building works due to its age etc) is becoming more onerous on a few key volunteers.

Initial legal advice obtained by the Parish Council (2020) suggests it is possible for it to act as both Custodian and Management Trustees of the charity; however, the matter requires further legal investigation.

Similarly, the legal ownership of the land at the Winterton Hall site is unclear, with three (possibly four) landowners, including the Parish Council and Youth Club. Considering the shelved Neighbourhood Plan, which offered protection to some of the community assets situated at the site (Preschool garden / Tennis Court / Youth Club building etc), it would be prudent for the Parish Council to obtain a definitive answer regarding the land ownership and legal advice on how to secure these assets for the benefit of the community for future years.

Councillors have received, via email, the initial legal advice of Wellers Hedleys Solicitors (legal advice privilege). The fee quote falls within the 2022/23 recommended budget for this matter, namely £2,000.

Wellers Hedleys provides specialist legal advice and support on all Parish/Town Council matters and is recommended by WSALC. The firm has already offered the Parish Council support on this matter in 2020 and has had sight of the Winterton Hall Deeds. Therefore, considering the specialist and diverse nature of the Parish Council's instruction, and the existing working knowledge of the firm regarding some of the issues, it is not necessary to seek further quotes for this matter.

6. Plaistow & Ifold Bus Shelter Oak

The two new bus shelters (Plaistow and The Drive, Ifold) were [designed](#) by a local Charter Surveyor who has a professional specialism in building conservation. The design is bespoke. A site

visit was undertaken to ensure the immediate surrounding architecture in Plaistow, which is a conservation area, is mirrored - the shelter [emulates the Sun Inn outhouse and several other adjacent buildings](#). The two bus shelters formed the New Homes Bonus grant applications in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the successful awards, amounting to £6,000 can only be spent on this project. The NHB applications specified that the building materials would be locally sourced, wherever possible, to ensure the shelters blends in with their surroundings.

The shelter design was approved by the Parish Council on 9th September 2020, further to public consultation with the Plaistow Village Trust and immediate neighbours (Plaistow) and publication on the [website](#). Please see minute reference, [C/20/123](#) pages 4-6.

Although the build has once again been delayed, the WSCC Volunteer Team lead has advised that they can store any materials purchased in advance by the Parish Council.

It would be prudent planning to ensure that some of the more specialist materials are obtained / commissioned in good time, so as not to delay the build start date when the Volunteer Team notify the Parish Council of their ability to begin the works. This could be with limited notice.

Given the desire to source material from local firms (wherever possible) and the need to select material which will enable the shelters to blend with the surrounding architecture, particularly in the conservation area of Plaistow, the Parish Council is recommended to approve the quote for the green oak for posts and braces from the Kirdford based company, Miliam Limited.

Further guidance has been provided by the shelters' designer as follows:

Although [the quote] states Ifold the amount quoted for is for the Plaistow Bus shelter as well. The 5 upright posts and braces are needed in oak, but the additional cross beams could be undertaken in soft wood as these will not be readily visible externally, only internally. Even if the PC don't go with oak cross beams to save costs, there will be a cost for softwood any

way but a lower price. The rest of the bus shelter is soft wood. Oak external posts will have greater longevity than soft wood. So, there is benefit not only appearance.

Bus Shelter framing

To supply only, 5 prepared posts along with a brace on 4 of them, to form the main structural element of 2 newly formed bus shelters. All in new green oak.

£2,113.00

To supply only, 5 optional Tie beams to each post and jointed to the braces.

£1,095.00

The current budget for the project, made up of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 New Homes Bonus grants is £6,000. The Parish Council is yet to consider / resolve to financially contribute towards the cost. The Clerk's recommendation is to keep a watching brief on the budget as other materials are purchased and take a view as and when. Many of the other regular building materials can be purchased, at cost, by the Volunteer Team.

Considering the rising costs, particularly in relation to building materials, it is recommended that the Parish Council place this order and take advantage of the generous offer of the Volunteer Team to store (for free) materials purchased in advance.

7. .gov.uk website and email domain

The latest '[Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide](#)' (March 2021) responsible for issuing proper practices about the governance and accounts of smaller authorities, such as Town and Parish Councils (and whose membership consists of sector representatives from NALC, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) has issued guidance on the importance of secure email systems and GOV.UK domain names: -

“When choosing a domain name for the council's website and emails, many local council websites are appropriately making use of the exclusive GOV.UK domain (for example, ourparishcouncil.gov.uk), with email addresses being linked to that domain as well [...] As well

as building credibility for your website, a GOV.UK should also ideally then be used to support your council's official email accounts as well, for both officers and Councillors [...] There are a number of important reasons why local councils of all sizes should ideally obtain an appropriate GOV.UK domain name for their council [...] obtaining a GOV.UK domain for your council website and email accounts demonstrates the council's official local government status. Members of the public are increasingly cyber security aware, so a GOV.UK domain can also help to build trust, credibility and visibly demonstrates authenticity. Many people will now reasonably expect a local council to have a GOV.UK domain name....”

The Parish Council's current web and email host company TEEC can support the Council to obtain a .gov.uk domain for £60 per annum on a minimum 2 year contract.

The 2022/23 budget for “Web Site Maintenance, Internet and Email Management” (£420) includes this cost.

7. **Councillor vacancies**

Cllr. Jeffery has notified the Chair and Clerk of her desire to resign as a Councillor with immediate effect.

After 27 years, this meeting marks the end of Cllr. David Ribbens' journey as a Parish Councillor. Cllr. Ribbens retires after dedicating over two decades to the service of his community. The Parish Council unreservedly thanks David for his wisdom, expertise, good humour, and commitment to the Parish of Plaistow and Ifold.

The Clerk will notify CDC's Returning Officer and begin the process of filling the two casual vacancies. Initially, the Clerk, on behalf of the Returning Officer, will issue a formal notice of the vacancies. If, within 14 days of the date of the notice (excluding weekends/bank holidays), 10 electors or more give written notice to the Returning Officer that they wish the vacancies to be filled by way of a By-election then CDC will run a By-election. If not, then the vacancies can be filled by [Co-Option](#).

8. **Legionella**

The following works have been advised in relation to the Winterton Hall to ensure that its water system is compliant with the legionella legislation: -
(The following work will require a plumber)

- Install a thermostatic mixer valve in the disabled toilet.
- Point of use hot water systems x2 - either clean internally to remove limescale, or replace (it is cheaper to replace, as the units are not designed to be cleaned internally and will require a plumber to clean)
- Burco kettle in kitchen - get serviced
- Wash hand basin in the old doctors' room - remove and [cut] pipework back to the main pipework within the building.

The WHMC are obtaining plumber quotes for the above works and have notified the Clerk of their intention to seek financial support from the Parish Council in relation to this matter in due course.

The WHMC are seeking to employ the services of a caretaker (around £11.50ph, by way of guidance only), who, among other responsibilities, can undertake the various weekly/monthly legionella testing and recording at the Winterton Hall. Similar requirements are needed at the pavilion. Therefore, the Clerk suggests that the caretaker is asked to add the water flushing/recording regime at the pavilion to their role. This will incur a minimal cost to the Parish Council. For example, a small contribution towards the hourly rate to be negotiated with the WHMC. The agreed amount could be added to the annual grant paid to the WHMC, currently £1,500.

By way of an example only, to illustrate likely cost to the Council: If the WHMC employed a caretaker for 4 hours per week at £11.50ph and the Council agreed to pay £1.50 towards this cost, that would equate to £6 per week; over 52 weeks of the year, this would cost the Parish Council £312.

The Parish Council can lawfully contribute financially (unlimited) to the WHMC for this purpose.

(The Council has the lawful power to provide / contribute towards the expenses of public buildings such as village halls (s.133, Local Government Act 1972); it has the lawful power to employ staff to discharge any of its lawful functions – including legionella compliance – (s.112 LGA 1972); and the lawful power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions (s.111 LGA 1972)).

9. **Litter Pick**

The biannual litter pick (spring and autumn) has been expertly and efficiently organised, on behalf of the community, by Sallie Baker. Sallie has now officially handed over the reins to the Parish Council and Cllr. Griffiths has ably taken over the running of the initiative. The 2022 spring litter pick took place on 3rd April and Sallie supported Cllr. Griffith and the Clerk to ensure that it was run smoothly.

The Parish Council's insurance company has issued best practice risk assessment and volunteer policy which it requires the Council to have in place to provide both volunteers and staff with cover under the public liability and employee liability elements of the policy. These documents have been marginally amended by the Clerk to fit the Parish Council's specific requirements. These documents need officially adopting by the Council.

A further insurance requirement is to ensure proper road signage for the duration of the event for the safety of litter pickers and other road users. The Clerk, with agreement from the Chair and other Members via email, purchased 12 signs in advance of the 3rd April litter pick. This decision requires formal ratification.

Cllr. Griffiths and Sallie Baker recommend that a further 6 signs are purchased to ensure the large area covered by the event is sufficiently signed.

The Parish Council wishes to thank Sallie and Gordon Baker for organising the litter pick.

10. **Ukraine**

The Northern Parishes Clerks (Loxwood, Wisborough Green, Kirdford, Ebernoe, Northchapel and PIPC) have been liaising to establish an idea of possible numbers of refugee families this area *could* expect to welcome. Many of the local services are joint e.g., schools, medical etc.

It has been suggested that a Facebook notice is issued asking those who have applied to host a refugee family notify their Council so an idea of numbers can be garnered.

Whilst it is considered unlikely that this area will welcome many families, owing to its rural location and limited services, ascertaining this information will help Parish Council's get 'ahead of the game' and forward plan.

Councils can consider making lawful financial contributions towards: -

- their local village halls (s.133, LGA 1972) to be used as a welcome centre / meeting place / socialising venue for refugee families
- Community public transport (Transport Act 1985, section 106A)
- Grant contributions to local organisations such as the Youth Club (s.137 LGA 1972 – subject to an annual limit).

A budget could be agreed / ringfenced by the Parish Council to be put into effect when required.

11. **Asset Register**

The Asset Register has been fully updated by the Clerk and now includes the Council's litter pick equipment.

The following alteration have been issued to the Property Damage section of the Pen/Axa policy: -

The sums insured now read as stated below:

- Buildings - £51,912 (no change)
- General Contents - £1,700
- Outside Equipment - Add at £800
- Street Furniture - Increase to £72,043
- Gates & Fences - Increase to £6,980
- Play Equipment - Increase to £52,350
- Other Surfaces - Increase to £29,700
- Mowers & Machinery - Add at £400

The existing policy terms are unaltered by this amendment.

The annual additional premium due is £106.95 including Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) which has increased the future annual premium payable to £1,444.81 including IPT. However, the pro rata additional premium due until the next renewal date on 1st June 2022 has been waived.

12. **Spring Newsletter**

The spring Newsletter has been delayed due to work pressures. However, this delay will allow the two Councillor vacancies and the date of the Annual Assembly to be added. The Newsletter will be issued ASAP in early April.

13. **Queen's Platinum Jubilee (QPJ)**

The following is the suggested wording for the dedication plaque for the 'Tree Through Time': -

'Old man Cecil'

This Sessile Oak has been dated from at least the 1650s. To help preserve this wonderful old tree for future generations to admire, this area has been allowed to naturalise to prevent damage to its roots from ground compaction.

This wild space was dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 5th June 2022 in celebration of her Platinum Jubilee and in recognition of her love and understanding of trees and nature.

During Her Majesty's historic 70-year reign, she and 'Old man Cecil' have witnessed many extraordinary historical events, such as;

The first ascent of Mount Everest in May 1953

The first human heart transplant in December 1967

The first man to walk on the moon in July 1969

The election of Britain's first female Prime Minister in May 1979

The sending of the first ever text message in December 1992

And many others.....

Did you know, King Charles I was executed in January 1649. Who knows, perhaps the acorn from which 'Old Man Cecil' grew was planted by a Parish resident who was a Royalist sympathiser in honour of the beheaded King

Cllr. Brown has sought 3x quotes for the dedication plaque for the 'Tree Through Time'. These will be available for consideration at the meeting.

14. CDALC Meeting

Cllr. Taylor attended the meeting on behalf of the Parish Council and his meeting notes were published with the agenda.

15. Northern Parish's meeting

Please refer to the notes taken at the last meeting on 17.03.2022 [here](#).

The meeting discussed the Northern Parishes individually putting together a package of work to challenge CDC's housing numbers as presented in their [letter dated 19 January 2022](#). These numbers / scenarios will be tested by CDC prior to going to public consultation. The meeting felt that if individual Parish Councils responded, CDC would have to consider the number of views. Therefore, each Parish will look at the sustainability of development e.g., electricity and water/sewage supply, schools, road infrastructure etc.

Table 2 Growth scenarios to be tested for the northern part of Chichester Plan area

	Kirdford	Loxwood	Plaistow and Ifold	Wisborough Green	Total
No further permissions ³	56	95	8	26	185
Limited Growth ⁴	70	115	15	40	250
Significant Growth 1	70	200	100	40	410
Significant Growth 2	110	290	115	80	595
Full development	242	322	795	118	1,477

Considering both her professional expertise and wealth of local knowledge garnered through the Neighbourhood Planning process (as Steering Group Chair), Sara Burrell has been asked to provide a fee quote to the Council to draft a response to CDC challenging the housing numbers being considered.

A budget of £300 has been allocated in the 2022/23 Annual Budget to pay any professional fees required to draft a response to CDC's growth scenario consultation.

16. **Highway Matters**

Cllr. Bushell and the Clerk met with Simon Watts of SW Transport Planning Ltd to discuss the agreed TRO applications within Plaistow, following the public consultation in June 2021. Please refer to the minutes of February 9th for the agreed TRO applications: [C/22/013 page 3](#).

Speed surveys are needed within Plaistow to evidence the need for a permanent 20mph limit along Loxwood Road. The average speed must be at or below 24mph. Four locations have been identified and the survey is scheduled week commencing 25th April.

Simon Watts has compiled a draft schematic of the new safety signage, 20mph limit and possible school crossing point [here](#). A final proposal will be presented to the Council to approve in due course, once the speed survey results have been received and there is a clearer understanding of what can be achieved.

The following advice has been received:

Whilst we wait for the speed surveys to be carried out, I have put together a drawing with a first draft of a possible road safety scheme, picking up the points we discussed on site last month. This represents our preferred solution including a permanent 20mph speed limit


covering three roads, additional school safety signage and hopefully a school crossing patrol by the church (which would of course depend on separate WSCC funding and approval processes).

The extents of the 20mph zone are as we discussed but could be adjusted if needed. We would need the speed surveys to return average speeds at or below 24mph. If not, we could consider introducing some traffic calming, such as speed cushions, to force average speeds down – although I understand such measures might not be favourable to the community. If we cannot meet the criteria for a permanent 20mph limit, a fallback could be the introduction of an advisory, part-time, 20mph limit outside the schools, using signs like the one below:



The final design and location of such signs could be decided later. For now, I think we should keep pushing for a permanent 20mph limit unless/until we find that the criteria cannot be met.

On the attached drawing, I have illustrated the addition of flashing

amber signs to supplement the existing  warning signs in Loxwood Road and Dunsfold Road; plus, a similar, additional, sign on The Street to complement the proposed school crossing patrol. Overall, this is a fairly minimal adjustment in terms of extra signs and will hopefully not alarm those who are opposed to urbanising the area. A balance has to be struck between minimising unnecessary signage and ensuring that the safety objectives of this scheme are achieved.

The location of the crossing patrol is shown in the most obvious position in terms of pedestrian desire-lines. Although, as discussed on site, its position close to the bend is not ideal.

If we are successful in securing agreement for a crossing patrol, the proposed **School** sign plate could be replaced with a **Patrol** sign plate. This, together with the 20mph signs and flashing lights, would

make it clear to approaching drivers that extreme caution is needed in this area.

I trust I have correctly interpreted our discussions and this is in line with your expectations for the scheme. However, if you have any comments or further suggestions please let me know.

17. **Correspondence**

- Plaistow & Kirdford Primary School's use of the Pavilion for Summer Fair on Saturday 25th June 12pm – 4pm

- Letter to CDALC from Tim Slaney, Director of Planning - South Downs National Park Authority

Response to the letter addressed to Tim Slaney, Director of Planning at SDNPA.

Many thanks for your letter which follows your dialogue with Andrew Shaxson. I do hope his feedback on all that we are doing and the current position we face and wider issues such as the Government recommendations as to the future of National Parks in response to the Glover Review were helpful to CDALC.

As you may be aware the provision of a statutory planning service is an operational matter and involves a contact of over £3m people and over 50 people's livelihoods. We also have to have regard to commercial confidentiality in the negotiations. It is not a matter for consultation with Parish Councils, not least as the model of delegated arrangements was central to the setup of the National Park Authority directed by DEFRA. This enables us to deliver on all parts of Vision and Corporate Plan in an even handed manner.

As an aside we contact a selection of parish clerks by phone for their feedback on the planning service (as opposed to How it should be provided) and have done so for surveys in the past 7 to 8 years. I hope you can understand that with over 176 Parish and Town Councils we have to be proportionate in our approach. I believe we are unique in the south east in our approach in surveying parishes but I stand to be corrected if Chichester District or other Districts do. As a matter of course we do also email Clerks and ask them to complete the survey online if that is their preference rather than phone calls which are obviously more personal. All parishes that have had a major application are contacted and we also aim to get responses from those who have had more general applications in the last year.

The survey is usually carried out every 3 years (2014, 2017, 2021) we delayed the last one due to Covid.

I am cc'ing in various colleagues and Carola Brown Chair of Trotton with Chithurst PC who has also written on the same subject albeit not as a

Member of the Chichester District Association of Local Councils (CDALC).

You have a key role in assisting us delivering National Park Purposes as another public body operating within a National Park and I hope you are able to attend our next Parish session on 18th March 2022. I have copied in Chris Paterson who has the details.

Many thanks
Tim Slaney
Director of Planning
South Downs National Park Authority

18. **Clerk's update & items for inclusion on a future agenda**

1. Tree surveys

The Clerk is waiting for the results of the pond survey. This matter may have to be deferred to a future meeting.

2. Councillor training on 11th May, Kelsey Hall

The Clerk will circulate further details about timing etc closer to the day, once details have been agreed with the trainer.

19. **Meeting Dates**

Recommendation: - To note the dates of forthcoming meetings.

- 17th May, Planning & Open Spaces Committee Meeting, 7:30pm – Kelsey Hall, Ifold
- 18th May, Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Assembly, 7:30pm – Winterton Hall, Plaistow

20. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Recommendation: - To consider and resolve upon whether to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during the consideration of the following item in accordance with S1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

This is a formality, as the nature of staffing matters are confidential and therefore the Council should resolve to exclude all public and press for the last part of the meeting. This will have separate confidential minutes.

21. **To discuss Staffing matters**

The Chair of the HR Committee will circulate the agenda and notes to Members, via email. This will remain confidential.

