



CLERK'S REPORT BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

Number	Item	Time
1.	<p>Apologies for absence & housekeeping</p> <p>Recommendation: - To receive and accept apologies for absence.</p> <p>None received in advance at the time of drafting this report.</p>	1 min
2.	<p>Disclosure of interests</p> <p><i>See Clerk's Report.</i></p> <p>Recommendation: - To deal with any disclosure by Members of any disclosable pecuniary interests and interests other than pecuniary interests, 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.</p> <p>None received in advance at the time of drafting this report.</p>	2 mins
6.	<p>Financial Matters</p> <p>1. Order for Payments</p> <p>Appendix A</p> <p>Financial Report for December - February (up to 03.02.2022). Includes income and expenditure since the December 2021 Council meeting on 08.12.2021.</p> <p>2. Appoint an Internal Auditor</p> <p>a. To consider the recommendations of the Finance Committee</p> <p>It is best practice for the Parish Council to change its Internal Auditor every three (3) years. This helps to avoid any conflict of interest arising out of familiarity and ensures that the Council's business is critically scrutinised. The Council has had the same Internal Auditor for over three years.</p> <p>Enquiries have been made with neighbouring Parish Council's for recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loxwood's recommended Internal Auditor is unable to take on any more Councils at this time. 	10 mins

- Wisborough Green currently instruct the same Internal Auditor as Plaistow and Ifold.
- Both Northchapel and Ebernoe Parish Councils use local Clerks to undertake their Internal Audits. However, this would not be suitable for Plaistow and Ifold, due to its significantly larger Precept than these two councils, including its PWLB loan and large capital projects.
- Kirdford have recommended Mr Mike Platten of Farsight Consulting Ltd.

Mr Platten is a CIPFA qualified accountant with more than 25 years' experience in the public sector, mainly in local government audit. He moved into the Parish and Town Council sector in the last 5 years and has the following relevant experience:

- Acting as RFO at a large parish council in Surrey and offering continuing finance support.
- Experienced user of the RBS system (**which Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council uses**) and Edge systems, both as auditor and as RFO.
- A portfolio of around 30 parish and town council audits per annum.

Mr Platten's service includes two (2) audits per annum, which is typical for Council's with larger Precepts and more complex activities and accounting. Historically, the Council has only had one annual Internal Audit. However, since 2019 its precept has risen by 54.8% (£62,000 in 2019/20 - £96,000 in 2022/23) and its activity has likewise increased significantly. Over this period, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Parish Council's Internal Audits have been undertaken remotely. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the RFO and Finance Committee that it invites a more rigorous Internal Audit.

Typical hourly rates range from £50 - £100 per hour. The Parish Council has previously paid £65ph and 65p per mile for travel expenses. The cost depends on how many hours are involved; however, in 2021/22 the cost was £195.

Mr Platten's charge is £360 plus VAT for the annual internal audit and 45p per mile (Farnham). Any additional work is charged at £60 per hour. His audit can be undertaken both remotely and in

person. It is the recommendation of the RFO that the Council invites an in-person audit in 2022/23 due to the changes in its activities and the previous two remote audits. Mr Platten can undertake the mid-term audit in March 2022 and thereafter support the Council in its preparation of the external annual audit in June.

- b. Resolve to appoint a new Internal Auditor
- It is recommended that the Council resolve to instruct Mr Mike Platten of Farsight Consulting Ltd to undertake its Internal Audit for the next three (3) financial years (2022/23, 2023/24, 2024,25).

3. Instruction of SW Transport Planning Ltd

- a. To consider the traffic calming measures sought within Plaistow village.
- b. Resolve to appoint SW Transport Planning Ltd to support the Parish Council with its Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) applications.

The Public Consultation undertaken in June 2021 highlighted support for the following traffic calming measure within Plaistow Village:

- Changing the speed limit to 20mph along Loxwood Road, Plaistow (past the shop, village hall, school, and church) – consultation results: 65% very supportive | 13% supportive (78%)
- Better signage that Loxwood Road is unsuitable for HGVs – consultation results: 64% very supportive | 8% supportive (72%)
- Additional school safety signage within the village - consultation results: 56% very supportive | 5% supportive (61%)
- Additional speed signage within the village – consultation results: 43% very supportive | 13% supportive (56%)
- Safety crossing at the three-way junction by the church/Sun Inn pub - consultation results: 42% very supportive | 8% supportive (50%) *

**When the safety crossing result (level of support) was further 'interrogated', whereas 50% overall were supportive, this rose to 72% of those aged over 71 and 56% amongst the under 55s' who may be more likely to have younger families. Certainly, of those who have children under 18, 62% of respondents were supportive.*

It must also be noted that the type of safety crossing was not specified in the consultation, which may have influenced how people answered. However, the type of crossing being considered is a lolly-pop person at the three-way junction at key times during the day when families are arriving/collecting on the 'school run'.

These measures can only come about via Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) made by WSCC. The Parish Council will need to make these TRO applications to WSCC in due course. The success of these applications are based upon public support – hence the need for public consultation – and road safety considerations.

On 14th December 2021, County Councillor Duncton, the police, WSCC Highways, representatives from the School and Preschool and Cllr. Bushell attended a road safety walk about at 08:45 to witness the various traffic concerns along Loxwood Road at this time of the day. Cllr. Duncton, the police and Highways are now aware of many of these issues and will therefore be able to support the Parish Council's applications when submitted.

Highways advised that to consider reducing the speed limit to 20mph, a speed survey would need to be undertaken by the Parish Council and the average speed would need to be 24mph or less. If the average speed is higher, then other speed reduction methods would need to be implemented in the first instance. Likewise, to make a successful TRO application to reduce/prevent unsuitable HGVs travelling within Plaistow alternative routes would need to be investigated and advised within the application.

The Parish Council has a working relationship with SW Transport Planning Ltd who has knowledge and understanding of the Parish's traffic / road networks. SW Transport Planning Ltd supported the Council in relation to the Crouchlands Farm Biogas plant and the Council has resolved to instruct them to support its consideration of any future development plans for the site. SW Transport Planning Ltd supported the Parish Council in relation to the traffic calming measures along Plaistow Road in Ifold and undertook the 2021 speed survey along Rickman's Lane, Plaistow to support an application for a TRO to extended of the 30mph limit.

Over recent weeks there has been increased activity on social media with residents complaining about:

- Parking and traffic issues within Plaistow during school drop off/pick up times.
- The need for more/improved parking around the village.
Better understanding of the unofficial one-way system around Plaistow at key times.
- Better drainage of the upper village green and an improvement of pathways from Common House Lane to the schools.
- Increase the use of the school buses from Dunsfold, Ifold and Kirdford.

The Clerk recommends that the Council instructs SW Transport Planning Ltd to undertake a speed survey along Loxwood Road in Plaistow and advise / help the Parish Council make its TRO applications as highlighted in the public consultation. SW Transport Planning Ltd can consider the TRO requirements and advise the Council accordingly to maximise the success of these applications.

WSCC is currently considering the feasibility of implementing a lolly-pop crossing at the three-way junction by the Church/pub.

Costs:

In 2021/22 the Parish Council budgeted £1,895.00 towards traffic calming and the budget currency stands at £0.00.

During the Quarter 3 budget review, draft budget and precept meeting, the Finance Committee uplifted the projected traffic calming budget for the current financial year by £905.00 to **£2,800.00** to take into consideration the cost of instructing SW Transport Planning Ltd.

The net cost of traffic speed surveys carried out using ATC's (automatic traffic counters), is £300 per site. Highways advised that two locations along Loxwood Road, Plaistow would need to be surveyed: one at the School and one between the shop and the Preschool. Therefore, the cost would be £600 (net).

SW Transport Planning Ltd fees for organising and analysing the surveys, supporting the Council's applications for TRO's and for advising generally are harder to define as the number of man-hours involved is unknown. Site visits and/or meetings with Highways

and/or police may be required. SW Transport Planning Ltd charges are based on an hourly rate of £60/hr (£450 per day). For budgeting purposes, SW Transport Planning Ltd suggested allowing for 3 to 5 days which would give a range of about £1,300 to £2,200.

This matter will extend beyond the current financial year and costs are likely to be incurred in 2022/23 as well. The final 2022/23 budget, including the traffic calming budget, is yet to be recommended by the Finance Committee. However, savings made during the current financial year will be translated into the final budget. The Parish Council's draft budget for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations is £3,000. However, today (07.02.2022) an anonymous resident has donated £2,000 towards the celebration costs. This will alleviate the Council's budget and allow some of the otherwise earmarked funds to be re-allocated to another budget such as traffic calming.

4. 'Take Your Litter Home' signage

The Durfold Wood Residents Association would like the Council to consider supporting two 'Please take your litter home' signs; one between the Shillinglee turning and the corner before Plaistow and one on the verge opposite Valentines cottages, on the Dunsfold road.

The Parish Council does not have the legal power to provide / pay for these highway signs; however, it can write to the Highways Authority (WSCC) and the County Councillor in support of such a measure if it resolves accordingly.

7. Recommencement of public meetings

2
mins

Recommendation: -

- a. To consider the local case level of Covid-19 and national guidance
- b. Resolve to recommence regular public meetings

At its December full Council meeting, Members considered the rise in Covid-19 cases and central Government's Plan B measures and resolved to vacate its current meeting schedule for all committees and delegate matters to the Clerk, under its Scheme of Delegation, for a time limited period, to be kept under regular review. The next review was set for February 2022.

Given the number of Covid-19 cases within the community are falling and central Government has removed all restrictions (including mandatory face coverings in public buildings and are encouraging people to return to the

office), it would be difficult for the Parish Council to continue to justify vacating its public meetings. Therefore, the Clerk recommends that in person meetings resume for all Committees with immediate effect.

8. **Neighbourhood Plan**

30

Timeline:

mins

June 2021 – CDC’s additional HRA on the N.Plan was completed. This additional HRA was triggered by Natural England’s concern over the accumulative impact on fresh water supplies in the North Sussex area from extraction at Hardham, Pulborough and the potential adverse impact on the internationally recognised and protected sensitive Arun Valley SPA , SAC and Ramsar. The HRA concluded that there is likely to be a cumulative adverse impact and recommended measures to control water consumption on new housing.

July 2021 - Janet Cheesley, the appointed N.Plan Examiner, reviewed the additional HRA. In an ‘open letter ‘dated 8th July she stated that Neighbourhood Plans are prohibited from making local technical requirements on new housing. Therefore the N.Plan cannot meet the requirements of the HRA and so cannot meet the Basic Conditions test and so she could not recommend the Plan goes forward to Referendum. Mrs Cheesley offered either that the PC withdraw the N.Plan, or carry on with the examination process whereby she would conclude the N.Plan cannot go forward to Referendum. The Steering Group sought advice from Locality (Central Govt body supporting Neighbourhood Planning) for professional advice on this matter. Locality advised 1) that the Parish Council obtain further Grant assistance for professional advice from AECOM; 2) in conjunction with CDC, ask the Examiner to suspend the Examination to allow time to determine whether there is an alternative course of action open to the Parish Council.

Running in parallel, CDC sought their own legal advice from a barrister, which they were willing to share with the Parish Council.

Please see the full minute (14.07.2021, pg. 4, [C/21/130](#)) and [NPSG report](#) for more details.

October 2021 – AECOM produced a further HRA for the Neighbourhood Plan area, which concluded that with modification to policy wording, the Plan would have no adverse effect on international designated sites. The Parish

Council resolved to endorse AECOM's HRA and propose the change of policy wording to CDC and the Examiner.

Please see the full minute (13.10.2021, pg. 6, [C/21/168](#)) and [NPSG report](#) for more details.

October 2021 – Following the full PC meeting on 13th October, the NPSG received CDC's legal advice. Whereas AECOM's updated HRA suggested a 'work-around' with a form of words, CDC's legal advice contradicted AECOM's suggestions/ 'work around' and was emphatic in its conclusion that the N.Plan cannot make/suggest mitigation policy/wording. The Steering Group sought AECOM's views of CDC's legal advice. AECOM acknowledged the conservative interpretation of the law by CDC's barrister, but advised that *"since [CDC] are competent authority (the ultimate deciding authority) for HRA I agree that I don't think your Plan can go forward..."*

CDC invited the NPSG to a meeting to discuss the implications of the legal advice and to consider the Examiner's two options for the Neighbourhood Plan (as posed in July 2021): -

1. to withdraw the Plan from examination; or
2. continue with the examination on the understanding that it will not be recommended that it proceed to referendum.

Please read the following documents:

- A. CDC's legal advice and updating advice (2x documents) – published on the Parish Council's website, alongside the Examiner's 'open letter' [here](#)
- B. [11. NOV NPSG 09.11.2021](#) – minutes of the NPSG meeting

December 2021 – Members of the NPSG met with CDC on 14th December.

Please read [12. DEC NP meeting with CDC](#) – notes from the meeting with CDC.

December 2021 – The NPSG met to consider the outcome of the meeting with CDC and the global situation and formulate its recommendations to full Council.

Please read [12.DEC NPSG meeting minutes 20.12.2021](#)

Current position

9th February 2022 - The Parish Council must now resolve to answer the Examiner's question posed back in July 2021; does it wish to withdraw the Plan from examination, or continue with the examination on the understanding that the Plan will not be recommended that it proceed to referendum?

Please read the [Report to Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council Meeting 09-02-22](#) – this is the NPSG's formal recommendations to the Council for its consideration and resolution.

It has been confirmed by Locality that £10,000 grant assistance will be available to the PC; rising to £18,000 if the plan has a Design Code. The Steering Group's recommendation is that the Plan can/will have a Design Code and therefore it is relatively certain that the Council will be successful in applying for £18,000 in grant funding.

Recommendation: -

- a. To consider the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- b. To resolve to withdraw the Plan from examination
- c. To resolve to continue to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish
- d. To resolve to modify the Plan in order that it can meet the requirements of water neutrality and ensure that the other policies benefiting the community can be retained
- e. To resolve to withdraw the Village Design Statement from CDC and amend accordingly to become a Design Code for inclusion within the Plan
- f. To resolve to apply for all available grant funding
- g. To resolve to continue to instruct Colin Smith Planning Ltd to assist and support the re-drafting of the Plan

9.

Policies

1 min

Further to completing CiLCA – the Clerk's professional qualification – and in preparation for a new Internal Auditor, the Clerk is ensuring that the Council has the appropriate policies in place and subsequent risk assessments and insurance cover.

The Council is invited to approve and adopt the following policies:

- a. Tree Management Policy

- b. Playground Inspection and Maintenance Policy
- c. Playpark Steering Group Terms of Reference

10. **Cllr. David Ribbens' Retirement in April 2022** 3 mins

Cllr. Ribbens has advised that he will retire from the Parish Council in April 2022 after 25 years as a Councillor. Cllr. Ribbens has devoted untold hours to the community in exemplary public service.

The Parish Council will need to notify the Returning Officer at Chichester District Council of the casual vacancy and begin the official process of calling a By-Election.

11. **Highway Matters** 2 mins

Matters to be reported by Members.

Recommendation: - To receive an update regarding a blocked drain along Shillinglee Road.

WSCC Highways have advised the following:

[Highways] regularly check the Highway gully at this location which is linked to a manhole and culvert that crosses the road and into a private ditch. Unfortunately, the majority of the water here comes off of the adjacent landowner's field where there is a pond. It would be helpful if the Landowner could limit the amount of water coming onto the highway by perhaps digging out the pond so as it can hold more water.

[Highways] spent a lot of money a few years ago carrying out drainage works, where the main issue was the ditch. [Highways] dug it out and at the time the property owners were aware that if they did not maintain the ditch the flooding issues could return.

So, in summary, there are 2 main issues here that private landowners could assist in limiting or removing the chances of this road flooding again.

Kind regards

Highways have said that they will contact the current owners and advise them of their riparian duties.

13. **Clerk's update & items for inclusion on a future agenda** 3 mins

1. The Drive, Ifold bus stop regeneration project including bench renovation

Phase One of this project draws to a close after the final session on Tuesday 8th February. Once per week, since 11th January, 10 volunteers have worked under the guidance and direction of Miss Palmerton to clear the area and

create a safe path, away from the road, to the soon to be constructed new bus shelter. The works have included the decommissioning of the old bus shelter. The rubble was re-used on site for the base of the pathway. An old hippo bag of grit and sand, which was derelict underneath brambles, was also re-used on site.

The Ifold Guides have supported the project by ‘potting on’ several hundred plug plants donated to the project by Butterfly Conservation, which will be planted during Phase Two. Likewise, they have also potted up the 40 sapling trees supplied free of charge by CDC.

The project has attracted many positive comments on social media, as well as in person well wishers who have spoken to volunteers as they have worked.

The project had an initial budget of £4,000 in 2021/22. The Finance Committee reduced this by £1,000 (to £3,000) at the Quarter 3 review in December. The current expenditure for the project stands at: £920.38

A/c Code		4700 Ifold Village Entrance		Annual Budget		0	
Centre		301 Village Maintenance					
Date	Reference	Source	Transaction Detail	Debit	Credit		
				Opening Balance	0.00		
01/12/2021	BACS	Cashbook	Ifold bus stop tree works	280.00			
14/01/2022	BACS	Cashbook	Bus Stop consultancy design	320.00			
28/01/2022	BACS	Cashbook	Ifold bus stop MOT Compost	243.00			
01/02/2022	BACS	Cashbook	Ifold bus stop insurance	21.00			
03/02/2022	BACS	Cashbook	safety equipment bus stop	56.38			
Account Ifold Village Entrance				Account Totals	920.38	0.00	
Centre Village Maintenance				Net Closing Balance	920.38		

2. Ash tree at Winterton Hall, Plaistow

Andrew Gale attended a site meeting at the Winterton Hall with members of the Hall Committee due to ongoing concerns regarding the tree dropping branches. On Friday 4th February, an email was sent to Henry Whitby of Chichester District Council requesting a 5-day Notice for the removal of the Common Ash at the front of Winterton Hall. Andrew Gale has now received confirmation of permission for the work to proceed

Andrew has scheduled the works for Monday and Tuesday 21st and 22nd February.

3. Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Steering Group

The first meeting is scheduled for 7th February. A further update can be provided at the meeting following this meeting. However, a generous member of the community has donated £2,000 towards the cost of the celebrations. They wish to remain anonymous, however have asked that their

donation only be used towards the event to mark the community's celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

14.

Meeting Dates

1 min

Recommendation: - To note the dates of forthcoming meetings.

- 23rd February, Planning & Open Spaces Committee Meeting, 7:30pm
– Winterton Hall, Plaistow
- 9th March, Full Parish Council Meeting, 7:30pm – Kelsey Hall, Ifold