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The Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the Bramber Parish Council that took place at the Beeding and Bramber Village Hall on Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 7:00pm.

Present: Cllr A. Blakelock (Chair), Cllr S. Blakelock, Cllr H. Bayford, Cllr D. Croker, Cllr M. Croker, Cllr Goodall and Cllr Kitson and Cllr Tilley.

In attendance: HDC Cllr Noel and Paul Richards (Parish Clerk).

Members of the public – one.

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr Green.

2. **Declarations of interest** – none.

3. **Minutes of the previous meetings held on 20th December 2023.**

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Meeting held on 20th December 2023, circulated previously, were **AGREED** by the Members, and were duly signed by the Chair.

4. **Matters arising** – The Railway information boards have now been firmly secured and BPC now due to take on the boards as a community asset. It has emerged that Southern Water is responsible for the drains under White Rose Cottage.

5. **Public Session** – none.

6. **Climate Action Plan.**

- The Chair referred to her report, circulated previously, and referred to the invitations to local groups and societies to present their climate and environmental plans. She introduced a member of the Bramber Society and invited her to make a presentation;
- A representative of the Bramber Society provided a short summary and history of the Society's activities. The Society had achieved much in 2023 but were always looking for new members and ways to increase funding. Last year the Society provided the flower baskets, arranged for a Coronation Tea, helped celebrate the 950th anniversary of the local Church and had arranged the annual carol service by the Christmas Tree. The future objectives of the Society included raising their profile and linking up with Steyning Greening to increase biodiversity (for example doing more with the planters in The Street). The Bramber Society would also look to the 'Weald to Waves initiative' to incorporate local gardens in the Green Spaces aspect of the programme. This would also include looking at unused green spaces in the parish;
- The Chair agreed that increased biodiversity would attract insects & mammals and that drought proof planting should also be considered. Cllr S. Blakelock suggested the use of pollinating plants. Wildflower 'bombs' in local gardens and verges might also be considered by the Society; and
- The Chair suggested that BPC and the Society work together, and that they should organise an event to workshop and generate ideas e.g. the use of bat boxes, re-wilding gardens etc. She proposed that BPC came to the next Society meeting to share thoughts. HDC Cllr Noel suggested that funding support for environmental schemes might be available. He agreed to report back on any grants that could be applied for.

7. **Reports.**

a) **HDC** – Cllr R. Noel reported that:

- The draft HDC budget will be reviewed at the next Cabinet meeting to be held on 25th January 2024. It will then be formally adopted by HDC at their full council meeting on 21st February 2024. The budget will be based on the new administration's Annual Plan;
- Included in the budget will be proposals to refurbish the Capitol Theatre in Horsham at a cost estimated to be £10.7m. Cllr M. Croker advised that those costs comprise approximately £7m to reflect carbon neutral objectives and £4m to refurbish the theatre. The refit will increase seating capacity and is aimed at attracting larger scale performances hence improving revenue and halving the ongoing subsidy;
- An increase in the housing stock will also be proposed to reduce pressure on housing waiting lists and address the influx of refugees. Additional funds will need to be raised to resource the planned increase;
- The cost of some Council services will increase including (a) car park charges to increase by 10% (b) green waste bin costs to increase to £54 per bin. Council tax will also be increased; and
- The purchase of Bramber Brooks by HDC nears completion.

Cllr M. Croker added that more government help for housing refugees was available to fund up to 40% of the purchase price. HDC might therefore acquire 6 more residences at 60% of the market price. Cllr Tilley requested that HDC attend the Bramber Annual Parish meeting in May to present their plans for Bramber Brooks. HDC Cllr Noel agreed to request attendance.

- b) **Neighbourhood Wardens** - Members noted the report. The Clerk was asked to invite the Wardens to the next meeting.
- c) **Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee** – a meeting later in January 2024 is planned.
- d) **Joint Parishes Youth Committee** – Cllr Bayford advised that the next meeting has yet to be scheduled and that the Memorandum of Understanding awaits signature.
- e) **HALC** – The Chair advised that the next WSALC meeting is scheduled for 23rd January 2024.
- f) **Village Hall** – Cllr Tilley reported on the meeting held on 15th January 2024. The Hall will be advertising a CPR training session to be held on 20th January 2024.
- g) **Website** – Cllr Tilley reported on a normal level of activity for the period. The website has now seen 10,000 visits since it first opened in 2018. Clerk reported that we would all need more secure email addresses.
- h) **The Steyning and District Community Partnership cycling/footpath project** – The Chair reported that the next meeting will be held on 7th February 2024. Cllr Kitson asked if the White Bridge project included functionality that would allow animals to follow a wildlife corridor across the bridge. Cllr M. Croker suggested that the gates would allow for such access and the Chair agreed to check.

8. Finance and General Purposes.

- **Ethical banking** – a review of the facilities offered by banks offering an ethical service were reviewed. It was **AGREED**, unanimously, that the Clerk arrange to change banks to the Cooperative Bank;
- **Donations** – as the Repair Café had repaired the salt spreader (at no cost), it was **AGREED**, unanimously, that a donation of £20 be made to them. Cllr Tilley agreed to arrange the donation; and
- **Payments for January 2024** – approved.

9. Planning

- a) **Applications** - it was **AGREED** to review application HDC/24/0020 by email.
- b) **Other Planning matters** – none.

10. Highways and Public Rights of Way.

- Cllr M. Croker reported that another Bollard in The Street had been knocked over. He will attempt to repair it but is also considering the use of collapsible bollards. There is no trace of the offending driver, but the Clerk was asked to check local CCTV; and
- The Chair reported that Annington Road was very muddy. Cllr M. Croker advised that HDC have scheduled a clean of the road;
- Cllr Goodall advised that vegetation adjacent to the Downslink footpaths had been flailed with no prior notification. Cllr M. Croker suggested that this was the EA’s winter cut but would verify this;
- Cllr Goodall enquired if village gateways could be installed on Clays Hill. The Chair agreed that this must be considered in the future;
- Cllr Tilley reported that cyclists had created an unofficial path on the Walks for All (by the flyover) to avoid the need to dismount and use the steps. He suggested that an appropriate sign be installed, and Members **AGREED** that this should be done. He understood that local resident had agreed to help install it; and
- The Clerk reported that 2 speedwatch sessions had occurred in January 2024.

11. Consultations – none.

12. English Heritage/Bramber Castle – The Chair advised that Cllr Green had attended a meeting on 16th January 2024 with EH and National Trust to review the creation of a community orchard in Scouts Field. She would report back on progress.

13. Environment and Parish Actions - The Chair advised that:

- Covid/Flu vaccinations were available on 18th January 2024;
- The Alzheimer’s Society had requested assistance in setting up Dementia Friendly villages; and
- Defibrillator training at the Hall will take place on 20th January 2024.

Cllr Tilley referred to the plans to create EV points in the car park in The Street. Cllr. M. Croker agreed to follow this up with HDC.

14. Correspondence – the report, circulated previously, was noted.

15. Items for inclusion on the next Agenda.

- Ethical Banking; and
- Wardens’ presentation.

16. Date of the next meetings.

- The next **Ordinary Parish Council meeting** will be on Wednesday 14th February 2024 at the Beeding and Bramber Village Hall commencing 7pm.
- **Planning Meeting** – TBA subject to receipt of planning applications.

The meeting closed at 20:30

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....

