

GRAFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GRAFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
Friday 15th November 2019 AT 7.0PM AT THE EMPIRE HALL, GRAFFHAM

Present: Cllr. H. Charman, Cllr. P. Churchward, Cllr. S. Macqueen and Cllr. J. Uphill (Chairman).
In Attendance: CDCllr. Alan Sutton
WSCllr. David Bradford
Ms. Tracy Rowe, Clerk
6 Members of the Public (3 of whom were present for agenda item 6, Public Questions.
2 of whom were present for Agenda Item 9 Light Pollution. 1 was present for Agenda Item 10 Pople Hill)

65. **To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr. C. Ainley, Cllr. S. Mackie and Cllr. Tom Richardson.

66. **To receive any declarations of interest from members and dispensation requests in respect of any items on the Agenda**

There were none.

67. **To approve the following Minutes: GPC Meeting held on 27 September 2019. Planning Meeting held on 14 October 2019.**

Having been proposed as correct by Cllr. Churchward and seconded by Cllr. Uphill, the minutes of Graffham Parish Council meeting held on 27th September 2019 were UNANIMOUSLY **RESOLVED** as **APPROVED** and were signed as a correct record by the Chairman of that meeting, Cllr. Uphill.

Having been proposed as correct by Cllr. Churchward and seconded by Cllr. Macqueen, the Planning Meeting minutes of 14th October 2019 were UNANIMOUSLY **RESOLVED** as **APPROVED**, and were signed as a correct record by the Chairman of that meeting, Cllr. Macqueen.

At this point the agenda was re-ordered to hear a report from Chichester District Councillor Alan Sutton.

68. **To receive a report from Chichester District Councillor Alan Sutton**

CDCllr. Alan Sutton had submitted a report to GPC in advance of the meeting which is reproduced below:

Rural Crime: Following a number of break ins to sheds & outbuildings in Duncton. It was clear that a number of incidents have been reported along the whole A272 into adjacent areas and counties. The appointment of 2 dedicated rural PCSO's has been agreed and they have responsibility for the Rother Valley County division (Including Graffham). We have met with the Chief inspector (John Carter) to ensure that pressure is brought. I urge anyone with anything to report (intelligence as well as actual crimes) does so through 101 or Crimestoppers or, if something is taking place in front of you, via 999. I will continue to work with Parish, District, County colleagues and our local MP's and the Police & crime commissioner to ensure our views are heard and acted on.

North Chichester County Local Committee (WSCC) Held last night: Main issues were Crime and West Sussex Highways, Transport & Planning "Supporting Resilient Communities" (leaflet) and the 2019/20 Highway Infrastructure Maintenance (plan document), which gives their Maintenance levels for 2019/20 and was discussed in depth by those present.

South Downs National Park Plan This has now been adopted and will be used going forward in planning matters. I attended a recent workshop for Parishes at Midhurst.

Sage House I visited Sage House which is a facility in Tangmere for day care and respite care for dementia patients and their families in the community. If you haven't visited it is well worth a visit. Facilities, equipment and support is available,

Duncton Cares I attended the group meeting and I am very pleased to be involved with this community initiative.

Countdown to Christmas There is a campaign to raise awareness and support shops within the district in the vital run up to Christmas. Online the hashtag is #countdowntochristmaspetworth a very nice prize of a day out in a Rolls Royce with lunch & shopping spending money is on offer

Petworth Vision I have been appointed to the board. I hope to bring greater co-operation and I am seeking to get more initiatives underway with the committee setting up workgroups for the benefit of the community, including the wider rural community. An example is "be the change", sponsored by local business which offers help. Mentoring and support to disadvantaged children at Midhurst Rother College

Elections Update

a) General Election:

Our Member of Parliament Nick Herbert has resigned after 15 years and a local man, Andrew Griffith, from Duncton was selected on Monday as the Conservative candidate. Nominations close on Thursday and there is a Liberal Democrat candidate Alison Bennett. It is likely that Labour and the Greens will put up candidates but

that is not known yet. The Brexit party also have a candidate but in view of recent announcements may not run in Arundel & South Downs.

b) Loxwood Ward

There is a by-election on November 21st to elect a Chichester District Councillor to replace the Lib-Dem / Green councillor who resigned recently.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

A brief note about the award by the Care Quality Commission of an Excellent rating for both hospitals

General Election

December 12th will affect some reports and council activities between now and December 12th

Whilst CDCllr Sutton's report had been read in advance by all GPC Members, for the benefit of the six members of public present, CDCllr. Sutton read it in full to the meeting. He stated that it was most important that any crime in the area was reported.

CDCllr. Sutton asked if would be possible to have a "Graffham Cares" organisation? Having been asked for clarity by the Vice-Chairman, he noted that the "Dunton Cares" was an initiative suggested by Dunton parishioners to meet and deal with issues such as County Lines, social isolation, loneliness and dementia. CDCllr. Sutton was keen to encourage other parishes to set up their own similar initiatives. He explained that Dunton parish would be aiming to assist with these matters by holding coffee mornings, working with schools, helping parishioners get out and about. Cllr. Charman stated that Graffham already has organisations such as Graffham Health Support Agency (GHSA), Thursday Club and the Lunch Club which provided similar services. Cllr. Sutton was thanked by the Chairman for his report.

The agenda was re-ordered to hear the report from WSCCllr. David Bradford.

69. To receive a report from West Sussex County Councillor.

WSCCllr. David Bradford stated that there had been changes in personnel within the Cabinet and that the Chief Executive of WSCC had been suspended. There had been a critical Ofsted Inspection report on children's safeguarding issues. More information might be expected in early December and he would then update GPC. WSCCllr. Bradford noted that remedial work had been taken on the highway by the entrance to Seaford College in an attempt to prevent further accidents.

WSCCllr. Bradford stated that he has some particular concerns:

- 1) Fracking – he is against fracking.
- 2) WSCC is in consultation to cancel subsidised rail passes for pensioners, although he noted that subsidised bus passes would remain.
- 3) PCSO's. It was noted that Graffham has been allocated a PCSO (PCSO Charlotte Hall 37781) – GPC should deal with PCSO Charlotte Hall and hold the Police accountable. It was necessary to crack down on rural crime and communities must be vigilant on County Lines. This area of concern could affect this area by infiltration through Sixth Form Colleges. It was necessary for there to be a strong police presence and awareness and a strong intelligence network. It was advised to follow Sussex Community Crimewatch on FaceBook. (Refer to Minute 82 below for further detail on PCSO Charlotte Hall).
- 4) Motorbike noise: He noted that bike riders were being prosecuted in Hampshire if they removed the noise-abatement equipment on their motorbikes. Parishioners in this area must be vigilant about motorbike noise – it was noted that some people in Graffham could hear noise of motorbikes from Cocking Causeway. Problems should be reported to Operation Crackdown, 101 or to the PCSO Charlotte Hall.
- 5) Crimes of any sort should be reported.

Having been thanked by the Chairman for their reports, both CDCllr. Sutton and WSCCllr. Bradford left at 7.30pm. Both reiterated that they could be contacted at any time by parishioners – their contact details are on the GPC website www.graffham-pc.uk or could be obtained from the Clerk.

70. Public Questions. A member of the public had attended to raise with the Council the following issues:

- Gulleys. The parishioner noted that, as she understood it, routine gully clearances were not now undertaken. Reports of issues had to be made and the relevant authority would take action if the gully was 50% blocked.
She noted that there is a gully which gets blocked causing water to flow across the road by Hoyle Farm and requested that GPC take action. **Action: Chairman/Cllr. Churchward**
- Hedges: The parishioner noted that although she had raised this issue with GPC in September, there were still many hedges in the parish which needed cutting back and cutting down in height, some of which were particularly bad. Overgrown hedges were dangerous particularly on blind corners – they push horse-riders and people on foot into the middle of the road and into the path of on-coming cars. Overgrown hedges posed a particular risk and hazard to horse riders and needed to be cut back right up to 10 feet high. She stated that GPC could actually speak to the relevant owners to ensure that hedges were cut back properly and if no action was then taken, GPC could request that WSCC cut the offending hedges and charge the parishioner directly. Cllr. Charman noted that this was an important issue – it was strongly desired that

Graffham remained as a rural village and everything should be done to protect horse-riders, dog walkers and pedestrians. **Action: Cllrs. Uphill and Churchward.**

Speeding through the village. Two other members of the public were present to discuss the problem of cars speeding through the village. One of the parishioners noted that during the “school run” times at the beginning of the school day, cars raced past their house at 40mph at least. At the end of the school day, cars raced past even faster – stating that it was like living in the middle of the Grand Prix. Where they lived, with their house closely adjacent to The Street, there were no clear sight lines, and it meant that they couldn’t go out during those times in the day.

A GPC member noted that many people in the village chose not to leave their homes or travel through the village during the “school run” times.

Conversation ensued and it was noted that the new Rural PCSO could be invited to a forthcoming GPC meeting to discuss the issue and she would be invited to visit the village at appropriate times of the day to witness the issue.

At this point the agenda was re-ordered to attend to Agenda Item 10 Popple Hill including speeding, hedges and signage in the village.

71. **Popple Hill including Speeding, hedges and signage in the village.**

A member of the public, who actually lived within East Lavington Parish, had written to GPC concerning the speed of cars on Popple Hill. Popple Hill straddles East Lavington Parish and Graffham Parish from Summers Farm (in Graffham) to the property known as Cacouna in East Lavington (the parish boundary being the stream at the bottom). Its entire length is a 30mph area. The member of public stated that Popple Hill was well used: there are three footpaths giving off at various points and by riders from the several livery stables nearby. The member of public stated that the 30mph speed limit needed to be re-enforced if there was not soon to be an accident involving a horse rider, pedestrian or cyclist, or to those people whose front paths give out onto the road. She had noted that the de-restriction sign (i.e. the sign going out of the village) opposite Cacouna needed replacing; there needed to be a significant reduction of the hedge/undergrowth both sides of the road outside Cacouna so that the speed restriction signs could be clearly seen by those approaching from the Petworth direction; the hedge outside Popple Meadows needed severely cutting back so the secondary 30mph sign could also be seen clearly from both direction and that it would be appropriate to see a Give Way sign on one side of the bridge over the stream.

The member of public from East Lavington had met with a representative from WSCC Highways department and requested that GPC and East Lavington Parish Council meet the cost of a larger sign, such as those Gateway style signs seen often in other villages, which could incorporate the name of the village and wording such as: “Graffham 30mph. Please Drive Carefully Through Our Village” or “Graffham. 30mph. Please slow down in our village”.

It was noted that the suggested positioning of this sign was to actually be in East Lavington. The member of the public had some initial costings for such a sign and passed these to the Chairman. These would be looked at but it was queried why GPC should actually contribute given the suggested positioning of the sign and the locality of Popple Hill in East Lavington.

If GPC were to agree that such a sign was desirable, Cllr. Charman queried whether funding could be sourced from Highways rather than by expecting GPC to contribute, noting that Highways appeared to have funding for unnecessary road name signs in the locality, although its work in filling in pot holes was unsatisfactory.

Cllr. Charman noted that Graffham was a rural village in West Sussex and was not in an urbanised area of Surrey and such signage might be unwelcome.

A member of public present suggested that there could be lines on the road near the bridge to show that it was a narrow bridge.

Discussion ensued and a GPC parishioner present, noted that previous GPC Councils had a policy of saying no to any signs on the Highways, in order to avoid having too many signs. If this new “Gateway” style larger sign were to be considered, this current council would need to consider the previous policy of no signage and reverse it, if desired.

Cllr. Churchward noted that if there were there to be a large “Gateway” style sign “welcome to Graffham”, then it would be possible, that there would end up being entrance signs on all access routes into the village.

Cllr. Charman reiterated his view that it was essential not to urbanise Graffham.

The agenda was re-ordered to consider Agenda Item 9. Light Pollution

72. **Light Pollution**

Two parishioners were present to discuss the problem of light pollution in the parish. It was noted that Graffham is a SDNPA Dark Skies reserve. One of the parishioners noted that there was a group called Greener Graffham in the parish, yet the parish was polluted with lights. It was now no longer possible to see the Downs in the evening from their house, due to the light pollution. Discussion ensued and it was noted that not only was there general light pollution but that there were some notable areas/properties within the parish which contributed strongly to this issue. Issues involved general lighting, over bright downlights and security lights which were not only very bright, but which were left on too long.

It was noted that light pollution affected nature within the village, in particular by affecting the bat population. It was agreed that GPC would seek definitive guidance from SDNPA, so that it had clear advice to offer to parishioners and that, if appropriate, an article might be included in the Graffham Parish News.

The two parishioners present for this item left at this point.

The agenda was re-ordered to address Agenda Item 8. Update on Land at Homes of Rest.

73. **Update on Land at Homes of Rest SDNP/14/02844/FUL.**

Cllr. Macqueen, Chair of GPC Planning Committee, noted that an email had been received that morning, from the CDC Enforcement Planning Officer. It was stated that the new Bellmouth Access Road, had not been constructed in accordance with the technically approved S278 highway drawings. WSCC were liaising with the developer to rectify this to ensure that it would be amended before WSCC would release the developer of their responsibility. (Minute 55, 27.09.18 refers)

It was also confirmed that CDC Enforcement Officer has another enforcement case still open regarding the heras fencing and the untidy appearance of the land.

The agenda was re-ordered to address Agenda item 9: Update on Calloways, SDNP/18/00938/FUL.

74. **Update on Calloways: SDNP/18/00938/FUL Calloways, Graffham Street, Graffham GU28 ONJ** Cllr. Macqueen noted that there was no update and no new information.

75. **Planning including:**

Cllr. Macqueen, Chair of GPC Planning Committee, took the lead on this item:

a) **New applications**

SDNP/19/04913/FUL, Empire Hall, The Street, Graffham GU28 0QB Proposed new rear entrance porch.

The Chairman showed all those present the plans, confirming that whilst there had not been a site visit, some members had viewed the plans on the SDNPA website and Cllr. Uphill had visited the site himself, as had Cllr. Macqueen.

Cllr. Macqueen, noted that he had no objections to the proposed rear entrance porch. Following discussion, the Clerk was **UNANIMOUSLY** instructed to issue a **SUPPORT** response with no further comments. **Action: Clerk**

SDNP/19/05072/HOUS The Folly, Graffham Common Road, Graffham GU28 OPT. Change of use of garage to habitable accommodation, single storey side and first storey front extensions, creation of first storey terraces and insertion of a veranda.

Cllr. Macqueen noted that this application was similar to SDNP/18/05316/HOUS which GPC had SUPPORTED with no further comments in February 2019. The application had subsequently been refused as no bat survey had taken place. This application included a bat survey and the Clerk was **UNANIMOUSLY** instructed to issue a **SUPPORT** response with no further comments. **Action: Clerk**

The remaining three members of public left the meeting.

b. **To receive any late or amended applications.** There were none.

c. **To note responses given by Graffham Parish Council since the last meeting.**

SDNP/19/03601/FUL Glasses Barn, Graffham Common Road. Substitute Plans. No Response.

SDNP/19/04538/NMA Summer Cottage. No Response.

SDNP/19/04023/FUL Cartref, Graffham Common Road, Graffham GU28 OPU

GPC submits a neutral response but has concerns about what seems an excessive amount of glazing and the impact that this will have on the area's dark skies which the GPC is very keen to support the SDNPA in protecting. If the extent of the glazing was reduced, then GPC would be minded to support the application.

SDNP/19/04570/HOUS The Laurels, The Street, Graffham GU28 0QA GPC submits a SUPPORT response SUBJECT TO the following being IMPOSED AS A CONDITION: that due to the location of the property at the road junction and on a bend, GPC requests that there be a construction management plan which ensure that contractors vehicles are parked within the curtilage.

SDNP/19/04845/CND The Woodman, Graffham Street, Graffham GU28 ONL. No response

SDNP/19/04843/CND The Woodman, Graffham Street, Graffham GU28 ONL No Response.

d. **To note decisions from CDC/SDNPA**

SDNP/19/01999/HOUS 2 Hillside, Graffham Street, Graffham GU28 ONP. Approved

SDNP/19/03600/FUL Shuttles, Graffham Common Road, GU8 OPU Application Withdrawn

SDNP/19/03601/FUL Glasses Barn, Graffham Common Road, GU28 OPU Application Withdrawn

SDNP/19/04119/TCA Timbers, New Road, South Ambersham GU29 0BY Raise No Objection

76. **Finance**

Cllr. H. Charman, Vice-Chair and Chairman of Finance Committee member, led this item.

Prior to the meeting the Clerk/RFO had circulated the following documents:

- Bank reconciliation as at 6 November 2019;
- Statement of Accounts as at 6 November 2019 reconciling to the bank as at 6 November 2019
- Receipts/Payments List as at 6 November 2019 showing cheques 828 – 837 reconciling to bank reconciliation as at 6 November. The document also showed receipts in the period up to 6 November.

- (a) **To review the bank reconciliation as at 6 September 2019** – Cllr. Charman presented and explained the bank reconciliation and proposed that it be approved. The bank reconciliation was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED as approved and Cllr. Charman, as Chairman of the Finance Committee, duly signed the bank reconciliation.
- (b) **To review the current statement of accounts – actual receipts and expenditure against budget as at 6 November 2019 reconciling to the bank reconciliation as at 6 November 2019**
Cllr. Charman presented and explained this document, noting that some of the figures showing as under budget in the last column were due to timing issues e.g. the Clerk’s wages had only been paid to the end of November and not to the year end. He noted genuine underspends, e.g. the underspend on training for Clerk and Councillor. Having confirmed that there were no queries, the document was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED as approved. Cllr. Charman, as Finance Committee Chairman, duly authorised the document.
- (c) **To ratify receipts and payments made since the last meeting on 5th July 2019**
The document showing receipts until 6 November and cheques 828 – 837 was reviewed. The receipt of £200 from NatWest as compensation for the continuing delay in updating the bank mandate with new signatories was noted. The document was Unanimously RESOLVED as approved. Cllr. Charman duly authorised the document.
- (d) **Update on the cheque signatories for Graffham Parish Council.**
The Clerk explained that she had visited NatWest bank at Chichester on 13 September and had submitted a letter of complaint from herself and the Chairman. NatWest Chichester had lodged a formal complaint to NatWest Birmingham Complaints Team and the Clerk had been contacted and had communication from a named member of the team. £250 compensation had been received for the “poor level of service” and the Clerk had been asked to resubmit documents which she had taken to Chichester on 13 September – namely a copy of the complaint letter taken to NatWest Chichester plus copies of GPC Minutes and KPMG Minutes which had been submitted previously in hard form. Despite having received confirmation from NatWest Complaints Team on 18 October that all had been received and inputted, nothing further had been confirmed. The Clerk had written again on 11 November. The Clerk suspected that NatWest had mislaid all document previously submitted, and verified, by Cllrs. Ainley, Churchward and Richardson. The Clerk would telephone the named member of the complaints team one more time.
- (E) **To note the need to review and approve GPC’s Financial Regulations in line with the Model Financial Regulations 2019 for England issued by SSALC.**
Minute 57, 15.11.19 refers. The Clerk/RFO had circulated the revised, Financial Regulations which had been prepared by herself and reviewed by Cllr. Charman, prior to the meeting. These contained multiple revisions. Cllr. Charman confirmed that he had carefully reviewed the document and proposed that it be re-adopted with the revisions. The document was UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

77. **Charity Commission Annual Return – Graffham Recreation Ground.**
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated the draft CC Annual Return for the Recreation ground, noting that it had already been checked by Cllr. Charman and the Treasurer from the Recreation Ground Committee. The figures contained within for “income” and “spending” had been audited by the internal auditor at the year end 31.03.19. The Clerk/RFO was UNANIMOUSLY AUTHORISED to submit the Charity Commission Annual Return for the Graffham Recreation Ground. **Action: Clerk**

78. **WSSC Winter Service Network Update.**
The Clerk and Cllr. Churchward, GPC’s Highways and Footpaths Officer, had received the WSSC Winter Service Network Update. It was confirmed that, unlike previous years, there would be no gritting from the Petworth Road through the village up to the Graffham Infant School. The only gritting of roads within the locality would be the main roads from Chichester to Petworth, from Chichester to Midhurst and from Midhurst to Petworth. Concern was raised about this as it meant that in icy conditions, or snow, the village could become cut off and that access to Graffham School might not be possible. It was agreed that GPC would write to Highways about this matter, emphasising the precedence of prior years and the necessary access to the school. The Headteacher would also be notified and it would be suggested that she also write to Highways.

79. **To receive reports on or from:**
Highways and footpaths. Cllr. Churchward, GPC’s Highways and Footpaths Officer, noted that a parishioner had copied an email to GPC, which he had sent to ELPC, concerning the state of the road from The Potteries to the small bridge near Popple Hill (both areas being in ELPC). It was noted that subsequently repairs had been made to this stretch of road.
Recreation Ground and Playground. It was noted that a representative from Greener Graffham had enquired as to whether activities involving digging and planting (wild flower meadows/allotments??) might take place on the recreation ground. It was noted that the terms of the lease between the National Playing Fields Association and The Parish Council of Graffham Sussex, precluded this sort of activity.
Empire Hall. Cllr. Churchward, GPC’s representative on the EH Committee, noted that the post of Promotions Officer had been offered to an applicant.

Selham and Ambersham. No report was given.

80. **Parish Matters (Clerk and Councillor). Use of Phone Box** It was noted that a request had been received from the Greener Graffham Group as to whether it might be allowed to use the Phone box as an information centre. Discuss ensued and it was concluded that as GPC was still deliberating as to its formal use, possibly involving housing a defibrillator, that the phone box could not be used as an information centre.
81. **Website Accessibility Regulations 2018.** Minute 41, 5th July 2019 and Minute 61, 27 September 2019 refers. The Chairman would take the lead on this matter. It was noted that local councils might not be required to comply...if there was a disproportionate burden to the Council BUT a formal assessment process had to be completed first to establish if this was the case. If this were the case, a formal statement had to be put on the website. **Action: Chairman**
82. **Correspondence and Invitations received. Rural PCSO's** It has been confirmed that PCSO Charlotte Hall 37781 is currently the appointed Rural PCSO for the Rother Valley which included Graffham Parish. PCSO Hall was currently predominately office based as she was in the later stages of pregnancy and would be going on maternity leave in January. PCSO Hall had stated to a neighbouring parish that she was keen to work with the community, building relationships and having support from her colleagues to provide a presence in the area. She had indicated that were she to be invited to attend meetings, she could arrange for a colleague to attend in her absence and likewise, were she to be informed of any other community events she would see if she could arrange for police attendance dependent on operation commitments.
The Clerk was instructed to notify PCSO of future meeting dates, to see if a PCSO might attend.
83. **Date of the Next Meeting**
Friday 17 January 2020 (Cllr. Churchward had submitted his apologies for this forthcoming meeting).
84. **Parish Council Meeting dates 2019/20**
Friday 13 March 2020, Monday 11 May 2020 Annual Meeting of the Parish, Friday 15 May 2020 Annual Meeting of Graffham Parish Council

These minutes are an accurate record of events.

.....Cllr. John Uphill, Chairman

..... Date