

Graffham Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Graffham Parish Council

Held 'Remotely' via Zoom Software
On Friday 12th March 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors John Uphill (Chairman), Howard Charman, Sandy Macqueen, Patrick Churchward and Simon Mackie.

In attendance:

Sarah Linfield BSc (Hons), CiLCA (Parish Clerk/RFO/Proper Officer)

90. Declarations of Interest

None received.

91. Public Participation

No attendance.

92. Apologies for Absence

Not applicable, all Parish Council members present

93. Minutes from previous Council Meetings

Committees — Finance 14 January 2021, Planning 5 February 2021 and 22 February 2021.
Full Council Meeting dated 15 January 2021.

Resolved - to approve the minutes of the meetings as a true record of the decisions of those meetings and authorise the Chairman to sign them.

94. Chairman's Report

Nothing additional to report beyond matters covered elsewhere within the meeting.

95. West Sussex County Council Matters

There was no representation on this occasion.

96. Chichester District Council Matters

There was no representation on this occasion although Councillor Alan Sutton had shared a briefing note which the Clerk had circulated to members – refer Appendix A.

97. Planning Matters

a. NEW APPLICATIONS/NOTIFICATIONS

- i. SDNP/21/00351/HOUS & SDNP/21/00352/LIS Hartley Cottage, Graffham Street, Graffham GU28 0NP
Erection of a single storey side extension, changes to fenestration and raising of floor level.

Resolved – to **SUPPORT** the application. **ACTION:** The Clerk

- ii. Notification of Tree Preservation Order (by Chichester District Council & South Downs National Park Authority) – Land at The Laurels, The Street, Graffham GU28 0QA.
Served 10 March 2021 in respect of the 3 oak trees.
Resolved – to **SUPPORT** the action, but for absolute clarity when responding to confirm that the Parish Council continues to strongly object to the application under reference SDNP/21/00092/FUL. **ACTION:**The Clerk
- b. PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS – To receive any updates.
- i. **SDNP/18/00938/FUL Calloways, Graffham Street, Graffham, GU28 0NJ.**
Demolition and change of use of existing buildings to form 10 dwellings and construction of replacement dwelling - no further update.
 - ii. **SDNP/14/02844/FUL Land at Homes of Rest, The Street, Graffham, GU28 0NW.**
Some steps had been taken to improve the appearance of the site.
- c. CONFIRMATION OF RESPONSES PROVIDED BY COUNCIL SINCE 15 JANUARY 2021.
- i. **SDNP/21/00092/FUL The Laurels The Street, Graffham, GU28 0QA**
Demolition of existing outbuilding, erection of a residential cottage and the creation of a new access. **Response confirmed** as strongly **OBJECTS**, 19 February 21.
 - ii. **SDNP/21/00228/CND Glasses Barn, Graffham Common Road, Graffham GU28 0PU**
Variation of condition 2 of planning permission SDNP/20/01430/FUL.
Response confirmed as ‘**approve in principle**’ but continues to object to the dormer windows, 9 February 21.
Chichester District Council had subsequently sought clarification on this response which would require the application to go before its planning committee. Whilst the Council had hoped for the more attractive dormers now proposed for ‘Shuttles, it accepts that planning consent has already been provided for the current design and the Clerk was asked to confirm this to the planning department. **ACTION:**The Clerk
 - iii. **SDNP/21/00227/CND Shuttles, Graffham Common Road, Graffham GU28 0PU**
Variation of condition 2 from planning SDNP/20/01431/HOUS.
Response confirmed as **SUPPORTS**, 9 February 21.
 - iv. **SDNP/20/04581/CND Cartref, Graffham Common Road, Graffham GU28 0PU**
Variation of condition 1 from Planning Permission SDNP/20/01435/CND to amend approve drawings (windows and door).
Response confirmed as **OBJECTS**, 9 February 21.
 - v. SDNP/21/00319/BBPN Opp. Coach House Cottage Graffham Street Graffham
Notification to install fixed line broadband electronic communications apparatus.
Decision made - Raise No Objection, 8 March 2021.
 - vi. **SDNP/21/00321/HOUS Minne Cottage Graffham Street Graffham GU28 0NL**
Replacement of UPVC windows with timber, replacement cladding, replacement extension and enlargement of first floor addition.
Response confirmed as **SUPPORTS**, 22 February 21.
 - vii. **SDNP/21/00297/HOUS Land Opp Pescods Store, Graffham Street, Graffham GU28 0NP**
Proposal of garage to replace garage bay.
Response confirmed as **SUPPORTS**, 22 February 21.

- d. **DECISIONS BY CDC/SDNPA INCLUDING WITHDRAWN & PRE-ADVICE APPLICATIONS**
- i. **SDNP/20/04417/TCA The Old Rectory** Notification of intention to fell 1 no. Mulberry tree (t1), Flowering cherry tree (t2) and 1 no Ash Tree (t3) - **(NO OBJECTION RAISED)**
 - ii. **SDNP/20/03869/FUL Tagents Barn.** Use as an unrestricted dwelling house **(REFUSED)**
 - iii. **SDNP/20/04934/TPO Pin Mill House.** Various Tree Works **(APPROVED)**
 - iv. **SDNP/20/02351/HOUS The Laurels.** Erection of a replacement outbuilding. APPEAL NO: APP/Y9507/D/326027 **(DISMISSED)**
 - v. **SDNP/20/04941/FUL Bluebell Wood, Topleigh Road, Graffham.** Installation of a ground source heat pump array and use of existing outbuilding as a plant room to serve domestic needs of dwelling **(APPROVED)** – see related item, bullet point (vi)
 - vi. **SDNP/21/00699/DCOND Bluebell Wood, Topleigh Road, Graffham (APPROVED)**
 - vii. **SDNP/20/04464/HOUS SDNP/20/04465/LIS Beck House, South Ambersham.** Demolition and replacement of existing timber outbuilding to rear of dwelling and extension to garage at front **(APPROVED)**
 - viii. **SDNP/21/00093/NMA Apple Trees Graffham Street Graffham** Non material amendment to SDNP/20/04248HOUSE **(REFUSED)**.
 - ix. **SDNP/20/05681/PRE Hoyle Depot Topleigh Road Graffham** Regenerative Farming (involving milking parlour building, food processing building, agricultural dwelling) **(ADVICE GIVEN)**

98. Finance Reports

- i. **Payments**
Resolved - to note and approve payments, including any authorised outside the meeting under its Financial Regulations.
The Clerk advised that payment of the ICO fee by Direct Debit would save £5.
- ii. **Bank Reconciliation**
Resolved - to note the budget monitor and Bank Reconciliation as at 5th February and 5th March 2021.

99. Risk and Governance

- i. **Policies and Procedures**
The Clerk had drafted and circulated policies referenced in her new contract of employment covering Grievance and Disciplinary, Expenses, Equality Opportunities and Health & Safety, based on the model format from the Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils.
Resolved – to adopt the new policies.
- ii. **Clerk's Laptop**
The current laptop was manufacture in 2015 and purchased in the financial year 2016/17 at a cost of £ 228, being used for business and personal purposes.
 - The Clerk explained that it is home style laptop not suitable for business use, beyond life expectancy and with an older style drive which is more prone to corruption and is not encrypted.

- Microsoft installed is the free home/student 2016 version, registered to the previous Clerk and should be replaced by Office 365 Business Premium at £112.80 + VAT.
- There is no back-up system for data or emails in place and as an interim measure a memory stick has been used for data. Microsoft Office will store emails and files securely in the Cloud (not on the laptop drive).
- The mouse did not appear to be working and the Clerk had purchased an external mouse.

As an alternative to purchasing a new laptop at an estimated cost of approximately £600 – in addition to the Microsoft licence (£112.80+VAT) and set up fee to include migration of email files which would be necessary in any event – the Clerk advised that it might be possible to swap the Hard Disk Drive with a Solid State Drive.

ACTION: The Clerk to research and brief the Council on the options.

iii. **Website Accessibility (Appendix B)**

The Clerk had circulated a draft 'Accessibility Statement' for Graffham Parish Council – added to the shared website with East Lavington Parish Council - and a report explaining the Council's obligations to comply with current legislation, effective 23 September 2020. The current website does not meet the accessibility requirements either in terms of its design or the content of documents that had been added since September 2018. The Clerk advised that the Council cannot rely on 'disproportionate burden' and take no action on the grounds of cost and time involved.

ACTION: Councillor Uphill undertook to engage with East Lavington Council regarding this matter and report back.

iv. **New Local Government Association Code of Conduct 2020**

The final version of the model Code of Conduct developed by Local Government Association (LGA), in consultation with local authorities and other agencies such as the Committee for Standards in Public Life, was approved by the LGA Board in December 2020. It is common practice to adopt the Code of Conduct of the principal authority which provides a consistent approach across authorities – it was discussed at Chichester District Council's Standards Committee on 25 January 2021 with the recommendation to the Full Council Meeting.

Resolved – to adopt the New Local Government Association Code of Conduct 2020

100. **Highways and other Parish Matters**

A no-through sign would be arranged to keep traffic away from the Recreation Ground and the steps that are loose by the War Memorial are being repaired.

101. **Clerk's Update**

i. **West Sussex Association of Local Councils**

The Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils is now being disbanded, the new Board of the West Sussex Association of Local Councils had just met and the outcome would be shared as soon as practical thereafter. The Clerk understood that the

subscription costs for 2021/22 would not exceed those already advised and budgeted for and, in fact, might even be less.

ii. **Correspondence**

The Clerk had circulated –

Messages from the South Downs National Park Authority

– opportunity to consult on the draft Camping and Glamping Technical Advice Note, responses by 11.59 p.m. Tuesday 16 March 2021.

– opportunity to consult on the amended draft Parking Supplementary Planning Document, responses by 11.59 p.m. 18 March 2021.

– Invitation to Parish Webinar – Dark Night Skies Wednesday 21/4/21 18:30 – 20:00.

iii. **Assets of Community Value**

When an ‘asset of community value’ comes up for sale, community interest groups will be given an opportunity to make a bid to buy it on the open market usually with a moratorium period to allow a competitive bid.

The Clerk advised that three of the Council’s four registrations had expired in April 2020 – those for the Empire Hall, White Horse Public House and Graffham Village Shop/ adjacent area, with the Foresters Arms registration expiring in September 2021. The strength of evidence now required to secure a successful nomination has increased and, having taken guidance provided by the Community Engagement Manager at Chichester District Council, and with the Shop and The Empire Hall effectively in community ownership, members decided against making any nominations.

Resolved - to take no further action with listings to lapse.

iv. **Singleton Oil Well**

The Parish Council and local MP Andrew Griffith had been alerted to concerns over the prospect of toxic materials being injected into the well in this environmentally sensitive area. The issue was considered of such importance that the Council should also write to endorse the concerns already expressed and gain support to address matters. **ACTION**: The Clerk

102. **Date of Next Council Meeting**

Annual Meeting of the Parish.

In the interests of the safety of parishioners the Council decided against organising a face-to-face event this year although it might be possible to arrange something later in the year. It was felt that such a well-attended and interactive event did not lend itself to a ‘Zoom’ meeting.

The Annual Meeting of the Council – dealing with its governance – will take place remotely under legislation which allows remote meetings and ends on the 6 May.

ACTION – the Clerk to confirm date.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Appendix A Chichester District Council Matters

Alan Sutton Chichester District Council Report March 2021

When our businesses start to reopen, it's really important that we all continue to play our part by supporting local. The past year has been tough on us all, but especially our local businesses. We all need to help our local businesses to recover and get back on their feet. We know from the feedback we had from our Christmas 'support local' campaign how much our businesses appreciate the support you they have already received. It's important that we all continue to do this over the months and years ahead.

As a council we have continued to offer lots of support to businesses, from issuing grants to offering advice and guidance. We recently held a webinar for local businesses to explain all of the financial support that is available and to provide them with the chance to ask questions.

I'm pleased to say that over 200 businesses signed up for the online event and that it was really well received.

Full details on the support that is available can be found here:
[www.chichester.gov.uk/covidbusinesssupportVaccination programme](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/covidbusinesssupportVaccinationprogramme)

We are continuing to issue regular updates on the vaccination programme from our NHS colleagues. These are being sent to all Members, Parish Councils and we are sharing them on social media and through our website and weekly email newsletter. We've received a very positive reaction from local residents following the news that a vaccination site has now been opened at Westgate Leisure Centre.

Textile and small WEEE (Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment) collection

A pilot for a monthly kerbside collection of these items has been approved. The pilot will cover approximately 75% of all households and is intended to help specify any future permanent collection of these materials by identifying the volume of materials and the participation rate of our residents. Small WEEE items would include items such as hair dryers, kettles and radios. It's planned that the service will commence in the summer when it is hoped that workforce availability, due to Covid, has stabilised.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Cabinet has recommended an annual budget spending plan for 2021-22 to the March Council meeting that sets a band D council tax of £170.81 (a £5.00 increase).

This budget is set against a financial background that Members will be familiar with and incorporates the first £1m of savings identified under the future services framework. Despite this, the expected effect of the pandemic on the council's activities has meant the budget uses £2.1m of reserves to balance the council's finances. More than ever the outlook for next year is uncertain.

Impact of Covid on services

In recent months staffing levels have been particularly unpredictable as staff develop symptoms or have to isolate due to contact with others. Thankfully, there have been few confirmed Covid cases and the staff concerned have made full recoveries. There have been no positive cases attributed to our working environment, which reassures us that our efforts are effective and we remain Covid secure. The changing status of the staff pool has made service management especially challenging but thanks to the hard work of our Leads, Supervisors and remaining staff all services have been delivered to our normal high standards

Council offers advice for prospective puppy owners

The demand for puppies has increased significantly since the March 2020 lockdown. We've received an increase in reports of unlicensed breeders, and reports that some are using the excuse of Covid restrictions to get round legal requirements. For example, not allowing buyers to visit the breeder to see the puppy with its mother before making a purchase. We will continue to use our social media to remind people looking to buy a puppy to always check that the breeder is licensed, and, if they are

going to visit a breeder, remember to stay alert and observe social distancing. We have a list of licensed breeders on our website at: <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/25475/Animal-licences>.

Appendix B Website Accessibility

What's Happening

Parish Council websites needed to comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 by 23 September 2020. This applied to all councils irrespective of when their site was published and is not about design but functionality and delivery to the user.

Making a website accessible means ensuring it can be used by as many people as possible, including those with impaired vision, motor difficulties, cognitive impairments or learning disabilities and deafness or impaired hearing.

Both the website itself and its content must be clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

Documents that have been added since 23 September 2018 should be accessible unless there is a valid reason why this can't be done which needs to be explained in an accessibility statement.

What You Need to Know

Graffham Parish Council is legally responsible for its website meeting accessibility requirements, not the website provider.

The Parish Council website is a public body website the purpose of which is to provide access to information that must be provided under legislation - finance/AGAR documents, register of interests, agendas and minutes etc.

The Council must publish an accessibility statement on its website which reflects the Council's current status in terms of content on the site and this must be regularly updated (at least annually). Whilst the legislation imposes a requirement to demonstrate that the website meets accessibility compliance, and non-compliance could put the Council in breach of the Equality Act, it is also about being the right thing to do. As a public servant the Council has a duty to make sure the information it posts is accessible to all.

The accessibility regulations refer to a 'disproportionate burden' where the impact of fully meeting the requirements is too much for an organisation to reasonably cope with. If the Council is to rely on this it must undertake an assessment which details the benefits against the burdens. It is not a means to avoid taking steps that could reasonably be undertaken and so cost or time are not valid reasons.

It is better to reduce the level of content on the website than have material that is not required and is not accessible. Put simply, keep it simple and ensure information is clear and accessible to all. Your clerk has undertaken two training sessions provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks on how to produce accessible word and excel documents.

Graffham PC's Website - Assessment

The council's current website does not meet the necessary accessibility requirements with a high degree of non-compliance and therefore steps must be taken to address this either through an upgrade to the current website - which is unlikely to be cost effective - or commissioning a new one.

Chairman: Councillor John Uphill
Parish Clerk: Sarah Linfield, BSc (Hons), CiLCA
Parish Council Contact Details: Email to graffhampc@gmx.co.uk

This existing site - built on an old build of WordPress - is not WCAG 2.1AA compliant, there are some framework problems, issues with heading structure as well as some contrast and also file link titles.

Lighthouse, which is a free tool to check accessibility, indicates it's 97% compliant but a scan with Tenon (which is a pro tool) identifies many errors and renders the site very much non-compliant. There are numerous pages where the content areas have missing heading styles, they are not sequential, and many other aspects also identified as failings.

Next Steps/Requirements

A bespoke accessibility statement is produced for, and approved by, Graffham Parish Council which explains what it has done and is doing to comply with the legislation.

All documents that are posted to the website in future are checked to ensure they are accessible, using online browser checkers.

The content posted since September 2018 must be checked to ensure it is accessible and revised (or it could be removed where it is not mandatory).

A new website is commissioned that incorporates WCAG 2.1AA accessibility standards so that is easy to use and maintain and is a cost-effective way to become and stay compliant.

Regular use of a free accessibility checking tool (monthly)