

COLDWALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD

ON TUESDAY 16th MARCH 2021 7.30PM * HELD VIRTUALLY

* The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (Regulation 5)

Those Present:	Cllr J Evans	Vice-Chairman
	Cllr C Dennis	
	Cllr S Hewer	
	Cllr O Dudman	
	Cllr A Hewitt	
	Cllr A Davies	
	Cllr A Lane	
	D Cllr P Clark	District Councillor
	D Cllr D van der Klugt	District Councillor
	Mrs LD Sherlock-Fudge	Clerk
Parishioners:	Lisa May	CEO Lodge Hill Trust
	Matthew Wykes	Lodge Hill Chair of Trustees
	Peter Cleveland	Henry Adams
	Tim Attfield	Lucy Perks
	Fiona Mills	Katie Franklin

Before the meeting there was an opportunity for members of the public present to speak with council.

Cllr Evans chaired the meeting in Cllr Nelson's absence and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Thanking residents of the village for joining the meeting and engaging in local matters and hoped it would continue in the future.

He explained that public participation for those wishing to speak on an agenda item would precede the meeting, following which members of the public could leave if they wished, then the full council meeting would commence, the last item would be a closed to the public to enable council members to have a confidential discussion for this item. Members of the public were welcome to stay for the council meeting up to item 9.

Public Participation:

Lisa May: reminded members of the good work that Lodge Hill do, highlighting other ways in which the local community benefits, employing 10 local people and 60 from further afield, 4 who have remained working through the current situation. They also use local suppliers, both for their catering and for the other activities, including local tradespeople for jobs at the facilities.

Lodge Hill provides activities for St James School as well as other schools, holiday clubs for local children, and the facilities are hired out for local weddings and other events. Local organisations, like the SDNP, use the facilities for meetings and training events. Under normal circumstances there are local groups which use the site, the Lunch Club are welcomed each

month. Alongside this, there are two cottages, which are partly used as holiday cottages but also provide accommodation when the site is used by schools.

Lodge Hill has been very open about their planning application, holding a public consultation in 2019. The application has received lots of support on the SDNPA planning portal. If the application is granted this will allow Lodge Hill to reinvest in the site and secure the future of the charity for the long term, to help thousands of children and young people.

Matthew Wykes: Three years ago, Lodge Hill explored ways to put money into reserves to sustain the charity going forward, which included forest school and cottage rental, but nothing would raise the amounts required. The charity can only fundraise for the activities and projects which are aimed at the children themselves, not maintenance. This application is to support the longevity of the charity's work on the site. He requests that the Parish Council gives a balanced comment like many local residents, reminding members that the development replaced the youth club, which also had traffic to and from the site, just like the proposed development will, nothing was mentioned about that traffic.

A decision needs to be made, at the planning meeting last week, Lodge Hill were accused of holding a gun to the parish regarding this application, that if the parish didn't say yes, then the parish would suffer the consequences. However, through the planning process, Lodge Hill met with the SDNPA, the proposed application is a result of feedback received from SDNPA to the charity, the original application had more houses. As charity trustees have to make a commercial decision, and as the charity needs to make a profit as they cannot run at a loss. Should the decision be to not support this application, then the trustees will need to look at how the charity can provide the services, which they are so successful at delivering, this might mean that eventually the site might need to be sold, moving the facilities elsewhere.

An email was read from Lord Dholakia, who highlighted that the primary aim of the application is for the Lodge Hill to survive, as it will pay dividends for generations to come. The sole aim is to generate sufficient income to enable the charity to continue their activities in the future. We would never be forgiven if our village did not support the application.

Tim Attfield: He agreed that Lodge Hill is a benefit to the community, however still had concerns about the proposed scheme, which included:

- The access to the site – felt it would be more appropriate from the A29.
- The projected valuation of the properties
- Wildlife licences required before planning.
- Lodge Hill's 2020 accounts make no reference to any difficulty in their finances.
- No maintenance program for the future upkeep.

Lucy Perks: Strongly support the application, seem to represent a younger cohort of residents. She and her partner, as local residents, were excited at the potential opportunity of purchasing one of the really affordable 2 bed homes as their first home and being given the chance before the properties were placed on the open market, not aware of other developments giving this opportunity to local residents. With new government scheme it will be much easier for young people to get on the property ladder in this lovely small village in the SDNP, where prices are usually extortionate.

She highlighted that the development would breathe new life into the village, highlighting that the position of the proposed site is less visible than the suggested potential meadow's site. Encouraging members to look forward, remember any ecological concerns are going to be addressed on the neighbouring land owned by Lodge Hill. She is upset that those objecting are taking away the opportunity for the younger generation to remain in the village. It would be incredibly sad if Lodge Hill had to close.

Fiona Mills: Resident of Colebrook Lane, has canvassed neighbours who in the majority are in support of the application. She actively supports this application to support the work of Lodge Hill to connect young people with nature especially in this time of climate change. Agreed that the proposal was going to provide an opportunity for local residents to purchase properties in a discreet development within the village. Hopes that it is what is wanted in the village to enable Lodge Hill to secure their future.

Katie Franklin: Supports the application for a small development in the village on the site of the redundant youth club. Giving an opportunity for young local people to stay in the village they have grown up in and do not wish to leave.

Cllr Evans asked for observations from councillors, before Peter Cleveland spoke on behalf of Lodge Hill:

- Cllr Hewer: noted that the comment indicating the traffic generated by the youth club would be the same as that generated by the development. The youth club was not very regularly used and by not many users which would not be comparable to that of sixteen houses.
- Cllr Hewitt: noted that the young who wish to purchase new homes was great for the village, noting that local housing associations are not selling homes in the village. Cllr Evans advised that the seven 2 bed homes are going to be made available on the open market rather than via a housing association.
- Cllr Dudman: noted that he used the youth club when he was young, but most young people walked to the club not using cars, the size of the car park is no comparison to the number of homes in the development.

Peter Cleveland: In response to the query regarding traffic numbers or movements, there was an existing use there from the youth club so there were existing movements to and from the site, wished to assure members that the way it is assessed by the highways engineers, is on a basis of no movements, then undertake a modelling exercise taking information from similar developments across the country, to calculate the figures for traffic movements. This information determines the type of access required for the site and visibility splays etc. We are aware that the current visibility splays are not great, but the proposal include provision to significantly improve that.

In terms of access from the A29, that is difficult with the proximity of Waltham Park Road; we wouldn't necessarily design a junction like that as it might cause confusion for road users with vehicles indicating to turn right for which junction. Also, an access would require a large break in the landscape buffer along the main A29.

Ecology has also been raised: if a development is in an area with any protected species, licenses are required to ensure that they are protected, this is a standard process to adhere to.

In terms of the accounts the charity has never had money to fund maintenance and provide the subsidised services that they do, it has got to the point where the works have become critical and they do not have the funds available to do them. COVID hasn't been helpful, but this was in discussion before the current situation.

With regard to ongoing maintenance and avoiding this situation in the future, the scheme is for Lodge Hill to retain one property to let or rent out to generate income which will go into a fund to provide money for continued maintenance. We would expect this to be secured with a legal agreement through SDNPA and this would then become an asset for Lodge Hill for the future.

It is interesting to hear the availability for local residents, and agreed with Cllr Evans that all the properties would be market value homes, if the scheme were to bring in any units for affordable homes (under the definition of affordable homes) we would have to provide a lot more dwellings to make it viable, the scheme has looked at providing the minimum number of homes but still provide the level of capital that Lodge Hill requires. Within the scheme the number and mix of properties is fixed, though there is scope to adjust the layout. Once the scheme is marketed to a developer there is an opportunity to work with the trustees and the parish, to ensure that there is provision to give a grace period for those with a genuine local connection to have an opportunity to purchase the properties before they are put on the general market. On the issue of the property values these are determined by the plot size and floor area, as what is available is not really of a comparable size, hence the differences in values.

Cllr Evans asked how the properties would be marketed to afford the local residents a degree of certainty of the value, without the developer waiting for another offer after the grace period. Peter Cleveland agreed that the properties would be marketed at a determined figure that would allow residents to make an offer, before someone with a bigger budget is able to make offers.

Cllr Dennis asked if the properties are to be valued on the open market, how can you control the estate agent putting prices up or making them available to local people first? – Two ways were suggested of ensuring that Lodge Hill benefit from the income; there would be a process which would be duly audited, and through a legal agreement put in place during the planning process, with wording detailing the period of grace would be controlled probably by a section 106.

What controls are there that the developers do not put the price up so much, that they become unaffordable for local residents? – The properties would be marketed at the market value. There is no control over what that value will be at the time.

Cllr Evans thanked everyone for their contributions. All members of the public stayed for the meeting.

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting:

20 / 47.00 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Nelson and Bowler, D Cllr Donnelly.

20 / 48.00 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS, AND ANY CHANGES SINCE THEIR LAST DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Nelson advised of his trusteeship to Lodge Hill and did not attend the meeting. No new declarations were received.

20 / 49.00 TO APPROVE AND SIGN MINUTES

Minutes for the council meeting held on 12th January 2021 were accepted and signed by the Chairman.

20 / 50.00 2020-21 YEAR END ACCOUNTS

The Clerk advised that she wished to use Rachel Hall as the Internal Auditor again for the current year's accounts.

Timetable, - year ends on 31st March 2021, the Internal Auditor's report is required by the meeting in May, so that the account statements can be signed. The Clerk had not yet received the Annual Governance Statement documents, but expected the accounts be exempt from examination.

Cllr Evans asked about the localness of the auditor, the clerk advised that Rachel is near Chichester the next local auditor was in Lewes.

RESOLVED: Members confirmed the appointment of Rachel Hall for the 2020-21 Year End Internal Audit.

20 / 51.00 FINANCE

20 / 51.01 Account Summary: The Clerk distributed the accounts for Parish Council and Alban Head Playing Fields Committee to members prior to the meeting. These are attached as Appendix A & B respectively.

Cllr Davies queried the cost of the kissing gate. The clerk confirmed that covered the cost of the kissing gate and installation and making good around. Cllr Evans noted that Southdowns Pest had links with the Barlavington Estate and were also known to the Alban Head Committee.

20 / 51.02 Authorise & sign amendments to Bank Standing Orders:

Clerk's Salary £370.28 - Members authorised instructions to Lloyds Bank to amend the current Standing Order to reflect 2021/22 monthly salary, was signed by signatories after the meeting.

20 / 51.03 Payments: Authorised and cheques signed by signatories after the meeting for:

Travis Perkins Trading Co	Padlocks & Shed Paint (AHPF)	£ 45.23
R S Hall & Co	AHPF Audit Fee	£180.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	Annual Subscription	£ 112.00

HM Revenue & Customs	PAYE Jan to Mar	£ 151.00
Mrs LD Sherlock-Fuidge	Travel & Expenses	£ 68.16
West Sussex ALC Limited	Annual Subscription	£ 298.15

20 / 52.00 ALBAN HEAD PLAYGROUND

In Cllr Nelson absence, the clerk updated members with the progress report for the development of the Children's Play Area at the Alban Head Playing Field, to provide additional play equipment for the under-five age range. Special thanks to Fiona Charman for her fantastic efforts in raising over 60% of the 9K target.

Cllr Nelson proposed that council added to the support shown by the community by providing £500, surplus from the current financial year. This would go to support the Parish Council's aim to increase current usage of the Alban Head facility by age beyond the range, encouraging families to the facilities offered.

Finally, the stile has been replaced by a kissing gate, which also will enable further access to the field.

Cllr Evans asked if there had been any contact from the football clubs regarding the resumption of their season? The Clerk advised nothing yet, however, the Alban Head Committee were due to meet the next week, hopefully the Alban Head Manager will have an update.

Cllr Davies suggested that it was a great idea for the surplus funds. Cllr Hewer asked whether payments have to be on the agenda to be approved; the Clerk confirmed that the payment could be agreed in principle now but made at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: Members confirmed the donation of £500 towards the Alban Head Playground project.

20 / 53.00 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL / PARISH CLERK

20 / 53.01 Cllr Davies asked for clarification regarding the proposed bridge closure at Swan Corner. The Clerk confirmed that it was the old road bridge, the pedestrian bridge and not the main A29 road bridge. The Clerk had posted clarification on the website in the hopes of allaying residents fears.

20 / 53.02 Cllr Dennis updated members regarding the recent SVHM committee meeting.

- Local elections due to be held in May will be held in the Sandham Hall, but under the applicable COVID restrictions at the time.
- Worries continue regarding the access to the front of the Sandham Hall via steps. The Committee is looking at providing an accessible ramp currently in discussions with surveyors, however, will involve a planning application to be submitted.
- Discussions continue regarding the School and Chuckleberries using the Sandham Hall carpark during the day. Cllr Dennis had noted when passing the hall that the carpark was full at 8.45am, and there were a further 15 cars in Arun Vale, and a queue of parents up the lane to the school, then by 9am the carpark was clear and there was just one car left in Arun Vale, noting that all the cars were very sensibly parked. This was the first week that the schools had been fully back following the lockdown, Cllr Evans noted that school numbers are expected to increase again in September, so the situation may change then.

20 / 53.03 D Cllr Clark updated members:

- Advised that so far HDC had given out over £7 million of grants to businesses.
- Small start-up business grants with matched funding, will re-open the next tranche at the end of the month.
- HDC housing supply numbers still under discussion.

20 / 54.00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

Next Meeting is the Annual Parish Meeting set for 20th April 2021 this meeting will be held virtually.

Next meeting of Council is the Annual Council Meeting on Tuesday 11th May 2021 at 7.30pm.

The Clerk noted that the current regulations allow for councils to hold virtual meeting up to 7th May, after that date potentially councils would be back to face-to-face meetings. There are discussions regarding the use of possible hybrid meetings or extending the date. However, this has posed difficulty for booking a venue, with not knowing what size of space would be required.

Cllr Evans noted that there is another Planning meeting for 24th March for discussion of an application in the village.

Cllr Evans thanked members of the public and Lodge Hill for staying for the meeting. The Members of the Public Left the meeting.

The following item is a Confidential Matter and Does Not Appear on the Publicly Published Minutes

20 / 55.00 *This item was a confidential matter and therefore does not appear on the publicly published minutes.*

Meeting Closed at 9.35 pm.

Chairman:..... **Date:**.....

Distributed to those present, also Cllrs Nelson and Bowler, C Cllr Arculus and D Cllr Donnelly.

DRAFT MINUTES - Not confirmed until the next council meeting