

GUESTLING PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF GUESTLING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD MONDAY 13 MAY 2024 7PM AT GUESTLING VILLAGE HALL

CHAIR: Cllr MARION ROBERTS

PARISH COUNCILLORS: Cllr GRAHAM FURNESS Cllr PETER KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN
Cllr MARTIN GRIFFITHS

PARISH CLERK: BRYONY YOUNG

2 MEMBERS PUBLIC

CLLRS: Cllr ANDREW MIER

Holly Harrison- Senior Planning Officer, RDC

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1	APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE: Cllr Beverley Coupar, Cllr Tim Grohne	
2	ELECTIONS: 2.1 TO ELECT A CHAIR – Cllr Griffiths nominated Cllr Marion Roberts, Cllr Knatchbull-Hugessen seconded 2.2 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIRS DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE, OR IF NOT THEN RECEIVED, TO DECIDE WHEN IT SHALL BE RECEIVED – Cllr Marion Roberts accepted 2.3 TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIR – Cllr Knatchbull-Hugessen nominated Cllr Graham Furness, Cllr Martin Griffiths seconded 2.4 TO RECEIVE THE VICE-CHAIRS DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE, OR IF NOT THEN RECEIVED, TO DECIDE WHEN IT SHALL BE RECEIVED – Cllr Graham Furness accepted 2.5 TO APPOINT STATUTORY OR STANDING COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND DECIDE ON MEETING DATES FOR THE YEAR: MARSHAM OLDER PEOPLES PROJECT - All GUESTLING TREE WARDEN - Cllr Knatchbull-Hugessen ROTHER ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS – Cllr Martin Griffiths ROBERT BRADSHAW CHARITY – Cllr Knatchbull-Hugessen (currently)	
3	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllr Roberts – Item 12	
4	MINUTES: The Chair is authorised to sign the Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held 17 May 2023 and the last Council meeting 11 March 2024	
5	MATTERS ARISING OR UNRESOLVED NOT COVERED SEPARATELY IN AGENDA FROM LAST FULL COUNCIL MEETING: Verge Eight Acre and Butchers Lane – Chased Highways Steward 3 times, still chasing and awaiting response Southern Water sewage works Three Oaks -lorries still attending , now stopped Marsham meeting ref Southern Water issues – nothing further heard National Highways regards junction at A259/school – further information requested Meeting with Football Club to do yearly contract overview and discuss club priorities with a view to prospective pavilion upgrade – MEETING HELD 1 JUNE Local Plan – see presentation minutes below, meetings around Rother to be advertised on Guestling PC website and PC meeting to be arranged to discuss Parish response Southern Water (discharge rates in area) – Cllr Knatchbull-Hugessen to draw up a letter to Southern Water from Parish Council ref. local issues/data cc Environment Agency	BY MR ALL K-H/BY
6	CORRESPONDENCE:.	
7	PRESENTATION FROM ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS ON THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2020-2040 (Holly Harrison – Senior Planning Officer, RDC) : Presentation and detail of how to comment (before 23 July) and local meetings on Guestling PC website : www.guestling.org.uk	
8	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Cllr Mier supports item 11 on agenda strongly	
9	FINANCE: ARC grant request £250 – Proposed Cllr Furness, seconded Cllr Griffiths – Unanimously agreed, clerk to pay Clerk to look at second bank for currently held CIL money Holly Harrison – RDC left 8.15pm	BY

10	ACCOUNTS 2023/2024: i. Guestling Parish Council to apply for a limited assurance review under the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 – AGREED AND SIGNED ii. Guestling Parish Council signed an Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024 – AGREED AND SIGNED iii. Guestling Parish Council signed the Accounting Statements 2023/2024 – AGREED AND SIGNED	
11	PROPOSAL THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL CONSIDERS PROMOTING AND POSSIBLE SUBIDISING OF PUBLIC COURSES IN CPR AND FAMILIARISATION WITH DEFIBRILLATORS: Look into training for residents/school that can be supported by the Parish Council (Rother Responders/St Johns Ambulance) – Parish Council voted to support <i>Vice Chair Cllr Furness to take over as Chair due to Chair Cllr Roberts interest in Item 12</i>	BY/MR
12	AFFORDABLE HOUSING WORKING GROUP REPORT: Report by Guestling Parish Council Affordable Housing Working Group Background: The Working Group was established to engage with all key stakeholders regards proposals for any affordable housing developments within or closely adjacent to Guestling Parish and to provide advice, comments and recommendations to the full council. The reason for establishing the Working Group arose out of the proposal to develop a site referred to as 'Land behind Fairview'. The site lies on the extreme edge of the Guestling parish boundary with Pett parish and in the heart of Pett village and had been suggested as being suitable for affordable housing. As at September 2023 GPC did not have a full understanding of the history of the proposal, what decisions, if any, had been made about a proposed development, the involvement of various bodies, the views of other parish councils or the status and involvement of a proposed Community Land Trust. The lack of clarity and perceived lack of information was having an unsettling effect on a number of local residents and placed GPC in a difficult position in not being able to answer questions raised by residents. GPC has an involvement in the matter in that it initially supported a Housing Needs Survey undertaken by the Sussex Community Housing Hub in 2021. The council fully supports the principal of affordable housing as an essential part of the strategy to address housing need. Furthermore, under the current Rother District Council Local Plan, Policy DHG2 states that one of the six criteria that must be met for planning permission to be granted for small scale residential development outside the development boundary designed to meet a rural need for local affordable housing is the support of the parish council. Consultees To gather information the working party met with: Tom Warder, Community Led Housing manager & Interim CEO at Sussex Community Housing Hub [SCHH], Graeme Quinnell, Housing Enabling & Development Officer at Rother District Council [RDC] and Rodney Buse, chair of Marsham Community Land Trust [MCLT] and we are grateful to all three for their cooperation. We also met with representatives of Pett and Fairlight Parish Councils and notes of all our meetings are published on the GPC website. The Working Group also received written comments from 11 residents and met with 5 of those. Remit of the Working Group The remit of the Working Group is to consider in general the potential to develop affordable housing within or close to the parish and whether a case is sufficiently and properly made out for such development. The consideration of any particular site and forming a view as to whether any particular site is suitable for development is a planning issue and is not within the scope of our consideration at this time. Findings A Housing Needs Survey of Guestling & Pett Parishes was undertaken and published in 2021. We are advised that the results of these surveys are regarded as remaining valid for a period of 5 years. While we acknowledge the experience and expertise of those at SCHH who undertook the survey we note that all the census, house price and income data referred to in the report is now several years old [the census data is over 10 years old and the 2021 census information is now available] and in the intervening period the UK has experienced a significant period of low economic growth, high inflation, significant increases in bank interest rates and an energy crisis as well as the aftermath of the 2020 COVID lockdowns. We also note that the Housing Needs Survey only covered the parishes of Guestling and Pett whereas the now formally constituted Marsham CLT also covers the parish of Fairlight. We recognise that for reasons largely beyond its control the progress made by MCLT has been slow. While we acknowledge the commitments expressed by both MCLT and RDC to holding full consultation with residents about any proposed development scheme, the perception is that little information has been or is being shared with residents. This has been unfortunate and unhelpful. We have been advised that as part of the development of a new Local Plan, RDC is committed to looking at other locations within the three parishes that may also be suitable rural exception sites for affordable housing. As such we are told that no decisions has been made about the Fairview site.	

	We also note that in the draft (Regulation 18] Local Plan 2020-2040 for Rother which is currently out for public consultation it is proposed that policy DHG2 is replaced with policy HOU5. The effect of this change is that “the former requirement for schemes to be supported or initiated by the Parish Council is removed and replaced with criteria (iv), a requirement to demonstrate that there has been meaningful community engagement throughout the development process and the benefits of the development to the village/parish are clearly defined. This change will enable rural exception sites to be brought forward by a wider range of groups and individuals, supporting the delivery of more affordable homes in rural locations where these cannot be accommodated within development boundaries.” Recommendation For GPC to support the development of a site for affordable housing in or near the parish it should require further evidence to corroborate the finding of the 2021 Housing Needs Survey so it can be confident that the need for affordable housing in the parishes is clearly demonstrated. In particular, it should be provided with the eligibility criteria for qualifying for affordable housing within the area as well as the application form to be used. The parish council should also see the responses [suitably anonymised] received via the application forms. So far there has been no information given to us to show what the potential housing mix will be. Similarly, we have no information on the likely rental or cost of shared ownership. Without this information it is impossible to understand whether this particular scheme will actually meet the housing needs that have been identified. If there is to be a shared ownership component then details of length of lease, share of repair and maintenance, responsibility for building defects and so on must be published if the Parish Council is to be in a position to take a view. GPC should also be satisfied that proper public consultation is conducted by RDC and MCLT. We believe that there are two stages of public consultation that should be undertaken: the first around the concept of affordable housing and the aims and objectives in promoting such a scheme and only after that the consultation that precedes the making of a planning application where the design ideas are described, and public views gathered. We have seen little evidence of either. At all stages of the process, we would expect information and updates are publicised in a timely manner through multiple channels including the website that MCLT are proposing to launch. In the opinion of the Working Group, Guestling Parish Council is not in a position to support the proposition under policy DGH2 and can see little evidence that consultation required by draft policy HOU5 has been carried out. The Working Group therefore recommends that Guestling Parish Council reserves its position at this time. <i>Standing orders suspended for any questions:</i> Member of public wished to say they are grateful to the Working Party for all the work put in <i>Standing Orders restored</i> Proposed that the Parish Council support the report recommendation to reserve a decision and that the Working Group be reactivated when further information becomes through, Working Party will stay as a Standing Committee – Parish Council all in favour <i>Cllr Mier and 2 members public left 8.35pm</i>	
13	ANNUAL REVIEW- PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES – Schedule for next meeting, Cllr Griffiths offered to look at Emergency Plan needs urgent update	ALL BY
14	FOOTBALL CLUB AND BOWLS CLUB CONTRACT RENEWALS: Football Club meeting to be held and contract discussed – Meeting taken place, update at next meeting Bowls Club renewal 14/2/2025 (Oct 2023 put in place)	MR/BY
15	AOB: NONE MEETING CLOSED 8.40pm	
	BRYONY YOUNG – PARISH CLERK 07730 015684 guestling.clerk@gmail.com	