

PARISH COUNCIL OF PLAYDEN, EAST SUSSEX

Clerk: Mrs Lesley Voice, 1 The Grove, Rye, TN31 7ND. Tel: 07767 221704

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6th February 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillors:, Mr P Osborne (PO) Chairman, Mr T Lenihan (TL) Vice Chairman, Mr A. Dickinson (AD).

East Sussex County Council (ESCC): Cllr Keith Glazier (KG)

Rother District Council (RDC) Councillor: Not present.

Members of the Public: 1

	Item	Action
1	To accept apologies for absence: Cllr Lizzy Hacking Mr D Stone	
2	Declarations of interest on items on the agenda: None	
3	To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on 5th December 2024. The minutes were unanimously approved and signed by PO.	
4	Reports from visiting Councillors: East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Councillor: Cllr Keith Glazier confirmed that East Sussex and West Sussex County Councils together with Brighton and Hove City Council had been successful in being accepted by the Government to be on the fast track devolution route to become new combined Unitary Authorities with a Mayor and cabinet for Sussex. There are tight timescales to produce a draft and then a final proposition of how the new 'one layer' authorities will work for Sussex. Due to these timescales and the resources needed to meet these, the current Councils had asked for and have been granted their wish not to have local elections in May 2025. It is anticipated that it would take several years to devolve fully into the new form of local government. The Government is providing some funding towards the transition. KG stated the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) budget for the 2025-6 year has a £55 million funding gap. ESCC have so far identified £12 million cuts in expenditure and will take £11 million out of reserves. The County Council self-insures and is required to keep a buffer of at least £10 million in reserve to meet its audit requirements.	

	<p>There has been a 116% increase in the cost of care packages which account for 40% of ESCC spending. The Council will receive a part exemption of the NI increases announced in the autumn budget. However, outsourced contractors do not get the same exemption and some also have additional costs due to the increase in the minimum wage. These increasing costs will be passed onto the Council. KG had been in contact with the Highways Steward and is unsure why some reported potholes have not been mended. KG will contact again. PO mentioned that there was a bad pothole in Military Road near where the landslip had been. KG will also mention this.</p> <p>Rother District Council Councillor: Cllr Lizzy Hacking was not present.</p> <p>PO stated that the council settlement figure which was released in December resulted in Rother District Council (RDC) being 3% worse off. Despite cost savings having been identified there is estimated to be an overspend of £3million. This will be taken out of reserves but this is not sustainable long term. RDC are in a better financial position than many other district councils who are massively in debt.</p>	
5	<p>Neighbourhood Watch. No information received.</p>	
6	<p>Public adjournment: To suspend the meeting for any public statements. <i>The period allocated to this is a maximum of 15 minutes.</i> There were no public issues raised.</p>	
7	<p>Matters arising from minutes of 5th December 2024 and not covered elsewhere. None</p>	
8	<p>Correspondence:</p> <p>The Clerk had received an email from the Playden WI giving an update on their financial situation. Following the WI letter sent to all Playden residents they had received a very generous donation from a local resident who wishes to remain anonymous. They had also been actively fundraising which has resulted in a healthier bank balance. This has enabled them to have electrical work undertaken and they will be updating the fire alarm system. A working party recently worked on levelling the carpark surface. The Clerk has been invited to their 107th birthday meeting which she has accepted.</p> <p>The Clerk reported she had attended a recent RALC meeting. James Kelly (ESCC Highways) had brought along some of his Highway Stewards. He reported that they were considering a different work scheduling basis where they would look at what was needed in an area as a whole rather than based on reporting date. Devolution was discussed. The suggested population for a mayor is 1.5 million. There are 1.6 million people in the whole of Sussex. RDC was not consulted on the County and City Council's submission to the Government. The next stage is for an interim local</p>	

	<p>devolution plan to be drafted by the end of March and a finalised plan for approval to be submitted to the Government by the end of September.</p> <p>The attendees were updated by RDC on the progress of the new Local Plan. Even though RDC will not exist under the new devolved system the Local Plan is still going ahead and will be incorporated with others in the new unitary authority plans The date for the new Local Plan to be finalised is December 2026. RDC will be coming back to all parish and town councils to ask for more sites for building homes. To meet the government targets sites will also need to have a higher density of buildings.</p> <p>The National Landscape (old Area of Outstanding National Beauty) will no longer be exempt from housing if it does not cause 'significant harm'.</p> <p>RDC announced that they would be reducing the number of councillors on the Planning Committee.</p>	
9	<p>To agree the Playden Parish Council Precept for 2025-6.</p> <p>The Clerk informed the councillors that the total expenditure for the current year 2024-5 will be approximately £5,750 and similar for next year. As the council currently has reserves it was decided to keep the precept the same, a total of £5,000. The Clerk to inform RDC of this decision.</p>	Clerk
10	<p>Website Update.</p> <p>The Clerk had attended the NALC webinar regarding the recommended use of the gov.uk email addresses and websites. This is recommended as they have a higher level of security and gives consistency across all levels of government. These are only available through a small number of authorised providers. It was announced that the government subsidy of £100 in the first year has now been used up.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that they had been contacted by Parish Online to say that they would continue to offer the £100 discount out of their reserves if the Council signed up to them managing the Council's new website. The Clerk informed the councillors that the cost would be approximately £370 (with discount) for the first year and £470 in the second and future years. This would include a new domain name. Playdenparishcouncil.gov.uk, email addresses for councillors and cloud storage for documents.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Clerk would check the final costs and then confirm the switch to Parish Online and find out what the next steps are.</p>	Clerk
11	<p><u>Planning</u></p> <p><u>New Applications</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Ongoing:</u></p>	

	<p>None</p> <p><u>Outcomes.</u></p> <p>RR/2024/919/P Brookgate, Folkestone Road, East Guldeford, TN31 7PB Proposed replacement dwelling Approved with conditions.</p> <p><u>Appeals</u></p> <p>None</p>	
12	<p>Accounts</p> <p>a) Expenditure – to approve the following expenditure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerks wages carried forward. <p>b) Income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
13	<p>Parish Councillors reports.</p> <p>None</p>	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05pm

THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING 6th March 2025 at 7.30pm.

Signed:

Chairman

Date: