

**PLAISTOW AND IFOLD PARISH COUNCIL
CLERK'S REPORT
FOR MEETING ON TUESDAY 21st JULY 2009**

4. Declarations of Interest by Members

Members may make any Declarations (personal or prejudicial) at this point of the meeting but they must, in any event, be declared before commencement of discussion of the relevant agenda item.

5. Chairman's Report

Notification has been received from the Wey & Arun Canal Trust that they are to install a new culvert under the canal, replacing a ditch, approximately 200m south of the former Southland Lock. The culvert will be 50m long and is required to control the water flow from woodland and land to the north of the canal. The water will flow into the River Lox and not the canal. Both the land owner and the Environment Agency have been involved in granting permission for the work.

The work will commence in late July but will not be completed until the summer of 2010. Work will be supervised on a daily basis and at no time, will the former towpath, bridleway and right of way be obstructed.

6. Councillor Vacancy

The Notice advertising the vacancy to be filled by co-option has been on the Parish notice boards for three weeks. In this time, one application has been received by the Clerk; which has subsequently been withdrawn. There are no other applications at the time of preparing the Report.

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That new posters are displayed, on the notice boards and at other locations in the Parish.**
- (b) That the filling of the vacancy is deferred to the September meeting**

8. Situation Report on previously reported matters

(a) Parish Action Plan and Village Design Statement

The Clerk has nothing to report

(b) Information regarding Dunsfold Park

The Clerk has nothing to report

(c) **Entrance gates to the Play Area**

Members are asked to note that the Council's grounds maintenance contractor has promised that this work will be undertaken by the end of July.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

9. **Finance**

(a) **Accounts for payment**

A schedule of accounts for payment from 23rd June 2009 to 21st July 2009, also detailing monies received, will be available at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to approve payment of the accounts

(b) **Budget Monitoring Information – 1.4.2009 to 30.6.2009**

Members will find enclosed the Budget Monitoring Sheets, together with a Bank Reconciliation and explanatory notes, for the first quarter of the financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the first quarter Budget Monitoring information

(c) **Community Reserve Fund – Afternoon Tea Clubs**

The Plaistow and Ifold Afternoon Tea Groups are looking to arrange a joint excursion in early September. This will take the form of a coach trip to Worthing, a matinee show at the Pavilion Theatre (Hello Dolly), tea in Worthing and the coach back to Plaistow.

The Groups run independently of each other but feel that a joint excursion would be beneficial for the members of the group, enabling them to meet new people and for a number of them, to get to Worthing, which is something those people are generally not able to do.

Plaistow Afternoon Tea Group is run by Diana Cave and a small group of helpers. There are currently about 24 people on the 'register'. People are charged 50p per monthly session to cover the cost of refreshments. The Group holds two lunches each year – in the summer (at Diana's home) and at Christmas (at Winterton Hall) and a charge of £1 per person is made.

There is no formal financial arrangement for the Group, save for a 'kitty' which fluctuates depending on the time of year. Currently, the 'kitty' stands at approximately £50, which will cover the cost of the summer lunch on 20th July.

Ifold Afternoon Tea Group is run by Carrie Osborne and a small group of helpers. There are currently about 19 people on the 'register'. People are charged 50p per monthly session to cover the cost of refreshments. The Group holds two or three lunches each year at Carrie's home and a charge of £1 is made.

The financial arrangement for the Group is the same as at Plaistow and currently there are no funds in the 'kitty'.

Carrie has commented that she and her helpers have previously arranged trips out for their members to the theatre in Horsham and Guildford, which have been extremely well received. The trips have been undertaken, however, in private cars, which is not always satisfactory.

Both Diana and Carrie are of the view that the majority of the people attending the Groups would want to take up this excursion. There would also be helpers attending the trip to offer assistance where needed and to ensure the safety of the Group. It is estimated that as many as 53 people could attend.

Financial Implications

The cost of a 57, 53 or 49 seat coach for 8 hours is **£345** for 8 hours, which is the minimum period of hire. There is sufficient funding in the Community Reserve Fund (currently £4382) to make this grant.

If Members are mindful of making the grant, the Parish Council could place the order directly with the coach operator. This would (a) negate any financial pressure on the organisers of the two Groups and (b) enable the Parish Council to reclaim the VAT.

Members are asked to note that the cost of the matinee tickets will be borne by the people attending the excursion; and for those who may have financial difficulty, the Groups' organisers will make appropriate arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

10. Insurance Arrangements

Members have previously been circulated with the schedule detailing the proposed revised insurance arrangements of the Parish Council assets.

The insurers have only, at this stage, been invited to quote on the revised requirements; and as the Council already has a Policy in existence, an annual premium total figure has been given. This is £1258.09. The current annual premium of £1036.52 has been paid (June 2009 to June 2010).

Enquiries following receipt of the quotation show the following –

- (a) All items of **street furniture** (bus shelters, seats and notice boards) and **play equipment** are insured at the rate of £13.86 per £1000 of replacement cost (total = £42,409)

- (b) **Safety surfacing** –

Main area (£8791)	81.22
For the slide (400)	3.70
For roundabout (£1500)	<u>13.86</u>
	98.78

- (c) **Fencing and Gates** (£3500) 32.34

- (d) **Laptop** (£700 – anywhere in UK) 33.07

- (e) **Fidelity Guarantee**
 £10,000 is currently £26. To increase to £25,000 is an increase of £40.95, including tax, on the current premium

11. Ashpark Brickworks

This agenda item is for discussion following two recent visits to the Parish Council by one of the owners of the site.

It is understood that a number of ideas for the site have been put forward and discussed by the owners, none of which has come to fruition. The last discussion was with Skanda-Hus for continued industrial use.

The District Council has stated that residential development; or part residential/part industrial development of the site will not be permitted. This is importantly to retain a rural industrial site but also because a residential development at that location is too removed from the village. There are other issues relating to the rear of the site being designated a Site of Specific Scientific Interest.

The owners of the site will not be present at the meeting, so as to enable free and frank discussion as to the Parish Council’s ideas. Depending on Members’ views, they may wish to attend the next Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION
Members’ views are sought

12. Councillor and Clerk Training

(a) Councillors

Members have been advised of the availability of a Councillor Training Course to be held on Monday 12th October 2009 from 6.30pm to 9pm at Wisborough Green Village Hall. The training is to be delivered by Trevor Leggo of SALC. Currently three Councillors have put themselves forward. Are there any other Members who wish to attend?

(b) The Chairman

Arrangements are being made for the Chairman to attend a Chairmans' Training Course at a convenient date. The cost of the course will depend on the number of days attended and whether the Chairman attends on a residential basis.

Financial considerations

The current Budget for Councillor Training is £750.00

(c) The Clerk

The Clerk will be attending the Clerk's Training Day at Pulborough on 28th September 2009. The cost for the course is £45.

Financial considerations

The current Budget for the Clerk's Training is £150

(d) NALC National Conference

This year's Conference is being held at the Royal College of Physicians in London on Friday 4th and Saturday 5th September 2009. The Day Rate for attendance is £191.67 per delegate. Would any Member wish to attend?

Financial considerations

The current Budget for Courses and Conferences is £200

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

13. Re-accreditation for Quality Status

The Quality Status scheme was launched in 2003 with the aim to provide benchmark minimum standards for Parish and Town Councils. The Parish Council was awarded Quality Status on 4th May 2006 and re-accreditation is due in May 2010.

The cost of the re-accreditation is currently £57.

In order to achieve Quality Status, Parish and Town Councils must demonstrate, by way of a portfolio of evidence, that they have reached the standard required by passing several tests. These are –

Electoral Mandate
Qualifications of the Clerk
Council meetings
Communication and Community Engagement
Annual Report
Accounts
Code of Conduct
Promoting Local Democracy and Citizenship
Terms and Conditions
Training

The format of each section is, in the main, similar to the original application form. There are three new sections – (a) Promoting Local Democracy and Citizenship; (b) Terms and Conditions; and (c) Training.

To assist Members the Application Form for Quality Status (the same for re-accreditation) is enclosed. The Parish Council's original portfolio will be available at the meeting.

Concerns have been expressed regarding the validity of re-applying for Quality Status, on two fronts. Firstly, the benefits. At the time when the Parish Council was awarded Quality Status, there was much talk of undertaking more roles and responsibilities and also the 'carrot' of additional funding being made available to Quality Councils, which would not normally be available. This did not come to fruition.

There are reasons why there have been no additional roles and responsibilities conferred on the Parish Council. Both the District and County Council have not embraced the Scheme in the expected manner. Also this Parish Council is the only Council in the area to be a Quality Council and it has not, therefore, been possible to form a 'cluster Quality Council group' as has happened in Mid-Sussex in respect of minor highway works. The reason why the expected funding was not made available is that insufficient Parish and Town Councils in West Sussex achieved Quality Status within a given time frame and the 'pot' was lost.

Secondly, the financial impact on the Parish Council. The Parish Newsletter, 'Parish Up-Date, was first published in Spring 2003, with the first provision for professional printing being made in the Budget for 2005/2006 (£800 – with actual costs in that year being £1347). The Budget provision for 2006/2007 was £1026; and for 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 it was £1380 per annum. The actual expenditure from 2005/2006 to 2009/2010 to date is £3399.

The first Budget allocation for the Parish Website was in 2004/2005 with an allocation of £300 with £442 actually being spent (for the purchase of the software). The Budget provision for 2005/2006 was £450; for 2006/2007 it was £400; for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 it was £250 per annum; and for 2009/2010 it is £1000. The actual expenditure from 2005/2006 to 2009/2010 to date is £352.

The Parish Council has worked hard over the years to provide the services and facilities that it does, especially for a small rural Parish Council. There are good and established links between the Council and the local and extended community, both with individuals and groups and organisations. The Council has an established grant system in place which enables local groups to grow and provide further valuable services to the community. It is submitted that this and the experience of both the Members and the Clerk measure up to the standards for Quality Status and thus gives confidence to the local community.

Members are invited to consider whether a presentation from SALC would be helpful.

RECOMMENDATION
Members' views are sought

14. Annual RoSPA Inspection of the Play Area

The Inspection was undertaken during the afternoon of Tuesday 9th June 2009.

Members will find enclosed a copy of the body of the Report.

Of the items on page 129 relating generally to the site, all items have been raised previously, except for the issue of car parking. No complaints have been received from users of the Play Area regarding this and it is not known why vehicles would have been parked in that position at that time.

In respect of the broken section and the missing slat, quotations will be obtained for repair work and reported to the September meeting.

In respect of the equipment –

(i) Swings

Both the retaining pole and the swing seat have been noted and are being monitored. It is not known how the retaining pole became bent and in due course, a representative of the supplier company, Wicksteeds, will be invited to inspect the equipment in relation to a metal or structural defect, both of which are under guarantee.

- (ii) **Roundabout**
Councillor Gravestock currently has the spares for all the play equipment. It is not known if the bolt referred to is amongst the items. If not, this can be ordered from Wicksteeds. Members are reminded that it is imperative that only approved parts from the manufacturer are used, to keep the equipment compliant.
- (iii) **Embankment Slide**
The recommendation under General Maintenance has been raised previously. Enquiries will be made of the Council's grounds maintenance contractor as to an appropriate solution. The spare tiles from the roundabout would not be appropriate for use here and it may be that Matta grass tiles would provide the solution. A Report on this aspect will be brought to the September meeting.
- (iv) **Multi Play Unit**
Bolt caps are in the spares items (see (ii) above). Members are invited to consider how to address the splintering and painting comment in respect of the deck.
- (v) **Adventure Trail**
Members are invited to consider how to address the comment regarding lubrication of the barrel roll

RECOMMENDATION
Members' comments are sought

15. The National Trust

- (a) **Lease for the Lower Green**
A copy of the Licence for the Lower Green has been sent by email from the Slindon Office of the National Trust. The Licence is required to be signed by the Chairman of Council and then it is returned to Polesden Lacey for a fair copy to be sent. The Licence Fee is £1 per annum, if demanded.

A copy of the Licence is currently with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their perusal.

RECOMMENDATION
That the Licence is duly signed

- (b) **Todhurst Event**
This was scheduled to take place on the weekend of 18th/19th July. The event was publicised in the last edition of the Parish Newsletter as agreed with Daniel Duthie of the National Trust. Nothing has subsequently been heard from the Trust and at the time of preparing the Report, it is not known if it is the National Trust's intention to be at Todhurst.

Members may recall that the possibility of requesting a Licence from the National Trust has previously been discussed. The outcome was that the situation would be monitored viz. to see if the Trust would return this summer. Members may wish to revisit this issue.

RECOMMENDATION
Members' views are sought

16. Highway Matters

(a) Highway Matters previously reported

All matters previously raised have been reported and a response is still awaited. The Parish Council's have now been passed to County Councillor Duncton for assistance.

RECOMMENDATION
Members are asked to note this section of the Report

(b) Pedestrian problems at The Sun

Concerns have been expressed by a member of the public who walks her children to School from Nell Ball. She is concerned about pedestrian safety in crossing the road at any point on the junction. An idea put forward has been the installation of a mirror, possibly in the grounds of the Church.

RECOMMENDATION
Members' views are sought

**18. Date of next meeting -
Tuesday 29th September 2009 at Winterton Hall, Plaistow**

Sue Kemp – Parish Clerk
15th July 2009