

MINUTES OF FALMER PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday November 28th 2023 7.30pm

PRESENT. Chair Melanie Cutress (MC) Annie Davies (AD) Andy Pearce (AP) Martin Gapper MG

APOLOGIES Helen Herbert

13 villagers attended.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING. were signed as a true record of that meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR To be addressed as the meeting progresses.

MATTERS ARISING:

Pauline Newman Starley asked for an addendum to the minutes of September's meeting as points she had raised about the tithe barn had been missed out. MC would check and reply.

1. Stadium Issues

- Concerns from parish council about heavy parking in Falmer North and few spaces for any resident returning home after the start of a match.
- The last two matches had seen an improvement and MC had met with stewards at the Amex on Nov 14th. They took the issue seriously and wanted to see improvements.
- MC would continue to monitor and report back.

2. Village Maintenance

- Falmer pond. Marcus White, a consulting engineer, and hydrologist with specialism in restoring historic ponds had now drawn up a plan of work but it was yet to be in the public sphere. No news either on the grant funding situation.
- potholes round the pond had been reported and a few had been repaired. The potholes on the road outside the farm shop had been reported yet again (case POT006655). ESCC had stated 'We are aware of this issue and repairs will be carried out as per the Council's investigation levels.
- Parish Councillors decided to again opt for 4 extra grass cuts in the summer on road and path verges. The cost had gone up by £50 to £272.00. We can claim VAT back.
- The grass round the pond had been cut on Nov 15th.
- Dirt motorbiking remained a problem from Stanmer and MG reported on what he had recently seen. Gary Coomber had videoed an incident and Courtney Coomber had reported it to the police. Greg Kent had also phoned 999 to report it and the police had come out. However, the police were not being successful in stopping this problem.
- The wooden bus shelter had been repaired by Justin Burt. Waiting for invoice.
- Southern roundabout road markings still no action. Pauline asked for a yellow box at the traffic lights to aid exiting at peak times. MC would follow up both issues.
- Broken wall at Ridge Rd and over hanging brambles reported to Sussex University.

PLANNING

- Bennetts field Student halls of residences for 555 bedrooms. Planning application LW/22/0175. APPEAL had been held in August. The Inspector had approved the appeal, but details of his decision were not yet available. Jill Burt was concerned over road access. No details available on anything related yet.
- 2 Swan Cottages SDNP/23/01743/HOUS. Change of use from a garage to an independently occupied dwelling. Application refused.

- Polowood Shoot SDNP/22/05978/LDC.

Certificate of Lawful application had resulted in only 52 days of shoot being allowed. However, although this had exceeded LDC had not closed the shoot down. This was important as clearly the Council wanted the operation to continue. However, it would only continue if it was a viable business.

Mr Coomber had now applied for planning permission to run an all-year-round operation except for Mondays and Christmas Day, Boxing Day and easter Sunday. This totalled 310 days and so was six times greater than the 52 days currently granted. The application was also asking for the shoot to close at 8pm every evening in summer. (See attached planning application's Hours of Business schedule.)

Parish Council wanted to see the business continue, taking their lead from Lewes District Council who had not closed the business down when they could have done. Parish Council thought this was significant.

However, Parish Council thought the application's Hours of Business schedule was excessive for the SDNP and had reached a position offering a different schedule. This took the view of a better balance between the business continuing and less clay pigeon shooting which would mean less noise. The PC's view was that they were happy with quieter activities like archery continuing all year all year round.

The PC's presented their alternative Hours of Business schedule to the meeting. This was for all activities to cease at 5pm all year round. No clay pigeon shooting on weekday afternoons from 2pm. No clay pigeon shooting on Saturdays and Sundays every other weekend. So, a two-week rota with alternate weekends having clay pigeon shooting.

One of the main problems for villagers remained the speed of traffic on Ridge Road. The official speed limit was 60mph. Many drivers were causing concern by aggressive driving and not slowing down approaching families with children, horse riders, dog walkers, hikers.

Comments were invited from the floor. There were a variety of points made.

- Questions on the number of people who were customers? Courtney Coomber gave a figure of 40 per hour.
- Comment from Mr Coomber on the history of the shoot and its return post Covid was earlier than 2021 as it was an outdoor activity. Initially post Covid, there had been an increase in numbers, but they were back to normal now.
- Comment on increase in traffic
- Comment on SDNP and tranquillity
- Comment on Parish council's decision-making process.

MC finalised by stating that the PC had an established position which would be submitted to LDC. Advised any one with concerns/ objections to make sure they got their comments in by the application deadline date.

FINANCE

- The accounts were reviewed and accepted.
- Precept for £1,000.00 agreed.
- VAT claim had been made.

ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD.

- Discussion about the request from the Monday short mat Bowls Club that used the village hall for Parish Council to pay for a defibrillator to be installed on the outside wall of the village hall. MG passed on his knowledge from the one installed outside the Swan pub. Quite a lot to be considered e.g., weekly checks, monthly checks, electricity connection, cost £900? MG made the point that it does save lives. MC would investigate costs.

Next meeting January 31st. 2024

ADDENDA NOV 28th.

Mrs Pauline Newman - Starley raised a concern that an item discussed at the meeting had not been minuted.

Correction to the minutes on the Tithe barn events venue.

Fran Woolley commented that as events manager, she was unaware of the document (events management plan approved 30.3.23.). When attention was drawn to the noise management within the plan, she was unaware of the Barn Doors being replaced by solid oak.

Work to her knowledge was not in hand.

Further discussion terminated with reference to the review.

The parish council was asked by Pauline Starley Newman to seek a FOI from the SDNP concerning the six-monthly review.

Pauline also raised concern that some of the enforcement actions, due to be completed prior to The barn being used as a venue had not been completed and should this be a contravention of planning, thus a further request of SDNP FOI