

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: of the Monthly Meeting held on 28 October 2024

PRESENT: Councillors J Bennett (Chairman), Mrs V Allen, Mrs A Cooper, A Cooper, G Lee, Ms L Lloyd, Mrs S Partridge, D Rogers, Mrs C Stevens and P Warren

In attendance: Mrs C Ward (Clerk of the Council) and Ms R Costan (Deputy Clerk of the Council)

248/24 NEW MEMBER - COUNCILLOR MRS C STEVENS

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, welcomed Councillor Mrs Claire Stevens to her first Meeting as a co-opted Member of the Council.

249/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Broomfield (Holiday), Broomfield (Holiday), Ceiriog-Hughes (Personal), Mrs Gregory (Personal), Grevett (Holiday) and Ms Revell (Holiday). These apologies were accepted by the Council.

250/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cooper declared a personal interest in Minutes 271/24 and 274/24. He remained in the Meeting during consideration of these items.

251/24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 23 September 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

252/24 SUSSEX POLICE

Apologies for absence had been received from Sergeant West and PCSO Raju.

(a) Matters Arising

The Clerk referred to Minute 217/24(a) and said that the 'homeless' individual was still actively begging in the Village.

She said that it was understood that the individual concerned was allegedly 'terminally ill' but this information had not been officially confirmed. However, the Anti-Social Behaviour Team was reluctant to progress with issuing a Community Protection Warning or Notice at the present time for this reason. It was understood that he continued to be under the 'umbrella' of Chichester City Council.

The latest message from the Anti-Social Behaviour Team was as follows:-

On 30/08/24 Chichester District Council accepted a homelessness duty of care and he was offered temporary emergency accommodation (3 times) as an interim, whilst he was waiting for the ground floor flat at Westward House to become available.

He has turned down all offers, stating he would rather rough sleep in Rustington. He has very poor health. Whilst in Rustington, he has been telling residents he is not being helped - this is untrue - He is not accepting any help. Residents have now set up a crowdfunding page for him - which I believe is up to about £1500.

There will be an offer of accommodation from Chichester District Council - If residents are being made to feel uneasy by his presence or begging this needs to be reported to the police along the usual lines - To date, reports are pretty non-existent.

Here is an excerpt from an email his probation officer sent me:-

*I have seen the Facebook post and GoFundMe and everyone seems very positive about *****, and there is no mention of him causing trouble or fear within the community in over 250 comments from individuals. If you feel that a crime has been committed, then I urge it to be reported to the Police.*

The Council NOTED this information.

(b) Arun All Parishes Meeting - 1 October 2024

The Clerk advised that Councillor Lee, the Deputy Clerk and herself had attended the above Meeting, which was again hosted by Inspector Ross Wickings.

Inspector Wickings had advised that the Call Grading System was in the process of being changed from a numerical system from one to four, with four being the lowest, to a lettering system to prioritise emergency and non-emergency calls as follows:-

- Category A - Emergency Response
- Category B - Response within one hour - Physical attendance
- Category C - Same day response within 24 hours
- Category D - Response within 72 hours - Passed to Initial Investigation Team
- Category E - Non-Emergency - Passed to Initial Investigation Team
- Category F - Filed - No further action

A number of questions detailing with concerns in respect of the current and new system were raised by those in attendance.

The Clerk said that he had then advised that the Coaching Unit would be merging with part of the Neighbourhood Policing Team on 7 October 2024, which was a major change for the Force. He also reported that there were also a large number of other internal personnel changes currently occurring across the County. He said that all in all Littlehampton was well-staffed with nine PCSOs, two Warranted Officers and two Sergeants.

Inspector Wickings had then provided an update on Operations Precinct and Sonar and said that these were still ongoing.

A number of local issues of concern were then raised by a number of the Parish and Town Councils' representatives, and these had all been responded to, as far as practicably possible, by Inspector Wickings.

The Council NOTED this information.

Councillor Lee then reported on the latest monthly crime figures online which stated that there had been 76 crimes, 2 of which had been burglaries which related to Sheds. He added that PCSO Raju had again provided him with a breakdown on crime figures for the current month, which totalled 85.

He concluded by saying that, fortunately, the Village was still a relatively low crime area.

The Council NOTED this information and conveyed its thanks and appreciation to Councillor Lee.

Councillor Ms Lloyd then referred to a break-in at the Westcourt Surgery in The Street and Councillor Cooper referred to a recent break-in at Chandlers BMW.

The Council was concerned to NOTE this information.

The Clerk then reminded the Council that there were currently two Public Consultations ongoing via the Neighbourhood Alert System, which it was hoped Members would have or be completing, namely the Sussex Resilience Forum - Local Risk Perception Survey and the Neighbourhood Alert System Survey.

The Council NOTED this information.

253/24 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ms Edwards and Gunner.

Councillor Mrs Partridge, in her capacity as a District Council, reported as follows:-

- *National Planning Policy Framework Consultation/Workshop/Meeting/Training - 26 September 2024. Consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

Leaders of all Parties at Arun sent a joint letter to Angela Rayner MP and all four members of Parliament representing parts of Arun, with the request for them to support and endorse the Council in raising these significant concerns with proposals within the Consultation

District Council believe it is not fit for purpose and has not been thought through

If it goes through, Developers could go for more of a Chance Development - They will speculate and bring forward development of what they call undersupply

The District Council has significantly increased the number of planning permissions granted for housing in the last five years, but has 8,000 planning permissions that have not been actioned

With regard to infrastructure, outside the Metropolitan area housing targets are being increased where there is no infrastructure, unlike Metropolitan areas where infrastructure already exists

What will affect Rustington - Not much really as the Village is already built out, but households will be paying substantially more for planning applications

Neighbourhood Plans - Hardly mentioned in the Consultation.

Councillor Mrs Cooper then reported as follows:-

- *Proposed Beach Huts - Greensward in front of Overstrand Estate - Economy Committee Meeting on 22 October 2024 - Two sites agreed for investigation in Bognor and Felpham - All other sites in the District - No further action and a verbal commitment that these proposals will not be considered again*
- *Policy and Finance Committee - 24 October 2024 - Parking Discs in Littlehampton and Bognor Regis - Two hours free parking - £4.00 for digital and £6.00 for physical disc - Both discs only able to be used once per day - Pricing is only fixed at this level for one year*
- *Additional £3M Expenditure agreed for Regis Centre Redevelopment*
- *District Council's membership of Greater Brighton Economic Board - Cost: £25,000.00 per annum - Councillor M Lury asked the Committee to give him a mandate to agree to him becoming a member of the Integrated Care Board as the District Council's representative. Questions were raised as to what benefits the Council had seen over the last 4 years of membership. With no answers given, the vote was tight, with it going through on the Chairman's casting vote.*

The Council NOTED this information and the Chairman thanked Councillors Mrs Partridge and Mrs Cooper for their most informative Reports.

254/24 COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Mrs Cooper reported on County Council issues as follows:-

- *Full Council - Motion to promote awareness through all possible channels to increase Pension Credit take up and to sign the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners'*
- *Motion to ask Government to rethink the A27 as a Strategic Plan for the South - Representation made to Prime Minister about lack of consultation before cancelling and reinvesting to meet to discuss plans for real and lasting improvements to resolve congestion and safety issues.*

The Council NOTED the above information and the Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Cooper for her Report.

255/24 CLERK'S REPORT

(a) Annual Civic Thanksgiving Service - Annual Civic Thanksgiving Service and Community Awards' Presentation

The Clerk reported the receipt of a message from Councillor Nikki Hamilton-Street, Chairman of Angmering Parish Council, an email from Miss Juliet Robinson and a telephone call from Mrs Kathleen Tidbury, expressing their thanks and appreciation to everyone involved with the organisation of the Event.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

256/24 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported on his official representation and attendance at Meetings, Events and Functions since the last Monthly Meeting as follows:-

- Blind Veterans UK Rustington - Chelsea Pensioners' Choir Visit and Lunch - 9 October 2024 (accompanied by Councillor Mrs Cooper)

The Council NOTED this information.

257/24 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Council NOTED the Reports of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 9 September 2024 and 7 October 2024.

258/24 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Council received the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 28 October 2024. (Verbal Report from the Chairman of the Committee).

The Council RESOLVED that the Recommendations contained in the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 28 October 2024 be APPROVED.

259/24 **ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Report of the Allotments Committee Meeting held on 7 October 2024.

The Council RESOLVED that the Report of the Allotments Committee Meeting held on 7 October 2024 be APPROVED.

260/24 **APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

The Clerk advised that there was one vacancy on the Planning Committee and the Council AGREED the following:-

(a) **Planning Committee**

Councillor Mrs C Stevens

261/24 **DIARY DATES 2025**

The Council RESOLVED that the Diary Dates for 2025, as presented, be AGREED.

A copy of these dates is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

262/24 **COMMUNITY CAROL CONCERT - 14 DECEMBER 2024**

The Clerk said that arrangements were now being progressed for the Community Carol Concert which would be taking place on Saturday 14 December 2024.

She said that the Littlehampton Concert Band and Sussex West County Guide Choir would be presenting special Festive Music and singing, and would, this year, be joined by the Friendship Singers for some additional special performances.

Cold soft drinks, mince pies and chocolate bars would be being served to the seated audience during the interval and there would, as in previous years, be a Free Lucky Programme Draw.

The Clerk also reported that the Chairman had decided that Blind Veterans UK Rustington should be the recipient of the Retiring Collection.

She then asked Members if they could consider donating a prize for the Lucky Programme Draw, which would be most appreciated.

She said that, as in previous years, press and other publicity, including Facebook and the Website, would be being undertaken on the run up to the Free Entry Event which was on a 'first come first serve basis'. She reminded Members that the Concert would commence at 7.00 pm.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

263/24 **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY - SERVICE AND PARADE**

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated the details and timings for the Parade and Service at the War Memorial on Sunday 10 November 2024.

The Clerk reported that an Event Management Plan was again being followed, with road closures being in place at appropriate locations for a specified period. She said that Medical and Support Services were being employed to provide stewarding and security at the above-mentioned locations, together with First Aid support.

She then referred to the Service, that would be being held prior to the Parade and Service at the War Memorial at St Peter and St Paul Parish Church, and said that this would commence at 9.45 am, and Members would be most welcome to attend. She said that the Church had asked if everyone attending could be seated by 9.35 am.

The Clerk then reported that the Chairman had been invited to do a reading at the Church Service prior to the Parade and Service at the War Memorial.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

**264/24 ANNUAL CIVIC THANKSGIVING & PRESENTATION RECEPTION -
13 OCTOBER 2024**

The Clerk referred to Minute 228/24 and said the Event had, again, been most successful with many favourable comments being received from guests. She said that Councillor Bennett, in his capacity as Chairman, had conveyed his sincere gratitude to the members of the St Joseph's Catholic Church, and, in particular, Deacon Adrian Burnett, for hosting the Service, as well as Anne Robinson.

She then advised Members that the Civic Giving (Church Collection) had amounted to £339.77 and, together with £140.00 representing the proceeds from the sale of planters, kindly donated by Ferring Nurseries, at the Awards' Reception following the Service, a total of £479.77 had been raised in aid of Blind Veterans UK Rustington.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

Councillor Cooper said that the Church Service had been excellent and so professionally and well conducted by Deacon Burnett. These sentiments were echoed by all Members who had attended.

265/24 HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE PARISH

The Clerk referred to Minute 229/24 and said that the private Reception on Saturday 5 October 2024 had been well attended and was a resounding success.

She said that a letter of thanks and appreciation had been received from Mr Tyler with a separate message being received from his Wife and family.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

**266/24 THE WOODLANDS CENTRE - PROPOSED MAJOR REDESIGN AND
REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

The Clerk referred to Minute 230/24 and reported that the Working Party had met on 9 October 2024 to review and finalise the specification for Phase One, with the objective of possibly scaling down the scope of works for the Project, prior to proceeding any further.

She said that a number of revisions had been considered and it had been agreed that a detailed and amended scope of works should be produced, with a formal Report recommending the way forward being placed before the Full Council as soon as practicably possible.

She concluded by advising the Council that, in the meantime, the Deputy Clerk and herself would be meeting with Emily and James Scott, from Studio Scott Taylor, to advise them of the up-to-date position in respect of Phase One.

The Council NOTED this information.

267/24 **NUMBER 12 BUS SERVICE**

The Clerk referred to Minute 232/24 and reminded Members that she had previously circulated further email correspondence with Mr Chris Chatfield, the Managing Director of Compass Travel, in this regard.

The Council NOTED this information.

268/24 **RUSTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW**

The Clerk referred to Minute 204/24 and reminded Members that she had previously circulated a Report from the Working Party Meeting held on 27 September 2024. A copy of the Report in its entirety is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED that no further action should be taken in respect of a possible review of the Rustington Neighbourhood Plan until the new Arun Local Plan was established and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had had time to take effect.

The Council AGREED that the position in respect of the Arun Local Plan and the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should be reviewed in 12 months' time.

269/24 **80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY - 8 MAY 2025**

The Clerk referred to Minute 233/24 and reminded Members that she had previously circulated a Report from the Working Party Meeting held on 17 October 2024.

Following a further discussion, the Council RESOLVED that:-

- *An approach should be made to the Littlehampton District Lions Club to ask if it would consider holding the Street Fayre on Saturday 10 May 2025, but relocating it to the Woodlands Recreation Ground, with a 'one-off' title for 2025*
- *An approach should be made to Showtime Amusements to hold its annual visit to the Woodlands Recreation Ground from 8 to 11 May 2025 inclusive (operational days)*
- *An approach be made to the Sports and Social Club to open the Club to non-members on 10 May 2025, hold a BBQ and possibly host a 'Fun Day' of Games and Activities in close proximity to the Club, plus other possible evening entertainment*
- *Further discussions to be held with the Littlehampton Concert Band regarding the possibility of the 'Prom on the Rec' Concert being held on the Recreation Ground during the afternoon of Saturday 10 May 2025*
- *Further discussions to be held with the Rustington Heritage Association regarding it hosting a possible 'Mini History Fest' as part of the Day of Activities and Events on the Recreation Ground*
- *Provision of £7,500.00 be made to cover the total costs to be incurred by the Council to facilitate the Celebratory Day of Activities and Events. This sum to be provided for as follows:-*

£4,000.00 in the 2024/2025 Budget

£3,500.00 in the 2025/2026 Budget.

The Clerk said that the 80th Anniversary of the plane crash that killed five people on 17 February 1945, which was officially commemorated when The Chaucery Memorial was unveiled on 17 February 2010, would be 17 February 2025.

She said that arrangements would be being made for a small Exhibition/Display at the Museum to mark this Anniversary.

The Council NOTED this information.

(Prior to consideration of the following item, Councillor Cooper had declared a personal interest as a Member of the Arun District Council's Economy Committee)

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - PROPOSED ADDITIONAL BEACH HUTS - CONSULTATIONS

The Chairman advised the Council that whilst he had been unable to attend the Economy Committee Meeting he had watched it on the Webcast.

He said that he was absolutely delighted that almost 100 members of the public had attended the Meeting and, following a detailed debate, during which the District Council Members for Rustington, together with Councillor Cooper, had addressed the Meeting in the strongest terms against the proposals for the following sites, in particular:-

- Overstand Avenue Greensward, Rustington
- South Strand Shingle Beach, East Preston
- West Kingston Shingle Beach and Greensward
- Ferring Rife to Sea Lane Greensward, Ferring

All of the above sites were discounted from any further consideration as sites for additional beach huts.

He then reported the receipt of a large number of messages expressing thanks and appreciation to the Parish Council and its personnel, as well as the District Councillors, for the support provided, and in particular, to those who made verbal representations at the Economy Committee Meeting.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - ADVICE RE: PREDETERMINATION

The Council NOTED the following email received from Daniel Bainbridge, Group Head of Law & Governance, in this regard:-

This email is being sent to all town and Parish Clerks following a request made by a couple of you at recent Code of Conduct training that I delivered at Aldwick at which I mentioned advice I had provided to our district councillors. We felt it would be helpful for you to see that advice (and share with your members should you want to) for purposes of consistency and sharing my view on predetermination across the district. I have adapted what I have written slightly in order for the wording to make sense when sending it to you all.

The matter of predetermination was covered during district councillors' Induction Programme last year but I thought it would be helpful to provide a reminder of some important advice given, with the aim of supporting you to try to avoid potential claims of predetermination. For example, if you are asked to support a local group that is protesting against a planning application.

I recommend that members use the following statement, which supports you in setting out that what you may have said publicly about an application (proposed or actual) before it reaches a committee is what you have said previously and that you will approach the committee meeting itself with an open mind.

“I wish to make this meeting aware that I may have made public statements in the past at xx Committee and/or in other circumstances, that I supported/opposed or have concerns (whichever is applicable) about xxx. These were my views that I held at that time. However, I have an open mind regarding this item and I will listen, and consider all the relevant issues and interests presented to this Committee today and I confirm that I will reach my decision on the merits of the application.”

However, just saying this does not automatically avoid a successful claim of predetermination - all members must be able to demonstrate that they are listening, taking into account relevant factors and putting aside irrelevant factors, and reaching an objective decision in terms of what they say at the meeting and the decision they make.

Further, there will be situations where members have said and done things in the lead-up to the application being considered that cannot be overcome by that statement. For example, if a member has said ‘Under no circumstances will I support an application on this site’, or has made a series of statements or acted in a way that give that very clear impression, then they need to consider whether a right-minded observer would not be able to consider them to be predetermined or biased.

My advice always is to support your community and to engage with the community and the issues it raises with you, but make sure when you are speaking with the community - and publicly, if you are supporting objectors - to be clear with them that your mind remains open even where you are supporting them. Essentially you need to be saying and indicating this ‘open-mindedness’ earlier on as well as at the committee meeting.

In terms of any photo opportunity, any members who choose to attend such events should have the above guidance firmly in mind and when they reach the committee they must be clear that although they have been photographed with the objectors they will be retaining that open mind. I would always recommend liaising with our Communications Team before agreeing to attend a photo opportunity or media event.

I hope that is helpful to you, clerks. If you have any queries then please do not hesitate to give me a call or send me an email.

273/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - SECTION 106 FUNDS DATA

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email, together with associated information, received from Ros Bentley, Planning Contributions & Data Analysis Officer, making the Council aware of the District Council’s latest IFS 2023-24, which was a summary of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Obligations (S106) held by the District Council as at 31 March 2024, which was considered at Planning Policy Committee on 26 September 2024.

The Council NOTED this information.

(Prior to consideration of the following item, Councillor Cooper had declared a personal interest as a Member of the Arun District Council’s Licensing Committee)

274/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - APPLICATION FOR A PAVEMENT LICENCE - BROADMARK CAFÉ AND BAR, 8 BROADMARK PARADE, BROADMARK LANE, RUSTINGTON - LICENCE APPLICATION NUMBER: 120205

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated email correspondence from Environmental Health to Members on 18 September 2024, together with associated documentation in connection with an application for a Pavement Licence for Broadmark Café and Bar, 8 Broadmark Parade, Broadmark Lane, Rustington.

She reminded Members that the application related to the proposed outdoor seating to the front of the premises for serving of food and drink at six tables with 18 chairs, as follows:-

Monday to Sunday 08:00 to 21:00

She then confirmed that no adverse comments had been received from Members in respect of this Pavement Licence Application and, therefore, no comments had been submitted to the District Council in this regard.

The Council NOTED this information.

275/24 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL - WEST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated an email received from Richard Abbot, Area Manager for Strategic Risk & Improvement, inviting the views, via completion of a questionnaire, of everyone living in, working in, or visiting West Sussex, on the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

She advised that the findings of the questionnaire would be fed into the planning process of the next CRMP, which would run from 2026-2030.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED that Members should be asked to complete the questionnaire on an individual basis, with no further action being taken by the Council in this regard.

276/24 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL - WEST SUSSEX HIGHWAY NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN - STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated an email, which included the following link to the Survey: Highway Network Management Plan Consultation | Your Voice West Sussex, received from Marius Kynaston, Senior Programme Manager.

In his email, he advised that the County Council had developed a Highway Network Management Plan (HNMP) to set out the approach taken to all aspects of highway network management in West Sussex. He said that as a key stakeholder the Council would like the Parish Council's views on the draft HNMP.

The email concluded by advising that the draft HNMP, together with a summary of feedback received from the Consultation, would be reported to the Council's Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee (CHESC) on 25 November 2024, following which, the HNMP would be updated and approved, subject to a formal decision of the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport.

The Clerk said that the closing date for comments was 30 October 2024.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED to take no further action in this regard.

277/24 WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS LIMITED (WSALC) - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE - 4 NOVEMBER 2024

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated an email received from Anna Beams, together with associated documentation in this regard.

She said that Councillor Mrs Cooper, together with the Vice-Chairman would be attending the Meeting and Conference.

The Council NOTED this information.

278/24 SAFETY OF LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES AND E-BIKES AND SCOOTERS

The Clerk referred to Minute 207/24 and reminded Members that she had previously circulated a further email from Ron Bailey, Researcher for Lord Foster, House of Lords, together with associated documentation.

The Council NOTED this information and AGREED to take no further action in this regard at the present time.

279/24 SWITCH FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL PHONE LINES - MANAGING THE CHANGE - FAMILIARISATION AND ADVICE SESSIONS

Councillor Lee referred to Minute 245/24 and advised the Council that he had attended training sessions on the forthcoming switch from analogue telephone lines to digital, and reminded Members that he would be covering the session at Rustington Library on 5 November 2024, from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

280/24 DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS CIRCULATED

The Council NOTED the following Documents and Publications previously circulated for Members' information:-

- (a) Arun District Council - News Release - Councillors decide on future of beach huts
- (b) Arun District Council - News Release - Parking in Littlehampton and Bognor Regis made easier
- (c) Carers Support West Sussex - Latest News - 24 September 2024 and 28 October 2024
- (d) Chestnut Tree House - How to be there for someone experiencing baby loss
- (e) Chestnut Tree House - How a bride found her perfect dress in our wedding boutique
- (f) CPRE - Campaigns Update - October 2024
- (g) East Preston Parish Council News - 10 October 2024, 17 October 2024 and 23 October 2024
- (h) Hidden Disabilities Sunflower - Important information for Sunflower Business Members
- (i) Home-Start Arun, Worthing & Adur - We answer the cries you don't hear
- (j) National Association of Local Councils - Chief Executive's Bulletin - 26 September 2024, 3 October 2024 and 25 October 2024
- (k) National Association of Local Councils - Events - Local Council Award Scheme - Introducing the new criteria
- (l) National Association of Local Councils - Newsletter - 25 September 2024 and 2 October 2024
- (m) National Association of Local Councils - NALC Website - 24 September 2024 and 1 October 2024
- (n) Office of Alison Griffiths MP - Press Release - 8 October 2024, 10 October 2024 and 25 October 2024
- (o) St Barnabas House - Lifting the spirits, one visit at a time
- (p) St Barnabas House - Remember your loved ones this Christmas
- (q) St Barnabas House - Make your Light Up a Life dedication by 15 November 2024
- (r) Turning Tides - You're invited to our Annual Meeting
- (s) Utility Aid - Community Matters Fund is now open
- (t) West Sussex Association of Local Councils - Sussex Resilience Forum - Local Risk Perception Survey
- (u) West Sussex County Council - Highways, Transport and Planning - Public Rights of Way Planned Improvements
- (v) West Sussex County Council - News Release - 24 September 2024 x2, 25 September 2024, 27 September 2024, 4 October 2024, 7 October 2024 x2, 11 October 2024, 15 October 2024, 17 October 2024 x2, 18 October 2024, 21 October 2024, 22 October 2024 and 24 October 2024 x2
- (w) West Sussex County Council - Recycling Special Edition - 10 October 2024
- (x) West Sussex County Council - Residents' eNewsletter - October 2024
- (y) West Sussex County Council - West Sussex 16-20 Bus Saver Survey Poster

281/24 DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Council NOTED the following Documents and Publications received for Members' information:-

- (a) CPRE - Countryside Voices - Autumn/Winter 2024

There being no further business the Meeting concluded at 20.21 pm.

Chairman: **Date:**

There were no questions received either preceding, or at, the Meeting for consideration during the Public Question Time, held prior to the commencement of the formal proceedings.

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED DIARY DATES 2025

Monday	6 January	Planning Committee
Monday	27 January	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	27 January	COUNCIL
Monday	27 January	Planning Committee
Monday	17 February	Allotments Committee
Monday	17 February	Leisure and Amenities Committee
Monday	24 February	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	24 February	COUNCIL
Monday	24 February	Planning Committee
Monday	17 March	Planning Committee
Monday	24 March	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	24 March	COUNCIL
Monday	7 April	Planning Committee
Thursday	10 April	ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING
Monday	28 April	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	28 April	COUNCIL
Monday	28 April	Planning Committee
Monday	19 May	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	19 May	ANNUAL COUNCIL
Monday	19 May	Planning Committee
Monday	2 June	Allotments Committee
Monday	2 June	Planning Committee
Monday	2 June	Leisure and Amenities Committee
Monday	23 June	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	23 June	COUNCIL
Monday	30 June	Planning Committee

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED DIARY DATES 2025

Monday	28 July	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	28 July	COUNCIL
Monday	28 July	Planning Committee
Monday	4 August	Leisure and Amenities Committee
Monday	18 August	Emergency Planning Committee
Monday	18 August	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	18 August	Planning Committee
Monday	8 September	Planning Committee
Sunday	21 September	CIVIC THANKSGIVING SERVICE & PRESENTATION RECEPTION
Monday	22 September	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	22 September	COUNCIL
Monday	6 October	Allotments Committee
Monday	6 October	Planning Committee
Monday	6 October	Leisure and Amenities Committee
Monday	27 October	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	27 October	COUNCIL
Monday	27 October	Planning Committee
Monday	10 November	Planning Committee
Monday	24 November	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	24 November	COUNCIL
Monday	1 December	Planning Committee
Saturday	13 December	CAROL CONCERT
Monday	15 December	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Monday	15 December	Planning Committee

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

28 October 2024

Rustington Neighbourhood Plan Review - Report from the Working Party

1. Mr Steve Tilbury, Planning Consultant, met with the Working Party on 27 September 2024 to gain an insight into Members's views and concerns in respect of the current Neighbourhood Plan, and to give his own thoughts as to whether it needed to be amended in any major way at the present time.
2. The Working Party discussed with Mr Tilbury, in detail, the contents of the Plan and the Village Design Statement, and at the conclusion of the Meeting it was agreed that he would produce a Report regarding the timing of a possible update to both the Plan and Design Statement for consideration by the Working Party, and subsequently the full Council
3. A copy of Mr Tilbury's Report is now attached for Members' information.
4. The Working Party has considered the Report, in which Mr Tilbury has recommended that the Council should take no further action until the new Arun Local Plan is established and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) have had time to take effect, and concurs with this view.
5. Accordingly, the Working Party is RECOMMENDING that taking account of the advice received from Mr Tilbury, no further action should be taken in respect of a possible review of the Rustington Neighbourhood Plan until the new Arun Local Plan is established and revisions to the NPPF have had time to take effect.
6. The Council's views are requested.

**Councillor J Bennett
Councillor Mrs A Cooper
Councillor R Grevett
Councillor Mrs S Partridge
Councillor D Rogers
Councillor P Warren**

14 October 2024

STEVE TILBURY CONSULTING

PLANNING ADVICE, POLICY, TRAINING

**TIMING OF AN UPDATE TO THE
RUSTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN AND DESIGN STATEMENT**

Advice to Rustington Parish Council

October 2024

Steve Tilbury

Brief and Summary of Advice

1. Rustington Parish Council has asked Steve Tilbury Consulting to advise on whether the Rustington Neighbourhood Plan (Rustington NP') and by implication the accompanying Rustington Design Statement ('RDS') should be updated, and if so when would be the most appropriate time to do so.
2. I have read the plan, other relevant background and contextual documents, and discussed with representatives of the parish council whether there are any major planning issues or local 'worries' which the plan currently fails to address.
3. My advice is that it would be sensible to update the plan and the RDS, but that there is no compelling reason to do so immediately. A review should be programmed so that it can respond fully to the emerging Arun Local Plan and more settled national planning policy. This will also give the parish council the opportunity to complete other important work on establishing parish priorities which can inform an updated plan and ensure that it focuses on helping to achieve those goals.

Background

4. Rustington is a village of approximately 15,000 residents on the coastal plain of West Sussex between Littlehampton and Worthing. It is bounded by the A259 to the north and the sea to the south. At a local level it is administered by Rustington Parish Council. The local planning authority is Arun District Council ('Arun').
5. Although the parish council and community are keen to affirm the identity of Rustington as a village, in planning terms it has many similarities to a small town. As well as a large (by parish standards) population, it has a very strong retail centre and other retail outlets and a wide range of small scale employment. Unusually there is very little undeveloped land (other than recreational and protected green space) within the neighbourhood plan boundary. The whole area is occupied by a variety of residential dwellings with supporting retail, employment and commercial activities. The amount of recreational open space is limited but none of this is perceived as being seriously threatened.
6. The Rustington NP was prepared by a community steering group with the support of the parish council, and was made on the 11th March 2015. It was produced before the current Arun Local Plan 2011 – 2031 was formally adopted in 2018.
7. The plan does not allocate any sites for development. It contains 6 straightforward policies:

Policy 1 relates to the development of housing on the site of the Rustington Convalescent Home. Since development of that site is about to start (along the lines expressed in the policy) this has fulfilled its purpose and would not need to be carried forward into any revised plan.

Policy 2 is a broad policy which seeks to ensure that new development in the area is appropriate in scale and well designed. It is supported by the RDS which was produced in 2010 and which is adopted by Arun as a supplementary planning

document in its own right. The RDS provides a good level of detail regarding the character areas of the village and what makes them distinctive. Although Policy 2 contains some out of date references, the principles on which it is based are sound and the design statement is still relevant. Most importantly it appears to be well used and easy to understand for applicants and decision makers.

Policy 3 designates three areas as Local Green Spaces, which gives them a high level of protection against inappropriate development. From discussions with the parish council, there are no additional areas which would meet the criteria of designation which need to be added. The policy is therefore as comprehensive as it could be in its scope.

Policy 4 promotes sustainable drainage in the context of the small scale householder and windfall development that is likely in Rustington. Although sustainable urban drainage is now firmly embedded as a prerequisite in planning policy and building regulations, it is still relevant in the context of reducing flood risk and promoting good water management.

Policy 5 seeks to ensure the viability of the village centre and to prevent the loss of retail units elsewhere in the village. Whilst the mechanism proposed by the policy is somewhat out of date due to changes in the use class order and permitted development rights, the objective of the policy remains valid. An update of the neighbourhood plan would not be able to 'override' changes made at national level but would almost certainly wish to maintain as much protection as possible for the retail offer in the parish.

Policy 6 safeguards existing commercial and businesses uses wherever possible, so as to ensure that the village continues to offer employment opportunities and valuable local services. Again, some of the national policy context is out of date, but the purpose of the policy is still highly relevant and it remains usable in decision making.

8. Planning applications within the urban area boundary consist mainly of householder development (extensions, annexes, remodelling), or the redevelopment of previously developed land of one sort or another. Recently that has included a number of applications for the replacement of redundant service buildings (hotels, pubs etc) with residential units.

The Rustington NP in Decision Making

9. In a sample of 10 (out of 35 in total) householder applications determined between 1st January and 30th June 2023 there were references to Policy 2 of the Rustington NP in all 10 officer reports (as there should have been). Four of the reports also contained detailed references to the design statement and character areas.
10. There were only 10 decisions on full planning applications in the same period, of which 9 contained formal acknowledgement of the Rustington NP – although none made use of it

significantly in reaching a decision. In one report there was no mention of the Rustington NP as part of the development plan, although the omission was not significant in the decision.

11. What is apparent from this limited review is that the Arun Design Guide first adopted as supplementary planning guidance in 2021 (updated in 2024) is now the first point of reference for officers on design matters in decision making, rather than the RDS. Since the Arun Design Guide is both comprehensive and detailed (and familiar to officers) this is not surprising, but the RDS provides useful detail on local character it is important that it is taken into account where relevant.

Reviewing a Neighbourhood Plan

12. Whether it is necessary to review and update a neighbourhood plan depends largely on whether its policies, old as they may be, are still effective in answering the questions that are being asked of the neighbourhood area, and whether there is anything which urgently needs to be put in place to address new challenges.
13. Unlike a local plan prepared by the local planning authority, a neighbourhood plan does not have to be reviewed every five years. It will remain part of the development plan until is replaced.
14. Even where a neighbourhood plan does not allocate any sites for development, the older it becomes, the more likely it is that one or more of its policies no longer 'aligns' fully with national planning policy or a more recently adopted local plan. At the simplest level it may use terminology or classifications which are no longer current. It may also contain policies which have been overtaken by changes or events at a national level, or which were formulated in response to a particular issue or set of local circumstances which have ceased to be important. Those elements of the plan will have a diminished role in decision making. The more detailed and specific a neighbourhood plan is, the more likely this is to happen¹.
15. On the other hand, many policies can be very durable where they deal with issues which alter little over time. For instance the need to protect a particular historic community asset, landscape setting, or the desire to promote good design in development proposals.

Arun District Context

16. Arun District Council has started to prepare its new local plan. The greatest challenge it faces is to find locations for significant areas of new development, much of which will no doubt be on green field sites. But there are no such sites in Rustington, and it is therefore difficult to see how this aspect of the new plan will have a significant direct impact on the village. The parish is unlikely to be asked to make provision for more than the smallest level of new housing. Windfall development – usually the replacement of existing buildings within the urban area boundary with residential units – will be its main contribution to housing numbers.

¹ A neighbourhood plan may also contain policies – such as those relating to a specific site – which have served their intended purpose and would not need to be carried forward.

17. Of course the village is not isolated from the choices that will be made about development elsewhere in the district, but the neighbourhood plan cannot influence those decisions. That is something for the parish council to discuss with Arun as the local plan is consulted upon. The same is true of any proposals in respect of an individual site in Rustington which is large enough to merit a local plan policy in its own right.
18. In addition trends in the way people that shop, seek employment and enjoy themselves will have an effect at local level. A number of recent applications for the redevelopment of commercial sites such as former pubs or hotels provide evidence of this. The priority now being given to protect the environment and promoting biodiversity in through the planning system is also a key feature of current plan making.
19. The new Arun local plan will undoubtedly deal extensively with these matters. It would be a mistake to 'over worry' that unless the Rustington NP is updated the village will be exposed to unwanted development pressure or undesirable outcomes. An updated neighbourhood plan should be seen as a complement to this process rather than needing to carry the whole burden itself.

National Planning Policy Context

20. Many of the changes to planning policy and processes begun by the previous government or proposed by the government elected in July 2024 are yet to be put into effect. There is considerable uncertainty over the timing of some of these, or what the actual impact (which may be different from that which is intended) will be on how plans and decisions are made. At present there is no indication that the role of neighbourhood plans or the process for making them is to be altered. The ability of a neighbourhood plan to insulate an area from changes made at a national level remains very limited.

Is an Update Required?

21. It is legally possible to update a neighbourhood plan at any time. A review does not have to wait for a new local plan to be adopted.
22. The Rustington NP is nearly 10 years old and in that time both the local and national planning context has moved on. However, because the most important policies in the plan are relatively high level – e.g. to promote good design and maintain local character – they remain relevant even if the precise wording of the policy would be different if written today. The nature of Rustington means that pressure for change is gradual and at a relatively limited scale. There is nothing that has occurred since 2015 which means that the Rustington NP urgently needs to respond to new local circumstances².
23. Most of the impact of planning policy on decision making, even where there is a neighbourhood plan, is derived from the adopted local plan. There does not appear to be any

² Of course, it always possible that individual planning applications will create local controversy. That does not mean that planning policy itself needs to be reconsidered unless it becomes obvious that there is a fundamental inconsistency or failure in the way that policy operates.

great concern that decision making under those policies has had a detrimental impact on the village. The Arun Design Guide now offers a considerable degree of additional protection against inappropriate redevelopment within the village, which is complemented by the additional detail in the RDS.

24. It would not be sensible to allow the Rustington NP to become seriously misaligned with local and national policy or to become (practically if not legally) insignificant in decision making simply because of its age. Reviewing and updating the plan, even if it were to contain broadly similar policies, would 'revalidate' its purpose and relevance, through community consultation and the preparation of an up to date evidence base. It would give the opportunity for any adjustments to priorities to be introduced, and for any sites specific policies to be included if these are required. All of this would be helpful to keep the plan 'front and centre' in decision making.
25. The plan should therefore be updated in due course, but there is no urgent 'driver' to begin that process now. On the other hand there are considerable uncertainties at district and national level and it would be sensible to allow these to be resolved (or at least become much more settled) before a review is undertaken. An updated plan can then respond to the content of the emerging Arun local plan and any important changes at national level rather than try to anticipate them or guess at their impact.
26. It would be a good idea to discuss the role and purpose of the RDS with Arun and to agree if, when and in what form it will be updated. If so, this is something which could be undertaken somewhat in advance of the updating of the neighbourhood plan itself.
27. In the meantime, the parish council can continue its work to identify parish and community priorities. This would be very helpful because it will help to ensure that the review of the Rustington NP has a clear purpose and direction when it is carried out and has a specific set of environmental, economic and social goals.

Summary

28. The Rustington NP should be updated, but there is no pressing need to start work immediately. The plan and the supporting RDS still provide an effective contribution to decision making. The replacement Arun Local Plan is at a very early stage of preparation and it would both practically and tactically better for the review of the neighbourhood plan to take place when it can be informed by what the plan has to say, and how it adapts to changes at a national level.

Steve Tilbury

Steve Tilbury Consulting

October 2024