

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

E-mail: clerk@fletching-pc.org

Website www.fletching-pc.org



3rd April 2024

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - Monday 8th April 2024

To Members of the Fletching Parish Council: You are summoned to attend a meeting of Fletching Parish Council on Monday 8th April 2024, 7.00pm at Fletching Village Hall.

Signed: *Gabriella Paterson-Griggs*, Clerk and RFO

Public Questions

The first ten minutes, before the start of the meeting, are available for public participation. Members of the public may ask questions or make representations, in respect of the business on the agenda. They may only speak at other points during the meeting, at the Chairman's discretion, if they have knowledge or information that will aid the discussion.

This meeting may be audio recorded for the purpose of minute taking

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence as reported at the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of items on the agenda, as required by the Members' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTES

To resolve that the minutes of the meetings held on 4th March 2024 as circulated on the agenda are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Update on any matters arising from the last meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda. To note any action taken or agree further action to be taken. – [see Meetings Action List](#)

5. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

To receive a report from the County Councillor Roy Galley.

6. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

To receive a report from District Councillor Christina Coleman.

7. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

To receive reports/updates from the Working Groups and External Bodies:

- i. Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Councillor Hannay
- ii. Fletching Recreation Ground Committee – Clerk

8. WEALDEN DC – REGULATION 18 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

To consider the proposed Parish Council response to the consultation and decide whether to hold a public meeting. – [draft response circulated separately](#). [Note there is to be a presentation on this item so it will be taken earlier on the agenda.](#)

9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

To note any correspondence received since the last meeting and agreed any actions arising.

- i. Wealden DC - Community Orchard Funding opportunities – [see attached media release](#)
- ii. Suspected pollution from commercial premises - letter from resident – [see attached copy letter](#).
[This is a Highways and Environment Agency issue and Cllr Galley has taken this up with ESCC.](#)

10. FINANCE AND ASSETS

- i. To approve the invoices and payments for April 2024 and note the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation. – [see attached](#)

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11. BURIAL GROUND

- i. To approve any requests or permits for the Burial Ground. – [see attached 2 requests for simple additional memorial inscriptions.](#)

12. POLICIES

To review the following policies: - [there are no changes proposed to the policies.](#)

- i. Complaints Policy and Procedure
- ii. Grievance Policy
- iii. Sickness and Absence Policy
- iv. Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy

PLANNING AND LICENSING

13. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING AND DRAINAGE

To discuss any issues/updates raised related to suspected breaches of planning or other regulations.

- i. **Flitteridge Farm, Daleham Lane** – update – [clerk to update at the meeting](#)

14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED

To agree comments to be submitted to Wealden District Council for the following applications: - [to follow](#)

- i. **WD/2023/3115/F Wilmshurst, Bell Lane, Fletching TN22 3YB**

Part single, part two-storey front extension, new canopy to proposed new entrance, material face lift to existing office with terrace above. A glazed link addition linking the main dwelling to existing barn and a single side storey extension to barn with material alterations, with change of use of barn to form part of dwelling. An outdoor swimming pool addition with associated hard landscaping and external works. (Comments to be submitted by 12 April 2024)

- ii. **WD/2024/0075/F Barkham Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XL**

Proposed vehicular access and driveway to serve dwelling and adjoining agricultural land, with existing access remodelled to provide access for pedestrians/cyclists only. (Comments to be submitted by 15 April 2024)

- iii. **WD/2024/0393/F Roselands, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XL**

Make temporary access used during construction of the new dwelling permanent and associated works. (Comments to be submitted by 11 April 2024)

- iv. **WD/2024/0504/PO Moons Farm, Sharpsbridge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3XG**

Discharge of section 106 agreement dated 20 March 1996 attached to planning permission WD/1995/0915/F (conversion of redundant granary to provide ancillary accommodation). (Comments to be submitted by 9 April 2024)

- v. **WD/2024/7013/AD Agricultural land at Rocks Road, Uckfield TN22 3PT**

Upgrading of existing access track to provide access to paddocks to be used for keeping rare breeds. (Note: the Parish Council is not a formal consultee on this application as it is an agricultural determination)

15. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – APPEALS

To note the appeals lodged against the following applications and decide if representations to be made:

- i. **APP/C1435/Y/23/3332131 (WD/2023/2033/LB) 17 The Courtyard, South Pavilion, Sheffield Park**

Proposed windows and doors replacement. (representations to be submitted by 30 April 2024)

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS

To note the planning application decisions from Wealden District Council received since the last meeting(s):

Applications Approved

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i. **WD/2023/3008/LB The Griffin, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS**

Alterations to basement drainage. (APPROVED 6 March 2024)

Applications Refused – none since the last meeting

Applications Withdrawn – none since the last meeting

17. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE

To agree any items to be included in future editions of the Parish Magazine

18. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

To finalise the plans for the Annual Parish Meeting being held on Thursday 9th May 2024

19. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

To discuss and note any future agenda items

20. TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

To agree the time and dates of the next meetings of the Parish Council

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MINUTES of the Meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Monday 4th March 2024 in the Village Hall, High Street, Fletching (7 – 8.35pm).

PRESENT: Councillors R Hannay (Chair), D Greenish (Vice-Chair), R Borton, N Collum, S De St Croix and K Minch.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO) and Councillor Christina Coleman (WDC).

Members of the Public in Attendance: 3

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Abraham, W Constantinou, L Snelgrove and Councillor R Galley (ESCC). It was noted that Cllr Greenish would be late arriving due to a prior commitment.

24/38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24/39. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 5th February 2024 were a correct record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

24/40. MATTERS ARISING

The Actions List as prepared and circulated by the Clerk was noted.

Minute 24/47v Litter Bins: It was agreed that the replacement bins should be wooden, have a top and be approximately the same size as the existing ones. The Clerk to contact Wealden District Council to ascertain availability and costs of those that met the specification.

24/41. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GALLEY

Councillor Galley was unable to attend the meeting and had circulated a written report which was noted.

24/42. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR CHRISTINA COLEMAN

Councillor Coleman reported that the District Council, at its Full Council meeting, had approved a 2.99% Council Tax increase. Alongside that an enhanced council tax reduction scheme had also been approved with an increase in the rate for second homes.

The Draft Local Plan Consultation would be going live at 5pm on 15 March 2024 and would run until 10th May 2024 at 5pm. Cllr Coleman encourage everyone to access the online virtual exhibition if there were not able to make any of the exhibitions being put around the District. She also explained that although the Council would accept responses to the consultation via email and letter the preferred method was through the consultation portal as that method would produce and acknowledgment. It was noted that it was just as important to state in the response what areas were considered positive with the draft plan not just those that were being objected to.

Cllr Coleman reported that she had requested that the planning application at Fletching Garage be considered by Wealden's planning committee. It was **AGREED** that, given the objections raised, a parish representative should speak at that planning meeting.

In response to a question an update was given on the Ashdown Business Park extension site. It was explained that the site was within the Draft Local Plan and that objections to it needed to be made by responding to that consultation.

24/43. PLANNING APPLICATION – RECEIVED

The following application was discussed. See Minute 24/54 below for further information.

WD/2024/0103/F Malling Farm, Down Street, Piltdown TN22 3XU

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24/44. CORRESPONDENCE – Keep Britain Tidy Campaign

The Parish Council noted that David McGibney had taken over as the co-ordinator of the Keep Britain Tidy (Great British Spring Clean) for the parish. The timing of the litter picking was discussed and it was **AGREED** that this should be an ongoing activity throughout the year not just during the campaign week. The Parish Council thanked Mr McGibney for undertaking this role and co-ordinating the arrangements on behalf of the Parish Council.

24/45. COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPOINTMENTS TO WORKING GROUPS

The following changes to the councillor responsibilities and appointments to working group were **AGREED**:

Assets: Addition of Cllr De St Croix

Finance: Addition of Cllr De St Croix

Planning Group: Addition of Cllrs Borton and Snelgrove (where possible at least three cllrs attend site visits).

FRGC: Cllr Greenish to be replaced by Cllr De St Croix

24/46. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

- i. *Neighbourhood Plan*: Councillor Hannay reported that the proposed policy areas along with the aims and objectives were being refined and once these were finished the Clerk would be sending out an invitation to quote to planning consultants for the next phase of the project.

Note: Cllr D Greenish arrived at the meeting at 7.33pm before the following items of business.

- ii. *Fletching Recreation Ground Committee (FRGC)*: The Clerk reported that the pavilion refurbishment works were ongoing and were due to be completed on time. It was noted that a couple of leaks in the roof had been dealt with.

24/47. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED – Speedwatch

Councillor Hannay reported that at the Piltdown Residents' Association (PRA) AGM the Parish Council had been asked to support the Speedwatch campaign that the PRA runs. It was noted that additional volunteers were required in order for the speed checks to take place on a regular basis at the two approved locations – the A272 in Piltdown and Ruston Bridge Road/Church Road in Fletching. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would put out a request for volunteers.

24/48. FINANCE AND ASSETS

- i. The invoices and payments for March 2024 were **AUTHORISED** and the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation were noted.

24/49. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

It was agreed that the existing grounds maintenance contract be extended for one year in order to give the Parish Council time to consider the requirements for the contract going forward taking into account the ecological friendly projects it had signed up to eg. Wealden to Waves. The Clerk reported that there had been an increase in the costs for the next year above what was being budgeted for. Councillors, therefore, looked at the schedule and discussed whether there was a need to have 18 cuts a year in all areas covered by the contract in order to reduce the cost. It was felt that the cuts need not commence until April (reducing the number of cuts by two) and that two further cuts could be removed towards the end of the season. This would reduce the overall number of cuts for the year to 14. It was also considered that Splaynes Green should only be cut every other week as a trial.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Grounds Maintenance Contract be extended for one year and that the number of cuts be reduced to 14 in all areas except Splaynes Green which would be cut every other week.

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24/50. GRANT APPLICATION

The Grant application from the Fletching Bonfire Society for £400 for road diversion signs, to also be used by the Parish Council if required, was considered and it was **RESOLVED** that the grant be awarded in full.

24/51. BURIAL GROUND

- i. No requests or permits for the Burial Ground had been received.
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** that there be no increase to the Burial Ground Fees and Charges for 2024/25

24/52. POLICIES

- i. The Publicity Policy was **APPROVED**
- ii. Resilience Plan – it was **AGREED** that Cllr Minch take the lead on developing the plan (with support from the Clerk) and that Cllr Hannay be the Emergency Co-ordinator and Cllr Minch the Deputy Co-ordinator. Other members of the team to be geographically spread between Fletching, Piltdown, Sheffield Park and Down Street. All councillors were asked to suggest names of those they considered would be effective on the team and any additional resources that could be added to the list.

24/53. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING

- i. *Flitteridge Farm*: There was no further update on this site.
- ii. *The Griffin Inn*: It was noted that an appeal had been lodged against the enforcement notice relating to the gazebo. It was **AGREED** that the Planning Working Group liaise on a response to be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council to the inspector by the deadline of 4 April 2024.

24/54. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED

It was **RESOLVED** to make the comments as set out after each application in respect of the following:

i. **WD/2024/0103/F Malling Farm, Down Street, Piltdown TN22 3XU**

Replacement of a lawful park home with a new dwelling.

Saved Policy DC22 provides that the redevelopment of existing mobile homes by permanent dwellings will be resisted unless on an individual basis where proposals meet the criteria of DC2. However, there is a technical conflict with DC22 in terms of replacement of a mobile home with a permanent dwelling and previous appeals have identified that, where a replacement for the mobile home has compliance with DC18, this is accepted as being a supportable position. The criteria under DC18 are that (1) the proposal is of a comparable size and massing to the existing building; (2) it is in keeping with the character of the locality; (3) it is similarly sited within the plot; (4) it does not result in the loss of a property of valuable local character. The application appears to meet these criteria.

In principle therefore, the Parish Council SUPPORTS the application subject to appropriate conditions, to include (i) detailed proposals for drainage being satisfactory (ii) removal of the existing park home(s), caravans and other such structures from the site (the applicant indicated that she intends to do this) preferably before the work starts and (iii) removal of permitted development rights relating to future extensions and other structures as provided by DC18.

ii. **WD/2024/0218/F North Hall Shooting Club, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3SA**

Metal storage building.

This application relates to the construction of a metal single-storey outbuilding for storing clays and ancillary equipment for the shooting school together a forklift truck and similar. Currently there is no storage facility for these items which are stacked on an uncovered concrete slab. The building would be 16.8m x 8.9m with an eaves height of 3m and a ridge height of 4m.

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In accordance with Policy DC14, it is considered that the proposal will not be visually intrusive in the AONB landscape and will be well screened by existing vegetation and within the bunded area.

The Parish Council SUPPORTS the application, provided appropriate conditions are imposed including a condition in accordance with DC14(5) for the building to be removed from the site on cessation of the recreational use.

iii. **WD/2024/0230/F The Flying Engine, Mill Lane, Fletching TN22 3PY**

Mounting of 3kw solar array to south facing slope of existing detached double garage. Solar array will be demountable, and therefore fully reversible.

This building is listed, dating back to the 17th century. There is a detached garage which is generously described as being of "low historical or architectural significance". The solar panels would be erected on the south slope on the roof of the garage and it is considered that they would have little (if any) impact on the listed building and its curtilage.

The Parish Council SUPPORTS the application.

iv. **WD/2023/2741/F The Old Archery, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3TN**

Proposed extension works to existing dwellinghouse. (Additional information received)

Previously, the Council agreed a response to this application to object to it. Since then, further information has been provided by the applicant's agent in support of the application. This information includes:

1. *A Comparison Schedule*
 - a. *Comparison of proposed extension works with existing house.*
 - b. *Comparison of proposed extension works with Approved 'House A'*
2. *Comparison Plans with Approved House A*
As submitted house plans shown next to and overlaid with Approved 'House A'
3. *Comparison Elevations with Approved 'House A'*
As submitted house elevations shown next to and overlaid with Approved 'House A'

Approved 'House A' is a larger house to replace the existing house on the site for which a planning permission was granted in 2017.

In light of that, Wealden District Council has asked the Parish Council to reconsider its objection.

We made the point in our original objection that, given that the site lies within the AONB (with the additional planning constraints that provides), it was surprising that the applicant had not been asked to provide a Design and Access Statement in support of the application; for example, such a Statement would no doubt have dealt with the points now raised. Furthermore, although we note that in 2017 a planning consent was granted for a larger replacement house, that permission was not implemented and had expired. It should not be assumed that, should such an application be made now, it would necessarily be supported by the Parish Council.

The applicant's agent advises that this application amounts to an:

1. *Increase in ground floor GIA (habitable space) of proposed of 22sqm (19%)*
2. *Overall increase in habitable space of proposed house (ground and first floor) of 47%, and*
3. *Increase in footprint of proposed including extensions and garage compared to existing house of 52%.*

Our principal objection to the application was that: "The proposed works are substantial and will effectively convert what is presently a modest cottage-type property into a much larger country house." That would appear still to be the case.

The comments submitted to Wealden District Council since the last meeting, agreed by the Planning Group, in respect of the following application were **NOTED**:

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v. **WD/2023/2653/F Fletching Garage, Bell Lane, Splaynes Green, Fletching TN22 3TN**

A partial demolition of the existing garage building and converting it to a 4-bedroom house; and erection of 2 x 4 bedroomed houses with associated car parking, amenity space and landscaping. (Amended Plans)

Having considered the amended plans submitted, the Parish Council's original comments and objection still stand.

24/55. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS

Planning decisions **RECEIVED** from Wealden District Council since the last meeting:

Applications Approved

i. **WD/2023/2612/F 2 Fern Cottages, Bell Lane, Splaynes Green, Fletching TN22 3TP**

Proposed single storey rear extension, proposed replacement garage and proposed front fence and gates. (APPROVED 1 February 2024)

Applications Refused

i. **WD/2023/3137/PIP Equestrian Manege (Sand School) at Little Barkham Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XL**

Erection of detached three-bedroom single-storey dwelling with carport and associated works. (REFUSED 12 February 2024)

Applications Withdrawn – none since the last meeting

24/56. SPLAYNES GREEN PHONE BOX

Councillor Hannay reported that he had spoken to Mr Tapp who had agreed to undertake the works required to straighten the phone box. Once that had occurred the box would be refurbished by Mr Forcier (who has the glass and paint etc) and then the Parish Council would purchase a replacement door as had previously been agreed. It was noted that the current intention was to display footpath maps and have a book and seed swap.

24/57. D-DAY 80 ANNIVERSARY

It was noted that a parishioner had agreed to co-ordinate an event to take place on 6th June 2024 which would commence at 6.30pm with bellringing followed by an event in the church and at the war memorial. The Beacon would then be lit at 9.15pm as part of the national event. Consideration was still being given as to how to fill the gap between the event at the church and the beacon lighting.

24/58. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE

It was agreed that the following items be included for the next edition of the Parish Magazine:

- Speedwatch
- Keep Britain Tidy Campaign
- Splaynes Green Phone Box
- Draft Local Plan Consultation
- D-Day 80 events

24/59. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Draft Local Plan
- Dates for future meetings

It was requested that Councillors contact the Clerk with any other items they wish to be considered at the next meeting.

24/60. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting would be held on Monday 8th April 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall

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FPC Meetings Actions List – April 2024

Date	Action	Who By	Notes
08/01/24	Invite PCSO Leon Greck to future FPC meeting	Clerk	Ongoing: email invite sent.
05/02/24	CIL Funds: obtain quotes for path in burial ground; replacement public litter bins; new handrail beside village hall	RH & Clerk	Public litter bins: information received from WDC. Decision to be made as to type of bin.
04/03/24	Public Litter Bins: ascertain from Wealden DC availability and costs of wooden bins of similar size to existing with tops.	Clerk	Ongoing. Meeting set up with WDC for 12 April.
04/03/24	Fletching Garage Planning Application: A parish representative to be registered to speak at the appropriate PCN meeting.	Clerk	Ongoing. Application withdrawn from PCN on 28 March. Awaiting new date.
04/03/24	Grounds Maintenance Contract to be extended for one year but reduced to 14 cuts and every other week at Splaynes Green	Clerk	Completed. The current contractor notified and costs kept within budget
04/03/24	Resilience Plan: Identify team members from each area of the Parish and add in any additional resources to Appendix D	KM & Clerk	Ongoing.

041/24

26 March 2024

Funding awarded to support community orchards

A total of £27,756 of funding has been awarded to Wealden District Council to support community orchards in the Wealden district.

The funding has been allocated by the UK government through The Coronation Living Heritage Fund, which celebrates the coronation of King Charles III and supports tree planting projects nationwide and honours the King's dedication to preserving the natural environment.

Wealden council is asking schools, residents' associations, village hall trusts, parish and town councils, businesses, community and voluntary groups, charities, not for profit organisations, and landowners with publicly accessible land to apply for grants between £1,000 and £3,500.

The aim is to bring fruit and nut trees back to life and make orchards thrive.

Applications to apply for a grant is open for eight weeks and will close Friday 10 May 2024 at 5pm. For more information and how to apply go to our [Climate Change Hub on Let's Talk Wealden](#) or contact sustainability@wealden.gov.uk

Planting will take place in autumn/winter 2024-2025, allowing plenty of time to plan the orchard appropriately.

A Wealden council spokesperson, said, "To be able to save and regenerate our orchards within our communities is a wonderful thing and we should all be aiming to preserve

orchards and the species that thrive in them for years to come. The fund allows the council to facilitate new planting and restoration of more orchards.

“This is an exciting opportunity for schools to educate children, residents’ associations to encourage social interaction and landowners and local councils and businesses to give our roadsides, parks and green spaces a welcoming invite to passers by or local residents.”

Notes to editors:

The Coronation Living Heritage Fund supported by £2.5m in funding has been made available through Defra’s £758m Nature for Climate Fund to allow county, unitary, metropolitan, London borough, district and city local authorities the chance to apply for up to two grants for projects ranging between £10,000 and £50,000. The funding will support the development of micro woods and community orchards to commemorate the King’s Coronation. Funds can be distributed across projects in their area.

Through the England Trees Action Plan and supported by the £758m Nature for Climate Fund Defra will help to transform the treescape and the forestry sector helping to put the UK on track to meet net zero targets, reverse the decline in nature and support economic growth.

For further information please contact:

Nichola Watters
Head of Planning Policy, Economy and
Climate Change
Wealden District Council
Email: Nichola.watters@wealden.gov.uk

Or Sian Killeen
Media and Communications officer
Wealden District Council
Tel: 07970 233231
Email: Sian.killeen@wealden.gov.uk

Environment Agency
Guildbourne House,
Chatsworth Road,
Worthing,
West Sussex.
BN11 1LD.

Date 30th March 2024

Mr and Mrs Beautiman
Pond Cottage
Shortbridge Road,
Piltdown,
East Sussex.
TN22 3XJ

07780 130524

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Suspected Pollution From Piltdown Garage Entering the Waterways and Highway.

My wife and I are the homeowners of Pond Cottage a renovated 1680s oak framed dwellinghouse, the property stands adjacent to Shortbridge Road in Piltdown. It is located on a level site, although lower than the adjacent road, with surrounding gardens and a front Laurel hedge of approximately 2 metres in height. Pond Cottage has a private drive and an entrance over a small culvert of approximately 225 mm in diameter, this was replaced in 2022 by Wealden District Council Highways. The Culvert has been a long-standing problem with blockages and runoff in heavy rainfall, Wealden Highways have alleviated the problem slightly by raising the granite sets, this has stopped the road water from entering the drive and flooding my garden, however, there are other long-standing issues with the water quality and pollution within the small stream adjacent to my neighbours' land and my front garden.

Problems started about 10 years ago when I renovated the property, as mentioned above the property is sited lower than the road (700/800mm) with falls generally in the direction of the house. On many occasions, rainwater and road runoff would enter my land flooding the garden and hardstandings, however, the issue was not constrained to floodwater, when the water level dropped a thick residue of oil and fine debris was transferred over the garden and hardstanding. The smell of petrol/oil and the rainbow-coloured shimmer of oil was notable within the standing pools of water, this happened on many occasions during the construction process. This was reported to Wealden District Council Highways and their local environment division, with numerous visits to the property.

Wealden District Council reported in a somewhat despondent manner the ditches needed clearing and this would be carried out when highways can be programmed in. During this consultation period, we were flooded on several occasions all with the consequence of oil deposits. During the period 2018-2020, it was noted the hand car washing facility with pressure washers was flooding the garage forecourt, and water was being discharged/brushed into the Aco drainage adjacent to Goldbridge Road the main A272. Water was also collected from the other businesses located within the garage facilities, maintenance, van hire/maintenance including the fuel forecourt, etc. My concern is how are the water runoffs being collected and to what extent are the oils and fuels being separated from the natural water courses. It was discovered the majority of the water was being discharged to a small

watercourse on the southern side of Shortbridge Road, however, on further investigation, it was found the majority of the suspected polluted water discharged directly onto the road at this point and then into my driveway further down the hill.

Wealden District Council was contacted immediately and with some reticence visited Pond Cottage again, they decided the ditches would be cleaned and a new crossover would be constructed to allow the free flow of water, this included a new culvert to allow the water to escape to a main River Ouse tributary at the rear of my property. The new Crossover was constructed in late 2021, however, the highway authority was unable to clean the ditches on the southern side of Shortbridge Road due to the high suspected hydrocarbon content, it was conveyed at this point Wealden was unable to remove the contents of the ditch as they could not dispose of it, the ditch is in the same condition to this date with partial water discharging into the ditch and onto the road.

The situation to date has been dismay, with other issues concerning landscaping, and continual flooding of the drive and front garden including oil deposits and debris due to the culvert being blocked.

The ditch now has a limited capacity and allows water to discharge into my front garden, therefore contaminating the soil and killing the Laurel hedging and Oak tree, a horticulture expert discussed the notion the oil content within the soil is starving the hedge of water on top of contamination to the root base, he went on to say, there is no reason for the hedge to die other than what he purported to be hydrocarbons, heavy metals and PAHs in the soil due to the high oil and petroleum smell and suggested it was tested, in his opinion the portion of the dying hedge and the surrounding soils should be removal and reinstated after the cause has been identified and corrected, he could not comment on the oak tree and suggested a consultation with an arborist.

In my opinion, it would be wise to go ahead with the soil sampling and if found to be polluted register a complaint to seek compensation for the removal and reinstatement of the contaminated land along with all associated hard and soft landscaping. As you will understand this cannot go on indefinitely and I believe 10 years is long enough for Wealden District Council to have sorted this matter.

I will forward my soil investigation report in due course, however, it would be of great value to have your thoughts on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Beautiman', with a long, wavy horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Beautiman MSc BSc (Hons) ICIOB
Arrow Survey Consultants Ltd
peter@arrowsurveyconsultants.com

Appendix of 18 Photographs.



Front Northern Elevation (Pond Cottage).



Oil deposit and debris to drive.



Laural hedge dieback.



Water run-off entering the drive.

Laural hedge dieback, showing good hedge.



Contaminated water with a rainbow effect.



Flooding to drive, contaminated water.



Oil deposits and rainbow oil affect front drive.



Oil-laden water bypasses the culvert.



Front garden retaining water.



Oil was deposited on the rear patio.



Water from ditch by-passing culvert (Oil noted).



Front path oil deposits and debris.



Soap build-up from car washing at the garage.



Oil and debris build up on the road surface.



Ditch full of debris, soap suds build-up from car washing facility, note the underlying black staining.



Blocked culvert, oily water, and underlying soil staining.



Notable black staining to hedgerow (Laurels) and lawn area.

Fletching Parish Council Finances 31 March 2024

Payments made by Direct Debit/Debit Card/BACS in March 2024

Payee	For	Amount	Method
HSBC	Bank Charge	£ 5.00	DD
EE Ltd	Mobile Phone bill	£ 16.46	DD
Fletching Bonfire Society	Grant	£ 400.00	BACS
Hugofox Ltd	FPC Website	£ 11.99	DD
FRGC	VAT Refund	£6,265.87	BACS
Amazon	Stationery	£ 6.41	DC
Wealden District Council	Dog Bin Provision	£ 330.00	DD
Webflow	Fletching Historical Archive website	£ 270.36	DC
	TOTAL	£7,306.09	

Payments Received in March 2024

From	For	Amount
RA Brooks	Burial Ground	£ 240.00
HMRC	VAT Refund	£ 4,679.50
	Total	£ 4,919.50

Payments for Approval – April 2024

Payee	For	Amount	Method
Knill James	Payroll Provider	£ 42.12	BACS
ESALC	Member Training	£ 48.00	BACS
Wealden DC	Parish Conference	£ 30.00	BACS
HMRC	PAYE Jan - March 2024	£ 553.40	BACS
Starboard Systems Ltd	Scribe Software licences	£ 745.92	BACS
G Paterson-Griggs	Clerk Expenses	£ 13.50	BACS
ESCC Pension Fund	Clerk Pension	£ 301.19	BACS
G Paterson-Griggs	Clerk Salary		BACS

Fletching Parish Council Bank Reconciliation	31/03/20243			
Balance per bank statements as at	31-Mar-24		Cashbook	
FPC Current Account	£ 23,030.69		Opening balance	£ 37,765.06
FPC Savings Account	£ 32,402.69		Add receipts in year	£ 73,300.25
FPC War Memorial Account	£ 432.64		Less payments in year	-£ 54,687.74
FPC Maryon-Wilson Account	£ 511.55			
Net Balance	£ 56,377.57		Balance	£ 56,377.57

APPROVED at a Parish Council Meeting on 8 April 2024:

Signed:

Chair of Fletching Parish Council

Date: 8 April 2024

Proposed wording

FRANK JOSEPH WATTAM

21.4.1934 - 24.2.2023

.....

Proposed material to be used ...**ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTION**.....

➡ Signature of Applicant: 

- Please confirm that the applicant is aware of the current regulations relating to the Fletching Burial Ground - Regulation 43(i) in particular.
- Work may not commence until the required fee has been paid and the appropriate permit issued by the Fletching Parish Council

Provide a sketch or illustration of proposed memorial

**ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTION TO THE EXISTING MEMORIAL OF THE
LATE ARTHUR PATRICK RANDLE (2013).**

Proposed wording

MARGARET SYLVIA

RANDLE

1936 - 2023

Remembered in the music she loved

(All face to be used - no space for any further inscriptions)

Proposed material to be used ...**ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTION**.....

➡ Signature of Applicant: 

- Please confirm that the applicant is aware of the current regulations relating to the Fletching Burial Ground - Regulation 43(i) in particular.
- Work may not commence until the required fee has been paid and the appropriate permit issued by the Fletching Parish Council

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FPC COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Definition of a complaint

- 1.1 Generally, this will be about the Parish Council's procedures or administration. It will be an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service - whether the action was taken (or the service provided by the Council) by the Parish Council or a person or organisation acting on behalf of the Council.

2. Making a complaint

- 2.1 Complaints should always be directed through the Clerk in writing or e-mail (except for complaints about the Clerk, in which case, the Chairman takes the place of the Clerk in managing the process). It may be that the matter you are concerned about could be dealt with in a less formal manner.
- 2.2 Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.
- 2.3 When your complaint has been received, the clerk will write to you within seven days to let you know:
- Who is responsible for dealing with the complaint
 - How it will be dealt with
 - When the complaint is likely to be dealt with
- 2.4 In certain circumstances, procedures/bodies other than the Parish Council may be appropriate in respect of the following types of complaint:

Type of conduct	Refer to
Financial irregularity	Local elector's statutory right to object to the Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the Council may need to consult with their auditor / audit commission.
Criminal activity	The police
Councillor conduct	Members of the Parish Council sign a declaration to abide by a Code of Conduct and if they breach that code, there can be consequences. A complaint alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct should be submitted to Wealden District Council, Monitoring Officer, Council Offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham BN27 2AX
Conduct of the Clerk	If the complaint is about the Clerk to the Parish Council, you should write to the Chairman. The clerk will be formally advised of the matter and be given an opportunity to comment.

3. Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints

- 3.1 There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to pursue a complaint when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should, or has been taken. These matters will be referred to the Parish Council by the Clerk with a summary of the issues and of the attempts made to resolve the

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complaint. The Parish Council may, in such circumstances, decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant and inform the complainant so, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

4. How will the procedure operate?

- 4.1 Complaints about the Council's procedures, administration or policies will be dealt with by the Parish Council. The outcome of the complaint will be published.
- 4.2 The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within seven working days and will also advise when the matter will be dealt with by the Complaints Committee which shall consist of 3 parish councillors and shall report its findings to Fletching Parish Council.
- 4.3 You will be invited to attend the meeting and to bring any representative if you wish
- 4.4 Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, you are requested to provide the Parish Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which you wish to refer to at the meeting. Similarly, the Parish Council will provide you with copies of any documentation which it wishes to rely on at the meeting.
- 4.5 The code of practice is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk.

5. Procedure at the meeting

- 5.1 The Complaints Committee will consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the press and public. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the next Council meeting in open session.
- 5.2 The Committee Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
- 5.3 You, as the complainant, or your representative, will outline the grounds for complaint.
- 5.4 Members of the Complaints Committee will ask questions of you or your representative.
- 5.5 If relevant, the Clerk will explain the Parish Council's position.
- 5.6 Members of the Committee will be able to ask questions of the Clerk to the Council.
- 5.7 The Chairman of the Committee will summarise the Parish Council's position and then you will be offered the opportunity of summing up.
- 5.8 You will be asked to withdraw from the meeting (together with your representative or anyone accompanying you) whilst Members reach a decision on whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. It may be appropriate in some circumstances for the Clerk also to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members reach a decision.
- 5.9 If any points of clarification are required, you will be invited to re-join the meeting whilst clarification is sought and then asked to withdraw again.
- 5.10 You will then re-join the meeting to be advised of the decision of the Committee, together with reasons for the decision, or, if necessary, to be advised when a decision will be made. Dependent on the detail of the reasons for the decision, it might only be possible to give you the decision at the meeting, with the detailed reasons following in the decision letter.

6. After the meeting

- 6.1 The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven (7) working days, together with details of any action to be taken.

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7. Complaints relating to the Clerk

- 7.1 These will be dealt with by the Parish Council as an employment matter. Such complaints could result in disciplinary action or, in cases of gross misconduct, dismissal from the Council's employment. The matter will be dealt with internally to protect the employment rights to which employees of the Parish Council are entitled. The complainant will be informed of action taken.

8. What to do if you are still not satisfied

- 8.1 The decision of the Parish Council is final with no appeal process as the Local Government Ombudsman does not consider complaints in respect of Parish Councils.

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GRIEVANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice. It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.2 Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.
- 1.3 This policy confirms:
 - Employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employees' case for their grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining their case.
 - The Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date.
 - Any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council.
 - An employee has the right to appeal against the decision about their grievance. The appeal decision is final.
 - Information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
 - Recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition.
 - If an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure.
 - If a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if they raised the grievance in good faith.
 - The Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the councils and the employee's consent.

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2. Informal grievance procedure

2.1 The Council and its employee benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with the Chair of the Parish Council to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with the Chair of the Parish Council (for example, because it concerns the Chair), the employee should contact the Vice-Chair or, if appropriate, another member of Fletching Parish Council.

3. Formal grievance procedure

- 3.1 If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally, the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chair of Fletching Parish Council.
- 3.2 Fletching Parish Council will appoint a sub-committee of three members to investigate the grievance. The sub-committee will appoint a chairman from one of its members. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee.

4. Investigation

- 4.1 Within 10 working days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance, the employee will be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The sub-committee's letter will include the following:
- The names of its chair and other members.
 - A summary of the employee's grievance based on his/her written submission.
 - The date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will be within 25 working days of when the council received the grievance.
 - The employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
 - A copy of the Council's grievance policy.
 - Confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of their witnesses at least five working days before the meeting.
 - Confirmation that the employee will provide the council with any supporting evidence at least five working days before the meeting.

5. The grievance meeting

- 5.1 At the grievance meeting:
- The chair will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee.
 - The employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence.
 - The chair will ask the employee what action they want the Council to take.
 - Any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness.

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- The employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case.
- The chair will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision, in writing, within five working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.
- A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee.

6. The appeal

- 6.1 If an employee decides that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the sub-committee, they may submit a written appeal to Fletching Parish Council. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the sub-committee's decision and must specify the grounds of the appeal.
- 6.2 Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:
- A failure by the Council to follow its grievance policy.
 - The decision was not supported by the evidence.
 - The action proposed by the sub-committee was inadequate/inappropriate.
 - New evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.
- 6.3 The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of Fletching Parish Council who have not been involved in the case. The appeal panel will appoint a chair from one of its members.
- 6.4 The employee will be notified, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will take place within 25 working days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
- 6.5 At the appeal meeting, the chairman will:
- Introduce the panel members to the employee.
 - Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of Fletching Parish Council.
 - Explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
- 6.6 The employee (or their companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of their appeal.
- 6.7 The chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.
- 6.8 The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the sub-committee or substitute its own decision.
- 6.9 The decision of the appeal panel is final.

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SICKNESS AND ABSENCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The council is committed to the care and well-being of its employee. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the staff member has access to information relating to sickness and absence and are aware of the steps they must follow when absent from work.
- 1.2 By managing sickness and absence, the council will continue to provide a high-quality service to members of the public.
- 1.3 This policy covers:
 - sickness leave
 - unauthorised absence and lateness
 - annual leave
 - compassionate and/or emergency leave
 - time off in lieu
 - medical appointments
 - maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave

2. Sickness leave

- 2.1 The Council recognises that there will be occasions when the staff member is unable to work due to sickness. The Council provides a sick pay scheme for its employee in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) terms and conditions. Details of sick pay are included in the employee's contract.
- 2.2 If an employee is unable to attend work due to sickness, they must inform the Chair of Fletching Parish Council, giving the reason for sickness, the likely duration and the expected date of return. This must be done as soon as practical on the first day of absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council accept notification of absence from a third party. Regular contact must be maintained with the Chair of Fletching Parish Council during a period of absence.
- 2.3 For absence of seven days or less, employees are required to complete the self-certification documentation as outlined in the Employment Rights Act 1996. For all absences which exceed a seven-day period, a medical certificate is required.
- 2.4 Employees who are frequently absent could be suffering from poor health which may require medical investigation. The Council will offer support and guidance in consultation with the employee and will consider referral to occupational health specialist services if deemed appropriate.
- 2.5 All sickness absence will be recorded. The Council will investigate and assess whether further action is necessary if periods of absence due to short-term self-certification sickness reach unacceptable levels, or if patterns emerge.
- 2.6 The Council takes a sympathetic view towards genuine ill health problems and will provide a supportive approach to the employee if they have been subject to long-term sickness. The employee returning to work following a period of long-term sickness will be supported on their return to work, and the following options may be considered:

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- Phased return to work
- Provision of specialist equipment

2.7 Where an employee has returned from any period of sickness, a return-to-work interview will be conducted by the Chair of Fletching Parish Council.

2.8 In cases where the employee's absence reaches excessive levels or there is a lack of information about the circumstances of the sickness absence, the Council may request medical information about their condition from their GP.

2.9 Any medical information received by the Council will be treated as strictly confidential. Any expense in obtaining medical information from the GP will be met by the Council.

3. Unauthorised absence and lateness

3.1 Unauthorised absence occurs when the employee fails to undertake their work and has not made arrangements with the Chair of Fletching Parish Council.

3.2 Where the employee returns to work following an unauthorised absence, they will be required to attend a meeting with the Chair of Fletching Parish Council to explain their absence. The employee will be expected to take any unauthorised absence from their annual leave entitlement, or if no entitlement remains, pay will be deducted for the period of unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action being taken.

4. Annual Leave

4.1 Details of annual leave entitlements are included in an employee's contract, in line with NJC terms and conditions.

4.2 The annual leave period runs from 1st April to 31st March the following year. A maximum of 5 days annual leave may be carried over from one year's entitlement to the next.

4.3 Requests for annual leave are at the discretion of Fletching Parish Council, with consideration of the operational requirements of the council being taken into account before a decision is made. Annual leave requests will not be unreasonably refused.

5. Compassionate and/or emergency leave

5.1 Compassionate leave is at the overall discretion of the Chair of Fletching Parish Council. The Council recognises that each individual's respective relationships are different, however in order to achieve consistency, in general paid compassionate leave will be granted in the following circumstances:

- the death of a close family member i.e. spouse, civil partner, child, sibling, parent (or equivalent in-laws) or grand-parent
- the diagnosis of, or final stages of care for, a serious (life threatening) illness affecting a close family relative (as defined above)
- the employee falling victim to a serious crime
- fire/flood/burglary at the employee's home
- road traffic collisions or other distressing accidents/incidents involving the employee or a close family member

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5.2 The length of paid compassionate leave granted is at the discretion of the Chair of Fletching Parish Council but is limited to a maximum of 10 days. Where a situation requires an extended period of leave beyond 5 days, other options should be discussed including use of TOIL, annual leave and/or a period of unpaid leave.

5.3 Requests for compassionate leave for situations not included above will be considered on an individual basis.

5.4 Requests for emergency leave are at the discretion of the Chair of Fletching Parish Council. The Council recognises that each individual's personal circumstances will dictate what may be deemed as an emergency, however in order to achieve consistency, in general paid emergency leave of one day will be granted in the following circumstances:

- To provide assistance or make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- On the occasion of an unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant.

5.5 The employee is expected to use the day's paid emergency leave to make any ongoing care arrangements for dependents. Any additional requests for leave should be considered as requests for annual leave and assessed using the Council's annual leave guidelines.

6. Time off in lieu (TOIL)

6.1 The employee's individual weekly hours are detailed in their employment contracts.

6.2 The Council recognises an employee's right to receive recompense for working beyond their contracted hours. Employees have a right to be paid at agreed NJC overtime rates. Any paid overtime must be agreed in advance with the line manager.

6.3 The Council encourages the use of TOIL and welcomes employee's consideration of management of the salary budget. TOIL requests will be considered in the same way as annual leave requests, with the need to maintain operational effectiveness.

7. Medical appointments

7.1 In-patient appointments or procedures taking the whole day will be treated as sick leave in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

8. Maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave

8.1 The Council recognises an employee's right to maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave as set out in the relevant legislation.

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Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Parish Council to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Council and between the Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Publicity Protocol
- Press and Media Policy

The Council has a website, Facebook page and uses email to communicate. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

The Council Facebook page intends to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within our Parish and promote our community positively.

Communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright
- Not contain any personal information
- If it is official Council business it will be moderated by either the Chair/Vice Chair of the Council or the Clerk to the Council
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Council page are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts, but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the Council's Facebook page for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products.

The site is not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities. Please do not include personal or private information in your social media posts to us.

Sending a message/post via Facebook will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the council's Clerk and/or members of the council by emailing.

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We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law

The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available. Any information posted on the Facebook page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the Facebook page. The Council may post a statement that 'A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

Parish Council Website

Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response. We may not respond to every comment we receive particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

The Council may, at its discretion, allow and enable approved local groups to have and maintain a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting information about the group's activities. The local group would be responsible for maintaining the content and ensuring that it meets the Council's 'rules and expectation' for the web site. The Council reserves the right to remove any or all of a local group's information from the web site if it feels that the content does not meet the Council's 'rules and expectation' for its website. Where content on the website is maintained by a local group it should be clearly marked that such content is not the direct responsibility of the Council.

Parish Council email

The Clerk to the council has their own council email address (clerk@fletching-pc.org) The email account is monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can. An 'out of office' message should be used when appropriate.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk. All new Emails requiring data to be passed on, will be followed up with a Data consent form for completion before action is taken with that correspondence.

Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, copy to the Clerk. NB any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act.

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These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Do not forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council, this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

Messaging

Members and the Clerk may use Messaging (SMS/WhatsApp) as a convenient way to communicate at times. All are reminded that this policy also applies to such messages.

Video Conferencing e.g. Zoom

If this medium is used to communicate please note that this policy also applies to the use of video conferencing.

Internal communication and access to information within the Council

The Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of social media and electronic communications is a major factor in delivering improvement.

Councillors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act in all their work on behalf of the Council.

As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures (at the extreme it may also involve a criminal investigation).

Members should also be careful only to cc essential recipients on emails i.e. to avoid use of the 'Reply to All' option if at all possible, but of course copying in all who need to know and ensuring that email trails have been removed.