PARISH COUNCIL OF SANDHURST, KENT

Please reply to Julie Horan, Parish Clerk, Old School, Back Road, Sandhurst, Kent TN18 5JS 01580-850273

Approved Minutes
Parish Council Meeting 11 February 2025

In Attendance:

Cllr Mark Griggs (Chairman) (MG)	Cllr Katherine O'Neil (KO) – Arrived 8pm
Cllr Christopher Robinson (Vice-Chairman) (CR)	Cllr Denis O'Neil (DO) – Arrived 8pm
Cllr David Rogers (DR)	Julie Horan (Clerk) (JH)
Cllr Julie Griggs (JG)	Borough Cllr Ellen Neville
	County Cllr Seán Holden

Item:	
1.	**Apologies for Absence**
	Cllr Caroline Wood (CW), Cllr Adam Kerry (AK), Borough Cllr Tom Dawlings, Borough Cllr Beverley Palmer
2.	**Declarations of Interest**
	Councillors were reminded that they must inform the Monitoring Officer of any changes to their Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. • DR Allotments – Allotment plot holder
3.	**Approval of Minutes**
	To resolve that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 January 2025 are a true record of the meeting. Members were reminded the only issue relating to the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy. • MG proposed; JG seconded and it was agreed by those present at the meeting that the minutes were a true record of the meeting.
4.	**Councillor Intervention**
	Borough Cllr Ellen Neville: Is trying to get information about the local government roll out. There is a Kent Leaders meeting tomorrow morning which is expected to be Fiery. The consultation in regard to the planned works on the traffic lights at Hawkhurst, they are saying it will be six weeks of staged closure but are hoping and planning for it to be less. EN has requested maps of the proposals and will forward them to councillors once received. The timing is terrible, with GCSEs, a possible clash with the Newenden Bridge closure and some junction work at Heartenoak Road, it is not going to be fun.

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	Cllr Sean Holden: Also spoke about the proposed work at the Hawkhurst Lights. SH spoke against having a mayor as they are not accountable to anybody and do not represent a variety of opinions.
5.	**Finance and accounts**
	Accounts: To approve accounts retrospectively for payments from 01 January 2025 to 31 January 2025 To receive details of receipts from 01 January 2025 to 31 January 2025 • DR proposed to agree payments and receipts for January 2025 ; JG seconded - all present agreed. To note the bank reconciliation at 31 January 2025 • CR confirmed that the reconciliation had been checked and signed. **Forecast:** KO asked that the wording around the playground grants be reworded. **Telephone & Broadband:** Gigaclear has quoted £30 per month for full fibre, broadband, and telephone for the OSH. This is the only provider that provides full fibre and high-speed internet. We are currently paying £41 for the existing phone service. • CR proposed to use Gigaclear to provide telephone and broadband at the OSH when the current contract expires ; MG seconded – all present agreed
6.	**Annual Review of Documentation**
	The following documents will be reviewed for approval at the March meeting: Financial Regulations – Cllr Christopher Robinson Financial Risk Assessment – Cllr Denis O'Neil Asset Register – Julie Horan Standing Orders **–** Cllr Mark Griggs Statement on Internal Control – Julie Horan
7.	**Website**
	The External Auditor observed at last year's audit that the parish should be using .gov.uk email addresses and a .gov.uk domain name for the website. JH circulated quotes from recommended providers for this service. **Quote A -** £149.99 per year plus the additional cost of having a website built (quote not yet received). **Quote B -** £449.76 per year plus £200 one-off payment to build a website. JH suggested going with quote B as the support provided was more comprehensive. After the first year, the price will drop as less support will be required. Quote A would require a website to be built by a third party and support for this is not included as part of the package. • MG proposed to go with Quote B ; CR seconded – all present agreed
8.	**OSH**
	Rear Window: The window will be repaired when the weather improves, and Dean restarts the painting of the OSH. **Buddleia:** CR will cut the Buddleia down to root level and use a stump killer to kill the roots. **Committee Meeting Report:** The lock on the ladies' toilet door is broken and needs repairing; Signage is required on the table and chair stacks so that when the ad hoc hall users put them away they know the correct way to stack them safely. **Gas Check Meter:** JH to get a quote to remove.

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	Floor: Academy Flooring is due to pop by in the next few days to make a temporary repair to the floor. When Bill from Academy Flooring visited recently, he took damp readings of the courtyard wall and floor and said they were damp. DR suggested more air bricks in the walls, quotes are needed.
9.	**Playing Field/Pavilion/Car Park/Toilet Block**
	Dog Waste Bins: JH to obtain quotes for the supply and fitting of dog waste bins that bolt directly to the ground. **Grass Protection matting:** Carried forward to the next meeting. **Boiler Replacement:** – Enquiries are ongoing - DR. **Toilet Block:** Review ongoing costs and repairs due to vandalism – Carried forward to the next meeting. **Fencing:** The fencing between Marsh Quarter Lane and the playing field is damaged - DR will come up with some suggestions.
10.	**Speed Watch Report**
	Report: – We held four sessions, all at Queen Street, on 24th, 25th, 29th and 30th. On all but the 29th we had four participants, and all our recent recruits came out at least once, quickly getting into the routine including using the phonetic alphabet (sometimes slightly modified!). In total we recorded 112 offenders out of 946 passing vehicles, that is 11.8%, which is higher than the normal rate of c. 10%. Our efforts culminated on 30th with a tally of 32 out of 192 – an amazing 16.7%. **New Equipment:** Ongoing – CR.
11.	**Allotments**
	Rent: One tenancy agreement will be terminated because of outstanding rent. **Inspections:** The plot inspection frequency and standard letter were discussed by the Allotment Committee and the response received back was very positive. • MG proposed that the PC carry out monthly allotment inspections during the growing season ; KO seconded – all present agreed apart from DR who abstained from voting. **Covering Plots:** DR produced a sample cover, JH & MG to investigate options for discussion at the next meeting.
12.	**Bench Lower Green**
	Options available will be investigated. Various benches around the village need attention. JH & MG to get names of carpenters to arrange quotes for repairs.
13.	**Climate Action**
	Request for funds of £100 from the Climate Action Group for publicising their meeting and for refreshments at the public meeting, to come out of the £100 is the purchase of a laminator that would be held in the parish office. • CR proposed to agree with the request ; MG seconded – all present agreed although DR had reservations **Should Sandhurst Parish Council Declare a Climate Emergency?** This was originally proposed in March 2024 and was rejected by the council. A new proposal was circulated before the meeting (appendix 1). Various comments were made and discussed by councillors, again although a lot of the points made were agreed with, there was still not enough information available to satisfy the queries

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	raised. The PC believe the Climate Action Group are doing a fantastic job, and fully supports what they are doing, shining a light on climate issues. A decision on whether or not to declare a climate emergency will be carried forward to a meeting in a few months when more information is available.
14.	**Neighbourhood Plan**
	Documents are expected from Alison Erdley that need reading through and if KO happy they will be submitted to TWBC.
15.	**Sandhurst Village Archive**
	We have funding agreed from the Ameila for the purchase and delivery of a fireproof safe to store the village archives in. JH to request a proforma invoice so that the safe can be ordered.
16.	**Planning**
	There will be an opportunity for members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes before the planning applications are discussed. Please remember a parish council is a statutory consultee in the planning process but has no statutory powers - only the right to comment.
	Application: Proposed Disabled Persons Parking Bay Address: Bodiam Road No comments made **Application**: 25/00153/FULL Proposal: Conversion of existing storage barn into ancillary living accommodation. Address: High Standings, Rye Road, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN18 5PJ Comments by: 14 February 2025 No comments made **Application:** 25/00248/FULL Proposal: Construction of stable block Address: Apple Barn, Back Road, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN18 5JS Comments by: 25 February 2025 No comments made
17.	**Correspondence to Clerk**
	Email received about the shelf in the Phonebox book exchange being damaged – DO will have a look to see what repairs can be made.
18.	**Public Intervention**
	None.
19.	**Date of Next Meeting**
	11 March 2025 08 April 2025 13 May 2025 – Annual Parish Council Meeting

Mark Griggs
Chairman, Sandhurst Parish Council

CC: **For Information**
County Cllr Seán Holden
Borough Cllr Ellen Neville
Borough Cllr Beverley Palmer
Borough Cllr Tom Dawlings

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Presented by: Ellen Neville, Borough Councillor & Chair of the Sandhurst Climate Action Group
Date: 06-02-2025

Subject: Proposal for the Declaration of a Climate Emergency in Sandhurst.

Overview:
As Chair of the Sandhurst Climate Action Group and borough councillor for this ward, I am presenting this proposal to declare a *Climate Emergency* in Sandhurst, Kent. This declaration is not just symbolic—it is an urgent call to action for our community, businesses, and local government to adopt more sustainable practices and take tangible steps to mitigate climate change. The time for delay has passed, and we must act now to protect the future of our children, our environment, and our economy.

Context and Rationale:
The effects of climate change are already being felt across the world, and Sandhurst is no exception. Our community is home to various vulnerable ecosystems, and we are already witnessing shifts in local weather patterns, threatening agriculture, local businesses, and biodiversity.

The UK government declared a *Climate Emergency* in 2019, acknowledging the necessity of taking immediate action. However, the urgency of the situation calls for local authorities, such as Sandhurst Parish Council, to also respond proactively by creating a plan to reduce our carbon emissions and strengthen our resilience to climate change. Town and parish councils are in a unique position to stimulate grassroots action, set a leadership example and provide a local, accountable focal point for practical action on the climate emergency. Around 300 parish councils have declared a climate emergency in the UK.

Why Declare a Climate Emergency?

1. **Scientific Consensus:**
   The scientific community has spoken clearly: the world must achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of climate change. This requires urgent, local action, and Sandhurst must play its part in this global effort.
2. **Leadership in Local Climate Action:**
   By declaring a Climate Emergency, Sandhurst Parish Council will set an example of leadership and commitment to climate action. It will position our community at the forefront of efforts to promote sustainability, resilience, and environmental justice.
3. **Economic Opportunities:**
   Taking proactive steps toward sustainability will not only mitigate environmental risks but can also drive economic growth. Investing in renewable energy, sustainable housing, and green infrastructure will create jobs, stimulate local businesses, and reduce our dependency on fossil fuels.

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4. **Community Engagement:**
   Our residents are increasingly concerned about the environment, and many are looking for opportunities in local environmental projects. By making this declaration, we signal to our residents that their voices and actions matter, and we can work with them to develop effective solutions. There are some projects identified in the village that will be an excellent focus point for achievable results by the community working together for the betterment of our environment.

Proposed Actions and Goals:
If the proposal to declare a Climate Emergency is accepted, I propose the following initial actions to be undertaken by the Sandhurst Climate Action Group and supported by the Sandhurst Parish Council:

1. **Commitment to Net-Zero Emissions by 2050:**
   Sandhurst Parish Council will commit to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, in alignment with the UK government's target. A clear action plan will be created to reduce emissions, including transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and promoting electric vehicles.
2. **Climate Adaptation and Resilience:**
   We will begin assessing the local impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, flooding, and changing biodiversity patterns. A strategy will be developed to increase the community's resilience to these impacts, particularly for vulnerable groups.
3. **Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Development:**
   We will adopt policies that encourage sustainable development, such as green building practices, the use of renewable energy, and water conservation. We will also work to enhance green spaces and improve the local ecosystem through rewilding efforts, planting initiatives and award agency of this with our younger members of the community.
4. **Carbon Footprint Reduction in Council Operations:**
   Sandhurst Parish Council will take steps to reduce its own carbon footprint, including energy efficiency measures in council-owned buildings, reducing waste, and encouraging sustainable practices.
5. **Public Awareness and Engagement Campaign:**
   We will launch a public awareness campaign to inform residents and local businesses about the impact of climate change, the importance of sustainability, and actions they can take to reduce their own carbon footprints.
6. **Collaborative Approach:**
   We will work with neighbouring councils, the Kent County Council, the Environment Agency, and local businesses to share knowledge and resources, ensuring that we approach climate action in a coordinated and effective manner.

Conclusion:
Declaring a Climate Emergency is not a decision to be taken lightly, but it is an essential one for the future of Sandhurst. We are standing at a crossroads. By taking action now, we can reduce the harmful effects of climate change, protect our local environment, and ensure a sustainable future for all who live and work in Sandhurst.

Signed:..... Dated:.....

I urge councillors to support this proposal and join the Sandhurst Climate Action Group in demonstrating Sandhurst's commitment to climate action and sustainability. Together, we can build a resilient, thriving, and sustainable community for generations to come.

Recommendation:
It is recommended that Sandhurst Parish Council formally declares a *Climate Emergency*, committing to urgent action on climate change and the development of a comprehensive climate action plan. This declaration can include the specific goals and actions outlined above, with regular progress reviews and community engagement efforts.

Signed:
Ellen Neville
Borough Councillor & Chair of the Sandhurst Climate Action Group

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