

Minutes of the **WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held on 10th
July 2017 at 7.30pm in The Old Station, Groombridge

PRESENT Cllrs Robin Ashby, Nick Anderson, Mrs Gwen Butcher,
Mrs Jane Clare, Andrew Fane, Mrs Anne Jenkins, Mrs
Diana Kelly (Chairman), Jonathan Kelly, Keith Obbard,
Mrs Jill Pardey, Marcus Tarling, Stephen Whittaker

In attendance: Debbie Siddle – Parish Clerk
Charlotte Harvey – Bridging Ages
County Cllr Francis Whetstone – ESCC (to end item 6)
31 members of the public

Members of the public are encouraged to come to the meetings and there is a 10 minute opportunity at the start of the meeting for them to address the Council.

Members of the public present wished to make Council aware of their objections to the licence application by Groombridge Place for extended hours for events and alcohol sales. One of the members of the public acted as spokesperson and made the following comments:

- Noise – residents have had issues with noise pollution and events exceeding recommended noise levels
- Security – residents in close proximity to Groombridge Place experienced trespass and security issues due to the unmaintained perimeter at the recent Joy Festival
- Potential traffic and access issues – there is limited public transport during the day and none at night therefore visitors will use cars and coaches
- Traffic accidents – the road narrows and is unlit and there is a bus stop nearby, has a traffic assessment been undertaken?
- Safety of our children – fields have been used by a large number of campers which have open access to the children's play ground
- Environment – potential for litter blown onto public land and into river. Wet wipes were found in woodland after recent Joy Festival
- Effects on wildlife and birds at RSPB Broadwater Warren
- Effects on livestock and cattle, especially horses in relation to increased firework displays
- Emergency response – premises straddle the county border and there is no local policing in the village, it is unclear which force would respond to emergencies
- Proposed figure of 3000 visitors is approximately double the number of residents in the village and seems too large. Extensive advertising of the Joy Festival drew visitors from a wide area
- There is little benefit to the local community with staff being drawn from outside the area and local businesses not seeing any significant increase in patrons
- Planning permission is unclear and the Parish Council was asked to clarify whether Groombridge Place has correct planning permission for such events

- In comparison to other similar local venues Hever is licensed from 11am to 1.30am every day, Penshurst Place has no full licence only a temporary alcohol licence 9am to 6pm, Scotney Castle 10am to midnight every day and Chiddingstone Castle has only temporary events licences
- Residents are disappointed by the lack of community engagement by Groombridge Place and have found it difficult to complain when events have been problematic in the past

Further comments made by members of the public present were as follows:

- Many properties lack soundproofing and some are listed so unable to soundproof further and therefore health and wellbeing of residents is compromised by loud music late at night
- The application should be rejected in its entirety rather than any compromise made
- When residents tried to complain about daytime noise from the Extreme Festival Groombridge Place said that it had no control as they had just rented their land to an events organiser
- The Joy Festival kept residents awake even though it wasn't very loud in terms of breaking noise regulations, because at night there is no other background noise in Groombridge
- The Joy Festival took place whilst children were studying for GCSEs and A Levels and some had sleep disrupted by noise at night
- Although the licence is being organised by Groombridge Place, it does not organise the events itself. Groombridge Place therefore has very little control and the events organisers have no longer term responsibility to the residents
- Events security and organisers cannot control people attending events if they go into the village and cause problems there
- Last spring half term, rain caused the car parks to be waterlogged and all day visitors had to park in the village which caused issues
- Although Groombridge Place state that events will arrange security, firms vary in quality and residents are concerned that some events will not be secure
- The application contradicts itself as on pg3 it says live music to 11pm but pg5 says midnight
- TWBC has previously been unable to confirm whether Groombridge Place has been operating under its existing licence for under or over 500 people, the concern is that confusion may continue
- The driveway and narrow road is an issue for increased traffic
- It is unclear why Groombridge Place requires a blanket licence rather than applying for temporary licences for each event

Cllr D Kelly confirmed that Withyham Parish Council had met with Groombridge Place following the Extreme Festival and aired many concerns residents had had with the noise volume of that had extended into the early hours of the morning. The representative from Groombridge Place voiced a desire to work more closely with the community and agreed a number of amendments to the position of the speakers and

location of the stage. However, they failed to mention to the council their imminent licence application.

Cllr Kelly informed people that if they wished to make an objection they should do so individually as they would then be eligible to attend the sub committee hearing and recommended that they make their comments under the 4 prompts given on the Sevenoaks website.

Cllr Tarling reminded people of Wealden District Council's 15km zone of influence, which is concerned with increased traffic movements on the Ashdown Forest and the possible effect of the proposals.

The Chair thanked members of the public for attending and opened the meeting at 8.05pm. The majority left.

1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING: None

2. APOLOGIES: District Cllr Rutherford – work commitment

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Cllr Obbard regarding item 15 as he is employed by Groombridge Place.

15. GROOMBRIDGE PLACE – Response to current licence application

This was considered at this point on the agenda in order that remaining members of the public could hear Council's discussion. Councillors had received a briefing paper prior to the meeting giving the back ground to the matter, and a link to the application.

Councillors commented that:

- In a quiet place such as Groombridge people's tolerance to the noise from an event is lower than in a more urban area where there is more background noise. Even decibels that would be regarded as tolerable by Environmental Health would not be acceptable in a village where it is normally almost silent at night
- Impact on wildlife is an issue as well as livestock, with there being many horses in the vicinity which would be affected by noise from fireworks
- As new Groombridge is in a valley, noise is trapped and amplified
- The Ashdown Forest 15km zone of influence should be considered as increased traffic could affect nitrogen depositions
- Highways should be involved in commenting on the application due to high volumes of traffic over short amounts of times
- Consideration should be given to access for emergency vehicles
- The Joy Festival obstructed rights of way with tents and this should not be allowed to happen again
- Last year's necessity for cars to park in the village due to waterlogged car parks demonstrates how the actions of Groombridge Place can impinge on the locality

- The existing licence is for events to 1am on Fridays and Saturdays and is already unacceptable to residents so an amendment certainly would not be acceptable
- Events such as the Joy Festival are felt to be too big for the site
- The health of children experiencing poor sleep due to noise should be a consideration
- Whilst the Parish Council understands that Groombridge Place's address is in Kent, it questions whether Wealden District Council should be more involved as the vast number of people affected live in this parish.
- The Clerk was asked to make Cllr Howell aware of the application

001260 **RESOLVED** that Withyham Parish Council should object to the licence application.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would draft a response and circulate on email to Councillors for agreement under the four prompts identified by the licensing authority. Once agreed the response would be shared on the WPC website and Facebook page. Withyham and Speldhurst Parish Councils would converse on the issue but would make separate responses.

The Clerk was asked to check the status of planning permission for Groombridge Place and notify Wealden District Council about the matter due to the impact on the parish.

9. BRIDGING AGES PROJECT

Charlotte Harvey outlined the Bridging Ages project in Forest Row. The original aim had been to ease loneliness of older people and it was felt that the link with teenagers helped the younger people to think about civic responsibility and learn from older people.

Following training, the young people meet regularly with their partner and then write the older person's life story. The books are published and there is a celebratory event.

The initial project received Lottery funding and further funding has been obtained to develop a toolkit. Bridging Ages wishes to pilot the toolkit with two different host organisations, one of which would be a parish council.

The Parish Council would appoint a coordinator and they would be paid for by Bridging Ages up to £2,000 for the pilot in return for feedback on the toolkit. A potential coordinator had already been identified who is known to the Council. The project is likely to take 50 to 60 hours.

Ten to twenty pairs of older and younger people would be needed, younger people could be sourced from school, youth project and scouts. It is envisaged that the project would run from September to April. The host organisation would be expected to fund the celebratory event. Bridging Ages would require the hosts to provide their safeguarding and health and safety policies.

Charlotte Harvey left the meeting.

The Chair pointed out that this initiative sits well with the parish plan under young and elderly. Councillors recognised that should they agree to undertake a pilot further discussion would be required with Bridging Ages about the coordinator's role and terms, and any other costs. The parish office would be made available for the project.

- 001261 RESOLVED** that Withyham Parish Council should request to run a pilot Bridging Ages project, subject to appointing a suitable coordinator within the budget provided by Bridging Ages.

4. MINUTES

4.1. To resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 12th June 2017 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

- 001262 RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2017 were approved.

4.2. Matters outstanding from these minutes (not listed as separate agenda items)

Matters resolved from previous minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 1266	Council	First draft of the WDC Local Plan published. WPC remains unclear as to whether to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan
Pg. 1291	Clerk/ District Cllr Howell	District Cllrs Standley and Newton chased for feedback on their actions from the meeting of 4 th January
Pg. 1292	Assistant Clerk	General code of conduct note about dog waste included in the next newsletter and put on the website
001165	Clerk/RFO	300 asset markers ordered
Pg. 1252	Clerks	WI shown interest in adopting phone box near the Victoria roundabout, Groombridge
Pg. 1286	Cllr Whetstone	ES Highways have stated they will not include Ladies Mile on their regular gritting routes
Pg. 1306 (March)	Clerk	Mr Wells of Uckfield Railway Line Committee invited to October meeting
Pg. 1312 (March)	Cllr Rutherford	WDC to inspect recycling bins at Groombridge car park for cleaning
Pg. 1339 (April)	Clerks	Speldhurst Parish Council supports our intention to deliver our newsletter to Old Groombridge
Pg. 1292	Clerks	Contractor to replace doors on Cooks Corner noticeboard
Pg 1358	Assistant Clerk	SALC to offer DPA training
Pg. 1359	Cllr Whetstone	Interim changes made to timings of the traffic lights at Crowborough Cross, longer term solution being considered

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Pg. 1359	Assistant Clerk	Up to date contact list produced for noticeboards and website
001238	Clerk	WPV Works coordinator ordered a Junior Nest combination swing with Safagrass matting from FLP
001239	Clerk	WPV Works coordinator notified of agreement to expenditure of up to £3,336 for tarmac
Pg. 1384	Councillors	List of parking hot spots submitted
001241	Clerk	Grant applicants from St John's Preschool, KSS Air Ambulance and Groombridge Bowling Club notified
Pg. 1384	Clerk	RBS contacted about Ear-marked reserves not showing on the budget report
001243	Clerk	JAKK contracted for works to fingerposts 8 and 10, and Bernard Patience for works to 2,4,5,6,12 and 14
001244	Clerk	Confirmed virement should not be made from 9030 EMR works in progress to 4420 Fingerposts. Alternative recording in place
001245	Clerk	Noted to overspend on budget 4420 until match funding is received from ESCC at which point budget line 4420 should be increased by £973 to reflect income
001246	Clerk	Tree fellas contracted to complete the maintenance works to the trees as quoted at St John's reading Room
001248	Clerk	WPV payment process approved
001250	Clerk	Accept the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations
001251	Clerk	Proposed updates to the Administration and Office Manual accepted
001252	Clerk/Chair	Annual Return Governance Statement approved
001253	Chair	Accounting Statements (end of year accounts to 31 st March 2017) approved

Matters outstanding from previous minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 988	Clerks	Cost price of sashes to identify newsletter distributors
Pg.1002	Cllr Whetstone	Pursue action regarding the list of drains requiring attention
Pg. 1102	Clerks	Publicise any environmental actions or changes WPC makes via the newsletter
Pg. 1102	Cllrs Obbard and Clare	Investigate free building energy assessments for the parish office
Pg. 1102	Cllrs Obbard and Clare	Identify where environmental improvements can be made in the office

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Pg. 1186	Clerk	Arrange rota for councillors to represent WPC at every Community Café
Pg. 1209	Clerk	Request ESCC Highways service level agreement/contract at meeting with Highways in December
Pg. 1215	Councillors	Parking issues to be considered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan
Pg. 1251	Clerks	Ask Withyham Parish Volunteers to identify someone suitable as NHW coordinator for lower part of Corseley Road
Pg. 1252	Clerks	Confirm with Celebrate Withyham that they will maintain the phone box at Balls Green.
Pg. 1258	Clerk	Look into the feasibility of requesting ice warning signs for Ladies Mile
Pg. 1264	Clerks	Investigate who is responsible for the trees at the Lye Green junction and to write to them
Pg. 1293	Cllr Whetstone	Pursue water that is still coming out of a drain on Beech Green Lane
Pg. 1296	Clerks	Source lidded plastic leaflet holders to attach to the noticeboards
Pg. 1312 (March)	Clerk	Investigate costs of a recycling facility at Withyham
Pg. 1313 (March)	Clerk	Note of thanks to be sent to Mr Mark Weaver
Pg. 1317 (March)	Clerks	Advertise Parish Tree Warden role through the website, Facebook and newsletter
Pg. 1339 (April)	Clerks	Ascertain ownership of the fence between Newton Willows and Station Road
Pg. 1339 (April)	Clerks	Investigate whether the RSPB still allows quad bikes at Broadwater Warren
Pg. 1339 (April)	Cllr Fane	Deliver our newsletter to Old Groombridge
Pg. 1339 (April)	Clerks	Include District and County Councillors' details in the newsletter
Pg. 1339 (April)	Cllr Whetstone	Investigate whether it is the responsibility of ESCC to remove car debris from roadside
Pg. 1340 (April)	Clerk	Investigate listing of Chafford sluice
Pg. 1340 (April)	Clerk	Look at producing further updates for residents about Balls Green Community space
Pg. 1359	Cllr Whetstone	Continue to press for repairs to the road between Groombridge and Withyham

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Pg. 1359	Assistant Clerk	Add to the Road Safety Committee and Strengthening Local Relationship agendas a junction warning sign for traffic coming out of Park Corner Lane onto Eridge Road
Pg. 1359	Assistant Clerk	Add to the Road Safety Committee and Strengthening Local Relationship agendas the proximity of the roundabout warning sign at the Victoria
Pg. 1360	Cllr J Kelly	Find the key for the Balls Green noticeboard
Pg. 1360	Cllr Whetstone	Pursue water running down Ironchurch Lane due to blocked ditches
Pg. 1360	Clerk	Circulate agreed task list to WPV
Pg. 1360	Cllrs D Kelly and Tarling	Consider both longer term and interim storage solutions for WPV and take recommendations to Finance and Administration Committee
001222	Clerk	Grant £2,000 to the Groombridge Scouts for a container on the Cricket Club land, to be paid once RNT permission in place
Pg. 1361	Assistant Clerk	Include in newsletter about the poor response to the litterpicks
Pg. 1361	Clerk	Recommend that the Premiere Angel store owner contacts Ashurst Wood post office for advice
Pg. 1361	Assistant Clerk	Flag up Post Office consultation in the next newsletter
Pg. 1361	Cllr Anderson, John Gramolt and Assistant Clerk	Arrange two evening meetings with a focus on personal resilience
001228	Clerk	Authorise expenditure of up to £113 for DBS checks
Pg. 1374	Clerk	Email Cllr Standley with any actions outstanding from the January meeting with Cllrs Howell and Newton
Pg. 1374	Clerk	Contact Cllr Whetstone summarising the specific location that led to the enquiry about clearing debris after RTAs
Pg. 1381	Clerk	Put tidying of leaf debris on the WPV task list.
Pg. 1381	Assistant Clerk	Seek further volunteers to help tidy Groombridge Recreation Ground through the newsletter.
Pg. 1381	Clerks	Ask WDC to remove the remaining black bin liners from Groombridge Recreation Ground
Pg. 1382	Councillors	Email Cllr Jenkins and the Clerks with any junctions where grass is restricting visibility

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Pg. 1382	Clerk	Check the Tesco grant application to ensure that all items listed for Balls Green had been considered
Pg. 1383	Assistant Clerk	Advertise new badminton club in newsletter
Pg. 1383	Cllr Whittaker/ Clerks	Produce display boards for councillors at Community Café .
Pg. 1383	Clerks	Circulate future Community café dates and request that Councillors add their names to the rota
001240	Assistant Clerk	Run a Road Safety Campaign in conjunction with other Towns and Parishes

Actions from these Minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
001260	Clerk	Withyham Parish Council to object to Groombridge Place licence application
Pg. 1400	Clerk	Licence objection to be shared on the WPC website and Facebook page
Pg. 1400	Clerk	Check planning permission status for Groombridge Place
001261	Clerk	Request to run a pilot Bridging Ages project, subject to appointing a suitable coordinator within the budget provided by Bridging Ages
Pg. 1407	Clerks	WPC to ask to meet with Karl Taylor about Crowborough Cross
Pg. 1407	Cllr Anders/John Gramolt	A public meeting involving Our Watch to take place in October/November
Pg. 1408	Cllr Jenkins	Speak with Groombridge Village Hall Committee about future bookings of cycle events
Pg. 1408	Cllr D Kelly (SLR) Cllr Clare (RSC)	Raise increase in cycle races on the parish roads in relation to safety for other road users.
Pg. 1408	Cllr D Kelly (SLR)	Raise reinstating the white lines to delineate the pavement opposite St Michael's School
Pg. 1408	Finance and Administration Committee	Review frequency of hedge cutting at Teasley Mead
Pg. 1408	Cllr J Kelly	Flier all residents about Balls Green BBQ
Pg. 1408	Cllrs J Kelly and Tarling	Speak with the Works Coordinator about the possibility of part of the Balls Green site being available after seeding
Pg. 1409	Assistant Clerk	Work additional hours to set up a WPV database, and to promote the barbeque
Pg. 1409	Assistant Clerk	Advice to go on the website, facebook, newsletter about reporting drones and where/what heights they can be flown

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001265	Clerk	Fund start up costs of 10 sessions of hall hire, freestanding posts and a net for badminton club
Pg. 1409	Clerk	Develop a Terms of Reference for Groombridge play area group
Pg. 1409	Councillors	Any interested in being involved in Groombridge Play area to speak with the Clerk
001266	Clerk	Leases on Groombridge Place to be signed when ready
001267	Clerk	Quotes from independent damp consultants to be circulated to Finance and Administration Committee
001268	Clerk	Commission Lindsay Frost to undertake investigations and prepare a report about a Neighbourhood Plan
001270	Clerk	Subscribe to AiRS for 2017/18
001271	Clerk	Move supplier of gas and electricity to Bristol Energy on a 24 month contract
001272	Clerk	Purchase noticeboard from Earth Anchors
Pg. 1412	Clerk	Request a charity box from First Responders for monies under £10 received for photocopying
Pg. 1413	Cllr Obbard	Raise concerns about Groombridge Place with WDC Chief Executive Charlie Lant at WDALC AGM
Pg. 1413	Councillors	Review amendments to actions list at September Council
Pg. 1413	Councillors	Deliver newsletters within a week of 28 th July
Pg. 1413	Clerk	Create a disaster recovery plan
Pg. 1413	Cllr Anderson	Research a surge protector
Pg. 1413	Clerk	As July Finance and Administration Committee meeting cancelled, urgent items of business to be by email

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the following minutes of committees and to approve and confirm recommendations contained therein and as far as requisite, the action taken by them.

5.1. Planning – 12th June 2017

001263 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee of 12th June 2017

5.2 Planning – 27th June 2017

001264 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee of 27th June 2017

To receive the following draft minutes of committees and to note recommendations contained therein and as far as requisite, the action taken by them - None.

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT and COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Whetstone confirmed that the land at the junction of Hendl Hill and Withyham Road is owned by ESCC.

Cllr Whetstone reported that the traffic lights at Crowborough Cross had been rebalanced to allow more traffic to move through the lights coming from the direction of London Road. He had tried to argue a second lane but ESCC had given reasons why this would not be feasible. Councillors remained concerned about traffic at this junction and it was AGREED that WPC would ask to meet with Karl Taylor.

District Councillors Howell and Rutherford were not present but Cllr Rutherford had provided an update by email. Wealden confirmed that a waste officer would "inspect the bins and arrange for any necessary cleansing" at the recycling centre in Groombridge.

The Building Stronger Communities Fund is open to any East Sussex community group within the county. Further details can be found here: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/funding/whoyouare/bsc/>

Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower Wealden has reviewed the programme of works and fire safety measures on the roughly 100 blocks of flats that the council owns. The vast majority are 2 storey, with just seven 3 storey buildings and two 4 storey buildings. None have external cladding. All have up to date fire risk assessments and smoke detectors. In addition WDC has a rigorous policy on keeping communal areas clear of items that might pose a fire hazard, or might impede fire rescue efforts.

Wealden successfully brought a prosecution against a resident of Hailsham for fly-tipping. He pleaded guilty to six incidents and was sentenced to 12 months in prison. Another fly-tipper, also from Hailsham, was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for 12 months having pleaded guilty to three incidents. Both were also banned from driving for 12 months. If residents see fly tippers they should take the details of any vehicles involved and report it to Wealden's Street Scene Team street.scene@wealden.gov.uk.

Cllr Whetstone, Sue and David Homewood left the meeting.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORTS

The meeting considered a date to hold a public meeting involving Our Watch. It was agreed it should take place in October/November. Cllr Anderson would discuss with the Assistant Clerk what is required and would also work with John Gramolt.

A new Our Watch scheme had been set up in Old Groombridge.

8. WARD REPORTS

(a)Groombridge Ward

Footpath 73 at the cattle grid had been closed temporarily due to sewerage on the path. Residents were thanked for contacting the Environmental Agency.

Councillors expressed concerns about the number of cyclists at Groombridge car park recently, blocking access for cars. Cllr Jenkins would speak with the village hall committee about future bookings of such events. It was also noted that any use of the Wealden car park should be agreed with WDC.

For the wider parish, there appears to be an increase in cycle races on the parish roads, which can be unsafe for other road users. Cllr D Kelly would raise at the SLR meeting and Cllr Clare at RSC

(b)St John's Ward

The grass had been cut at Lye Green but it was noted that ES Highways cut to just a 1 metre swathe generally. However, the cut at the Bunny Lane junction had been more substantial which Councillors were pleased to know due to safety concerns there.

(c)Withyham/Blackham Ward

Cllr J Kelly had met the Highways Steward and spoken about some items of concern. This included reinstating the white lines to delineate the pavement opposite St Michael's School, which the steward would look into. Cllr D Kelly would raise at the SLR meeting.

A resident had mentioned that their brown bin had not been collected and was advised to contact WDC.

A verge had been missed from the cutting schedule and was being looked at by ES Highways. A resident had enquired about regularity of hedge cutting at Teasley Mead. As this is every three years, Cllr Whittaker asked for frequency to be reviewed at Finance and Administration Committee.

Cllrs Whetstone, left the meeting

9. BRIDGING AGES PROJECT

This was considered earlier in the agenda in order that Charlotte Harvey, a representative of Bridging Ages, could present to Council.

10.WITHYHAM PARISH VOLUNTEERS: NEXT STEPS AND BALLS GREEN PROJECT

The works at Balls Green are progressing but it is unlikely to reopen this year as there has not been the manpower hoped for.

It is hoped to hold a barbeque in the first weekend of September as a showcase for residents and volunteers in order to show what is achievable and to inspire more volunteers to get involved in parish projects. Cllr J Kelly was asked to flier all residents. At that point most things should be completed except the grass seeding which would be done afterwards. It was advised that Cllrs J Kelly and Tarling should speak with the Works Coordinator about the possibility of part of the site to be used after seeding.

In order to help engage existing and recruit more volunteers the Assistant Clerk had agreed to work additional hours to set up a database, and to promote the barbeque.

11. AIR TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

Some Towns and Parishes are adopting drone policies and it was agreed that the Parish Council would monitor usage in order to consider whether to do so.

It was agreed that advice should go on the website, facebook page and in the newsletter about how members of the public can report drones along with advice about where and at what heights they can be flown.

Cllr Pardey left the meeting.

12. GROOMBRIDGE BADMINTON CLUB

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting requesting set up costs of 10 village hall bookings and some equipment be funded from the Parish Action Plan and Projects budget line as it falls under the aims of the current parish plan. This was supported by the majority of Councillors as it was seen as a good opportunity to restart badminton in the area.

- 001265 RESOLVED** to fund start up costs of 10 sessions of hall hire, freestanding posts and a net from the Parish Action Plan and Projects budget line.

13. GROOMBRIDGE POST OFFICE UPDATE

Angel Premier Stores had submitted an updated business plan, costs for alterations and application to Post Office Ltd before the 30 June deadline. An interview would likely take place mid August, and the Parish Council would support this if required. The owner had been asked to shadow the existing post office in the meantime. There would be a consultation which would last up to 14 weeks, or shorter if responses tailed off early on.

14. GROOMBRIDGE RECREATION GROUND: PLAYGROUND UPDATE AND LEASE (To request delegated authority to sign the lease and underleases)

A successful public meeting had taken place to encourage residents to help with a project renewing the play area at Groombridge Recreation Ground. Around 25 members of the public had attended. A local resident had agreed to lead the project with the parish council, and the Council looked forward to working with her as well as other families in the village. The Clerk would be developing a Terms of Reference and any Councillors interested in being involved should speak with the Clerk.

The Clerk had requested that the leases on Groombridge Recreation Ground should be ready to be signed by the week of 21 July 2017.

- 001266 RESOLVED** that the leases on Groombridge Recreation Ground should be signed when ready.

15. GROOMBRIDGE PLACE – Response to current licence application

This was considered after agenda item 3 in order that members of the public could hear Council's discussion.

16. PARISH OFFICE – To request delegated authority to Finance & Administration Committee to agree whether to commission an independent damp consultant

001267 RESOLVED that quotes from independent damp consultants should be circulated to members of Finance and Administration Committee in order to commission a report on the parish office building.

17. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – To consider a proposal to help ascertain next steps

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting recommending that a consultant is engaged to ascertain whether the Parish Council should proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan under the current planning restrictions in the District. Council agreed that despite the draft Local Plan being completed, it is no clearer as to what extent a Neighbourhood Plan could influence planning in Withyham parish.

001268 RESOLVED to commission Lindsay Frost to undertake investigations and prepare a report about the likely remit of a Neighbourhood Plan as per the briefing paper.

18. MISSING LINK UPDATE

A letter had been sent to the landowner concerned requesting a meeting to discuss the purchase of land, requesting a response by 7th July. The Clerk had not received a response and it was therefore presumed that a purchase would not be possible. A meeting of members of the Missing Link group had been arranged for later that week to consider next steps.

19. FINANCE

19.1. To note the report showing payments made to date against budgets

The Clerk circulated two reports prior to the meeting in order that Councillors could see expenditure against budgets, budget remaining and Ear-marked reserves budgets. These were noted.

19.2 To authorise the payment of invoices (to include grants) and note regular payments

Cashbook 1 (General Account)

Chq/BACS no	Payee	Detail	Net amount	Budget code
BACS66	Tree Fellas	Treeworks on Station Road, Groombridge	3300	4230
BACS67	ROSPA	Groombridge playground inspection	98	4222
BACS68	BW Patience & Sons	Fingerpost repairs 2, 4 and 6	978	4420
BACS69	RBS Ltd	Accounting software licence	116	4016
BACS70	Lockton	Buildings Insurance	553.64	4038
BACS71	Kier	office waste bin Jul-Sep	77.55	4506
BACS72	DMC	Photocopier usage Mar-Jun	190.74	4017

BACS73	Groombridge Village Hall	Hall hire playground mtg	33.76	9027
BACS74	Malcolm Brown	Mileage	1.8	4003
BACS75	Malcolm Brown	Salary Jul 2017	Total: £2087.05	4003
BACS76	Samantha Catlin	Salary Jul 2017		4000
BACS77	Deborah Siddle	Salary Jul 2017 + o/t Jun		4000
BACS78	Natalie Brett	Salary Jul 2017 + o/t Jun		4000
BACS79	Fenella Murray Willis	Clerical support Jun 2017		4005
BACS80	NEST	Pension contributions (DS/NB)	164.05	4001
BACS81	AiRS	Annual subscription	50	4008
BACS82	SALC	Legal and Finance training x2	180	4007

Payments made outside of meeting

Chq/BACS no	Payee	Detail	Net amount	Budget code
None				

Prepaid Card

Payment no	Payee	Detail	Amount	Budget
None				

Receipts

Date	Name		Amount
1.7.17	SVR	Rent	375
3.7.17	SVR	Utilities and mtg room Dec-Jun	812.1

Monthly payments made by DD/standing order outside of council meeting

Payment type	Payee	Detail	Amount	Budget
DDUW0617	Utility Warehouse	Gas & electricity	141.23	4502
DDUW0617	Utility Warehouse	Phone/ Broadband	67.6	4013
DDSEW0617	South East Water	Water charges	10	4502
DDBS0617	Business Stream	Water charges	8.2	4502
DDBG0617	British Gas	Boiler servicing	26.79	4503
SOTN0617	T Newman	Rent	625	4012
SONH0617	N Houghton	Rent	625	4012
HSBC0617	HSBC	Bank charges	7.6	4600

001269 **RESOLVED** to pay the invoices listed above, to pay by BACS/sign the cheques accordingly

19.3 To consider a request for subscriptions from AiRS

The Parish Council's subscription to AiRS had lapsed and a reminder had been received by the Clerk to pay this year's annual subscription. Whilst

Councillors recognised that AiRS provides a valuable service to village halls, it wished to monitor the value to the parish council.

001270 **RESOLVED** to subscribe to AiRS for 2017/18 and review in 2018/19.

19.4 To agree quotes (to include gas and electricity, noticeboard)

The Clerk had circulated quotes for alternative providers for gas and electricity prior to the meeting. Bristol Energy showed significant savings.

001271 **RESOLVED** to move supplier of gas and electricity to Bristol Energy on a 24 month contract.

The Clerk had circulated several designs and quotes for a noticeboard to be placed at Groombridge Play area, in order to update people on the rejuvenation project. Councillors agreed the wall hung aluminium frame from Earth Anchors.

001272 **RESOLVED** to purchase the 8xA4 wall hung aluminium framed noticeboard in green with header board, lettering and spare magnets from Earth Anchors.

19.5 To delegate authority to the Clerk to pay invoices in August in discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair, and to report to September Council

As there was no Council meeting timetabled for August, the Clerk had sought delegated authority to pay invoices in August.

001273 **RESOLVED** to grant the Clerk delegated authority to pay invoices in August in discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair, and to report to September Council

19.6 To agree charity to benefit from monies received from photocopying

Council had agreed at the June meeting to nominate a charity to benefit from monies under £10 received for photocopying. It was AGREED that First Responders should be nominated for 2017/18, and reviewed in 2018/19

19.7 To note that the bank reconciliations file was available at the meeting for review

The Clerk held the bank reconciliations file up for Councillors to see and invited members to review it either following the meeting or at any time during parish office opening hours.

20. REPORTS ON MEETINGS and CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS to include Clustering, Ashdown Forest Conservators

Cllr Obbard had attended the Ashdown Forest Conservators Parish Liaison Panel meeting and the notes had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that following the June meeting, the Ashdown Forest Conservators had been notified that they could apply to the Withyham Parish Council's grants.

Cllr Jenkins had attended a meeting with Forest Row, Hartfield and Danehill about clustering and it had been agreed that the parishes concerned would look for opportunities where this would be beneficial.

Cllr Obbard would be attending the WDALC AGM and would raise the concerns about Groombridge Place with WDC Chief Executive Charlie Lant.

The Clerks had met with the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss the number of actions arising from meetings. A cross over had been identified which means that some duplications could be removed. Alternative strategies to progress actions were also being considered, and Councillors were asked to assist with actions. Councillors would be asked to agree on mass proposals for all actions at September Council.

Councillors were also asked to alert Clerks ahead of Council meetings of updates to any actions given to them.

21. CLERK'S REPORT

The newsletter would be ready for distribution from 28th July, Councillors are asked to deliver within a week of them being available in order that all parishioners receive their copy in a timely manner.

It was reported that due to a lightning strike, the parish office internet had been down for several days. This had highlighted the need for a disaster recovery plan. Cllr Anderson offered to research a surge protector to avoid future issues.

Council AGREED that due to workload the July Finance and Administration Committee meeting should be cancelled. Urgent items of business could be circulated by email.

22. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

The Balls Green telephone box had been repainted. The Clerk confirmed that the parish Council's intention to adopt it had been made known and paperwork was awaited.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is Monday 11th September at 7.30 pm at The Old Station, Groombridge preceded by a Planning committee meeting at 7 pm

The meeting closed at 10.30 pm