



Easebourne Parish Council
Community & Environment Committee
Minutes of a Meeting Held at
6.00pm on Wednesday 7th February 2024
At Easebourne CE Primary School

Present – Mike Noble (MN) – chairman, J Macdonald-Lawson (JML), D Pack (DP), I Milne (IM)

In attendance – E Tremaine (ET) – Parish Clerk

1. **Public Question Time** – No members of the public were present.
2. **Apologies and Reasons for Absence** – Elaine Roberts-Grimsey for personal reasons
3. **Code of Conduct**
 - a. No declarations of interest
 - b. No dispensation requests
4. **Minutes of Last Meeting** – the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed. Proposed by IM, seconded by DP.
 - **Carry over action – Hooli/Stripe – MN to nudge Hooli.**
 - The meeting with Tom was set up but had to be cancelled, **ACTION – MN to re-arrange.**
 - Trees action complete.
 - JML asked about the meeting with the Church but this has not taken place yet.
5. **Verbal/Written Panel & Project Group Reports** –
 - a. **Communications (Volunteers and Staffing)**
 - i. Discussion about the Parish Magazine and who is contributing from the PC, to come back to after the scheduled meeting with the Church and Magazine team.
 - ii. The Parish newsletter has gone out and positive feedback received from the community. It was commented that it should be started sooner next year.
 - iii. A few bits and bobs have been put up on the website. Need to keep pushing for new Councillors. IM has found a potential lead **ACTION - ET to follow up with good Councillor guide etc.**
 - b. **Easebourne Park**
 - i. Fete in the park – Sunday 7th July – first meeting with the PTA has gone ahead, jobs all delegated out. Much bigger event than previous with lots of elements. IM & MN have made a good start on their actions. JML would like to be involved too.
 - ii. Loo repair – IM has spoken with Artizans, they have come and put in some posts to stop the door swinging too far but are yet to repair.
 - iii. Stadium seating project – quotes have been sought. £16.5k plus VAT for 5 rows. £12k for 4 rows. £10k for 3 rows. With steps down the middle and a central rail and a rail at the top. 2 more quotes need to be sought before proceeding. **ACTION – IM to seek more quotes.** The quotes can then go ahead to be approved by the Finance Committee.
 - iv. Defibrillator – there is a problem with the door of the new defib which IM is following up with the Heartbeat Trust. **ACTION – IM to sort defibrillator door.**

- v. Lawrence from Wildwood is going to do an inspection at the park for dens and trails next month.
 - vi. IM spoke to Keith Dummer regarding putting in some more picnic benches with concrete pads. **ACTION – IM to follow up and get another quote.**
 - c. **Emergencies and Winter Planning**
 - d. **Footpaths**
 - i. JML reported that the issue with the steps that come down to Winter Lane has been reported to WSCC.
 - e. **Highways**
 - i. Gateway posts – DP has looked at how to give them a facelift and has a recommendation for a cleaning solution which he will go ahead with and test on a small area of the posts. IM suggested that if this works FrEP could be approached to help.
 - ii. JML raised whether we were notified about the closure at Mill Bridge, ET confirmed we were not. MN will mention to TR at the Highways meeting.
 - f. **Parishes Environment Group**
 - i. ERG sent around an update following her meeting with Paul Stephens regarding the swifts, see appendix.
6. **Proposals to Full Council** – none
7. **Matters of Report** - none
8. **Date of Next Meeting** – 6.00pm Wednesday 3rd April 2024.

Meeting Closed at 18.45

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairman

Appendix

Notes from a meeting with Paul Stevens re Swift Box Initiative 19.01.2024

Paul has a background in bird conservation and is currently the lead conservation expert on House Martins in the UK as well as running a number of swift box initiatives. Paul is formerly the Wetlands Manager at Arundel. He has considerable experience in the current initiative to promote swift boxes in Sussex and also makes nesting boxes for both swifts and housemartens. Both swifts and housemartens are on the red list as endangered species. Funding for some of the work has come from Sussex Ornithological Society, RHS Wisley, South Downs National Park and also via Justgiving fundraising online.

Rebuilding the swift population takes time. Putting up nesting boxes is just the start. Swifts are colonial nesters and everything starts with a survey to find out if there are any swifts in an area so that you can build from that start-point. Swifts adopt a nest as their forever home and return to it each year. They winter in Africa, following the rains and termite hatch areas (main source of food). The return to the UK at the end of April/early May.

We looked at an app called Swift Mapper which identified that whilst there are a few swifts in Midhurst there are only a couple in Easebourne (conservation area), a couple in Lodsworth and none in Heyshott (that's what any surveys are currently indicating). It is important therefore to start with a survey and this is usually done in June/July in the early morning and early evening.

Typically a project like the kind PEG or Greenheal are looking at would start with a training session which Paul would be prepared to run and in getting interested parties on board as key supporters eg Derek Welsman (Canon Reverend at St Mary's who is already a keen birdwatcher, any local environmental supporters in the Easebourne Conservation area such as Emily Sacco (Sustainable Dinners) as well as parish council members and Easebourne Primary School. It is also worth involving Cowdray Estate Sustainability Manager Nick Macdonald and also any key players from developers, particularly the ones developing the old primary school site in the conservation area (Metis Homes). A training session was recently run in the Arundel area, promoted by Arundel Green team via Facebook, posters etc and there was a good take up with over 70 people attending the training session on swifts. There are now 24 swift boxes and 14 housemarten boxes going up in Arundel. Swift bricks work particularly well in new developments where bricks designed to house swifts are built into new homes.

There is also the option to install housemarten towers which Paul makes. We walked around Easebourne Park and looked at this as a potential site. Paul is especially keen to get young children involved and develop their awareness and understanding of the need to protect threatened species of birds.

We agreed that as a next step I would report back to PEG/Greenheal at the next meeting 22.01.2024 and also to the various parish councils. I would also approach other interested stakeholders as mentioned above. I will then get back in touch with Paul with a view to setting up a training session for the beginning of May (possible venue Cowdray Hall) and we can see the level of interest locally and work out a plan to move forward on getting swift

boxes up around our communities. This will require some promotion to make sure it is a successful event.

Elaine Roberts Grimsey 19.01.2024