

## Buildings and Business Plan Matters

### Buildings

51 High Street is now very low cost electricity and water & sewerage is minimal as it is unused. The area has a few items inside and is checked frequently for any issues.

49 High Street – the potential office alterations are being investigated and some alternatives have been suggested. These will all be looked into and cost estimated and presented back to full council when the information is all collated and ready for a decision to be made. Some will have low costs around £20,000 possibly and some will have greater costs associated £50,000+

The carpet in some of the rooms is looking poor; however there is little point in spending anything on these at present and they are adequate.

The leak that occurred early in the year in the water mains on council land is almost completed. The clerk is now waiting for the final adjustment from the sewerage company as they charge based on the water meter for fresh water. They have now received the letter from the leak company detailing the issue that has occurred. This is being chased frequently and council will be notified when the matter is concluded in full.

### Pavilion

Window in shower at Pavilion rotted and needs replacing – S Shing offered to use the grant money to fund this. Estimated costs of one window £450 UPVC obscure glass for shower area. Needs to be safety in bathing area, but above 800mm height. This has now been approved by full council and the clerk has assisted the district councillors in completing the application for funding. I will await a response from the district councillors when the funding is granted if at all.

Vent now given the go ahead By MCI & TV. Have set the wheels in motion and awaiting a date for the vent to be done. This is likely to be in the next few weeks before Christmas or just after xmas in the new year.

Shower hooks installed in the shower room for towels.

Lights being replaced with fluorescent tubes and old fittings to be possibly used in the gent's loo in the High Street whilst awaiting refurb/permanently.

Legionnaires test all done, awaiting results.

The area does not have air conditioning.  
The area is under 500m<sup>2</sup>

All fire extinguishers up to date.  
Key to open kitchen window shutters is now on a hook in the kitchen, users advised.

Kitchen still needs doing, cricket indicated they wanted to replace in exchange for free rental... will put to council if letter comes in.

Wannock Office

Have a few people interested in hiring the room and council have now resolved to charge at £15 per hour. There are a few chairs in the room left over from the chambers and these are now in the cupboard there and a couple of tables that were in t51 have been moved so some basic furniture is there for use now.

There was a small ingress of water through the walls when the pointing was being done, this has now dried and Norman has plans to retouch these on his list of tasks.

Files for storage are now in the small office room, which can be locked and key pad coded. Therefore this will remain locked when the area is hired out. The kitchen is still in a reasonable condition although dated. The toilets are all in good condition.

I have got quotes for the alarms. The alarms at present are not police connected and would need to be replaced. Once the quote is in the cost versus the use can be considered. Effectively the building is empty except for files and a small amount of furniture. The cost quote came in at £

The clerk has considered putting a fire safe in the small office room for offsite backup, although more recent events have indicated this will not be necessary now.

Field area

The field has now been dedicated as a field in trust without charitable status. All paperwork has been sent off to the solicitors and land registry now.

The goal posts have now been stripped back, protected, painted and the new nets fitted.

#### Age Gym/S106

This is in hand; we are now looking for a RoSPA report for the insurers which they require prior to the installation.

#### Gate entrance to the field area and play area

The gate to the play area had an old fitting; the park is checked daily Monday to Friday. A resident contacted the office and stated that the gate had not closed properly and allowed his granddaughter to exit before he could get her. On checking the gate it was within its tolerances, but it was not a tight close and so whilst the clerk was on holiday the staff changed the fitting with a new one. The new fitting shuts too quickly but has a snug fit on close. There were concerns about the possibility of finger entrapment and therefore the gate was chained shut and a sign erected signposting users to the field entrance gate.

The gate remains closed, it was unlocked temporarily for the annual park check, where it was confirmed that the gate shuts too quickly (not too slowly). As the fitting was a new fitting, there is no way to "break" the fitting and make it looser, although investigations are still underway whether it can be loosened off by over stretching it etc.

The same resident has now complained to RoSPA, the clerk has written to RoSPA stating the facts and has asked the chief officer to give advice on how to tackle the issue. He has stated that he will consider the whole matter and email back. I am waiting for this email response.

In the meantime, Council has been looking into a potential move of that gate to a location further along. The gate will require the barrier and permission from ESCC to move the barrier and to tarmac over the grassed area which is part ESCC Highways owned and part PTC owned. The clerk has now been advised by ESCC that planning permission may be required (the road is a particular designated road) and so the clerk is now awaiting information from Wealden District Council on whether planning permission is required for this. Once that is known ESCC will be able to give the Town Council an estimate of the costs involved in moving the gate from that location.

#### Other assets

#### Oakleaf play area

The equipment is now aging and the majority of the equipment is over 20 years old with a few exceptions. Much of the equipment has been checked and maintained adequately over the years but the large slide and attached bridge is now failing. It is safe and is being checked daily. Unfortunately to replace the parts that are failing would mean that the whole piece of equipment will need to be replaced.

I have had a letter with children's signatures on asking for a swing to be installed. This was from children at the local Polegate primary and junior school.

The s106 money CAN be used, but as long as the Town Council could demonstrate that the equipment is suitable for use for over 12's and possibly adults. As the funding available is for youth and adult play space. There are a few pieces of equipment that would fit this criteria on first glance and these have been confirmed by the district council who would need to approve this. Once issue that might occur is the land is rented from ESCC who could at any time end the licence and the equipment would need to be removed. Whilst this is unlikely to happen it may cause issues with the S1096 funding. This needs to be checked in full. The clerk will be reporting to the council on this in due course.

### Street Lighting

Most of the columns are now scheduled for replacement and the cells in those locations being changed over to the new LED and part night lighting systems. However there are still a number that need to be replaced and I am meeting with the street lighting engineer over the next few months to discuss what is left over, how many have been done and completed (we have not been invoiced yet) and which remain requiring replacement. This will allow a final check on the likely costs that need to be set into the budget and for a future replacement strategy.

### Allotments

#### Gosford Way

It is important to know that the Town Council does not gain ANY income from the allotment in Gosford Way. This is because the land is rented to the Town Council and the District Council charge exactly the same amount that income is derived the year before. Each year the District Council contact the Town Council and the clerk supplies them with the figures of income from that financial year and the Council received an invoice for that same amount. Therefore there is little point in increasing the fees for Gosford way, only to keep it in line with the other allotment. PTC has now had permission to use the allotment area next to the wall, although the land is poor quality

the list is still very long and a number of people have been interested in taking over the plot.

#### Cophall Allotment

Cophall allotment is our larger allotment and has a large waiting list as well. The allotment is maintained by both the maintenance person and a grounds maintenance contractor. The maintenance person has been gradually improving the allotment, particularly the walkways and numbering of the allotments.

There are a number of historical issues on the allotment and these related to the sun/shade on the plots and the waterlogged areas. These are being tackled one by one gradually and in some instances this has freed up a small plot.

There have been recent talks of putting a toilet cubicle on the allotment. This is fairly costly (around £1500 per year) and I am currently looking at whether this would be viable if each allotment holder paid toward a toilet. If this is a viable cost this could be put to council and the allotment holders to see if they were willing to pay this on top of their normal allotment fees. (Allotment holder request and considered by District Councillor for a grant donation towards one years funding).

#### Brightling Road

Brightling road has five main areas to consider:

##### Entrance Field

Main field with play area, skate park and basketball court

BMX Track

Meadow

PADMEC mini Railway enclosure

The entrance field is close to the stream and the stream is owned by the council as a riparian owner, plus the environment agency access the stream regularly and keeps it clear. This flows towards the storage area in land beyond that which is council owned.

There is a main gate, William Daly gate, which leads to empty land. A third of the way up is a bridge which leads to the right into the main field. Further up is a stile which leads to the farmers field beyond and the footpath 5 (ESCC maintained) this goes behind Heron Ridge housing area.

A number of houses back gardens adjoin the council land and although gates are allowed, the council periodically send out letters

stating that there is no right of way across council land. This prevents a house owner from claiming rights of way in the future. Occasionally house owners approach the council to be able to do work on their gardens with access to the rear. Depending on the work this is either granted or goes to full council for approval. (for when a skip is required to be placed on land etc)

Occasionally the office receives queries about trees on council land. The council does not have a policy on this (something that may need to be considered in the future). But decisions have been made which direct policy that the council will not undertake tree surgery on council owned trees but allows the householder to arrange for their own tree surgeon to remove any overhanging branches if they do not wish for the tree to "over hang" their land.

Many house holders would like that this is the councils responsibility but in law a land owner is not required to do this and it would be more economical to remove the trees in some instances.

Polegate Town Council was subject to an insurance claim on the trees in the Meadow (allegedly undermining an extension of new houses there.) These trees were removed and the current ones are checked annually as part of the insurance to ensure that the trees are kept in check. The report is prepared and from time to time work is required. Often there is not but a budget figure is entered for this.

The stream has once again become overgrown with soft vegetation and the clerk is arranging for this to be cleared by the grounds maintenance contractor/payback team if free of charge and within their new remit.

The BMX track is used, but I would suggest not as much as it could be. The land there generally looks derelict and is very uneven; there are signs up to warn people.

The skate park signs will soon be ordered as the old ones are now becoming unreadable.

The goal posts have now been stripped back, repaired and painted and the new nets fitted.

The cycle shelter has suffered from a large amount of vandalism (the panels smashed) and the clerk has not replaced these but had them removed for safety. It is doubtful whether the shed is actually used for bicycles. The committee may wish for the panels to be replaced (but these are costly and are quite likely to be broken again; They could be replaced by sheet metal which is less prone to vandalism (pop stud rivets) and would then protect the cycles if used.

The rain shelter for dog walkers adults and youth alike, has also been vandalised and the costs for replacing some of the panels is being investigated and a number of crime reports submitted. At present the shelter has not been repaired but the sides made safe after the panels removed.

The skate park has had 3 of the 4 checks this year and has also had its RoSPA safety check. Some of the equipment is aging, but this is being maintained well by the company. Last years contract was poorly maintained and the clerk noted the breach and negotiated and full discount on the contract for that year. Each periodic check is now chased directly (the contractor thought one of his team was doing the work).

There continues to be some issues with litter and other anti social behaviours and these are reported immediately to the police and if damage is caused this is notified on the 101 non emergency reporting system. This alerts the police to the issues going on and also the clerk liaises with the targeted youth support team, who in turn liaise with the police.

#### Basketball court

The maintenance person has been siding the edges of the basketball court. The baskets have been replaced with less perishable nets. He has also swept the areas and weed kills (with safe weed killer) to prevent the lifting of the tarmac which has happened over the previous number of years.

#### PADMEC

Padmec continue to invest in their area and improve the whole site.

#### Pond

The pond and stream are being kept clear and generally they are dry in the summer and full in the winter. The surrounding area is managed in as natural way as possible in accordance with the report originally made on creation of the Meadow area.

#### Meadow

As above the area is kept in as natural state as possible. Some of the dips have filled with water and these have been topped up with soil from other areas. The central area has been sown with the wildflower seeds as re the original report. The areas have been strimmed and the brambles cleared earlier in the year. Then dips have been filled and the area generally kept in its natural but maintained condition.

The benches have now settled in and although it is quite wet there it got a fair amount of use in the summer. The litter picker has been gradually going into the undergrowth and collecting ancient litter to ensure that it is kept as clear as possible.

#### High Street Toilets

The toilets have now been purchased for £20,000. The costs are still being handed over to the Town Council with effect from April 2014.

Water costs	£210 pa
Sewerage costs	£300 pa
Electricity Costs	Unknown at present £600 pa?
Maintenance (drain clearance)	£200 pa
Council Tax	£1220 pa
Cleaning/unlocking/locking up	£7217 pa
Sanitary Bins	£240 pa
Total costs expected	10000 pa