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# **Crouch Stakeholder Group Meeting**

Seaford Town Council, 37 Church Street, Seaford, BN25 1HG

Wednesday 16th October 2024 at 5pm

## **Seaford Town Council (STC) Officers:**

Sharan Brydon, Assets & Projects Manager, STC (Chair)

**STC Councillors:**

Steve Quayle, interim Town Clerk, Seaford Town Council

Cllr Christina Bristow, Seaford Town Council

Cllr Rod Buchanan, Seaford Town Council

Cllr Stephanie Dubas, Seaford Town Council

Cllr Imogen Taylor, Seaford Town Council

**Group representatives:**

Crouch Concerns – Bob Downing and Bob Gough

Crouch Bowls Club – Dave Grimley and Richard Bosworth

Seaford Community Garden – Lesley Drew, Gillian Davey, Margery Pennington

Seaford Natural History Society – Mike Vingoe

Seaford Town Football Club – Mike Greve

Seaford Action for Nature (TFS) – Margery Diamond, Viv Johnson, Jackie Emery

## **Minute Taker**: Louise Dickson, Projects & Facilities Assistant, STC

## **MINUTES**

1. **Introduction and Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr Sally Markwell (STC), Cllr Maggie Wearmouth (STC), Cllr Olivia Honeyman (STC), Cllr Lindsay Stirton (STC), Paul Boyce (LDC), Gemma Mcfarlane, The Mecread Youth Centre.

1. **Updates**

**Seaford Action for Nature**

* Seaford Action for Nature (formerly Trees for Seaford) has shared the plan for the new trees at The Crouch. They have been collaborating with East Sussex County Council and Balfour Beatty volunteers to plant 120 trees in Seaford under the Urban Tree Challenge scheme. One of the designated sites for this initiative is The Crouch.
* SAFN-confirm that the budget includes provisions for the commercial watering of the trees.
* SAFN have selected the special varieties of trees, which are on order. They have also contacted the residents at the site, this has also involved a leaflet drop.

*Bob Downing from Crouch Concerns has expressed that he and his neighbours have not been consulted regarding the tree planting, nor received any leaflets.*

*SAFN responded by reaffirming their commitment to addressing residents' concerns. For any households that did not respond, a leaflet was delivered to their door.*

* The planting will take place on Saturday, 23rd November, in the morning. All volunteers are welcome to join them for this event. The Mecread Centre will be providing soup for the volunteers.

*Cllr Stephanie Dubas – Would like to clarify that the proposal for the inclusion of 15 trees in Crouch Gardens was not approved at the full council meeting*.

* SAFN has stated that they have completed all requested actions. They proposed the inclusion of 15 trees in Crouch Gardens, and this proposal has been reviewed by the full council. SAFN was under the impression that it had received approval.
* SAFN-Did request clear communication with the stakeholder’s group regarding this matter.

*Cllr Christina Bristow-A walkaround with town councillors may be necessary following the response from Cornfield House regarding the trees. They have requested more information about the proximity of the trees to the exit, particularly in relation to safety considerations.*

* SAFN-Confirmed that the decision to place the trees in the area near Cornfield House is primarily based on accessibility for watering, ensuring that the van can navigate the area easily.
* SAFN to liaise with Councillor Christina Bristow, Councillor Maggie Wearmouth, and Bob Offen, Inspector for STC to discuss details regarding space for the trees, particularly near the playground. They will also explore the possibility of planting additional trees in the gaps between the existing ones.

***Actions: Onsite meeting needed between councillors and Trees for Seaford.***

**Seaford Community Garden**

* The back wall has been successfully repaired, though it is now lower than before. A structure will need to be installed on top to prevent unauthorized access.
* The Community Garden open day in July was a success and well attended. *Councillor Imogine Taylor expressed her admiration for the open day and the strong sense of community spirit.*
* Garden therapy sessions are currently on hold due to illness.
* A memorial tree will be planted in the Peace Garden for a volunteer who passed away on October 30th at 11 AM.
* Enquired about the arrival of one of the compostables, as there is currently no toilet access for volunteers, who are using the bowls club in the meantime.

**Crouch concerns**

Several outstanding concerns regarding recent developments**:**

* There are no updates to report, as no progress has been made on the issues at hand.
* The appeal with Seaford Town Council (STC) has not yet proceeded.
* Historical complaints remain unaddressed.
* Have the Working Group established by STC made any progress regarding the lighting, gates, fencing, and advertising? There are specific requirements concerning the fencing around the pitch as stipulated by the FA that need to be addressed.
* Regarding CCTV, have the cameras been registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and do they comply with data protection laws? It is important to be mindful of individuals' information rights and responsibilities concerning those rights.
* Are the financial regulations being met by the football club in comparison to the other users in the area.

***Actions:***

***Steve Quayle has requested additional patience as we work towards organising a meeting with Crouch Concerns.***

***Councillor Christina Bristow has also expressed her desire to be included in this meeting, along with representatives from the football club.***

**Seaford Natural History Society**

* There have been no complaints regarding the proposal to allow edges to develop wildflowers and support insect populations. It appears that the cuttings have been collected following the mowing.
* However, it has been noted that the edges are not as wide as originally agreed upon.
* Additionally, garden cuttings have been dumped at the back of the Crouch, and it is imperative that these cuttings are removed as soon as possible.
* Grateful to Seaford Town Council for their continued support.

**Crouch Bowls Clubs**

* Pleased to report that the lights are now installed and fully operational.
* Excellent meeting with idverde, who have significantly improved their work on the green. They are currently turfing over two of the beds and splitting the perennials for the remaining bed.
* Disappointed with the lack of communication surrounding the matter of the proposed memorial bench, which is replacing like for like. *Sharan Brydon commented that STC are in the process of checking the lease and the use of disposable land, although the memorial policy is currently on hold.*
* Carl Smith has requested bi-annual meetings with idverde to ensure ongoing collaboration and communication.

**STFC**

* The new committee is actively working to improve engagement with the council and has been shared information about meetings that have been organised and subsequently cancelled. It has been noted that the previous committee for the club did not always adhere to best practices.
* It has become increasingly evident that the club’s infrastructure is falling behind, resulting in disappointment for both the children and adults of Seaford. There are frustrations as the club strive to implement improvements, yet they feel that they have lost a year in this effort.
* Unfortunately, the facilities do not meet the same quality standards as other playing fields, leading to them hiring alternative locations for the teams.
* Discussions are needed relating to the planning for the lights, the removal of fencing, and the securing of planning for the advertising boards.
* It is important as a club that all stakeholders feel valued and heard as the club looks to move forward.
* Update on the "Scoop the Poop" initiative. The club actively involved children in the community to design a poster that promotes responsible dog ownership. This engagement not only raises awareness about the campaign but also encourages creativity and responsibility among the youth. The club has communicated with both Seaford Town Council (STC) and Lewes District Council (LDC) regarding the processes involved. The costs from Tansley’s have been reviewed, and both LDC and STC have expressed their agreement to support these initiatives but still waiting to hear back from STC.
* Focus remains on fostering community responsibility for dog ownership, as staff are currently addressing the issue of dog mess on the mini-pitches and main pitch prior to their use.

*Cllr Imogen Taylor commented that dog fouling has become an increasing problem in our area. Could STC assess the situation and explore possible solutions.*

* An issue regarding the placement of one of the new dog bins, which is currently situated in the middle of the path, obstructing vehicle access and making it difficult for vehicles to turn around.

*Bob Gough commented that no vehicles should be driving down the road, and deliveries are not required to stop outside the clubhouse.*

* The club has formally requested a meeting with the councillors so that they would gain a better understanding of the club. Such a meeting would foster improved communication and collaboration between the club and the council.

*Cllr Christina Bristow-enquired about the recent removal of the infill from the pitch. Will there be a replacement provided. The issue of the perimeter barrier has not yet been addressed. There is a strong desire to see this initiative move forward and be developed, particularly as it was not handled correctly by the previous town clerk.*

*The working group are four key stakeholders who wish to contribute to the review process. The working group will return with recommendations based on these discussions.*

*Would it be beneficial to arrange meetings with new staff, existing staff, and ward councillors to ensure comprehensive communication and collaboration moving forward.*

**Councillors Update**

**New Bins**

* The new dual bins have been rolled out. These bins are designed for both litter and dog waste, featuring a wildlife flap that helps keep litter contained while preventing access for predators. However, there is still no bin by the mini pitch.
* Additionally, Mark Abraham, (award-winning veterinary surgeon, broadcaster, author and animal welfare campaigner, has offered to help publicise the dog bins, which is a positive step.

*Sharan Brydon- We are currently reviewing the locations of some of the bins. There has been no feedback regarding the other locations yet. We will address this within our team and with LDC. Communication will follow up on this matter.*

**Heat Pump at The Mecread**

Cllr Rod Buchanon-The installation of the heat pump at the Mecread Youth Centre has encountered some challenges related to the lease. Rod visited the site to assess the situation. The outdoor condenser can be placed on the wall overlooking the Crouch, which aligns with our commitment to creating a sustainable green environment. STC would also need to consider noise implications moving forward.

**STC updates**

The compostables will be relocated with the assistance of the company that installs them.

*Bob Gough would like to confirm whether it has been established within the full council that the compostables will be moving to The Crouch and South Hill Barn. Additionally, could Seaford Town Council provide information on the long-term plans for upgrading the toilet facilities at The Crouch.*

***Action: STC to update the notices on Compostable doors.***

**3. Next Meeting**

Meeting arranged for Thursday 13th March 2025 at 5:00 PM.