

**Minutes - Piddinghoe Parish Meeting**  
**Held - Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 7.30 – 9pm**  
**Venue - Piddinghoe Village Hall**

*This Parish Meeting was called by the following local electors:*

Juliet Amer / Sohail Amer / Steve Green / Ben May / Sarah May / Donna Sant / Craig Stronach

*In response to (as summary):*

- the limited time allocated for public discussion of ongoing concerns regarding safety and the C7 with reference to Egrets Way at the Piddinghoe Parish Council Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025;
  - our concerns that any potential reduction in speed appears to be contingent on delivery of the proposed infrastructure project, Egrets Way. However, the project does not guarantee vehicle speed reduction, excludes the south junction with Piddinghoe Village/C7, and has a poor history of delivery and delays;
  - a lack of clear strategy for engaging the community, resulting in local voices and safety concerns going unheard and undocumented.
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**Present:**

*NPLA members (the Panel)* - Juliet Amer / Sohail Amer / Sam Green / Steve Green / Ben May / Sarah May / Donna Sant / James Stevenson / Craig Stronach  
*Cllrs* – Paul Bevan (Chair, Piddinghoe Parish Council) / Amanda Brimble / Bev Traylen  
Members of the public

**Apologies:**

Cllr - Stella Spiteri (Lewes District Council)

**1. WELCOME**

Piddinghoe Parish Council Chair, **Cllr Paul Bevan**, opened the meeting stating that it had been called as a Parish Meeting under the 1972 Local Government Act by six local electors. In response to issues arising from the Piddinghoe Parish Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 when it was felt that not enough time was given for members of the public to raise issues and concerns regarding safety on the C7 and

EW7. Paul stated that in light of this he would step down from Chairing the meeting, agreeing to pass the role to **Sarah May** (NPLA member and resident).

Sarah May, Chair, thanked Paul and reiterated his point that the purpose of the meeting was to raise ongoing concerns regarding safety and the C7, particularly those previously unrecorded or unacknowledged, via a resident led forum. The aim being to formally document these so that they can enter the public domain. She pointed out that the NPLA were not acting as experts but concerned members of the community.

**Sam Green**, (NPLA guest member), formally introduced the meeting emphasising the importance of residents' voices being heard to genuinely represent the community's concerns regarding safety and the C7. She highlighted frustration over the lack of action despite years of reports, consultations, and strategies aimed at improving safety on the C7. The *Roads in the South Downs: Enhancing the Safety and Quality of Roads and Places in the National Park*, published in June 2015 by Hamilton-Baillie Associates Ltd for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and its partner councils was cited. This report warned that higher vehicle speeds would discourage public use of rural roads and erode village life—an outcome Sam said she believed has materialised. Sam argued that accident statistics are misleading, as many road users avoid dangerous areas altogether, making the absence of incidents a poor indicator of much-needed safety improvements. Despite multiple initiatives since 2015, including surveys and feasibility studies, fundamental safety concerns remain unresolved. Sam stressed that the current speed limit of 50mph undermines the village's liveability, with residents experiencing daily noise and danger. She called for the meeting to be a turning point—focused not on past delays but on collective future action. The goal is to make the community's voice stronger and ensure that promises finally lead to tangible improvements and outcomes.

The North Piddinghoe Landowners Association (NPLA) went on to introduce themselves and indicate which homes they reside in.

## **2. A SAFER C7**

**Steve Green**, (NPLA member and resident), introduced himself stating that he has 30 years professional experience working for the London Fire Brigade, with 5 years as Head of Rescue Operations. He has also worked with Transport for London (TFL) under Conservative and Labour administrations on road safety having spent 5 years as Borough Commander.

- i. **C7 usage – recent data + statistics** – Steve cited the recent Safer C7 Draft Study by PJA (presented on 17 June 2025 to an advisory group of parish councils and stakeholders). The NPLA have noted errors and omissions in the

report regarding proximity risks and footways. The report states that there are no buildings with active frontage on the C7 at Piddinghoe, and no Footways/ Paths, which is factually incorrect. When the NPLA reported this to Joe Attwood at Safer C7, he stated (via email) that the revised information the NPLA provided him with would not impact the recommendations of the report. This raises concerns about the integrity of the process, which fails to acknowledge facts or lived experience. Indicating that it is not evidence led but rather outcome driven.

- ii. **Residents' ongoing concerns** – Steve highlighted the lack of action taken to improve road safety due to focus on Egrets Way Phase 7 (EW7). He raised issues around delivery of the final stage of EW sidelining residents' concerns for strategic connectivity stating that EW7 brings no guarantee of speed reduction, no redesign of high-risk junctions and no meaningful response to suppressed demands for safe walking. Steve reported that he raised concerns with Neville Harrison (former member of SDNPA and currently a member of the Project Delivery Team, Safer C7) in March 2023 and again at a following Piddinghoe Parish Council meeting also in 2023 (which was not included in the minutes of said meeting). At the same meeting, Steve highlighted the dangers of wedding any potential safety improvements to the C7 with Egrets Way. Both projects (Safer C7 and Egrets Way) have since become combined and consequently EW7 is being used as leverage to reduce speed on the C7. At this point, Paul confirmed that funding for EW7 has not been confirmed while risks associated with the C7 continue on a daily basis. Steve responded with the point that combining the two runs the risk of nothing getting done to address the ongoing issues.
- iii. **The C7 feasibility study vs the Safer C7 Project.** The 2022 ESCC Highways feasibility study paid for by Piddinghoe Parish Council relies on crash data. This approach ignores the broader safety principals of The Department for Transport Circular 01/2013, "Setting Local Speed Limits", revised in March 2024. Meanwhile the Safer C7 Project claims to rebalance road user hierarchy, but its proposals are designed to deliver infrastructure and include no near miss data. Both reports negate community engagement and lived concerns.
- iv. **What the safer C7 means to the NPLA, our community and what we are campaigning for.** Steve pointed out that 50 mph is an excessive speed regardless of criteria and then only if observed. In his experience of living in Piddinghoe for 7 years it is often not. He stated that the road fails on current accessibility standards and safety principles making it illegal, and that ESCC Highways is failing in its duty of care. The NPLA want guaranteed speed reduction in residential zones, footways that meet national standards (the current ones do not) and safe access to and from properties regardless of the

proposed cycle path. The NPLA ask that all future reports start with one question: *what does safety mean to those who live here?*

### 3. CYCLE PATHS AND THE C7

- i. **Egrets Way to date and promises made on C7 speed reduction. James Stevenson** (NPLA member and resident) covered his experience of the history of EW going back to 2013. He referenced the first 'closed' Piddinghoe Parish Council meeting held in 2014 when it was agreed to work with EW on putting EW through Piddinghoe. At a following meeting villagers felt they were being forced to adopt EW. EW representatives targeted individual villagers for further discussion (undocumented) including but not limited to (Shelia, Brian Brady and latterly Steve Green; James and Diana Stevenson were also visited by EW at this time). James stated that this behaviour by EW representatives has been going on for 10 years.
- ii. **Egrets Way Phase 7 – Sustrans Proposals.** James raised current Sustrans plans for the cycle path. FAQs recently posted by Piddinghoe Parish Council suggest that they don't think the speed limit will be reduced below 40mph should the proposal go ahead. He asked: is there any minuted evidence from ESCC that the speed limit can only be reduced to 40mph or is this anecdotal? There is a pinch point on the Piddinghoe stretch of the C7 between Magnolias and Kiln Cottage. A real concern is that the cycle path goes ahead, along with a pedestrian crossing leading to the bus stop while the speed limit remains at 50mph. James pointed out that there are examples of pinch points where cyclists, pedestrians and road users exit together supported by a speed restriction. The example he gave was Narrow Street, London, E14.

### 4. Egrets Way Phase 7 (EW7) – NPLA concerns and our objection to the proposals

- i. **Impact – Ben May** (NPLA member and resident) noted that the projected completion of EW7 will have a significant impact on Piddinghoe compared to other villages along the C7. Impacts could include increased parking around the village with cyclists arriving by car to then use EW; increased littering; the visibility of Piddinghoe on national cycling maps could change the quiet, secluded nature of the village; loss of verge features along the C7 could alter the rural character of the village entrance at the north junction, and reduce biodiversity in those areas; the path and adjacent areas will need to be well maintained; without a guaranteed speed reduction, junctions like the one at the northern entrance to the village could become even more hazardous because of mixed use traffic.

- ii. **Risk Assessment** – (this was referenced later by Steve in 5. Community Engagement)
- iii. **Speed reduction** There is no binding agreement in place to ensure that the speed limit will be reduced should EW7 go ahead. Safer C7 has proposed visual cues for reducing the speed limit however these are only backed by enforceable speed limits, legal and planning consents. ESCC Highways has indicated that EW7 *could* reduce the speed to 40mph. Similarly, Piddinghoe Parish Council's recent FAQs stated the cycle path *should* reduce the speed to 40mph. But there are no guarantees. Why has there been no commitment to secure a binding agreement from ESCC Highways to reduce the speed? Why hasn't a traffic regulation order (TRO) been requested by the Parish Council as a condition of their support for the project? This has created a planning gap leaving residents exposed to further risk.
- iv. **Consultation - Juliet Amer** (NPLA member and resident) stated that prior to the purchase of their property and other riparian properties there was no mention of EW in the searches conducted by solicitors. Previous village consultation in 2024 was poorly communicated and therefore poorly attended. Consequently, there has been no transparent strategic community engagement. On a personal note, Juliet added that the Sustrans plans do not reflect the buildings that are currently on their property.
- v. **Handling of objections – Sohail Amer** (NPLA member and resident) noted that he hasn't seen any record of residents' objections to the plans and moving forward wanted to know how these would be recorded in future meetings and consultations.
- vi. **Funding** - Juliet observed that SDNPA has secured funding for the project over the next two years. However, there was no indication as to where the funding came from, when the funding window opened and when it would close.
- vii. **Additional Funding** – James reflected on the trail of funding and how the CIL may or may not be connected to a project like this. He wanted clarification on who exactly would benefit from the funding.
- viii. **Completion of EW7** – (see note vi)
- ix. **Disruption to our community** – (see note i)
- x. **Maintenance of existing infrastructure** Ben wanted clarification on who will be responsible for the maintenance of the cycle path given the current state of existing pathways being in very poor condition.

## 5. Community Engagement

The following concerns were raised and lived experiences shared by members of the public who are Piddinghoe residents:

- the distance between Piddinghoe's north junction and the C7 blind bend is 34 metres which is not compliant with local authority guidance (e.g. Nottinghamshire, Fareham) which specifies 160 metres as the required forward visibility on bends for roads with design speeds of 50–60 mph.
- (lived experience) a resident who has lived in the village for 16 years commented on the challenges of pushing a buggy along the C7 path to visit her parents who were at the time residing at Kiln Cottage. She also described crossing the C7 to access the bus stop as terrifying. She reported that Lewes District Council had stated that not enough people had died on this part of the C7 to warrant reducing the speed and that because this part of the village didn't clearly look like a village people would just break the law if the speed was to be reduced. The resident thought these were challengeable grounds to attempt getting the speed reduced. She declared support for EW7 so that her son could cycle safely to Lewes.
- The Panel was asked how we intend to challenge the proposals for EW7. Sarah commented that we would challenge the accepted notion from ESCC Highways that the speed can only be reduced to 40mph. Ben clarified that following the meeting minutes would be published, shared and circulated so that they can be included in any future consultation process.
- Steve emphasised that speed reduction on the C7 should not be linked to or dependent on EW7. They are separate issues. Steve went on to state that the situation regarding landowners and EW7 had not been communicated accurately via Piddinghoe Parish Council. At the last Piddinghoe Parish Council meeting the Chair was reported as saying that there was resistance from landowners for EW. Steve responded that this was untrue. Some years ago, he had offered his land (200 metres fronting the road) to EW for free on the condition that the C7 speed limit was lowered to 30mph and that they make a pathway for all residents to use safely. This discussion was not minuted at the relevant Piddinghoe Parish Council meeting. Steve also noted that the road fails the requirements of Highway Code 163 on a number of counts making it potentially illegal.
- Steve stated that there needs to be an independent risk assessment.
- A resident requested data about accidents and deaths on the C7
- Sam underscored the way specific crash data was used to support or undermine the case for speed reduction on the C7.
- We were asked by the floor about our information on safe road speeds. Sarah said that the Department for Transport was responsible for setting local speed limits and that these figures were supported in SDNPA principles. She quoted: *a 50mph speed limit is only appropriate where visibility, which means*

*sightlines, meets minimum stopping distances and pedestrian infrastructure is adequate.*

- Rodmell's successful speed reduction to 30mph through the village was raised. Juliet shared that she had made contact with a Rodmell resident who reported that the village paid for the speed reduction measures themselves and were still in debt.
- Ouse Valley Way was mentioned. James noted that it would have been cheaper to buy the field on Harping Hill in order to complete EW7 rather than the proposed Sustrans plans.
- A resident shared that ESCC Highways had recently claimed that part of her land didn't belong to her. She challenged this with ESCC Highways and it was confirmed that the land remained their property.

Sarah asked the community to identify their priorities:

- Speed reduction, ideally to 30mph. There was a show of hands – over 30 people in the room were counted as wanting a 30mph limit.
- A resident wanted to know why we weren't doing more to demand a speed reduction.
- Steve asked Piddinghoe Parish Council to actively advocate for a speed reduction on the C7. Steve suggested there should be an independent risk assessment not connected to Safer C7, SDNPA or EW to get a genuinely independent view on the current Sustrans proposals. Bev asked how this was going to be paid for given that the Parish Council have little funds. Ben noted that in order to remain independent we – the community - should be responsible for raising the money ourselves for the risk assessment.
- A resident requested a vote in favour of those who wanted the cycle path if it came with a speed reduction. Sarah clarified that it was going to be a multi-use path for cycles, horses and pedestrians, not solely a cycle path. Residents weren't aware of this. Sohail asked whether the Parish Council has campaigned for speed reduction. Paul said they had been doing so for decades without result and that EW presented an opportunity to get speed reduced that should be taken advantage of. He mentioned that a year had already been lost due to the project lead having had a car crash (23/24), which is why things are running late. 2027 was cited as a potential date for the start of construction, having additionally lost time between the summer and the current date. He stated that the Parish Council is just a consultee and the people who need to hear the views and concerns aired at the meeting are the people running the EW project. They had planned to launch a full consultation

for around this time, but it hadn't started due to the concerns of riparian residents. He noted that one outcome would be to approach Sustrans with the research and information gathered at the meeting. Steve asked Paul if there was a conflict of interest given his involvement with SDNPA and Paul said he had nothing to do with EW proposals, he had been asked to advocate in his role as Chair of Piddinghoe Parish Council.

- A resident reminded the meeting that Sustrans came up with a plan to reduce the speed to 20mph in 2014 and then Highways said it would never be lowered below 40mph. Current plans show a speed limit of 30mph although they know Highways say it can be no lower than 40mph. Sohail noted that there is a lack of trust in the process.
- Sam noted that the NPLA wrote a letter on the 28th June 2025 in response to the latest Sustrans proposals to all EW stakeholders asking for a constructive consultation process. To date the NPLA have not received a single acknowledgement from any of the stakeholders. Sam asked the meeting whether we are all on the same page: do we, as a community, want a speed reduction regardless of whether that results in a cycle path or not? What are we going to do differently going forward? The NPLA have looked at the key issues, the reports to date, where they fall short and intend to use this as a starting point for constructive communication and consultation.
- A resident asked if the NPLA was going to have a relationship with Piddinghoe Parish Council. Ben clarified that we would look to collaborate with the Parish Council.

## **7. Close**

Sam closed the meeting with a statement stating silence does not mean consent and that absence from using the road does not mean safety. She shared the NPLA's intention to document concerns through the Minutes and to share these with both the community and C7 stakeholders. She stated that as a community we want stakeholders to take us seriously. We want them to engage with us going forward, not as gatekeepers, but as partners in restoring safety, dignity and democratic voice to reducing speed on the C7.

After Meeting Close there was a late question:

- A resident asked that she have her earlier request for a poll addressed. Ben asked her question: do we want to see a multi-use pathway if linked to speed reduction? At this point Steve reminded the meeting that linking speed reduction to EW7 was a route that had been gone down before. 25 people raised their hands.



## Meeting concluded at 21.07

### ACTIONS

- Meeting Minutes to be recorded and shared in the public domain via Piddinghoe Parish website. These will also be sent to all stakeholders in EW along with another copy of the NPLA's original letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to which we have received no response;
- NPLA to request a reassessment of the PJA report findings based on new evidence. In that report it is stated: *As part of the individual settlement analysis, we reviewed the relationship between each settlement and the C7 corridor...the analysis has focused particularly on the design relationship of each settlement i.e is there active frontage on the C7 and also the functional relationship i.e is there a reason to cross the C7 at this location? We believe understanding this interface and expanding on these existing relationships will be essential in informing the future design recommendations for each settlement, and cumulatively along the C7.* The data for Piddinghoe (stating that we have no buildings with active frontage on the C7 and no footpath) was incorrect, and yet we have been told that this will have no bearing on the outcome. This is what we will challenge;
- Seek clarification from ESCC Highways where in legislation it is documented that the speed cannot be lower than 40mph on the Piddinghoe stretch of the C7;
- We will approach Sustrans/EW7 and ask them to outline their community engagement strategy;
- We would like Piddinghoe Parish Council to confirm how community objections to EW7 will be captured and recorded;
- We would like SDNPA to confirm funding sources, and beneficiaries of that funding;
- Seek clarification on the duration of the two-year funding year window that has been quoted by Cllr Paul Bevan. When did this window open? And when will it close?
- Clarify multi-use of the cycle path and how this will impact on Highway Code recommended passing distances plus road speeds;
- Formulate a strategy for sharing these initial community concerns with SDNPA and Sustrans.

