

WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 7.30pm

West Dean College

<p>Present: Cllr Steve Corbett, Cllr Helen Court, Cllr John Fleming, Cllr Keith Goacher, Cllr Amy Green, Cllr William De Groot, Cllr Ian Graham and Cllr Cathy Slade.</p> <p>In attendance: Clare Kennett, Clerk to the Parish Council</p> <p>The meeting was chaired by Cllr Corbett. Two members of the public and no members of the press were present.</p> <p>1. Apologies for absence: There were no apologies.</p> <p>2. Code of Conduct: There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensations.</p> <p>3. Rural crime: As PCSO Booker was unable to attend the meeting, it was AGREED to defer the item until the next meeting in May.</p> <p>4. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2024: Members AGREED to APPROVE the minutes as a true record and they were signed as such by the Chairman.</p> <p>5. Update on matters carried forward from previous meeting: Members NOTED the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Grinch Lane: Members NOTED the letter sent to WSCC Highways and Fire Service on 26 January 2024 about the poor condition and continued deterioration of the road. Highways had responded about debris and mud encroachment which they considered to be a street cleaning issue, but members discussed that it was in fact a road surface issue and the photographs recently submitted proved that in some parts the edges had eroded which would cause severe problems for large vehicles. Cllr Corbett said he was waiting for a response to his recent email which asked for repairs to be made within 28 days. Cllr Hunt said he was also looking into the matter, and he didn't think repairs would be made quickly but hoped that it would be included on Highway's schedule.Operation Watershed: Members NOTED that the application for a second phase of works was successful and grant funding of £20,036.32 had been received. The Clerk had not yet received the invoice for the first phase of works and would follow this up. <p>6. County Councillor report and questions: Members thanked County Councillor Jeremy Hunt for the report circulated prior to the meeting which was NOTED. In summary, Cllr Hunt said the revised Council Plan and Budget for 2024/25 was</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Cllr Corbett</p> <p>Clerk</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

approved on 16th February, including approval of the increase in WSCC's share of Council Tax by 4.99% (2.99% core services + 2% ASC Precept). This represented an increase for an average Band D taxpayer of £1.57 per week. In 2024/25, WSCC would be investing just over £2bn in the county, including:

- £961m - managing schools and education.
- £507m caring for adults (both elderly and working age) and keeping people healthy.
- £204m in children's social care and supporting young people.
- £91m protecting the environment, recycling and waste disposal.
- £83m maintaining highways.
- £38m running the F&RS.
- £22m supporting local communities.
- £3m supporting the local economy.

Cllr Hunt said the Adult Learning team were going on a roadshow to encourage people to find out about free training and learning opportunities, including a free maths training course. This was available for adults (aged 19+) who did not already have a GCSE grade c/4 or higher in maths and wanted to improve their numeracy skills. More information and the dates were available at [Multiply bus - West Sussex County Council](#). Cllr Hunt said that he was aware the Highways had been communicating with the Chairman about Grinch Lane and said he was also having discussions to try and resolve the issue. However, there was nothing further to add at the moment. With regards to the Binderton Community traffic regulation order, there had unfortunately been some administration errors which is why some had to be re-published. The last day for a call-in was today and it was hoped that the TRO could be implemented from 14 March. Cllr Hunt said that most of the work had been done, so the final part of the job would not take too long. Cllr Hunt said Cllr Graham had asked officers about riparian responsibilities for the ditches on the B2141. Cllr Hunt said it was the tenant's responsibility which should be passed onto them by the landowner. Cllr Hunt said the vehicles continued to drive fast through the flood water on Chilgrove Road which was causing the road surface to lift, and temporary two-way traffic lights were in place to control traffic. Members discussed that there continued to be sewage issues at East Dean and Southern Water were using tankers to pump sewage to prevent it flowing into properties. It was commented that the tankers were expensive to use, and the issue was still being classed as an emergency even though it had happened for three months of the year for the last three years. It was discussed that ash dieback works would be taking place on the B2141 in March and that the branches would be laid across ditches, not in them, before they are collected. Members discussed that vegetation blocked ditches and they were supposed to be cleared regularly by WSCC. Cllr Hunt finished by saying the latest WSCC news and events could be found at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

7. **District Councillor report and questions** Members **NOTED** that District Councillor Henry Potter had sent his apologies and thanked him for the report circulated before the meeting. In summary, Cllr Potter that at the Full Council meeting on 27

February, the budget for year 2024/25 had been agreed and would show a surplus, but the increase in the Precept was kept low at 2.99% which equated to £5.42 per annum, a modest 10 pence a week. Cumulatively, including the Precepts for WSCC, Sussex Police and the Parish Precepts, this resulted in an annual Council Tax bill for a Band D property of £2,234.88. The Council had been successful at managing its financial affairs and had many income generating investments and hoped it would continue under the new membership. The recent flooding had tested the District Council's resilience with almost the entire District suffering, though much less than the Lavant Valley. Needless to say, Southern Water had failed miserably. Cllr Potter had been looking at the Southern Water Draining and Wastewater Management Plans and they were not very encouraging. For a start these plans were published a year ago in March 23 and all appeared to require further investigative work plus agreement and promise of funding from OFWAT. It would be some time before any long-term measures were implemented. Reading the Technical Summary and Programme Appraisal accompanying the report, Cllr Potter said he found it depressing with very little hope of much success. If anyone had the time and desire to learn more of, what I can only describe as, an impossible situation which needed URGENT attention, Full details could be found by searching 'Southern Water Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans'. The situation at East Dean was as bad as ever and in Charlton and Singleton not much better, though the Watershed investments to the River Lavant by WSCC a few years ago seemed to have alleviated the past flooding of the road through Singleton. There still remained uncertainties regarding the nitrate/nutrient offset scheme involving farmland at Chilgrove but Cllr Potter understood this would be finalised and agreed at the April Planning Meeting. This was a scheme whereby developers buy 'credits' from landowners to offset nitrates arising from building houses elsewhere within the catchment areas served by wastewater who discharge surpluses into the harbours and waterways. It was a scheme introduced by Natural England a couple of years ago to facilitate the excessive development we were expected to provide, personally I question the sustainability of the scheme which must be monitored for at least 85 years up to 125 years! Currently the SDNPA had agreed to monitor and report on progress, so, watch this space!

8. Brief report from Cllr Corbett following attendance at the WSALC Chairs Forum on 23 January and CDC's All Parishes meeting on 19 February: Cllr Corbett said that referendum principles had been discussed with regards to the Precept and that parish councils should be prepared in case the government brought in a cap. Cllr Corbett said that some parishes across the country had taken on some non-statutory services of other authorities in the drive for more efficiency savings. Cllr Corbett also said that he had found out that PCSOs were supposed to attend a parish council meeting at least once a year. Rural crime was discussed in general and any direct work needed to be taken up on a case by case basis with the police.

9. Traffic/roads update:

- a) Speedwatch: Cllr Court said there was no further update as the weather had prevented the group from meeting.
- b) SID report: Cllr Graham said that the SID was in its new location and had captured the usual high speeds of 60-80mph in the 30mph zone. Members

<p>discussed that Singleton Parish Council was lobbying for a 20mph zone on the A286 and it would be interesting to find out if it went ahead.</p> <p>c) A286 Binderton speed limit change: Cllr De Groot said the TRO consultation period ended today and hopefully the work would be completed soon. Members discussed that the new Binderton road signs were very large and that it was hoped that new line markings would be painted as part of the scheme.</p> <p>10. Planning Committee: Members NOTED the letter submitted to the SDNPA by Cllr Corbett in response to the consultation on SDNP/24/00520/DCOND: Discharge of condition 8 (Footway Works) of SDNP/18/05920/FUL. Land east of Chitty's Plantation A286 The Grinch to Town Lane, West Dean. Members NOTED that the discharge of conditions had been approved by the SDNPA and discussed that they were concerned about safety and that a solution was needed as soon as possible to get people off the road which was dangerous for pedestrians.</p> <p>11. Cemetery: Members considered the report prepared by the Clerk about memorial stability testing and the quotes received for the cost of training versus the cost of an independent memorial stability tester. Members AGREED to contract Robert Ayling, Haven Memorials, at an estimated cost of £425 plus VAT. Members APPROVED the draft cemetery inspection policy prepared by the Clerk with no further comments. Cllr Goacher apologised for not having circulated a quote for the tree and hedge maintenance as he had been unwell, and he would prepare this so that work could take place in the autumn. Members discussed the cemetery fees and it was AGREED that the Clerk would compare them against those charged by other local burial authorities for discussion at the next meeting in May.</p> <p>12. D-Day 80th anniversary, Thursday 6 June 2024: Cllr Slade and Cllr Court said they were planning an afternoon tea party on Saturday 8 June at the Selsey Arms and there would be a cake/traybake competition, a tombola, a produce table with items to share, swap or buy, bingo and a live singer. The dress code would be red, white and blue. Cllr Graham said the Edward James Foundation could donate some scones. Members discussed that it would be nice to have a children's area at the event. Members AGREED to buy a D-Day commemorative flag at a price of £28.80 plus postage and it was discussed that it could be flown at the pub. Members also discussed buying a flagpole for the Parish which were estimated to be around £500 and could be located at the school - Cllr Graham said he would ask the Headteacher about it - or at the village stores or entrance to West Dean. The Clerk agreed to look at funding opportunities, including CIL funding.</p> <p>13. Annual Parish Meeting: Members AGREED to hold the event on Wednesday 8 May at 7pm and APPROVED the agenda prepared by the Clerk.</p> <p>14. Finance</p>	<p>Cllr Goacher</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Cllr Slade and Cllr Court</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>a) Members RESOLVED to APPROVE the list of payments totalling £966.35 and due immediately (to be paid before 8 May 2024 and required advance authorisation). There were payments totalling £1,267.58 made since 10 January 2024 which members RESOLVED to APPROVE retrospectively. See Appendix 1.</p> <p>b) Members NOTED and APPROVED the bank reconciliations and bank statements to 29 February 2024 which were signed by the Chairman. Members NOTED the circulated budget report with no further comments.</p> <p>c) Members APPROVED the engagement letter from Mulberry & Co which offered a fixed price of £65 per hour (plus VAT) for a three-year period to 31 March 2026.</p>	
<p>15. Correspondence: Members NOTED the list of correspondence. It was AGREED to apply for a portrait of King Charles III. Members discussed the correspondence from a resident about the bus shelter opposite the pub and AGREED that the roof had been replaced in 2019 and they considered it to still be structurally safe. Members discussed that the ivy and leylandii needed to be tidied up and Cllr Graham said he would look to replace the bench. The Clerk would inform the resident. Members also discussed correspondence from another resident about a village map which identified house numbers. Cllr Graham said that a new map was available and he would arrange for it to be placed outside the Village Stores and at each of the bus shelters. The Clerk would inform the resident.</p>	<p>Cllr Graham</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>16. Announcements and items for the next meeting: It was AGREED to include co-option on the agenda of the next meeting as a resident had expressed an interest in standing as a councillor. The Clerk would send an application form to the resident.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>17. Confidential business: Members RESOLVED to exclude the public and press, in the view that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or arising out of the business about to be transacted – Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.</p>	
<p>18. Staffing matters: Members AGREED to set up a staffing committee and APPROVED the circulated draft terms of reference with the first meeting taking place on Wednesday 15 May at 7pm at West Dean College. The following membership was AGREED: Cllr Court, Cllr Corbett, Cllr Goacher and Cllr Slade. Cllr Graham said he was happy to be involved if that was helpful but would prefer not to attend another meeting if possible. Members discussed the publication of the Clerk’s home address and it was AGREED to use the postal address for West Dean College for correspondence with the public.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>19. Date of next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 7.30pm.</p>	
<p>The meeting closed at 9.15pm.</p>	

Appendix 1

1. Payments for approval, 13 March 24		Total	Net	VAT
BACS	Confidential payments March 24	482.32	482.32	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance March 24	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services March 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	HMRC March 24	120.40	120.40	0.00
BACS	Mileage March 24	9.27	9.27	0.00
BACS	MS 365 March 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	O2 mobile phone March 24	21.00	17.50	3.50
BACS	K Goacher, gate post at Cemetery	288.00	240.00	48.00

966.35	912.79	53.56
---------------	---------------	--------------

2. Payments made since the last meeting, 10 Jan 24

		Total	Net	VAT
BACS	Confidential payments Feb 24	482.32	482.32	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance Feb 24	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services Feb 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	HMRC Feb 24	120.40	120.40	0.00
BACS	MS 365 Feb 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	O2 mobile phone Feb 24	21.00	17.50	3.50
BACS	CDC uncontested election in May 2023	238.50	238.50	0.00
BACS	South Coast Pestforce molehills at Cemetery	360.00	360.00	0.00

1,267.58	1,262.02	5.56
-----------------	-----------------	-------------

3.

Receipts

BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 17/01/24	3.00
BACS	Operation Watershed grant 19/01/24	20,036.32
BACS	VAT refund 2023 30/01/24	1,434.52
BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 16/02/24	3.00
BACS	Santander: Interest	5.19

21,482.03

4. Bank reconciliation

Barclays

Balance per statement 29/02/24	£88,043.33
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00

Revised bank	£88,043.33
---------------------	-------------------

Cashbook control

Balance forward 01/04/23	£28,412.51
---------------------------------	-------------------

Add total receipts to date	£74,895.58
Less total payments to date	<u>£15,264.76</u>
Cashbook at 29/02/24	<u>£88,043.33</u>

Santander

Balance per statement 01/03/24	£6,273.64
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	<u>£0.00</u>
Revised bank	<u>£6,273.64</u>

Cashbook control

Balance forward 01/04/23	£6,216.01
Add total receipts to date	£57.63
Less total payments to date	<u>£0.00</u>
Cashbook at 29/02/24	<u>£6,273.64</u>

<u>Total in both accounts</u>	<u>94,316.97</u>
--------------------------------------	-------------------------