

# WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 7.30pm

West Dean College

**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.

**In attendance:** Cllr Jeremy Hunt, West Sussex County Council, and Clare Kennett, Clerk to the Parish Council.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Corbett. One member of the public and no members of the press were present. The meeting started at 7.50pm due to the overrunning of the Annual Parish Meeting held the same evening.

- 1. Election of the Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office:**  
Cllr Corbett was proposed by Cllr Fleming, seconded by Cllr Slade and all in favour. Cllr Corbett was **ELECTED** as **CHAIRMAN** who signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.
- 2. Apologies for absence:** There were no apologies.
- 3. Election of the Vice-Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office:** Cllr Goacher was proposed by Cllr Corbett, seconded by Cllr Court and all in favour. Cllr Goacher was **ELECTED** as **VICE-CHAIRMAN** who signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.
- 4. Code of Conduct:** Cllr Fleming declared an interest in the planning appeal notification for APP/Y9507/W/24/3339405, SDNP/23/04384/CND, Colworth Farm.
- 5. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2024:** Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true record and they were signed as such by the Chairman.
- 6. Update on matters carried forward from previous meeting:** Members **NOTED** the following updates:
  - Cllr Corbett and Cllr Fleming said that a successful site meeting was held at Grinch Lane with six Highways officers. It was agreed that work to improve the lane would take place while other scheduled work on the A286 was underway. Debris from the road would be cleared so they could review the surface and mark up defective areas in preparation for patching in June, with resurfacing stone treatment taking place the following year.
  - PCSO Colin Booker was unable to attend the meeting to discuss rural crime in the Parish due to other work commitments and the Clerk had advised him of the other meeting dates in 2024. PCSO Booker sent the summary below which was **NOTED**.

PCSO said he was assigned to the Rural Crime Team for the districts of Chichester and Arun, with his unit based in Midhurst. The main four areas of his work were agricultural relating to farms; environmental which was mainly fly tipping and assisting local authorities to tackle the issue; wildlife including coursing, poaching to nesting birds and habitat destruction; and heritage which included everything of historical importance. PCSO Booker said his main contacts were farmers, gamekeepers and those connected to the industry. Many police officers had left and there had been many vacancies, but they had recruited new staff members which meant they were able to better address issues across the area. Across West Dean and Chilgrove, the main issue was related to coursing/poaching.

- Members **NOTED** that the memorial stability testing inspection at the cemetery and churchyard will take place week commencing Monday 13 May.

7. **Open forum:** The member of the public said she was interested in attending to hear more about water quality issues in the area, covered briefly at the Annual Parish Meeting which had been held just before the AGM.

8. **County Councillor report and questions:** Members thanked County Councillor Jeremy Hunt for the annual report circulated prior to the meeting which was **NOTED**. In summary, Cllr Hunt said that West Sussex finances were in a sound position, despite ongoing challenges with the escalating costs of social care. Spending on adult social care alone accounted for nearly 35% of overall net revenue budget. This put an increasing financial pressure of local authorities and the next government needed to tackle the issue as a priority. In 2024/25, WSCC's gross revenue spend was just over £2bn and would support residents by investing:

- £961m managing schools and education
- £507m caring for adults and keeping people healthy
- £204m for children's social care and supporting young people
- £91m protecting the environment, recycling and waste disposal
- £83m maintaining highways
- £38m running the Fire and Rescue Service
- £22m supporting local communities
- £3m supporting the local economy.

The condition of roads continued to be a concern and the Asphalt Industry Alliance had predicted that the one-time repairs across England and Wales would cost £16.3bn and take a decade to complete. Local authorities received government grants, including an additional £8bn for highways. The West Sussex share would be £67m spread over the next 11 years. The County Council was also investing £10m in revenue spending, as well as £20m of capital, and had already invested £20m over the last two years. So altogether, over and above the normal government grant funding, the County would be investing an additional £50m into the roads over a four-year period. Between October 2023 and February 2024, there was more rain in five months than normally expected in a whole year. March didn't show much improvement, and some West Sussex areas saw three times the rain. In these conditions, potholes form as water seeped under the road surface and saturated the substrate which led to a hydraulic fracturing effect as vehicles passed over. Teams were working overtime and highways contractor gangs were working twilight shifts and Saturdays to manage the increased number of safety repairs. There were also 'find and fix' gangs operating in urban

areas and three Jet Patchers working in rural areas. The County continued to focus on quality ‘sidesawn and sealed’ repairs. Although these repairs took longer, they lasted longer. Inevitably, with the amount of water on the network some repairs could fail. Please report highways issues at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/>

The County had cleansed 90,000 gullies this year and there were four gully suckers carrying out reactive work to alleviate flooding issues. They had tackled over 600 jobs on the highest priority sites. Due to the amount of rain, and the very high ground water levels, many gullies that appeared blocked were just full up, with nowhere for the water to go. Please report blocked gullies, potholes or other highways issues at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/maintaining-roads-verges-and-pavements/road-maintenance/flooding-drainage-and-gullies/>

In March 2024, Highways teams received 9600 enquiries from the public, of those 6000 related to potholes; delivered 4300 safety repairs, of those 3200 were for potholes; completed 320 find and fix jobs – a proactive approach to roads with multiple potholes; and repaired 810 safety potholes by the velocity jet patcher which equated to around 460sqm.

WSCC was reinforcing its ongoing support for people who care for family members, friends and neighbours with a new five-year contract to offer information, guidance and emotional health support. The contract, which began on 1 April, was awarded to [Carers Support West Sussex](#). The service provided a carers’ helpline, support groups and specialist services for young carers.

WSCC Digital Safety Team had organised another round of events to advise residents about scams and prevent fraud. The 1.5 hour sessions were open to all residents and more information could be found at [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk) (search for ‘Are you scam savvy?’) and [www.westsussex.gov.uk/staying-safe-online](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/staying-safe-online)

Highways officers and members of the Parish Council carried out a site visit at Grinch Lane and the summary below was from the Assistant Area Highways Manager:

*“As we are scheduled to have resources in the area (scheduled work on A286 and part of MotorvRoad) it was decided we would try and progress the Grinch at the same time if possible. Engineers have requested we try and clear some debris from the road on a non-prejudice basis in order for them to review the surface of the carriageway so they can assess the road condition and mark up any defective areas in preparation for patching. We have forwarded the siding request onto colleagues for consideration with a request this is assessed and progressed asap. If the siding works can progress in May, engineers should be able to assess the carriageway condition in advance of potential pre surface dressing patching in June. The timetable should be that once the road has been patched in summer the road will then be subject to surface stone treatment the following year, which should seal the surface and improve skid resistance. All works are subject to road space availability and resource permitting we are working to a very tight timeframe. This information is correct to the best of my knowledge at the time of writing and may be subject to revision.”*

The Communities traffic regulation order application for revised speed limits between Lavant and West Dean were now in place and operational. Cllr Hunt said

he was happy to support the Parish Council in their desire to improve safety on this section of road. **Ditches - B2141** - A query had been raised by about ditches on the B2141 regarding the riparian responsibilities and discussions were ongoing. Cllr Hunt said he was pleased to promote and support the Parish Council's application to improve the road drainage on the B2141 around Crows Hall Farm. The main works were completed last year, which have greatly improved the situation. There was another application to carry out some additional works, but this was still to be completed due to the very wet winter.

Cllr Graham attended a recent parish council meeting in East Dean where Southern Water gave a presentation on proposed works in the Lavant Valley. Cllr Graham might have discussed the possibility of a similar visit by SW to a future West Dean meeting, and I'm sure that he will update you on the outcome of that meeting. However, if anyone is interested, SW will be giving a similar presentation at the forthcoming Singleton PC Annual Meeting at 7pm on Monday 20th May. The latest news from WSCC was available at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

9. **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 said the new administration, which had assumed leadership of the Council in May 2023, had many new members who had embarked on a major learning curve on how CDC 'worked'. The review of the District Local Plan continued but still faced with major issues regarding the poor infrastructure in the District. No financial assistance from National Highways resulted in a new policy whereby additional funding would be sought from developers to contribute towards the agreed necessary improvements to sections of the A27. This had been set at £3,400 per bedroom for all development which would have an impact on increasing traffic on the A27. There were exceptions, for example, in care and retirement homes where occupants were unlikely to have cars. As said previously, just as CIL charges did, this new levy would add to the cost of new housing and borne by the buyer, not the developer. It had emerged that the allocation of 635 new dwellings per annum was unachievable and a figure of 535 seemed more likely. Of course, this would depend on the findings and decision of the Planning Inspectorate at examination. Sadly, and against much public opinion, Car Park fees were increased, the public consultation on this proposal took place last year September and October and the increase was based on the ONS inflation figure, at that time, of 11.1 %. However, when the proposal came before Council in March this year, inflation had fallen to 4.3%, yet the suggested increase was approved and implemented. The fees for all types of taxi and private hire licencing, though untouched since 2018, it was proposed that they were increased by 35% to the dismay of the taxi trade. However, it was agreed by the General Licencing Committee that this increase be phased over two years, lessening the impact of such a large increase. The continuing incursion of Council owned land and car parks was slowly being addressed by introducing earth bunds around open spaces at Sherborne Road and New Park recreation ground. Consideration was being given to how to prevent occupations of Northgate and Market Road Car Parks and it was already agreed to release £50,000 from reserves to recruit a Gypsy and Traveller 'Liaison' Officer to engage with members of the travelling community to hopefully bring the nuisance under control. The cost to the public purse for evictions and the clear up afterwards was enormous and intolerable. Time would tell if the investment was wise. The

Council's budget was set and agreed at a little over £15 million and the Precept increase for a Band D householder worked out at approximately 5 pence per week, a very modest rise. The Councils 'Green' Agenda towards Climate Change was continuing with installation of solar panels at leisure centres and the further purchase of electric vehicles for the maintenance teams, though a diesel truck had to be replaced like for like because an electric vehicle was unable to tow trailers. Two new city street sweepers were now operating with favourable support from the operators but not such good news regarding the two refuse collection freighters. One had been frequently breaking down, the charging period is lengthy, and the initial cost is eye watering! In excess of £400,000 each! A diesel equivalent was about half that figure. The recent discovery of Roman and even earlier Iron Age artefacts and remains on the land at Tangmere had thrown a spanner in the works. The excavation and associated works were expected to continue until late 2026 and considering outline planning permission was granted in 2020, this strategic development was well behind expectations. However, the Compulsory Purchase Order for parts of the site was yet to be completed. Finally, notice was received on May 3rd that the reviewed Local Plan had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration. This was good news as pending a decision, which is likely to take several months, the Plan would carry some additional weight when considering future planning applications.

**10. Review of lead councillors:** Members **RESOLVED** to appoint councillors to lead on the following areas of work.

- Traffic action: Cllr Graham and Cllr Court
- Planning: Cllr Corbett
- Highways and flooding: Cllr De Groot
- Village maintenance and footpaths: Cllr Graham
- Winter management and maintenance: Cllr Graham.

**11. Review and adoption of policies:** Members **APPROVED** the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Staff and Cllr Data Policy, Data Protection Policy and Risk Register with no further updates. It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had used the latest version of the model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. NALC was updating the Financial Regulations and the Clerk would bring the new version for the Council's consideration when it was available.

**12. Traffic/roads update:**

- a) Speedwatch: Cllr Court said the group had been out a couple of times recently.
- b) SID report: Cllr Graham said the SID had been moved to a new location near Mannor Farm and was pointing in the direction.
- c) A286 Binderton speed limit change: Cllr De Groot said the scheme had now been completed. Members discussed that the new road signs in Binderton were very large which seemed to be contrary to the advice issued by the SDNPA about minimal signage in the national park. Cllr De Groot said the West Dean village sign had been knocked over by a vehicle crashing into it. Also, the bus stop sign was missing, and it was discussed that Stagecoach was responsible for replacing it.

Clerk

<p><b>13. Planning Committee:</b> Cllr Corbett said that there were no comments from members of the public relating to the planning appeal for APP/Y9507/W/24/3339405, SDNP/23/04384/CND, Colworth Farm, replacement barn to provide farm office and facilities for existing shoot including 2 no. rooms for overnight tourist accommodation. (Variation of Condition 2 of permission SDNP/20/01937/FUL - altered siting of barn) - Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission SDNP/22/05830/CND for addition of 2 no. external stairs with reconfigured fenestration to suit, relocated gate and reconfigured parking spaces.</p> <p>Cllr Corbett said the deadline for submission of representations to the Planning Inspectorate was 5 June and he would wait to see if there were any objections before submitting a comment on behalf of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Cllr Corbett informed members about the SDNPA Planning Committee update, The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25% increase in planning application fees for residential, and then by inflation.</li> <li>• Planning permission now require for short-term holiday lets including Airbnbs.</li> <li>• 4-year rule for retrospective permission for a certificate of lawfulness is now increased to 10 years.</li> <li>• Financial penalties for planning authorities to accelerate decision-making.</li> <li>• Powers to stop planning permission for historically slow developers.</li> <li>• Developers will have to deliver vital infrastructure and community assets with housing.</li> <li>• (Not a planning issue) Council tax premium can be applied on second homes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cllr Corbett</b></p>
<p><b>14. Cemetery:</b> Members considered the report prepared by the Clerk with a comparison of fees charged by other local burial authorities. It was discussed that the fees charged at the cemetery had not been reviewed for many years and that they were low compared to many. An increase in the fees would contribute towards ongoing repair and maintenance costs at the cemetery. Members <b>AGREED</b> unanimously to increase the amount charged by 100% across the board. The Clerk would update the fee schedule and the information on the website. It was <b>AGREED</b> to review the fees again in a year's time.</p> <p>Cllr Corbett said that the cemetery rules may need updating and asked the Clerk to circulate them for discussion at the next meeting in July.</p> <p>Cllr Corbett said that the moles at the cemetery had come back again and asked the Clerk to contact Pestforce about catching them.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>15. D-Day 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Thursday 6 June 2024:</b> Cllr Slade and Cllr Court said a D-Day Village Party had been organised for Saturday 8 June at the Selsey Arms from 3-5.30pm, with a tea party, live music and games, and bingo from 6-7pm. The pub had agreed to do the food at a cost of £400 and cater for 100 people. This included sandwiches, sausage rolls, cake and tea/coffee. West Dean College were kindly donating scones. Mo Woods was booked from 3-5pm to sign at a cost of</p>	<p><b>Cllr Court and Cllr Slade</b></p>

<p>£180. There would be a tombola with the proceeds donated to Help for Heros. There would be a cake competition and Cllr Corbett kindly donated a winning apron and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> wooden spoons. Games would be available, and the recently purchased D-Day flag would be flying on the pub's flagpole. Posters had been published and invitations sent to residents. Members discussed that the grassed area between the village store and the pub would be an ideal place for families with children, and Cllr Graham said he would help with organising access to it.</p>	
<p><b>16. Flagpole:</b> Members considered the quotes circulated by the Clerk. Members <b>AGREED</b> unanimously to purchase a 6m fiberglass flagpole with an internal halyard, locking door, gold finial, hinge base and cover, and delivery at a cost of £417.50 (ex VAT) from Flagpole Express. The Clerk would arrange delivery to the primary school where it was to be installed. The Clerk would ask for the fitting instructions. To note, Harrison Flagpoles had quoted £469 (ex VAT) and Hampshire Flag Company had quoted £879.92 (ex VAT).</p>	Clerk
<p><b>17. Internal audit for financial year 2023/24 and Section 1 of the AGAR:</b>  17.1 Members <b>NOTED</b> the internal audit report for 2023/24 prepared by Andy Beams, Mulberry &amp; Co following a meeting with the Clerk on 19 April 2024 and <b>RECEIVED</b> the recommendations with no further comment.  17.2 Members <b>REVIEWED</b> the effectiveness of the system of internal control and <b>APPROVED</b> the Annual Governance Statement, Section 1, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24, by resolution. Cllr Corbett signed Section 1 of the AGAR.</p>	Clerk
<p><b>18. Receipts and payments 2023/24 and statement of reserves:</b> Members <b>NOTED</b> the circulated budget report to 31 March 2024. It was <b>NOTED</b> that due to receiving grants from Operation Watershed, the Council would be required to complete a full audit in 2023/24 as income and expenditure was over £25k. The Clerk explained that minus grant funding of £59,106.56, income was £15, 855.20. Minus expenditure of grants of £39,070.24, remaining payments were £15,578.07. The general reserve at the end of the financial year was £6,300.80 as a VAT refund was due of £7,901.69 (received on 11 April).</p>	Clerk
<p><b>19. Accounting Statements, Section 2 of the 2023/24 AGAR:</b> Members <b>APPROVED</b> the Accounting Statements by resolution and Cllr Corbett signed Section 2 of the AGAR. Members <b>AGREED</b> and set the period of public rights for the inspection of the unaudited AGAR.</p>	
<p><b>20. Finance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>APPROVE</b> the list of payments totalling £777.53 and due immediately (to be paid before 10 July 2024 and required advance authorisation). There were payments totalling £1,902.33 made since 13 March 2024 which members <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>APPROVE</b> retrospectively. See Appendix 1.</li> <li>Members <b>NOTED</b> and <b>APPROVED</b> the bank reconciliations and bank statements to 30 April 2024 which were signed by Cllr Goacher.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members <b>NOTED</b> the Council’s annual fees, charges and regular payments with no further comments.</li> </ul> <p><b>21. Correspondence:</b> Members <b>NOTED</b> the list of correspondence. Members discussed that Southern Water had prevented further oil contamination in the River Lavant. It was <b>AGREED</b> that Cllr Corbett would reply to the resident about potholes.</p> <p><b>22. Announcements and items for the next meeting:</b> There were no announcements.</p> <p><b>23. Date of next meeting:</b> The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 7.30pm.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 9.25pm.</p>	
--	--

## Appendix 1

<b>1. Payments for approval, 8 May 24</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>VAT</b>
BACS	Confidential payments May 24	482.32	482.32	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance May 24	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	HMRC May 24	120.40	15.00	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services May 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	Mileage May 24	26.78	26.78	0.00
BACS	MS 365 May 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	O2 mobile phone May 24	21.00	17.50	3.50
BACS	Viking Direct ink cartridges	76.67	63.90	12.77
		<b>772.53</b>	<b>648.80</b>	<b>18.33</b>
<b>2. Payments made since the last meeting, 13 March 24</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>VAT</b>
BACS	Confidential payments April 24	482.32	482.32	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance April 24	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	HMRC April 24	120.40	120.40	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services April 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	MS 365 April 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	O2 mobile phone April 24	21.00	17.50	3.50
BACS	K Goacher grass cutting April 24	900.00	750.00	150.00
BACS	Newton Newton Flags, D-Day flag of peace	34.80	29.80	5.00
BACS	Second class postage cemetery notices to Cllr Corbett	1.55	1.55	0.00
BACS	Mulberry & Co, final internal audit 2023/24	156.00	130.00	26.00
BACS	WSALC & NALC subscription 2024/25	140.90	140.90	0.00
		<b>1,902.33</b>	<b>1,715.77</b>	<b>186.56</b>
<b>3. Receipts since the last meeting, 13 March 24</b>				



BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 17/04/24	3.00
BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 18/03/24	3.00
BACS	SDNPA CIL 2024/25	1,612.98
BACS	CDC 1st Precept payment 2024/25	8,678.50
BACS	VAT refund quarter 3 2023/24	7,901.69
BACS	Santander bank interest	5.38
		<u><u>18,204.55</u></u>

#### 4. Bank reconciliation

##### Barclays

<b>Balance per statement 30/04/24</b>	<b>£56,351.77</b>
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00
<b>Revised bank</b>	<b>£56,351.77</b>

##### Cashbook control

<b>Balance forward 01/04/24</b>	<b>£40,057.93</b>
Add total receipts to date	£18,196.17
Less total payments to date	£1,902.33
<b>Cashbook at 30/04/24</b>	<b>£56,351.77</b>

##### Santander

<b>Balance per statement 01/05/24</b>	<b>£6,284.57</b>
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00
<b>Revised bank</b>	<b>£6,284.57</b>

##### Cashbook control

<b>Balance forward 01/04/24</b>	<b>£6,279.19</b>
Add total receipts to date	£5.38
Less total payments to date	£0.00
<b>Cashbook at 01/05/24</b>	<b>£6,284.57</b>

<b><u>Total in both accounts</u></b>	<b><u>62,636.34</u></b>
--------------------------------------	-------------------------

---