

WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 6pm

West Dean College

Present: Cllr Helen Court, Cllr John Fleming, Cllr Keith Goacher, Cllr Amy Green, 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 Goacher. Three members of the public and no members of the press were present.

24. Apologies for absence: Cllr Steve Corbett and Cllr William De Groot.

25. Code of Conduct: There were no declarations of interest or requests for a dispensation.

26. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2024: Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true record and they were signed as such by the Chairman.

27. Update on matters carried forward from previous meeting: Members **NOTED** the following updates:

- **Item 6:** PCSO Booker was unable to attend the meeting and the Clerk had sent him the meeting dates for the rest of the year. It was **AGREED** to write to Inspector Dave Lyons outlining the Council's concerns about rural crime in the Parish, and the Clerk would work with Cllr Fleming on writing a draft to be circulated to members for approval.
- **Item 15:** Cllr Court and Cllr Slade said the D-Day event held on 8 June 2024 had been a success and had raised £500 for the Royal British Legion and the Sussex Snowdrop Trust which was divided equally between the two.
- **Item 16:** Cllr Goacher said the flagpole had been installed at the school. There had been many positive comments, and the school would make good use of it in the future.
- **Item 17:** The Clerk had submitted the audit papers for 2023/24 to the external auditor.

*It was **AGREED** to defer the Open Forum until the end of the meeting due to the earlier start time of the meeting in case members of the public arrived at 7.30pm.*

28. 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 despite the recent election, work of the County Council had gone on uninterrupted. Cllr Hunt said the County Council was formulating budget plans for 2025/26 and the four-year medium term financial

Cllr
Fleming,
Clerk

strategy to 2028/29. An update, and the financial challenges, would be presented at public Cabinet on 23 July. A further package of multi-million-pound road repairs and improvements had started, proactively tackling pothole issues and investing in larger-scale resurfacing. Following additional funds being added to last year's budget for highways, the County Council was committed to tackling the impact of persistent, severe weather with reactive and proactive measures. This financial year, in addition to the base budget for highways of £43.8m, the County Council had invested an extra £4m to support highway maintenance, including pothole repairs; an additional £7m to increase resurfacing and treatments programme to more than £20m, enabling highways teams to deliver one of their largest programmes of works to date; a further £2m to tackle the carriageway patching backlog following the wet conditions. This work would start in early summer to maximise the best working conditions. The County Council had received £4.3m of government funding announced in 2023 to deliver resurfacing works, with delivery having already started and the programme due to run to September 2024. A further £10m from Council funds had been committed for next year (2025/26) to continue the work needed to make the highway more resilient for the future. These figures showed that the County Council was taking action and demonstrating a commitment to the Better Roads campaign. Teams of highway officers identified and assessed safety-related defects through routine inspections and by responding to customer reports, with around 1,000 safety defects fixed a week. Last year, safety repair teams completed more than 46,000 safety defect repairs, of which approximately 30,000 were potholes. This was an increase of more than 5,000 from the previous financial year. In rural areas, the County Council used three Velocity spray injection patchers to repair more than 23,000 further defects while also delivering proactive patching covering 26,000m², which was equivalent to covering more than 130 tennis courts. The Planned Delivery team worked across 189km of roads in the last financial year, which were either completely resurfaced or had surface dressing, micro-asphalt treatments, or large-scale areas of patching and completed. The public's help in spotting and reporting concerns was appreciated and could be reported online or on 01243 642105 for those that were an immediate risk to public safety.

www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/roadworks-and-projects/road-projects/better-roads-road-funding-information/ Cllr Hunt said the County Council was offering advice and practical support with the cost of living and residents could drop into any of the 36 libraries for free [library support online](#). The Community Hub was open seven days a week and offered information and advice across a broad range of support, including the Household Support Fund for those struggling with costs towards fuel or food bills. West Sussex Record Office's new website gave residents better access to the history and heritage of the County. The online catalogue used specialist digital preservation system enabling users to search through the records and access up to 36,000 images to view, download and purchase. Residents could also visit their local library to use a public computer, and staff would be able to help with the new website. For those who wanted to make a visit to the Record Office in person, the website was still a handy tool. The new Reader Order Management system let the team know which documents you'd like to view in the searchroom by requesting up to three items in advance, helping customers make best use of their research or study time when they visit. The website also promoted events and talks taking place <https://www.wsro.org.uk/> Children of all ages could visit a West Sussex library and join Amelia, Riley, Bob the dog and friends as they get creative to complete the 2024 Summer Reading Challenge, Marvellous Makers. All that participants needed was a library card, which were available from all West Sussex libraries.

Children could register online for the challenge at arena.westsussex.gov.uk/src, The County Council was looking to recruit volunteers aged 14 and over to support staff in promoting the Summer Reading Challenge, developing their skills and gaining valuable experience working with children and families. Applications could be submitted at www.westsussex.gov.uk/src. **Ditches - B2141:** Cllr Hunt said he believed that Cllr Graham was in discussion with WSCC regarding the riparian responsibilities of landowners and maintaining the ditches. **Operation Watershed:** Following the original works carried out on the B2141, Cllr Hunt said he understood there was a supplementary application to carry out some additional works, but that these were still awaiting delivery. Cllr Hunt said he understood that the Council had already received the funds for this work from WSCC, and he asked if the necessary works instructions to Landbuild to carry out the work had been issued. The Clerk said she would check with the Operation Watershed Team. **The Grinch:** Cllr Hunt said he had been advised that the possible patching works, which we had hoped to complete in June, were now unlikely to take place this summer as hoped for. Weather permitting, the works would still progress this financial year. He said he would keep progressing this with highways as he was also disappointed. However, Cllr Hunt understood some siding works were carried out at the end of May. Cllr Hunt said he would circulate photographs to members which showed the siding works underway. **Motor Road:** Following complaints regarding the state of the road, Cllr Hunt said highways had carried out extensive patching works and the road was now in a much better state of repair. Extensive patching work had also been carried out on the A286 from Lavant right through to Singleton. **WSCC residents newsletter:** A monthly newsletter was sent to all residents who subscribe to our free email service <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWSCC/subscriber/new>

Clerk

29. District Councillor report and questions Members thanked District Councillor Henry Potter for the report circulated before the meeting which was **NOTED**. In summary, Cllr Potter said at the Cabinet meeting on 11 June, members agreed to recommend to Full Council the release of £420,000 from reserves to cover the cost of specialist professional services to support the Planning Authority in defending planning appeals. In addition, a further £74,000 was agreed, again from reserves, to provide funding for legal and expert advice during the years 2024/25. The reason being, the Council had received a number of speculative applications for housing some of which had become subject to appeals. These appeals are sometimes very costly and time consuming hence the need for substantial funding. Whether this will be worthwhile remains to be seen since the new government plans to increase housing supply by unsustainable numbers. Also, during the same meeting, the Cabinet agreed the release of £206,206 towards the cost of replacing the public toilets in Tower Street, Chichester. Interestingly, the very following day, 12 June, the Planning Committee voted to defer a decision on the demolition of the toilets until the decision was agreed by Full Council. There has been much aversion by the public to lose these toilets, but there is evidence of subsidence to the foundation of the building so something must be done. Cllr Potter said he fully supported the recommendation to demolish the block, knowing that the money had been set aside for the replacement. There appeared in the Chichester Observer last week a rather derogatory letter questioning my support for what is obviously the best option, demolish and renew which is supported by most of the responders to the future of these very necessary toilets. The Council had begun a 'Let's Talk' consultation period for members of the public to engage in debate regarding the Climate Emergency Action Plan beginning with an online session which took place on 1 July. Face to face meetings were planned,

in Petworth at the Leconfield Hall, the Grange Centre in Midhurst and at the Assembly Rooms in North Street Chichester, on Thursday 25 July from 3.00 pm until 5.00 pm. A great opportunity to voice your views on Climate Change where refreshments will also be provided. Even more detail will be found in the next copy of the Councils 'Initiatives' magazine.

30. The Trundlers: Celia Dickinson attended the meeting to give an update on The Trundlers, which was an amateur dramatic group formed in the 1980s and gave many successful, enjoyable and memorable performances. The group ceased to operate in the early 2000s and a sum of around £1,500 remained in a dormant bank account. Celia Dickinson said that members of the former Trundlers group had expressed a wish for the money to go towards a community project and asked if the Parish Council would support the group in identifying a project. It was **AGREED** that members would think of proposals to be discussed at the next meeting in September. It was also discussed that some of the performances had been filmed and that the money could be used to transpose the film as a digital copy, that could be shown at future Parish meetings and events and uploaded to the Council's website as a village archive.

31. Annual Parish Meeting of Singleton and Charlton Parish Council: Cllr Corbett and Cllr Goacher attended the meeting where Southern Water gave a presentation on sewage issues in the Valley. Cllr Goacher reported that Southern Water had started to reline sewage pipes in East Dean which would be completed this summer. It was hoped that this work would improve the situation further downstream. Cllr Goacher said that Charlton had suffered the most during the last winter and that residents at the meeting had commented that there were only 10 or 15 more toilets than there were 20 years ago when the ground water level was higher, and they wanted to know what was causing the problems. Southern Water said that the pipes were designed to run at 60% capacity and when they were full of spring water, the system became overloaded and couldn't flow. Southern Water said most of the blockages in the pipes were to do with a buildup of fats and wet wipes, and that lateral pipes from houses to the sewage network were also a cause. Members commented that there were no proposals for improvements at West Dean in the current financial plan to 2031 and it was hoped that other improvements locally would improve the situation. It was discussed that raw sewage was a public health issue, although new legislation from 2022 was having an impact and making water companies more accountable. It was discussed that modern reporting and technology meant that people knew more about the issue than they had in the past. Cllr Hunt explained that Southern Water were working with Portsmouth Water on Havant Thicket Reservoir and were proposing to use a reverse osmosis system to recycle cleaned wasted water for public use. Cllr Hunt asked the Clerk to circulate a consultation from SOSCA on the proposals to members.

32. Traffic/roads update:

a) Speedwatch: Cllr Court said there was no further update.

**All
members**

<p>b) SID report: Cllr Graham said the SID was working well and continuing to record speeds.</p> <p>c) A286 Binderton speed limit change: It was AGREED to defer the item until the next meeting in September when Cllr De Groot would be present.</p>	
<p>33. Planning Committee: Members RESOLVED to have no objection to the following applications and the Clerk said she would submit the comment to the SDNPA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/02566/PNCOUF: Change of use of building from agriculture to farm shop (less than 150 sqm). Crowshall, Chilgrove Road, West Dean. • Class R, R.3 - (1) (a) Notification (less than 150 sqm.) for the change of use of building from agriculture to a café (Class E (b)). Crows Hall (The Courtyard), Crowshall Farm, Chilgrove Road, West Dean. 	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>34. Cemetery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members RECEIVED the recommendations of the memorial inspection carried out on 16 May 2024 which identified health and safety issues with seven memorials. The Inspector had recommended that the memorials were laid down until they were repaired. The Clerk had looked through the cemetery records and had been unable to find any address details for the owners. It was AGREED that Cllr Goacher would lay down the identified memorials and a notice would be put up at the Cemetery to inform the owners. Cllr Goacher said he had spoken to one family who was aware of the inspection and Cllr Court said she would speak to another. • Members considered the circulated cemetery rules and members approved the change to let dogs on leads in the cemetery. Members discussed that paragraphs A and B relating to fees for residents and non-residents of the Parish could be better worded. Cllr Court said she would have a look at the wording. It was AGREED to consider the rules again at the next meeting in September. • Cllr Goacher said that although there was evidence of moles in the cemetery, they did not seem to be making too much disruption. It was AGREED that the situation would continue to be monitored. • Cllr Goacher said that he would provide a quote for the Council's consideration for tree and hedge maintenance at the cemetery. • It was discussed that the D-Day silhouettes could be placed either side of the lytchgate. It was AGREED to contact the family of a grave close to the lytchgate to see if they would be happy with this proposal. It was AGREED to consider this again at the next meeting in September. It was discussed that there may be woodworm in the Lytchgate which would be investigated. 	<p>Cllr Goacher, Clerk</p>
<p>35. Salt Audit 2024/25: Cllr Graham had provided the Clerk with details of the salt that was required, and the Clerk would submit the information to WSCC. It was NOTED that the salt from the previous winter had not been received and may have been delivered to a wrong location.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p>36. Finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members RESOLVED to APPROVE the list of payments totalling £682.27 and due immediately (to be paid before 11 September 2024 and required advance authorisation). There were payments totalling £3757.85 made since 8 May 2024 which members RESOLVED to APPROVE retrospectively. See Appendix 1. Members NOTED and APPROVED the bank reconciliations and bank statements to 30 June 2024 which were signed by Cllr Goacher. Members APPROVED the latest version of the Financial Regulations which had been updated by NALC in May 2024. <p>37. Correspondence: Members NOTED the list of correspondence with no further comments.</p> <p>38. Announcements and items for the next meeting: There were no announcements.</p> <p><i>The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7.25pm.</i></p> <p>39. Open Forum: A resident commented that the cherry tree at The Warren was being removed. Cllr Graham said that it was rotting and that some of the wood would be used to make a bench and table, and it would be replaced with a new tree.</p> <p><i>The Chairman reconvened the meeting at 7.28pm.</i></p> <p>40. 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>41. The Selsey Arms: It was AGREED that Cllr Fleming would draft a letter to the pub to be circulated to members beforehand for comment.</p> <p>42. Staffing Committee: Members APPROVED the Clerk’s Personal Performance Development Review with no further comments which would be signed by Cllr Corbett at the next meeting in September. It was AGREED to adopt all of the HR policies, except the Flexible Working policy as it needed to be updated to reflect the latest legislation. It was AGREED to defer the item on the Civility and Respect Pledge to the next meeting in September.</p> <p>43. Date of next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 11 September 2024 at 7.30pm.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.50pm.</p>	<p>Cllr Fleming</p>
--	--------------------------------

Appendix 1

1. Payments for approval, 10 July 24

Total

Net

VAT

BACS	Confidential payments July 24	482.12	482.12	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance July 24	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	HMRC July 24	120.40	15.00	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services July 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	Clerk's mileage July 24	13.39	13.39	0.00
BACS	MS 365 July 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	O2 mobile phone July 24	21.00	17.50	3.50

		682.27	571.31	5.56
--	--	---------------	---------------	-------------

2. Payments made since the last meeting, 8 May 24

		Total	Net	VAT
BACS	Confidential payments June 24	482.12	482.12	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance June 24	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	HMRC June 24	120.60	120.60	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services June 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	MS 365 June 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	O2 mobile phone June 24	21.00	17.50	3.50
BACS	Flagpole Express Ltd, flagpole for school	501.00	417.50	83.50
BACS	Royal British Legion Industries, Silhouettes and lamppost sign	354.99	295.82	59.17
BACS	Haven Memorials, cemetery memorial inspections May 24	765.00	637.50	127.50
BACS	WSCC street light maintenance and energy 2023/24	1,117.78	931.48	186.30
BACS	Wendy Goacher grass cutting at St Andrew's Church	350.00	350.00	0.00

		3,757.85	3,295.82	462.03
--	--	-----------------	-----------------	---------------

3. Receipts since the last meeting, 8 May 24

BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 16/05/24	3.00		
BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 18/06/24	3.00		
BACS	Santander bank interest 01/06/24	5.56		
BACS	Santander bank interest 30/06/24	5.39		
		16.95		

4. Bank reconciliation

Barclays

Balance per statement 30/06/24	£51,823.68
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00
Revised bank	£51,823.68

Cashbook control

Balance forward 01/04/24	£40,057.93
---------------------------------	-------------------

Add total receipts to date	£18,202.17
Less total payments to date	<u>£6,436.42</u>
Cashbook at 30/06/24	£51,823.68

Santander

Balance per statement 01/07/24	£6,295.52
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	<u>£0.00</u>
Revised bank	£6,295.52

Cashbook control

Balance forward 01/04/24	£6,279.19
Add total receipts to date	£16.33
Less total payments to date	<u>£0.00</u>
Cashbook at 01/07/24	£6,295.52

Total in both accounts	<u>58,119.20</u>
-------------------------------	-------------------------
