

# WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 7.30pm

West Dean College

**Present:** Cllr Steve Corbett, Cllr John Fleming, Cllr Keith Goacher, Cllr Kate Hellyer and Cllr Cathy Slade.

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

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Corbett. No members of the public or press were present.

**63. Apologies for absence:** Cllr Amy Green and Cllr Will De Groot. It was **NOTED** that Cllr de Groot last attended a meeting on 10 July 2024, and it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to him to inform him of the six-month attendance rule. If a member did not attend any meeting for six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, they ceased to be a member of the authority, unless the council accepted a reason for the failure to attend before the six-month period expired. The Clerk informed members that if Cllr De Groot was unable to attend the next meeting on 8 January 2025, they would need to consider a reason for non-attendance and if they would like to grant a dispensation to extend the period of absence for an agreed length of time.

**64. Code of Conduct:** Cllr Goacher declared an interest in item relating to the Cemetery as he would be submitting a quote for the tree and hedge works. There were no requests for a dispensation.

**65. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2024:** Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true record and they were signed as such by the Chairman.

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

- **Minute 27:** Cllr Fleming had contacted the police to ask for a PCSO to attend the meeting, but he had not received a response. Cllr Fleming said he would contact them again to inform them of future meeting dates. Cllr Fleming said that there had been many incidents of rural crime recently with trespassing, stolen vehicles, damage to crops and property, use of catapults and confrontations with farmers. It was discussed that this was a genuine concern for those living locally, it seemed to be organised crime, and Motor Road and Hylter Lane were being used as a means of access to land.

- **Minute 60:** Members thanked the Edward James Foundation for installing a new seat in the bus shelter, which they had also cleaned and cleared the overgrown vegetation, as well as regularly emptying the litter bin.

**67. Open Forum:** There were no members of the public present.

**68. County Councillor report and questions:** Members thanked County Councillor Jeremy Hunt for the report circulated before the meeting which was **NOTED**. In summary, WSCC was consulting on its budget and priorities for 2025/26, and they were keen to hear from residents [www.westsussex.gov.uk/budget](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/budget). The Council wanted to close a budget gap of £38.5m in the coming year, although this could be lower if a decision was made to increase council tax. The Council had invested an extra £13m to actively tackle the problem of deteriorating roads. Over the last six months, highways teams had demonstrated commitment to better roads with around 18,000 potholes repaired using the 'sidesawn and sealed' method and 9,600 repaired using the velocity jet patcher. There were 23,625 sqm worth of small to medium-scale patching, 4.2 miles of large-scale patching and 116 miles of surfacing treatments. A further £4.5m was being invested in a winter resilience programme to increase drainage works. The Meals on Wheels service had highlighted the valuable service offered to customers across the county. It delivered 2,983 meals each week to the elderly, disabled or housebound. Cllr Hunt said that the Operation Watershed project at Chilgrove Road had been completed. He was aware that highways work for The Grinch was still scheduled to be completed this financial year. Cllr Fleming said that the road had been marked out ready for work. Cllr Hunt said residents in Lavant were working on a traffic regulation order application to WSCC to extend the 50mph limit from the beginning of Chilgrove Road to Binderton Lane, and he recommended the Council contacted Lavant Parish Council if it would like to extend it further. Cllr Hunt also reminded residents that there was a monthly residents newsletter which people could subscribe to at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWSCC/subscriber/new>

**69. 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 the government's increase in employer national insurance contributions would cost the District Council in the region of £500k per annum. There were circa 373 local authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland so any relief would cost the government circa £200m, which is why Cllr Potter feared it would be unlikely. There had been little progress on the Southern Gateway Redevelopment Scheme, which was on the agenda for Cabinet and was presented to Full Council last month, due to the uncertainty of relocating the numerous bus stops contained in the bus terminal. It had been suggested that they could be moved to Avenue de Chartres and South Street. However, at the Cabinet Meeting on 05/11, a public question was tabled suggesting 'how wrong it was to divert bus passengers onto a busy road adjacent to the Avenue de Chartres multi-story car park, the bus terminal should remain.' The response by the Leader of the Council was 'the vision of a Transport Hub in this location would be close to a railway station, bus stops, toilets, EV charging points, bicycle racks, cafes and of

course car parking. How all these facilities would be accommodated within the Southern Gateway area remained to be seen. Another member of the public addressed the Cabinet saying that the bus terminal must stay. Always in mind is to have improved pedestrian routes towards the city centre which, considering the ageing population of Chichester, should not feature high in priorities. Further assessments of the scheme would proceed using £5m from the Local Enterprise Partnership. Following a request from councillors, the Cabinet would receive and note a five-year resource monitor update. Concerns had been recorded about the high-level of funding for various projects. At end of October, funding approvals had amounted to £4.46 million but at the 05/11 meeting, Cabinet were asked to agree further funding of £8.228 million! This would include £0.25 million for the purchase of replacement refuse collection and a green waste collection vehicle. The two-year trial of two electric refuse collection vehicles had been less than successful. £8m would be set aside for refurbishment and investment in the Councils leisure centres. The contract with Everyone Active, who currently managed them, expired in 2026, after 10 years, and preparations were being considered for the re-tendering process. The centres clearly need reinvestment. Finally, there had been many developments to The Rubbing House in Lavant which had resulted in Enforcement action, which had been appealed against and the Planning Inspectorate were holding a hearing at East Pallant House on 28 November.

**70. The Trundlers:** It was **AGREED** to defer the item until the next meeting. The Clerk would contact Celia Dickinson.

**71. Traffic/roads update:**

- a) **Speedwatch:** There was no further update.
- b) **SID report:** Cllr Graham said the SID was working again, and that Sussex Police had deployed a device which gave an average speed reading of 31.7mph. It was discussed that the location on the first turn on Motor Road by the school had not been the best place as cars slowed down to enter the side road, the pub or school. Cllr Graham said he would write to the police again and send them some of the data the SID had captured. It was discussed that the police were withdrawing from the Safer Sussex Road Partnership and although Katy Bourne, PCC, said it would be replaced, there was no further information about the new scheme.

**72. Asset of community value:** Cllr Slade agreed to work with Cllr Goacher to rewrite the application.

**73. Car parking in the village:** It was discussed that cars park on the corner of Church Lane near the river which blocked entry for refuse lorries. It was discussed that there was not much that could be done about the situation currently, although the Council would continue to monitor it.

**74. Planning:** Members **NOTED** that the SDNPA had approved 24/02664/HOUS: The construction of a new structural glazed canopy to provide much needed to shelter to occupants and visitors. Hylters, Hylters Lane, Chilgrove. Members had **NO OBJECTION** to 24/02570/HOUS: Demolition of existing chimney and chimney stack, replace with two storey side extension and single storey flat roof extension

with roof terrace. Blackbush House, B2141 Old West Dean Road to High Street, Childgrove, West Dean. Members had **NO OBJECTION** to 24/04291/TCA: Notification of intention to fell 1 no. eucalyptus tree (T1). 96 Church Lane, West Dean. Members discussed the use of The Pool House, Binderton House, Binderton Lane, Binderton as a luxury rental property. It was **AGREED** for Cllr Corbett to write to Planning Enforcement again to restate the Council's objection as a condition had been placed on the property for it not to be used for commercial purposes.

#### 75. Cemetery:

- It was discussed that Cllr Goacher and Cllr Court had been trying to contact the family of Hayley Baxter as the memorial was unstable. The Clerk had written a letter, asking for it to be repaired as well as the ornamental tree to be removed, which they would hand deliver. Members **AGREED** for Cllr Goacher to lay down the other six memorials.
- Cllr Goacher had prepared a specification of works for tree and hedge maintenance at the Cemetery. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would send it to KJC Trees and Brushwood Tree Services for quotes to be considered at the next meeting on 8 January. Members also agreed that Cllr Goacher would be asked to quote for the job and, as Cllr Goacher had declared an interest, he did not take part in the discussion. It was discussed that the work would need to be completed by the end of January 2025. It was discussed that the School and the SDNPA could still install the owl boxes as these trees would not be cut back.
- Members **AGREED** to locate the two remembrance silhouettes near the water tap in the Cemetery. Cllr Goacher said he would move the bench and bin away from the area.
- Members retrospectively **APPROVED** the additional subscription on the memorial of Jacob Wilkinson (plot 140) in memory of his wife, Edith Wilkinson.

#### 76. Finance:

- Members considered the draft budget for financial year 2025/26 prepared by the Clerk. It was **NOTED** that the budget would need to be approved by Full Council at the next meeting on 8 January 2025 so the final Precept figure could be sent to the District Council by the end of the month. In summary, the Clerk had accounted for a 5% inflationary increase across most of the Council's current commitments and in addition, it was **AGREED** to budget £4,000 for the Cemetery to include the grass, tree and hedge maintenance; to budget £2,000 for VE Day 80 commemorations in May 2025; and to budget for employer national insurance contributions which the Council was now liable for following the government's budget announcement. It was discussed that the Council may need to include more for website development and new email packages and the Clerk would research this further for discussion at the next meeting on 8 January 2025.
- Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the list of payments totalling £202 and due immediately (to be paid before 8 January 2025 and required advance authorisation). There were payments totalling £1,322.93 made since 11

September 2024 which members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** retrospectively. See Appendix 1.

- Members **NOTED** the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2024/25 as per the Clerk's contract with no further comments.
- Members **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the budget report to 31 October 2024 which stated that expenditure was at 70%, as well as the bank reconciliations and bank statements to 31 October 2024 which were signed by Cllr Goacher.
- Members **AGREED** to setting up a two-stage approval process for online banking as required by Financial Regulation Section 6. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would set this up for Cllr Corbett and Cllr Court.

**77. Domain name:** Members considered a report prepared by the Clerk which set out information about the purchase of a .gov.uk domain name for the website and email accounts, and the implications for the Council. It was **AGREED** to purchase westdeanparishcouncil.gov.uk, if it was still available, through Parish Council Websites at a cost of £30 ex VAT. A grant of £100 was available from the government which would cover the first three years, but there would be a renewal fee after that. The Clerk had found some initial quotes for a new website, as the existing one did not meet WCAG2.2AA accessibility standards, and it was agreed that she would research this further for the Council to consider at its next meeting, along with more detailed quotes for new councillor emails. It was discussed that the Clerk may be able to apply domain name to the clerk's 365 email address with some IT support. If not, it may be necessary to buy a new email account, and the Clerk would research this further if necessary.

**78. Meeting dates:** Members **AGREED** the following meeting dates for 2025. 8 January, 12 March, 14 May, 9 July, 10 September and 12 November.

**79. Correspondence:** Members **NOTED** the list of correspondence. It was **AGREED** to hold a site meeting with Landbuild, who had recently completed the Operation Watershed works at Crows Hall Farm. Councillors commented that they would like to better understand the work that has been completed before paying the invoice.

**80. Announcements and items for the next meeting:** Cllr Slade gave her apologies for the next meeting on 8 January.

**81. Date of next meeting:** The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 8 January 2025 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

## Appendix 1: Payments for approval

### 1. Payments for approval, 13 November 24

		<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>VAT</b>
BACS	Working from home allowance Nov 24	18.00	18.00	0.00

BACS	HMRC Nov 24	120.40	15.00	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services Nov 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	Clerk's mileage Nov 24	13.39	13.39	0.00
BACS	MS 365 Nov 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	O2 mobile phone Nov 24	22.85	19.04	3.81

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		<b>202.00</b>	<b>90.73</b>	<b>5.87</b>
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## 2. Payments made since the last meeting, 11 September 24

		<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>VAT</b>
BACS	Confidential payments Oct 24	482.12	482.12	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance Oct 24	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	HMRC Oct 24	120.60	120.60	0.00
BACS	Chichester Payroll Services Oct 24	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	MS 365 Oct 24	12.36	10.30	2.06
DD	O2 mobile phone Oct 24	22.85	19.04	3.81
BACS	Gallagher insurance 2024/25	617.00	617.00	0.00
DD	Information Commissioners Office Data Protection Fee 2024/25	35.00	35.00	0.00

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		<b>1,322.93</b>	<b>1,317.06</b>	<b>5.87</b>
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## 3. Receipts since the last meeting, 11 September 24

BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 18/09/24	3.00
BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount 16/10/24	3.00
BACS	HMRC VAT refund 01/04/24-30/09/24	898.96
BACS	Santander bank interest 01/09/24	5.58
BACS	Santander bank interest 01/10/24	5.40

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		<b>915.94</b>
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## 4. Bank reconciliation

### Barclays

<b>Balance per statement 31/10/24</b>	<b>£55,729.84</b>
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00
<b>Revised bank</b>	<b>£55,729.84</b>

### Cashbook control

<b>Balance forward 01/04/24</b>	<b>£40,057.93</b>
Add total receipts to date	£27,791.63
Less total payments to date	£12,119.72
<b>Cashbook at 31/10/24</b>	<b>£55,729.84</b>

### Santander

<b>Balance per statement 01/10/24</b>	<b>£6,312.07</b>
Less outstanding payments	£0.00

Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00
<b>Revised bank</b>	<b>£6,312.07</b>

**Cashbook control**

<b>Balance forward 01/04/24</b>	<b>£6,279.19</b>
Add total receipts to date	£32.88
Less total payments to date	£0.00
<b>Cashbook at 01/10/24</b>	<b>£6,312.07</b>

<b><u>Total in both accounts</u></b>	<b><u>62,041.91</u></b>
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