

WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 7.30pm

West Dean House

Present: Cllr Steve Corbett, Cllr Helen Court, Cllr Ian Graham, Cllr John Fleming, Cllr Keith Goacher, Cllr Amy Green, 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 and no members of the press were present.

99. Apologies for absence: Cllr Will De Groot.

100. Code of Conduct: Cllr Fleming declared an interest in planning application 25/00079/APNR as the applicant and did not take part in the discussion. There were no requests for a dispensation.

101. To welcome Kate Whitton, Chalk Stream Resilience Officer at Western Sussex Rivers Trust, and receive an update on the River Lavant: Kate Whitton explained that her role was funded by Chichester District Council for three years to help improve the River Lavant as much as possible, as it had suffered from poor health in the past and there was an opportunity to salvage it. Meetings with local landowners and riparian owners had taken place and a report on the condition of the Upper Lavant had been carried out. Aims were to improve water quality, habitat, natural features and identify opportunities for restoration. Volunteers had been involved with water quality testing and monitoring of invertebrates to build a picture. River reports were a score card which showed how the river was performing at any given time. There had been meetings with Southern Water who were undertaking a programme of relining pipes to prevent surface water egressing into the network, as this had previously overwhelmed the system leading to discharges and pumping. Southern Water were also speaking to homeowners about preventing water entering the network by installing measures such as water butts to collect rainwater. The River Lavant was winterbourne which meant it dried up in the summer months. It was noted that in 2024, Portsmouth Water had abstracted 2,612,096 cubic metres of water from the aquifer that fed the River Lavant at one abstraction point at Centurion Way Pumping Station. A meeting had also been arranged with the Chichester Harbour Conservancy to discuss water quality and pollution in the Harbour. It was discussed that reed beds were being tested by Southern Water to clean water and stop pollution which was an effective and good use of a natural resource, but they were contained in concrete bunkers. To be truly effective, they would need to be rolled out on a massive scale and within a natural landscape. Kate Whitton said that each day of her work was different and involved collecting data for records, talking to landowners, residents or

the Environment Agency, having meetings with stakeholders and creating wet land. Kate Whitton said she was also involved in the Aldingbourne, working with Arun District Council, that her role was unique to the area, and she was not aware of other local authorities with chalk rivers providing the same resource. Kate Whitton said reports on the River Lavant could be found at <https://wsrt.org.uk> and by registering an account at <https://cartographer.io> Kate Whitton said she would be happy to attend a meeting in a year to give the Council an update on the progress of her work. Kate Whitton could be contacted on 07421 126 944 or at kate@wsrt.org.uk

102. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2025: Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true record and they were signed as such by the Chairman.

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

- **Minute 72:** Cllr Slade was working with Cllr Goacher on the registration of the Selsey Arms as an asset of community value.

104. Open Forum: There were no comments or questions.

105. County Councillor report and questions: Members thanked County Councillor Jeremy Hunt for the report circulated before the meeting which was **NOTED**. In summary, Cllr Hunt said that WSCC had agreed a balanced budget for 2025/26 which provides support for the most vulnerable, without cuts to frontline services. It would spend more than £2.2bn on vital services including £1284m for schools, education and children's social care; £553m to care for adults and keep people healthy; £98m to protect the environment, recycling and waste disposal; £87m to maintain roads and provide transport; £65m for fire and rescue services and support communities; £5m to support the local economy. Cllr Hunt said the pressures facing the Council outweighed the funding it received from government and the balanced budget had been achieved by increasing Council Tax by 4.99%. The increase represented an additional £1.65 per week for a Band D property. Cllr Hunt said that local government devolution in Sussex had moved a step closer and the government had approved a joint bid between West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council to be a priority for devolution with an elector mayor for the County. A government consultation was underway at [Sussex and Brighton devolution - GOV.UK](#). Cllr Hunt said Experience Sussex had been launched [Experience Sussex - London's Extraordinary Neighbour](#) and that the County Council's Active Travel team were winners of [Commute Zero Hero Award Winners Driving 53,000 Greener Journeys Every Year - Mobilityways](#). Cllr Hunt said the County Council's cyclical programme of drainage and gully cleansing was underway. Cllr Hunt said that Lavant Parish Council was working on a community highway scheme with the possibility of extending a proposed reduced speed limit from the southern end of the A286 to Binderton Lane. Members said this had been discussed before and would be a sensible approach, and that more measures such as cameras were also needed to prevent speeding.

106. 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 District Council's cabinet had been supporting the early application to devolve local government to meet the deadline of 21 March. Cllr Potter

Cllr Slade
& Cllr
Goacher

said the District Council had set a budget of £20,366,000 for 2025/26, representing an increase of £5.58 for a Band D taxpayer which, at 2.99%, was well below the threshold when a referendum would be necessary. The District Council collected the tax in its area for the County Council and Sussex Police, who had raised their precept to £15,937,996 which was an increase of 5.54% on the previous year, and a Band D taxpayer would contribute £266.91 towards the policing in the district. For comparison, a West Dean Band D taxpayer would be paying £290.82 toward the District and Parish precepts, the Parish segment was £98.76. Cllr Potter said the District Council had agreed to release sums of monies to support various projects through the coming year, including £600,000 to assist WSCC Highways in remedying the uneven paving in the City; money to improve the facilities at Westhampnett Services due to enlarging the refuse collection fleet as a further freighter was needed solely for waste food collections from food outlets, and the entire fleet would, in future, use Hydrogenated Diesel fuel which was 'greener' but would up the fuel costs by £85,000 per annum; and further excavations in Priory Park following on from the recent excavations which revealed interesting artifacts. Cllr Potter said the issue of changes to National Insurance contributions had become apparent with the cost to the District Council being £545,000 but the government had only awarded £110,000 by way of compensation, and only for the coming year. Thereafter, taxes would have to be raised to meet the increase which also impacted on parish councils. Cllr Potter said that the River Lavant was flowing well, and he had received a road closure notice for Knights Hill, Charlton, from 11 to 13 March while Southern Water removed the pumping and screening equipment from the adjacent field. Though the spring had risen at Cucumber Farm, there was no sign at East Dean yet.

107. Rural crime update: Members thanked PCSO Booker, Rural Crime Team, for the report circulated before the meeting with was **NOTED**. In summary, there had not been as many incidents over the last few months. There had only been one official report of poaching/coursing across the West Dean/Chilgrove area, and it looked like it was starting to stop, as it always did around this time of year. PCSO Booker said one of the main vehicles involved in poaching/coursing was found parked at Chilgrove and was seized by the Rural Crime Team with the assistance of locals. The owner had not claimed the vehicle, so it would be destroyed. There were a few enquiries ongoing around those linked to the vehicle, including other vehicles they did not know about. The only other crime was the theft of around 14 tons of premium beech cordwood which would have been turned into fire logs. This was stolen from a remote location behind gates on the West Dean estate. Due to the amount taken, this had to have occurred over a few days or certainly trips. PCSO Booker said he was now starting to see issues emerge around off-road bikes and quad bikes across multiple pieces of farmland across both Chichester and Arun Districts. There was a possibility they were being used for poaching/coursing, as well as joyriding across farmland. They had been seen coming through the Chilgrove area and it was being monitored by the Rural Crime Team. If any vehicles were seen and it looked like the occupants were up to no good, please contact PCSO Booker on 07912 895 813, at colin.Booker@sussex.police.uk or at <https://sussexpolice.researchfeedback.net/ruralcrimeteam>

108. Traffic/roads update:

- **Speedwatch:** There was no further update.
- **SID report:** Cllr Graham said the speed indicator device was active. Cllr Graham said the Estate had paid for a speed survey on the A286 near the Primary School to use as evidence to provide to the police and to persuade Highways that safer

traffic management was needed near the school. A similar survey had been carried out in 2016, and it identified that the average was then 47mph in the 30mph zone. The speed survey would identify vehicle types and the dates and times. Members thought that the survey carried out by the police had not been done in the right place which is why it generated a low average, and the new survey would provide credible data. It was discussed that some buses even travelled at over 40mph. It was noted that more drivers were exiting Cemetery Lane the wrong way, which was a one-way road. Cllr Corbett said he had noticed it too and that there was no signage at the bottom of the lane to alert drivers to the one-way until they were near the top. It was discussed that road markings needed to be repainted, and Cllr Hunt said that the County Council would only do this if they were more than 75% worn.

109. Planning: Members **RESOLVED** to make the following decisions.

- **25/00079/APNR:** Proposed road to provide access to the full width of the adjacent agricultural building. Colworth Farm, The Grinch, West Dean. To **NOTE** that the SDNPA has allowed the proposal to proceed. Members also noted that this was not a road but a concrete pad around 4m x 10m to allow entry to a building.
- **24/04973/FUL:** Construction of replacement campsite facilities. Land to the north of Foresters Cottage, A286 Church Lane to Millers Lane, West Dean. To **NOTE** that the Council has supported the application. Members noted that many residents had offered their support to the proposal.
- Cllr Corbett said he had not received a reply from the Enforcement Team regarding his recent enquiry, an action from the last Full Council meeting, about The Pool House, Binderton House, Binderton Lane, Binderton which was being used as a rental property. It was **AGREED**, with all in favour, that Cllr Potter would contact the Enforcement Team on the Council's behalf to request that a reply was sent to Cllr Corbett.

110. Cemetery: Members thanked Cllr Goacher for the recent hedge and tree maintenance at the Cemetery. It was **NOTED** that there had been an interment of a coffin to burial plot 15 in the new Cemetery on 7 March.

111. VE Day 80: Members **NOTED** that a grant of £250 was available from the District Council to support community commemorative initiatives. It was **RESOLVED** to apply for funding to buy a tree to be planted on the village green and to buy a flag for the pole at the school, which would be bespoke to West Dean. Cllr Court said she would research trees and flags. Cllr Graham said he would liaise with Cllr Goacher about the D-Day silhouettes which would be placed at the Cemetery. It was **AGREED** to hold a sub-committee meeting to discuss the organisation of an event to mark VE Day 80 on Thursday 8 May.

112. Litter picking day: It was discussed that an event could be organised to pick up litter that lined the verges and hedgerows. Cllr Graham and Cllr Green said they would meet to discuss this further.

Cllr Court
& Clerk

Cllr
Graham
& Cllr
Green

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| <p>113. Annual Parish Meeting: Members NOTED the draft agenda circulated by the Clerk. Instead of holding the Parish Meeting and Annual General Meeting of the Council on the same evening, it was AGREED to merge the two so there was just one meeting. The Clerk would invite the Chief Executive of West Dean and the Headteacher of the Primary School to attend.</p> | <p>Clerk</p> |
| <p>114. Website: The Clerk showed members the latest version of the new website. It was discussed that new photographs were needed and Cllr Graham said that an aerial photo of the Parish could be taken to replace the image of West Dean House. Members AGREED to send the Clerk a head and shoulder image for the councillor page. It was discussed that information could be included on the useful links page about local tourism, the pub, the open theatre, local walks, Centurion Way, the pre-school, the school and the Scouts, as well as more on local history. The Clerk asked members to send her any information they had. It was AGREED to continue to work on the site until the next meeting in May when the Council could review it again.</p> | <p>Cllr Graham & Clerk</p> |
| <p>115: Email accounts: Members discussed that they were happy with the new email system which had stopped the amount of SPAM/junk emails received. Cllr Graham asked for his emails to be transferred from the old system and the Clerk asked him to provide her with his login details for both accounts. It was discussed that the old system could be deleted in October when the contract ran out.</p> | |
| <p>116. Finance: Members NOTED the budget report to 28 February 2025 with no further comments. Cllr Goacher signed the bank reconciliations to 28 February 2025 – the Barclays account closed with a balance of £32,370.97 and the Santander account closed with a balance of £6,339.37. Members RESOLVED to APPROVE the list of payments totalling £820.29 and due immediately (to be paid before 14 May and required advance authorisation). There were payments totalling £5,131.75 made since 8 January which members RESOLVED to APPROVE retrospectively. The Clerk would post the bank mandate to Cllr Corbett and Cllr Goacher to sign. Members AGREED to give funding of £100 to support the Valley Diary in 2025/26. The Clerk said she would include this in the budget so it could be considered in future years.</p> | <p>Clerk</p> |
| <p>117. Correspondence: Members NOTED the list of correspondence. It was discussed that Motor Road was being closed to provide a new water supply for 91 West Dean and that it was unlikely to take four days to carry out. The correspondence from the Forestry Commission was discussed and Cllr Graham said that the Estate had felled all of its spruce to prevent the spread of the beetle, although it may be a concern to other nearby landowners. Members discussed the SDNPA changes to the fencing on Centurion Way, which had been done without any notice and was considered to be dangerous in parts as it had exposed sheer drops. Cllr Corbett said he had attended planning training held online by WSALC which had been useful, and he had sent the presentation slides to the Clerk to circulate to members. A key point that any comments submitted should uphold the credibility of the Parish Council and that councillors should not get bogged down in the detail.</p> | |

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| <p>118: Announcements and items for the next meeting: There were no announcements</p> <p>119. Date of next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 7pm.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 9.15pm.</p> | |
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Appendix 1: Payments for approval

1. Payments for approval, 12 March 2025

| | | Total | Net | VAT |
|------|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| SO | Confidential payments March 25 | 496.83 | 496.83 | 0.00 |
| SO | Working from home allowance March 25 | 18.00 | 18.00 | 0.00 |
| SO | HMRC March 25 | 120.40 | 15.00 | 0.00 |
| SO | Chichester Payroll Services March 25 | 15.00 | 15.00 | 0.00 |
| BACS | Clerk's mileage March 25 | 13.39 | 13.39 | 0.00 |
| BACS | MS 365 March25 | 12.36 | 10.30 | 2.06 |
| DD | O2 mobile phone March 25 | 18.00 | 15.00 | 3.00 |
| BACS | Microshade VSM emails March 25 | 78.31 | 65.26 | 13.05 |
| BACS | WSALCplanning training S Corbett | 48.00 | 40.00 | 8.00 |
| | | 820.29 | 688.78 | 26.11 |

2. Payments made since the last meeting, 8 January 2025

| | | Total | Net | VAT |
|------|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| SO | Confidential payments Feb 25 | 497.03 | 496.83 | 0.00 |
| SO | Working from home allowance Feb 25 | 18.00 | 18.00 | 0.00 |
| SO | HMRC Feb 25 | 124.20 | 124.40 | 0.00 |
| SO | Chichester Payroll Services Feb 25 | 15.00 | 15.00 | 0.00 |
| BACS | MS 365 Feb 25 | 12.36 | 10.30 | 2.06 |
| DD | O2 mobile phone Feb 25 | 22.85 | 19.04 | 3.81 |
| BACS | Microshade VSM email accounts Feb 25 and email transfers | 132.31 | 110.26 | 22.05 |
| BACS | K Goacher cemetery tree/hedge maintenance | 4,260.00 | 3,550.00 | 710.00 |
| BACS | Reimbursement H Court flowers for Connie Block | 50.00 | 50.00 | 0.00 |
| | | 5,131.75 | 4,393.83 | 737.92 |

3. Receipts since the last meeting, 8 January 2025

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|------|--|------|
| BACS | | |
| | Aerial Direct mobile phone discount Feb 25 | 2.00 |
| BACS | Santander bank interest 01/01/25 | 5.60 |
| BACS | Santander bank interest 01/02/25 | 5.62 |

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|------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| BACS | Santander bank interest 01/03/25 | 5.08 |
| | | <u>18.30</u> |

4. Bank reconciliation

Barclays

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Balance per statement 28/02/25 | £32,370.97 |
| Less outstanding payments | £0.00 |
| Add outstanding receipts | £0.00 |
| Add petty cash | £0.00 |
| Revised bank | £32,370.97 |

Cashbook control

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|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Balance forward 01/04/24 | £40,057.93 |
| Add total receipts to date | £31,823.29 |
| Less total payments to date | £39,510.25 |
| Cashbook at 28/02/25 | £32,370.97 |

Santander

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Balance per statement 01/03/25 | £6,339.37 |
| Less outstanding payments | £0.00 |
| Add outstanding receipts | £0.00 |
| Add petty cash | £0.00 |
| Revised bank | £6,339.37 |

Cashbook control

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|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Balance forward 01/04/24 | £6,279.19 |
| Add total receipts to date | £60.18 |
| Less total payments to date | £0.00 |
| Cashbook at 01/03/25 | £6,339.37 |

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| <u>Total in both accounts</u> | <u>38,710.34</u> |
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