

Minutes



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

C/o West Dean
Chichester
PO18 0QZ
clerk@westdeanparishcouncil.gov.uk
07596 884847

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of West Dean Parish Council held on Wednesday 11 June 2025 at 7.30pm at West Dean House, West Dean.

Present: Cllr Helen Court, Cllr Ian Graham, Cllr Will de Groot, Cllr John Fleming, Cllr Keith Goacher, Cllr Amy Green and Cllr Cathy Slade.

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

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Goacher. No members of the public and no members of the press were present.

06/25/01. To hold a minute's silence in memory of Cllr Steve Corbett: Cllr Goacher opened the meeting by saying on behalf of the Council how shocked and saddened he had been to learn of the passing of the Chairman, Cllr Steve Corbett. To his knowledge, Cllr Corbett had been a parish councillor for 20 to 25 years and was always passionate about West Dean, welcoming to others, efficient in his approach, and pivotal on all matters relating to planning. Cllr Corbett would be missed by all. Cllr Fleming said thank you to Cllr Goacher on behalf of the Council for the way in which he had responded to the matter. Members held a minute's silence in Cllr Corbett's memory.

06/25/02. Election of the Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Five nominations were received for Cllr Goacher, with all in favour. Cllr Goacher was **ELECTED** as **CHAIRMAN** who signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

06/25/03. Apologies for absence: The Clerk had not received any apologies for absence.

06/25/04. Election of the Vice-Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Cllr Court was proposed by Cllr Graham, seconded by Cllr Fleming with all in favour. Cllr Court was **ELECTED** as **VICE-CHAIRMAN** who signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

06/25/05. Declarations of members' interests: Cllr Graham and Cllr Green declared an interest in planning application 25/01239/PA3R as employees of West Dean Estate and they did not take part in the discussion or decision.

06/25/06. To consider a request from Mrs Carol Corbett about a memorial tree to be planted in memory of Cllr Corbett: Members **AGREED** to the planting of a walnut tree in the Cemetery, as requested, and to offer the option of an A5-size wooden plaque or an A4-size

Minutes

stone plaque next to the tree - the Clerk would write a letter to Mrs Corbett. It was discussed that the tree could become very large, and it was important to plant it in a location that would not affect the burial ground. It was discussed that planting the tree would not set a precedence to others as Cllr Corbett's long service of 25 years on the Council was exceptional.

06/25/07. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2025: Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a correct record, and they were signed as such by the Chairman.

06/25/08. Update on matters carried forward from the previous meeting: Members **NOTED** the following updates.

- **Minute 111.** Members **NOTED** that Chichester District Council had awarded a grant of £250 towards the cost of a Populus Tremula (Aspen) tree to commemorate VE Day 80 which had cost £295 ex VAT plus delivery of £65.
- **Minute 112:** Cllr Graham and Cllr Green said there was not a lot of litter in the Parish, but they would keep an eye on the situation and would organise a litter picking event if required.
- **Minute 113:** It was **NOTED** that the Annual Parish Meeting had been cancelled on 14 May 2025 due to the passing of Cllr Corbett. It had not been possible to reorganise the meeting before 1 June deadline (the end of the period when the meeting can be held) due to the half-term holiday which was not have enabled the school to attend. The internal auditor had advised that the Council already gave residents the opportunity to attend full council meetings which were held in public and included an open forum agenda item. Members **RESOLVED** to cancel the meeting in 2025, given the exceptional circumstances, and to invite the Chief Executive and Principal of West Dean to attend a future meeting. The Clerk would also write to the Headteacher to inform the school of the decision.

06/25/09. Open Forum: There were no comments or questions.

06/25/10. 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 gave his sincerest condolences on the sad, and sudden, loss of the Chairman, Cllr Steve Corbett, who had been a councillor for many years. His steadfast support, both for the Parish and wider community, would be sadly missed.

Cllr Hunt said the government's increases to national insurance had added more pressure to social care budgets and many providers had struggled with the unexpected increases. Cllr Hunt said the government's taxes on farmers and small businesses had stifled growth and both these industries were important to the economy of West Sussex providing employment and sustainability of the countryside. At recent County Council meetings, there had been motions to call on the government to look at these policies again, including exemptions for all care providers and charities. Cllr Hunt said the government had not responded so far. Cllr Hunt said the government's implementation period for local government devolution and reorganisation was challenging and being considered on the priority programme was the only real option. While acknowledging limited local engagement due to the tight timescales, all councils have committed to extensive consultation with all residents, businesses and

Minutes

wider stakeholders as proposals develop. Cllr Hunt said there would be mayoral elections in May 2026 and elections for the shadow unitary authority in May 2027. Cllr Hunt said the County Council had put in an additional £50m into highways over the last two years and residents were starting to see real improvements in the state of the roads. In 2024/25, 44,767 potholes were repaired, the time from receiving a report to repairing the pothole was down to 14 days, 134.5 miles of surfacing works had been carried out, 36,031 sqm of small and medium scale patching had been carried out and over 123,000 drainage gullies had been cleansed. Cllr Hunt said it was likely that the A286 would be surface dressed following extensive patching that had taken place last year. Cllr Hunt said a design had been agreed for Halnaker Windmill and that it could be completed next summer. Cllr Hunt said Lavant Parish Council were proposing to submit a traffic regulation order to reduce the speed limit on Childgrove Road and Binderton Lane, and members **AGREED** to support a neighbouring parish.

06/25/11. 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 discussions were ongoing regarding local government reorganisation. There were no proposals for the break-up and division of the whole of Sussex, although some involved boundary changes which would entail a long process. Cllr Potter said various dignitaries had shown interest in becoming the mayor of the strategic authority, and there had been assurances of a public consultation in September. The District Council had reviewed its Development Management Service (Planning Services) and had agreed to reduce its planning committee from 13 to 11 members. Cllr Potter said this represented a loss of local knowledge, particularly as it was comprised of 15 members not so long ago. However, the time allowed for representations to be made to the committee remained at a full three minutes (there had been discussion about reducing it to two minutes). Automatic referrals to the committee would be removed for minor applications and listed building consents, but discretion was given to the Director of Planning in consultation with the committee chairman. Cllr Potter said there were 3,000 listed buildings in the district and 86 conservation areas which should be afforded maximum protection. The extensions to time allowed for responses to applications was to be curtailed, except in extenuating circumstances agreed by the Director of Planning. Cllr Potter said the District Council had appointed a new monitoring officer, and the Council had welcomed a new member, Dominic Merritt, who had replaced Jess Brown Fuller. Cllr Potter said the Council had increased its hackney carriage and private hire licencing fees and there had been many objections, but fees had not been increased since 2016 and the 10% increase covered a forecasted deficit of £23,700 and to maintain a cost neutral financial position in the future.

06/25/12. Rural crime update: Members thanked PCSO Booker, Rural Crime Team, for the report circulated before the meeting which was **NOTED**. In summary, there had been a report of number plates being stolen from a vehicle parked at the White Horse car park, but there was nothing else of note. PCSO Booker said the Rural Crime was working to continue to patrol the area and deal with anything they came across. Members discussed that there had been an illegal rave at the Singleton Oil Field over the Easter weekend which police had attended.

Minutes

06/25/13. 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: It was **AGREED** to defer a decision until the next meeting. Cllr Slade and Cllr Court said they would attend the planning training being offered by the District Council.
- Highways and flooding: Cllr De Groot
- Village maintenance and footpaths: Cllr Graham and Cllr Goacher
- Winter management and maintenance: Cllr Graham

06/25/14. Review and adoption of policies: Members **APPROVED** the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Staff and Cllr Data Policy, Data Protection Policy, Freedom of Information Policy, Risk Register and Asset Register with no further updates. It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had used the latest NALC version of the model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

06/25/15. Traffic/roads update:

- **Speedwatch:** Cllr Court said the Group had been out a few times in recent weeks and had captured vehicles travelling at 40mph to 50mph at school time, and they had witnessed children crossing the road and cars breaking suddenly. Cllr Court had included articles in the school newsletter to ask parents to volunteer for the Group.
- **SID report:** Cllr Graham said the recent traffic survey had identified an average speed of 36mph which was disappointing. It was likely that the strips were in the wrong place, capturing vehicles slowing down to enter the school grounds which affected the average. Cllr Graham was going to look at the data again to remove vehicles that may be deaccelerating.

06/25/16. Planning: Members **RESOLVED** to make the following decisions.

25/01239/PA3R and 25/01238/FUL: Biomass Shed: Conversion of 1 no. industrial biomass building into a visitor centre incorporating farm and craft shop. Biomass Shed, Home Farm, A286 The Grinch to Town Lane, West Dean. Members **AGREED** to support the planning application as it made use of an unused building, provided employment opportunities and contributed to the wellbeing of the local community.

06/25/17. VE Day 80: Cllr Court said the whole day was a huge success. The tree planting ceremony went well with 18 people coming along, including Barry Phillips representing Chilgrove, Stephen Bell representing Binderton, Sonia Fleming and Simon Renwick representing the farming families, and Tony Boxall who is the eldest and has lived in West Dean his entire life. John and Bryan Court, Ann Kendall and Connie Block were invited but, unfortunately, they could not attend. Cllr Court thanked Cllr Goacher and Cllr Graham for their help with preparations, particularly Cllr Goacher who dug the hole and transported the tree down the road in the loader bucket. We had tea, coffee and delicious cake and everyone said how lovely it was and were all impressed at the size of the tree, particularly Tony as he had commented about it probably being so small that he would not be around to see it grow. We now need to organise a plaque, if we have any money left in the budget. The evening celebration was well attended. By pure luck we had a professional bell ringer ring

Minutes

the church bells at the beginning of the evening. There were 212 meal requests in total; the fish and chips were excellent, large portion sizes and excellent value for money, the total cost £1,736.25 excluding VAT. Ashley from Stubbington Fish & Chips was very easy to work with from the very beginning and nothing was too much trouble. He was blown away by the venue and was grateful for the electric hook up which made it so much easier. The pre-ordering worked really well, save for a slight hiccup with emails but luckily Ashley had brought extra so it all worked out fine. The children sang beautifully which also included some audience participation, however our quiet moment of remembrance got a bit lost, mainly due to the speaker not being adequate for the outdoor space. The tombola was a huge success, and along with a donation from the ice cream lady, we raised £165.00 for Tuppeny Barn, a local charity which runs workshops for female veterans and spouses of veterans who are considered vulnerable. Thanks to Cllr Slade and Cllr Green for all their help organising and delivering the invites, to Cllr Graham and his team who did an amazing job in setting up/taking down the venue and running the bar, and Cllr Goacher for sorting out the fire pit and donating the wood and his excellent compering the whole day. Cllr Court said she was very proud of the event with the villages and school coming together, and the flower show at the Church. We truly honoured VE Day. Cllr Goacher thanked Cllr Court on behalf of the Parish Council for her help and support in running a successful event. It was discussed that the Clerk could upload some of the images to the website.

06/25/18. Website: Members **AGREED** to publish the new website www.westdeanparishcouncil.gov.uk to the public. It was discussed that the photographs still needed to be updated but that it was a work in progress. The Clerk also needed to include the new website address on the external audit forms. Members **RESOLVED** to adapt the drawing of the ancient oak tree which was situated at West Dean as the Council's new logo, with thanks to GPS Trees for use of the picture.

06/25/19. Internal audit for financial year 2024/25:

19.1: Members **NOTED** the internal audit report for 2024/25 prepared by Andy Beams, Mulberry & Co, following a meeting with the Clerk on 8 May 2025 and **RECEIVED** the recommendations with no further comment.

19.2: Members **REVIEWED** the effectiveness of the system of internal control and **APPROVED** the Annual Governance Statement, Section 1, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25, by resolution. Cllr Goacher signed Section 1 of the AGAR.

06/25/20. Receipts and payments 2024/25 and statement of reserves: Members **NOTED** the circulated budget report to 31 March 2025 with no further comments.

06/25/21. Accounting Statements, Section 2 of the 2024/25 AGAR: Members **APPROVED** the Accounting Statements by resolution and Cllr Goacher signed Section 2 of the AGAR. Members **AGREED** and set the period of public rights for the inspection of the unaudited AGAR which the Clerk would publish to the public.

06/25/22. Finance:

Minutes

21.1: Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the list of payments totalling £886.86 and due immediately (to be paid before 10 September 2025 and required advance authorisation). There were payments totalling £6,279.10 made since 12 March 2025 which members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** retrospectively (see Appendix 1). It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had used the Santander account for all payments in May due to an issue relating to councillor access to the Barclay's account, and it was **AGREED** to transfer the total amount spent of £4,010.20 back to that account.

21.2: Members **NOTED** the bank reconciliation to 30 April 2025 with no further comments (see Appendix 1).

21.3: Members **REVIEWED** the annual fees, charges and regular payments with no further comments or changes.

21.4: Members considered the report circulated by the Clerk regarding investments. It was **AGREED** to open a Barclays savings account, which was instant access, and to transfer the earmarked reserves of £20k to generate some interest. It was **AGREED** to defer a decision on a longer-term investment until the next meeting. It was **AGREED** to add Cllr Court as a banking signatory to the Barclays Bank account.

06/25/23. Correspondence: Members **NOTED** the list of correspondence with no further comments.

06/25/24: Announcements and items for the next meeting: There were no announcements.

06/25/25. Confidential business: Members **RESOLVED** to exclude the public and press, in the view that publicity would prejudice the public interest of the confidential natures of the business or arising out of the business about to be transacted – Public Bodes (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

06/25/26. Staffing Committee: Members **NOTED** the circulated minutes and **APPROVED** the recommendations of the meeting held on 12 March 2025.

06/25/27. Date of next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 10 September 2025 at 7pm. As May's meeting had been postponed until June, it was **AGREED** to cancel the meeting in July. Cllr Slade gave her apologies for the meeting in September as she would be away.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Minutes

Appendix 1: Payments for approval

1. Payments for approval, 11 June 2025

		Total	Net	VAT
SO	Confidential payments June 25	509.19	509.19	0.00
SO	Working from home allowance June 25	18.00	18.00	0.00
SO	HMRC June 25	162.81	162.81	0.00
SO	Chichester Payroll Services June 25	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	Clerk's mileage June 25	13.39	13.39	0.00
BACS	MS 365 June 25	12.36	10.30	2.06
DD	O2 mobile phone June 25	19.34	16.12	3.22
BACS	Microshade VSM emails June 25	78.31	65.26	13.05
BACS	Reimbursement H Court VE Day items	58.46	48.71	9.75
		886.86	858.78	28.08

2. Payments made since the last meeting, 12 March 2025

		Total	Net	VAT
SO	Confidential payments April 25	509.19	509.19	0.00
BACS	Confidential payments May 25	509.19	509.19	0.00
SO	Working from home allowance April 25	18.00	18.00	0.00
BACS	Working from home allowance May 25	18.00	18.00	0.00
SO	HMRC April 25	162.81	162.81	0.00
BACS	HMRC May 25	162.81	162.81	0.00
SO	Chichester Payroll Services April 25	15.00	15.00	0.00
SO	Chichester Payroll Services May 25	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	MS 365 April 25	12.36	10.30	2.06
BACS	MS 365 May 25	12.36	10.30	2.06
DD	O2 mobile phone April 25	18.00	15.00	3.00
BACS	O2 mobile phone May 25	19.34	16.12	3.22
BACS				
	Microshade VSM email accounts April 25	78.31	65.26	13.05
BACS				
	Microshade VSM email accounts May 25	78.31	65.26	13.05
BACS				
	K Goacher Cemetery grass maintenance May 25	960.00	800.00	160.00
BACS				
	Newton Newton VE Day 80 Flag	36.60	30.00	6.60
BACS				
	Griffin Nurseries Populus tremula tree and delivery	432.00	360.00	72.00
BACS				
	Chichester District Council dog/litter bin emptying 2024/25	658.94	549.12	109.82
BACS				
	WSALC and NALC subscription 2025/26	145.38	145.38	0.00
BACS				
	Mulberry & Co internal audit May 25	234.00	195.00	39.00
BACS				
	Ashley Young Holdings Ltd fish and chips	2,083.50	1,736.25	347.25
BACS				
	Valley Diary donation 2025/26	100.00	100.00	0.00
		6,279.10	5,507.99	771.11

Minutes

3. Receipts since the last meeting, 12 March 2025

BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount April 25	2.00
BACS	Aerial Direct mobile phone discount May 25	2.00
BACS	VAT return quarter 4 2024/25	818.44
BACS	CDC Precept 1st instalment 2025/26	11,895.50
BACS	CDC VE Day 80 grant for tree	250.00
BACS	Santander bank interest 01/04/25	5.42
BACS	Santander bank interest 01/05/25	5.21
BACS	Santander bank interest 01/06/25	5.28
		12,983.85

4. Bank reconciliation

Barclays

Balance per statement 30/04/25	£38,018.03
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00
Revised bank	£38,018.03

Cashbook control

Balance forward 01/04/25	£27,488.68
Add total receipts to date	£12,715.94
Less total payments to date	£2,186.59
Cashbook at 30/04/25	£38,018.03

Santander

Balance per statement 01/05/25	£6,350.00
Less outstanding payments	£0.00
Add outstanding receipts	£0.00
Add petty cash	£0.00
Revised bank	£6,350.00

Cashbook control

Balance forward 01/04/25	£6,339.37
Add total receipts to date	£10.63
Less total payments to date	£0.00
Cashbook at 01/05/25	£6,350.00

<u>Total in both accounts</u>	<u>44,368.03</u>
--------------------------------------	-------------------------