

WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday, 16 October 2023

at The Amenity Hall, Stone Cross School, Adur Drive, Stone Cross B24 5EF

Present: Cllr P Baldwin, Cllr L Comfort, Cllr F Durling, Cllr M Fairweather*

Cllr K Farley, Cllr C Hanson, Cllr R Mayfield, Cllr P Quanstrom, Cllr D Upton*

(* denotes WDC Councillors)

ESCC Cllr D Shing, WDC Cllr C Primett, 3 members of the public

Also at the meeting: S. Sanders (Clerk)

52. Apologies

Cllr D Axell, Cllr A Taylor

53. Declarations of Interest

None

54. Questions from members of the public

The public were asked which agenda item they wish to speak on at the beginning of the meeting.

They were then invited to speak for two minutes (max) at the start of the agenda item rather than at the beginning of the meeting. This will be for any or all agenda items if required.

55. Draft Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 18 September 2023 to be agreed and confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the Meeting

The Minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chair of the Council

Proposed and Seconded

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 18 September 2023 be agreed and signed

56. To receive information and raise any questions to ESCC / Wealden District Councillors present

ESCC Cllr Shing gave a general update on ESCC. There was little to report at the moment except to remind parents that the closing date for secondary school applications was 31 October 2023.

Cllr Shing was informed about the uncut grass verge outside the Sycamore Grange Retirement Home. The verge and hedge were both overgrown and needed cutting as soon as possible.

Cllr Shing was then asked by WDC Cllr Primett about the progress of a pelican crossing on Ditton Road / Golden Jubilee Way. There was little information currently with a grant application being submitted earlier in this year. It is still possible but approval and progress of the scheme depends on ESCC being awarded the funding. A Councillor informed Cllr Shing that the white lines on Dittons Road and the small roundabout had worn away and had not been replaced since all the roadworks had taken place. Cllr Shing said that he would bring it to the attention of the Highway Steward as soon as possible.

WDC Cllr Primett spoke on issues in the Polegate Central Ward which includes Dittons and Stone Cross.

Cllr Primett informed Councillors that the week beginning the 16 October is “Recycling Week” which would hopefully remind and educate people that the best way forward is to recycle as much as possible.

WDC are carrying out a review of polling stations in the District for accessibility. They want to hear from anyone that finds polling places a barrier to voting in local and general elections. The closing date for the public consultation is 30 November 2023. The outcome of the review will be published early in 2024.

The cars that advertise on the junction of Golden Jubilee / Dittons Road are still there and there seems little that can be done but Cllr Primett will pursue the matter.

Wealden Community Grants to enhance community spaces are available but the closing date is close.

One Councillor informed Cllr Primett that the whole process of this funding application was unwieldly and would make applying for grant funding very challenging for many people.

WDC Cllr Fairweather updated the Council on other Wealden District Council matters. He told Councillors that it was a major project to produce a new Local Plan that took in the whole of the Wealden District. It was taking considerable work to prepare a plan to present to Full Council.

57. Clerks Report on actions taken following the last meeting:

Cherwell Close Play Equipment

The Clerk said that a report with quotations was awaited from the Council play inspection team. Unfortunately, the quotes had not been available for this meeting but as soon as they had been received the quotes would be circulated to Councillors.

Grant application from Wealden Citizens Advice (WCA) – re-application

Unfortunately, a project was not forthcoming, only a request for grant funding for day to day running costs. The Council agreed that the Clerk should contact Wealden Citizens Advice and inform them that their application does not meet the Parish Councils grant funding terms and conditions

They will be most welcome to reapply when they have a particular project in the parish area that needs funding

Proposed and Seconded

Majority approval with one abstention

Resolved: That Wealden Citizens Advice will be welcome to apply for grant funding for a particular project in the Parish area

A completion date for Adur Park

This item will be discussed at length later on the agenda

An enquiry regarding a yearly maintenance contract for the Westham Pond

The Clerk was awaiting a response from a pond contractor. As soon as it is received it will be passed to Councillors. This item will be put on the Agenda for the November Full Council meeting that will be held at Westham Village Hall.

58. Cherwell Close Play Equipment

Please see the Clerks Report above.

59. Financial Items recommended for approval

(i) Reconciliation Reports for August 2023 for approval and resolution

The reconciliation reports were agreed by Council and signed by the Chair of the Council

(ii) Bank Statements August 2023 to be approved

The bank statements were approved by Council and signed by the Chair of the Council

(iii) External Auditors Conclusion of Audit for the year ended 31 March 2023

Councillors were supplied with a copy of the papers and noted the report

(iv) Risk Assessment Report October 2023

Councillors were supplied with a copy of the Risk Assessment Report and noted the report

It was agreed to resolve all the above items

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: That the following documents be approved.

Reconciliation Reports for August 2023

Bank Statements for August 2023

External Auditors Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

Risk Assessment Report October 2023

60. Adur Park

- (i) A verbal update regarding a completion date for the all-weather all access path**

A Councillor informed Council that a specific completion date cannot be given. The work was weather driven with work being held up with puddles on the path. The Agri flex which is used in the path cannot be laid in wet weather.

(ii) A recommendation for the payment of an invoice for the fencing around the play area

The fencing around the play area had now been installed with two gates one each side of the play area. This would now give children a safe space to play in once the surfacing was complete.

It was agreed that the invoice for the fencing installation can now be paid.

**Proposed & Seconded
Unanimous agreement**

Resolved: That the invoice of £14,345.00 + VAT be paid for fencing the play area in Adur Park

(iii) To resolve payment for the extended 'wet pour' in the childrens play area. The original area agreed did not include adjustments to the extent of the new fencing which was required

It had initially been decided that the whole of the play area should be covered with wet pour surfacing but Councillors were concerned about the increase in the cost of using wet pour for the whole of the play. It would amount to extra expenditure of nearly £20,000.

Councillors asked to see the original quote and any further information about the increased costs. There had been some misunderstanding regarding the cost about covering the whole area with wet pour or a mix of wet pour and grass.

Councillors decided not to agree to the extra expenditure for the complete covering of wet pour in the play area and to return to the original agreement.

Ultimately, it was decided to agree to the original quotation for Option A which included a mix of wet pour and grass

Proposed & Seconded

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: To revert to the original decision of agreeing Option A which included three separate projects amounting to £29,288.10+ VAT.

- (iv) To discuss the feasibility of installing metal fencing along the Friday Street side and entrance to Adur Park. A pedestrian gate into the park will be kept.**

The Chair asked if quotations could be sought for metal fencing to run the length of Adur Park on the Friday Street site.

This would be to mitigate the incursion into Adur Park by certain groups. A pedestrian gate would be kept so that members of the public could enter the park by this gate.

Quotations would be brought to the January meeting.

61. An enquiry received from a resident regarding the land ownership at the corner of Hobney Rise, Westham

The Clerk reported that a letter been received from concerned residents in Westham regarding the fencing off of the land on the corner of Hobney Rise. The fencing had been reported to ESCC Highways to find out the ownership of the verge and why it was fenced off.

A short discussion was held to see if anyone on the Council knew why the fencing had appeared but it was decided to wait to see what ESCC Highways had to say about the fencing.

62. Items for the next Agenda

A report from a pond contractor regarding yearly maintenance of the Westham Pond
Quotations for the re-siting / removal of the play equipment in Cherwell Close

63. To resolve to exclude Members of the Press and Public (Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act) 1960

64. Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2024

A quotation was received from a contractor with regard to the grass cutting and grounds maintenance in the Paris area.

After a short discussion it was agreed that the contract should be accepted with allowances for the grass to be cut by a by a local contractor in some areas of the parish.

Proposed & Seconded

Majority agreement & 1 abstention

Resolved: To appoint a local contractor for the next 12 months (January 24 – December 24)

The Meeting closed at 8.20pm