

WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday, 20 November 2023

at The Westham Village Hall, Peelings Lane, Westham, BN24 5HE

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

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

(* denotes WDC Councillors)

WDC Cllr C Primett, 5 members of the public

Also at the meeting: S. Sanders (Clerk)

65. Apologies

Cllr K Farley, Cllr A Taylor, ESCC Cllr D Shing

66. Declarations of Interest

None

67. 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.

68. Draft Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 16 October 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 16 October 2023 be agreed and signed

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

Cllr Primett informed the Council on a number of items including: The Let's Talk hub has now gone live on the WDC website. Hydrogenated vegetable oil is now being used in their waste vehicles and the planning application has been submitted for the new leisure centre in Hailsham. WDC have also taken South East Water to task.

Cllr Fairweather reported that a Full Council meeting would take place on Wednesday 22 November. The Local Plan was taking up much time of Councillors but was hoping to be presented in February 2024.

70. A verbal update on the Wealden Car Park in Peelings Lane

The Chair of the Village Hall Committee asked if they could speak on this item which has been on the agenda since early summer.

On Monday night the following deep concerns were raised by members of the public and the Chair of the Village Hall Committee on this item. The following are their comments:

- The Chair of the Village Hall Committee is utterly disappointed on the lack of support from the District and Parish Council and asked that their disappointment is minuted
- Apparently, all the businesses in the Westham High Street area are suffering at the lack of parking for clients to visit their businesses such as the kitchen designer, hairdressers, estate agents.
- A promised consultation in September on a reduction of parking hours on the Peelings Lane car park has failed to materialise without any purposeful explanation being made by Wealden DC to the village hall committee and Parish Council of why this has happened
- The placement of a 'clothes bin' for the Salvation Army which has become a target for fly tipping has appeared on a loading bay space. The ideal loading / unloading bay slot for the hall was the space where the recycling bins were, but this had been allocated to the Salvation Army. It seems that the decision to put the recycling bin in the loading bay space was made by Wealden DC Environmental Health department. This act has become too much to bear for the village hall committee as the need for a loading bay space has been denied to them. Users of the hall are now the target of being ticketed on a regular basis

- It would be interesting to know how well used this clothes bin is and how often it is emptied
- A community hall that is an asset to the community should be on the verge of closing because of the trenchant attitude of Wealden DC to them. Bookings cannot be taken because they are scared of receiving a ticket which seem to be happening on a regular basis. There are now no weddings, wakes or even large parties in the diary, because delivering catering, bouncy castles or a disco to the hall comes with a double yellows parking fine. Everyone now accepts there is nowhere to unload or deliver at or near the hall and goes elsewhere
- The hall have operated a 'Pop In' coffee morning for nearly forty years. As the use of the car park by non-hall users has increased the users of the 'Pop In' has declined. Many of the visitors to the coffee morning are less able and need to park close to the hall. This is now impossible
- A young girl with severe health impairments enjoyed coming to the 'Pop In' once a week. Unfortunately, the van in which the girl with her wheelchair travelled could not park to unload so they had to park at the side of the building to unload. They were ticketed even though they explained about the impairments of the girl

Councillors asked that a letter be written to the Portfolio Holder outlining these issues and asking when a decision would be made about the car park future.

The Clerk said that more information was needed as the car park consultation had seemed to have been paused and they were unsure of the reason.

It was agreed that a letter would be written to the Portfolio Holder asking for an explanation as to why the consultation has not gone ahead

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous decision

71. A verbal update from the Peelings Lane Group regarding traffic measures in this area

Before the item was discussed by Councillors a member of the public spoke of the increase of fly tipping in the Foxes Hollow area bordering Peelings Lane.

A Councillor explained to Councillors that it was very difficult to find the right person at ESCC to talk about the issues that had risen around the Peelings Lane area.

A letter sent to ESCC by the Group enquiring about bollards placing at Peelings Lane there had been no acknowledgement from the ESCC Road Safety Team which was very disappointing.

An official letter would be sent to ESCC in the new year asking for a contact name and number so that the issue of traffic using Peelings Lane as a cut through / short cut can be progressed.

It was agreed that signage would make little difference to the traffic that frequently uses the area. Fly tipping was becoming a problem in the area with a large drum of oil dumped in a ditch.

Wealden DC street scene team had been contacted and had been very helpful.

72. Removal of play equipment at Cherwell Close and re-siting in Hamble Road

A quotation was circulated to Councillors regarding the removal and re-siting of the play equipment.

They asked if another quote could be sought so that comparisons could be made as it was quite a specialised job.

Also, the re-siting of the equipment should wait until the Spring as the weather and ground conditions are currently unsuitable for grounds work.

73. Financial Items recommended for approval

(i) Reconciliation Reports for September and October 2023 for approval and resolution

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

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

(ii) Bank Statements September and October 2023 to be approved

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

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

(iii) Interim Audit Report October 2023 – Councillors to note the report

Councillors were supplied with a copy and noted the report with no questions

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

- (iv) Change to Financial Regulations 4.5 – Recommendation from the Internal Auditor to increase the emergency spend limit for the Clerk to £2,000 which would be sufficient for this size of Council**

Councillors agreed to the increased spend limit for the Clerk as recommended by the Internal Auditor

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

- (v) Agreement for a quotation for tree maintenance work around Westham Pond**

A quotation was circulated to Councillors who agreed for this work to go ahead in the winter

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

- (vi) Charge for the Ordinary Parish Elections held on 4 May 2023**

Councillors noted the charge by Wealden DC and were concerned the charge was so high as no Parish election had been held in any ward

- (vii) NALC Pay Agreement for 2023/24 has been agreed and required agreement to be implemented**

Councillors agreed to the increase in the pay agreement for 2023/24

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

- (viii) Parish staffing levels in the new year**

The Clerk said that information would be sort from other Councils regarding the employment of an assistant Clerk / administrator in the new year

74. Urban Grass Cutting Contract 2024

The County Council has supplied details for the grass cutting contract 2024. The Clerk explained that the following three options are available:

Options

Option 1 - Standard: Two cuts over the course of a year to be carried out by ESCC at no cost to the Parish Council. Urban grass will be managed for safety purposes only. Such as the corners of roads for safety purposes and visibility for road users.

Option 2 – Extra cuts: Parish Councils may fund an additional four cuts to be carried out by ESCC, totalling six cuts (two standard and four extra) over the course of the year. **This would cost the Parish Council a total of £4,078 for the year.** The dates of the grass cutting would be up to ESCC not the Parish Council. All complaints would be dealt with by ESCC Highways.

Option 3 – Self delivery: Parish Councils take on responsibility to deliver all urban grass cutting in their area. This must include a minimum of two cuts over the course of the year. ESCC will not carry out any urban grass cutting in the area. **ESCC would pay the Parish Council the sum of £2,039 to do this.**

In the past Westham PC has carried out 'self-delivery' in the Parish with verges cut about at least once a month between February / March and October to keep the verges short.

What Self Delivery means:

Grass cutting dates will be arranged and decided by Westham PC and their grass cutting contractor

If Councillors were to select this option ESCC would provide a small contribution of **£2,039**

The cost of self-delivery of is approximately verges is around **£10,000.**

Issues and complaints will be dealt with by the Clerk

Westham PC has a large number of verges in its area. The grass cutting maps show a sizable area which stretches from the Golden Jubilee Island / Dittons Road to

Pevensey Castle / Lion Hill to the railway bridge. Also, residential roads in Stone Cross and Westham are included.

Verges in Hankham are cut on a rural basis and not part of the grass cutting contract.

Councillors may want to consider less cuts but this must be balanced against the number of complaints from members of the public about uncut grass.

After a short discussion Councillors about self-delivery and “No Mow May” they decided that to agree to another year of self-delivery.

Recommendation: that for the year 2024 Westham Parish Council will carry out self-delivery of grass cutting in the Parish area

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

75. A verbal update on the ongoing works in Adur Park including a finishing date

A report was given on the current situation of the work at Adur Park. No finishing date can be given yet due to the being unable to finish the contract.

The work has had to be suspended due to the weather and the ground being waterlogged and the contractors withdrawn from site.

The ground in the play area has yet to be finished with wet pour unable to be laid in wet weather.

It was hoped that the work could be finished before Christmas but that now seemed very unlikely. The contractors will visit the site periodically to ensure that the safety of the site is not compromised. Already the Heras fencing around the play area had been pulled down in parts to reach the play area which was waterlogged.

Another update would be sought from the contractors before the next meeting.

Items for the next Agenda

- (i) A verbal update on the all-access, all-weather path and play area surfacing at Adur Park

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

The Meeting closed at 8.45pm

