

WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday, 19 February 2024

at The Amenity Hall, Stone Cross School, Adur Drive, Stone Cross BN24 5EF

Present: Cllr D Axell, Cllr P Baldwin, Cllr L Comfort, Cllr F Durling, Cllr K Farley, Cllr M Fairweather, * Cllr C Hanson, Cllr P Quanstrom, Cllr A Taylor, Cllr D Upton*

(* denotes WDC Councillors)

WDC Cllr C Primett, 1 member of the public

Also at the meeting: S. Sanders (Clerk)

90. Apologies

Cllr R Mayfield, ESCC Cllr D Shing

91. Declarations of Interest

Cllr L Comfort – Personal - Item 10

Cllr L Hanson – Personal – Item 10

92. 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.

Two members of the public asked to speak on Items 6 and 10

93. Draft Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 15 January 2024 to be agreed and confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the Meeting

The Minutes had previously been circulated to Councillors. They 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 15 January 2024 be agreed and signed

94. To receive information and raise any questions to ESCC / Wealden District

Councillors present

Cllr Primett informed Councillors that the Draft Local Plan has been approved and will go out for public consultation in March.

He had attended an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council last Thursday at which Councillors discussed the draft plan. Finally, councillors approved it and agreed for the consultation to begin in March.

The consultation will run for eight weeks and people will be able to view the Draft Local Plan at in-person drop-in sessions.

Dates and details of where to view the draft local plan will be released soon.

Cllr Primett informed Councillors that Wealden DC would increase their share of the Council Tax billing by 2.99%. Wealden DC have managed to keep the increase under 3% by the use of financial reserves but savings would need to be made in the years to come if the level of service given by Wealden DC was to be continued.

Cllr Fairweather informed Councillors that the Budget Meeting would be held next Wednesday at Wealden DC in Hailsham. He then encouraged everyone to comment on the draft Local Plan with a special consultation portal being made available for comments.

95. To agree the Pond Maintenance and Management Plan for the year 2024/25

Before this item was discussed a member of the public informed Councillors that good work had been carried out in bringing the pond back to a good standard. The

pond maintenance plan by an outside pond contractor would be beneficial to the good work the volunteers of the pond working group are carrying out.

This item had previously been discussed at the January Full Council meeting.

Councillors were supportive of the idea of a yearly pond maintenance plan but had certain queries that needed answering from the pond maintenance company.

The Clerk then supplied Councillors with copies of the pond maintenance plan and answered the queries that had been made. This included a query about the workforce of the pond maintenance company. The Clerk informed Councillors that the pond maintenance company had a core work force and also called on various consultant contractors when it was needed. They would be used for tackling the various problems found in individual ponds.

After a short discussion Councillors decided to agree to the yearly maintenance/management plan supplied for 2024/25.

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous decision

Resolved: that the pond maintenance /management plan 24/25 submitted be agreed

96. To agree new fencing for the Friday Street boundary of Adur Park

Now that all weather all access path was nearly completed in Adur Park it was time to look at fencing off the park boundary along Lion Hill / Friday Street leaving only a small pedestrian gate.

Various fence types had been suggested and it was decided that security fencing was the preferred choice. It would be no higher than 1.2 metres so would not be intrusive to visitors entering the park. It was also agreed that the stone block would be kept at the previous entrance.

Councillors were concerned about the safety of children using the pedestrian gate and asked if there was any way of stopping children running straight through the gate into the road.

The Clerk said that she was meeting the fencing company next week and would ask relay the concerns of councillors regarding the pedestrian gate. A drawing of the new pedestrian gate would be sent and circulated to Councillors for their comments.

A Councillor asked if the small wooden fence could be kept and the new fence erected behind it. The Clerk said that the fencing contractor would be asked if this was possible.

Quotations had been sought but only one quotation was supplied. This was acceptable to Councillors with funding for the fence and gate being obtained from CIL funding.

Councillors asked that the fencing be erected as soon as possible and definitely by the end of March 2024.

Proposed

Seconded

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: that new secure fencing be erected along the Lion Hill/Friday Street boundary of Adur Park before the end of March 2024

97. Agreement for the re-siting of two benches from Cherwell Close play area to Adur Park

Requests had been made by members of the public for more seating in Adur Park to complement the new path around the perimeter of the park.

A Councillor informed everyone that there were two metal benches in the Cherwell Close play area that could be moved. The closure of the Cherwell Close play area had been discussed at an earlier meeting and it had been decided to leave the decision to a later date as nothing could be removed or transferred in the present weather conditions. Councillors decided that removal of the two metal benches from Cherwell Close to Adur Park could go ahead and arrangements would be made for them to be re-sited.

Proposed

Seconded

Majority Agreement – 1 abstention, 1 Against

Resolved: that two metal benches sited in Cherwell Close play area be re-sited in Adur Park

98. Financial Items recommended for approval

(i) Reconciliation Reports for December 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

Resolved: That the reconciliation reports for December 2023 are agreed

(ii) Bank Statements December 2023 to be approved

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

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: That the bank statements for December 2023 are agreed

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

100. Amenity Hall and Parish Office Lease at Stone Cross Primary School

Councillors discussed the current invoice received from the school. A Councillor updated members present with present position of the lease and finding new premises for the Parish Council.

Over the past few months various agencies had been contacted but no further progress had been made in finding alternative premises.

Councillors agreed that the latest invoice received should be paid.

Also, a letter would be written to the school outlining certain conditions that Councillors felt should be considered from 1 April 2024.

The Meeting closed at 8.20 pm

