

WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday, 21 October 2024
at The Amenity Hall, Stone Cross School, Adur Drive Stone Cross, BN24 5EF

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

(* denotes WDC Councillor)

Also at the meeting: WDC Cllr C Primett, ESCC Cllr D Shing

S. Sanders (Clerk)

Two member of the public

167. Apologies

Cllr D Axell, Cllr K Farley, Cllr R Mayfield

168. Declarations of Interest

None

169. Questions from members of the public

A member of the public asked to speak before Item 6 on the Agenda

170. Draft Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 16 September 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.

The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 16 September 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chair of the Council

Proposed and Seconded

Majority decision – 3 abstention

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 16 September 2024 be agreed and signed by the Chair of the Meeting

171. To receive reports from East Sussex County Councillors and Wealden District Councillors

WDC Councillor Chris Primett updated Councillors on the Boundary Review that was taking place at Wealden.

The Review had been broken into two parts. The first part dealt with the size of the Council and how many Councillors were required. The review committee had now reported back and the final report for the first part had been sent to the Boundary Commission.

The second part would move onto the discussion of ward boundaries and what changes needed to be made as new developments increased the size of the original wards.

Cllr Primett then spoke of the Complete Review of the Constitution of Wealden District Council. He said that major work would be going into the review including how better to serve the community, make the interface between the public and the Council user friendly and how to communicate efficiently and effectively to the public.

One of the main issues would be the planning process and how it is addressed. With the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) due to be rolled out with a number of changes that may affect the way the planning process is carried out. This may include shorter consultation periods.

Cllr Daniel Shing spoke about the funding gap of approximately £55 million pounds that had been announced by East Sussex County Council (ESCC). How to manage this funding gap was now under consultation.

He then said that ESCC Highways was winter ready and it will be the first winter for the new contractors.

Also, Potholes should always be reported to East Sussex Highways via the link on the County Council website.

Finally, 31 October is the deadline for Secondary School applications.

WDC Councillor Mark Fairweather outlined the problems that could occur if the consultations period for planning applications was reduced. It would be detrimental for “call in” procedures going forward.

172. Grant Funding Applications received by the Council for consideration:

(i) St Wilfrid’s Hospice

The Hospice were seeking funding towards the travel costs incurred by the community nursing team when they visit hospice patients at home.

This support is available to the community 7 days a week. Westham, Hankham and Stone Cross are within the catchment area and the grant they were asking for will help meet the travel costs for the nurses, to enable them to visit patients living at home in these areas.

Grant funding of £500 was applied for.

After a short discussion it was agreed to find the amount applied for by the hospice.

Proposed and Seconded

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: That grant funding of £500 be awarded to St Wilfrid’s Hospice

(ii) Stone Cross Windmill

Before this application was discussed by Councillors the Chair of the Stone Cross Mill Trust told Councillors the history of the windmill.

The windmill is a Grade 2* listed building a reminder to all resident of the agricultural inheritance and history of the area as well as the current environmental methods to mill flour. The windmill relies solely on

donations which have lessened over the years but the Shepham Trust have been extremely generous in recent years.

A group of volunteers work every Monday repairing and maintaining the windmill.

The windmill was fully restored in 2000 and is open to all residents and visitors. Entry is free and benefits members of the community who may not have the funds to visit other historical sites as well as providing excellent refreshments at affordable prices and a place to meet and socialise. The Windmill Winter Fair is due to be held on Sunday 24 November this year. Open from 12pm until 4pm with refreshments. All are welcome to attend.

The grant funding application is for replacement of a number of shutters for the sweeps. This is because the shutters and associated thimble rails only last approximately five years before they become too rotten to use. Councillors were very interested to hear the history of the windmill and its place in the community today and agreed to the grant funding amount of £534.99.

Proposed and Seconded

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: That grant funding of £534.99 be awarded to Stone Cross Windmill Trust

173. Proposed allotment site at the Wells Estate, Rattle Road, Stone Cross

Wealden DC Section 106 Agreement for allotment plots at the Wells Estate

Previously discussed at the July meeting.

The original Section 106 Agreement had been made in 2013. The development of the Wells Estate had finally finished in 2020.

Because of difficulties with the legal agreement from 2020 to 2024 the planned allotments had not been handover to the Parish Council.

Councillors then discussed the S106 agreement and the requirement for the Parish Council to take over a car park as well as the nine plots on the allotment site.

A number of issues would need to be clarified before any decision could be made. These included installing a water connection and security fencing of the site. A meter would be installed for water usage at the site. The water charge would be paid for by the Parish Council.

The water connection would be installed by South East Water to the edge of the site then a private contractor would be required to carry out the work to install piping and troughs / standpipes.

The developers left the site as a vacant piece of ground without any connections or fencing installed. The lack of these essential items will now take time to source and set up.

Costings have now been found for the initial set up of the allotment site and were distributed to Councillors. These included fencing with either metal or wood with gates and setting up the plots.

South East Water had now been paid to supply initial costings for installing water to the site. These should be back by the November Council meeting. It is estimated costs will be anything between £5k to £8k.

Another Councillor had made enquiries about the need for a purpose built community building for Council and Community use being set up on this site. Enquiries had been made whether the agreement could be changed as it would still be community use. A new Community building was needed as soon as possible and this was one possibility. Enquires would be continuing.

The Senior Planning Managers at Wealden DC had not yet contacted Westham PC after a number of emails sent and phone calls made regarding this proposal.

174. Clerks monthly update for Councillors

(i) Grounds maintenance payments recently carried out and the winter programme of works

The Clerk informed Councillors of the winter programme of grounds work that would be carried out during the next few months.

This included work to these following areas:

The Rattle Road Allotments – completely overhauled

The path and ground between Beaulieu Drive and Tillingham Way to be cleared and cut back

Part of the above pathway to be cleared and the original fence restored

The Darrent footpath to raise hanging trees

Cherwell Playground to have the hedges cut back and ground cleared and trimmed

Cherwell footpath to be cleared by cutting the hedges back and lowering the height

Adur Park hedging along the back of Cuckmere Drive will be lowered and cleared at the back

Other work will be added during the winter months

(ii) Southern Water and the Pylon Field, Hamble Road

Councillors were informed that In March 2024 major work would be taken place on Council land at Rother Avenue /Hamble Field. The work was to install new sewer pipes from a main at Rother Avenue, Stone Cross to a new housing development on Dittons Road and would take a number of months.

The work has gone ahead with the Parish Council being promised by Southern Water that the contractors would put a small wooden picket

fence around the children's play area in Hamble Field before they finished. This was to mitigate the loss of the field to residents for a number of months. The contractors have now left and the fencing has never happened. The CEO of Southern Water has now been contacted for a response.

Southern Water had now contacted the Clerk and asked her to inform the Council that investigations into the failure to answer any emails over the course of months would be carried out.

The installation of fencing around the childrens play area in the Pylon Field which had not been carried out would now go ahead in late October.

(iii) Supply of benches for Adur Park and Westham Pond

A robust seat had now been sourced for use in Adur Park and by the pond at Westham. These benches were good quality and a reasonably priced.

Councillors agreed these benches would be ideal to be installed.

(iv) Adur Park update

Regarding Adur Park a Councillor informed the meeting that there were problems on one side of the path near the play area. It seemed as though the land had subsided. The contractors had been informed and have been asked to send out a team to access and repair the ground.

175. Installation of Lighting on the Parish Council Car Park and pathway (next to Stone Cross School)

The Chair of the Council informed Councillors that lighting in this area would make a great difference to the safety of residents during the dark nights. The car park is well used day and night with people visiting the doctors and the supermarket.

Due to the difficulties of installing electricity in this area solar lighting would be an option and a possibility. A basic survey of the car park would need to be carried out to assess suitability and cost if this project were to proceed. The survey would show how many lamps would be needed and where they could be sited.

This item will be on the next agenda for an update on any further information.

176. Financial Items recommended for approval

(i) Reconciliation Reports for August 2024 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 August 2024 are agreed and signed by the Chair of the Council

(ii) Bank Statements August 2024 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 August 2024 are agreed and signed by the Chair of the Council

(iii) External Auditors Conclusion of Audit for the year ended 31 March 2024

Councillors noted the report

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

There were no matters to be discussed

The Meeting closed at 20.25 pm

