

The minutes of the Westham Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 20th May 2019.

Present. Councillors Haffner, Durling, Fenner, Hayward and Belcher

Apologies. None received.

Cllr Durling opened the meeting and thanked the outgoing Councillors for all their hard work. She also announced the sad departure of Cllr Terry Cornford and asked for a minutes silence, which was then observed.

Cllr Durling explained that the previous Chairman had resigned, the previous Vice Chairman did not wish to be appointed as the Chairman, and that the previous very capable Parish Clerk had also resigned. She also explained that as she held a councillor position on the outgoing Council, and had been re-elected onto the incoming Council, it was her duty to open the meeting as there were no other outgoing Councillors or Clerk to do so. Cllr Durling explained that we had a locum clerk in place temporarily, however he was not able to spare enough time in his workload to support us, but kindly helped prepare us for this meeting so that we could keep the Parish Council open.

Cllr Fenner then stated that as the only remaining Councillor from the outgoing Council, Cllr Durling needed to sign the minutes as a true and accurate record. Cllr Durling carried this out.

Cllr Durling then stated it was her role to elect a Chairman and asked for proposals. Cllr Belcher proposed Cllr Mike Haffner and this was seconded by Cllr Hayward. The vote was agreed by all Councillors .

Cllr Haffner made a thank-you acceptance speech, thanked the public for coming, and expressed the hope that more of the public would attend the meetings in the future.

Cllr Haffner then carried out his duty to elect a Vice Chairman and asked for proposals. Cllr Hayward proposed Cllr Durling, and Cllr Belcher seconded the proposal which was met with agreement from all Councillors

Cllr Durling then stated that the agenda needed to be altered slightly to enable a vote to be taken to have a stand-in minute taker.

Cllr Durling proposed that Lyn Fletcher, a known and respected local resident, could take the minutes for this meeting, and all Councillors agreed.

The taking of minutes was then handed over from Councillor Belcher to Lyn Fletcher.

(Second part Parish Council AGM minutes 20/05/2019)

3. Apologies for Absence

No prior apologies had been received prior to the meeting

Wealden District Council Cllr Doodes and Cllr Snell sent their apologies which were accepted. **NOTED**

Minutes Silence

Cllr Durling proposed a minutes silence to mark the recent demise of former Cllr Terry Comerford who had served as a member of the Westham Parish Council and had chaired the Parish Council Finance Committee.

The Council and members of the public showed their respect by standing for one minute's silence in memory of Cllr Comerford.

4. Declarations of Interest in relation to items on the agenda

No declarations of interest were made in relation to items on the agenda **NOTED**

5. Co-option of Councillors to fill the 6 vacancies on the Parish Council

Cllr Haffner explained that advertisements had been placed on the parish noticeboards for people interested in being co-opted to fill the six vacant seats for Councillors but no applications had been received.

There were two options: - Either to consider interested persons present at the meeting or to advertise further. Concern was expressed that parish residents could be on holiday or just had not yet seen the advertisements.

It was also noted that the need for some of the vacancies to be filled was pressing, particularly given the current vacancy for a Parish Clerk. The advertisements could be left on the noticeboards as all the vacancies might not be filled immediately

Cllr Durling proposed that an opportunity to co-opt further Councillors should be made immediately.

Cllr Hayward seconded. This was agreed with two objections. **AGREED**

Cllrs resolved to consider applicants present at the meeting following a short presentation from each interested person. **AGREED**

Five members of the public made a presentation to the Council.

Norman Beaney. Mr Beaney had lived in the area for 40 years and had previously served on the County Council, Pevensey Council and Westham Parish Council.

Andrew Durling. Mr Durling is a retired psychiatric nurse, has lived in the village for 20 years and his daughter attended a local school. He plays a full part in village life including volunteering at village hall events and the Pevensey and Westham Forest garden.

At this juncture Cllr Durling declared an interest as the spouse of Mr Durling and recused herself from consideration of the candidates. **NOTED**

Robert Mayfield. Mr Mayfield has lived in Westham for 11 years. He is a retired PE teacher and youth worker having run several large organisations with budgets of over £2.5 million.

Kate Colbran. Ms Colbran owns a business in the centre of the village and has followed council business for the past year. While Ms Colbran has no direct experience of council work she is keen to help the council decision making and to learn. She is passionate about the local community, how the village looks and how it welcomes visitors.

Evan Jones. Mr Jones was formerly a teacher who has lived in Pevensey and Westham for 40 years and brought up his children here. His background is education, marine biology, a diving instructor, photographer, writer and illustrator. He has a passion for the Pevensey Levels and the local area, and also set up a local marine trust.

Council resolved to meet in private to consider whether to co-opt the applicants. The meeting was temporarily suspended while councillors left the room. Cllr Durling recused herself and did not join the discussion.

Westham Parish Council AGM resumed at 8.10pm

Councillors noted that two of the applicants Robert Mayfield and Norman Beaney had already made their declaration of eligibility in the May 2019 elections and that these were held by Wealden District Council.

Council resolved that Robert Mayfield and Norman Beaney would be co-opted with immediate effect. Council invited Robert Mayfield and Norman Beaney to make and sign their declarations that they would take the office of Councillor in Westham Parish which they duly did. **AGREED**

Cllrs Beaney and Mayfield joined the Council AGM meeting

6. To agree the Standing Orders

The Council noted that the current Standing Orders for Financial Regulations 2014 and Members Code of Conduct are not up to date as there is a 2016 version.

The meeting was suspended to allow a member of the public to make a point

The meeting resumed

The Council resolved to adopt the current Financial Standing Order until such time as the updated Standing Orders could be considered and adopted within the next 6 months. **AGREED**

The Council resolved to adopt the current Members Code of Conduct **AGREED**

7. To agree the Committee structure

The Council resolved to agree the existing committee structure. **AGREED**

7a. To agree terms of reference for each committee, sub-committee and working group

The Council resolved to agree the existing terms of reference for each committee, sub-committee and working group. **AGREED**

7b. To agree the numbers of councillors to serve on each committee, sub-committee and working group

The Council resolved to agree the existing numbers of members of each committee sub-committee and working group. As the Parish Council still has three vacancies the committee membership would be filled at a later date when more members are available. **AGREED**

7c. To agree the quorum for each committee, sub-committee and working group

The Council resolved to adopt the previous quorum of 4 councillors for each committee, sub-

committee and working group. **AGREED**

7d. To elect councillors to serve on each committee, sub-committee and working group

The Council resolved to elect the members of each committee, sub-committee and working group.

Cllrs Beaney, Fenner, Haffner, Belcher, Mayfield and Durling were elected to the **Finance Committee. AGREED**

Cllrs Hayward, Durling, Belcher, Haffner and Fenner were elected to the **Parks Committee. AGREED**

Membership of the Westham Village Pond working Group were deferred to the next meeting. **AGREED**

7e. To elect the chairman of each committee, sub-committee and working group

The Council resolved to elect the Chairs of the Committees

The Council elected Cllr Mayfield as Chair of the **Finance Committee. AGREED**

Councillors elected Cllr Hayward as Chair of the **Parks Committee. AGREED**

8. To appoint Representatives of the Council on the following bodies

8a. East Sussex Association of Local Councils: Cllr Mayfield. Cllr Haffner(?). **AGREED**

8b. Emergency Plan Coordinator: Cllr Hayward. **AGREED**

8c. Neighbourhood Watch: Cllr Haffner. **AGREED**

8d Pevensey Town Trust: Appointment deferred to next Council meeting. Cllr Belcher offered to cover the next Pevensey Town Trust meeting if the need arises, until a representative is appointed. **AGREED**

8e. St Johns Trust: Cllr Belcher. **AGREED**

8f Stone Cross Memorial Hall: Appointment deferred to next Council meeting. **AGREED**

8g Westham Village Hall: Cllr Fenner. **AGREED**

8h. Wealden District Council.: Appointment deferred to next Council meeting. **AGREED**

9 To review the Council's Eligibility for the General Power of Competence

As there is no Parish Council Clerk with the necessary training currently in post, the Power of Competence to undertake certain tasks has been lost. Therefore Westham Parish Council will need to conduct its business without this additional Power.

Councillors are resolved to review the General Power of Competence at the next meeting. **AGREED**

10 To Review the Asset Register

Council Members have not been made aware that anything has changed in the Asset Register which **is listed in the Annual Accounts.**

The Council resolved to accept the Asset Register subject to external audit. **AGREED**

11. To Review the Councils Insurance Arrangements

Cllr Durling confirmed that the Councils insurance had recently been renewed with Zurich under the same terms of cover as previously. **AGREED**

12. To review the Councils Policies and Procedures

12a. Complaints

The Council resolved to adopt the existing policies and procedures. **AGREED**

12b. Freedom of information

The Council resolved to adopt the existing policies and procedures. **AGREED**

12c. Dealing with the press and media

The Council resolved to adopt the existing policies and procedures. **AGREED**

12d. Employment

The Council resolved to adopt the existing policies and procedures. **AGREED**

13. To approve the Meeting Schedule and locations

Currently all meetings take place at Stone Cross School but a request has been made for more meetings to take place at Westham. Full council meetings currently take place on the third Monday of the month and Finance meetings take place on the second Monday of the month. Dates may be adjusted if needed provided the public are informed in advance.

The Council resolved that full council meetings would continue to meet on the third Monday of the month and the location would alternate between Stone Cross or Westham Village Hall. **AGREED**

14. To approve the bank signatories

The Council noted that the parish council laptop and papers were only made available three days prior to this delayed Annual General Meeting.

The Council noted that previous signatories and persons with the power to access the Council's banking information had a duty to relinquish this to the newly elected parish council and had not yet done this. The cheque books had not yet been made available.

It was resolved that Councillors would continue to look into this problem and report back to the next Council meeting

It was resolved that Cllrs Haffner, Mayfield and Beaney, with the newly appointed Clerk when in post, would be signatories to the Parish Council bank account.

It was resolved to adopt the existing policy that two signatures would be required on every cheque.

AGREED

15 To agree Members Allowances and Chairman's Allowance

It was noted that there is a distinction between allowances and expenses.

It was resolved that this matter would be deferred for further discussion once the new Parish Clerk is in post. **AGREED**

16 To note Section 137 spending in 2018/19

As Parish Council accounts had not been made available to councillors until three days prior to the Meeting, and the two co-opted councillors had not seen these, the Council had not had opportunity to examine this spending.

It was resolved to defer consideration of Section 137 spending until the new Clerk was in post to assist with this. **AGREED**

17 To approve annual subscriptions payments to

17a. Information Commissioners Office

It was resolved to approve this. **AGREED**

17b Society of Local Council Clerks

It was resolved to approve this. **AGREED**

17c. Stone Cross School (Electricity Payments)

It was resolved to approve this arrangement. **AGREED**

17d Sussex Association of Local Councils

It was resolved to approve this **AGREED**

17e. Wealden District Association of Local Councils

It was resolved to approve this. **AGREED**

The Annual General Meeting of Westham Parish Council was closed at 9pm