WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Westham Village Hall, Peelings Lane, Westham

East Sussex BN24 5HG

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday, 16 March 2020

Present:

Cllr HM Haffner (Chair), Cllr F Durling, Cllr R Mayfield, Cllr N Beany, Cllr J Hayward, Cllr D Upton, Cllr J Jones, Cllr K Farley, Cllr D Axell, Cllr P Baldwin, Cllr A Livingstone

In attendance: S Sanders (Clerk)

2 members of the public

143. Apologies – ESCC Cllr D Shing, WDC Cllr P Doodes, Cllr R Cade, Cllr A Snell, WRC Cllr R Martin

144. Declarations of Interest

None

145. Questions from members of the public on matters on the Agenda at the discretion of the Chair

None

146. Reports from the County Councillor and Wealden District Councillors

There were no County Councillors or District Councillors present

147. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 17 February 2020

The Clerk informed Councillors that the extended contract for maintenance and grass cutting that had been agreed at the last Full Council meeting (and was included in the above Minutes) had been kept to the same costs as last year, A letter of confirmation would now been sent to the Contractor.

The Chair asked that the Minutes of the above meeting be agreed as a correct record

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 17 February 2020 at 19.30 hrs

Proposed: Cllr M Heffner

Seconded: Cllr N Beaney

Unanimous agreement

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2020 be agreed

148. Memorial

Cllr Haffner said that an email had been received from a resident regarding a memorial tree and memorial plaque on Cannon Green.

Cllr Durling, the Councils tree warden explained that this area was quite crowded and not ideal for another tree to be planted.

Councillors then discussed the request and agreed in principle that a plaque be erected on the Cannon Green and a tree in another area.

Cllr Durling kindly said that she would liaise with the family and offer other areas for the planting of a memorial tree.

Proposed: Cllr Durling

Seconder: Cllr Hayward

Resolved: that in principle, a memorial plaque be allowed next to the cannon on Cannon Green

149. Stone Cross Petition

Cllr Haffner updated Councillors on the latest information regarding the petition. He had emailed the CEO of Wealden DC with a Freedom of Information (FOI) request for documents and this had been passed on to the Governance Team to be dealt with. The team had 20 working days to send documents back to Cllr Haffner. The final date of return was 26 March 2020. He finished by saying that when the documents were returned, he would send them out to all Councillors.

150. Financial documents for Resolution by Council

Cllr Mayfield, Chair of Finance read out a Year End Financial Statement to Councillors. He discussed the low Precept that had been set and the number of financial improvements that had been made during the past few months. He then said that several financial documents needed to be approved before the end of the financial year on the 31 March 2020.

(i) External Auditors Report and Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2018/2019 – matters drawn to the attention of the Authority:

After discussion Councillors agreed that they were unable to comply with the request '*an adequate explanation for the variance between the prior and current year values in Boxes 3 and 6 of section 2'* as information is not available from the previous Council.

'Evidence of consideration of risk management arrangements by the while authority during 2018/19. This was requested as part of our intermediate review procedures'.

Councillors agreed that in the absence of current risk management arrangements a new document was required. A draft updated document had now been provided.

It was agreed to accept the External Auditors Report and Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2018/2019

Proposed: Cllr M Haffner

Seconded: Cllr K Farley

Resolved: that the External Auditors Report and Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2018/2019 is agreed

(ii) Internal Auditors Interim Report for the year ending 31 March 2020

The Clerk supplied Councillors with the above document and explained the sections of the report. After a short discussion in which Councillors asked a variety of questions it was agreed to accept the Interim Report.

(iii) Draft Risk Assessment of Financial & Non-Financial Internal Audit Controls

Councillors were supplied with a hard copy of the draft document. This was a new a completely new Risk Management document for the Parish Council and the Clerk asked them to consider the controls carefully. Several questions were asked which the Clerk then answered. When all Councillors were satisfied it was agreed to adopt the draft document.

(iv) Bank Reconciliation & Bank Statement (Current & Reserve Account) for January 2020

Copies of the bank reconciliation and bank statement for January 2020 were handed around to Councillors. The bank reconciliation was produced on the new RBS Financial system that had been installed at the end of last year. It is hoped that having the accounts computerised will lead to better transparency of the Councils finances.

The Clerk pointed out that the reconciliation statement and bank statement would now be a standing item on the monthly Full Council Agenda.

(v) Amendment to Financial Regulation 6.21

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council does not operate a petty cash system so the above financial regulation needed to be adjusted.

It was decided that the Regulation should now read: *The Clerk / RFO may be given expenses for the purchase of stamps, stationery, and other small administrative expenses.*

Receipts and invoices for payment made shall be forwarded for reimbursement and checked by three Council signatories.

Councillors agreed to this amendment of the Financial regulations.

(vi) Agreement for Mulberry & Co to be the Councils Auditors for the year 2020/21

Cllr Mayfield explained that the above auditors had carried out an Interim Report that was very satisfactory. He found the auditors courteous and knowledgeable.

It was agreed that Mulberry & Co be the Councils auditors for next year

The Chair of Finance, Cllr Mayfield asked that Councillors agree to accept and resolve all Agenda items 8 (i) to (vi)

Proposed: Cllr M Haffner

Seconded: Cllr A Livingstone

Unanimous Agreement

151. Change of name of the Parish Council

Cllr Haffner explained to Councillors that it would be better to await the outcome of the consultation due to the insecurity of the Parish being split.

A proposal was made that in principle the name of the Parish Council should be changed from Westham Parish Council to Westham & Stone Cross Parish Council, but this would not be put forward until confirmation that the Parish would not be split.

Proposer: Cllr M Haffner

Seconder: Cllr J Jones

Unanimous agreement

152. Draft WPC Contractor / Service Providers Policy March 2020

Cllr Livingstone outlined the main principles of the draft policy. Councillors then discussed the different aspects of the policy and how it would work within the Parish Council.

After the draft policy was considered it was proposed for adoption.

Proposed: Cllr A Livingstone

Seconded: Cllr D Axell

Resolved: That the above draft policy for Contractor and Service Providers be adopted at this meeting

153. Planning Decisions

Land adjacent to 1 Uplands Cottages, Rattle Road, Stone Cross, Westham BN24 5DT

Description: Proposed dwelling

Council Observations: The conditions have not been complied with concerning

Refuse, Hedging, Highway requirements and significant car parking

Langsett, Rattle Road, Westham BN24 5DS

Description: Minor material amendment to application WD/2017/2499/FR (erection of detached dwelling) involving variation of condition 5 to increase the ridge height

Council observations: A decision cannot be made as there is not enough information supplied

2 Church Avenue, Westham, Pevensey BN24 5LN

Description: Erect conservatory to rear

Council observations: No objection on any planning grounds to this application

154. It was resolved to exclude Members of the Press and Public (Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960

Proposed: Cllr Haffner Seconded: Cllr Beaney

Unanimous agreement

The Clerk and the public then left the room

155. Confidential staffing matter

The meeting closed at 21.40 hours. Due to the Coronavirus the date of the next meeting is yet to be arranged