

WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday,
28 April 2025 at The Amenity Hall, Stone Cross School,
Adur Drive, Stone Cross, BN24 5EF

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

(* denotes WDC Councillor)

Also at the meeting:

ESCC Cllr N Geary, ESCC Cllr D Shing

S. Sanders (Clerk)

212. Apologies

Cllr L Comfort, Cllr M Fairweather

213. Declarations of Interest

None

214. Questions from members of the public

None

215. Draft Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 17 March 2025 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 17 March 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chair of the Council

Proposed and Seconded

Unanimous decision

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 17 March 2025 be agreed and signed by the Chair of the Meeting

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

ESCC Cllr N Geary

Cllr Geary updated Councillors on all matters concerning ESCC. In this area weed spraying would be carried out on the 22 July. Also, Hankham Hall Road will be closed on the 30 April.

Cllr Geary attended a meeting with the Police, National Highways and the MP for Bexhill and Battle (Westham is in this constituency) to discuss the accidents that occur on the A259. It was agreed that a road safety survey should be carried out.

Cllr Geary asked Councillors that if they came across poor signage in the area to contact her.

A reminder that there were no elections in the ESCC area this year.

ESCC Cllr D Shing

Cllr Shing informed Councillors that there had been a new ESCC scheme for increased charges for contractors carrying out work on the highway. This is to reduce roadwork disruption on major routes that are carried out during the day.

Also, the final date to return proposals for local government reorganisation would be in September this year.

Cllr Fairweather – Wealden District Council

Wealden's Oversight and Scrutiny Committee had Nick Gray, Manager at Pevensey Bay in for questioning. The reason that building cannot be allowed on the flood zones is that the EA does not have funding for its projects beyond 2038, whereas 100 year certainty is required to allow building. There is a Coastal Strategy Plan in preparation, but that is about two years away.

East Sussex Planning Enforcement is badly under-staffed and is very disinclined to take an interest in the Rubbish Transfer Station in Westham. More pressure is needed to progress this issue.

Listed Building in Pevensey Conservation Area

A case with the Heritage Officer is being pursued. Ongoing.

Westham Crossroads and Level Crossing

Westham High Street

Both Zebra crossings were reported and have since been re-painted. The bus stop has since been re-painted too.

Local Plan update

The Local Plan Report, and its Appendices, were published. It is quite easy to read, and to find the section related to Westham, and Peelings Lane in particular (pages 151 - 155 of Appendix A). It is a very high-level summary. The Officers say that they have just collated the responses to see what common themes emerge. The Officers say that they have not yet considered the details of individual comments yet, and that will be done in the course of the spring and summer.

The Local Plan Reg. 18 consultation will re-open, for 6 weeks, in Quarter 3, we need to be mentally ready for that re-opening, with any new material ready for submission. I have found extensive, and quite troubling, errors in the Sustainable Settlements Study in so far as it relates to Westham (and I know other errors relating to other villages). I am preparing a detailed critique of the Study in so far as it relates to Westham. The Officers publicly concede that the accuracy of the Study has been challenged, and seemingly not just by me.

MP visit

The MP for Stone Cross has asked me to arrange a visit. He has specifically asked to meet the Stone Cross Cllrs. He also wants to meet as many residents as

possible, I am looking for opportunities. This will have to be in the August Parliamentary recess. Date now set as Saturday August 16th.

Local Government re-organisation

Wealden Cllrs. had an Extraordinary Full Council (18th March) which agreed a response to the Government. The response was to agree to an East Sussex Unitary Authority but to leave the door open to smaller authorities (e.g. Coastal and Rural) if the Govt. criteria were changed to allow this.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The pending re-organisation means that Wealden Cllrs. see even more urgency in getting community benefits down to the grassroots.

A paper to allow this will need to go to Full Council in May but the shape of the proposals must be clear a couple of weeks before then.

217. Financial Items recommended for approval

(i) Reconciliation Reports and payment lists for March 2025 for approval and resolution

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

That the Payment List of £20,390.69. for March 2025 is approved

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous Agreement

Resolved: That the reconciliation reports and payment list for March 2025 are agreed and signed by the Chair of the Council

(ii) Bank Statement for March 2025 to be approved

The bank statement for March 2025 was approved by Council and signed by the Chair of the Council

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous Agreement

Resolved: That the bank statement for March 2025 is agreed and signed by the Chair of the Council

(iii) The Reserve Account to be moved to a new provider

Councillors were told that the Reserve Account had been held with Nat West Bank for some time. A new financial provider should now be sought for a better return on the funds.

Councillors agreed to this proposal.

Proposed and seconded

Unanimous Agreement

Resolved: That enquiries for a new provider for the Reserve Account should go ahead

(iv) Invoice received from Stone Cross School for payment

An invoice was presented to Councillors for payment from Stone Cross School. The invoice was for £2733.28.

Councillors agreed that the invoice should be paid but will consider further discussions with the school. In due course a letter will be sent from the Council to the school management group.

218. Discussion on a new street lighting contract for all street lights owned by Westham Parish Council

The contract with ESCC streetlighting was now ending. The new contract that had been sent for signature from ESCC had a number of issues that were needed to be addressed before it was signed. Legal advice had been sought for clarification.

An independent street lighting company had been contacted for details of a new street lighting maintenance contract. An initial meeting had been held and more information would be forthcoming. This would be brought to a future meeting.

219. Wealden Police Crime Statistics for the Stone Cross and Westham Parish Council area

The crime figures for February were now available for the public. They showed a number of crimes (around 35) in the Westham Parish area.

Again the PCSO for the area would be contacted to see if there were any problem areas that should be brought to the Councils notice. The figures for March will be brought to the May Council Meeting.

220. Clerks Monthly update for Councillors

(i) Solar Lighting on the Parish Council car park

The solar lighting was installed during the Easter Holidays and is now working well. The path and car park is now well lit at night with the lighting being set with sensors.

The cost of installing the lighting was over £22,000.

(ii) Felling of the Oak Tree behind 9 Darent Close, Stone Cross

A large oak tree behind 9 Darent Close will have to be felled as requested by the insurance company of a resident. A qualified tree surgeon will be engaged to carry out the work.

(iii) Adur Park – replacement of outdoor adult gym equipment this year

The outdoor adult gym equipment in Adur Park is very well used and is now showing signs of wear and tear after being in place for the last few years.

A quotation was received but was considerably higher than expected.

Another quotation will be obtained from a leading playground supplier which would be presented to Councillors.

Also, grant funding for the new equipment would be sought.

(iv) Adur Park path repairs to be carried out

Parts of the newly installed path are showing signs of subsidence especially by the childrens play area.

The contractors who installed the path have been contacted to carry out repairs and have returned an estimate that is expensive. They will be contacted again to see if a better price can be negotiated.

(v) Wells Estate Allotment site and car park

Cllr Durling and Cllr Hallett had previously circulated their latest report on the allotment site to Councillors.

There was still no clear answer to what type of fencing should surround the site for security reasons. A 6' metal fence was suggested but this may Not be suitable as residents were only a short distance from the fence line.

The Clerk informed Councillors that fencing 6' or over would need planning permission and conversations with the planning department would be needed. Another quote for fencing would be required.

There was a suggestion to move the entrance to the allotment site but this would require a dropped kerb to be installed by ESCC contractors.

The cost of a licence to carry out the work would be £397.00.

Southeast Water had sent out details of increased prices for water connections from 01 April 2025.

(vi) Removal of Metal signage in various locations

A small number of metal signs were installed around the parish a few years ago. These signs have now become worn with no information showing on the surface. The Clerk asked the Council if the metal signs could be removed with new signage sought. The sturdy poles could be left in place while new signs were sought.

(vii) War Memorial at St Lukes Church

The war memorial at St Lukes Church had now been cleaned and all the letters repainted earlier this month. A reputable firm from East Sussex that carried out this type of work for Councils had been sought.

221. 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 20.45pm