

WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday,
17 March 2025 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 D Upton*

(* denotes WDC Councillor)

Also at the meeting:

S. Sanders (Clerk)

ESCC Cllr N Geary, ESCC Cllr D Shing, WDC Cllr C Primett

203. Apologies

Cllr D Axell, Cllr K Farley, Cllr R Mayfield, Cllr A Taylor

204. Declarations of Interest

None

205. Questions from members of the public

None

206. Draft Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 17 February 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 February 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 February 2025 be agreed and signed by the Chair of the Meeting

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

ESCC Cllr N Geary

Cllr Geary kindly attended the meeting on behalf of the County Council. Cllr Bowdler had earlier sent a report out to Councillors updating them on the work of ESCC.

Cllr Geary answered questions from Councillors on all aspects of County Council work.

ESCC Cllr D Shing

Cllr D Shing attended the meeting and spoke about the school crossing issue which had been brought to the notice of Parish Councillors by Cllr Comfort.

Cllr Comfort asked Cllr Shing about the officer responsible for the recruitment process and how the recruitment process can be accelerated so a crossing warden may be recruited as soon as possible.

Cllr Shing asked that it be noted that he was not present at the February Council meeting but had sent a short report.

(i) Cllr Fairweather – Wealden District Council

February and March have been very busy months. Regarding Unitary in January, the White Paper had only just been published (just a few days before Xmas) and the implications hadn't fully emerged.

The ESCC proposal is not the only deal on the table. Wealden District Council have put their own proposals forward which will be debated. These can be found on the Wealden website.

This process is also dubbed "devolution" by the Govt., but there are precious few details about this, beyond that the Mayor election to be held in 2026.

Local Elections for the East Sussex County Council due to be held in May this year have been cancelled.

Cllr Fairweather then informed Councillors on various issues and information from Wealden DC.

(ii) Cllr C Primett – Wealden District Council

Cllr Primett informed Councillors that on Tuesday 18 March 2025 the District Council will discuss the Unitary proposals for East Sussex to go forward. All proposals have to be firmed up by September. The boundaries of the new Unitary would be discussed at a later date.

(iii) Cllr Fairweather to speak of a proposed visit by James MacCleary MP in the summer to Stone Cross and Hankham

Cllr Fairweather informed the Council that James MacCleary MP for Stone Cross, and Hankham would like to visit the area in August and meet Councillors and local people. Cllr Fairweather asked if there were any local events happening in August. Councillors were unaware of any events at the moment.

Note- Westham Parish Council is an anomaly when it comes to parliamentary constituencies. The Parish is split between the Stone Cross and Hankham area included in the Lewes Constituency with James MacCleary MP and Westham included in the Bexhill and Battle constituency with Kieran Mullen MP.

208. Financial Items recommended for approval

(i) Reconciliation Reports and payment lists for January 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 £9,127.53 for January 2025 is approved

Proposed and seconded

Majority agreement – 1 abstention

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

(ii) Reconciliation Reports and payment lists for February 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 £8,578.61 for February 2025 is approved

Proposed and seconded

Majority agreement – 1 abstention

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

(iii) Bank Statement for January 2025 to be approved

The bank statement for January 2025 were approved by Council and signed by the Chair of the Council

Proposed and seconded

Majority agreement – 1 abstention

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

(iv) Bank Statement for February 2025 to be approved

The bank statement for February 2025 were approved by Council and signed by the Chair of the Council

Proposed and seconded

Majority agreement – 1 abstention

Resolved: That the bank statements for February 2025 is agreed and signed by the Chair of the Council

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

It was agreed that this item should be moved to the April Full Council agenda when Cllr Mayfield is present

209. An invitation for the Clerk and Chair for a meeting with Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) meeting with ESCC Highways at a future date

The Chair explained that an annual meeting with ESCC Highways would be held soon. The discussion would cover all the issues in the area and Councillors were asked if they would put forward any concerns that had been passed on to them by residents.

A number of issues in the parish were raised and would be put forward at the SLR meeting.

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

At the last meeting, the Clerk said that crime figures have shown an increase in the past year of certain types of crime in the Westham and Stone Cross Parish area. The figures in certain months may be skewed by one incident but overall the increase was worrying. Clarity in the numbers was needed.

The PCSO for the area would be invited to a future meeting of the Council.

A Councillor remarked that it would be helpful to the Council if a meeting with the new Police Inspector for the area could be arranged.

The crime figures for January 2025 should be available for the next Full Council meeting. The Councillors were informed that there were no crime figures available for January.

210. Road Safety on Adur Drive

Following on from the previous meeting when concerns were raised the background to this item was explained by a Councillor.

Previously Stone Cross School had employed a lollipop person twice daily to escort children across the road. Unfortunately, the current lollipop person had left and recruitment of a new person was found to be difficult at this time. There were still no applicants for the position of lollipop person at the time of the March Full Council meeting.

There is now a dedicated ESCC Road Safety Officer for this issue. They have stated that the funding is in place for this position and they are keen to appoint. The Parish Council will ask for regular updates from the Road Safety Officer. Unfortunately the parking at 'pick up' times at Stone Cross and Westham Primary Schools is now becoming unmanageable with cars left on yellow lines and on the pavement.

211. Clerks Monthly update for Councillors

(i) Solar Lighting on the Parish Council car park

Before the work can commence SGN have to be notified of the work that is to be carried out above a high pressure gas main (HPGM). A meeting was held on 5 March when the SGN engineer met with the solar lighting installer.

The engineer pointed out where the HPGM ran and said that one of the proposed lights would have to be moved. The original drawings of the solar installation would have to be changed.

After consultation with the SGN engineer the new solar light was to be moved and installed three metres from the original site.

The contractor agreed to carry out new drawings to show the Council where the new light would be. The main issue would be having enough illumination from the newly positioned light over the path where the light would be needed.

Councillors were supplied with new drawings at the meeting and agreed that the repositioned light was acceptable.

It was agreed that the installation work can start as soon as the contractors are available. Councillors asked that for the least disruption to school time work should go ahead when the school is on holiday.

(ii) Cherwell Close Play Area – removal of equipment

A further discussion took place about re-siting the equipment or disposing of it totally.

Some of the equipment is still in fairly good condition and could be re-sited at the pylon field off Hamble Road which has spare capacity for equipment.

The cost of removing and re-siting the equipment would be expensive but cheaper than having to buy new equipment.

Further discussions about what happens to the vacant play area off Cherwell Close once the equipment is removed are needed.

Currently there are no recommendations as to what can be done for this play area. If the equipment is to be removed then the next six months are ideal.

There were concerns raised that during the summer holidays there would be anti-social behaviour in this play area. It was agreed that the local police would be informed.

(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.

The Clerk and a Councillor met with a representative of Sunshine Gym Equipment on Monday 17 March to discuss the installation of adult gym new equipment.

Various options were discussed and plans for the site will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

(iv) A request for signage in Adur Park play area

A request has been made for a 'No Dogs' sign to be attached to the gate of the play area in Adur Park. As the play area is already fenced off Councillors were surprised that dogs were still being taken into this area. The play area is fenced off from dogs but people are still taking dogs into this area and some users feel uncomfortable. Councillors agreed that a sign should be placed on the gate to inform people that dogs would not be allowed inside the play area.

(v) Wells Estate Allotment site and car park

Cllr Durling and Cllr Hallett had visited the site with Wealden District Councillor, Cllr Primett who has valuable knowledge on setting up and running an allotment site. They met with a local contractor who had knowledge of trenching work.

The Clerk informed Councillors that estimates for the trenching of the pipework /troughs to connect to the mains water were difficult to source. A contractor had now been found that would carry out the work for a reasonable rate.

Cllr Durling also explained to Councillors plans showing how the site could be divided into 34 plots.

There was much discussion about the division of the plots and the access available on the site.

Also, there was 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. This is a discussion that would need to be revisited at future meetings.

The car park that was meant for allotment use is now used by residents. No agreement could be made on how the car park would be maintained or regulated.

The Chair said a full feasibility study should be carried out before any decision should be made.

Residents near the allotment site should be consulted about the fencing and the use of the car park.

Further discussions with Councillors about the total cost to make the allotment site useable will be required in future meetings.

(vi) ESCC Memorandum of Agreement for Street lighting repairs and maintenance – Insurance liability question

The above agreement had been sent by the County Council for signature.

The Clerk explained that the old agreement had now expired and a new document had been produced.

A number of questions had arisen due to the liability of the Parish Council in certain circumstances.

It was decided that new options to maintain the Westham PC owned street lights would be sort.

211. 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 20.40pm

