

Minutes of the **ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING** of **WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL** held on Thursday 18th May at 6.30pm at the Bodle Street Green Village Hall

PRESENT: Councillors A Long (Chairman), Chris Wells, Charlie Saunders, Buster Ansell and Peter Sterling

Also present: ESCC Bob Bowdler
3 members of the public
Jackie Cottrell – Parish Clerk

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

The Clerk confirmed she had received one nomination for Chairman which was proposed and seconded without challenge.

00005 Cllr Andrew Long was duly declared Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2023/24.

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN

The Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF NEW COUNCILLORS

The Clerk stated that all councillors had signed their declaration of acceptance of office before the meeting had commenced.

It was **AGREED** to consider item 9 ahead of the election of vice-chairman

TO RECEIVE WRITTEN APPLICATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF PARISH COUNCILLOR AND TO CO-OPT A CANDIDATE/S TO FILL THE EXISTING VACANCIES

8.1. To receive application forms from prospective councillors

The Clerk confirmed she had received two applications which she had circulated to all Members. ESCC Bob Bowdler had informed the council on the day of the meeting he wished to be considered for the position of parish councillor.

8.2. Co-option interview

The first candidate addressed the meeting and summarised why she was interested in the position of parish councillor and the experience she had to offer the PC. The applicant confirmed she lived and worked in the parish and had some experience in customer services and hoped to offer the council a different perspective.

The second candidate had very recently been a councillor for Warbleton PC and wished to return to the parish council.

ESCC Bob Bowdler addressed the meeting. He reported he felt he had the available time required to fulfil his duties as a councillor. He asked Members to note he would be attending the parish council meetings as a matter of course in his role as county councillor.

The Chairman asked the first applicant if she would be able to make her own informed decisions as a separate entity to an existing councillor who was her husband. She confirmed this would not affect her decision making.

A councillor stated that they were pleased to see a lady had applied for the position.

8.3. To resolve the successful candidates

A vote was taken and all three candidates were successful.

00006 **RESOLVED** Mr Bruce Simpson, Mrs Beverley Saunders and ESCC Bob Bowdler as the new Councillors for Warbleton Parish Council.

8.4. Successful candidate/s to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of office
Bruce Simpson, Beverley Saunders and ESCC Bob Bowdler signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

There was one nomination for Vice Chairman, which was proposed and seconded without challenge.

00007 Cllr Charlie Saunders was duly declared as the Vice Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2023/24.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

PCSO – Cathy Gilling – annual leave
WDC Cllr Cornelie Usborne – prior commitments

The Chairman instructed the Clerk to email the parish council meeting timetable to both new district councillors expressing the parish council's desire for them to attend the meetings.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

MINUTES

To **resolve** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Thursday 16th March 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

00008 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on Thursday 16th March 2023.

Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda – **NONE**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - NONE

APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- (a) Finance and General Purposes – minimum of 3 councillors**
- (b) Planning & Development – minimum of 3 councillors**
- (c) Environment – minimum of 3 councillors**
- (d) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – minimum of 3 councillors**

The Chairman suggested that due to the low councillor numbers and on the advice of the internal auditor and Clerk that the structure of the council should be reviewed at the next Full Council meeting in July. Several councillors were very supportive of the idea of having less meetings in the hope of a more efficient council where detailed discussions would only happen once. It was **AGREED** to only resolve membership of the Planning & Development Committee.

00009 RESOLVED Planning & Development committee membership:

(a) Planning & Development

Charlie Saunders
Chris Wells
Buster Ansell
Peter Sterling
Beverley Saunders
Andy Long
Bruce Simpson
Bob Bowdler

The meeting was not adjourned as all councillors were members of the Planning & Development Committee.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

00010 RESOLVED Cllr Charlie Saunders to be Chairman and Cllr Sterling to be Vice-Chairman of the Planning & Development Committee

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

00011 The representatives to outside bodies were **RESOLVED** as follows:

(a) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Cllr Ansell & Cllr Bowdler

(b) Dunn Village Hall – Cllr Long

(c) Bodle Street Green Village Hall – Cllr Beverley Saunders

(d) Warbleton Charity – Cllr Wells

FINANCE

12.1. To note bills that have been paid under the delegated authority to the Clerk and/or F&GP Committee

Noted

Cheque No/BACS No	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
1	Jackie Cottrell				Clerk Salary – April 2023
2	HMRC	156.40		156.40	HMRC payment for 6.4.2023 – 5.5.2023
3	Jackie Cottrell	11.99	2.40	14.39	Domain renewal for 1 year
4	SBG Computers	139.95		139.95	One year security and laptop clean

5	NALC	32.68	6.54	39.22	Clerk training course Emergency planning
6	James Todd & Co	80.00	16.00	96.00	March 2023 payroll and NEST pension set up fee
7	ESALC	410.86		410.86	ESALC and NALC annual subscription
8	Agrifactors	855.00	171.00	1026.00	Resolution 578 agreed at September 2022 Full Council. Funds to be taken from the infrastructure budget
9	Graham Long	45.00	9.00	54.00	Mole removal adjacent to the Dunn Village Hall
10	NEST pension	54.08		54.08	April Clerk pension

WPC/18.5.2023 - 00010

12.2. To note the first half of the precept payment from WDC £11,895.50 has been received

Noted

12.3. To note the parish council has received a CIL payment of £375.43

Noted

12.4. To note the CIL Monitoring Report for 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

Noted

12.5. To authorise the payments as listed

Cheque/BACS No	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
11	Jackie Cottrell				Clerk salary May
12	HMRC	201.90		201.90	Payroll 6.5.23-5.6.23
13	James Todd & Co	22.00	4.40	26.40	April 2023 payroll fee
14	Jackie Cottrell	9.99		9.99	Printing 18.2.23-17.3.23 – inv1061979881
15	Jackie Cottrell	9.99		9.99	Printing 18.3.23 – 17.4.23 – inv1063555003
16	NEST pension	74.16		74.16	May Clerk pension

17	Jackie Cottrell	14.99		14.99	HDMI cable for parish council meetings
----	-----------------	-------	--	-------	--

WPC/18.5.2023 - 00011

00012 It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payments listed above

12.6. To note the finance reports, bank reconciliations, budget monitor and reserve movements for April 2023

The Clerk asked Members to note all the financial reports had been independently checked by the Chairman of F&GP before the end of his term of office.

Points to note:

- The new excel documents were now in place to monitor the above
- The miscellaneous budget of £200 only had £15 remaining. This was due to mole removal costs and laptop maintenance
- The infrastructure budget for the year 2023/24 of £427 had been spent on repair works to the village sign. Of the remaining invoice balance of £428, £190.80 had been debited from the Bonfire Society Donation ear marked reserve (leaving a zero balance) and £237.20 had been debited from the Infrastructure ear marked reserve. The Infrastructure ear marked reserve now had a balance of £1,776.80
- The nest pension scheme had now been set up
- James Todd & Co had incorrectly calculated the Clerk April salary. This had now been rectified and included in the Clerk May salary calculation
- No costs had been received from WDC regarding the elections
- The CIL balance stood at £10,412.07. The sales order for the picnic benches ordered for BSG totalled £1,574. There were 2 picnic benches for Rushlake Green at an approximate cost of £900 still to order. The notice board refurbishment works totalling £325 had not yet been paid. Other on-going possible CIL projects were the replacement fencing at the Peter Croft war memorial, two finger post repairs, the kissing gate at the DVH and any flagpole costs

The Clerk was instructed to check if the peter croft memorial fencing had been repaired.

12.7. To receive and note the internal audit report for the financial year 2022/23

The Chairman clarified that himself and the Clerk had attended the face-to-face audit meeting. The audit had been successful and the auditor had confirmed the PC were compliant with all the internal control objectives.

Noted.

12.8. To note the Exercise of Public Rights will commence on Monday 5th June 2022 and end on Friday 14th July 2023

Noted

12.9. Resolve Section 1 of the AGAR: The Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

The Clerk clarified the AGAR was the responsibility of the Council as a whole. The internal auditor had advised the Parish Council to tick "yes" to each box. This was also the recommendation of the Clerk. The council reviewed the individual control objectives.

00013 It was **RESOLVED** to approve Section 1 of the AGAR: The Annual Governance Statement for the accounting year 2022/23

12.10. To note the significant variances for Section 2 – Accounting statements 2022/23

Noted

12.11. To consider, approve and sign the accounts – Resolve Section 2 of the AGAR: The Accounting Statements for 2022/23

The Clerk stated the figures on Section 2 had previously been circulated to all Members. She confirmed the Chairman of F&GP (before his term of office had ended) had independently checked all the figures she had submitted. These figures had also been approved by the internal auditor. There were no comments from Councillors.

- 00014** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the annual accounts for 2022/23 and Section 2 of the AGAR: The Accounting Statements for 2022/23

12.12 To re-adopt Financial Regulations

The Clerk confirmed there had been no changes to the Financial Regulations that had been adopted by the council a year previously. It was **AGREED** the Financial Regulations would be reviewed at the next Full Council meeting once the council structure had been reviewed and Resolved.

12.13 To re-adopt Standing Orders

The Clerk confirmed there had been no changes to the Standing Orders which had been adopted by the council a year previously. It was **AGREED** the Standing Orders would be reviewed at the next Full Council meeting once the council structure had been reviewed and Resolved.

12.14 To adopt the Reserves Policy

The Clerk confirmed the Reserves Policy had been updated and circulated prior to the meeting.

- 00015** It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Reserves Policy

12.15 To note the results of the Clerk's annual appraisal

Noted

COMMITTEE MINUTES

To **receive** the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings

13.1.Planning & Development – 21st February 2023

13.2.Environment – 2nd March 2023

13.3.APA – 9th March 2023

13.4.Planning & Development – 14th March 2023

13.5.SLR meeting – 28th March 2023

13.6.Planning & Development – 4th April 2023

13.7.Planning & Development – 25th April 2023

Noted. The Clerk had yet to circulate the minutes of the APA and the SLR meeting.

REPORTS

14.1. To receive reports from the District and County Councillors

Noted.

ESCC Bob Bowdler reported to members that it was likely a brand-new youth centre would be constructed in Heathfield this year. He would confirm this at the next council meeting.

The Chairman stated that the District Council had seen great change regarding the new Green party and Independent coalition Members who had replaced the Conservative

Members as a result of the elections. He hoped the District Council had noted the unrest of the electorate which should encourage positive change regarding the concerns of the public especially the current state of the roads and the overdevelopment of the surrounding parishes.

Cllr Bowdler asked Members to note the County Council would be responding although new or improved infrastructure would only follow as a result of more housing. He reported the new Highways contractor had increased the size of the workforce and working practices were changing. Potholes would be repaired in one visit. However, the funds available would not cover all the repair work that was required.

Several councillors highlighted that the new Highways contractor's computer systems had not been able to transition the existing reported problems. Cllr Bowdler would investigate.

14.2. To receive reports from PCSO Cathy Gilling - None

14.3. To receive reports from Parish Councillors

A councillor reported there had been a bird flu case in East Hoathly. The killing zone was 10km surrounding BN86 6QP and would include Rushlake Green Village Green. It could last up to eight weeks. 85 000 mallards would be killed.

A councillor reported fly tipping on Sandhills Lane. He would report the exact location to the Clerk.

14.4. To receive reports from the Parish Clerk

Noted

The Clerk reminded all new councillors that they would need to fill in their Register Of Interests as soon as possible.

FINGER POST MAINTENANCE

15.1. To agree a volunteer councillor to complete a health check on the finger posts in the parish for 2023

The Clerk clarified the last check had been completed in July 2022 by an ex-councillor. Two finger posts had been identified as needing repair work. The Clerk was still waiting for more quotation.

It was **AGREED** Cllr Wells and Cllr Charlie Saunders would complete a health check on all the finger posts during the summer months.

BANK MANDATE

16.1. To agree a councillor to be added to the bank mandate

The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Long could sign checks and release online payments and Cllr Wells could only sign cheques. At least one more bank signatory was required.

00016 It was **RESOLVED** to add Cllr Beverley Saunders, Cllr Simpson and Cllr Charlie Saunders to the bank mandate

WEBSITE MAINTENANCE

17.1. To agree Steve Williamson can continue to update the parish council website with news items following instruction from the Clerk

00017 It was **RESOLVED** Steve Williamson could update the parish council website following instruction from the Clerk

PARISH COUNCIL OWNED TREES

18.1. To review and agree the trees owned by the parish council

Members **AGREED** to the best of their knowledge the parish council only owned 4 trees:

- The jubilee tree located between the Grantees and Tombeckworth – plaque missing
- A Medlar tree located outside Tombeckworth
- A Walnut tree adjacent to the Dunn Village Hall
- A Cherry tree outside Osborne House

18.2. To consider nominating one councillor as a tree warden

00018 It was **RESOLVED** Cllr Sterling as the Tree Warden for the parish council

18.3. To note the Clerk will keep a register of trees

Noted

18.4. To review and agree any tree work required and instruct the Clerk to obtain the necessary quotes

It was **AGREED** Cllr Sterling would assess the trees in the parish and report his findings at the next Full Council meeting.

TO CONSIDER A NEW LOCATION FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL FLAGPOLE

The Chairman reported the Horse & Groom pub owners had confirmed they were happy for the flag pole to remain on their land. Cllr Saunders has a new flagpole if one is required in the future. The council considered alternative locations.

00019 It was **RESOLVED** the flagpole would remain in its current location.

RUSHLAKE GREEN VILLAGE GREEN NOTICE BOARD

20.1. To review the repair work to the notice board

The council considered the photographic evidence circulated ahead of the meeting. A detailed discussion took place. The Clerk noted the concerns raised by councillors. It was noted the refurbishment was a work-in-progress.

20.2. To agree a course of action

00020 It was **RESOLVED** the Clerk would write to the company with the council's concerns. The Chairman to agree the letter.

HONORARY PLAQUE

21.1. To consider the purchase of an honorary plaque for a long-standing ex parish councillor

The council discussed a plaque for a long-standing ex parish councillor. The Chairman confirmed the plaque would be bought by an anonymous donation.

00021 It was **RESOLVED** that the plaque would be added to one of the parish council's benches on Rushlake Green Village Green

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Two councillors would be producing a laminated parish map for all Members and the Clerk.

The Clerk to invite Speedwatch to the next Full Council meeting to report on the usage of the parish council's speed gun.

Cllr Simpson would be aiding the Clerk with formulating the parish council's Emergency Plan.

Cllr Sterling and Cllr Saunders to send the Clerk the exact location of a tree whose branches were obstructing the carriageway opposite Morgans Farm.
The Chairman requested councillors to contact the Clerk with ideas of where to locate a bike rack in Rushlake Green.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 13th July 2023 at 6.30pm at the Bodle Street Green Village Hall

The meeting closed at 20.30

