

WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL

www.warbletonparishcouncil.co.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of Warbleton Parish Council held on Thursday 24 October 2024 7pm at Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green

1. **Attendance:** Councillors Andy Long (Chair), Chris Wells, Buster Ansell, David Jarrold and Jeanne Peterson (Clerk)

Apologies for absence: It was resolved to accept apologies as given from Councillors Katy Whymark, Bruce Simpson and Bob Bowdler.

Other attendees: District Councillors Greg Collins and Cornelia Osborne were unable to attend the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest** - None

3. **Minutes**

3.1 It was resolved that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26 September 2024 were a correct record subject to the following amendment to Item 8.4i: The Warbleton Charity does not need additional committee members but is seeking more people to benefit from the charity's scheme. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

3.2 **Matters Arising** - None.

4. **Public Participation**

Two members of the public were present. The following points were raised:

- It was hoped that the parish council precept would not be raised by so much again this year, as it contributes to the overall financial burden on residents when times are difficult and other costs likely to go up.
- The farming industry appears to be in a state, and burdened with increasing debt.

5. **Reports**

5.1 **County Councillor Bob Bowdler** - A monthly report had been circulated and was taken as read.

5.2 **District Councillors** – none attended and no report was available.

5.3 **PCSO** – PCSO Susan Choppin joined the meeting at 7.40pm and was welcomed by the Chair. The order of the meeting was suspended to allow PCSO Choppin to update the council and the following points were discussed:

- Nothing of substance had been reported to the police from within the parish over the previous two months
- In adjacent areas there have been van break-ins and tools stolen. The police are trying their best to gather intelligence on this and have introduced a UV pen marker scheme.
- The council understood that police have pulled out of the Sussex Road Safety Partnership, but this was news to the PCSO and it will be looked into.
- It was confirmed that the Rural Crime Team do still operate from Heathfield, but currently there is no dedicated PCSO for Warbleton Parish.
- There is an ongoing issue with road safety due to speeding on the A267 of which the police are aware.
- When local events are being held at Rushlake Green, a call can be made to 101 to register this to see if there is police team available on the day to drive through and check compliance with parking.
- Calls to 101 are always monitored. They can be logged as an "intel" which

means there needs to be three or four reports of the same issue to get a warrant for police action. Any serious problem to be reported to 999.

- It was noted that the rural crime team have and use drones.
- Poaching is an ongoing local problem.

5.4 **Parish Councillors**

- i. **Cllr Whymark** – Notes had been circulated following attendance at a collective parish meeting and the Chair's Forum.
Cllr Long briefed the meeting further; It appears a number of parish councils, vocal at recent association meetings, have serious concerns about how Highways are managing its responsibilities. ESALC has taken this up and is pulling together a collective representation. The council agreed that it supports continuing attendance at relevant meetings to support a collective approach.

5.5 **Clerk's Report** – Taken as read and there were no questions.

6. **Committee reports**

6.1 The proceedings of the following committee meetings were noted:

- i. **Planning & Development** – minutes of the 08.10.2024 meeting had been circulated. The Planning Committee Meeting due to be held on 29 October 2024 is postponed as there are no new applications to review.
- ii. **Staffing Committee** – Notes of the 26.09.2024 meeting had been circulated and were discussed under Item 11.3

7. **Finance**

- 7.1 **It was resolved** to authorise the payments for October 2024 (payment list as circulated). The clerk asked that an additional Wealden District Council Invoice be included. This had not previously been presented to the council and related to the quarter payment October to December 2023 dog bin emptying. This was agreed.
- 7.2 **It was resolved** to approve the bank reconciliation, the budget monitor and reserve movement reports at 30 September 2024. The CIL end of year report was noted, and the CIL balance had been updated in the reserves report and annotated accordingly. The clerk was asked to investigate any upcoming potential time lapses of past CIL funding awards.
- 7.3 The initial draft budget paper for 2025/26 was noted. Council members were asked to send to the clerk any additional suggestions in preparation for a revised document to be presented to the council at the November meeting. Details will be circulated to non-attending members

8. **Warbleton Emergency & Resilience Planning**

- 8.1 A second electrician is making a site visit to each of the village halls on Friday 27 October to assess the set up and quote for installing change-over switches for the use of a generator. The clerk asked members if anyone knew of another local electrician that could be asked to provide the third quote.
- 8.2 Discussions are ongoing about water testing analysis and how a common protocol can be established between the companies offering a service.

9. **Water Pollution Rushlake Green**

Available data shows that spillage from the Back Lane sewage plant at Rushlake Green occurred 12 times in 2023 (a substantial increase to previous years: 2019 no spill, 2020 four spills, 2021 zero spill, 2022 two spills), while the annual water flow was not dissimilar year on year.

The council will continue to look into this anomaly, it is a work in progress. In the meantime, the spillage data will be circulated to all councillors.

10. VE Day Commemoration May 2025

- 10.1 **It was resolved** to agree in principle to placing a fire beacon on Rushlake Green for the commemorative event of VE Day. This would be subject to later agreement of type & footing (i.e. a more permanent footing could provide a platform for future tribute occasions), associated costs to council funds and planning requirements.
- 10.2 **It was resolved** that the clerk research any planning requirements and other considerations as noted in Item 10.1, to be reported at the November meeting.

11. Highways maintenance

- 11.1 **It was resolved** that members of the council would in principle aim to carry out quarterly routine checks of the whole parish area and its roads to maintain reporting momentum to ESCC Highways. This had been carried out successfully prior to the recent SLR meeting. The clerk was also asked to look at revamping the website, specifically to make external links more prominent for residents to be able to report Highways issues direct to ESCC.
- 11.2 ESCC Highways have confirmed categorically that the transfer (including temporary) of its responsibility for the management of hedgerows and trees is not an option available to the parish council.

12. Exclusion of press and public

- 12.1 **It was resolved** to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during consideration of item 12.2 and 12.3 pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the exempt nature of the business to be transacted due to legal and confidential considerations.

It was noted that the exclusion notice has been repeated over a number of meetings, and this should only be used when absolutely essential to afford transparency of the council's business. To this end the following can be reported:

- 12.2 There were no updates to report in this item.
- 12.3 The Clerk's annual appraisal report was received by the council. Suggested minor corrections were noted and agreed as to the contract of employment and job description. A recommended incremental pay award will be considered at the full council meeting in November.

13. Urgent matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda:

- Punnetts Town School Crossing – A meeting is being arranged between Heathfield & Waldron, and Warbleton Parish Council Chairs to discuss with leading local campaigners how this can be moved on. Research is needed into available funding opportunities to support the capital works required for a potential 200K project to install a crossing along with associated infrastructure.
- Recognition of the first female vice-chair to introduce a Warbleton Parish Council meeting [26 September 2024].

14. Annual Parish Assembly 2025 – this item was taken forward and discussed after Item 11 and before Item 12.

It was resolved to agree in principle that the council would review its arrangements for the Annual Parish Assembly 2025 with the aim of attracting more residents to attend. The clerk was asked to look into potential banner signage, and other miscellaneous costs to report at the next meeting.

15. Date of next meeting – Thursday 26 November 2024 at Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm