

# WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Meeting of Warbleton Parish Council held on Thursday 28 November 2024 7pm at Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green

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

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

**Other attendees:** District Councillor Greg Collins

2. **Declarations of Interest** - None

3. **Minutes**

3.1 **It was resolved** that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 24 October 2024 were a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

3.2 **Matters Arising:** In reference to The Warbleton Charity it was asked whether WPC could apply to it for funds. The charity representative confirmed that it could not. Funds must be dispersed as a direct benefit to the parishioners of Warbleton by way of support to apprentices and the distribution of financial help or hampers to those considered in need. The process is governed strictly by the Charity Commission.

4. **Public Participation**

One member of the public attended. The following points were raised:

- There is a dramatic change coming in agricultural life due to central government policies.
- Land in the parish will be affected and farmers will find it increasingly hard to earn a living.

5. **Reports**

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

5.2 **District Councillor Greg Collins** gave the following report:

- There had been no material progress at the Three Cups site. Sidings got cut back by ESCC, but there is a drainage problem at the Punnetts Town path.
- Cllr Usborne has taken leave from District duties until further notice.
- WDC are beginning conversations around the council's climate strategy and there will be a meeting in early December.
- There have been discussions between the District Council and the Environment Agency on the pollution at Furnace Brook. Investigations are ongoing.
- On the question around provision of a proper crossing at the Punnetts Town School, it was acknowledged that a number of pupils who attend the school are from outside the area. This contributes to the traffic congestion and increased danger.

- There seems to be some confusion around WDC contribution of CIL monies to ESCC - of which there has been none. In theory S106 money is applied to support changes in local infrastructure caused by development. CIL monies mitigate the cumulative effect in an area. WDC are currently looking at its pot being spent in places which have taken on the development.
  - Cllr Collins reported that he now holds the financial portfolio at District under which falls CIL controlled planning and environment concerns. He will keep the parish council informed.
- 5.3 **PCSO:** PCSO Choppin was unable to attend the meeting but reported that during the last reporting period there had been one reported incident of Criminal Damage and one of Theft.

5.4 **Parish Councillors:**

- i. **Cllr Jarrold** had attended the Dunn Village Hall Committee meeting on 4 November 2024. Concerns had been expressed, although no vote taken, about the costs of and proposed installation of a change-over switch at the hall for use with a generator in the case of an emergency situation.

Cllr Long confirmed that once the council has a completed Emergency/Resilience Plan this will be circulated to higher authority councils as well as utility companies. Where possible, and where there are known change-over switches utility companies will provide and install their own generators to help support local communities in an emergency event. Or if they are unable then local resources can be called upon. Everyone, in practice, would pull together.

Further conversations will continue to take place with village hall committee representatives, aiming to install one switch within the current financial year and the other in 2025/26. Full costs to be covered by the parish council.

Cllrs Jarrold and Long will attend the Dunn Village Hall AGM on 2 December 2024, and Cllr Jarrold the Bodle Street Green meeting in the new year.

It was noted that the annual energy costs of Dunn Village Hall remain very high.

- 5.5 **Clerk's Report:** Taken as read and there were no questions. The clerk added that a second electrician's quote had now been received for installation of change-over switches at the parish halls. Options would be discussed once it had been decided which hall would be installed within this financial year.

## 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. Draft Minutes from the meeting held on 26 November 2024 were not yet available.

## 7. Finance

- 7.1 **It was resolved** to authorise the payments for November 2024 (payment list as circulated).
- 7.2 The National Pay Award for Clerks was noted and it was agreed that the back pay due would be paid with the December 2024 wages.
- 7.3 **It was resolved** by full council to approve the one incremental point advance to the clerk's wages as recommended by the Staffing Committee.
- 7.4 **It was resolved** to approve the bank reconciliation, the budget monitor and reserve movement reports at 31 October 2024.
- 7.5 The draft budget 2025/26 was assessed line by line. The clerk was asked to make the following updates ready for final discussions in January:
  - Find out specific costings for the provision and annual emptying for a dog bin at

Bodle Street Green. Confirm with village hall representative as to the preferred location.

- Include funds in the new Annual Parish Assembly budget line once specific costs are estimated (refreshments, marketing banners) minimum £200.
- Look into whether CIL funds could be used for the cost of buying a beacon & installing infrastructure on the green to secure it. Otherwise add into the draft budget.
- Increase legal costs provision to £600
- Provision will need to be included for the installation of an emergency electrical change-over switch at one village hall.
- The parish asset check would take place prior to the January meeting and any identified maintenance costs included in the final draft budget.

7.6 It was agreed that further investigative work was needed on investment options for the council's reserve funds. This will be considered at the next council meeting and Cllr Whymark will pass additional information to the RFO to prepare for that.

7.7 The council noted that the CIL Monitoring Officer had confirmed they would alert the council should any deadline become close on the need to spend allocated CIL funds. In the meantime, the council is mindful of the need to spend these in a timely manner.

## **8. Warbleton Emergency & Resilience Planning**

Four like-for-like quotes for water testing analysis at Spring Hill had been received and **it was resolved** to contract South East Water. Sample pots would be sent to the council which will need to be couriered back to their Lab for testing. Cllr Whymark will make the necessary arrangements.

## **9. Water Pollution Rushlake Green**

A Southern Water engineer's report had been received following water testing, but there are still questions that need answering. The Environment Agency could if asked potentially provide a view on this so that the council can consider whether the sewerage plant required further and more direct investigation. There are heavy metals in the silt, which implies contamination over a long period of time.

## **10. VE Day Commemoration May 2025**

There had been no response from WDC Planning since sending in draft specifications of a proposed beacon to be erected at Rushlake Village Green. The clerk was asked to chase this again. Councillors agreed to send to the clerk contact details of potential local contractors who could make/supply a beacon with pole, and a metal work commemorative silhouette. These would be discussed at the January meeting.

## **11. Highways – Punnetts Town School Crossing**

Cllr Whymark attended the recent Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council meeting where this topic had been discussed. The school falls within that parish and, although fully supported by them in principle, it was decided not to consider funding the installation of a crossing due to budget constraints. Full legal responsibility would also have to be assumed for operation and maintenance, and a precedent would be set. They voted to keep the pressure on ESCC and local MPs. WPC members will also keep abreast of developments and attend any meetings as thought useful.

The clerk read out an update from the Safer Roads Partnership, which indicated that the school was receiving positive support from that quarter, and the clerk was asked to publish the information onto the website.

**12. Annual Parish Assembly 2025**

Potential guest speakers were discussed. The format of serving refreshments was still thought a good approach and the whole event could provide the opportunity to engage potential new councillors. The clerk will send a draft event agenda to Cllr Whymark, and also obtain more detailed costing for advertising banners and assess implication on the budget.

**13. Spring Hill replacement tree**

**It was resolved** in principle to replace the tree at Spring Hill and commemorate it in some way to show the land belongs to WPC. The specifics of the plaque wording to be further discussed.

**14. Urgent matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda: None**

**15. Date of next meeting:** Thursday 23 January 2025 at Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green 7pm.

**The meeting closed at 8.50pm**