

Minutes of a meeting of **WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL** held on Friday 23rd April 2021 at 9.30am remotely via zoom

PRESENT: Councillors A Long (Chairman), Mike Smythe (Vice-Chairman), Steve Williamson, Chris Wells, Keith Graham, Roy Iremonger, Celia Davis, Dave Powell and Karen Cook

Also present: Wealden District Councillor Bob Bowdler
Wealden District Councillor Sue Stedman
5 members of the public
Jackie Cottrell – Parish Clerk

00295 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllr Reading – work commitments

00296 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Smythe – Personal Interest in items 8 & 9
Cllr Graham – Personal Interest in items 8 & 9
Cllr Cook – Personal Interest in items 9

MINUTES

To **resolve** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18th March 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

00297 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18th March 2021

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public urged the Parish Council to activate the moratorium, item 9 on the agenda. The 60 strong community group that had been formed in response to the sale of the Horse & Groom pub proved the community wanted to protect the Asset of Community Value. He asked Members to note only the Parish Council could activate the moratorium, their group were unable to do that. They were not a Community Interest Company. Community grants were available towards the cost of purchasing the pub by a Community Interest Company.

A spokesman for the Village Leaf reported an unprecedented response in supporting the campaign to protect the pub. The Chairman reassured him that if the Parish Council activated the moratorium, the procedures were all in place and the deadline would not be missed.

The last member of the public updated the Council regarding a meeting that had taken place with MP Huw Merriman to discuss the recently approved Black Duck pub application. He felt disappointed WDC Cllrs Bowdler and Stedman did not attend. He wished Members to note there had been an unknown delay with the ACV application and as a result it had not been received until after the planning application had been approved. The ACV on the Black Duck was now awaiting approval by Wealden DC. The Chairman noted all comments and assured the public the Council were aware of the gravity of the situation.

00298 **RESOLVED** to change the order of the agenda to enable item 9 to be discussed immediately after the public participation.

THE HORSE AND GROOM PUB RUSHLAKE GREEN

9.1. To activate the 6-month moratorium period – deadline 24th April 2021

The Chairman explained the terms and conditions of the moratorium and the options that would be available to the Parish Council and Community Interest Companies if it was activated. He asked Members to note the brewery may qualify for exemption of the moratorium but that was yet to be determined. He urged Councillors to take the prudent approach and trigger the moratorium. Lastly he highlighted the significance of the activation and any subsequent bids for future change of use applications on the pub. All Councillors commented and fully supported the activation of the moratorium.

00299 It was **RESOLVED** Warbleton Parish Council would activate the 6-month moratorium on The Horse & Groom Pub , Rushlake Green

REPORTS

5.1. To receive reports from District and County Councillors

WDC Cllr Bowdler reported that a decision had been made for the portfolio holder to attend the meeting with Huw Merriman regarding the Black Duck.

WDC Cllr Stedman reiterated WDC Cllr Bowdler's comments. She reported that they had been subjected to a high level of unreasonable behaviour unlike any they had experience before.

5.2. To receive reports from PCSO Morris

None received.

5.3. To receive from Parish Councillors

None received.

5.4. To receive reports from the Parish Clerk

The Clerk referred to the report circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. She added Wild About Warbleton had passed on their thanks to the Councillors who had had attended the meeting regarding Rushlake Green Village Green. The Chairman added it had been agreed that no scarifying would be taking place on any areas of the Green or the land within the Council's control. A very small triangle which abuts the Dunn Village Hall would be left grow wild and monitored.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

6.1. To receive the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:

- (a) Environment – 4th March 2021
- (b) Planning & Development – 16th March 2021
- (c) Finance & GP – 7th April (not yet distributed)

Noted.

FINANCE**7.1. To authorise the bills for payment**

Cheque No.	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
	ESALC Ltd	463.60		463.60	ESALC subscription 2021/22 £380.57 & NALC subscription 2021/22 £83.03
	123 Reg	11.99	2.40	14.39	Domain renewal 1 year (this was a change of payee)
	Simon Goacher	146.19		146.19	Payroll services 2020-21
	Jackie Cottrell	9.99		9.99	Printer ink 18 th Feb – 17 Mar 2021
	Jackie Cottrell				Clerk salary April

00300 It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payments listed above

7.2. To agree the Parish Council 2020/21 end of year accounts:**7.2.1. The cash book for 2020/21****7.2.2. The bank and cash book reconciliation for 2020/21****7.2.3. The Parish Council general reserve levels as at 1st April 2021****7.2.4. The Parish Council ear marked reserves as at 1st April 2021****7.2.5. The Asset Register valuation as at 1st April 2021**

The Chairman of F&GP referred to the financial accounts that had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. All the accounts had been reconciled by the RFO on the 1st April, independently checked and approved by the Chairman of F&GP. He clarified the format of the accounts and explained the figures in detail. He stated Warbleton PC would remain classed as a "Smaller Council" as both income and expenditure was less than £25,000, but this might change in the future with potential increases in the precept or additional CIL receipts/expenditure. He asked Members to note the newly adopted Asset Register now had values added, which would be reported on the AGAR.

7.3. To note the internal audit is scheduled for 27th April 2021 – Noted

There were no comments from Councillors on the above items.

00301 It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Parish Council 2020/21 end of year accounts

7.4. To note the recommendation of the F&GP that the Parish Council should seek to exempt itself from the Limited Assurance Review, subject to any recommendations from the internal auditor

The Chairman of F&GP clarified the above and stated it would be an item on the next full council agenda for resolution. He advised even with an exemption, 5% of councils were still subject to a random audit - **Noted**

7.5. To note the budget monitor for 2021/22 – c/f to the next Full Council meeting**7.6. To note the draft AGAR figures**

The Clerk confirmed the draft AGAR figures had been completed and independently checked and approved by the Chairman of F&GP – **Noted**

THE BLACK DUCK PUB NOMINATION AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

8.1. To agree to support the nomination of The Black Duck pub as an asset of community value

All Councillors strongly supported the Black Duck pub nomination to become an Asset of Community Value. It was noted the Parish Council did not condone the unreasonable behaviour shown towards WDC Cllr Bowdler and Stedman.

00302 It was **RESOLVED** the Parish Council would strongly support the Black Duck pub nomination to become an Asset of Community Value.

8.2. Update on the Black Duck Pub sign

[The Clerk updated Members at the end of the meeting on this item]

The current owners were under no obligation to change the sign and Wealden DC advised a change back to the original sign would be at the discretion of the owners of the property. The Clerk advised the item would be revisited when the ACV decision had been made.

DATE FOR THE ASM AND FULL COUNCIL MEETING IN MAY 2021

10.1 To agree holding a virtual combined ASM and Full Council meeting on Thursday 6th May replacing the scheduled Full Council meeting on the 20th May

The Clerk and Chairman advised the Council it would be a prudent measure to hold the ASM and Full Council meeting on the 6th May. This would be before virtual meetings became illegal and taking into account the results of the Councillor survey which strongly hinted low attendance at face-to-face meetings in the immediate future.

00303 It was **RESOLVED** the combined ASM and Full Council meeting would be held on Thursday 6th May 2021

TO DISCUSS THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

11.1. To agree to continue to hold Planning & Development meetings every 3 weeks

The Chairman of the Planning & Development committee, the Chairman of the F&GP Committee and the Clerk all supported the proposal to continue to hold meetings every 3 weeks. The Clerk had not experienced any difficulties with this time frame and meetings were taking an adequate amount of time. An item had been added to every planning agenda to allow for late planning applications which had been received after the publication of the agenda that could not be carried over until the next planning committee meeting. There were no further comments from Councillors.

00304 It was **RESOLVED** to hold Planning & Development Committee meetings every 3 weeks

11.2. To agree the Planning & Development meetings on the 18th May and 8th June would be held under delegated authority where Councillors would email their responses to the Clerk – dependent on the results of the Clerks councillors survey

It was agreed to defer the above decision until the ASM and Full Council meeting on the 6th May. The outcome of High Court judgement regarding the future of virtual meetings would be available by that date.

UPDATE ON THE USE OF ZOOM FOR PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Clerk advised that any decisions on the use of zoom for future parish council meetings would be dependent on the High Court judgement which was imminent.

COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION AND NEW VACANCY

The Chairman reported the news of Cllr Velten's retirement from the Council. The Clerk was waiting for a notice of vacancy to be sent from Wealden DC. If an election was not called (closing date 20th May) the vacancy would be filled by co-option

**URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING
and/or INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA**

London Bridge Protocol
Risk Assessment regarding a return to face-to-face meetings
Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 6th May 2021

The meeting closed at 10.42am

DRAFT