

Minutes of a meeting of **WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL** held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.00pm remotely via zoom

**PRESENT:** Councillors A Long (Chairman), Mike Smythe (Vice-Chairman), Karen Cook, Steve Williamson, Pauline Velten, Chris Wells, Richard Reading, Dave Powell (arrived at 7.35pm) Keith Graham, Roy Iremonger and Celia Davies

Also, present: Jackie Cottrell – Parish Clerk  
Wealden District Councillor Bob Bowdler  
East Sussex County Councillor Bill Bentley  
12 members of the public

**00238 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - None**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None**

### **MINUTES**

To **resolve** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

**00239 RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda

The Chairman requested the Clerk continue to investigate the legalities of resolutions en masse.

The Chairman referred to Resolution **00217** regarding the Rushlake Green Village Clock and requested it to be an item on the February Full Council agenda.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A member of Wild About Warbleton requested the Chairman gave answers to questions that had been sent to him and the Clerk via email at an earlier date.

The Chairman confirmed there would not be an Environment Committee meeting in January due to the Clerk's workload. A meeting would hopefully take place in March.

The Chairman confirmed that consultation with Orchard Landscape would not take place unless relevant recommendations were agreed at the Environment Committee.

The Chairman confirmed he would ask the member of Wild About Warbleton for information regarding item 11 on the agenda at the relevant point in the meeting.

A second member of the public had technical difficulties and the Chairman advised him to contact the Clerk with his comments or to attend the next Full Council meeting the following month.

## **REPORTS**

### **5.1. To receive reports from District and County Councillors**

East Sussex County Councillor Bill Bentley confirmed the Council was working hard in its efforts to support the community. He reported there had been problems with COVID cases within care homes in the county and there was work being done trying to open a facility for people fit for discharge, but who were still COVID positive. Temporary mortuaries had been opened.

Wealden District Councillor Bob Bowdler reported staff were continuing to work from home and the offices at Hailsham had been offered as a place for a mass vaccination centre.

The Chairman of the Parish Council asked a question regarding the licence costs for items erected on ESCC Highways land. The Clerk was requested to email both Cllr Bentley and Cllr Bowdler with the details of the licence costs the Parish Council would have to pay. The costs would be taken to a Scrutiny committee meeting the following day.

### **5.2. To receive reports from the Parish Councillors**

Cllr Davies encouraged Members to support the COVID Community network which had been set up to help those members of the community in need at this difficult time. She reported the Dunn Village Hall was closed and they had received another grant of £1,300 from Wealden District Council. She advised there had been a positive response to the CIL survey; the Rushlake Green Village Stores and the Village Leaf had both supported the effort for responses. She encouraged Councillors to remind family and friends of the deadline 31<sup>st</sup> January when the survey would close.

No other Councillors had anything to add.

### **5.3. To receive a verbal report from David Morris – Police Community Support Officer**

The Clerk confirmed David Morris had been sent the zoom invitation and agenda and had assured her of his presence previously but he was not in attendance.

### **5.4 To receive reports from the Parish Clerk**

The Clerk referred to her report circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

She added that a new location for the Bodle Street Green Parish Council notice board would be presented at the next CIL Committee meeting.

**COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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

- (a) Planning & Development – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- (b) Planning & Development – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- (c) Finance & General Purposes – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- (d) Planning & Development – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- (e) Finance & General Purposes – 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Noted.** Members were also asked to note, the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 had not yet been received.

**FINANCE**

**7.1. To note the Finance reports, bank reconciliations and budget monitor for December 2020 and the bank reconciliations for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter**

The Clerk confirmed all of the above were up-to-date.

**7.2. To authorise the bills for payment and sign the cheques**

The Clerk said that salary details would not be disclosed on the agenda or public papers due to data protection and confidentiality. The Chairman of the F&GP Committee confirmed that this was in line with the Financial Regulations. The Clerk confirmed she would investigate how Councillors would obtain salary information if desired.

Cheque No.	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
	SPS		41.14	246.84	CIL flyer distribution costs
	Elephant Print			134.31	CIL flyer production costs
	Jackie Cottrell			14.39	Zoom subscription December Inv58407346
	Jackie Cottrell				January Salary
	Jackie Cottrell			14.39	Zoom subscription November Inv53001923

**00240** It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payments listed above

**7.3. To retrospectively approve the two payments authorised at the F&GP committee meeting in December**

Cheque No.	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
	Jackie Cottrell			573.56	Clerk Salary December
	HMRC			387.28	Payroll Oct-Dec 2020

**00241** It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payments listed above

**7.4. To note retrospectively the remaining payments authorised at the F&GP committee meeting in December – Noted**

Cheque No.	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
	Jackie Cottrell			43.00	Ink - June, July, Sep & Oct
	PKF Littlejohn		40.00	240.00	External Audit Fees
	Jackie Cottrell			21.89	25 1 <sup>st</sup> class stamps
	Wealden District		12.50	75.00	Dog bins quarterly emptying charges

**7.5. To agree to move 2020/21 budget item for Election Expenses of £500 to an earmarked reserve in accordance with Financial Regulations 4.2.**

The Chairman of F&GP referred to the report submitted to Members.

**00242** It was **RESOLVED** to move 2020/21 budget item for Election Expenses of £500 to an earmarked reserve in accordance with Financial Regulations 4.2.

**7.6. To authorise the grant payments specified in the 2020/21 budget recommended for approval by the F&GP Committee**

	BSG Village Hall			300.00	Mowing grant 2020/21
	St John the Evangelist Church BSG			300.00	Churchyard maintenance grant 2021/21
	St Mary the Virgin Church Warbleton			625.00	Churchyard maintenance grant 2021/21

The Chairman of F&GP referred to his report which had been circulated to all Members. He confirmed the F&GP Committee unanimously recommended the 3 grant payments. The only information the F&GP Committee had been waiting for was from St Mary the Virgin, Warbleton Church regarding information on the maintenance costs they had incurred. This had now been received.

He noted that both the village halls had received a grant payment in 2020 even though the halls had not been utilised by the Parish Council due to CoVid-19 restrictions. Both halls had received grants from Wealden District

Council of £10,000 during 2020. The F&GP Committee had recommended no further grants should be made to either hall.

Cllr Reading enquired as to why the 2 churches received different grant amounts. The Chairman of F&GP committee stated they were historically different amounts.

**00243** It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the grant payments listed above

**7.7. To approve the discretionary grant awards for the accounting year 2021/22 recommended for approval by the F&GP Committee**

Cllr Long and Cllr Smythe declared a Personal Interest in the Village Leaf application.

The Chairman of F&GP explained to Members that the grant application process had changed and everyone now had to apply to receive a grant with the exception of the village halls for Parish council usage.

It had previously been agreed that any grants awarded would be payable in the 2021/22 financial year which made it easier for the Parish Council to budget. There had been three applications that had been received on time. Only applications received before the deadline date had been considered. Historic applicants had been chased for an application before the deadline in view of the new process.

	Village Leaf			210.00	
	St John the Evangelist Church BSG			300.00	
	Warbleton Housing Association			300.00	

**00244** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the three grant payments listed above

**7.8. To agree the Parish Council budget for the accounting year 2021/22 recommended for approval by the F&GP Committee**

The Chairman of the F&GP Committee stated all the budget details were in the report submitted to all Members. The proposed budget had been set at £20,002 which was an increase of £1,636 or an 8.91% increase on the year before. It had been the cumulation of several months' work.

All Committee Chairman and the Council's Chairman/Vice Chairman had been given an opportunity to contribute to what should be budgeted. Every item had been reviewed by the Clerk and the F&GP Committee.

The following had been discussed in detail:

- 2020/21 budget expenditure projected to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021
- Projected reserves of £13,402.44 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021
- Known and projected expenditure requirements in 2021/22

The Chairman of F&GP read through his detailed report to Members in full. He reiterated the importance of the new budget line for infrastructure which had been the result of the newly adopted asset register. This had been requested by the Chairman of the Council. The asset register had highlighted a number of items in need of repair. The committee had agreed it would not have been prudent to allow the reserve levels to drop. There were no questions from Councillors.

**00245** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Parish Council budget for 2021/22

**7.9. To agree the Parish Council precept for the accounting year 2021/22 recommended for approval by the F&GP committee**

The Chairman of F&GP committee explained to Members there were two options to fund the budget. Option one was to fund the budget solely with the precept and option two was to use some of the reserves as well as the precept. The different options had been detailed in the report submitted to all Members and shared again with the full Council. The F&GP committee unanimously recommended the budget should be funded through the precept. If this was agreed, this would represent a £2.35 increase for a band D property per year. He stated, for background information, that the precept was £15,000 9 years ago and there were many intervening years where there had only been either no or a slight increase. He asked Members to note Wealden District Council were not proposing any increase in Council Tax for 2021/22.

**00246** It was **RESOLVED** the precept would be set at £20,002 for the accounting year 2021/22

**INTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT**

**8.1. To appoint Keith Robertson as the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council in 2021**

The Chairman spoke highly of Mr Robertson and the hard work that had been put in last year to get the Parish Council on the right track. He recommended the re-appointment of Mr Robertson for the 2021/22 year.

**00247** It was **RESOLVED** to re-appoint Mr Robertson as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year 2021/22

**FOCUS CLUSTER GROUP**

**9.1. To note the Parish Council's response to Wealden's Direction of Travel Document submitted to the Focus Cluster Group**

Cllr Smythe reminded Councillors they had all received a copy of the Wealden Direction of Travel Document - **NOTED**

**9.2. To note the collated response from the Focus Cluster Group to Wealden's Direction of Travel Document submitted to Wealden**

Cllr Smythe also reminded Councillors they had received a copy of his response for the Focus Cluster Group on behalf of the Parish Council which had since been submitted. Cllr Smythe had been disappointed with the

format of the Focus Cluster Group response to Wealden District Council -  
**NOTED**

**9.3. To agree that the Parish Council submit their own comments directly to Wealden DC before the deadline of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Cllr Smythe informed Members he felt it a prudent measure for the Parish Council to submit their own individual comment to Wealden DC. This response had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. Councillors had no additional comments to add.

**00248** It was **RESOLVED** to submit Cllr Smythe's response to Wealden District Council's Direction of Travel Document on behalf of Warbleton Parish Council

**RUSHLAKE GREEN VILLAGE GREEN SITE VISIT**

The Chairman verbally updated Members. Cllr Cook, Reading, Powell, members of Wild About Warbleton, various experts and the Chairman himself had all attended the meeting. All attendees had received a detailed report from Wild About Warbleton shortly before the site visit. It concluded Rushlake Green Village Green was reasonably well stocked with wildlife and even had rare fungi present. The report detailed recommendations to encourage further plants and wildlife. The report would be discussed fully at the next Environment meeting. Cllr Reading thanked Wild About Warbleton for the well documented report.

Cllr Powell voiced concerns regarding future grass cutting costs which could increase if the grass was left to grow longer.

**TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE PARISH COUNCIL WISH TO JOIN THE EAST SUSSEX HIGHWAYS GRASS CUTTING TRIAL**

Details of the trial were read out to Members. The Chairman consulted with Wild About Warbleton regarding various details. A debate ensued and many Councillors raised concerns about road safety and possible cost implications of the Parish Council agreeing to the trial.

**00249** It was **RESOLVED** the Parish Council would not be joining the East Sussex Highways grass cutting trial

**ROAD SAFETY**

Cllr Smythe voiced his concerns regarding road safety. He reported there continued to be an increase in the volume and speed of vehicles in the area putting the safety of walkers, cyclists and horse riders in danger. The village shop due to COVID was attracting more visitors and there had been 3 accidents at one particular junction very recently. The Speed Watch statistics had caught the attention of the police. The Clerk was in the process of organising an SLR meeting, the previous one, held some time ago, had been disappointing. Cllr Smythe requested road safety should be a priority for the Parish Council. The Chairman reassured Cllr Smythe it would be addressed at the next Environment meeting.

**COUNCIL YEAR 2021**

**13.1. To note the dates for Council meetings circulated in a separate report**

The Chairman stated the Environment Committee meeting dates had not yet been confirmed. **Noted.**

**UPDATE ON THE USE OF ZOOM FOR PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**14.1. To agree that all parish council and committee meetings continue to be held via zoom up until the end of the March 2021**

All meetings would continue to be held via zoom. The Clerk confirmed that no further updates had been received regarding the continuation of zoom meetings when the legislation expired.

**URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING and/or INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA – NONE**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

18<sup>th</sup> February 2021

The meeting closed at 8.46pm