

Minutes of a meeting of **WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL** held on Thursday 17th September 2020 at 7.00pm remotely via zoom

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

Also present: Jackie Cottrell – Parish Clerk
Wealden District Councillor Susan Stedman
Ten members of the public

00159 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Dave Powell – work commitments
Richard Reading – work commitments

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

MINUTES

To **resolve** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th July 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

00160 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th July 2020. The Clerk to correct one spelling mistake.

Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee highlighted that 2 cheque payments had the wrong cheque numbers written against them on the previous agenda. Cheque number 101383 should have been 101385 and the amount should have been £701.34 and not £701 which was stated. Cheque number 101384 should have been stated as cheque number 101386

00161 It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk make the necessary adjustments regarding the incorrect cheque numbers and 34p discrepancy.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public spoke on behalf of Wild About Warbleton, regarding item 11 on the agenda. The group had received three separate correspondence regarding Orchard Landscapes and their excellent ability to work in a manner which was sympathetic to the environment. She stated the Parish Council's obligations would differ depending on whether they were the owners of the Green or merely trustees and requested the Chairman clarify this. Members were asked to note the apologies of another member of the public who was unable to attend.

A second member of the public spoke regarding the financial protocols of the Parish Council. She stated much progress had been made. The zoom connection became unstable at that point. The Chairman requested the member of public to email the Clerk with her question.

A third member of the public spoke regarding the report and maps she sent from the Vitality Villages Community Routes Programme. The group was set up over five years ago. She requested that Warbleton Parish Council nominate one Councillor to meet with the group regarding community route 21 which goes through the parish. The group are hoping Warbleton Parish Council would support route 21. They already had the support of Herstmonceux Parish Council and Matthew Harper from East Sussex County Council Rights of Way. This would be the 8th route they have tackled. The Chairman confirmed this matter would be discussed under item 5.3.11.

No other members of the public wished to speak.

REPORTS

5.1. To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Wealden District Councillor Sue Stedman read a report from Bob Stanley. Contingency plans had been made for local outbreaks of Covid-19. Covid-19 is slowly having a lesser effect on the delivery of Wealden Services. The new planning consultation system had been published. The consultation closes on the 29th October. This would change the way planning permissions would be given. District Councils would be judged on the housing delivery numbers. Wealden are hoping to have a new Local Plan by the end of 2023. Any growth areas had been given automatic outline planning. No small villages were expected to be in the growth zone. Parish Councils would be informed if sites do come up in their areas. Regarding finances Covid-19 had cost the District Council so far 2.139 million with 1.989 million re-imbursed by the government. The net cost by the end of the financial year would be covered by reserves. All leisure centres had now been re-opened.

5.2. To receive reports from Parish Councillors

Cllr Davies reported that Dunn Village Hall would be opening at the beginning of October. They would be following the government guidelines regarding Covid-19 and were currently carrying out a risk assessment. They were doing a fantastic job in difficult circumstances. The hall had been repainted and had new curtains. Members were asked to note agenda item 5.3.9. where the idea of the flyer for CIL ideas would be discussed. Cllr Davies stated this would be a way the Parish Council could share their ideas

with the local community before progressing further with any of them whilst at the same time advertising the new Parish Council website. Cllr Velton reported that Bodle Street Green Village Hall is open and various groups are meeting whilst adhering to the Covid-19 guidelines.

5.2.1. Community Speedwatch in Bodle Street Green – Cllr Smythe

Cllr Smythe reported that the Community Speedwatch had been operating in Bodle Street Green successfully for the last 18 months. The statistics collected confirmed there was a problem with speeding vehicles. However, the Bodle Street Green Speedwatch had been temporarily suspended due to lack of support. A flyer had been posted through villager's doors although two Members at the meeting confirmed they had not received the flyer. The response was very disappointing. Rushlake Green members will now cover this area on an ad-hoc basis in order for the service to resume.

The Police and Crime Commissioner visited the Speedwatch team in Rushlake Green. In one hour, 33 cars were recorded speeding. As a result, Cllr Smythe hoped the Commissioner would put greater emphasis on increasing the police presence in the village going forward.

5.3. To receive reports from the Parish Clerk

5.3.1. Relocation of the defibrillator currently located at the Black Duck

The Chairman of the Heathfield and Waldron First Responders was invited to speak at this point. He confirmed they had 5 defibrillators to maintain within the Warbleton Parish Council area. Following the closure of the Black Duck pub they would need to know a new location, which would have to offer a power supply. Nigel Mckeenan was also invited to speak. He stated that the unit could operate without power and perhaps stay at its present location until the pub was sold. He felt there would be a risk the unit could be put in storage as there would be a lack of alternative locations. The Councillors discussed the issue further.

00162 It was **RESOLVED** the Clerk would write to the owners of the Black Duck to enquire if they would be happy to keep the defibrillator located at their property until it was sold. The power could be turned off if they wished. Once the property changed hands the new owners would be contacted.

5.3.2. Barclays Bank Mandate

The Clerk reported herself and the Chairman were both now set up for internet banking. The two remaining councillors, who were signatories to the account, were awaiting their cards. The monthly payments could be processed online for September. The Clerk would send the Chairman a copy of the invoices to be paid and talk him through the authorisation process.

5.3.3. Update on the bench donated by David Bysouth

The Clerk updated Members on costs associated with the installation of the bench. Highways would charge £58.28 which was the physical fee for the bench itself. The Section 171 fee would be £387.22. All works must be carried out by a street works accredited contractor with the appropriate £10M liability insurance. The Parish would also need to provide Highways with their insurance documentation to prove they have £10M public liability insurance for the structure itself. East Sussex could provide a quote for the works. The Clerk confirmed the other bench recently installed at Punnetts Town cost approximately £300 to installed.

It was **AGREED** the Clerk would add the item to next CIL Agenda for discussion. The item would also be added to a future Finance Agenda if necessary.

5.3.4. Update on the Asset Register

Unfortunately, the Clerk and Cllr Graham were unable to attend the Asset Register tour. The Chairman and Cllr Wells completed the work. Every asset was now pictured and its location had grid references attached. The Chairman confirmed he was reformatting the existing document with the new information which would be shortly passed to the Clerk. The Chairman also confirmed to the Finance Chairman that the clock at Osbourne house would need to be added to the insurance policy. The Finance Chairman asked Councillors to note a request to the former Clerk for the clock and the defibrillators to be added to the policy previously had been ignored.

5.3.5. Update on the noticeboards & Bodle Street Green gates

The Clerk had no further update on this item. She would continue to chase the item with Highways.

5.3.6. Village Players Open Air Performance

The Clerk read the letter received from Ann Walker, Chairman of the Village Village Players asking permission to stage four open air performances at the end of June 2021 on Rushlake Green

00163 It was **RESOLVED** to allow the Village Players use of Rushlake Green Village Green subject to the usual deposit being paid, any Covid-19 restrictions allowing such entertainment to take place and a risk assessment received in good time.

5.3.7. Headed paper

Cllr Smythe and the Clerk would continue to work together on a logo design for the headed paper in the coming weeks. Any designs produced would be circulated to Members for feedback before the final design recommendation to Full Council

5.3.8. Repair works to the turning circle

The Clerk confirmed she had a copy of the Land Registry Official Copy of the Title Plan which shows the Parish Council do not own the land. The Clerk relayed the previous costs of repair works for the turning circle in 1997 which the Parish Council chose to contribute to. These costs were split between the resident, the Dunn Village Hall and the Parish Council. They were £860 plus £150 VAT. The Clerk asked Councillors to note the comments of the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee from the previous Full Council meeting which were “there were no funds in the budget for this and if agreed the Parish Council would have to fund using reserves.” The Clerk confirmed she had been keeping the resident up-to-date with the situation.

00164 It was **RESOLVED** that no further action would be taken and the resident would be informed

5.3.9. To consider an idea of a flyer. One side will be for the local community to consider CIL ideas and the other will promote the Parish Council's new website

The Clerk asked Members to consider the table of quotes from 3 different companies for the production costs of the flyer. The distribution cost was also listed. The Chairman of CIL added that the costs for the flyer could not be taken from CIL monies so asked Members to note there would be a cost implication if this proposal was accepted. All Councillors supported the idea.

00165 It was **RESOLVED** the Parish Council agree the sum of £300 could be used for the production and distribution of the flyer. The CIL committee would have the final decision on which of the 3 companies to use

5.3.10. To consider candidates for Wealden Districts Council's Recognition for Service to the Community

After some discussion, the Chairman decided the session did not need to be exempt. All Councillors were in favour of nominating Tony Field and spoke very highly of his efforts towards helping the community during a time of national crisis. It was also noted how hard Tony Field's team had worked too.

00166 It was **RESOLVED** to nominate Tony Field as Warbleton Parish Council's candidate for Recognition for Service to the Community

5.3.11. To consider Vitality Villages request for a Member of Warbleton Parish Council to attend a meeting arranged by them to gain the support of the Parish for Community Route 21

The Chairman informed Members that Vitality Villages had attended the recent Environment Committee meeting and, on his recommendation, had forwarded the information to the Clerk in order for this item to be discussed at Full Council. All Members were supportive, some had concerns about potential costs but the Chairman assured Councillors it would be a preliminary meeting to discuss their ideas at this stage.

00167 It was **RESOLVED** the Chairman would arrange a meeting with Vitality Villages with the Councillor who's land it borders to consider their requests

5.3.12. External Audit Update

The Clerk confirmed that she had received a response from PKF Littlejohn on the 30th July to confirm all the Parish Council documentation had been received. The Parish Council had received further correspondence at a later date advising we could exempt ourselves from an external audit. The deadline to reply was too short to arrange a meeting. As a result, after discussions with the Chairman and the Chairman of Finance & GP Committee and taking into account the conflicting advice we had already received, the decision was made to not to seek any exemption.

All the relevant documentation is on the website and the Notice of Public Rights is displayed on the noticeboards too.

The Parish Council were awaiting any comments back from the External Auditor.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Finance and General Purposes – 14th July

(b) Planning and Development – 21st July 2020, 20th August and the 3rd September

(c) CIL – 21st July 2020

(d) Environment – 3rd September

Noted. Members were also asked to note, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee and the Environment Committee both held on the 3rd September by the Former Locum Clerk had not yet been received

INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Clerk requested the Chairman review item 8. INSURANCE RENEWAL on the agenda before item 7. as that was one of the payments that featured on the list of bills for payment.

The Clerk had received the Insurance renewal, it was the same price as last year which had been budgeted for. Once the Asset Register had been fully updated the Clerk would forward this to the insurance company who would make any necessary amendments to the policy. The Chairman of Finance

& GP Committee requested Members to note page 5 of the schedule which listed specific items, some of which were inconsistent with what the Parish Council currently own. If Members had any comments regarding that, they should contact him and the Clerk within the next week. The matter would be addressed fully by himself, the Chairman and the Clerk. He advised the Clerk would need to look at other insurance providers for next year to see if there was better value for money.

00168 It was **RESOLVED** the Parish Council would renew their insurance policy

FINANCE

7.1. To authorise the bills for payment and sign the cheques

Cheque No.	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
101384	CANCELLED – Wealden District Council - bins			75.00	Wrong payee name
101387	Jackie Cottrell	878.60		878.60	Salary – August
101388	Jackie Cottrell	451.61	-	451.61	Salary – September
101389	HMRC	465.71		465.71	Payroll – July-Sep 2020
101390	Wealden District Council	62.50	12.50	75.00	Dog bins 1.7.2020-30.9.2020
101391	Jackie Cottrell			75.00	Cq 101384 wrong payee name. Clerk paid with credit card on the 21.7.2020
101392	BHIB-Insurance	520.51	62.46	582.97	Inv LCO00012-406291
101393	Zoom			43.17	Zoom June, July and August
101394	Jackie Cottrell			20.75	25 1 st class stamps
101395	Jackie Cottrell	3.00	0.60	3.60	Memory stick

The Chairman of Finance & GP Committee advised cheque 101384 for Wealden District Council was approved in June but classified as a direct debit which was incorrect. The cheque was then made out to the wrong payee name. The Clerk paid the bill with her personal debit card hence cheque 101391 to the Clerk to cover this cost. The Clerk's August salary needed approval retrospectively, as per the financial regulations and was significantly higher than normal due to the extra committee meetings which took place around that period and the extra work needed for the audit. The Clerk's hours were now back to 8 and would not be increased unless the Chairman of Finance or the Chairman of the Parish Council authorised that in advance.

Although the budget did significantly increase to encompass the costs associated with hiring a new Clerk, the Chairman advised we would be over budget on this item by the end of the year.

He asked Members to note cheque number 101390. The payee name should have read: Post Office.

The Chairman of Finance & GP would check back in the minutes last year to confirm if had been agreed to provide the Clerk with a debit card.

Lastly the cheque payee name for 101393 should have read Jackie Cottrell – this was the monthly payment to zoom which debited her personal card.

The Chairman of Finance & GP asked Members to note that we were still holding a deposit for £200 from the Horticultural Society. The event due in the Autumn had been cancelled. The Clerk would arrange to refund these funds.

00169 It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payments listed above

7.2. To note the finance reports, bank reconciliations and budget monitor

The Chairman of Finance & GP apologised for the lateness of the information sent. Bank reconciliations which were completed up until the end of June. This was due to the delay with establishing online banking and the Clerk not being sent paper copies of the statements. Now this is available the situation would rectify itself. They were only in draft format and still need to be discussed and verified with the Clerk. Regarding the Budget Monitor he was working on this with the Clerk. Up-to-date reconciliations would be produced shortly. He asked Members to note 4.8 from the financial regulations which required any material differences with the budget and actual expenditure of £100 or 15% to be reported. For the period from the 1st April -30th June, a laptop and printer which cost £754.96 was unbudgeted but approved. In total £597.01 payments were made to the Locum Clerk and there would be more to come. That was unbudgeted expense. In the quarter from April – June there was a £738.00 overspend due to salary and tax costs. The national salary award would result in £78 of back pay to the Clerk. Reserves were in the region of £13,000 but would reduce further with other expenditure. As a result of these figures the Finance Chairman would not support any further unbudgeted expenditure. A full detailed report would be sent to all Members shortly.

7.3. Internal Audit update

The Chairman of Finance & GP confirmed he had sent out a schedule of actions undertaken. The Parish Council are not behind with any items and he was comfortable all items were being addressed. There would be a full debate on the Asset Register in October.

7.4. To agree the Website Accessibility Statement

The Chairman of Finance confirmed by the 20th of September the website would comply with all the regulations and recommended acceptance of the statement which would be published on the website. He confirmed this would need to be reviewed annually.

00170 It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Website Accessibility Statement

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

9.1. To resolve committee membership changes

The Chairman apologized for not recognising that Cllr Iremonger was in fact a member of the Environment committee at the last meeting.

RISK REGISTER

10.1 To approve the updated Risk Register

The Chairman of Finance & GP stated the previous Risk Register was significantly out of date. The Former Locum Clerk had used the standard model and produced a draft for submission which he had also added to. This would be the first draft which would need to be reviewed. He recommended Members to note this draft and this would be then sent to the Finance & GP Committee to be reviewed in detail.

00171 It was **RESOLVED** that Members would note the draft Risk Register which would then be reviewed in detail at the next finance meeting for recommendation for acceptance at the next Full Council meeting.

WILD ABOUT WARBLETON GROUP UPDATE

The Chairman stated he would be grouping 11.1.-11.3. together as one item. He had recently chaired the first meeting of the Environment committee where Members listened to Wild About Warbleton's submissions. He requested all Members should attend the exhibition to give themselves a rounded view of the Wild About Warbleton's proposals and to decide if they wished to support them. As a result, he recommended no decisions would be made and the item should be deferred until the next Full Council meeting. He asked the Clerk to confirm if the Parish Council were the owners of The Green or Trustees. The Chairman clarified the group's proposals to Members.

UPDATE ON THE USE OF ZOOM FOR PARISH COUNCIL

It was **AGREED** to carry on with the use of zoom for Parish Council meetings.

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

The Chairman requested a discussion regarding the timings of the reports and documents which were being sent out ahead of meetings. He was concerned Members were not receiving them in good time especially Members who did not use a computer. He also requested an item regarding correspondence. He would like to discuss the possibility of a correspondence log. He noted data protection could pose issues but would like the Parish Council to be as transparent as possible.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th October at 7pm via zoom

The meeting closed at 9.17pm