

# WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the meeting of Warbleton Parish Council held on Thursday 26 October 2023 at Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green

1. **Attendance:** Councillors Andy Long (Chairman), Buster Ansell, Katy Whymark, Peter Sterling, Richard Whymark and Bob Bowdler. Jeanne Peterson (Clerk)

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors Charlie Saunders, Beverley Saunders, Chris Wells and Bruce Simpson.

**It was resolved** to accept the apologies as given

2. **Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1. Cllr Long declared a personal interest in item 10 and will leave the room during discussion

3. **Minutes**

- 3.1. **It was resolved** that subject to a correction in attendees – Katy & Richard Whymark were **not** present - the minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 September 2023, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
- 3.2. Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda:
  - i. The Chairman confirmed that arrangements were in hand for a plaque to commemorate Bryan Whitton's services to the Community.

4. **Public Participation**

One member of the public attended the meeting and raised the following points:

1. Concerns about the changes in control over the administration of the council given the number of newly elected members this year.
2. Following difficulties in the past the council had worked hard over the last 3-5 years to establish sound financial and operating controls but of recent it has been noticed that timely reporting had slipped:
  - i. The website is out of date with the latest minutes published in May 2023
  - ii. There are no budget or finance reports in the Finance section
  - iii. The agenda and meeting papers [current meeting] were published only just prior to the meeting
  - iv. There are inaccuracies in the Financial Regulations and the Standing Orders couldn't be found
  - v. Bank reconciliations were presented in an unusual way with the year start figure appearing at the top of the sheet instead of using the opening current bank balance
  - vi. Confirmation required of the current level of reserves and whether they are in keeping with audit recommendation
  - vii. There appears to be no evident plans for use of CIL funds this year

The Chairman stated that the new clerk will look into the financial reporting along with the other issues raised, and will report back.

## 5. Reports

- 5.1. **County Councillor Bob Chowdler:** The monthly report had been circulated. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is seriously over budget; 10.2 million from children's services alone due to increased costs principally for agency staff due to reducing numbers of foster carers. There is currently a recruitment drive to encourage people to become foster carers.
- A point was raised regarding Highways and the poor condition of roads. It appears, looking at comparative information, that East Sussex is one of the worst counties in the country for improvement programs and surface dressing. Warbleton Parish Council (WPC) is attempting to set up a Securing Local Relationships (SLR) meeting with Highways in order to address the council's concerns.
- 5.2. **District Councillor Greg Collins:** There are still issues about access to the Three Cups site with WDC Heritage & Planning trying to pursue the compulsory purchase order.
- The use of hydrogenated vegetable oil in council vehicles has reduced carbon output by 90% and does not require any modification to be made to the vehicles for its use. However, it does need to be imported from France as there are no facilities to produce it in the UK.
- Further work will be done on the Local Plan in the new year, in the meantime the New Council Strategy is on the WDC website. Heads of services are not expecting any dramatic changes in the 2024/2025 budget.
- Both District Councillors are jointly running a community forum.
- 5.3. **PCSO Catherine Gilling:** A written report had been circulated. Letters had been issued to residents where their parked vehicles had been causing a problem at the junction of Three Cups corner. It seems to have helped. Other items to note were a lorry fire during resurfacing on the A22 and a bus fire at Hellingly.
- Poachers in the area are being targeted by the Rural Crime Team. A councillor raised the issue that there had been a problem in not being able to get help during an incident after calling both 101 and 999.
- 5.4. **Parish Councillors:** There were no reports from parish councillors
- 5.5. **Parish Clerk:** A written report had been circulated and there were no questions. There was a correction to be made on the note about a vacancy which should have stated councillor vacancy not clerk.

## 6. Committee reports

- 6.1. The proceedings of the following committee meeting was noted:
- i. Planning & Development – 3.10.23 draft minutes had been circulated and subsequently approved at the 14 October 2023 Planning Committee meeting.
- 6.2 Staffing Committee – This item was deferred until the next meeting.
- 6.3. It was noted that Cllr Beverley Saunders now represents the council at the Dunn Village Hall Committee and Peter Sterling will represent the council at Bodle Street Village Hall Committee. These positions will help the continuation of positive reciprocal communications between the council and local groups.

## 7. Finance

- 7.1. The bills paid under the delegated authority to the clerk were noted (payment list as circulated)
- 7.2 **It was resolved** to authorise the latest month's bills for payment (payment list as circulated)

7.4. The election expenses statement had now been received reporting a cost of £1035 which frees up previously held grant funds. The council can now consider at its next meeting the re-introduction of Grant Funding, collate its beneficiary list and update grant application forms.

7.5 The draft annual precept budget 2024/2025 will be presented at the November council meeting. Councillors were invited to but did not put forward any specific suggestions apart from potential beneficiaries to the grant scheme.

## **8. Parish maintenance**

8.1 Rushlake Green village notice board – An alternative to the costly replacement of the notice board was discussed. There is a possible option to use the Village Store board which would increase exposure of council information to local residents. Members supported this idea and the related logistics and costs will be reported at the next meeting for consideration.

8.2 Finger posts update:

- i. Report update on general check of all posts – not available
- ii. It was noted that match funding by ESCC has now been agreed and the clerk is making the necessary arrangements for payment
- iii. Repairs have now been completed to posts at Church Hill Lane & Rookery Lane

8.3 Kissing Gate, Rushlake Green – Councillors attended an on site meeting with a contractor to agree specifications and the quote is awaited.

8.4 Grass cutting – **It was resolved** that WPC commission the standard option for two urban cuts in the year at no cost to the council.

## **9. Booking for Rushlake Green**

9.1 **It was resolved** to agree the Rude Mechanicals' request to book the use of Rushlake Green on Sunday 23 June 2024. The green is common land so no charge is made for its use, but the council requires evidence that all events will be properly managed and a returnable deposit is charged to applicants to cover any consequential costs. The clerk was asked to circulate booking information so that all members are aware of the process.

A retrospective request had been received to display posters at Rushlake Green. The clerk was asked to let the applicant know that it was alright this time but that in future the council wants to know beforehand.

**10. Assets of Community Value (ACV) Applications** – this item was deferred until the vice-chairman is present to preside over the discussion (see minute item 2.1).

## **11. Speed Roundels in Rushlake Green**

It was noted that ESCC has been informed of the council's decision, not to go ahead with speed roundels in the village.

## **12. Speed Watch**

The clerk was asked to extend an invitation to the Rushlake Green Speed Watch Representative to attend a meeting of the council to report back on their data collection, and to agree on Speed Watch arrangements going forward.

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

**14. Date of next meeting** – 23 November 2023 Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green 7pm