

Minutes of a meeting of **WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL** held on Thursday 16th March at 7pm at the Dunn village hall

PRESENT: Councillors A Long (Chairman), Graham, Wells, Iremonger and Williamson

Also present: Jackie Cottrell – Parish Clerk
1 member of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Simpson – work commitments
Cllr Ansell – family bereavement
Cllr Saunders – family commitments

00627 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Long -Prejudicial Interest item 9.2.ACV-Horse & Groom pub
Cllr Graham – Personal Interest item 9.2.ACV-Horse & Groom pub

MINUTES

To **resolve** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 12th January and the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on the 9th February 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

00628 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12th January and the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on the 9th February 2023

Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda
None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The owner of the Horse & Groom pub spoke regarding item 9.2. stating he would be disappointed if the parish council decided to go ahead and begin the process of listing the pub as an ACV. He confirmed that neither himself or his partner had any intention of selling the business or the property in the future clarifying they had invested a significant sum into bringing the pub back to its best.

He also stated they were no problems with leaving the flagpole in its original position.

The Member of public left the meeting at 19.03.

REPORTS

5.1. To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Note

A councillor noted his disappointment with the lack of provision of WDC reports.

5.2. To receive reports from PCSO Catherine Gilling

None. The Clerk was instructed to write as a matter of urgency to PCSO Cathy Gilling to note the parish council's disappointment at the lack of police presence at council meetings.

5.3. To receive reports from Parish Councillors

None

5.4. To receive reports from the Parish Clerk

Noted.

The Clerk was instructed to clarify at the upcoming SLR meeting which roads were classed as single-track roads in the parish.

The Chairman confirmed to the Clerk that he would be attaching the plaques from the old benches which had been removed from The Green and reattaching them to the new benches.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

- (a) Finance & General Purposes – 1st December 2022
- (b) Environment – 26th January 2023
- (c) Planning & Development – 31st January 2023
- (d) Planning & Development – 21st February 2023
- (e) Environment – 2nd March 2023
- (f) Planning & Development – 14th March 2023

The Clerk confirmed the minutes from the 21st February, 2nd March and the 14th March would be circulated shortly.

OSBORNE HOUSE CAR PARK – Resolution required 7.1, 7.2. & 7.3.

7.1. To agree the increased invoice amount for the repair work to Osborne House car park

The Chairman read out a pre-written statement from the Clerk:

“Whilst I appreciate with this project a quick decision was imperative and as a part-time Clerk working for 3 different councils, I am not always available.

But by agreeing to proceed with additional costs attached without the approval of the Full Council, section 10.4 of the Financial Regulations has been breached.

Moving forward there will need to be a procedure in place to prevent this happening again.

It is my recommendation and that of Trevor Leggo, who I have sought independent advice from, that the council’s Financial Recommendations need to be amended to allow the Clerk higher delegated authority alongside the approval from the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Chairman of F&GP in emergency situations.

Trevor Leggo has also advised that it would not be necessary for the councillors involved to declare a prejudicial interest in this item.”

The Chairman stated that although test holes had been dug, the contractor had found an area of the car park where the base was softer which needed additional work as a

result. An emergency site meeting was held which himself and Cllr Wells attended. The Clerk had not been contactable. Due to nature of the repair work a decision was made to go ahead with the additional works required to complete the job. He asked Members to note the Council's previous resolution which had stated:

"The Council agreed payments could be made in line with the quotation and any contractual obligations."

He agreed with the Clerk's recommendation that a procedure would need to be put in place to protect the Council going forward.

The Clerk was instructed to include an item on the next council agenda to review the council's Financial Regulations.

The Chairman of F&GP understood the difficulty of the position of the two councillors who had attended the site visit. However, he reiterated the importance of the council's Financial Regulations which served to protect the council and the individual councillors.

He reiterated that no individual councillor has the authority to the commit the council to any expenditure.

He suggested the council should be cautious with how the Financial Regulations are reviewed and that there should always be limits regarding delegated authority for the Clerk. Regulation 10.4 was very clear and a breach had occurred.

The Chairman of the council suggested a future resolution for agreed works could build in a contingency budget but he agreed any changes to the proposed price must go through the Proper Officer. He asked Members to note on this occasion best endeavours were made.

The Council considered the invoice.

00629 RESOLVED to agree the increased invoice amount for the repair work to Osborne House car park. The invoice totalled £20,991.60.

7.2. To consider re-painting the yellow ambulance parking space outside Osborne House

7.3. To consider providing a disabled parking space

The Council considered both items together. It was noted that the ambulance space had been painted on by the previous caretaker of Osborne House. A detailed discussion took place regarding the advantages of each item.

It was AGREED neither painted space could be policed and only hope value could be attached. The Housing Association had got the option of adding an ambulance space on the land that they owned. It was noted there would be an ongoing maintenance cost attached to any painted space.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would add the delineation lines to the SLR agenda regarding the pavement at the bottom of the car park.

It was AGREED no action would be taken by the council with either item.

8. FINANCE - Resolution required 8.2.,8.9 & 8.9.1.

8.1. To note bills that have been paid under the delegated authority to the Clerk (see report below)

Noted

Cheque No/BAC S No	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
85	Jackie Cottrell				Clerk salary February 2023
86	Jackie Cottrell	9.99		9.99	Printing costs 18.12.22 – 17.1.2023
87	Jackie Cottrell	12.83	2.57	15.40	12 first class stamps
88	Jackie Cottrell	28.32	5.67	33.99	Shredder
89	James Todd & Co	20.00	4.00	24.00	January payroll fee
90	Twaites & Reed Engineering Ltd	1244.00	248.80	1492.80	Osborne House Clock Service
91	Jackie Cottrell	57.00	8.99	65.99	Plaque for the Queens Green Canopy
92	Jackie Cottrell	35.00		35.00	ICO Renewal

8.2. To authorize the bills for payment (see report below)

Cheque No/BAC S No	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
93	Jackie Cottrell				Clerk salary March 2023
94	HMRC				HMRC

95	James Todd & Co	20.00	4.00	24.00	February payroll fee
96	Nicholls Bros (Sussex) Ltd	17,493	3,498.60	20,991.60	Osborne House car park re-surface
97	Wealden District Council	65.00	13.00	78.00	Dog bin emptying charges 1.1.23-31.3.23
98	Jackie Cottrell	167.40		167.40	Mileage 18.7.22 – 16.3.23
99	Jackie Cottrell	27.49	5.50	32.99	2500 sheets of white paper
100	Image Matters	30.00	6.00	36.00	Defibrillator signage
101	Broxap	1617.00	323.40	1940.40	Two new benches for Rushlake Green
102	Jackie Cottrell	9.99		9.99	Printing costs Inv106030 8747 18.1.23-17.2.23

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00630 It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payments listed above.

8.3. To note the Finance Reports, bank reconciliation and budget monitor for December, January and February 2023

Noted. The bank reconciliation and budget monitor for February had not yet been circulated.

8.4. To note the projected end of year expenditure verses budget for 2022/23

The Chairman of F&GP had circulated the above reports which the Clerk had not yet checked. The March invoices had been included in the figures. He referred to his report which stated the end of year projected spend was £21,727. The projected budget had been £21,615.67. The projected spend was lower than predicted in January due to lower HMRC charges, no expenditure on flower beds and delays in completing the

Land Registry change of address details. The projection does include £2,500 which subject to the council approval would be transferred to ear marked reserves.

The CIL balance was approximately £10,000.

8.5. To note the date for the parish council internal audit

Keith Robertson would conduct the Internal Audit on Friday 21st April. The time to be confirmed. Noted.

8.6. To note the payroll cost increase from 1st April 2023

There had been a 10% increase in payroll costs. Noted.

8.7. To note the one off set up fee for the Clerk pension

There had been a £60 one off set up fee for the Clerk pension. Noted.

8.8. To note the monthly payroll cost for processing the Clerk/Council pension contributions

The charge would be approximately £4 a month. Noted.

8.9. To agree the parish council pension contribution

The Clerk clarified the options to the Council.

00631 It was **RESOLVED** the Council's pension contribution would be 3% on total earnings.

8.9.1 To agree a virement for unspent election and environment budgets

The Chairman of F&GP clarified the unspent funds from this year's budget were:

- Election Expenses - £500
- Maintenance - £2,000

00632 RESOLVED to approve the above virements.

8.9.2. To receive and note the projected Council general reserves as at 31.3.2023

The Chairman of F&GP referred to the spreadsheet which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The projected general reserve level would be £9,800 at the end of the financial year. Once the council had received the VAT refund for the car park expenditure the general reserves would increase to £14,700. This amounted to an overall decrease of £1000 from the previous year.

8.9.3. To receive and note the projected Council ear marked reserves as at 31.3.2023

Noted.

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE – Resolution 9.2. & 9.3.

00633 RESOLVED Cllr Williamson to chair item 9.

Cllr Long left the meeting at 7.54pm.

9.1. To note the process of listing an Asset of Community Value

Noted.

9.2. To agree to list the Horse & Groom pub as an ACV

A discussion took place. It was noted the pub had been thriving since it's re-opening. It was **AGREED** to defer the item to a future council meeting after the elections when a new council would be in place and to allow wider discussion with the community. The possibility of a public meeting was discussed.

Cllr Long re-entered the meeting at 8.04pm.

9.3. To agree to list the White Horse pub as an ACV on its expiry in August 2023

A discussion took place. It was noted the pub had had a successful re-opening. The new landlords were tenants of the freehold. An ACV would ensure a degree of protection for the village.

00634 RESOLVED to renew the ACV on the White Horse Pub on its expiry.

9.4. To recommend a time frame for the Clerk to complete any necessary work

It was agreed the application should be submitted as soon as practically possible once the existing ACV had expired.

TO AGREE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE WALNUT TREE PLANTED FOR THE QUEENS GREEN CANOPY

Cllr Long informed the Council that a local lady had agreed to maintain the Walnut tree. The Clerk was instructed to email her the care instructions.

BOOKING FOR RUSHLAKE GREEN – Resolution required 11.1.

11.1. To review and agree The Warbleton & District Horticultural & Poultry Society request to book The Green on Saturday 29th July 2023

It was noted time was required either side of the event for setting up and dismantling of equipment.

00635 RESOLVED the booking date requested.

STATEMENT OF THANKS FOR COUNCILLIORS

The Chairman of the Council gave a speech thanking the Councillors for all their hard work over the last four years. He asked Members to note the vast changes that had been made during that time and that the council had moved on leaps and bounds.

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

The Chairman instructed the Clerk to add benches to the next meeting agenda and to consider the possibility of a plaque for Brian Whitton who had been a long-term parish councillor.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

ASM - Thursday 18th May 2023, Bodle Street Green Village Hall at 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 8.13pm