

Minutes of a meeting of **WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL** held on Thursday 19th November 2020 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, Keith Graham, Roy Iremonger and Celia Davies

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

00207 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

MINUTES

To **resolve** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th October 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

00208 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th October 2020. The Clerk to clarify 5.3.3. to state Chris Wells was unable to continue as a signatory for internet banking and to amend minute number 00194 to read the Parish Council agreed to pay the **installation** costs of the bench

Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda - None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public representing the Village Leaf requested information on the timescale of the Parish Council's review of the grant application process. He suggested several possible improvements that could be made. Firstly, that grants approved would be less dependent on historical decisions previously made which favoured larger charities who could more easily fit the qualification criteria and secondly there would be potential to set aside funds for ad-hoc grants throughout the year.

The Chairman of F&GP Committee confirmed the review had commenced. The Parish Council would offer more flexibility but generally would not support on-going costs. More discussion would be taking place in December or January and the new process would be in place for 12 months' time.

A spokesperson for Wild About Warbleton urged the Parish Council to pass the resolution for item 14 on the agenda in order for East Sussex County Council to be informed of the Parish Council's support for the 5 proposed routes. She requested clarification on how the consultation process would work.

The group had previously requested a meeting date for a site visit of Rushlake Green Village Green once their detailed survey had been carried out. Several dates were suggested to Members. Details of the existing cutting contract would be needed.

The Chairman stated these items would be addressed later on the agenda. A third member of the public spoke. He suggested that perhaps Parish, District and County Councils should be setting money aside for funding local projects which might not happen as a result of the huge pressures on public finances since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Chairman noted these comments.

REPORTS

5.1. To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Wealden District Councillor Bob Bowdler stated the principle of large unitary Councils was being discussed by central Government at the moment.

The South Downs National Park would be holding a presentation in November on YouTube which would be open to everyone. They had very recently purchased the rights to the Cuckmere Haven.

The County and District councils had petitioned central government to continue with virtual meetings after the legislation ends in May and to also be able to hold hybrid meetings.

Wealden District Council's consultation on the new Local Plan would be ending in the middle of January.

5.2. To receive reports from the Parish Councillors

Cllr Velten reported Bodle Street Green village hall had purchased a new bollard for the third time.

No other Councillors had anything to add to any of the reports already distributed to Members prior to the meeting.

5.2.1. The remote Wealden Parish Conference

Cllr Smythe verbally updated Members on important items from the conference. He suggested the Clerk contact Warbleton's PSCO and to investigate the Community Safety Action Group in Heathfield. The SHELAA map was now in the public domain and one of the sites for possible development was situated in Rushlake Green. CIL would be replaced with IL. Cllr Iremonger reiterated that the local PCSO would be able to report or attend future Parish Council meetings. The Clerk confirmed she would investigate this.

5.2.1 To receive reports from the Parish Clerk

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

She verbally updated Members with new information. She had received a quote from Highways for the installation of the David Bysouth bench which was for £750 plus VAT considerably higher than budgeted for. She was waiting for two other quotes from private contractors. This item would potentially have to be re-presented at a future CIL meeting.

The Clerk would be arranging an advisory meeting with Highways at the location of the Bodle Street Gates to discuss the potential costs of installation.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

- (a) CIL – 29th September
- (b) Finance & General Purposes – 12th October
- (c) Planning & Development – 15th October
- (d) Planning & Development – 29th October
- (e) Planning & Development – 12th November

Noted. Members were also asked to note, the minutes of the Planning & Development meeting held on the 12th November had not yet been received.

FINANCE

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

Cheque No.	Payee	£	VAT	£ Total	Purpose
	SSALC		6.00	36.00	Introduction to Planning webinar
	Keith Robertson			264.00	Internal Audit
	Jackie Cottrell			14.39	Zoom subscription
	WDALC			22.00	Annual subscription to March 2021
	Jackie Cottrell			549.22	Clerk Salary November

The Chairman of F&GP Committee asked Members to note the payment to the Internal Auditor was higher than budgeted for but this was due to the extra work that was required this year.

00209 It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payments listed above

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

The Clerk had completed the bank reconciliation which had been confirmed as correct by the Chairman of F&GP. The budget monitor would be circulated the following day. The Financial Regulations state the budget monitor should be completed quarterly but the Parish Council produced this monthly and it would be available to review on the website.

The Chairman of F&GP stated the Parish Council had responded to questions from the External Auditor and these had been circulated to all Members. The Clerk confirmed Section 3 of the AGAR would be returned shortly from PKF Littlejohn. The Chairman requested our response be available on the website.

The expiry date for grant applications would be 30th November. All previous applicants from last year had been written to. No further grants would be awarded without an application so the process would be simplified. Before grants were paid for this year successful applicants, they had been asked to submit the relevant invoices to demonstrate that the funds had been spent.

The Chairman of F&GP asked Members to note the Clerk had received a request from St John's Church Bodle Street Green for remedial work to the war memorial, which the Parish Council has responsibility for. External grants were available but details of these were not known at that point.

8. COUNCIL YEAR 2021

8.1. The Planning & Development Committee recommend Full Council agree to hold planning meetings every 3 weeks for a trial period. The length of trial period to be agreed

The Chairman of the Planning & Development Committee stated that the above had been agreed at the recent meeting and was a recommendation to Full Council. He also suggested that meetings would be held on a Tuesday to avoid clashing with the Full Council meetings.

A brief discussion took place.

- 00210** It was **RESOLVED** to hold Planning & Development meetings every 3 weeks on a Tuesday for a trial period of 3 months with a review at the April Full Council meeting.

8.2. To agree the dates for the CIL Committee

The Chairman of CIL referred to the correspondence that all CIL members had received regarding the structure and timings of the meetings in 2021. She confirmed no comments had been received.

- 00211** It was **RESOVLED** to hold a meeting on a monthly basis in January, February and March. Following on from this period, future meetings would be held bi-monthly. Dates to be confirmed.

8.3. To note the dates of the F&GP meetings

The Chairman of F&GP stated the committee would meet quarterly. Dates to be confirmed

FOCUS CLUSTER GROUP

9.1. To discuss the option of a Councillor volunteering for the Focus Cluster Group. This group had been set up to work with Wealden District Council regarding the development of the new Local Plan

The Chairman requested a Member to volunteer for the group.

- 00212** It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Smythe would represent the Parish Council at the Focus Cluster Group

WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL DEBIT/CREDIT CARD

10.1 To consider the cost and risk implications of the parish council having a credit or debit card

The Clerk briefly introduced the topic. She stated it would be easier for the Parish Council to claim back VAT. Cllr Velten highlighted licences needed to be paid for with a credit card. The Chairman of F&GP disagreed with the idea of a credit card due to the risk implications with only a monthly statement. The debit card had less risk implications; effectively it would mean that the Council was borrowing money, with only a monthly statement. The debit card had less risk implications as all Councillors on the bank mandate could regularly check the bank balance. He confirmed that the items that VAT would be claimed back for were of very small value and not worth the associated risks attached. Further discussions followed.

The Chairman deferred this item until the Clerk could confirm with ESCC Highways whether it was possible to pay licences by BACS rather than a credit card.

ASSET REGISTER

11.1 To agree the Clerks adjustments and to adopt the Asset Register

The Clerk confirmed she had made the necessary adjustments and had circulated the amended Asset Register to all Members several weeks earlier. She had received no comments.

00213 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Asset Register

BODLE STREET GREEN NOTICE BOARD

The Clerk explained after visiting the notice board and confirming its poor state of disrepair, she had spoken to the CIL Chairman and asked permission to take the item straight to Full Council to agree the licence costs as the next CIL meeting was not until January.

The Chairman of the Parish Council questioned the need to move the notice board to a new location and the potential extra costs associated with that decision. The Clerk and Cllr Velten were in agreement the existing location was difficult to reach on foot, there was no pavement or regular footfall.

00214 It was **RESOLVED** that CIL funds would be used to pay the Section 115 licence £57.20 and the Section 171 licence £380

FLYER DISTRIBUTION COSTS

The Clerk confirmed the proprietor of the Rushlake Green Village Stores had contacted her and offered to share distribution costs if he could also distribute a leaflet of his own promoting his shop. The distribution company had sent a new cheaper quote meaning that that the Parish Council would have to agree to pay an extra £81.15 in distribution costs for the flyer to go ahead. The Chairman of CIL added the flyer is ready to go, after the relevant date changes and she recommended the flyer should go ahead. The Chairman of F&GP supported the flyer.

- 00215** It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council agreed to pay the additional £81.15 costs for the distribution of the flyer. Cllr Wells, Powell and Cook abstained from voting.

WILD ABOUT WARBLETON

The Chairman asked Members to note this item had been agreed in principle at the last Full Council meeting. Extra time had been given for Councillors to attend the exhibition and for the Clerk to note any further correspondence from the public. The Chairman confirmed any support from the Parish Council should be subject to a management scheme in place which would not allow areas to be neglected or become overgrown. A discussion amongst Councillors followed. Several Councillors expressed concern that existing wildflower verges were not being managed and feared the Parish Council have to cover these costs in the future.

- 00216** It was **RESOLVED** to support the Wild About Warbleton's five proposed new routes for conservation adoption subject to there being no adverse Highways safety issues or concerns with the same principle applied to any properties situated along those particular verges regarding their sightlines. Also, on the condition East Sussex County Council have a management scheme in place and will not neglect these verges. Cllr Smythe abstained from voting, Cllr Wells and Cllr Powell voted against the resolution.

TO MOVE UNRESERVED ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

The Chairman explained how the process would work. At the beginning of the meeting all the items on the agenda that required a resolution, unless reserved by a Councillor at the beginning of the meeting or prior to the meeting, would be resolved on mass. The Chairman clarified this would only be possible for items that all Councillors would be voting yes for. The Clerk would check the legalities of the idea and ensure the Standing Orders supported the process.

- 00217** It was **RESOLVED** that unreserved items would be resolved in a block format unless reserved by a Councillor prior to or at the meeting and subject to the Clerk's confirmation that the process was correct and legal and the Parish Council's Standing Orders supported the process

UPDATE ON THE USE OF ZOOM FOR PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Zoom meetings would continue but It was agreed the Parish Clerk would provisionally book the village halls from the beginning of February to be mindful of changing circumstances.

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

The Chairman informed the Clerk to add the Clock in Rushlake Green as an item for the next Full Council meeting at the request of Cllr Wells.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Full Council meeting would be held on the 14th January 2021

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- 00218** **RESOLVED** at 8.38pm to exclude the press, public on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential staffing nature of the business to be transacted.

PARISH CLERK CONTRACT AND STAFF RELATED ISSUES

To review and agree to resolve policies and procedures relating to the contract of employment for the Parish Clerk

20.1. Warbleton Parish Council sickness policy

20.2. Warbleton Parish Council performance management policy

20.3. Warbleton Parish Council travel and expenses policy

The Chairman of F&GP confirmed the above policies were the last in relation to the policies regarding the Clerk's contract.

- 00219** It was **RESOVLED** to adopt the above policies

The meeting closed 8.40pm