

Minutes of the **WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held on 13th
November 2017 at 7.30pm in The Old Station, Groombridge

PRESENT Cllrs Robin Ashby, Nick Anderson, Mrs Gwen Butcher, Mrs Jane Clare, Andrew Fane, Mrs Anne Jenkins, Mrs Diana Kelly (Chairman), Jonathan Kelly, Keith Obbard, Mrs Jill Pardey, Marcus Tarling, Stephen Whittaker

In attendance: Debbie Siddle – Parish Clerk
County Cllr Francis Whetstone – ESCC (to end item 11)
District Cllr William Rutherford – WDC (to end item 8)
Linsey Winter (prospective councillor)
Trevor Wells – Southern Railway Parishes (to end item 7)

Members of the public are encouraged to come to the meetings and there is a 10 minute opportunity at the start of the meeting for them to address the Council. There were no members of the public present for this part.

1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING: None

2. APOLOGIES: None

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Cllr Obbard for item 9 as he is employed at Groombridge Place. Cllr Jenkins for 18.3 as she is a Trustee of Groombridge Village Hall.

4. MINUTES

4.1. To resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 9th October 2017 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

001321 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2017 were approved.

4.2. Matters outstanding from these minutes (not listed as separate agenda items)

Matters resolved from previous minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 1252	Cllr J Kelly	Confirmed that he and a resident will maintain the phone box at Balls Green.
Pg. 1360	Clerk	New keys cut for Balls Green and Withyham noticeboards
Pg. 1383	Cllr Whittaker/ Clerks	Display boards produced for councillors at Community Café
Pg. 1444	Clerks	Notices displayed at car park to say that any untaxed vehicles are being reported
Pg. 1445	Clerk	Confirmed that area where mud is problematic at St Johns is a Right of Way and reported

Pg. 1450	WPV/ F&A	hedge works at Balls Green deferred (Agenda item 8c), other works to be continued in spring
Pg. 1454	Assistant Clerk	Information from Noise Management Board was on the Air Traffic Committee agenda
001309	Clerks	Aviation strategy response paper submitted
Pg. 1471	Assistant Clerk	Preferred style of signage for Cherry Gardens Hill agreed
Pg. 1471	Councillors	Public meeting on Thursday 12 th October 'Taking a Stand Against Scams' diarised
001311	Clerk	Process in place to fund the GYP coordinator for the remainder of the 2017/18 financial year
Pg. 1472	Clerk	Work underway with ESCC Rights of Way to clarify Missing Link field options and costs
001313	Clerk	Grant of £2,000 made to St Thomas' Church towards the replacement organ and works to the vestry

Actions outstanding from previous minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg.1002	Clerk	Pursue action regarding the list of drains requiring attention – Clerk to request list from Cllr W, compare to our list then take to SLR as a standing item/report to Council
Pg. 1102	Cllrs Obbard and Clare	Identify where environmental improvements can be made in the office
Pg. 1251	Cllr Anderson	Identify someone suitable as NHW coordinator for lower part of Corseley Road
Pg. 1360	Cllr Jenkins	Follow up possibilities for WPV storage in Finance and Administration Committee
001222	Clerk	Grant £2,000 to the Groombridge Scouts for a container on the Cricket Club land, to be paid once RNT permission in place
Pg. 1382	Clerk	Check the Tesco grant application to ensure that all items listed for Balls Green had been considered
Pg. 1383	Assistant Clerk	Advertise new badminton club in newsletter
Pg. 1445	Cllr Whetstone	Lobby for Mardens Hill resurfacing
Pg. 1445	Assistant Clerk	Invite Liam Reilly from ESCC to the next SLR meeting to discuss poor quality of work
Pg. 1445	Cllr Ashby	Ask the tenant at A264/Ironchurch Lane corner to cut hedge back
Pg. 1450	Cllr Anderson	Carry out further research on pollution testing tubes
001296	Clerk	Make grant to Withyham Kings Hall for internal redecoration, to be paid on receipt of a copy of a complete invoice
Pg. 1465	Cllr D Kelly	Report to RSC on proposal by resident for a 20mph limit outside The Nook surgery

Pg. 1472	Assistant Clerk	Newsletter to carry before and after pictures of Balls Green
Pg. 1472	Assistant Clerk	Advertise for a portable outdoor table tennis table for GYP
Pg. 1472	Cllr Anderson	Put a request for Speedwatch volunteers on the Next Door Groombridge site
Pg. 1475	Clerk	Future agenda to include Car air pollution

Actions from these Minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 1489	Assistant Clerk	Circulate details of bins scam
Pg. 1490	Clerk	Permission to be granted to St Thomas' Church, Groombridge to hold a classic car event at Groombridge Recreation Ground on 1 July 2018
001325	Clerk	Give permission to Groombridge WI to maintain the telephone box at The Victoria, to be evaluated after three years
Pg. 1490	Clerks	Report to ESCC that road signs at the bottom of Friars Gate and the Sussex Oak have been damaged
Pg. 1490	Cllr Obbard	Attend to Hoadleys Lane grit bin
Pg. 1490	Councillors	Expressions of interest to work on a parish welcome pack to Clerk please
Pg. 1490	Clerk	Confirm with Balls Green resident a date for a site visit and whether they would like some holly saplings to be planted
Pg. 1491	Cllr J Kelly	Notify resident that Ashdown Forest Conservators maintains a map of where defibrillators are located
Pg. 1491	Cllr J Kelly	Investigate costings of street renaming
Pg. 1491	Cllr J Kelly	Update the Assistant Clerk on pot holes filled on Beech Green Lane
Pg. 1491	Cllr Fane	Draft response to library consultation
Pg. 1492	Cllr Anderson	Provide his Neighbourhood Watch updates to the Clerks each week for circulation on the Friday briefing
Pg. 1492	Councillors	All encouraged to join their Next Door area
001326	Clerk	Confirm to Forest Row wish to share their Community Warden for 4 hours a week from December
Pg. 1492	Clerks	Ensure that the warden's details are on the website, newsletter and noticeboards
Pg. 1493	Cllr Tarling and Cllr Pardey	Draft a response to WD/2017/1817/MAJ to be agreed by Councillors on email
Pg. 1493	Cllr Whittaker	Draft a response to the High Weald questionnaire for the January meeting
Pg. 1495	Cllr Butcher	Attend the Groombridge Village Hall AGM to ask whether they would install a screen

Pg. 1495	Cllr Anderson	Return to Council with further AV costings
Pg. 1495	Assistant Clerk	Circulate notes from the SALC Planning Update
Pg. 1496	Councillors	Review unsung helpers list for any additions
Pg. 1496	Clerk/Chair	Arrange for WPC to lay a wreath in the parish on Remembrance Sunday in 2018

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the following minutes of committees and to approve and confirm recommendations contained therein and as far as requisite, the action taken by them.

5.1 Planning – 31st October 2017

001322 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee of 31st October 2017

5.2 Air Traffic Committee – 25th July 2017

001323 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Air Traffic Committee of 25th July 2017

5.3 Rights of Way Committee – 24th July 2017

001324 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Rights of Way Committee of 24 July 2017

To receive the following draft minutes of committees and to note recommendations contained therein and as far as requisite, the action taken by them.

5.4 Air Traffic Committee – 30th October 2017

Noted, Chair of Committee to notify some corrections.

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT and COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Cllr Whetstone explained that the ESCC Whole Council Forum would be meeting on 14 November to discuss the 2018/19 budget. Except for dangerous sites, rural grass cutting is likely to cease as ESCC cannot afford to continue it. He explained that it is anticipated that in a few years the Social Services requirements are likely to absorb all ESCC's income.

Cllr Whetstone was asked why some ESCC Officers are paid high salaries when services are being cut and he explained that overall the salary bill is considerably lower than a couple of years ago. Cllr Whetstone voiced frustration at the system for contractors quoting for work every four years, with lowest quotes often being received and accepted from contractors who do not understand the work involved and then into contract are unable to deliver on the money agreed. Withyham Parish Council shares Cllr Whetstone's frustrations and is concerned about the implications for safety and for town and parish councils.

Following an email from a resident, Cllr Whetstone has inspected the layby and access to Gillridge Lane. There are many potholes, and he has asked the Highways Steward to prioritise those in front of the access to the lane.

The ESCC campaign 'Get a Grip' to encourage better school attendance has raised complaints and will likely be debated in due course. ESCC

schools have lower attendance and success rates than many other comparable councils and it feels that it needs to do something to raise skills in the county.

A campaign has been presented to ESCC to remove companies such as Shell and BP from the Pensions portfolio based on fossil fuels being a risky investment, however Cllr Whetstone feels reassured that the Fund is well run.

District Councillor Rutherford outlined that Wealden District Council has published its Housing Strategy 2017-20. Due to low salaries in Wealden, it focusses on smaller housing such as continuing with plans for council housing, provision of lower cost housing from the private sector, and 21 additional traveller pitches.

Work has started on the new crematorium at Horam, which is expected to be operational at the end of 2018 and will provide 1200 spaces a year.

Wealden is aware of people pretending to be WDC employees and trying to charge residents for having an overweight bin. WDC will never issue on the spot fines. Withyham Parish Council will circulate details of this scam as part of its Action Against Scams work.

7. UPDATE FROM SOUTHERN RAILWAY PARISHES

Trevor Wells reported from Southern Railway Parishes.

- Strikes appear to be reaching resolution with the offer of a pay increase. Whilst Southern Rail is the stakeholder, the Government pays them to run the service for them.
- Along the Hurst Green to Uckfield line, every parish council is represented as well as District and County Councillors and MP involvement.
- Over the last 11 years passenger numbers have doubled on the line but Government investment has not increased to address this.
- An Uckfield to Brighton line is seen as a missing link, to allow a second line to Brighton. The Gib report headline was that this line should not be reopened, but there were also persuasive arguments within the report for that to happen
- A programme of modernisation of stations is in the pipeline along with electrification of the current line and a depot at Crowborough which would bring employment for cleaning and servicing of trains overnight.
- There is an issue with disabled access at several stations along the line and whilst there is a programme for installation of lifts at these station, it is unclear when money will be available for the works to start
- An international consortium has been found who have produced an initial strategy on revamping the line and are now going to full costings
- Further information can be found on www.wealdenline.org.uk

- Dualling on the Cowden line was also considered in the Gib report; reinstating older infrastructure would be very expensive and hard to do

Trevor Wells was thanked for making this presentation, and asked to return to a future meeting when he has further updates. Councillors AGREED that Trevor Wells should continue to be the Withyham Parish Council representative on the Southern Railway Parishes group.

Mr Wells left the meeting.

8. WARD REPORTS

(a) Groombridge Ward (to include a request for an event at Groombridge Recreation Ground)

Permission had been requested by St Thomas' Church, Groombridge to hold a classic car event at Groombridge Recreation Ground on 1 July 2018. This was AGREED.

Groombridge WI has asked to maintain the telephone box at The Victoria once Withyham Parish Council has adopted it, and have presented some interesting ideas.

001325 RESOLVED that Groombridge WI should be given permission to maintain the telephone box at The Victoria, to be evaluated after three years. Council noted that it is in the progress of adopting the telephone box at Balls Green, and already has adopted the one at The Ridge, which the Residents Association maintains.

(b) St John's Ward

Since the retiming of the lights the traffic queues have improved but there was a serious accident there. Karl Taylor has confirmed that the remarking is to be done.

Whilst undertaking a survey of grit bins, Cllr Obbard noticed that road signs and the grit bin at the bottom of Friars Gate have been damaged. The road sign at the Sussex Oak is also damaged. The Clerk was asked to report this to ESCC.

(c) Withyham/Blackham Ward

The grit bin at the bottom of Hoadleys Lane needs drainage and digging out and the front.

Some younger families have moved to School Lane, and there was a street get together on bonfire night. Councillors agreed that a parish welcome pack is needed, and Cllr D Kelly would work with another Councillor to compile this.

Following a complaint from a resident about their boundary hedge being cut on the Balls Green Community Space side, Cllrs D Kelly, J Kelly, Jenkins and Obbard met with the residents. The Clerk took notes. It was agreed that Withyham Parish Council and its volunteers will not cut the hedge back any further and that there will be a site visit now as well as in the spring to assess it. In the mean time the residents have agreed to cut it to the same height as their neighbours'. The Parish Council is concerned

about the level of shade cast by the hedge, which is preventing grass seed from growing in the community area but recognises the need to balance this with the residents' concerns about their privacy. The Clerk awaits a date for a site visit and confirmation of whether the residents would like some holly saplings to be planted.

It was agreed that the Community Area at Balls Green is looking really good. Phase two will commence in the spring with installation of a shelter, picnic benches and signage. Communications with neighbouring residents will be a priority.

Cllr J Kelly asked whether a defibrillator could be placed in the phone box at Balls Green and was advised that this would need to be considered with Council along with any other ideas. Blackham Court has installed one and is keen to run a training session. Cllr Obbard believes that Ashdown Forest Conservators maintains a map of where defibrillators are, and Cllr J Kelly agreed to pass this information on to the resident who had contacted him about Blackham Court.

It was suggested that Balls Green would benefit from renaming, such as Upper-, Middle- and Lower Balls Green. The parish council's experience is that street renaming can be costly and Cllr J Kelly was asked to investigate costings. This could then be considered alongside other parish council priorities.

Beech Green Lane has had many pot holes filled, and Cllr J Kelly would update the Assistant Clerk.

Cllr Rutherford left the meeting.

9. GROOMBRIDGE PLACE

It was reported that the Assistant Clerk had drafted a letter to the Planning Investigations Officer at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, regarding Groombridge Place and enforcement issues, which had been agreed at that evening's Planning Committee meeting and was AGREED to be sent.

It was reported that during the previous weekend there had been a family rave which had caused noise disturbance to residents.

11. ESCC LIBRARY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

This was considered at this point in the meeting to allow Cllr Whetstone to observe.

Cllr Fane had drafted a response to the current ESCC Libraries consultation and was asked to complete the questionnaire prior to the December Council meeting, to be agreed there. Cllr Fane reported that he had spoken with ESCC who stated that the mobile library vehicles are safe and in a good state of repair currently, but if that service was to cease the books could be made available to a parish or community group.

Cllr Whetstone left the meeting.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORTS (To include Next Door Groombridge demonstration)

Cllr Anderson emphasised that more support is required in order to grow neighbourhood watch areas.

It was agreed that Cllr Anderson will provide his updates to the Clerks each week for circulation on the Friday briefing.

Cllr Anderson presented a demonstration of Next Door Groombridge, which is a useful local resource and networking tool. Councillors were encouraged to join their Next Door area, but were reminded that they should not make comments on such sites on behalf of the parish council.

Cllr Anderson was thanked for his presentation and his Neighbourhood Watch work.

12. COMMUNITY WARDEN

Further to October Council's agreement to share Forest Row's Community Warden, the Clerk had identified underspends in the current financial year which could allow this to progress in 2017/18, and this was considered on the basis of 4 hours per week plus mileage. The Clerk confirmed that he operates a varied shift pattern, mileage will be monitored, and an induction would be provided.

001326 RESOLVED to share the Forest Row Community Warden for 4 hours a week from December.

The Clerks would ensure that the warden's details are on the website, newsletter and noticeboards.

13. WEALDLINK

Historically, Wealdlink had been funded by WDC but when they withdrew funding, 7 towns and parishes agreed to support the community bus. There are now 6 buses offering a unique door to door service as well as group hires, with enormous voluntary support.

The Transport Committee had launched an inquiry into the licensing arrangements for community transport minibuses and the broader sustainability of the community transport sector. The deadline had passed, and Wealdlink had made a formal response. The concern is that the community bus sector is already regulated and Wealdlink is well run, and any further legislation could be too costly for them to remain viable.

Council was asked to consider whether it wished to make a response as the web forum still appears to be accepting comments. Cllr D Kelly and the Clerk were asked to draft a response to go on the webforum, to be copied to the MPs for Wealden and Lewes.

14. CROWBOROUGH COMMUNITY CENTRE WD/2017/1817/MAJ

Cllr Pardey outlined that Crowborough Community Centre is very successful and self-sustaining, and is used by Withyham parish residents. The recent planning application to build houses on the Mead House Car Park will affect the Community Centre's viability if the proposal to build 68 dwellings goes ahead. This is because the Community Centre would be left

with 16 parking spaces, which would be insufficient. Furthermore, Crowborough is creating a Community Hub at the old Pine Grove offices, which will also require access to parking.

Councillors agreed that some housing would be acceptable, but sufficient parking should remain. They were also concerned that Wealden District Council would both be the planning authority and would benefit financially from a sale which would be a possible conflict of interest.

Whilst the date for consultation had passed an objection could still be made and it was agreed that Cllr Tarling and Cllr Pardey should draft a response to be agreed by Councillors on email.

15. ROAD SAFETY UPDATE

It was reported that the design for the settlement signage at Cherry Gardens Hill had been agreed and had been ordered.

The Clerk had received confirmation that the feasibility studies for the roadside options for the A264 Missing Link had been commissioned by ESCC. The Clerk is working with ESCC Rights of Way team on the field options.

Cllr Whittaker reported that accidents on the A264 have continued, but is reassured that Withyham Parish Council is doing all it can to try to achieve a speed limit reduction. Cllr D Kelly confirmed that the relationship with ESCC has become stronger and that the Assistant Clerk is notifying them of every accident. We hope to hear presently that an agreement has been reached on speed limits. Cllr Whittaker asked that any new information is shared with him in order to share with residents.

16. TO NOTE AMMENDMENTS TO HEDGE AND GRASS CUTTING POLICY

This had been considered at September's Finance and Administration Committee, where considerations for cutting of grass at Park Corner and hedges at Balls Green had been added and an amendment had been made to frequency of cuts at Teasley Mead. This was noted.

17. HIGH WEALD PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The Clerk had circulated details of this questionnaire prior to the meeting and it was agreed that Councillors should be encouraged to respond individually, as well as a response being made by Withyham Parish Council. Cllr Whittaker would draft a response for the January meeting.

18.FINANCE

18.1. To note the report showing payments made to date against budgets

The Clerk circulated this report prior to the meeting and it was noted.

18.2 To authorise the payment of invoices and note regular payments

These had been circulated prior to the meeting.

CASHBOOK 1 (GENERAL ACCOUNT)

Chq/BACS no	Payee	Detail	Total inc VAT	Budget code
BACS144	SSALC	Training - Planning, new cllrs networking - Clerks	264 156	4007 4009
BACS145	Weld Done	Spur at play area	50	4220
BACS146	Groombridge Village Hall	Hire - scams meeting	42.2	4051
BACS147	Freya Cook	Coordinating GYP	80	4106
BACS148	Kier	Office bin	93.06	4506
BACS149	Natalie Brett	Mileage (networking)	26.82	4009
chq 100686	BT	Adoption 2x phone kiosks	2	4040
BACS150	Natalie Brett	salary Nov & o/t Oct	Total: £2,190	4000
BACS151	Malcolm Brown	Maintenance work nov		4003
BACS152	Samantha Catlin	Cleaning nov		4000
BACS153	Fenella Murray Willis	Locum Oct		4005
BACS154	Deborah Siddle	salary Nov & o/t Oct		4000
BACS155	NEST	Pension scheme contributions	170.52	4001
BACS156	Viking	paper and laminating pouches	75.44	4015

Payments Made outside Meeting

Chq/BACS no	Payee	Detail	Total inc VAT	Budget code
BACS142	BW Patience	Fingerposts 5, 12 and 14	3391.2	4420
BACS143	New Look Driveways	Resurfacing Balls Green	2904	9206
chq 100684	Ray Bailey	Windowcleaning	30	4503
chq 100685	Samba Sports	Goals	517	4201
BACS157	R Palphramand	Skip hire Balls Green	240	9026

Cashbook 3 Prepaid Card

Payment no	Payee	Detail	Amount	Budget
PP21	Camaloon	fridge magnets (scams)	123.77	4051
PP22	Fasthosts	exchange mailboxes	77.48	4016
PP23	Equipashop	A4 leaflet holder	20.94	4015
PP24	Amazon	2018 Calendar	7.99	4015
PP25	Royal Mail	Unpaid postage	1.5	4015
pp26	My Memory	Additional PC memory	35.5	4016
pp27	Ebay	Key box for back door	10.99	4015
pp28	Marks and Spencers	catering for training	18.5	4510
pp29	Facebook	Scams meeting advert boost	4	4016

Receipts

Date	Name	Detail	Amount
1.11.17	SVR	Rent	375.00
1.11.17	ESCC	Contribution to fingerposts	973.00
1.11.17	HMRC	VAT repayment Apr-Sep17	3826.28
1.11.17	SVR	Utilities & room hire	367.30

MONTHLY PAYMENTS MADE BY DD/STANDING ORDER OUTSIDE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Payment type	Payee	Detail	Amount	Budget
DDUW1117	Utility Warehouse	Phone/ Broadband	69.16	4013
DDBE10917	Bristol Energy	Gas/Electricity	69.63	4502
DDSEW1017	South East Water	Water charges	8	4502
DDBS1017	Business Stream	Water charges	8.2	4502
DDBG1017	British Gas	Boiler servicing	29.69	4503
SOTN1017	T Newman	Rent	625	4012
SONH1017	N Houghton	Rent	625	4012
HSBC1017	HSBC	Bank charges	10.95	4600

001327 **RESOLVED** to pay the invoices listed above, to pay by BACS/sign the cheques accordingly

18.3 To agree any quotes

Cllr Anderson had prepared quotes for audio visual equipment as current equipment is out of date and not wholly suitable for larger meetings, such as the APA at Groombridge Village Hall.

There was a discussion about the specifications provided, and Cllr Anderson was asked to provide costings for a screen which would accompany consideration of the costings provided for a projector and audio equipment. It was asked whether the parish council should have a large portable screen, or whether it could contribute towards a fixed screen at Groombridge Village Hall. It was AGREED that Cllr Butcher would attend the AGM to ask whether Groombridge Village Hall would install a screen, and that Cllr Anderson would return to Council with further costings based on the response.

18. REPORTS ON MEETINGS and CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Tarling had attended the SALC Planning Update with the Assistant Clerk and found this to be useful. The Assistant Clerk intended to circulate notes.

Cllrs Fane and Whittaker had found the SALC New Councillor training helpful and were struck by how well run Withyham Parish Council is in comparison to those of some other councils represented by delegates who attended.

19. CLERK'S REPORT

A calendar of meetings for 2018 had been circulated and Councillors asked to let the Clerks know if there are any issues.

The current incumbent of the Parish Maintenance Person post had given his resignation and the role had been advertised. Interviews are expected in December and the current incumbent would leave once a replacement is found.

Following the December Council meeting the annual celebration of unsung helpers would take place as a way of thanking people who help the Parish Council. The Clerk would circulate the draft list to Councillors for any additions.

20. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Car air pollution, Libraries consultation (December), High Weald questionnaire (January).

Cllr Clare asked whether it would be appropriate for WPC to lay a wreath in the parish on Remembrance Sunday. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and that it should be considered for 2018.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is Monday 11th December at 7.30 pm at The Old Station, Groombridge preceded by a Planning committee meeting at 7 pm and followed by a celebration of our Unsung Helpers.

The meeting closed at 10.20 pm