

Minutes of the **WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held on 11th
June 2018 at 7.30pm in The Old Station, Groombridge

PRESENT Cllrs Mrs Jane Clare, Andrew Fane, Mrs Anne Jenkins,
Mrs Diana Kelly (Chair), Keith Obbard, Mrs Jill Pardey,
Marcus Tarling

In attendance: County Cllr Francis Whetstone – ESCC
District Cllr William Rutherford – WDC
Malcolm McDonnell – Chair, Rights of Way Committee

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.

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

2. APOLOGIES: Cllr Nick Anderson – family commitment
Cllr Robin Ashby – family commitment
Cllr Mrs Gwen Butcher – family commitment
Cllr Jonathan Kelly – illness
Cllr Stephen Whittaker – family commitment
Cllr Ms Linsey Winter – family commitment

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Cllr Jenkins for item 13.1 as she is a trustee of Groombridge Village Hall where Groombridge preschool is based.

4. MINUTES

4.1. To resolve that the minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting held on Monday 21st May 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

001450 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2018 were approved.

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

Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk to identify actions no longer required.

Matters resolved from previous minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
001404	Clerk	Admin Assistant role to be advertised presently
001406	Clerk	WDC policy guidance to be used for death of a member of the Royal Family
Pg. 1606	Clerks	WDC street scene officer to monitor usage at Groombridge recycling centre
001424	Clerk	Terms of Reference for the Planning, Finance and Administration, Rights of Way Advisory, Road Safety and Air Traffic Committees adopted

WPC/11.6.2018 – 001643

001425	Clerk	Standing Orders adopted
001426	Clerk	Financial Regulations adopted
Pg. 1611	Chair/Cllr Jenkins	Met with St Thomas' Church about youth club provision
Pg. 1611	Clerk	Asset register updated as per minutes
001427	Clerk	Complaints Procedure adopted
001428	Clerk	Procedure for requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and Publications policy adopted
001429	Clerk	Existing Data Protection Act Policy adopted until updated policy is agreed presently
001430	Clerk	Press/Media Policy adopted
Pg. 1612	Clerk	Permission given to St Thomas' Church to use Groombridge Recreation Ground for a Pet Service on Sunday 15 July
Pg. 1613	Clerks	Highways Coordinator notified that further ditching works on Ironchurch Lane cannot be completed until hedging is undertaken
001431 001432	Clerk	Signed Annual Return (end of year to 31 st March 2018) sent
Pg. 1618	Clerk	Mulberry and Co appointed as internal auditor
001434	Clerk	Quote for IT support from SME Group accepted
001436	Clerk	Quote from ES Highways for the structural testing of steel lighting columns accepted

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. 1445	Cllr Whetstone	Lobby for Mardens Hill resurfacing
Pg. 1450	Cllr Anderson	Carry out further research on pollution testing tubes
Pg. 1465	Cllr D Kelly	Report to RSC on proposal by resident for a 20mph limit outside The Nook surgery
Pg. 1472	Cllr Anderson	Put a request for Speedwatch volunteers on the Next Door Groombridge site
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. 1495	Assistant Clerk	Circulate notes from the SALC Planning Update
Pg. 1496	Clerk/Chair	Arrange for WPC to lay a wreath in the parish on Remembrance Sunday in 2018

WPC/11.6.2018 – 001644

Pg. 1530	Clerk	Arrange meeting of Ward Chairs with the Community Resilience lead to discuss the community action plan
Pg. 1551	Cllrs D Kelly and Jenkins	Circulate guidelines outlining the roles and responsibilities of Councillors and the Clerks in projects
Pg. 1555	Clerks	GDPR training to be arranged for all Councillors
Pg. 1568	Clerk	Report to ESCC that the top hinge on the gate where footpath 33 meets the recreation ground is broken
Pg. 1571	Cllrs Butcher and Whittaker	Investigate Withyham Charity trustee duties further and then confirm their interest
Pg. 1585	Ward Chairs	Ward Chairs to contact the Clerk to arrange collection of litter picking equipment to be stored in their homes.
Pg. 1585	Cllr Tarling	Review planning information for Warren Nursery on numbers of children and follow up with Cllr Rutherford
Pg. 1588	Cllr Winter and Clerk	Review Parish Plan
Pg. 1606	Cllrs/ Clerks	Clerks/training to assist with opening papers for meetings
Pg. 1611	Clerk	Ask Cllr Ashby to represent the Council on the Blackham Village Hall Committee
Pg. 1611	Clerk	Ask Cllr Anderson to represent the Council on the Groombridge Sports Ground Committee
Pg. 1612	Clerks	Investigate ownership of the verge on the cricket ground side of Newton Willows
Pg. 1613	Assistant Clerk	Report pothole on the Groombridge side of Summersales Hill
Pg. 1613	Assistant Clerk	Seek an update from Enforcement about the woodyard on Gilridge Lane
Pg. 1615	Assistant Clerk/Cllr Obbard	Seek further volunteers for Speedwatch
Pg. 1615	Clerk	Purchase a sign to request no parking on the Balls Green Community Space access drive
Pg. 1615	Clerk	Purchase the signage previously agreed, a small noticeboard and suggestion box for Balls Green Community Space
Pg. 1616	Cllrs	Consider whether they need any personal data held electronically or paper based, and to destroy if no longer required
Pg. 1616	Clerks	Bring a proposal for office data security to next meeting
001435	Clerk	Appoint Local Council Public Advisory Service as Data Protection Officer
001437	Clerk	Allow the Assistant Clerk to re-register for CiLCA should she not complete in time

Actions from these Minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 1642	Chair/Vice Chair/Clerk	Identify actions no longer required
Pg. 1646	Rights of Way Committee	Consider whether a non-slip surface at Back Lane bridge is necessary ahead of Council making a decision
Pg. 1647	Malcolm McDonnell	Look at claiming the paths at Groombridge Place with a Definitive Map Order
Pg. 1647	Clerk	Report height of the grass and hedges on either side of the railway bridge on Station Road as a safety issue
Pg. 1647	Assistant Clerk	Put on SLR agenda request for removal of kerb by the chain link fence opposite the post office and yellow lines extended
Pg. 1647	Parish Maintenance Person	Look at the noticeboard at St John's Church as it swings open
Pg. 1648	Clerk	Oversee actions relating to red telephone box at Balls Green
Pg. 1648	Clerk	Convey permission to resident for access over Teasley Mead recreation area with a grabber lorry
001454	Clerk	Make grants to St Thomas' and St Johns' churches
Pg. 1650	Clerk	Seek further information for deferred Groombridge Preschool grant
001455	Clerk	Adopt the Pensions/Discretions Policy
001456	Clerk	Adopt the Health and Safety Policy
001457	Clerk/Councillors	Undertake actions agreed following the HR review

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 – 14th May 2018

001451 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee of 14th May 2018.

5.2 Planning – 29th May 2018

001452 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee of 29th May 2018.

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

5.3 Road Safety Committee – 4th June 2018

Noted.

5.4 Finance & Administration – 4th June 2018

Noted.

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT and COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Cllr Whetstone apologised for the situation regarding grass cutting. Now that urban cuts have reduced from 6 to 2 the issue has been exacerbated by the first cut in the parish being due end July/start August and the second in November. The recent rural cut along Lye Green has also been patchy. Withyham Parish Council was disappointed that ESCC made its decision to reduce grass cuts after the parish council had already set its budget for this financial year so it was unable to subsidise further cuts. Cllr Whetstone hopes that it will be better managed in future. Councillors notified Cllr Whetstone that due to the length of grass in some places school children are having to walk into the road and he agreed to follow this up. ESCC is meeting on 12th June to consider further budget cuts for 2018/19 and Cllr Whetstone will notify the Clerk if there are any items the parish needs to be aware of.

Cllr Whetstone was asked about the duelling of the markings at Crowborough Cross. Cllr Whetstone confirmed that the lining had been done incorrectly and the intention is to rectify this. The parking bay outside the shops is also too long which prevents cars passing. Cllr Whetstone will follow this up.

Cllr Rutherford reported that he raised the missed collections from Groombridge recycling centre at both WDC Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Galley had subsequently met with Kier and agreed an action plan for additional crews, and confirmed that action would be taken if they do not fulfil their contract. Cllr Rutherford has sought clarification as to whether fines can be imposed if recycling centres are not emptied. Kier's contract ends summer 2019 and WDC is already looking at replacements.

7. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Malcolm McDonnell reported that the Rights of Way Committee currently comprises of 10 members including 3 councillors. There is also a further member of the public to be co-opted at the next meeting.

The 48 miles of rights of way in the parish are generally in a reasonable condition. Current issues are over cropping and paths being overgrown which can be helped by early use of secateurs by walkers, in the winter it is muddy conditions.

The Open Spaces Society reported earlier in the year that just 60% of paths have signposts at the roads or tracks they join. This is mandatory and the Rights of Way Committee noted around 12 missing posts which ESCC replaced promptly.

SVR has suggested a non-slip surface on the bridge at Back Lane and asked WPC if it might fund it. The responsibility in the case of an accident would be with either ESCC or SVR. It was AGREED that the Rights of Way Committee would be asked its view on whether this is necessary ahead of Council making a decision.

Asset mapping of stiles and gates is now underway and the Committee has agreed a completion date of the end of this year.

The Rights of Way Committee reviewed a bridleway claim at Broadwater Forest. There was no specific advice either way by the committee, although the general feeling was access to the Forest pre-RSPB was permissive.

A member of the Rights of Way Committee had reported being prevented from crossing one of the bridges at Groombridge Place between the Kent and Sussex paths. The bridges have been used without let or hindrance for as long as anyone can remember and so whilst they are not on the definitive map they are in effect a right of way. Malcolm McDonnell will look at claiming the paths with a Definitive Map Order, and will seek assistance from the Rights of Way Committee in collating evidence. In the meantime, if there continues to be an issue, Withyham Parish Council may speak with the landowner and point out that they will not be able to win a claim.

Malcolm McDonnell was thanked and it was agreed that he should make a report every 6 months or so.

Malcolm McDonnell left the meeting.

7. WARD REPORTS

(a) Groombridge Ward

It was noted that the height of the grass and hedges on either side of the railway bridge on Station Road is an issue for children walking to their school buses.

A resident had enquired as to whether the kerb by the chain link fence opposite the post office could be removed and yellow lines extended. This would be added to the SLR agenda but ES Highways is unlikely to act due to budget constraints.

It was reported that there had been a break in at St Thomas' Church. Other churches are asked to be vigilant.

(b) St John's Ward

A rural cut has taken place at Lye Green which has made the junction less dangerous.

The Parish Maintenance Person was asked to look at the noticeboard at St John's Church as it swings open.

(c) Withyham/Blackham Ward

A resident had asked whether they could maintain the red telephone box at Balls Green which WPC has adopted so that they can start a book swap and for WPC to fund a defibrillator to be placed in there. Councillors welcomed this interest and the Clerk was asked to check with the adjacent resident whether they would have any objections to usage. Councillors queried whether Kings Hall or St Michael's School would be a better place

for a defibrillator. The Clerk was asked to seek First Responders' views and then to include in the budget planning for 2019/20. It was noted that the Ashdown Forest Conservators has a map of defibrillators across the forest, and the Clerks were asked to link the WPC website to this. In the mean time WPC would support the use as a book swap and would provide the materials from the Parish Action Plan budget for shelving. The Parish Maintenance Person would be asked to see if he can fix the roof.

A resident at Teasley Mead had asked for access over the recreation area with a grabber lorry. Council Agreed to this on the condition that the resident and the contractor gives due consideration to safety of others and restores the condition of the ground if any damage is caused.

It was noted that signs have been installed in one direction on Cherry Gardens Hill. ESCC confirmed that they await the other set of signs.

Cllrs Whetstone and Rutherford left the meeting.

9. BALLS GREEN COMMUNITY SPACE – STREET MEETING UPDATE

Councillors who had attended updated the meeting that there had been a reasonable attendance, including from young people who use the space. There had been a good discussion about how the space can be best managed and some of the young people aim to design a poster with guidelines. People raised ideas of additional equipment and residents will be encouraged to make their suggestions, the police who were present said that an application for a grant could be made to the police fund. Councillors complimented the Community Warden for his involvement.

10. COMMUNITY WARDEN REPORT

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting which will be posted on noticeboards and the website. The Road Safety Committee has asked the Community Warden to monitor traffic at St Michaels School and report back, and he was also asked to visit St John's.

11. TO AGREE THE ROLE OF HIGHWAYS COORDINATOR

A volunteer job description had been circulated prior to the meeting and this was AGREED.

12. FINANCE

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

The Clerk had circulated this report prior to the meeting and it was noted. There were no questions

12.2 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	Net amount	Budget code
Chq100695	Ray Bailey	Window cleaning	30.00	4503
BACS43	BW Patience	Fingerpost A264/Ironchurch Lane	498.00	4420
BACS44	Kier	Office waste April	28.59	4506

BACS45	Wealden District Council	Litter bins Apr-Jun Dog Bins Apr-Jun	187.5 437.5	4211 4213
BACS46	Forest Row Parish Council	Community Warden May	155.00	4063
BACS47	F Cook	GYP Feb-May	280.00	4106
BACS48	D Carden	Staffing review and travel	588.20	4040
BACS49	WITM0005	Chairman's allowance 2018/19	1300.00	4010
BACS50	WIT0013	Mileage (posters etc)	20.70	4003
BACS51	WIT0012	Jun salary & May overtime	Total £2485.08	4000
BACS52	WIT0008	Jun pay		4000
BACS53	WIT0010	May office cover		4005
BACS54	WIT0007	Jun salary & May overtime		4000
BACS55	WIT0013	Jun pay		4003
BACS56	Inland Revenue	Tax & NI Apr-Jun	1009.68	4001
			6395.25	

Grants payments (agreed at item 13.1)

Chq/BACS no	Payee	Detail	Net amount	Budget code
BACS57	St John's Church	to maintain the churchyard and a large storage box	650	4101
BACS58	St Thomas' Church	Mowing and maintaining the churchyard	900	4101

Payments made Outside the Meeting

None.

Cashbook 3 Prepaid Card

None.

Receipts

Date	Name		Amount
1.6.18	SVR	Rent	375.00

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

Payment type	Payee	Detail	Amount	Budget
DDSEW0618	South East Water	Water charges	1	4502
DDBS0618	Business Stream	Water charges	9	4502
DDBG0618	British Gas	Boiler servicing	29.69	4503
DDUW0618	Utility Warehouse	Phone & broadband	68.16	4013
DDBG0518	Bristol Energy	Gas & electricity	109.19	4502
SOTN0618	T Newman	Rent	625	4012
SONH0618	N Houghton	Rent	625	4012
DDNEST0618	NEST	Pension Contributions	175.52	4001
HSBC0618	HSBC	Bank charges	5.5	4600

001453 **RESOLVED** to pay the invoices listed above, to pay by BACS/sign the cheques accordingly.

12.3 To agree any quotes

There were no quotes.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MARCH FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE:

Papers in support of these items had been circulated prior to the meeting, along with the minutes of the meeting.

13.1 To consider recommended Grants

Finance and Administration recommended to Council grants totalling £1,550 for:

- St John's Church £650 to maintain the churchyard and a large storage box (required paperwork had been submitted following the meeting and circulated to the committee. No condition required on the grant therefore)
- St Thomas' Church £900 for mowing and maintaining the churchyard

This was from a 2018/19 grant budget remaining of £5,417. These were AGREED.

001454 RESOLVED to agree the grants to St John's Church of £650 and St Thomas' Church £900, totalling £1,550.

Council noted the deferral of the application from Groombridge Preschool pending further information.

13.2 To consider the Pensions/Discretions Policy

This had been circulated prior to the meeting.

001455 RESOLVED to adopt the Pensions/Discretions Policy.

13.3 To consider the Health and Safety Policy

This had been circulated prior to the meeting.

001456 RESOLVED to adopt the Health and Safety Policy.

13.4 To consider whether to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during consideration of the following items 13.5 pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the confidential nature of the business.

AGREED – none present.

13.5 To consider staffing matters and proposals for a personnel sub-committee

Council received the recommendations from Finance and Administration Committee and supported the following:

- AGREE the setting up of a staff/personnel sub-committee consisting of a minimum of 3 councillors
- AGREE that these councillors may meet with the clerks as soon as possible to agree the Clerk's, Assistant Clerk's and an Administrative Assistant's working patterns and hours. This would allow the Clerk to advertise the Administrative Assistant role immediately
- AGREE that these councillors may confirm the job descriptions for the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Administrative Assistant. This would also allow the Clerk to advertise the Administrative Assistant role immediately

- AGREE that these councillors may consider the Clerk's and Assistant Clerk's salary gradings as per the report, with a recommendation taken to July Council
- AGREE that these councillors may draft a Terms of Reference for the staff/personnel sub-committee, to be taken to July Council
- AGREE A scheme of delegation to be drafted to go to the next Finance & Administration Committee and then Council
- AGREE that whilst there were concerns about whether it would be appropriate for a parish council, further information to be sought about, and consideration to be given to a visioning and business planning exercise

They also requested that the councillors who would be meeting should consider the process for the imminent appraisals.

001457 RESOLVED to undertake actions agreed following the HR review

13.6 To invite the public to return to the meeting if they were excluded for the previous item

AGREED – none present.

18. REPORTS ON MEETINGS and CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Tarling had attended a HWCAAG meeting where it had been stressed that people need to contact their MP to ensure that noise issues from Gatwick remain on the agenda.

19. CLERK'S REPORT

Councillors were asked to assist the Clerks with locking up at the end of evening meetings.

20. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA (To include Car Air Pollution, Guidance on councillor roles in projects, DPA policy, office data security proposal)

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING To note that the date of the next Council meeting is Monday 9th July 2018 at 7.30 pm at The Old Station, Groombridge and this will be the Annual Statutory Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm