

Minutes of the **WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held at **THE OLD STATION, GROOMBRIDGE** on **14<sup>th</sup> November 2022** at 7.30pm

**PRESENT** Cllrs Nick Anderson, Andrew Fane, Alan Gaukroger, Robert Gordon-James, Diana Kelly (Chair), Keith Obbard (as District Councillor for item 6), Jill Pardey, Jennie Paulson-Ellis, Paul Watkins, Linsey Winter

**In attendance:** Deborah Siddle - Clerk (minutes)  
2 prospective councillors

Members of the public are encouraged to attend meetings and there is a 10-minute opportunity for members of the public to address the Council. Two prospective councillors were present to observe the meeting; they introduced themselves and were welcomed by the Chair.

**1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING:** The meeting was recorded for the use of the Clerk and would be erased once the minutes are agreed.

**2. APOLOGIES** — District Cllr Millward

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None

#### **4. MINUTES**

4.1. To resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**002385 RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were approved.

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

Matters resolved from previous minutes

| <b>Minute no.</b> | <b>Who</b>                  | <b>Item</b>                                                                                           |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg. 5217          | Councillors                 | A possible new coordinator has been identified for Speedwatch. Cllr Fane has offered to help.         |
| Pg. 2568          | Administrator/Cllr Anderson | Replacement trees offered to the Cricket Club, awaiting response                                      |
| Pg. 2592          | Cllr Obbard                 | Unable to attend the WDALC meeting                                                                    |
| <b>002367</b>     | Clerk                       | Additional £6,000 subsidy paid to Withyham Parish Community Interest Company in 2022/23               |
| Pg. 2594          | Clerk                       | Responded to the IRP that WPC has frozen councillor allowances for the past couple of years           |
| Pg. 2594          | Clerk                       | HMRC guidance on councillor allowances and tax situation circulated on email                          |
| <b>002369</b>     | Clerk                       | Additional four urban grass cuts in 2023/24 requested from ES Highways at a cost of £976 for the year |

|               |       |                                                                                            |
|---------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg. 2594      | Clerk | Agreed reply to response from DfT on Gatwick night flights sent                            |
| <b>002370</b> | Clerk | Engaged a Project Manager through ESALC to produce an up to date Resilience/Emergency Plan |
| <b>002371</b> | Clerk | Adopted the Protocol for Capital Expenditure                                               |
| <b>002372</b> | Clerk | Adopted the Prepaid Card Policy                                                            |
| <b>002373</b> | Clerk | Adopted the Document Retention and Destruction Policy                                      |
| <b>002374</b> | Clerk | Adopted the Community Engagement Statement of Intent                                       |
| <b>002375</b> | Clerk | Adopted the Petitions policy                                                               |
| <b>002378</b> | Clerk | Submitted a Code of Conduct complaint to the District Monitoring Officer on behalf of WPC  |

Actions outstanding from previous minutes

| <b>Minute no.</b> | <b>Who</b>              | <b>Item</b>                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg. 2067          | Clerk                   | Enquire whether the Crime Audit Officer can assess Withyham and Blackham                                                                               |
| Pg. 2297          | Cllr Fane               | Investigate whether any of the Burrswood buildings, gardens or trees require listing                                                                   |
| Pg. 2319          | Clerk                   | Arrange for signs requested by Blackham litterpickers                                                                                                  |
| Pg. 2515          | Clerk                   | Put Electric Vehicle charge point at the parish office on an agenda after the lease is secured                                                         |
| <b>002313</b>     | Playground Group/ Clerk | Remaining playground income to be used for items such as plaques, picnic benches/seats and contingency (Groombridge Playground)                        |
| <b>002314</b>     | Playground Group/ Clerk | Add a wheelchair accessible piece of equipment, once income confirmed (Groombridge Playground)                                                         |
| <b>002315</b>     | Playground Group/ Clerk | If more funds are raised reinstate the second combination wall, or a similar piece of equipment (Groombridge Playground)                               |
| <b>002356</b>     | Clerk                   | Source and set up a bank account with a third institution and transfer the excess funds from the HSBC accounts to that,                                |
| Pg. 2574          | Clerk                   | Close the 'HSBC Deposit account' once new account is set up                                                                                            |
| Pg. 2593          | Clerk                   | Arrange a replacement lock on WPC's container                                                                                                          |
| <b>002368</b>     | Clerk                   | Accept the three-year grass cutting quote for 2023-2025 from Landscape Services with the Newton Willows spec updated and once GSGA income is confirmed |
| Pg. 2594          | Clerk                   | Ask residents for their views on whether 20mph limits should be introduced                                                                             |

## Actions from these Minutes

| Minute no.    | Who               | Item                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg 2608       | Staff Committee   | Consider proposal for all noticeboards                                                                                                                                |
| Pg 2608       | Clerk             | Investigate and arrange replacement sign on the gate at Groombridge Recreation Ground and a larger 'no parking' sign, budget allowing                                 |
| Pg 2608       | Cllr Winter       | Monitor progress on parking issues on Corseley Road                                                                                                                   |
| Pg 2608       | Cllr Gordon-James | Make some enquiries about recently installed fencing at St Thomas' School                                                                                             |
| Pg 2609       | Clerk             | Confirm to Cllr Obbard what methodology would be used to assess WPC's carbon footprint                                                                                |
| Pg 2609       | Cllr Winter       | To meet with young people at Groombridge Youth Club to listen to their views                                                                                          |
| <b>002386</b> | Council           | Match fund a piece of play equipment up to the value of £2,500 at Teasley Mead Recreation Ground                                                                      |
| Pg 2609       | Clerks            | Contact residents who would be interested in fund raising to set up a fund-raising group                                                                              |
| Pg 2610       | Councillors       | Suggest any volunteers to invite for the Unsung Helpers event                                                                                                         |
| Pg 2612       | Councillors       | Any further suggestions or offers of help for the next newsletter to be relayed to the Assistant Clerk                                                                |
| Pg 2612       | Clerk             | Next agendas to include:<br>Councillor Co-options (December)<br>Budget and Precept 2023/24 (December or January)<br>Wild verge signage (tbc)<br>20s Plenty (new year) |

**5. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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

5.1 Rights of Way Advisory Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 - noted

5.2 Planning Committee – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 - noted

5.3 Planning Committee – 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – noted

**6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT and COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

County Cllr Taylor confirmed that she continues to chase the multiple highways related issues in the parish that have been raised with her.

District Cllr Obbard had provided a written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It highlighted the following:

- Wealden District Council has earmarked £250,000 to help to ease the cost of living crisis for residents in need of extra help
- A new Wealden Vineyard Guide for 2022/23 has been produced in collaboration with 'Locate East Sussex'
- The Boundary Commission for England has published the new proposals for the replacement of the Wealden Constituency; the new Constituency would be called Sussex Weald and include the

whole of the District Ward of Hartfield, Crowborough, Wadhurst, Heathfield and Hailsham

- WDC Leader Anne Newton issued a statement making it clear that the Council would not support Fracking for oil & gas in Wealden. She also stated that the new Local Plan would embody the strongest possible protections for our environment
- There is often confusion over which items can or cannot be recycled, so there is a web page called “Recyclopedia” on the WDC website;
- With the Autumn leaf fall now occurring there are extra road sweeping team out on the roads

Cllr Obbard also updated the meeting that WDC is rolling out EV charging points at its car parks, starting with the larger ones first.

Planning Committee had discussed recent activity at Park Corner. The WDC Enforcement Officer was investigating and intended to undertake a site visit.

## **7. WARD REPORTS**

Cllr Kelly thanked all those who laid wreaths on behalf of WPC at our parish churches.

### (a)Groombridge Ward (Groombridge)

Cllrs Anderson and Winter had been keeping the parish council noticeboard at the Post Office updated. A proposal for all noticeboards will be going to Staff Committee.

The sign on the gate at Groombridge Recreation Ground needs replacement, and it would be helpful for there to be a larger ‘no parking’ sign. The Clerk would investigate and arrange, budget allowing.

Cllr Winter had distributed a flier to all households on Corseley Road between Station Road and Springfield Road, asking for more consideration when parking. Progress will be monitored.

Kent County Council has accepted the claim for the bridge path at Groombridge Place. ESCC also needs to make a matching decision by 17<sup>th</sup> November so that both Orders can be made concurrently.

The Clerk confirmed that the recently removed tree on the boundary of Newton Willows and Groombridge Cricket Ground is on East Sussex Highways land.

The recently installed fencing at St Thomas’ School has caused some concern around its appearance, obstruction to sight lines at the adjacent footpath, and whether planning permission was required. Cllr Gordon-James would make some enquiries.

Cllr Gordon-James reported that some landlords can obtain grants to install charging points at residential properties. He would investigate for Phoenix House.

The Clerk confirmed that she had bought a new padlock for the container and will arrange for the old one to be removed.

Cllr Fane reported that there are plans for a wild verge at the lower green in Old Groombridge. The Administrator/Volunteer Facilitator was making contact with the Speldhurst Parish Council lead.

(b) Groombridge Ward (Withyham/Blackham)

The water leak had been fixed on Cherry Gardens Hill.

(c) Marden's Hill Ward

Cllr Pardey notified the meeting of Cllr Tarling's intention to resign. As per legislation, councillor resignations must be made in writing to the Chair.

**8. PARISH PLAN 2020-2024**

Cllrs Kelly and Winter (authors of the current Parish Plan) had met with the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Administrator/Volunteer Facilitator to review progress against the Parish Plan priorities. These updates and recommended further actions had been circulated prior to the meeting.

8.1 Receive progress updates and 2023-24 aims

Councillors received and noted the updates and recommended further actions.

Cllr Obbard was pleased to see the intention to assess WPC's carbon footprint, the Clerk would find out what methodology would be used.

8.2 Agree lead Councillor to seek views from young people

As there is an objective to seek to identify ways to better engage with young people in the parish to listen to their views and meet their needs, Cllr Winter AGREED to meet with young people at Groombridge Youth Club to start that initial liaison.

*County Cllr Taylor left the meeting.*

**9. TEASLEY MEAD PLAY EQUIPMENT** – update on residents' survey and recommendations

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting. A request had been previously made for play equipment to be installed at Teasley Mead and a survey was conducted of Blackham residents. This was conducted online and via paper forms delivered to adjacent households.

Council noted the responses to the survey, and that WPC has £2,500 in Ear-marked Reserves allocated for a piece of equipment. The Clerks estimate that a piece of equipment will cost £5-6,000.

**002386 RESOLVED** to match fund a piece of play equipment up to the value of £2,500 at Teasley Mead Recreation Ground

Residents who would be interested in fund raising will be contacted and asked to set up a fund-raising group.

As per the survey results, equipment selected will be either a set of swings or a climbing frame dependent on budget, accessibility requirements and fund-raising group preference.

## 10. NEWTON WILLOWS WILD VERGE SIGNAGE

This item was deferred, pending recommendations from those involved in the project.

## 11. UNSUNG HELPERS EVENT

Due to Covid, WPC had been unable to thank the volunteers who help the Council (our Unsung Helpers). Council agreed to an event after Christmas, date to be confirmed. Should Councillors wish to suggest any volunteers they should do so via the Administrator

## 12. FINANCE:

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

12.2 To authorise the payment of November invoices/note regular payments

| Date            | Payee Name                     | Reference  | £ Total Amnt | £ Creditors | £ VAT  | A/c  | Centre | £ Amount  | Transaction Details               |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|--------|------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 18/10/2022      | Ray Bailey                     | BACS157    | 30.00        |             |        | 4503 | 101    | 30.00     | Window cleaning                   |
| 18/10/2022      | S J Osborne                    | BACS158    | 107.04       |             | 17.84  | 5101 | 500    | 89.20     | Outhouse lock<br>(Phoenix House)  |
| 07/11/2022      | Managed Technology             | BACS159    | 228.90       |             | 38.15  | 4017 | 101    | 190.75    | copies Jul-Oct<br>support Oct-Jan |
| 07/11/2022      | Groombridge Village Hall       | BACS160    | 64.68        |             |        | 4064 | 101    | 64.68     | C Cafe hall hire sep<br>& Oct     |
| 07/11/2022      | Commercial Services Trading Lt | BACS161    | 3,371.68     |             | 561.95 | 4261 | 203    | 56.88     | Grass cutting                     |
|                 |                                |            |              |             |        | 4240 | 202    | 303.46    | Grass cutting                     |
|                 |                                |            |              |             |        | 4260 | 203    | 151.73    | Grass cutting                     |
|                 |                                |            |              |             |        | 4205 | 201    | 2,297.66  | Grass cutting GRG<br>& Tanyard    |
| 07/11/2022      | SME IT Solutions               | BACS162    | 358.56       |             | 59.76  | 4013 | 101    | 83.51     | Telecom services                  |
|                 |                                |            |              |             |        | 4021 | 101    | 215.29    | IT services                       |
| 07/11/2022      | Biffa Waste Services Ltd       | BACS163    | 152.09       |             | 25.35  | 4506 | 101    | 126.74    | parish office waste               |
| 07/11/2022      | Hertfordshire Association of L | BACS164    | 45.00        |             |        | 4007 | 101    | 45.00     | Cllr training x3                  |
| 07/11/2022      | Society - Local Council Clerks | BACS165    | 630.00       |             | 105.00 | 4007 | 101    | 525.00    | Staff training x8<br>sessions     |
| 07/11/2022      | Viking Direct                  | BACS166    | 123.28       |             | 20.55  | 4015 | 101    | 102.73    | Stationery                        |
| 07/11/2022      | Wealden District Council       | BACS167    | 336.00       |             |        | 5101 | 500    | 336.00    | Council tax -<br>Phoenix Hse      |
| 07/11/2022      | Everflow                       | BACS168    | 34.51        |             |        | 5101 | 500    | 34.51     | Water charge (est)<br>Ph/Hse & PO |
| 07/11/2022      | Deborah Siddle                 | BACS169    | 11.75        |             |        | 4510 | 101    | 11.75     | Kitchen supplies                  |
| 07/11/2022      | B Agutter                      | BACS170    | 10.80        |             |        | 4421 | 401    | 10.80     | Highways Coord<br>mileage Oct     |
| 07/11/2022      | Forest Row Parish Council      | BACS171    | 216.00       |             | 36.00  | 4063 | 101    | 180.00    | Community Warden<br>Sep shifts    |
| 07/11/2022      | Various                        | BACS172    | 3,552.81     |             |        | 4000 | 101    | 3,552.81  | Nov Salaries & Oct<br>overtime    |
| 07/11/2022      | NEST pensions                  | BACS173    | 289.54       |             |        | 4001 | 101    | 289.54    | Staff pensions Nov                |
| 07/11/2022      | Various                        | BACS174    | 537.80       |             |        | 4011 | 101    | 537.80    | Cllr Allowances<br>Apr-Sep22      |
| 07/11/2022      | Prepaid card                   | CB1PPC1122 | 444.68       |             |        | 203  |        | 444.68    | CB1 to PPCard<br>Nov22            |
| 07/11/2022      | Mrs J Pardey                   | CHQ100341  | 83.50        |             |        | 4011 | 101    | 83.50     | Cllr Allowance                    |
| 07/11/2022      | British Gas Lite               | DDBG1122   | 196.96       |             |        | 5101 | 500    | 196.96    | Elec PO & Ph/House                |
| 07/11/2022      | Octopus Energy                 | DDOCTO1122 | 190.00       |             |        | 4502 | 101    | 190.00    | Old Station elec<br>(est) Oct     |
| 07/11/2022      | Opus Energy                    | DDOPUS1122 | 41.90        |             |        | 4502 | 101    | 41.90     | Gas parish Office<br>(est)        |
| 07/11/2022      | HSBC                           | HSBC1122   | 8.00         |             |        | 4600 | 101    | 8.00      | Charges to 23 Oct                 |
| 07/11/2022      | PWLB/DMO                       | PWLB1122   | 8,389.48     |             |        | 5100 | 500    | 8,389.48  | Loan Repayment<br>PO/Phoenix Hse  |
| 07/11/2022      | The Premier Trust N A Houghton | SONH1122   | 625.00       |             |        | 4012 | 101    | 625.00    | Parish office rent                |
| 07/11/2022      | The Premier Trust T J Newman   | SOTN1122   | 625.00       |             |        | 4012 | 101    | 625.00    | Parish office rent                |
| Total Payments: |                                |            | 20,704.76    | 0.00        | 864.60 |      |        | 19,840.16 |                                   |

## Prepaid card

Payments made between 01/11/2022 and 14/11/2022

| Nominal Ledger Analysis |                          |           |              |             |       |      |        |          |                         |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------|------|--------|----------|-------------------------|
| Date                    | Payee Name               | Reference | £ Total Amnt | £ Creditors | £ VAT | A/c  | Centre | £ Amount | Transaction Details     |
| 07/11/2022              | Milk & More              | PP37      | 15.84        |             |       | 4510 | 101    | 15.84    | parish office milk Oct  |
| 07/11/2022              | Zoom Video Comms Ltd     | PP38      | 14.39        |             | 2.40  | 4016 | 101    | 11.99    | Zoom Nov                |
| 07/11/2022              | AmazonUK                 | PP39      | 9.89         |             | 1.65  | 4015 | 101    | 8.24     | Container lock          |
| 07/11/2022              | NALC                     | PP40      | 38.93        |             |       | 4007 | 101    | 38.93    | Training                |
| 07/11/2022              | The Poppy Shop           | PP41      | 83.95        |             | 13.99 | 4010 | 101    | 69.96    | Poppy wreaths           |
| 07/11/2022              | Blinds2Go                | PP42      | 228.68       |             | 38.11 | 4015 | 101    | 190.57   | Blinds parish office    |
| 07/11/2022              | Wealden District Council | PP43      | 53.00        |             |       | 5101 | 500    | 53.00    | Register Ph/Hse address |
| Total Payments:         |                          |           | 444.68       | 0.00        | 56.15 |      |        | 388.53   |                         |

**002387** **RESOLVED** to pay the November invoices listed above, to pay by BACS/sign the cheques accordingly

### 12.3 To consider quotes

There were no quotes.

### **13. REPORTS FROM MEETINGS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Obbard had attended the Ashdown Forest Parishes Liaison meeting. Parking charges on the Forest would begin the following week.

Cllr Gordon-James had attended an East Sussex Police Forum and felt the geographical reach to be too wide for the meeting to be of benefit.

Cllr Watkins had attended the Wealden Police Community Focus Group and would circulate a written note of the meeting. With regards concerns about pavement parking at Corseley Road, Operation Crackdown had been highlighted for reporting such issues.

Cllr Anderson and Cllr Winter had attended the NALC Climate Emergency Networking Group. They were pleased to see WPC is already covering many points.

Cllr Kelly had hosted the Wealdlink Parishes' meeting at the parish office, which was the first face to face meeting since Covid.

Cllr Obbard understood that some parishes would like to work together on the 20s Plenty initiative. The Clerks are gathering further information from ESCC and would bring this back to Council in the new year.

### **14. CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk is working on the budget and Precept request for 2023/24. Finance Committee will consider this on 28<sup>th</sup> November and make a recommendation to December or January Council.

The parish office will close from 2pm on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December and reopen at 9.30am on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January for Christmas. Any emails and phone messages to the parish office during that time will receive a response on re-opening. Contact details for ES Highways and the Police would be advertised.

The Community Warden had broken his ankle and was unable to work. The Council sent their best wishes for his recovery.

Councillors received the timetable for the next newsletter, and the list of topics to be included. Any further suggestions or offers of help should be relayed to the Assistant Clerk.

**15. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA:**

- Councillor Co-options (December)
- Budget and Precept 2023/24 (December or January)
- Wild verge signage (tbc)
- 20s Plenty (new year)

**22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING** - the proposed date of the next Council meeting is Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 7.30pm, to be held at The Parish Office unless otherwise notified by the agenda.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm