

Minutes of the **WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held at
THE OLD STATION, GROOMBRIDGE
on **8th April 2024** at 7pm

PRESENT Cllrs Nick Anderson, Andrew Fane, Alan Gaukroger,
Robert Gordon-James, Diana Kelly (Chair), Jill Pardey,
Deviani Parekh-Jones, Penny Lawne, Beth Rhodes, Judi
Tuke, Linsey Winter

In attendance: Deborah Siddle - Clerk (minutes)

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.
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 – District Cllr Jessika Hulbert
County Cllr Georgia Taylor

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - none

4. MINUTES

4.1. Resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 11th March 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

002682 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2024 were approved.

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

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg 2885	Cllr Anderson	Concerns that Msporti cannot afford to operate from the Tanyard raised at GSGA meeting
Pg. 2886	Cllr Parekh-Jones	Will meet with the Guide leader and Scout leader regarding bulb planting later in the year
Pg. 2935	Cllr Gordon-James	Responded to questions raised for WPCIC
002657	Clerk	Streetlight Design/Works brief sent to East Sussex Highways
002658	Clerk	Estimates for Orchard Rise, Withyham Road and Birchden Corner streetlight works up to £3,383.39+VAT agreed
002659	Clerk	Response sent to KCC DMMO for Groombridge Place footbridge
Pg. 2937	Clerk	Notes prepared from Visioning item for 20 th April

002661	Clerk	Adopted the Risk Assessment and Management Policy
002662	Clerk	Adopted the Pensions Discretions Policy
002663	Clerk	Adopted the Capability Policy
002664	Clerk	Adopted the Dignity at Work Policy
002665	Clerk	Adopted the Volunteer Policy & Agreement
002666	Clerk	Adopted the Volunteer Problem Solving Policy
002667	Clerk	Adopted the Volunteer Equal Opportunities & Managing Diversity Statement
Pg. 2939	Councillors & staff	Diarised 20 th April for a Visioning/Parish Plan session and 25 th May for the Annual Parish Assembly

Actions outstanding from previous minutes

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 2827	Clerk	Marden's Hill speed reduction to be placed on a future agenda when information is received from the resident
Pg 2860	Clerk	Investigate whether the Community Payback Team could be involved in any future projects
Pg 2884	Cllr Anderson	Arrange a Groombridge Ward meeting
Pg 2884	Cllr Fane	Feedback from future meetings, if they arise, about Ashurst and Blackham Sportsground
Pg 2885	Council	Receive a debrief on the success of the May Fair traffic management plans after the event
Pg 2887	Assistant Clerk	Have a recruitment push for Speedwatch in the village magazines in the new year
002623	Clerk	Set up a bank account with Unity Trust Bank with all members of Finance Committee on the mandate
Pg. 2920	Assistant Clerk	Summer Facebook posts to include information on reporting overgrown verges
Pg. 2920	Clerks	Next newsletter to contain more information about what we spend money on
Pg. 2922	Cllr Taylor	Raise WPC's concerns about cats eyes not being a part of the ESH contract, particularly in rural areas
Pg. 2922	Councillors	Let Cllr Winter know if they require cover for their allocated community café

Actions from these Minutes

It was felt that a message via the WI was not an appropriate route to find new Speedwatch volunteers, but notices in the noticeboards could be.

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 2956	Cllr Gordon-James	Check whether the Police had been asked to help at Groombridge May Fair
Pg. 2956	Cllr Kelly and Clerk	Meet with two prospective councillors
Pg. 2956	Cllr Pardey	Report the pot holes at Lye Green to ESH
002683	Clerk	Confirm that WPC permits a defibrillator to be installed at St John's Reading Room
Pg. 2956	Cllr Gaukroger	Keep abreast of Gatwick developments and report back to Council as necessary.
Pg. 2956	Cllr Gaukroger	Review whether WPC should be a member of any existing Gatwick campaign groups
002685	Clerk	Update RBS with Earmarked Reserves for 2024/25
002686	Clerk	Adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy Policy
002687	Clerk	Adopt the Borrowing & Investment Strategy
002688	Clerk	Adopt the Fees & Charges Policy
Pg. 2959	Cllrs Tuke and Winter	Update WPC noticeboards with information as described
Pg. 2959	Clerk	Future agendas to include Glyphosate response and Marden's Hill road safety

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES

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 Planning Committee – 11th March 2024 – noted

5.2 Finance Committee – 25th March 2024 – noted

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT and COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Taylor had provided a report from ESCC on its achievements in 2023/24 which had been shared with Councillors prior to the meeting.

7. WARD REPORTS**7a) Groombridge Ward (Groombridge)**

Cllr Gordon-James reported back from a meeting with the St Thomas' School Parent Association Chair regarding the traffic management plans for the May Fair. Steward volunteers would be managing traffic flow on Station Road and a further four volunteers were needed. Residents along Station Road would be asked to park at the parish office spaces for the day to assist this. The Pig had offered a field for parking at Groombridge Place, should the ground be dry enough and Stewards would be required

there also. Cllr Gordon-James would check whether the Police had been asked to help.

7b) Groombridge Ward (Withyham/Blackham)

Meetings were being arranged with two prospective Councillors and the Chair and Clerk.

7c) Marden's Hill Ward

Cllr Pardey reported that the pot holes at Lye Green are particularly bad, she was encouraged to make reports to ES Highways.

The Clerk had been approached by the Ashdown Forest Conservators, from whom WPC has a licence for the Reading Room land, asking to site a defibrillator there. The cost, installation and maintenance would be undertaken by Crowborough First Responders through a Legacy. Councillors agreed that this would be a very important addition.

002683 **RESOLVED** to permit a defibrillator to be installed at St John's Reading Room by Crowborough First Responders

8. VISIONING / PARISH PLAN – “Putting the Current Parish Plan to Bed” discussion

On 20th April WPC Councillors and Staff will meet to consider the next Parish Plan 2024 to 2028. As at the March Council meeting, Councillors were asked to consider several headings of the current Parish Plan, what essential services we should we continue to deliver and if there is anything we should no longer do. The Clerk took notes of the discussion and these will feed into the 20th April session.

9. CONSIDER GLYPHOSATE LETTER

Deferred to next meeting.

10. CONFIRM WPC APPROACH TO GATWICK AIRPORT

Councillors had received information prior to the meeting outlining concerns that proposals are being developed on a new flight path over the Parish.

Councillors noted that the Council had had an Air Traffic Committee but this had stopped being active. It was AGREED that it would be premature to reinstate that Committee until more is known and in the meantime Council would respond on a case by case basis. It was also noted that the Climate and Ecology Advisory Group have had some discussions on the matter.

Cllr Gaukroger agreed to keep abreast of developments and report back to Council as necessary. He would also look at whether it would be appropriate for WPC to be a member of any existing campaign groups.

11. FINANCE:

11.1 Note the report showing payments made to date against budgets – noted.

WPC/8.4.2024 002957**11.2 Authorise the payment of April invoices/note regular payments**

Council noted payments authorised by March Finance Committee and contained within those minutes. The following April payments were agreed:

Date	Payee	Ref	Amount	Code	Details
08/04/2024	British Gas Lite	DDBGL0424	242.66	4502	Post Office/Ph Hse electricity
08/04/2024	Michael Bell Brand Comms	BACS1	348	4018	Annual website hosting 24-25
08/04/2024	Rosemary Newton Trust	BACS2	302.21	4200	Groombridge Rec Ground rent 24-25
08/04/2024	PWLB/Debt Management Office	PWLBPlay1	2831.28	4219	Loan repayment Gb Playground
08/04/2024	Groombridge tennis Club	BACS3	500	4101	Grant - Padel court
08/04/2024	Withyham & Blackham PCC	BACS4	800	4101	Grant - maintenance Blackham Churchyard
08/04/2024	Wealden Citizens Advice	BACS5	800	4101	Grant towards running costs
08/04/2024	Air Ambulance	BACS6	350	4101	Grant towards Helicopter services
08/04/2024	St John's the Evangelist (Crowborough)	BACS7	1000	4101	Grant for scaffolding for roof repairs
08/04/2024	Groombridge Village Hall	BACS8	1000	4101	Grant for replacement chairs
08/04/2024	The Premier Trust T Newman	SOTN0424	666.66	4012	Parish Office rent (April)
08/04/2024	The Premier Trust N Houghton	SONH0424	666.67	4012	Parish Office rent (April)
08/04/2024	Alex Chenchik	BACS9	11.57	4407	PMP Mileage (March)
08/04/2024	Groombridge Village Hall	BACS10	35.56	4064	Community Café hall hire (March)
08/04/2024	B Agutter	BACS11	14.85	4421	Highways Coord Mileage (March)
08/04/2024	Opus Energy	DDOPUS0424	139.66	4502	Elec Parish Office (est)
08/04/2024	N Wealden Community Transport	BACS12	157	4401	Wealdlink Qtr1
08/04/2024	Rialtas Business Solutions	BACS13	230.4	4016	Finance package licence 24-25
08/04/2024	Biffa	BACS14	78.75	4506	Parish Office bins (March)
08/04/2024	Withyham Parish CIC	BACS15	1000	5001	Subsidy Post Office (April)
08/04/2024	East Sussex County Council	BACS16	1242	4226	Urban verges Grass cuts - 4 extra
08/04/2024	D Siddle	BACS17	15	4407	Paint for parish office kitchen
08/04/2024	Various	BACS18	4752.64	4000 4003	Salaries (April)
08/04/2024	NEST Pensions	DDNEST0424	477.05	4001	Pensions (April)
08/04/2024	Prepaid Card	CB1 to PPC	17.88	4510 4016	CB1 to PPC for April Exp
08/04/2024	SME IT Solutions	BACS19	387.6	4021	IT support contract April
			18067.4		

002684 RESOLVED to pay the April invoices listed above; to pay by BACS or sign the cheques accordingly.

11.3 Note the WPC Grants agreed at March Finance Committee - noted Cllr Winter reported that March Finance Committee had considered grants from the 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets. There had been twelve applications requesting more funds than were available and this led to a lengthy discussion. The Finance Committee minutes show that as three of these applicants could spend funds before the end of March, these awards had been made from the 2023/24 budget. Of the remaining applications, six had been awarded from the 2024/25 budget of £10,000 totalling £4,450 and three applications were deferred pending further information. This left £5,550 in the 2024/25 budget should those applicants reapply and for any further applications.

Cllr Winter was commended for her chairing of a very complex meeting.

11.4 Agree Earmarked Reserves for 2024/25 (recommended by Finance Committee)

002685 RESOLVED to agree the following Earmarked Reserves for 2024/25

Code	Name	Est at 31.3.23 (£)	24/25
325	Teasley Mead Play Equipment (<i>in progress</i>)	2,500	2,500
327	Groombridge Play Area [£3,027 is the balance on the funds raised]	2,761.60	3,027
329	Road Safety Projects	3,000	3,000
332	WPC Volunteers (<i>ringfenced as this was a grant from WDC</i>)	1,940.10	1,940.10
333	Parish Office Repairs	3,000	3,000
336	CiL	18,832.16	18,566.76
337	Parish Assets e.g. new bus shelters, benches, noticeboards etc Agreed 24/25 Precept would include £35K for this budget	3,000	38,000*
338	Environmental Improvements (CEAG)	4,017.42	4,017.42
340	Streetlights (<i>new columns are £3-4K</i>)	3,000	3,000
341	Post Office/Phoenix House Maintenance	475	475
342	FUTURE Elections May 2023 - WDC cost scenarios: £12,800 (Groombridge Ward £8,400 & Marden's Hill Ward £4,400) assuming that the District Ward is uncontested - If District and Parish are both contested, estimate £8,000 – that includes contingency of 15%. - If none of the Parish Wards are contested, then there is still a charge £1,432.	6,768.39	6,768.39
		48,804.67	83,804.67

12. POLICIES FOR AGREEMENT

12.1 Community Infrastructure Levy Policy (recommended by Planning Committee)

002686 RESOLVED to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy Policy

12.2 Borrowing & Investment Strategy (recommended by Finance Committee)

002687 RESOLVED to adopt the Borrowing & Investment Strategy

002688 12.3 Fees & Charges (recommended by Finance Committee)
RESOLVED to adopt the Fees & Charges Policy

13. COUNCILLOR MEETINGS AND TRAINING ATTENDED

Cllrs Kelly and Parekh-Jones had attended the Wealden Parish Conference. They had found this a useful networking opportunity and very informative, particularly about the draft Local Plan.

Cllrs Parekh-Jones had attended an Emotional Intelligence seminar which helps to understand how best to work together and understand people's behaviours. She would circulate the supporting documents.

Cllrs Winter and Anderson had attended Finance training which they had found helpful. The notes had been circulated to other members of the Finance Committee.

Cllrs Kelly and Rhodes had met to discuss our community messaging, starting with reviewing our content for the Parish magazines. Cllr Rhodes was building a matrix of what information we should share and when over the year, as well as interesting historical information about the Parish. Cllr Gordon-James had attended training on Councillor Recruitment and Retention. It confirmed that we do many things right as well as the importance of communicating about what we do well with residents and all Councillors taking responsibility for identifying new potential councillors.

It was AGREED that information should go into our noticeboards about being a councillor along with information about WPC, an advert for Speedwatch volunteers and instructions on how to report issues to other agencies. Cllrs Tuke and Winter would lead.

Cllr Lawne had attended a meeting about the draft Wealden Local Plan. Consultation runs to 10th May and WPC's Planning Committee members would be meeting on 22nd April to discuss a response.

Councillors were reminded to diarise 20th April for a Visioning/Parish Plan session and 25th May for the Annual Parish Assembly.

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

- Glyphosate response
- Marden's Hill Road Safety (when resident provides further information)

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 15th May 2024 (Annual Statutory Meeting) at Groombridge Old Station at 7pm unless otherwise notified by the agenda

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.