

WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Meeting of Warbleton Parish Council held on Thursday 25 July 2024 7pm at Bodle Street Green Village Hall

1. **Attendance:** Councillors Charlie Saunders (Chair), Katy Whymark (Vice-Chair), Beverley Saunders, Andy Long, Chris Wells, Bob Bowdler and Jeanne Peterson (Clerk)

Apologies for absence: Councillors Buster Ansell and Bruce Simpson
It was resolved to accept the apologies as given

Other attendees: District Councillor Greg Collins

2. **Declarations of Interest**

2.1. None

3. **Minutes**

3.1. **It was resolved** that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 June 2024 were a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

- 3.2. **Matters Arising**

It was questioned whether there had been any update following last month's report of the environmental issue at Furnace Brook Fishery, but there was no further information. It was noted that ESCC are aware and it is in the hands of the Environment Agency.

4. **Public Participation**

Two members of the public were present. The following points were raised:

- Concern was expressed that the council is considering taking over responsibility within the parish of managing the cut back of hedgerows and trees. It is the statutory duty of the higher authority (ESCC Highways) to undertake this and the supporting work load involved. Inspecting roads and checking ownership could be beyond parish capacity if it takes on the costs and liability. The clerk works part time hours and this project would create a burden of additional hours. Warbleton parishioners would be paying twice for the service as a portion is already accounted to ESCC via council tax. It is ESCC that should be holding landowners to account. Any contracted works would need to go to Tender.

The council responded that it was looking at this option only as a way of getting things going and to try and engage action by landowners. It would only be considered as a temporary measure. Parish Councils are very much being encouraged to send out letters in the first instance before ESCC follows up if no action has been taken. Cllr Long and Cllr Wells offered on a voluntary basis to hand deliver letter notices to landowners.

- It was reported that the evening event planned by the Little Arts Festival on 10th August had now been diverted to the Friday, therefore negating the need for additional car parking facilities on the 10th when there is another private event being held in the village.

5. Reports

5.1. County Councillor Bob Bowdler

- A monthly report had been circulated. It was noted again that ESCC cannot afford to take on the management of all the hedgerows and trees that fall within the county area. WPC's idea to deliver initial letters to offending landowners within the parish is a compromise.
- The clerk has been sent information to circulate on an upcoming road closure in Dallington.
- A question was raised whether land which appears not to be in anyone's ownership could be taken on by ESCC. Information will be sent to Cllr Bowdler on the unregistered land near C15/Marklye Lane.

5.2 District Councillors - Cllr Cornelie Osborne was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Greg Collins made the following report:

- Confirmed that the Environment Agency had been asked about the pollution incident and had been told that an investigation is ongoing
- Wealden District Council (WDC) are expecting advice as to the new planning policy framework following the recent election of a new Government.
- Responses to the Local Plan have been uploaded to the WDC website.
- The Local Government Association had initiated a peer review exercise the results of which are published on the WDC website.
- A capital grant is available to fund community green spaces for improvement or to create active travel.
- Cllr Collins was asked who is the new head of enforcement as the Three Cups site remains in a poor state and with the fencing down again – could a 215 Untidy Land Notice be served? Cllr Collins will follow this up and talk with planning officers. There is an upcoming meeting with planning portfolio holders with the director of the planning service to discuss the position generally about Three Cups and another couple of listed buildings. There is no statutory time limit on the pre-application stage.

5.3 PCSO Megan Driscoll: No report was available. The clerk was asked to formally correspond with the lead on PCSO activity to try and engage regular communication with the local officer.

5.4 Parish Councillors:

- Cllr Beverley Saunders:** A written report of the last Dunn Village Hall Committee meeting held on 01.07.24 had been circulated and was noted. Although the water leak has been sorted out in the cellar, there remains a problem with dry rot for which the committee will be applying for grants to fund tanking it. It was agreed that information would be fed back to the hall committee about any available grants and that WDC has its own grants officer who could help.
- Cllr Beverley Saunders :** A written report of the last Bodle Street Green Village Hall Committee meeting held on 11.07.24 had been circulated and was noted.

5.5 Parish Clerk:

- A written report had been circulated and was noted. The clerk added that the defibrillator at the White Horse Inn at Bodle Street had recently been removed without any explanation to the council. On contacting Heathfield & Waldron First Responders the clerk had been told it was removed for a battery change.
The clerk was asked to write a formal letter on behalf of the council to Heathfield & Waldron First Responders to express its concern about the recent removal of the device and the lack of notification to the council or even a notice on the unit site.
- The clerk will email councillors to arrange the removal of the existing notice board at Rushlake Green so that the installation of the new board can be arranged.

6. Committee reports

6.1. The proceedings of the following committee meetings were noted:

- i. Planning & Development – minutes of the 23.06.2024 meeting had been circulated also the draft minutes of 16.07.2024.

7. Finance

7.1 **It was resolved** to authorise the payment of the July bills (payment list as circulated) which includes the deposit return to Rude Mechanicals

7.2 A question was raised about the reserve movement report which noted a £10 income as refund following an overpayment in May. It was confirmed that this had been reported on the May 2024 Bank Reconciliation report; a payment had been set up in error as £24.39 to the clerk when it should have been £14.39. The £10 discrepancy was repaid 3.6.2024.

It was resolved to accept the bank reconciliation, the budget monitor & reserve movement reports for 30 June 2024.

7.3 **It was resolved** that as there is no council meeting during August the month's bills will be prepared for payment under the delegated authority of the clerk for authorisation by the council's signatories and then presented at the September meeting.

7.4 **It was resolved** that the council's Discretionary Grant application round which will be considered within the 2025/2026 budget discussions will open on corresponding dates as last year Monday 16 September 2024 and close on Friday 17 January 2025. The clerk will update the paperwork and was authorised to contact local organisations who may wish to apply. The clerk was asked to include Wealden Works. It was noted that 1600 remains in the current year budget for discretionary grant allocation.

8. Appointment of Representatives to outside bodies

8.1 **It was resolved** that Councillor Katy Whymark will represent the council at the Wealden District Association of Local Councils (WDALC). Other members will step in on the occasions that she is unable to attend.

8.2 **It was resolved** that Councillor Chris Wells will continue as the council's representative on the Warbleton Charity Committee for the remainder of the term of the council.

9. Overflow car parking

This issue was discussed during Item 4. and has already been resolved by the Little Arts Festival group.

Information was shared about an ESCC lead members meeting to discuss a campaign to slow traffic around schools. Warbleton Parish currently does not have a crossing or speed restrictions in the vicinity of the school. Cllr Bowlder will look into whether the renewed speed indication device data can be used in evidence to support some control.

10. Casual Vacancies

A member of the public present at the meeting expressed interest in joining the council and gave some background as to their experience. It was agreed that the clerk would email over general information on being a councillor and the application details.

11. Warbleton Emergency & Resilience Planning

11.1 It has proved problematic obtaining accurate photos of the village hall fuse boards to give load limit information for the electrician. A photo has now been obtained for Dunn Village Hall, and one is to be completed this evening at Bodle Street. Cllr Simpson is in communication with UK Power Networks and EDF (suppliers of generators in emergency situations) to see whether there are any parameters from their point of view that should also be taken into consideration.

11.2 Quotes are still awaited from accredited water testing laboratories for testing the Spring Hill Well. Cllr Whymark will chase these.

12. Highways maintenance

12.1 There has been no response from ESCC to WPC's request for information on a temporary transfer application for the management of hedgerows and trees. The clerk was asked to chase this.

12.2 **It was resolved** that the draft information to inform landowners about managing hedgerows within their ownership be made available on the website and via social media. It was agreed that Cllrs Long and Wells would hand deliver letters on behalf of the council to individual landowners where it is evident that cut back is required. The clerk will provide the template letters as drafted with revised addressee to "Resident." The clerk was asked to improve the document which gives visual dimensions of cut back and this would then be attached to each letter as well as available on the website.

12.3 The clerk reported that the council's request for information regarding details on the agreed works protocol [pot holes] between ESCC and contractor has been referred as a Freedom of Information Request.

13. Exclusion of press and public

13.1 **It was resolved** to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during consideration of item 13.2 pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the exempt nature of the business to be transacted due to legal and confidential considerations.

14. Urgent matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda - None

15. Date of next meeting – Thursday 26 September 2024 at Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm