

WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



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WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES of proceedings for the monthly meeting of Washington Parish Council held on Monday 5th June 2023.

PRESENT: Cllr B Hanvey, Cllr P Heeley, Cllr A Lisher (Vice-Chairman) and Cllr J Luckin

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC), Cllr Emma Beard (HDC) and Cllr Joan Grech (HDC).

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Ms Z Savill

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 0

ABSENT: Chairman, Cllr Keech and Cllr Thomas.

The Vice-Chairman opened the meeting at 19:30 hours.

FC23/89 **To Consider accepting Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements**
Apologies with reasons for absence from the Chairman, Cllr Keech and Cllr Thomas were received and it was **RESOLVED** they be **ACCEPTED**. There were no announcements.

FC23/90 **To Record Declarations of interest from members on any item to be discussed and Consider Dispensations.**
There were no declarations of interests as defined under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's adopted Code of Conduct or requests for dispensations. Members were reminded to report any changes to their register of interests forms.

FC23/91 **Minutes of the last meeting**
Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2023 and Confidential Report of Minute Item **FC23/88** regarding legal advice for Rampion 2 agent's request for survey licences.

FC23/92 **Public Speaking**
None

S.S.B

County Reports

WSCC Cllr Marshall reported that he was taking up concerns from Ashington Parish about traffic issues with the recent Big Day Out. He asked if any were received from Washington residents. None raised.

Cllr Heeley asked if CLAG3 had taken up Andrew Griffith MP's offer earlier in the year for a meeting to discuss their concerns about the Rock Common Quarry planning proposals. Cllr Marshall commented that he had pushed for a meeting but nothing had been arranged. He reported that the application had been potentially scheduled for consideration on 19th May but no other date had been confirmed.

District Reports

Cllr Grech took questions from members and reported on the following:

- **Longbury Hill Wood - planned enforcement action**
An update on HDC's planned legal proceedings were not received in time for the meeting. Cllr Hanvey commented that the compliance case had been going on for a long time without any effective decisions being made and that District Members should push HDC to enforce the planning condition. Cllr Grech agreed to take this up with the legal department.
- **Old Clayton Kennels planning application** – this would be going to HDC Planning Committee for consideration on 20th June.
- **South Downs National Park elections:** Cllr Grech had been elected as the Horsham District Council representative on the SDNPA board.
- **Government consultation on proposed increase in Infrastructure Levy on buildings:** will HDC be giving this any consideration and what are they doing with the district's portion of Washington's portion received from local development, estimated at about £270k? Cllr Grech agreed to find out and report back to the Council.

To Report and Update the Action List from the last meeting.

The following to be noted for information:

Action	Progress
Clerk chased up WSCC Highways for response to the Parish Council's request to make a licence application for Speed Activation Device in Rock Road.	HA Assistant Area Manager confirmed (1 st June) that he will assess the site for a suitable location for the SID so that the council can make an application. He apologized for the delay which was due to a very high number of reports of safety issues on the roads.
WSCC Highways agreed that works for hatchings outside the Allotment entrance should take place 31 st May. This did not take place. This was reported to the HA	HA Highways Manager confirmed (5 th June) that he will chase this up with the contractor and update the council. Information pending.

To respond to further FOI request from a resident regarding the Council's grant decision for a forestry track in Georges Lane bridleway. Clerk reported on reasons for further delays to the response due to significant workload of other higher priority business, pushed back by the loss of 21 working hours due to the recent 3 bank holidays.	Further response in progress.
The council's TPO (Tree Preservation Order) application for the Washington Scarlet apple tree in the allotment. The HDC Tree Officer assessed the tree on 1 st June and reported that it did not meet all the criteria for a TPO.	To be reported to the next OSRA meeting.
PO Box address – The Post Office had not responded to the Clerks requests for invoicing for the new address since March. All legal and banking correspondence was reaching the Council as normal.	Clerk to chase.

FC23/95 To Comment on Planning Applications in the parish received for this meeting.
DC/23/0993 – The Clearing Rock Road Storrington West Sussex
Conversion of loft into habitable space, including raising of existing roof height, installation of front and rear dormers. Installation of 16no. solar panels to southern roof slope. Removal of existing balustrade and installation of replacement glass balustrade to first floor rear terrace.
 Following a discussion it was agreed to table this item on the Planning & Transport Agenda next month.

FC23/96 To Report planning decisions of significant applications in the parish
 None

FC23/97 Planning Compliance

The following cases were noted for information.

Longbury Hill Wood, Rock Road Storrington – Breach of Condition Notice August 2022 in relation to Condition 7 of DC/17/2117.

The Vice-Chairman commented that the matter was being raised with HDC by Cllr Grech, as agreed in her district reports earlier in the meeting. There was no further discussion.

SDNP/23/00240/LB - Frankland Arms London Road Washington - 23rd May 2023

Alleged: materials used for patio area and balustrade are not as approved under SDNP/21/05690/FUL and SDNP/22/04274/DCOND

It was noted that other issues had been raised with HDC by a parishioner regarding allegations of excessive noise and a licensing issue. He had consented that the complaints could be forwarding to the District Ward Members. Clerk to action.

FC23/98 To Report any Appeals lodged in the parish or decisions
 None reported.

S.S.B

- FC23/100 To Report any maintenance issues affecting Parish Council property outside the Recreation Ground and Agree any required action**
None raised
- FC23/101 To Appoint additional banking signatories**
It was reported that a payment could not be made before 1st June in accordance with the terms because none of the four approved signatories had been available or able to make the transaction. The Clerk/RFO explained that whilst it was an unusual occurrence, the Council must be able to meet its financial obligations for payments. Following a discussion, Cllr Luckin and Cllr Hanvey agreed to be Council signatories.
The Council **RESOLVED** they be appointed as Full Power signatories under the two-to-authorise mandate arrangements. A mandate was signed at the end of the meeting by the Vice-Chairman and Cllr Heeley, to be posted to the bank. Clerk to action.
- FC23/102 Budget Monitoring: To Report the Council's current 2023/24 budget position**
A report of the Council's current position from 1st April to end of June 2023 and adopted Budget was previously circulated. It was noted that there was a 3% variance in staff payments, anticipated only for this first quarter, due to the staff pay increase awarded in March. Otherwise, the Council was operating within budget. This would be covered by the Council's 6 months' reserves for operating costs. Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to note the budget position.
- FC23/103 To Appoint a representative for the Council on the Rampion 2 Community (Onshore) Project Liaison Group (PLG) and Agree on any matters to be raised**
Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** in the interests of continuity to ask Cllr Thomas if he is willing to continue as the Council's previously appointed representative of the PLG. Clerk to action.
- FC23/104 To Consider an invitation to the Rampion 2 Community (Onshore) Project Liaison Group (PLG) online meeting on 14th June and Agree on any matters to be raised.**
An invitation from Paula Seager, Independent PLG Chair and Facilitator, on behalf of Rampion 2, for the online Teams meeting on Wednesday 14th June 6.30pm was previously circulated. It was noted that the project team will be announcing the final onshore cable route proposals and communicating next steps on the Development Consent Order (DCO) process and timeline for Rampion 2. Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to ask Cllr Thomas if he can attend; to raise the following comment: *To confirm the Parish Council's opposition to the route (currently proposed) and to ask for that to be noted in the PLG minutes.* Clerk to action.
- FC23/105 To Consider the retention of the Council's single noticeboards**
Councillors discussed the proposal in the minutes of the CIL Working Party's last meeting (27th April 2023) for disposal of the Council's single boards at Montpelier Gardens and Spring Gardens. The OSRA Committee had requested at their last meeting (22nd May 2023) for this to be considered by Full Council. A copy of the asset register showing the value of the boards was also circulated. The clerk advised on the council's legal position on disposal of assets.

It was noted that increasing occurrences of flooding of the Old London Road exit in winter months made it impossible to access the Spring Gardens noticeboard for displaying notices. The council had previously agreed not to use the board at Rock Road for reasons of inaccessibility. The single boards were not big enough to publish all the required statutory notices and meeting agendas. It was reported that the boards had been installed years ago before the Council had a website and that this and the three double noticeboards were sufficient in meeting the publication requirements of council information. The CIL Working Party had agreed that it would be more prudent to spend monies only on the noticeboards which are required.

It was noted that although the pinboards needed replacing, the posts themselves were not dangerous or likely to fall over. But the Council would need to consider the cost implications for removing them in the future. The Vice-Chairman commented that removing the noticeboards would hopefully encourage more people to visit the Council's website.

Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to display notices on the single boards announcing they would be decommissioned and to direct them to the website for Council information. The Council would consider any feedback received when they discuss disposal of the boards at a future meeting.

FC23/106

To Consider taking part in a group local council training session.

The Council discussed a proposal from the Storrington & Sullington Parish Clerk for a bespoke training session with Mulberry & Co. It would be for up to 20 councillors at a cost of £450 in total. Councillors were asked before the meeting to provide suitable dates and times, i.e. mornings or evenings.

Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** it was a good idea and to confirm an interest in principal. Clerk to ask if 3 or 4 different dates could be offered, based on the take-up by other councils.

Washington Recreation Ground Charity

FC23/107

To Report any urgent maintenance issues on the Recreation Ground and Agree required action

It was reported that the frame had snapped on one of the MUGA goal posts. Following a discussion it was resolved to delegate action for repairs to the Clerk within £200 or consider replacing both goals.

FC23/108

To Report Year End 2022.23 Annual Return for the Washington Recreation Ground Charity

The Clerk had completed and previously circulated the 2022/23 Annual Return for the Washington Recreation Ground Charity. This was noted. Clerk to report the AR to the Charity Commission.

FC23/109

To receive the draft minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting on 22nd May 2023.

The draft minutes were noted and the recommendation for the Finance Committee to review the requirements for the Council on seeking quotations for works and services. Clerk to convene a Finance meeting for this between the Planning & Transport Meeting and the OSRA meeting next month.

FC23/110

To Receive the draft minutes of the Planning & Transport Committee Meeting on 22nd May 2023

The meeting was cancelled.

S.J.B.

FC23/111**To Consider a shortlist of community projects proposed by the CIL Working Party which may benefit from CIL funding**

A copy of the CIL Working Party's recommended list of CIL projects in the minutes of its last meeting (27th April), the CIL Survey responses (anonymised), NALC guide on CIL spending, and other supporting papers were previously circulated and discussed. It was noted that the Village Hall projects had been shortlisted from the Council's CIL Survey in 2022. The Hall Trustees had refined their proposals in one document which was also circulated. The Council projects for Recreation Ground/Play Area improvements were previously put forward by the OSRA Committee subject to costs. It was noted that all the projects met the CIL expenditure requirements. The Clerk advised on the Council's legal position on granting monies including the S137 requirements.

Councillors agreed that it was absolutely right to spend the CIL funds on the parish's two biggest assets which were the Village Hall and Recreation Ground but to determine how this should be done. Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to agree the projects in principal subject to further legal advice from HDC on CIL granting requirements. To review this before engaging with a representative from the Village Hall Trustees on how their proposals can satisfy the legal specification requirements and tendering for quotations. Clerk to action.

FC/23/112**To Approve the Payments Schedule for this meeting**

The following payments totalling **£4,167.01** with invoices were previously circulated

The Council **RESOLVED** they be **APPROVED** and that the payments for the annual website hosting be further deferred subject to confirmation of the correct package. Authority for the payment to be delegated to the Clerk in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

Washington Parish Council									
PAYMENTS TO APPROVE: FC JUNE 2023									
Voucher	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
33	Clerk's salary net	08/06/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Clerk's salary (net)	Washington Parish Council	1,683.30		1,683.30
34	Clerk's expenses	03/06/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Clerk's Mileage	Washington Parish Council	20.70		20.70
35	Office expenses	03/06/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Office phone contract	Washington Parish Council	9.00		9.00
36	Clerk's expenses	08/05/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Electricity	Washington Parish Council	26.00		26.00
37	Clerk's expenses	08/05/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Broadband	Washington Parish Council	20.00		20.00
38	Special Projects	08/05/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	DeFlo Cabinet - CIL Project	J Electrical	320.00	64.00	384.00
39	Parish recreation ground maintenance	08/05/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Grounds maintenance	Sussex Land Services Ltd	445.80	89.16	534.96
40	Insurance	06/05/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Insurance	BHB Ltd	975.35		975.35
41	Office expenses	08/06/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	DPO Service	Satswans Limited	150.00	30.00	180.00
42	HDC Dog Bin cleansing	08/06/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Dog Bins	Hersham District Council	37.96		37.96
43	Subscriptions and legal fees	08/06/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	SLCC subscription	Society of Local Council Clerks	187.00		187.00
44	Clerk's Pension	08/06/2023	FC June 2023	Lloyds Current Account	Pension	NEST	108.74		108.74
Total							3,983.85	183.16	4,167.01

S.S.B

FC/23/113 To Approve an adjustment to the Payments Schedule for the FC May 2023 meeting.
The Payments Schedule totalling £5,450.57 was approved at the last meeting. and previously circulated.
It was reported that the £31.18 for the allotment gate padlock was incorrect and should have been shown as £20.19. The correct amount was paid but the schedule should be adjusted to show total payments of **£5,436.58** The Council reviewed this and it was **RESOLVED** to agree the adjusted payments schedule.

FC/23/114 To Approve the following financial reports:

Reports of the following were previously circulated:

Outstanding purchase orders: **£378.00 Post Box address* (*Royal Mail invoice pending)**

Outstanding sales invoices: **£420**

Outstanding CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy): **£13,423.91** (from Vineyards Development).

Income: **£1,110.06** first payment of the 2023.24 HDC cleansing grant

Bank Reconciliation Lloyds current account: **£67,021.53 for May 2023**

Bank Reconciliation for Nationwide Business Savings Account: **£85,419.26**

The Council **RESOLVED** the financial reports be **APPROVED**. Clerk to transfer the £419.26 interest from the Nationwide account to the Lloyds account.

FC/23/114 VAT

It was noted that the Q1 2023/24 VAT would be reclaimed in July 2023 and would be reported to the FC July meeting.

FC/23/115 PAYE and National Insurance contributions

It was noted that the Q1 2023/24 tax and insurance contributions would be due July 2023 and would be reported to the FC Jul meeting in the payments schedule.

FC/23/116 Correspondence report

None reported.

FC/23/117 Clerk's Report

The following reports were noted:

- GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

Councillors were reminded to delete general email correspondence over 6 months in accordance with the Council's privacy and file retention policies published on the website.

- Advanced warning on public access restriction to HDC's planning website

Warning received (17th May) from HDC that access to the Public Access to the planning website will be unavailable due to WSCC carrying out electrical work, on the following dates:

— 5pm Friday 19th – end Sunday 21st May 2023

— Tuesday 11th – Thursday 13th July 2023

— Saturday 16th September 2023

SJR

These are confirmed dates but change is always possible. Councillors urged to Plan accordingly. HDC's Systems and Performance Officer will try to respond to Any urgent requirement for documents during the mid-week July outage, Subject to the number of requests received.

- **Consultation on Community Infrastructure Levy until 9th June.**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) were consulting on proposals to increase the Infrastructure Levy that local authorities receive from real estate developers in England. Closing date for responses is 9th June 2023; responses to NALC is 17th May. NALC briefing note and explanatory note from WSALC were noted.

- **Notice from West Sussex County Council - abuse of its highways staff will not be tolerated**

Notice received 17th May in response to reports of abuse to Highways staff whilst carrying out essential works.

FC/23/118

To Receive items for the next agenda

Cllr Heeley requested an item on the next Planning & Transport Committee Meeting for the traffic calming proposals (discussed at the site meeting with Highways Assistance Area Manager on 5th May) on London Road in the village, and licence application for a Speed Indicator in Rock Road.

FC/23/119

Dates and time of next meetings at Washington Village Memorial Hall (Dore Room).

The following dates and varied times of the next meetings were noted:

Planning & Transport Committee: Monday 19th June 2023, 6: 30pm

Open Spaces Committee: Monday 19th June 2023, 8:00pm

Full Council Meeting: Monday 3rd July 7:30pm

FC/23/120

To resolve, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, in accordance with Standing Orders 3d to exclude the press and public on grounds that the confidential matters to be discussed under item FC/23/121 will involve disclosure of privileged and sensitive information which would be inappropriate to put in the public domain.

The Council **RESOLVED** to exclude the Press and Public from the next item as it contained legal advice which is privileged information which must not be disclosed to the public.

FC/23/121

To Discuss a request from the Rampion2 land agents to negotiate Heads of Terms for easement rights for the proposed cable route on the Recreation Ground and note request for access to conduct surveys.

An email from the Land agent on 17th May from the developer's land agent, Carter Jonas, was previously circulated to Councillors. It included the following (summary):

- A formal request to negotiate Heads of Terms for grant of easement on the Recreation Ground for a section of the proposed onshore cables and associated apparatus with the Rampion 2 project;
- Follow up to their previous request to agree a 12month Survey Licence for placing survey equipment on the council's land, with clarification on the purposes of the environmental surveys in assessing the cable alignment/ constraints along the route.

SJB

- A copy of [FAQs](#) on the surveys was provided. Noise monitoring surveys were required to understand the baseline levels of noise locations in close proximity of proposed construction compounds or HDD(Horizontal Direct Drill) locations – the agent stated that allowing the noise surveys are in the best interests of the local community. The survey is designed to ensure that correct levels are to ensure the amenity of local residents is protected.
- Request for prior consent to place equipment on the Recreation Grounds for one of the surveys later in May.

It was noted that where possible, the clerk had provided responses to some of the above, based on the council's discussions and resolutions at the Full Council Meetings in April and May. The survey dates requested were too late for the meeting and no further survey dates were proposed.

A Confirmation Schedule confirming the council's ownership of the land had been signed by the clerk and returned to the land agent before the 8th June deadline. This was noted.

The council considered legal advice, originally reported at the FC meeting in April last, cautioning on agreeing the Survey Licence and in the absence of an agreement of the Heads of Terms. It was noted that the council had been previously advised of the potential conflict between acting as landowner and a local authority in negotiations for grant of rights, where there is opposition from the local community to the route.

It was noted that the licence permits the developer to carry out excavations on the land and even if the surface is restored, an obligation under the Agreement, there is a potential for disturbance to the Allotments and/or the Recreation Ground. This could cause problems especially if it involves the Allotment site if it is protected by statute.

The council considered a quotation from its solicitors to further advise on the matter, and guidance from the agent.

The council considered its quite considerable legal obligations both as a public body and charity trustee to protect the grounds as an important and much-valued community asset. It expressed concern that RWE's solicitors, by capping their offer to meet all reasonable professional fees, this was hampering the council's ability to ensure it secured advice from suitably qualified professionals to meet these obligations. It was also unreasonable given that the development proposals were being imposed upon the council, and that it had expressed serious concerns about the scheme and its impact on the local community in responses to three public consultations and a public meeting.

Following a lengthy discussion, the council **RESOLVED** to comment on the Heads of Terms with a request that the fees cap is lifted by the developer if the council is to meet its obligations as a public body and trustee in seeking the professional advice required.

This is on a without prejudice basis as the council has already expressed its serious disagreement with the route and that its concerns have not been met. It was noted that the developer's land agent had not requested consent for any

further surveys. Clerk to action.

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was closed at 9.15pm

Signed.....

Dated..... 3rd July 2023

Acronyms

AIRS Action in Rural Sussex
AGAR Annual Governance and Accountability Return
CIL Community Infrastructure Levy
CLAG: Chanctonbury Local Action Group
CSW Community Speed Watch
DCO Development Consent Order
DPO Data Protection Officer
HALC Horsham Association of Local Councils
HDC Horsham District Council
HDPF Horsham District Planning Framework
HAMSVA Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Association
ICO Information Commission Office
LGS Local Green Space
NALC National Association of Local Councils
SSWNP: Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
PROW Public Rights of Way
SDNPA South Downs National Park Authority
SDNP South Downs National Park
SHELAA Strategic Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment
SID Speed Indicator Device
SLCC Society of Local Council Clerks
TPO Tree Preservation Order
TRO Traffic Regulation Order
TTRO Temporary Traffic Regulation Order
VAS Vehicle Activation Device
WPC Washington Parish Council
WRGC Washington Recreation Ground Charity
WSALC West Sussex Association of Local Councils
WSCC West Sussex County Council