

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 11th December 2023.

PRESENT: Cllr S Buddell (Chairman), Cllr B Hanvey, Cllr P. Heeley, Cllr T Keech, Cllr Lisher (Vice-Chairman Cllr J Luckin and Cllr J Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC).

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Ms Z Savill

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 0

ABSENT: 0

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:30pm.

FC/23/12/1 To Accept Apologies for absence
None received.

FC/23/12/2 To Receive Declaration of Councillors personal or prejudicial interest
None received.

FC/23/12/3 To Approve the Minutes of the last Full Council meetings on 6th November 2023
The Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 6th November which were duly signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

FC/23/12/4 To Consider an application for co-option to the Parish Council's Washington Ward
Members noted that following the local May 2023 elections there were two vacancies on the Parish Council for the Washington Ward and two on the Heath Common Ward. Members considered a written application from former Washington Councillor Mr Geoff Lockerbie in his absence. The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously by voting to co-opt Mr Lockerbie onto the Council as a representative of the Washington Ward. It was noted that Mr Lockerbie would sign his acceptance of office at the earliest opportunity.

FC/23/12/5 Public Speaking
None

FC/23/12/6 Reports from County and District Councillors
HDC Reort

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Cllr Joan Grech and Cllr Emma Beard had previously given their apologies. They would be attending the Full Council Meeting of HDC the same evening which is considering the approval of the District Local Plan. There were no reports for the parish.

WSCC Report

Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC) reported on the following:

- He joined Andrew Griffith MP and the three Local Horsham District members in a recent meeting with CLAG 3 (Chanctonbury Local Action Group) to hear their concerns about the Rock Common Quarry application reference WSCC/028/21. Chief concern was the delay in determining the application. Cllr Marshall informed CLAG 3 that the application is being frustrated by water neutrality issues and that it was for the applicant to seek determination of the application. He confirmed that there was no legal deadline for this but there was still a legal requirement for the quarry reinstatement. He had agreed to get involved in a number of other areas of concern relating to access safety in the quarry proposals.
- WSCC was finalising its 2024/25 budget to be considered for adoption in February 2024.
- He responded to the Chairman's enquiry on behalf of a resident, regarding ownership of The Holt twitten, confirming that the Land Registry should have the address details. It was noted that WSCC had previously informed the resident that the twitten was privately owned by 3 people in Somerset. The Clerk confirmed that the resident was using the title number to locate their addresses in order to resolve maintenance issues of the paving and a bollard light.

Councillors thanked Cllr Marshall for his reports. Following an exchange of seasons greetings, Cllr Marshall left the meeting.

FC/23/12/7 To Report on actions and matters arising from the last meeting

The list of actions were previously circulated (Appendix 2) and noted. Cllr Lisher reported that Wilbars would be adjusting the SID in London Road to face the correct way for alerting southbound traffic entering the village.

FC/23/12/8 Planning: To Report applications, decisions and appeals on significant applications

None reported.

FC/23/12/9 To Agree action on any urgent maintenance of council property.

None reported. A quotation was received from the groundsman for planting mixed species hedging in the gaps along the Recreation Ground. It was agreed this would be considered at the OSRA meeting in January.

FC/23/12/10 To Report the draft minutes of Committee meetings in November 2023.

The draft minutes of the Committee meetings for Finance, OSRA, and Planning & Transport Committee on 20th November and Personnel on 27th November were noted (Appendix 3). There were no recommendations for approval from the PT meeting. Recommendations from the other meetings were considered under separate agenda items at this meeting.

FC/23/12/11 To Consider the Council's 2024/25 Draft Budget and Precept

The Chairman of the Finance Committee reported (Appendix 4) on the proposed 2024/25 budget of £134,616 (Appendix 5) from the Working party meeting on 5th December. He advised this could be achieved with a 5% increase in precept and reduction in some of the earmarked reserves. The draft

budget figure was made up of: £64,295 operating costs, £22,100 Earmarked Reserves and £48,221 General Reserves for 9 months' operating costs.

The following key points of the working party's proposal were noted:

- The Personnel Committee's recommendation of a 2% increased allocation for pension were incorporate in lines 3 and 5 of the draft budget
- £10k allocated for the VAS replacement reserve to be removed, as the costs for maintaining the devices were the responsibility of WSCC. This represented a significant saving.
- Newsletters budget removed as this had not been used. The Council published quarterly editorials in the Sussex Local.
- Earmarked reserves reduced in favour of increasing the general reserve to £48,221 representing 9 months' operating costs.
- Capital reserves represent CIL funds and are not included in the operational budget.
- Finance Committee to regularly review the Council's cash position going forward, with a view to better balancing the operating costs with the precept income in the coming years.

Councillors discussed the proposed budget. It was noted that due to the high increases in costs for the Council, 12% estimated for next year, it would no longer be able to freeze any increase on the council precept as it had done in previous years.

Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to **APPROVE** the 2024/25 budget and 5% precept. This equates to £40.12 for a Band D property, an increase of 15p per month from the current year.

FC/23/12/12 To Consider the frequency of meetings and Agree 2024/25 dates

The Council considered the Personnel Committee's recommendation (27th Meeting on November 2023) to reduce the monthly meetings of the two main Committees: the Open Spaces, Recreation Ground and Allotment (OSRA) and Planning & Transport (PT) to 6 times a year. This was to be a starting point to help the Council reduce its administrative workload.

A copy of the 2024/25 meeting calendar dates were previously circulated and considered.

was proposed to keep the Committee dates open if there was business to be transacted which could not be deferred or delegated..

Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the recommendation for the two committees to meet every other month from February 2024 on a 6-month trial basis; to **ADOPT** the 2024/25 calendar meeting dates, keeping monthly committee dates open if there was business to be transacted which could not be deferred or delegated.

FC/23/12/13 Washington Recreation Ground Charity:

- **To Approve the Washington Recreation Ground Charity 2022/23 Annual Return**
Deferred to the Full Council meeting in January 2024.

S.J.B.

- **To Approve a quotation for tree works**
Members considered the OSRA Committee's recommendation (meeting on 20th November 2023) to approve a quotation of £2,650 from Sawing Heights to carry out the HS2 works recommended in the Council's 2022 Trees inspection report from Gale Tree Consultancy. It was noted that the decision was deferred to this Council meeting because the value of the quotation exceeded OSRA's authorisation limits. It was noted that Sawing Heights is the Council's approved contractor who had satisfactorily carried out other tree works in the report. Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** to engage the contractor for the quoted works.
- **To Approve quotation for repairs in the Play Area**
Members considered a quotation of £1,051 from HAGS to repair damage to the Ryan slide tower and other items identified in the 2023 annual play safety inspection. It was noted that the quotation was tabled for this meeting because it was not received in time for the last OSRA meeting. The contractor was previously approved by the Council and had supplied and installed the Ryan tower in 2017. Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** to engage the contractor for the quoted repairs.
- **To Agree and Sign terms and conditions for quarterly play area safety inspections**
Members considered and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the terms and conditions of the quarterly safety inspections for the Play Area by HAGS, to commence in April 2024, as recommended by the OSRA Committee. The contract to be duly signed after the meeting.
- **To Receive Charity Commission News for the Recreation Ground Trustees.**
Members noted the Charity Commission News publication which was previously circulated.

FC/23/12/14 To Agree a recommendation for off-site storage and Consider quotations.
It was recommended by the OSRA Committee (meeting on 20th November 2023) to move the Council's archive legal and accounting documents and a number of other Council property from the Clerk's home before Christmas. A longer term solution to digitise those which must be retained in accordance with legislation, could be reviewed at a later date. Current documents for immediate access, would remain at the Clerk's home.

Quotations from two local storage providers were previously circulated and considered:

- Contractor A (Worthing): **£1,396.50**
- Contractor B (Pulborough): **£729.96**

Following a discussion, the Chairman proposed and the Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** that archive storage is moved from the Clerk's home to an offsite facility; to **APPROVE** the estimated £729.96 from Contractor B/JNJ Storage, for keeping the items for one year, to be reviewed at a later date, plus the estimated £150 cost of transportation to the facility.

FC/23/12/15 To Agree amendments to the Council's insurance policy and asset register
The asset registers for the Council and the Washington Recreation Ground Charity were previously circulated (Appendix 6 and 7).

SJB.

The following amendments made to the Parish Council register since May 2023 were noted:

- Added: Two speed indicator devices acquired 30th November 2023 valued at £4,630.
- Added: Two new double noticeboards (October 2023) valued at £2,996.
- Removed: Three single noticeboards and two double noticeboards (October 2023) valued at £3,809.95.

Total increase: **£3,816.05** (Street Furniture), bringing the total value of assets on this register from £29,192.77 (May 2023) to £33,661.25.

The following amendments were anticipated on the separate Washington Recreation Ground Charity register once installed:

- MUGA lights: £4,680
 - Play Area safety surfacing: £13,402
- Total increase anticipated: **£18,082** (Playground equipment)

The Council's insurance broker, Clear Councils (formerly BHIB Councils), has increased the value of cover for these changes on the policy for Street Furniture to £75,925 and Playground Equipment to £101,680, to include the anticipated items, for an additional premium of £20.17 for the remaining term. This includes Insurance Premium Tax. The auditing requirement to keep the two registers separate in the annual accountability statement was noted.

Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the changes to the Parish Council asset register 2023/24 and to **APPROVE** the additional insurance premium. The invoice was included in the Payments schedule for this meeting.

FC/23/12/16 Rampion 2: To Receive updates

The Council noted the following for information:

- **Carter Jonas withdrawn request for noise-monitoring surveys on the Washington Recreation Ground/Allotment land**
The Council noted that Carter Jonas, land agents for Rampion 2 proposals, reported (phone call to the Clerk) that they are no longer seeking the Council's consent to access the Recreation Ground for noise monitoring surveys.
The surveys would instead be carried out on neighbouring land (Jockey's Meadow) owned by the National Trust. Consequently, the clerk did not instruct the Council's solicitor to advise on the draft licence agreement.

It was further noted that because the Council objects to the proposed cable route through its land, the land agent is unwilling to lift the cap on covering the Council's professional fees for advice on the Rampion 2 Heads of Terms for easement.
- **HDC's written representation to the Rampion 2 DCO application and Principal Summary Statement of Areas of Disagreement**
Copies of these two HDC documents (Appendix 8 & 9) were shared with the Council by Cllr Grech on 5th December.

FC/23/12/17 To Approve Payment, Report Income and Bank reconciliations

The Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the total payments of **£11,065.07** for the

following invoices:

Voucher	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
120	CIL (to be spent by 27/04/25)	20/11/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Noticeboards	Nick Blunt Fencing Ltd	S	520.00	104.00	624.00
121	CIL (to be spent by 27/04/25)	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Speed Indicator Device	ElanCity	S	2,339.99	468.00	2,807.99
122	CIL (to be spent by 27/04/25)	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Speed Indicator Device	ElanCity	S	2,289.99	458.00	2,747.99
123	CIL (to be spent by 27/04/25)	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		CIL Grant	Washington Village Mem	Z	2,403.33		
124	Office expenses	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Stationery	Viking Office UK Limited	S	58.02	11.60	69.62
125	Training	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Training	Horsham District Council	Z	105.60		105.60
126	Litter warden / litter clearance	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Litter	Stella Russell	Z	166.72		166.72
127	Litter warden / litter clearance	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Litter	Stella Russell	Z	166.72		166.72
128	Clerk's Salary & Expenses	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Clerks salary (net)	Washington Parish Coun	Z	1,794.03	2.37	1,786.40
135	HDC Dog Bin cleansing	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Dog bin emptying	Horsham District Council	X	37.96		37.96
136	Clerk's Pension	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		Pension	NEST	X	108.74		108.74
137	Subscriptions and legal fees	11/12/2023	PC/23/12/17	Lloyds Current Account		ICO registration	ICO, Registration Team	Z	40.00		40.00
Total									10,021.10	1,043.97	11,065.07

Chairman and Vice-Chairman agreed to authorise the payments online.

FC/23/12/18 To Report the Council's reconciled bank balances since the last meeting

The Council noted the following:

The Council's Lloyd's account was reconciled at **£79,319.84** for the end of November 2023. There was no change to the Nationwide account balance from the last meeting at **£85,000**.

FC/23/12/19: To Report the Council's income since the last meeting

None reported

FC/23/12/20 Grants: To Consider a CIL Grant application from the Village Hall

The Council considered a CIL grant application from the Village Hall for £3,010 to upgrade the hall's consumer units. Quotations to support the application and the Hall's latest annual accounts were also circulated. It was noted that it was a new project not included in the Hall's original list which had been supported in principle by the Council. All available CIL funds for the projects had been earmarked, subject to grant applications, and there was no new funding available. The Council had previously approved two CIL grant applications for £3,649 and £4,299 at the September and November meetings respectively, for Hall projects on the original list. Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** not to approve the grant application for this reason.

FC/23/12/19 To Report Correspondence

Correspondence to the Council was noted and that there was no action required.

FC/23/12/20 Clerk's Report: To Approve staff holiday

The Council **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the Clerk's request for 8 days' annual leave from 18th December 2023 and returning 4th January 2024. Office closure over the festive period would be reported on the Council's website.

FC/23/12/21 To Consider attending a First Aid training course.

The Council considered an invitation to attend a First Aid training course on Thursday 18th January to be hosted by Lancing Parish Council. Cost would be £75 per candidate. Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** not to take up the offer on this occasion. Clerk to notify the host.

FC/23/12/22 To Receive items for the next agenda and Chairman's Announcements

None submitted. The Chairman announced that he was saddened to hear of the

SJB

death of Malcolm Eastwood, Chair of HALC and Vice-Chair of WSALC who passed away on 10th December following a short illness.

FC/23/12/23 Dates and time of next meetings at Washington Village Memorial Hall (Dore Room).

Full Council Meeting: Monday 8th January, 2023, 7:30pm

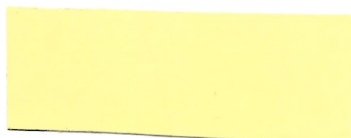
Personnel Committee: 29th January 2024, 7:00pm

Planning & Transport Committee: Monday 19th February 2023, 7:00pm

Open Spaces Committee: Monday 19th February 2024, 7:45pm

The Chairman thanked Councillors, Chairs of Committees and the Clerk for their support. There being no other business to transact, the meeting closed at 9:14pm

Signed:



Dated: 8/1/2024

AIRS Action in Rural Sussex
AGAR Annual Governance and Accountability Return
CLAG Chanctonbury Local Action Group
CIL Community Infrastructure Levy
CPRE Council for the Protection of Rural England
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
PCC Police Crime Commissioner
PINS Planning Inspectorate
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
WSSC West Sussex County Council

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