

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 4th May 2021 via the Zoom Online Meeting Platform.

PRESENT: (Cllr C Beglan (CB), Cllr S Buddell (SB), Cllr B. Hanvey (BH), Cllr P Heeley (Chairman), Cllr A Lisher (AL), Cllr G Lockerbie (GL) and Cllr K Woods (KW))

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC) and Cllr Jim Sanson (HDC) gave their apologies for absence

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Zoe Savill

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 1

ABSENT: 0

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:40pm.

22.85. Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements

All in attendance. The Chairman gave the following reminders: this is the last remote meeting before the Council meets at the Village Hall on 21st June, coinciding with the ending of lockdown restrictions; the deadline for contributions to the Council's Spring newsletter is next week.

22.86. Declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed and agree Dispensations

None declared.

22.87. To approve the Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting on 12th April, 2021.

RESOLVED unanimously to approve the draft minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting as a correct record to be duly signed by the Chairman.

22.88. Reports from County and District Councillors

Members noted apologies received for absence from Cllrs Paul Marshall (WSCC) and Jim Sanson (HDC).

County Report: Circulated before the meeting. This included statistic showing a dramatic decrease in the coronavirus infection rate across West Sussex up to 25th April, the Horsham District being the second lowest for over 60s. Members did not raise any matters for attention.

District Report: None. Members did not raise any matters for attention.

22.89. Public Speaking

Resident, Mr Alan Maynard, spoke in support of a Community Highways Scheme application for improvements to the Rock Road/A24 junction. He reported that it is has the backing of Cllr Paul Marshall

at a recent site meeting. This was attended by himself with another resident initially to discuss the need for acoustic fencing to help mitigate A24 traffic noise and air pollution following the recent felling of trees

along the Old London Road. Also in attendance was the Highways Authority's Assistant Area Mr Steve Douglas who agreed a junction improvement would be a great benefit to the area.

Mr Maynard pointed out the following reasons why the junction is so dangerous:

- No acceleration lane . This means traffic emerging from the junction onto the A24 is forced to run the gauntlet of fast traffic accelerating from the nearby Washington roundabout.
- Inadequate signage and road markings on the deceleration lane to warn of the junction and the sharp 90 degree turning into Rock Road; immediate proximity of the Old London Road just off the turning.
- The A24 slip lane is often used as a rest stop, blocking the view southwards for traffic emerging from Rock Road.
- Motorists entering the slip lane are sometimes forced back onto the A24 when they cannot make the junction turning. This makes it doubly dangerous for anyone waiting to emerge from the junction. He reported on a similar incident when a vehicle spun out of control, ending up in the southern part of Old London Road and narrowly missing a cyclist.
- A school coach is stationary across the junction for the morning collection and afternoon drop-off.

He suggested the following improvements:

- Install an acceleration lane
- Improve the geometry of the deceleration lane with proper signage, perhaps reflective bollards, to give proper warning
- Safety/crash barriers to protect those waiting to drive, cycle or walk across the road.
- Acoustic fencing to help mitigate A24 traffic noise: Mr Maynard informed members that it was suggested at the site meeting that this could be placed along the limits of WSCC owned land backing onto the Old London Road.
- He supported Cllr Marshall's desire to reinstate public transport. He had suggested this could be safely achieved by incorporating a separate bus lane into the Old London Road at the southern end, exiting at the northern end of the improved junction.

Mr Maynard agreed to actively support the council if it agreed to making a CHS application for an improvement scheme. The Chairman thanked him for speaking and Mr Maynard remained for the council's discussion of the CHS application later in the meeting.

22.89. To Report and Matters Arising from the last meeting.

- **Instant Access Deposit Savings Account for the Parish Council:** Clerk to action.
- **New website:** The Chairman has discussed with the Clerk how this can be taken forward over the forthcoming weeks.

22.90. To Consider Planning Applications

There were no planning application notifications received in time for consideration.

22.91. To Report Planning Decisions

Parish: Washington PC

Application Number: DC/21/0224

Site: Washington Towers Caravan Park London Road Washington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 4AJ

Description: Application to confirm the continuous use of land as a naturist facility for a period in excess of ten years (Certificate of Lawful Development - Existing).

Decision: Application Refused by HDC

Date of Decision: 22/04/2021

The Chairman reported that it would appear the application has not met the technical requirements which may have to be addressed by the applicant. The Parish Council made no objection to the application.

22.92. Appeals Lodged or Decided

None lodged or decided at the time of the meeting.

22.93. Planning Compliance

HDC Planning Compliance teams is looking into allegations regarding a fence in Hampers Lane, Storrington. See Correspondence Report item later in these minutes.

22.94. To Review, Consider, Recommend and Report on Parish Council issues, including Maintenance

22.94.1. To Report Coronavirus updates and any maintenance issues affecting Parish Council property outside the Recreation Ground and any recommended action.

No matters reported.

22.94.2. To Consider making a Community Highways Scheme (CHS) application for improvements to the A24/Rock Road junction.

Members discussed an email from Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC) in support of a CHS to improve the A24/Rock Road junction with a slip road, and points raised by Mr Alan Maynard in the public session..

Members noted that for many years the parish council has expressed its concern about the dangers of the junction and the need for safety improvements. This is particularly because of the increase in local housing development and traffic. Cllr Marshall had also reported in the past that the nearby A24 Washington roundabout has reached or is close to reaching traffic capacity. It was agreed that acoustic fencing and reinstatement of a separate bus slip lane, though important, are separate issues which could make the junction scheme too costly to implement if they were included in the same CHS application. Mr Maynard confirmed he would be willing to assist in drafting an application.

RESOLVED unanimously to broadly support the need for a substantial improvement to the junction to incorporate an acceleration zone and more adequate marked deceleration zone off the A24; to seek advice on the information required to complete the CHS application form to be reviewed at the next meeting; to notify Cllr Marshall of the council's support and to liaise with him on how best to take the scheme forward; Clerk to action.

The Chairman thanked Mr Maynard for his support and that the council will keep him informed of developments. Mr Maynard left the meeting after thanking the council for supporting the initiative.

22.94.3. To Receive and Approve the Financial Report for Year Ending 31st March 2021

(reconciled)

Members **NOTED** the Financial Report (reconciled), with Year End 2021 bank reconciliation circulated before this meeting which showed a closing balance of £75, 037.90. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Financial Report for Year Ending 31st March 2021.

22.94.4. To Receive and Review Internal Auditor's Report and Letter for the financial year 2020/21

Members discussed the signed Audit Report 2020/21 by Andy Beams for Mulberry & Co and his review of the Council's internal financial procedures and controls. It was **NOTED** that he was satisfied that the systems and internal procedures at the Parish Council are well established and followed. Members carefully considered the points raised and recommendation for them to each have a common council email address, other than the Clerk. The matter has been discussed at other meetings and it was previously agreed the Chairman would have one for occasional correspondence, once the new website is set up. Following a discussion, it was proposed that the Vice-Chairman should also have a council email address under the same arrangements. The Vice-Chairman reported that he undertakes 2 hours annual GDPR training.

RESOLVED unanimously to **NOTE** the Auditor's report and recommendation and to **AGREE** that the Vice-Chairman has a council email address under the same arrangements as the Chairman.

22.94.5. Review and Approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021

A copy of the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 (Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)) was previously circulated and reviewed.

RESOLVED unanimously to **APPROVE** the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 as a correct record of a sound system of internal control and accounting to be signed by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO.

22.94.6. To Review and Approve the Council's Accounting Statement 2020/21

A copy of the Annual Accounting Statement for 2020/21 (Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)) was previously circulated and reviewed.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Annual Accounting Statement 2020/21 is a correct record of the Council's income and expenditure to be duly signed by the Chairman.

22.94.7. To Report significant variances of the accounting year for the AGAR 2020/21

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to **NOTE** the report of significant variances and explanations in the accounting year 2020/21 previously circulated and which are published on the council's website.

22.94.7. To Report the publication of Notice of Public Rights.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt the public inspection period for the 2020/21 accounts Of 14th June to 23rd July 2021 to be published before Thursday 7th May, 2021.

22.94.8. To Consider a hire request for the Recreation Ground for the Village Day on Saturday 11th September

Members considered and **RESOLVED** unanimously to **APPROVE** a hire request by the Secretary of St Mary's School PTA, Mrs Liz Horwood to use the Recreation Ground on Saturday 11th September 2021 for the Village Day. There is no charge. Members noted that the Clerk had shared the Council insurer's requirements for the event to Mrs Horwood. A copy of the organiser's proposed activities are agreed subject to the prevailing insurance policy, the Parish Council's signed indemnity form and satisfactory risk assessments. Clerk to notify the Council's insurers.

22.94.9. To Discuss re-stocking of Longbury Hill Wood and the temporary access and hardstanding

Members discussed an email (26th April) from HDC's Planning Compliance Team that they are pushing for compliance in respect of the alleged '*breach of condition*'. This relates to the continued existence of the temporary access and hardstanding for the woodland site in Rock Road beyond completion of the tree felling in 2018. Senior Planning Compliance Officer Jennifer Baxter reported that the owner wishes to submit a pre-application enquiry by 30 June and they will know more by this date. This coincides with the extended expiry date of the felling licence to re-stock the woodland. It is the Council's understanding that a scheme of final landscaping for the gate and hardstanding should already be in place. Members noted a letter from Matthew Woodstock, Partnerships & Expertise Manager South East of the Forestry Commission to the Council on 21st September 2020 which confirmed that he was satisfied that replanting was no longer necessary at the time and that natural regeneration was in place and approved. They would "*continue to monitor to ensure the trees are maintained to establishment as per the felling licence conditions.*"

The Chairman queried why HDC should wait for an application instead of enforcing the planning conditions. BH warned that unless the site is reconsolidated as proper woodland in accordance with the forestry licence, it will remain vulnerable to development and the loss of an important woodland amenity. He had observed that much of the regeneration is scrub with a lot of birch and not the 5,500 mixed broad leaf required in the licence conditions. He urged the council to write to the FC, asking them to further inspect the site and to point out the FC's written statement which supports the preservation of the woodland in perpetuity. The Chairman shared his concerns but remained sceptical that pushing for a review would achieve anything more in the interval between now and the anticipated pre-application next month. He pointed out that the site has some level of protection as it is not designated for development in the Neighbourhood Plan or the District Plan, is outside the Built Up Area Boundary, and was last assessed by planners with the lowest feasibility score for development. He suggested it may be better for the Council to respond only when a planning application is submitted when all the information will be available for proper consideration. CB criticised the FC for failing in its statutory duty by accepting scrub and not the original terms of the licence. SB agreed and that the council should raise its concerns with MP Andrew Griffiths that the Forestry Commission is failing in its duty to protect the woodland.

At the Chairman's invitation, BH made a formal proposal that the Parish Council writes to the Forestry Commission stating it is extremely concerned that no action appears to have been taken to ensure compliance with the original licence granted in 2017, leading to the very serious possibility of a loss of a highly valued woodland amenity.

RESOLVED by a majority (5) to **AGREE** the proposal. BH agreed to assist the Clerk in drafting the response.

22.95. Washington Recreation Ground Charity

22.95.1. To Report any maintenance issues on the Recreation Ground and Agree action

None at the time of publication of the agenda.

22.95.2 To Consider a request to conduct a survey of the Washington Recreation Ground and Allotment land by the Rampion 2 land agent

Members discussed a formal request from the Rampion 2 land agents, Carter Jonas to conduct surveys on the Recreation Ground/Allotment land. It was noted that the Clerk has not received a response from the agent to her request for details of the survey proposals or for outstanding information on the alternative cable routes considered. A copy of the minutes of the February meeting of the Rampion 2

community liaison group which included the council's request, was shared with the land agent for clarification of the information required..

Members noted that the Council is not in a position to consent to a survey of the allotment and that the agent would need to contact the tenants directly. Members also noted a copy of a letter to the Chairman from Andrew Griffith MP on his concerns about the significant impact of the Rampion 2 cable route on his Arundel and South Downs constituency. The MP has launched a survey to ascertain the strength and nature of local residents' concerns before he responds to the formal consultation later this spring. The Chairman had responded that he would publish the survey link in the parish council newsletter and website: www.andrewgriffithmp.com/campaigns/rampion-2

RESOLVED unanimously that the council requires information about what the survey entails and that it is expecting a response on what action is being taken about the potential alternative routes. Clerk to action.

22.95.3. To receive reports and recommendations from Committees and Working Parties

Members **NOTED** the draft minutes of the OSRA and Planning & Transport Committee Meetings on 26th April and that there are no recommendations for consideration..

2.96. To Approve Bank Reconciliation, Payments and Report Income

The reconciled bank statements showing transactions between 26.02.2021 and 29.03.2021 accounting year to date statement, payments schedule and invoices

RESOLVED unanimously that the following payments totalling **£ 3,039.95** be **APPROVED**

Payee	Details	Amount £
Kay Publishing Ltd	2021 Spring Newsletter	624.00*
Mulberry & Co	2021 Audit	198.00
West Sussex ALC	2021.22 Subscription	625.97**
Z. Savill	April 2021 Salary & Expenses	1 363.55
Pension April 2021	NEST	60.43
ST Tech	Laptop repairs	168.00
Total		£ 3,039.95

*£624.00 paid to Kay Publishing Limited on 22/04/2021 under delegated powers with authority from the Chairman and Chairman of the Planning & Transport Committee.

** £625.97 invoice for WSALC/NALC 2021.22 subscription due 27/04/21: This item was deferred from the last meeting for more information on the reorganisation of WSALC since the new board was created in April. This matter was discussed at the prior Annual Parish Council Meeting and it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to **AGREE** to renew the Council's subscription for this year.

Councillors to RESOLVE to AGREE the financial reports as follows:

Outstanding purchase orders: **0**

Outstanding sales invoices: **0**

Income: **£50 rent and deposit Plot 7 & £20, 809 (unreconciled) 1st Precept payment 2021.22**

Reconciled Bank Balance on 29 March 2021 (2021 Year End figure): **£75,134.48** – this was reported to 'the last Full Council Meeting in error. The Bank has not yet issued a new statement for this meeting.

22.97. VAT

2021.22 Q1 VAT Report due July 2021

22.98. PAYE and National Insurance contributions

2021.22 Q1 PAYE Report due July 2021

22.99. Correspondence Received

Members noted the following correspondence received:

- NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin 6th April 2021
- Government funding to help our economy: from HDC 15th April 2021
- Neighbourhood Alert – April 2021 Newsletter

They discussed three emails in April regarding an allegation of encroachment of a fence onto the Hampers Lane public right of way. The Clerk reported that this is being investigated by Planning Compliance at HDC.

RESOLVED unanimously to write to the Planning Compliance team that the Parish Council has received correspondence from a number of residents concerned about the fencing. To add that it would be useful to see the officer's report on their investigation. Clerk to action.

23.00. Clerk's Report

23.00.1. Governance:

WSALC Legal Team update April 2021

Members noted advice and information from WSALC's Legal Team on 15th April including:

- Responses from the Legal Team to individual request may take up to 15 working days instead of the usual 4-6.
- The legal team has submitted witness evidence to NALC for the Lawyers in Local Government (LLG)/ Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO)/ Hertfordshire County Council remote meetings court proceedings against the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. It is now a Judicial Review case. Judgement expected end of April.
- Period of Mourning (ref: Death of HRH Duke of Edinburgh on 9th April) : s243 of the Local Government Act 1972 excludes days of mourning when calculating clear days' notice for council meetings.
- Annual Meetings in a year of elections and when there are no elections.
- Muting meetings – dealing with disruptive behaviour from the public.
- LTN 37 Freedom of Information.
- Legal Briefing L01-21 on pre-election publicity

23.02. To Receive items for the next agenda

CB suggested and agreed to provide a report in the newsletter on the 4 Councillor vacancies and an appeal for people to come forward. CB reported she might be away for the next Rampion 2 (onshore) Community Liaison Group meeting in June. BH agreed to stand in if needed.

23.03. Dates and time of next meetings:

No Committees in May and June

Full Council Meeting: Monday 21st June 7.30pm.

There being no other business to conduct, the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:15 hours.

Signed.....

Dated.....