

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 1st February 2021

PRESENT: (Cllr C Beglan (CB), Cllr S Buddell (SB), Cllr B. Hanvey (BH), Cllr P Heeley (Chairman), Cllr J Henderson (Vice-Chairman/JH) Cllr A Lisher (AL) and Cllr K Woods (KW))

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr James Wright (HDC). Apologies from Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC) and Cllr Jim Sanson (HDC)

ALSO: Clerk to the Council

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 3

ABSENT: GL

The Chairman opened the meeting at **19:00 hours**.

21.98. Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements

RESOLVED to accept apologies from GL (work)

21.99. Declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed and agree Dispensations
None.

22.00. To approve the Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting on 4th January 2021.

RESOLVED to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true record of the meeting on 4th January 2021. Chairman to sign once physical meetings resume.

22.01. Public Speaking: Presentation of the Rampion 2 Wind Farm expansion proposals

A Power Point presentation was given on the early Rampion 2 proposals by Development and Stakeholder Manager Chris Tomlinson and Project Manager Vaughan Weighill.

They answered questions from Members and the Public about the proposed cable route through Washington and concerns about the impact on residents, local amenities and roads and the rural character of the area which is largely inside the South Downs National Park.

Members noted that the cable route is indicated through Jockey's Meadow and the Washington Recreation Ground/Allotment, the first two being protected green spaces in the Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (SSWNP). A governor of the local St Mary's CE school in the village was concerned that the route is close to the area of Jockey's Meadow used by pupils for outdoor education activities. A resident wrote to the Council expressing concern at the potential loss of trees

which were planted to screen the village from traffic noise on the nearby A24.

The speakers explained that the indicative route through Washington was the ‘least impact’ option, avoiding designated highly sensitive areas of ancient woodland to the south and Rock quarry to the north. The steep slope to the south was also technically unfeasible for cable laying. They recognised there would be “some inconvenience and temporary disruption” from the works. They are looking at ways to reduce this to a minimum as much as possible. The following were some examples put forward:

- Highly sensitive sites would be avoided where possible, such as the ancient woodland south of the route.
- Tree removal would be avoided where possible. But where it is necessary they would generally replant at a safe distance nearby from the cable route to provide a net gain and restore character
- Where there are large busy roads, such as the A24, they would use horizontal directional drilling (HDD) and there was a good prospect this could be continued under the Recreation Ground, keeping above ground disruption to a minimum; But this method is only by exception and would not be possible or practical for the vast majority of the route which will be trenched.
- The vibration from HDD technique is mild and would not be noticeable beyond 40ft away. They would keep it away from buildings.
- They will be consulting with WSCC Highways Authority on a traffic routing plan and would do everything possible to keep heavy equipment off the small local roads. But where it is necessary it would be for very short distances for site access.
- Compensation to landowners affected by the scheme and grants available from a community benefit scheme.

The speakers urged residents and members of the public to visit the online exhibition for the project at www.Rampion2.com and give feedback so that the Rampion team is made aware of all local issues, concerns and constraints. These, together with the anticipated results of environmental and other specialist surveys, as well as other stakeholder and community engagement will be used to help shape detailed proposals for consideration at the first formal consultation at the end of May. Any comments received up to 3 weeks after the 11th February deadline of the current informal consultation will be accepted. But these may be deferred for consideration in the later updated proposals. They invited the school governor to contact them after the meeting to further discuss areas of concern so that they may get a better understanding of them.

The Chairman thanked the speakers and that he looked forward to further engagement when details of the project are available. Before leaving the meeting the speakers thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address Members. A member of the public also left the meeting.

22.02. Reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr James Wright (HDC) reported on a number of matters including:

- **Draft Horsham District Local Plan:** HDC aims to submit the draft Plan for examination before the county council elections in February.
- **Council tax arrears letters:** JW apologised on behalf of HDC for letters sent out in error for council tax arrears and that he will help those still affected if they get in touch.
- **Coronavirus/Covid-19 vaccine jabs:** JW urged people to contact Andrew Griffith MP if they are concerned that someone has been ‘missed’ from receiving a vaccination, and he will personally

follow it up.

- **Local concern about Rampion 2 proposals:** Cllr Wright confirmed he had an interest because the indicative cable route runs through two farms which he rents in Washington and Partridge Green. He expressed enthusiasm for the project as a whole but raised serious concerns about local impact of the cable route, namely through the Roman Villa field, a nearby scheduled monument on the edge of this parish at the Wiston crossroads, and its proposed alternative route within 200 metres of Buncton Church, and also the ‘destruction’ around Washington. He is working closely with Cllr Paul Marshall (Leader of WSCC and Washington’s local ward representative) to ensure that the Rampion 2 project team fully understand the sensitivities of the area. He would be joining Cllr Marshall and Rampion2 representatives for a walk-on site visit after the covid lockdown restrictions are lifted and would feedback to the Parish Council.

He responded to a number of questions including the following (paraphrased):

Q: Has the government’s recent u-turn relating to their algorithm for housing been reflected in any revisions to the draft Local Plan?

A: *The figure is a much more sensible one than the 1,650 set by the algorithm. JW welcomed the Plan’s proposals to deliver more affordable housing for young people.*

The Chairman thanked him for his reports and that the Council would welcome the opportunity to nominate a Member to join the planned site meeting. Cllr Wright agreed and left the meeting

22.03. Matters Arising from the last meeting.

- **Precept 2021/22 request to HDC the Principle precepting authority:**
The Clerk reported confirmation from HDC of the Parish Council’s precept request of £41,618 for Washington parish and that the tax base has not changed. The amount of environmental cleansing grant will be confirmed in April. The Chairman reported that Washington had one of the lowest Band D tax percentages in the district and that he was proud of what the parish council achieves at low cost to residents.
- **Transfer of funds to an FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme) protected account – progress report**
The Chairman reported that after further investigation, a Nationwide account is likely the best option for protecting the council’s reserves. Council to approval of the new account at the meeting on 1st March. This is subject to confirmation of the application process.
- **Website Transparency – progress report**
The Chairman reported on his disappointment with the website hosts for not contacting the Council in over 7 weeks to progress arrangements on developing the new transparency website. He has looked into other providers and will share his findings with the Working Party with the view to putting forward a revised proposal for consideration at the next Council meeting on 1st March.

22.04. To Consider Planning Applications

SDNP/20/04362/FUL - 1 Rockwood Mews Old London Road Washington RH20 3BN
New acoustic fence, planting and bund to south of unit one approved DC/19/0281

and change of use of land to residential use in conjunction with dwelling.

The Chairman reported that the application appeared to be the same as the previous proposal in November 2020 for which the Parish Council raised no objection as consultee.

RESOLVED to make **NO FURTHER COMMENT**.

22.05. Planning Decisions in the parish:

The Chairman reported on the following planning decisions in the parish:

DC/20/2401 – Crosswinds Hampers Lane Storrington RH20 3HZ

Outline application for the demolition of existing dwelling and erection of detached Dwellings with associated garaging with all matters reserved.

Decision: Refused 2 Dec 2020

The Chairman reported that policies in the adopted Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan and the Heath Common Design Statement had been included in reasons for refusal.

DC/20/2376 – West Clayton Farm Storrington RH20

Outline application for the demolition of existing outbuildings and the erection of bungalow Dwelling and creation of access with all matters reserved.

Decision: Refused 1 Dec 2020.

The Chairman reported that policies in the adopted Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan had been included in reasons for refusal.

All other planning decisions for the parish can be viewed on the HDC Planning Portal.

22.06. To Review, Consider, Recommend and report on Parish Council issues, including Maintenance

22,06.1. Grit bin in Vera’s Walk: The Chairman reported on the very poor state of the grit in the bin halfway along the road. The Clerk confirmed that she had earlier in the day emailed the Mr Joe Payne with a request to empty and refill it with new grit.

22,06.2. To Consider a request for land referencing information for the Recreation Ground and Allotment land from the Rampion 2 land agents.

Members noted that part of the indicative cable route corridor for the proposed Rampion 2 wind farm expansion is through the Washington Recreation Ground and Allotment, owned and managed by the Parish Council on behalf of parishioners. Members considered a written request from Carter Jonas, land agents for Rampion 2, for details of ownership and interested parties relating to the land. The Clerk explained that this would also include the Washington Memorial Village Hall and Tenants of the Allotment. A list of Frequently Asked Questions relating to the project were previously circulated. Members noted that by obtaining this information, known as the Land Referencing Process, all parties can remain informed as the project evolves, ensuring their land or property interest is represented throughout the entire development process.

RESOLVED unanimously to provide the required information on a ‘without prejudice’ basis, making it clear that it must not affect or be prejudicial to any further consultations that the Parish Council may have relating to the Rampion 2 cable route. To also clarify this in correspondence to the Allotment tenants when seeking their consent to include their contact details, and to clarify that the indicative cable route is unconfirmed. Clerk to action.

22.06.3. To Consider an initial response to Rampion 2 draft proposals for an underground cable route through Washington parish.

Members discussed the Rampion 2 online public exhibition which shows a map of the cable corridor through the parish. They noted that the indicative route extends east to west through the South Downs National Park, across the A24, through Jockey’s Meadow and the Recreation Ground/Allotment land. The former two areas were noted as protected green spaces in the Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (SSWNP). The route would then twice cross the A283 Washington/Steving Road before going westbound to join the National Grid at Bolney. It was unclear if the Allotment land is included. Rampion 2’s land agents had indicated that this is unlikely.

Members took into consideration the relevant policies of local Plans, including the SSWNP. They also considered concerns from members of the public made earlier in the public session.

The Clerk had previously referred Members to the project’s scoping consultation and examination documents published on the Parish Council’s website.

Members discussed a number of issues about the cable route. They noted that proposals are in the early stages and that ecological, environmental and other survey results were still in progress.

Members agreed they were only in a position to give a very broad response to the request for feedback. A full response would be made once all the details are presented for the first formal consultation in the summer.

It was **RESOLVED** to give initial feedback to the Rampion 2 consultation by expressing concern at the proposed broad alignment of the route as this would affect the parish, the effect on existing screening and the disturbance of resulted construction works, including traffic generation on local roads. Members ask that planners take steps to ensure compliance with the relevant policies of the adopted joint Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan

It was further **RESOLVED** to consider presenting joint concerns with the Parish’s Neighbourhood Plan partners at Storrington & Sullington Parish Council which may arise at the formal consultation phase. Clerk to action.

22.06.4. To Agree specification for the London Road bus stop light by the Recreation Ground

Members discussed the proposed Philips BGP615 light specification from HDC’s approved contractor SSE Streetlighting. Mr Chris Jende, HDC Building Services Engineer confirmed that the unit is recommended for minimum light bleed, best suited for the area’s sensitive location close to the South Downs National Park. A light shield would be fitted to decrease light ‘bleed’ further.

RESOLVED unanimously to **APPROVE** the light unit and to fund the one-off £1,081.67 costs, approved by Full Council on 16th December 2020, from unspent earmarked reserves for highways improvements. Clerk to notify Mr Jende so that he can instruct works

22.07. Washington Recreation Ground Charity

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

None reported.

22.07.2. To Discuss and Consider action to reduce the erosion of the School Lane/ Recreation Ground verge.

Members discussed a report to the Open Spaces Committee Meeting on 18th January about erosion of the verge of the Recreation Ground by School Lane from traffic overrun, particularly near the village hall. They noted that this may eventually undermine the fencing, causing it to collapse. The verge is owned by the Parish Council and also acts as a buffer from any flood water from the road. A water access cover in the verge is close to collapsing in the road. The Highways Authority confirm they are not responsible for maintaining verges on privately owned land but could potentially be involved in a TRO process to install a parking restriction on the highway.

RESOLVED to seek advice and costs on a recommended parking restriction before making a TRO application. Clerk to contact the WSCC sub-contractor who replaced the traffic bollards by Vera's Shelter

22.08. To Receive reports and recommendations from Committees and Working Parties

The draft minutes of the OSRA and Planning & Transport Committee Meetings on 18th January were previously circulated. There were no other recommendations.

22.09. To Approve Bank Reconciliation, Payments and Report Income

The reconciled bank statement showing transactions between 30.11.20 and 30.12.20 accounting year to date statement, payments schedule and invoices were circulated before the meeting.

RESOLVED that the following payments totalling £1,464.91 be APPROVED

Payee	Details	Amount
T.J. Manvell	Invoice 87 Repair of MUGA memorial bench	190.00
HDC	Invoice 906918 Q4 dog bins-payment approved by OSRA 18/1/21	34.45
NSA	2021 subscription	66.00
Z Savill	January 2021 salary & expenses	1,125.76
NEST	January 2021 staff pension	48.70
Total		£ 1,464.91

*Payment of £34.45 invoice 906918 by BACS on 20th January 2021

Councillors to RESOLVE to AGREE the financial reports as follows:

Outstanding purchase orders: None

Outstanding sales invoice: £30 allotment rent

Income: £60 allotment rent

Reconciled Bank Balance - £84,189.25.

22.10. VAT

It was noted that Q4 VAT reclaim is due April 2021

22.11. PAYE and National Insurance contributions

It was noted that Q4 contributions are due April 2021

22.12. Correspondence Received

Correspondence received was previously circulated and noted with no action required.

22.13 Clerk’s Report

There was no report.

22.14. To Receive items for the next agenda

The Clerk reported that the previous request to discuss the parish noticeboards is deferred to the next meeting because of the Rampion 2 presentation.

22.15. Dates and times of next meetings via Zoom

Full Council Meeting: Monday 1st March 2021, 7.30pm

Committees: Monday 15th February 2021 from 7pm.

There being no other business to conduct, the meeting was closed at 20.49 hours.

Signed.....

Dated.....

