

# 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 1<sup>st</sup> March 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 G Lockerbie (GL)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC) and Cllr Jim Sanson (HDC)

**ALSO:** Clerk to the Council, Zoe Savill

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

**ABSENT:** KW

The Chairman opened the meeting at **19:30 hours**.

### **22.19. Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements**

**RESOLVED** unanimously to accept apologies for absence from KW (work)

### **22.20. Declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed and agree Dispensations**

The Chairman and CB declared an interest in item 22.28.4, being members of a Road Fund Committee on the Heath Common 'Lanes'.

### **22.21. To approve the Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.**

**RESOLVED** unanimously to **APPROVE** the minutes of the last Full Council meeting as a true record of the proceedings.

### **22.22. Public Speaking**

No members of the public were present.

### **22.23. Reports from County and District Councillors**

#### **Horsham District Report**

Cllr Jim Sanson reported that Horsham District Council (HDC) has significant Coronavirus business support grants available and he urged businesses in need to contact them via HDC's website at:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk>

The Chairman asked for a response to complaints from a Horsham resident about HDC's decision in

December to prevent spoken or written statements from the public, including local councils, at Full Council meetings. Cllr Sanson reported that written statements can be submitted beforehand as it is not always possible or reasonable for the public to expect immediate responses to questions at meetings

### County Report

Cllr Paul Marshall reported on the following:

**WSCC 2021/22 Budget:** Cabinet has approved the Budget following a Government settlement which helped plug the £44 million shortfall, much of it due to increasing costs of service purchasing as well as significant increases in children and adult services.

**Trial of new bookings system for ‘tips’:** WSCC is launching an App for the public to book visits to some of its waste depots, including Horsham. This is principally to reduce traffic congestion arising from social distancing measures during the pandemic. Billingshurst is not included in the scheme.

**Resident’s request for speed bumps in Georges Lane:** Cllr Marshall sought the PC’s view on a resident’s request for speed bumps to slow traffic in the lane. He pointed out that it is an unadopted road as well as a public bridleway. AL commented that the resident who has three young children, had initially written to him on the matter. He pointed out that traffic speeds had increased significantly since recent surface repairs, and a fox had been hit in broad daylight and left dying in the middle of the lane. It was suggested that ‘round hump’ or similar could be the answer. The Chairman advised that it was a matter for residents of the private lane, and noted that Heath Common Residents Association had recently consulted with the PROW team and county council solicitor, who advised that speed bumps would not be permitted on public rights of way in Heath Common. Any roads where speed humps are permitted must be fully illuminated with street lights. In the past, residents in Bracken Lane had been required to remove speed bumps which had been laid without consultation.

### £100 million Government settlement to WSCC to cover costs of the pandemic

BH asked the size of the Government’s financial settlement with the County Council?

Cllr Marshall reported that this was in the region of £100 million, of which £83 million covers the direct cost of managing the pandemic and £20 million for unpaid council tax and business rates. He explained that the County’s 2021/22 budget is based on ‘business as usual’ and not pandemic costs.

*The Chairman thanked the Members for their reports. Cllr Marshall and Cllr Sanson left the meeting.*

### 22.24. Matters Arising from the last meeting.

The Chairman reported on the following:

- **Onshore cable route for Rampion 2 Windfarm expansion:** the Council has responded to the informal consultation which includes proposals for an underground cable corridor through Jockey’s Meadow and the Recreation Ground, both designated Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan. The response is published on the Parish Council’s website.
- **Bus Shelter Light replacement, London Road:** HDC has instructed SSE Services to replace the faulty light unit and confirmed it will continue to maintain it.
- **Protection of Recreation Ground Verge, School Lane:** Quotations are being sought for a solution to protect the verge from traffic overrun, as requested at the last meeting. The clerk will be

meeting a contractor on 2<sup>nd</sup> March to discuss various options. To be considered at the next Full Council Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

**22.25. To Consider Planning Applications in the Parish**

None for consultation.

**22.26. Planning Decisions in the parish:**

Parish: Washington PC

Application Number: DC/20/2247

Site: Ridgeways Georges Lane Storrington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3JH

Description: Fell 2 x Douglas Fir and 2 x Scots Pine

Decision: Application Permitted

Date of Decision: 09/02/2021

Application Number: DC/20/2466

Site: High Mead Hampers Lane Storrington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3HU

Description: Erection of a detached single storey timber frame outbuilding/games room.

Decision: Application Permitted

Date of Decision: 09/02/2021

**22.27. Appeals in the parish:**

None lodged or decided at the time of the meeting.

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

**22.28.1. To Report Coronavirus updates affecting the Parish Council and any recommended action**

It was NOTED that the Clerk will seek clarification on NALC (National Association of Local Councils) guidance that physical council meetings must resume after 7<sup>th</sup> May.

**22.28.2. To Receive the Council's Financial Report**

The Clerk's financial report for end of January 2021 was previously circulated. The Chairman confirmed the Council's healthy budget position, showing a positive variance of £78,500. This includes an additional income of £14,000, much of it from the Community Infrastructure Levy. **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

**22.28.3. To Consider and Agree a deposit savings account for the Parish Council**

Members discussed various options researched by the Chairman of the Finance Committee to protect the Council's reserves. It was noted that only two banks and one building society offered FSCA protection for local council funds, and that interest rates are very low in all three.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to open an instant access deposit savings account with the Nationwide Building Society as this offers FSCA protection and also meets the Council's Financial Regulations for banking security. Clerk to action.

**22.28.3. To Review the Parish Council's website provider and consider quotations**

The Chairman reported on the lack of progress from the Council's website provider to liaise with him and the Working Party on the new website. Despite a reminder, there had been no further contact from them in over two months or any confirmation that they formally accept the contract. The government's deadline to meet the website accessibility requirements is now long overdue. With these issues in mind, the Chairman reported that he has been in discussions with the Working Party and the Clerk on other suppliers. They are

still waiting on further information from a local council on their experience with one of the suppliers. The following quotations from a shortlist of three were shared with Members before the meeting:

| Company      | Build costs | Annual web hosting costs | Expected costs Year 1 | Expected costs Year 2 + |
|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Contractor A | £1000*      | £199                     | £1199                 | £199                    |
| Contractor B | £330        | £120                     | £450                  | £120                    |
| Contractor C | £599        | £300                     | £899                  | £300                    |

Following a discussion, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to end the service agreement with Vision ICT AND to delegate the decision to the Working Party and Clerk on the preferred supplier to avoid any further delays.

**22.28.3. To Consider next publication date of the Parish Council’s Newsletter.**

The Council discussed the next newsletter and a quotation of £520 from Sussex Local to produce and distribute it in the parish and it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree the following:

1. To engage Sussex Local to produce and distribute a Spring newsletter in May, depending on the magazine’s schedule. Dates to be advised.
2. Chairman to produce front page Chairman’s Report; GL to report on OSRA’s activities; AL to report for the Planning & Transport Committee; CB to report on the Rampion 2 proposals and forthcoming public consultation.
3. Chairman and Clerk to proof-read the final drafts from Sussex Local.

**22.28.4. To Consider a proposal to contribute towards a forestry track access to the Warren Hill National Trust car park.**

AL reported on the progress of the National Trust plans to upgrade the southern end of the Georges Lane into a forestry track. This section, a public bridleway, is managed by the National Trust as access to its car park at Warren Hill. It was noted that the Forestry Commission has offered 40% of the costs and that the Trust is fairly confident of raising half of the remaining £24,000 required. But there is no guarantee for the rest, given the financial strain on the Trust from the pandemic. It was further noted that improvements to the access are long overdue and that unless progressed in 2021/22 there was the risk that the Forestry Commission may withdraw funding. Members discussed this, noting that the Council had Warren Hill is an important community facility and the Chairman’s earlier report of a £14,000 income surplus. The Clerk advised on the Council’s power to contribute to the repair and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways under the Highways Act 1980 ss 43 50.

GL proposed to offer £12,000 one-off match funding and this was seconded by AL . It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the proposal. The Chairman and CB did not take part in the voting. The offer is conditional upon an assurance that the forestry track will be completed before next Winter and

with no expectation for the Parish Council to contribute to maintenance costs. In the event that the project is delayed, the Parish Council would review its offer.

**22.28.5. To Consider supporting the Slow Ways walking project**

**RESOLVED** to defer this item to the next meeting, in the absence of KW who was due to give a report.

**22.29. Washington Recreation Ground Charity**

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

None reported.

**22.30. To Receive reports and recommendations from Committees and Working Parties**

**RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the draft minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February and that there was no Planning & Transport Committee Meeting.

**22.31.1. To Consider recommendation to approve grounds maintenance quotation.**

Members considered the following quotations:

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Contractor A:           | <b>£4,141.00</b> |
| Contractor B :          | <b>£6,553.50</b> |
| Contractor C: (J Payne) | Withdrawn        |

Contractor A for 3-year grounds maintenance:

2021: **£4,056.00**

2022: **£4,130.00**

2023: **£4,390.40**

Two other quotations were sought but the Clerk had not received a response. A third contractor had withdrawn interest prior to the meeting.

It was NOTED that Contract A, Sussex Land Services, had previously provided a good and reliable service to the Council and the quotations represented best value for money. **RESOLVED** unanimously to engage them on a 3-year basis for the quotations of £4,056 for 2021, £4,130 for 2022 and £4,390.40 for 2023. This is subject to termination on both sides should circumstances prevail.

**22.31.2. To Consider disposal of the parish council's two redundant noticeboards at Spring Gardens and Rock Road.**

Members discussed the Council's resolution in December 2020 to discontinue use of the Council's noticeboards at Spring Gardens and Rock Road. It was noted that the reasons were due to the difficulties of finding contractors willing to carry out the necessary repairs but also the dangers of accessing the Rock Road board. JH and CB commented on the need to retain the board at Spring Gardens. The Clerk advised that the resolution cannot be reversed within 6 months (before May) of that meeting without notice of a special motion. **RESOLVED** unanimously for the OSRA Committee to review this item at their May meeting and to make a recommendation to Full Council.

**22.31.3 To Receive report from the Q2 meeting of the Rampion 2 Community Project Liaison Group**

CB reported on the Rampion 2 Community Project Liaison Group meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> February and that she is waiting for responses to her questions on why other routes had been discounted. She is also waiting for the Rampion team to provide details on what is the longest uninterrupted distance for directional horizontal drilling. Formal proposals will be shared at the next PLG meeting just prior to the public consultation in June.

**RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

**22.32. To Approve Bank Reconciliation, Payments and Report Income**

The reconciled bank statement showing transactions between 30.12.20 and 20.01.21 accounting year to date statement, payments schedule and invoices were previously circulated.

**22.33.** To approve the following payments totalling £5,680.96.

| <b>Payee</b>          | <b>Details</b>                  | <b>Amount</b>    |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| S. Russell            | Litter collection – Dec 2020    | 115.20           |
| J Electrical Services | Annual Electrical Inspection    | 162.00           |
| Nick Blunt Fencing    | New fencing and gates           | 4,216. 80*       |
| Z Savill              | February 2021 salary & expenses | 1,137.05         |
| NEST                  | February 2021 staff pension     | 49.91            |
| <b>Total</b>          |                                 | <b>£5,680.96</b> |

\*Payment of £4,216.80 by delegation (email) on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 under s.101.LGA 1972

**Councillors RESOLVED** unanimously to **APPROVE** the payments and the following financial reports:

Outstanding purchase orders: **0**  
Outstanding sales invoices: **0**  
Income: **£91**  
Reconciled Bank Balance: **£82,516.14**

**22.33.2 NEST Pension**

The Clerk confirmed submission of the May and September 2020 outstanding schedule contributions by Direct Debit on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

**22.34. VAT**

To Note that Q4 VAT due April 2021

**22.35. PAYE and National Insurance contributions**

To Note that Q4 due April 2021

**22.36. Correspondence Received**

**RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the Correspondence Report circulated before the meeting.

**22.37. Clerk’s Report**

**RESOLVED** to note the Clerk’s Report circulated before the meeting.

**22.37.1. Training**

An invitation from WSALC (West Sussex Association of Local Councils) to attend free online training sessions was discussed. The Chairman requested to attend the Role of Councils as Employers; Chairman of OSRA and Planning & Transport requested to attend ‘Chairmanship’ session; AL requested to attend the Planning session. **RESOLVED** that the Clerk notifies these Members when dates are confirmed by WSALC and bookings become available.

**22.38. To Receive items for the next agenda**

**RESOLVED** to add the following items:

- Finance Committee Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> March: Outsourcing Payroll to a third-party provider.
- Planning & Transport Committee Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> March: Reports from two residents on access issues to Washington Village; Update on whether HDC will be taking action on the the continued provision of gated access to Longbury Hill Wood.

**22.39. Dates and time of next meetings (via the zoom platform).**

Open Spaces Committee: **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March, 6.30pm**

Finance Committee: **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March, 7.15pm**

Planning & Transport Committee: **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 7.45pm.**

Full Council Meeting: **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, 7.30pm.**

**22.40. To Consider the exclusion of the Press and Public from the next confidential item of the agenda as per the Council’s Standing Orders.**

None present.

**22.41. Annual staff salary review**

The matter was previously discussed by confidential email. **RESOLVED** unanimously to **APPROVE** the Personnel Committee’s recommendation for the clerk/RFO’s salary to be increased. This is equivalent (not linked) to the NALC pay scale of LC2 24-28 substantive benchmark range.

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

Signed.....

Date.....

