** WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL (Online) MEETING**

**MINUTES** of proceedings for the monthly meeting of Washington Parish Council held on Monday 11th May, 2020

**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), Cllr G Lockerbie (GL) and Cllr K Woods (KW)

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Cllr P Marshall (WSCC)

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

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**: 2

**ABSENT**: Cllr J Sanson (HDC) and Cllr J Wright

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

**20.76. Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Council’s first online meeting as permitted by Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 whilst it is unable to meet physically during the current Coronavirus crisis.

**RESOLVED** to **NOTE** that all members were present.

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

**RESOLVED** to **NOTE** there were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensations.

**20.78. To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting held on 2 March, 2020**

**RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the draft Minutes of the last meeting on 2nd March 2020 as a correct record.

**20.79. Public Speaking**

There were no requests to speak.

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| **20.801. Reports from County and District Councillors**  Cllr Paul Marshall, (Storrington and Washington Ward) and Leader of West Sussex Council, reported on its  continued support of critical services in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and working towards enabling social  distancing following the Government lockdown-easing measures.  He made a number of points including the following:   * **Supporting the vulnerable**: The County Council’s primary activities have been focused on supporting the 10,000 vulnerable residents needing help with food, medicine and social welfare; community hubs. * **Re-opening recycling sites**: The Government’s easing of restrictions on essential travel has   allowed the Council to re-open its recycling sites on Monday 11th May for black bag and  garden waste.   * **Maintaining social distancing**: The Council is looking at measures, including ‘virtually’   widening busy pavements in the larger West Sussex towns, to maintain social distancing, as  some residents return to work and the phased re-opening of schools.   * **Post Lockdown recovery**: COVID-19 is likely to be around for another 24 months.   The Council is entering the next phase of how it can prioritise its services going  forward, to begin supporting the economy, and at the same time continue to manage  COVID-19, particularly for the most vulnerable residents    *The Chairman thanked Cllr Marshall for bringing the council up to date on the County’s response to the COVID-19*  *crisis. There were no questions from members, and Cllr Marshall signed out of the meeting.*  **RESOLVDED** to **NOTE** the report and that there were no reports from Cllr Sanson or Cllr Wright.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **20.81. To Consider Planning Applications**    **20.81.1. DC/20/0717- Vineyards Old London Road Washington RH20 3BN**  *Demolition of existing dwelling house and erection of 16no residential dwellings (C3) with associated works.*  Membersdiscussed this application at length. It was noted that the council already supports in principle the  allocation of the Old London Road site for housing development in the Storrington, Sullington and Washington  Neighbourhood Plan.  Members welcomed the increase in the number of smaller 2-bedroom units, to include one affordable unit, compared with the original application, helping to meet identified local housing needs.  They also noted that the site has been identified as a sustainable location for a residential development of this  scale through the Neighbourhood Plan process and will make a significant contribution towards the growth  needs of the parish. BH (Washington Ward) supported the application in principle but raised a number of  concerns including the proposal for one affordable housing unit. This is below the 35% (rounded up to 6 units)  expected by HDC for a site of this size, and will not be supported by the housing officer unless a sufficient  number is proposed or an explanation as to how affordable tenure could be provided.  BH also commented on the traffic implications on the A24 junction, which has a fast egress, with Old London  Road and Rock Road, when there are already two quite substantial developments already in progress in the  area.  The Chairman acknowledged the pressure on Rock Road which had been discussed a number of times by  the council. He pointed out that this is an issue which is not necessarily specific to the Vineyards development,  but is overall an important one in terms of creating an exit lane or additional safety onto the A24. He  invited members to discuss whether it is something to add to their submission and reminded them that  Vineyards is a designated site in the Neighbourhood Plan and to that extent already has the support of the  parish council.  On the affordability issue, the Chairman explained that he personally could not comment upon the  applicant’s viability argument discussed with HDC because it was not made available to view, and that it was  for HDC to evaluate.  CB was of the opinion that the council should support the proposal as it offers a much higher  percentage of smaller accommodation than is usually offered by developers and is what the community needs. # GL supported comments already made by members, but in particular with CB as two-bed accommodation are in  the greatest need in the parish. The Chairman invited members to consider if the council should include  a submission on affordable housing. Only BH raised his hand in support, and the motion was therefore not  carried.  **RESOLVED** to support the application in principle, and to request the conditions as stated in  the Council’s previous response to DC/19/2478, but with some amendments as follows:   * Retain adequate ‘green’ screening to maintain privacy and to prevent overlooking on neighbouring properties, and to mitigate traffic noise from the nearby A24. * Request no street lighting, in recognition of the Parish’s Unlit status, and the important designation of the nearby South Downs National Park as an International Dark Skies Reserve * To prohibit any burning of waste, including ‘green waste’, on site. All waste to be taken off site     **20.82. To Review, Consider, Recommend and report on Parish Council issues, including maintenance**  **20.82.1. To Receive and Review Internal Auditor’s Report and Internal Audit Letter for the financial**  **year 2019-20**  Members discussed the signed Audit Report 2019-20 by Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co, and his review of the Council’s internal financial procedures and controls. It was NOTED that in the auditor’s opinion *the systems and internal procedures at Washington Parish Council are regulated and followed, that it takes policies and procedures seriously and overall, the systems and procedures in place are entirely fit for purpose.* There were no recommendations for future action. It was further NOTED that in the auditor’s opinion *that the annual accounts and AGAR are ready to be signed off by council and the external auditor and that the AGAR is a true and fair reflection of the financial transaction of that of the council for the year ended 31st March 2019.* Accordingly, he has signed off the AGAR and this is published on the council’s website. Members thanked the clerk for the audit preparation and commended the auditor for a well-presented and timely report.  **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the audit report and letter.  **20.82.2.** **To Receive and Approve the Financial Report for Year Ending 31st March 2020 (reconciled)**  Members considered and NOTED the Financial Report (reconciled) with Year Ending 2020 signed by the clerk as RFO on 14 April 2020 with bank reconciliation circulated before the meeting which showed a closing balance of £53,720.00  **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Financial Report for Year Ending 31st March 2020.    **20.82.3. To Review and Approve Annual Governance Statement 2019-20**  Members reviewed each box of the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20.  It was NOTED that the auditor reported that in his opinion *the systems and internal procedures at*  *Washington Parish Council are regulated and followed; it is clear the council takes policies and procedures seriously* and he was pleased to report that *overall, the systems and procedures the council has in place are entirely fit for purpose*.  **RESOLVED** that the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20 is a correct record of a sound system  of internal control and accounting. It was **APPROVED** to be **duly Signed by the Chairman and Clerk.**  **20.82.4. To Review and Approve Accounting Statement 2019-20, Report significant Variances**  **and the Notice of Public Right**  Members considered the Accounting Statement 2019-20 signed by the clerk as RFO on 7 May 2020 and the auditor’s report.It was NOTED that in the auditor’s opinion the **‘***AGAR will be ready for submission to the external auditor within statutory time scales and that the control objective of Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.’* The Clerk as RFO explained the Council’s significant variances which were due to the early repayment of the balance of the Public Works Loan of £14,629.70, and income of £710 from the sale of the silver cups. The Council also received a £2,000 refund of a grant for public toilets in Storrington.    **EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS**  Members NOTED the auditor’s explanation and advice regarding the changes in the statutory deadlines for inspection due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The Council’s Notice period will start Tuesday 1st September and end Wednesday 30 September  **RESOLVED** that the Annual Accounting Statement 2019-20 is a correct record of the Council’s income and expenditure, and to AGREE the explanation of significant variances.  The Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 to be **APPROVED** and **duly Signed by the Chairman**  **and Clerk as RFO**.  **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the dates for the Notice period for the Public Rights and Publication of unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return, to be published/posted on Tuesday 12th May 2020.  **20.83.Washington Recreation Ground Charity**    **20.83.1. Tree management: To Consider a quotation for H2 Tree works**  Members discussed the quotation of £1,470 from Mr R Mellor of Arboricultural Excellence for all H2  tree works recommended in the 2019 Tree Inspection by Andrew Gale Consultancy, namely  the removal of two dying elm trees on the recreation ground.  GL, Chairman of OSRA, commended Mr Mellor for the works as he had completed all high priority (H1)  tree works satisfactorily in 2019and cleared away the debris.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to engage the services of Arboricultural Excellence for H2 tree works as quoted  **20.83.2. To Consider any maintenance issues arising**  The Clerk reported that Colourworks Coating has confirmed they hope to start the MUGA line painting towards the end of the week. She has also emailed T J Manvell to advise when they can clean the benches and re-paint the goal posts. The works were due in the spring but have been delayed due to COVID-19. The Clerk agreed to update the council with their response.  **RESOLVED** to note the information.  **20.84. Approve Payments, Receipts and Quotes**    **20.84.1. To Receive Year to Date Reconciled Payments, Receipts and Approve Purchases**  The reconciled bank statement showing transactions between 28.02.20 and 25.03.20 accounting year to date statement, payments schedule, invoice and purchase order summary were circulated to members.  The Clerk reported that the council has received £13,438.20 Community Infrastructure Levy, which represents the parish’s 25% portion of developer funds for housing under construction at the former Highways Depot, Old London Road. It is the first time CIL monies have been paid directly to the council ahead of expenditure. The information with CIL funding guidance was previously circulated with the Clerk’s April briefing which advises of a 3-year limit imposed upon the council to indicate to HDC how it will spend the funds within the next 5 years.  Members welcomed the funding and agreed to discuss at a future meeting how it can be spent for the benefit of the parish. The clerk agreed to seek guidance on the most suitable account for the funds so that it is safely separate from the council’s other income, and to report back to council.  The clerk recommended the continuation of the WSALC and NALC subscription as it supports the council in its work with up to date legal compliance, particularly important during the COVID-19 crisis, and also the clerk’s CiLCA studies.  Councillors **RESOLVED (342)** that the following schedule of payments totalling **£2,726,82** be **APPROVED.**   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Date** | **Invoice** | **Payee** | | **Total (Gross)** | | | 08/05/2020 | 30 Apr 2020 | Clerk’s net Salary & Expenses April 29020 + backdated pay increase for Feb & March 2020 | | £ 1410.59 | | | 30/04/2020 | 134215 | Sussex Land Services Ltd grass-cutting April 2020 | | £ 513.60 | | | 15/04/2020 | ORD507176 | SLCC Practitioners Guide 2020; 11th Ed Local Council Administration; delivery | | £ 140.00 | | | 01/04/2020 | 1102 | WSALC & NALC 2020.21 subscription | | £ 662.63 | | | **Total** |  | | **£ 2,726.82** | |   Councillors **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the financial reports as follows :  **Income received**:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Date** | **Description** | **Amount** | | 23/04/2020 | HDC – parish precept 1st payment | £ 20,904.00 | | 01/05/2020 | HDC – parish cleansing grant 1st payment | £ 967.20 | | 15/04/2020 | CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) – developer monies from former Highways Depot, London Road | £ 13,438.20 | | 07/04/2020 | Sussex Local credit note | £ 559.20 | | **Total** |  | **£ 35,868.60** |   Outstanding purchase orders: **£1,420.00** – replacement fencing on Recreation Ground  Outstanding sales invoices - **£5** outstanding allotment rent 2019/20  Year End 31 March 2020 closing bank balance - **£53.719.82 reconciled**    **20.84.2. VAT**  **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** that the 2019/20 Q4 VAT rebate is pending.  **20.85Correspondence Received**  Members considered the correspondence previously circulated and no matters were raised.  **RESOLVED**to **NOTE** the correspondence.  **20.86. Clerk’s Report**  Members considered the Clerk’s Report previously circulated and no matter were raised.  **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.  **20.87. To Receive items for the next agenda.**  CB commented that the deadline for replanting at Longbury Hill Wood is fast approaching and that there is no sign of it taking place.  **RESOLVED** to agree that the matter is discussed at the next meeting. The agenda will also include the Council’s consideration of its planning response to the revised application for the Frankland Arms public house.  **20.88. Dates and time of next meetings.**  **RESOLVED** to note that the next online meeting of the Council will take place on Monday 1 June 2020.    **The meeting was closed at 20:43hrs.**  **Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Dated\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | |  | |  | |