

**MINUTES OF WESTMILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 17 May 2023 AT 7.30PM in Westmill Village Hall**

**Councillors: Tom McMullen (Chair) Bernadette King Anne Downes Jim Beaven Sue Debono**  
**Officer attending: Sarah Kubica (Clerk and RFO)**  
**Present: 3 members of the public**

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

23.031 Apologies received from Cllr Cowler noted and approved by those present.

**DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

23.032 Cllr King declared an interest in matters relating to the T&M Greg Trust in her capacity as Trustee of the T&M Greg Trust.

**MINUTES OF MEETING** 23.033 The minutes of the WPC meeting held on 22 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.

**UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT (UD) ON CHERRY GREEN LANE (CGL) UPDATE**

23.034 The Unauthorised Development on CGL has still not been determined by East Herts District Council (EHDC) planners, has not been put before the EHDC Development Management Committee (despite multiple assurances otherwise), and remains, some 18 months after the development commenced, without planning consent and in contravention of a High Court injunction. This Council believes that there has been a failure on behalf of EHDC planners, to promptly complete their duties. It is noted that the applicants do not have certainty of the legal position, and the Parish, in particular the immediately surrounding neighbours, have had their legitimate expectation of protection under planning law ignored by EHDC.

It is also noted that for over a year District Councillors have been advising that WPC meet with EHDC planners but, until now, neither District Planners nor Parish Councillors have been able to make this happen. Reviewing the history of correspondence, it is clear to this Council that there has been a significant amount of 'stonewalling' by EHDC Planning Department and a regular refusal to answer legitimate questions from the Parish, either at all or in a timely manner. In the opinion of this Council there has been a failure of democratic principles in particular Accountability and Transparency.

It is resolved that this Council uses its best endeavours, in a persistent and determined manner, to seek accountability and transparency from EHDC Planners by all means at their disposal. Where appropriate it will authorise individual Councillors to approach EHDC for meeting and/or use any legal or public relations tools at its disposal. Clerk to collate details of dates that requests for information have been made to EHDC including via elected representatives.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

23.035 Brief discussion on UD, it was acknowledged that the initial response to the unauthorised development from EHDC was fast and gave the Parish confidence that they were treating the matter seriously. However, thereafter, the planners seemed to disengage and it became apparent that the Parish's trust was misplaced. Advice to the WPC seemed to prioritise the applicants to the detriment of some parishioners.

**FINANCE**

23.036 Audit requirements for the year ending 2022/2023:

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| a) To approve the Annual Accounts 2022/23                             | approved unanimously |
| b) To approve the Certificate of Exemption 2022/23                    | approved unanimously |
| c) To approve the Annual Internal Auditor Report for the year 2022/23 | approved unanimously |
| d) To approve Section 1, the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23      | approved unanimously |
| e) To approve Section 2, Accounting Statements 2022/23                | approved unanimously |
| f) Dates for the public rights period (5 June to 14 July 2023)        | approved unanimously |

23.037 RFO circulated information on payments since the last meeting and expected to September 2023. The list of approved payments is an appendix to these minutes.

23.038 The payments before Council were agreed. Insurance renewal has increased this year and RFO has obtained a new quote but as policies are packaged to suit all needs, much of the cover is in excess of WPC requirements. RFO will attempt to obtain further quotes to present to the council before renewal on 1 June. Current insurer offers an alternative for smaller authorities, RFO to find out if sums insured offered are sufficient to cover WPC assets.

Chair: chair@westmillpc.org.uk  
 Parish Clerk: clerk@westmillpc.org.uk

**TRAINING AND ROLES FOR NEW COUNCILLORS**

23.039 Councillors to contact the clerk with any training requirements. After brief discussion on roles the following duties were assigned, with councillors in agreement that all will offer support where needed and continue to monitor all new planning applications; Defibrillator, 20s Plenty, bank: Cllr Beaven; Highways, flytipping: Cllr Cowler; Highways, noticeboard: Cllr Debono; Risk Assessment, Village Green, Bins: Cllr Downes; Payments, Internal Audit, GT liaison, Defibrillator: Cllr King; Planning, bank: Cllr McMullen.

**NEW BIN EMPTYING ARRANGEMENTS**

23.040 Overflowing bin at recreation ground reported - bin currently emptied weekly on a Wednesday. Suggested that football team take their rubbish home (Mike McRae on behalf of GT aware). Cllr Downes to ask whether the Shared Waste team can carry out dog bin emptying.

**HIGHWAYS**

23.041 Cllr Downes has met twice with Highways to discuss new signage and road markings after complaints of speeding traffic and a near-miss incident involving a child. Possible signage discussed includes; 'children in road' as the village has a nursery and playground; 'SLOW' markings near playground, 'give way' lines at the bottom of CGL; 'Westmill' signs at the entrance to the village. Highways explained that due to budget and demand there were delays but higher priority signage will be given consideration.

**POSSIBLE CLOSURE ASPENDEN ROAD INTO BUNTINGFORD**

23.042 A temporary traffic order application to close Aspenden Road near the Keepers Chase development has been received and sent for processing and traffic management due for discussion. Highways has noted the concerns raised by WPC. Cllr McMullen has noticed contractors bringing large vehicles through the village and will request they take an alternative route to avoid damage to the verges of village green spaces.

**20s Plenty**

23.043 Cllr Beaven provided an update: Hertfordshire County Council does not support this initiative and continues to follow DfT policy for physical calming measures rather than a sign only implementation of 20mph, despite the Welsh Government and areas of London rolling out 20mph zones.

**PLANNING**

23.044 Planning applications/decisions details attached as an appendix to these minutes.

**VILLAGE EVENTS**

23.045 19 May, 6pm, village rounders. 28 May, 7pm screening of Matilda at St Mary's. 29/30 July, Mary Greg exhibition. The art exhibition will not be held this year as volunteers are still being sought to take on the project.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

23.046 Electrical testing certificate on defibrillator kiosk is due for renewal. Thank you to Cllr Partridge for providing the risk assessment which Cllr Downes will now monitor.

**POLICE REPORT/NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

23.047 Local Police unable to attend today's meeting: Police recorded one crime in Westmill in April. Neighbourhood Watch representative was unable to obtain any information from Police regarding a low flying helicopter and police presence on CGL on the weekend of 21-23 April.

**GREG TRUST (GT)**

23.048 Cllr King updated all present: the centenary event involves art on loan from Stevenage and Manchester. Interior renovation works to start on cottage number 4 and due to take 8 weeks. Fencing to be added to the recreation ground in line with league requirements and Westmill football club has asked for reinstatement of the three existing flood lights subject to the condition of cabling. Gifted land at the centre of the village - 'Jackson's Meadow' was transferred to the GT on 31 March and we thank the owners of the land for their generous gift to the village.

**CLERK'S REPORT**

23.049 Insurance quote information raised under 23.037.

**MATTERS ARISING**

23.050 There were no matters to add.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

23.051 6 September, 29 November 2023, 7 February, 15 May 2024 proposed

**MEETING CLOSE**

23.052 The meeting closed at 8.35pm. Cllr McMullen thanked everyone for their contribution

## 23.037 Appendix

Cheque/DD	Item Description	Amount (VAT incl)	Payee
Payments since last meeting 22 February 2023			
BACS	LITTER FEBRUARY	97.50	M MASON
BACS	LITTER MARCH	97.50	M MASON
BACS	LITTER APRIL	50.00	M MASON
BACS	CLERKS SALARY JAN-MAR	300.00	S KUBICA
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL FEB, MAR, APR	28.80	IONOS
BACS	ANNUAL SUBS	193.69	HAPTC
BACS	EHDC DOG BIN	184.72	EHDC
BACS	AUDIT FEE	60.00	J JAMES
BACS	PRINTING PAPER EXPENSES	7.50	R PARTRIDGE
BACS	LAMINATING SHEETS	5.00	R PARTRIDGE
BACS	GRASS CUTS 2 x APRIL, 1x MAY	135.00	CT GARDENS LTD
BACS	LIME TREE POLLARDING EST	600.00	T FULLER
Payments expected to September 2023			
DD	LITTER PICK MAY, JUN, JUL, AUG	200.00	M MASON
DD	ANNUAL FEE GDPR	35.00	ICO
BACS	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	10.00	100 PARISHES
BACS	PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE	498.66	ZURICH
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL MAY	9.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE, DOMAIN RENEWAL & EMAIL JUNE	21.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL JULY	9.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL AUGUST	9.60	IONOS
BACS	ACCOUNTING FEE	90.00	PURE BALANCE
BACS	CLERKS SALARY APR-JUN EST	400.00	S KUBICA
DD	ELECTRICITY DISCONNECT	235.00	EON NEXT
BACS	GRASS CUTS, MAY, JUNE, JULY, AUG, SEP	360.00	CT GARDENS LTD
BACS	NEW COUNCILLOR TRAINING	64.00	HAPTC
BACS	ELECTION FEE ESTIMATE	50.00	EHDC

## 23.044 Appendix

<b>Planning Application Ref</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Deadline/ Decision Date</b>	<b>Consultation Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>LPA Appeal Ref</b>
<b>3/21/2509/FUL</b>	Land at Cherry Green Lane	28/11/22	Change of use of the land for 2 Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches, accommodating the siting of 2 mobile homes, 4 touring caravans and 2 dayroom/amenity buildings, alongside the formation of an access road, areas of hardstanding, provision for foul water drainage and widened site entrance onto CGL	Pending	N/A
<b>3/21/1792/LBC</b>  <b>3/21/1791/FUL</b> <b>3/23/0817/VAR</b>	Knights Hill Farm	07/03/23  19/05/23	Change of use of a group of agricultural farm buildings into 4no. dwellings and associated works Conversion of one agricultural building to a 3 bedroom dwelling: variation of condition 9 (detailed itemised schedule of repairs) of listed building consent 3/21/0909/LBC - to vary the wording from 'prior to the commencement of any works' to 'prior to the commencement of any above ground construction works, not including demolition'	Grant consent with conditions  Pending	