

WESTMILL PARISH COUNCIL

125

MINUTES OF WESTMILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 6 September 2023 AT 7.30PM in Westmill Village Hall

Councillors: Jim Beaven Steve Cowler Sue Debono
 Anne Downes Tom McMullen (Chairman)

County Councillor: Jeff Jones

Officer attending: Sarah Kubica (Clerk and RFO)

Present: 2 members of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

23.053 Apologies received from Cllr Bernadette King and approved by those in attendance. Cllr Aubrey Holt also sent apologies for not being present.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

23.054 None for this meeting.

MINUTES OF MEETING

23.055 It was noted that litter pick payments for May, June, July and August were missing from the payments list under item 23.037 of the minutes of the WPC meeting held on 17 May 2023 which will be amended. The minutes otherwise were approved as a correct record.

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

23.056 Since the last meeting Cllr McMullen has been in contact with East Herts District Council (EHDC) planners on several occasions to understand the reasons for the delay in bringing the CGL application to the Development Management Committee (DMC) and to check that EHDC is aware of facts relevant under planning law. Cllr Holt, who sits on the DMC, advised the chairman before the meeting that the application was unlikely to be heard at the DMC this month. As the application has been undetermined for nearly two years there may be another public consultation and parishioners will be encouraged to engage with this directly or via the parish council (WPC). There was a question from Cllr Downes in relation to rural policing challenges which was dealt with in 23.058 below. Cllr Jones re-iterated that there are legitimate challenges as to whether Westmill is a sustainable location for such a development.

REPRESENTATION AT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DMC)

23.057 WPC intends to have a representative speaking for parishioners at DMC but any submission will be time restricted.

POLICE REPORT/NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

23.058 Police crime statistics cited one crime in August - church break-in causing damage to decorative organ pipes and theft of altar cloth and a bag of crisps. Residents are reminded to record make, colour and registration of suspicious vehicles. It was noted that the spate of thefts from a number of vehicles in the village earlier in the summer were not listed. It was also reported that some local farmers had seen an increase in rural crime, also not reflected in statistics. The chairman has met with the relevant chief inspector who emphasised the need for all crime to be reported as this informs data for resourcing. The chairman in turn emphasised a need to build confidence in the Police through better transparency in relation to police activity in the village and a better response to crimes which would improve overall reporting. Policing challenges in East Herts were also discussed with the chief inspector with the time taken to deploy resources across the large rural footprint in the district to places like Westmill when incidents and crimes occur, highlighted. After a brief discussion on CCTV and the value of footage supplied by residents after crimes, Cllr Beaven and OWL representative Dennis Downes who recently attended a Police Priority Settings Forum, urged residents to report all crimes by phoning 999 (crime in progress) or 101 or <https://www.gov.uk/contact-police>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

23.059 'Light the Night' tree lighting is likely to be on 8 December. A resident comment on instances of cars driving through the village at excessive speed was addressed in 23.066 below.

FINANCE

23.060 RFO circulated information on payments since the last meeting and expected to November 2023.

23.061 The list of approved payments is an appendix to these minutes.

23.062 The 23/24 annual donations to St Mary the Virgin £200 and the Greg Trust (GT) £500 were proposed by Cllr Beaven and seconded by Cllr Debono and approved. The annual donation to the GT replaced by hall hire fees from April 2024. Cllr Downes thanked the GT for its generosity.

23.063 Budget information was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting and no significant variances reported since April, clerk to circulate 24/25 budget proposal to councillors before the next meeting. It was confirmed to Cllr McMullen that pollarding of the 18 lime trees was biennial.

23.064 Agreed to fund the clerk CiLCA training and, subject to a reasonable quote, a new parish laptop and to seek agreement to share the cost with any other parish council the clerk works for. Clerk to obtain quote for a laptop.

LITTER AND BINS

23.065 Cllr Downes reported that after issues of overflowing bins and incorrectly sized bin bags, this was now working well and raised with Cllr Jones that EHDC should ask the Shared Waste team to seek further efficiencies by carrying out dog bin emptying at the same time.

HIGHWAYS

23.066 Cllr Downes thanked Cllr Jones for funding new road signs and SLOW road marking from his locality budget. Signs indicating elderly, children and pedestrians in the road will be in place within this financial year. Cllr Jones/Highways to discuss with WPC the location of signs to ensure the desired effect while acknowledging the conservation area and appearance of the village. On the subject of speeding vehicles, Cllr Jones suggested that the police and crime commissioner could be applied to for an assessment of speeding and it was acknowledged that if the problem is not regular or persistent in nature, and involving only a small number of drivers this may not be picked up in an assessment. Cllr Cowler will report the sunken road surface at the top of Station Hill (southern exit to A10) to Thames Water for repair and report water over-run forming a trench on the edge of Station Hill to HCC Highways.

VILLAGE GREEN

23.067 Cllrs McMullen and Cowler to seek quotes for a Christmas tree and order for early December. Cllr Beaven has lights and batteries.

23.068 Nuisance parking on the village green has not been a significant issue, no action required.

PLANNING

23.069 Planning applications/decisions details are attached as an appendix to these minutes. The councillors noted the refusal of 3/23/1373/ARPN and considered possible consequences.

RISK ASSESSMENT

23.070 Cllr Beaven has approached a resident electrician to carry out telephone kiosk PAT testing and will contact CHT for cost of replacement defibrillator pads/battery

23.071 Cllr Downes will arrange for the large lime tree to be assessed and confirmed that roof tile repairs to the village green pump housing will be carried out next month by a volunteer and future necessary repairs should be budgeted for.

GREG TRUST (GT)

23.072 Cllr King emailed an update: The centenary event was well attended with positive comments. Works completed on cottage number 4 and tenant in situ. Permission given to Westmill football club to erect a new mower shed and install dugouts (these benches can also be used by residents). Cllr Cowler asked if the football club had plans for a new fence. Playground inspection completed and a new entrance gate and 'no dogs' sign installed. Allotments have been trimmed and owners reminded to keep plots under control. Jackson's Meadow to continue as a grazing field with access from the Twitchell to the top of the field planned. New fuse box in village hall after recent electrical inspection, roof repairs planned.

CLERK'S REPORT

23.073 Consultations available from DLUHC, Stansted Airport, HCC services for young people and Citizens Advice Bureau has emailed WPC requesting a donation.

MATTERS ARISING

23.074 Cllr Beaven to source quote for a perspex frame to cover $\frac{2}{3}$ of the noticeboard to protect notices from weathering. Cllr Debono has provided new drawing pins and biodegradable laminate sheets. Cllr Cowler shared that BT is switching to digital voice powered by broadband, in readiness for the analogue network switch-off in 2025. Cllr Beaven has sourced village signs and Cllr McMullen has agreed to source gate(s) and a post to put up a village sign at the A10 entrance to the village.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23.075 29 November 2023, 7 February, 15 May 2024 proposed.

MEETING CLOSE

23.076 The meeting closed at 8.53pm. Cllr McMullen thanked everyone for their contribution.

23.061 Appendix

Cheque/DD	Item Description	Amount (VAT incl)	Payee
Payments since last meeting 17 May 2023			
BACS	LITTER MAY, JUN, JUL, AUG	200.00	M MASON
BACS	CLERKS SALARY APR-JUN	445.50	S KUBICA
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL MAY, JUL, AUG	9.60 x 3	IONOS
DD	ANNUAL FEE GDPR	35.00	ICO
BACS	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	10.00	100 PARISHES
BACS	PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE	450.64	BHIB
DD	WEBSITE, DOMAIN RENEWAL & EMAIL JUNE	21.60	IONOS
BACS	GRASS CUTS 2xMAY, 1xJUN	135.00	CT GARDENS LTD
BACS	GRASS CUTS 2xJUL, 1xAUG	135.00	CT GARDENS LTD
BACS	ACCOUNTING FEE	90.00	PURE BALANCE
BACS	MILEAGE EXPENSES - ELECTION FORMS	11.70	S KUBICA
BACS	COUNCILLOR TRAINING	47.00	HAPTC
Payments expected to November 2023			
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL SEP, OCT, NOV	28.80	IONOS
BACS	CLERK SALARY JUL-SEP EST	350.00	IONOS
DD	CHRISTMAS TREE	125.00	TBC
DD	LITTER PICK SEP, OCT, NOV	150.00	M MASON
DD	GRASS CUTS x3	135.00	CT GARDENS
DD	DEFIBRILLATOR ANNUAL SUPPORT	151.20	CHT
BACS	ELECTRICAL TESTING KIOSK	45.00	LOCAL ELECTRICIAN
BACS	CHRISTMAS LIGHTS BATTERIES	20.00	J BEAVEN
DD	ELECTRICITY DISCONNECT	235.00	EON NEXT
BACS	DONATION	200.00	ST MARY THE VIRGIN
BACS	DONATION	500.00	T&M GREG TRUST
BACS	CLERK TRAINING CILCA	300.00	HAPTC
BACS	ELECTION FEE ESTIMATE	50.00	EHDC

23.069 Appendix

Planning Application Ref	Location	Deadline/ Decision Date	Consultation Description	Comments	LPA Appeal Ref
3/21/2509/FUL	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
3/23/1228/LBC	Archers Hall SG9 9LW	18/07/23	Single storey rear extension to main dwelling. Creation of patio with planting beds, demolition of garden wall and erection of new garden wall	Pending	N/A
3/23/1373/ARPN	Gaylors Farm SG9 9LD	01/09/23	Proposed change of use and conversion of Barn 1 and Barn 2 to provide 2no.smaller dwellinghouses and 2no. larger dwellinghouses	Refused	N/A
3/23/1429/HH	The Beeches SG9 9LL	16/08/23	Erection of car port	Pending	N/A