

**Minutes of Westmill Parish Council Meeting  
held on Wednesday 13 December 2023  
at 7.30pm in Westmill Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs Jim Beaven, Steve Cowler, Sue Debono, Anne Downes, Tom McMullen (Chairman)

**In attendance:** Sarah Kubica (Parish Clerk) and 3 members of the public

**23.077 Apologies**

To receive and accept apologies for absence

Cllr Bernadette King due to illness. County Cllr Jeff Jones. District Cllr Aubrey Holt

**23.078 Interests**

To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda

None

**23.079 Minutes**

[To approve the Minutes of Westmill Parish Council meeting held on 6 September 2023 as an accurate record of proceedings](#)

**Resolved**, that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of proceedings and duly signed. Agreed unanimously

**23.080 Unauthorised development on Cherry Green Lane**

To receive an update

Cllr McMullen explained that East Herts Planning had given notice that this application would be heard at the 6 December Development Management Committee (DMC) meeting. However, the application was not on the agenda and they then stated, on 4 December, that the application would not be heard

**23.081 Representation at Development Management Committee** Clerk/Cllr McMullen to enquire with East Herts Planning on the likelihood of this application being on the 10 January agenda and to identify which district councillor will be in attendance. Cllr Downes asked whether the councillors on the DMC visit the sites that are to be discussed – clerk to enquire

**23.082 Rural policing/Neighbourhood Watch**

To receive a report from representatives

Neighbourhood watch representative Dennis Downes advised that no crimes were reported in Westmill since the last meeting. Sergeant Terry Alcock has a new position and is replaced by Sergeant Tim Armstrong. Clerk will request details from the most recent Police Priorities Forum meeting

**23.083 Public participation**

For members of the public and councillors to raise matters of concern

There is concern with residents about road safety on the A10, particularly turning in and out of Westmill with regular incidents reported and 3 accidents occurring last week. Clerk to enquire of Cllr Jones what additional safety measures are available? Discussion of Item 23.087 followed

**23.084 Finance**

[a\) To authorise payments made in accordance with budget](#)

[b\) To note receipts](#)

**Resolved**, to note/approve agenda items a and b, Agreed unanimously

c) [To consider the draft budget and approve the precept for 2024-25](#)

**Resolved**, the draft budget was discussed and revised using the consumer prices index [CPIH](#) as a guide to maintain the precept in real terms. It was agreed that reserves were sufficient and that the budget should be balanced. It was agreed that there was a continuing commitment to spend on the village what is raised. Future costs, particularly in relation to labour and services, were budgeted at CPIH growth. The precept was approved. The official precept form was completed and duly signed. Agreed unanimously

d) [To consider the report on banking and investment options](#)

**Resolved**, to keep administration to a minimum and retain the current banking arrangement, opening a fee free Business Premium interest bearing account (currently 1.5% AER) and transfer in the bulk of funds. Pursue a complaint with the bank over poor customer service. Keep under review. Agreed unanimously

e) To purchase Arnold Baker 13th edition on Local Council Administration

**Resolved**, to approve agenda item e. Agreed unanimously

### 23.085 Reports from councillors

To hear about activities undertaken by councillors

Cllr Beaven attended the East Herts Town and Parish Engagement Event on 14 November focusing on carbon reduction in the district. Of particular interest was funding for tree planting and the availability of grants for properties [off gas heating](#). A poster is on the noticeboard, East Herts has written to residents, a discussion on how to publicise this to eligible residents ensued. Dead tree opposite The Terrace reported to Cllr McMullen

### 23.086 Village green damage prevention

To consider a quote for temporary posts

Cllr McMullen has 2 posts and will arrange to install these at the eastern end of the village. Cllr McMullen confirmed that local large farm vehicles were taking alternative routes to avoid the village centre where possible

### 23.087 Highways

To receive an update regarding signs and road markings

Cllr Cowler advised that the works to remedy the damaged road surface at the top of Station Hill expected in early December has been delayed. Cllr Cowler will research what funding is available from the Road Safety Trust to improve safety at the A10 junctions [roadsafetytrust.org](#)

Clerk advised that the placement of warning signs in Westmill is due this financial year, date to be advised by HCC Highways

### 23.088 Planning

[To receive details of applications and decisions](#)

Noted

### 23.089 Risk Assessment

To receive an updated risk assessment

Cllr Downes confirmed that the roof over the village green pump had been inspected and minor repairs carried out. Inspection of the large lime tree to be arranged

### 23.090 The Greg Trust

To receive a report on activity in the parish

*Two new trustees have been appointed, Gill Lundy and Dennis Downes.*

*Village Hall*

*The Village Hall roof repairs continue to be researched. Westmill nursery have been informed of the forthcoming works.*

*WPC to continue to use VH for meetings, after their grant to GT expires(4/24) a hiring fee will be paid.*

*The Christmas carols around the tree will receive a donation from GT. Cottages*

*Renovations all completed including front garden improvements.*

*Playground*

*The annual inspection showed no concerns.*

*Entrance gate has been replaced as old one was in disrepair.*

*Allotments*

*Small rent increase to go towards costs of upkeep.*

*Recreation Field*

*Positive Environment Agency river survey results received, 14/09/23.*

*Jackson's Meadow*

*New fence to be erected in November and information plaque to be put near the entrance*

### **23.091 Clerk/RFO Report**

Clerk to thank village volunteers by letter. North Herts has confirmed to contractors to empty the bin outside the children's playground. Please make any parish council purchases via the clerk

### **23.092 Date of next meetings and items for the agenda**

To note that the next parish council meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 February 2024. Proposed dates for 2024: 15 May (plus APM and annual meeting), 4 September, 27 November

The meeting closed at 8.52pm