

Minutes of Westmill Parish Council Meeting
held on **Wednesday 14 February 2024**
at **7.30pm** in **Westmill Village Hall**

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

In attendance: Sarah Kubica (Parish Clerk), County Cllr Jeff Jones and 1 member of the public

24.01 APOLOGIES

To receive or accept apologies for absence
District Cllr Aubrey Holt

24.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
Cllr King on T&M Greg Trust in her capacity as Trustee

24.03 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To allow members of the public and councillors to raise matters of concern
None

24.04 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

To approve the Minutes of the Westmill Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 13 December 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

24.05 RURAL POLICING/ NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

To receive reports from representatives

Cllr McMullen reported several incidents of large scale commercial fly tipping in the general area and once within the parish in January and recommended general vigilance. Those present were reminded to report all crimes by phoning 999 (crime in progress) or 101 or <https://www.gov.uk/contact-police>

24.06 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

To receive reports from parish, district and county councillors on activities undertaken in the parish
Cllr Jones attended [HCC full council meeting on 13/2/24](#); £1.1bn budget utilising £11m reserves; council tax to rise by 4.99% this year; 2% ring fenced for adult social care; £31m for care and careworkers' pay; £18m for highways network improvements including removal of vegetation, litter, sign and drainage works; savings achieved by loss of 400 staff; HCC move from County Hall to Stevenage. Cllr Jones will request statistics to investigate improvements on A10 after 10/2/24 fatality. Sir Oliver Heald MP is retiring after 32 years. Cllr Jones has passed complaint from Cherry Green resident about metal fencing issue to Cllr Holt and Cllr McMullen has followed up concerns from a resident over electric fencing blocking footpath access. The fencing has been moved although electric fencing is permitted to cross a footpath as long as footpath users have a safe way of crossing or opening the fencing and there are appropriate warning signs

24.10 was discussed next

24.07 PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION

To consider the draft Equality and Diversity [policy](#) for adoption by council
Resolved, to adopt the Equality and Diversity policy. Agreed unanimously

24.08 FINANCE

- a) To authorise [payments](#) made in accordance with the budget
- b) To note receipts
- c) To agree internal auditor for 2023-24

Resolved, to note/approve agenda items a-c. Agreed unanimously

24.09 PLANNING

a) To receive [Planning](#) Report and current Planning Applications

Noted. Application 3/23/2240/HH is granted and reconsultation of 3/24/0156/HH noted

b) To provide an update on 10 January Development Management Committee meeting
3/21/2509/FUL land at Cherry Green Lane was approved with conditions at the meeting. Applicant to comply with conditions requiring completion within 3 months from approval

24.10 HIGHWAYS

a) To receive an update on potholes and repairs

Cllr Cowler reported that works expected at the A10 southern exit were not carried out, then fault reference changed. Cllr Jones to confirm works schedule for this and the 3 children signs, 3 playground signs and 3 people in road signs and re-marking of the "slow" marking in the correct direction funded from his locality budget. Cllr Jones will submit the unclassified road Westmill to Aspenden for consideration for government funding of repairs

b) To discuss A10 road safety issues

Cllr McMullen highlighted that the northern exit from A10 has been the site of a series of accidents and that there is no sign to Westmill when approached from the north. A discussion of the benefit of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) followed and Cllr Jones will consider the options. Cllr Downes explained that litter collecting at the bus stop on the northbound lane of the A10 is not cleared by HCC as dangerous to operatives. Cllr McMullen reported that litter (including signs left behind by Highways contractors) have blocked the drain running under the A10 (northern junction) causing local flooding. Cllr McMullen will report to Highways

24.11 RISK ASSESSMENT

To receive an updated risk assessment from Cllr Downes

Noted. Cllr Beaven changed pads on defibrillator today and will clean the kiosk and resolve water leaking into noticeboard. A couple of additional verge protection bollards have been added to the village green but it was noted that it may be necessary to advise residents not to park immediately adjacent to this slight bottleneck, as is also the case at the eastern end of the church wall

24.12 T&M GREG TRUST

To receive a report on activities

Cllr King:

Village Hall - Research continues on finding grants to help with the cost of the proposed roof repairs.

Cottages - Damp problems and gutter issues have been dealt with.

Playground - Monthly risk assessments continue.

Allotments - Internal hedges have been cut and there is some ongoing tree work.

Jackson's Meadow - An information plaque will be sited outside the cut through.

Grazing field - The current tenant will continue to graze horses on this field.

Trustees - Alan Gibson has now resigned from TMGT as he has moved away.

TMGT were very grateful for all the work he has done over the past years as a trustee.

Dennis Downes and Gill Lungley are now trustees

24.13 CLERK'S REPORT

Items for information only

Clerk continues in lengthy phone calls to Barclays to process mandate for signatories and online banking. Insurance renewal quotes will be requested for next meeting. Town and Parish Forum reminder 13 March 7pm via Teams. Next rural policing forum 18 April 7.30pm, Manor House

24.14 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

To note that the next council meeting will be held on 15 May, preceded at 7pm by the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual meeting of Westmill Parish Council. Dates proposed: 4 September, 27 November 2024, 5 February, 14 May 2025

The meeting closed at 8.31pm. The chairman thanked everyone for their contribution