

Minutes of Westmill Parish Council Annual Meeting
held on **Wednesday 15 May 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

24.15 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a chairman for 2024/25 and sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Resolved, Cllr McMullen was proposed by Cllr Beaven and seconded by Cllr Downes. There being no other nominations Cllr McMullen was elected unanimously

24.16 APOLOGIES

To receive or accept apologies for absence
District Cllr Aubrey Holt

24.17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

24.18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

To approve the Minutes of the [Annual meeting of Westmill Parish Council held on Wednesday 17 May 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

24.19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

To approve the [Minutes of the Westmill Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 14 February 2024](#) 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

24.20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

24.21 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

To receive reports from parish, district and county councillors on activities undertaken in the parish
County Cllr Jones reported that he was intending to set up a meeting with the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hertfordshire, Jonathan Ash-Edwards in Buntingford, and representatives from surrounding villages would be invited. He also reported that elite cyclists will pass through Buntingford on 24 May around 11am in the first stage of Ford Ride London, a UCI Women's WorldTour. There will be road closures for a short time. Some road resurfacing works were brought forward in preparation for the race. Cllr Jones offered to fund initial expenses of Buntingford Festival Choir (BFC) from his locality budget

24.22 UKSPF FUNDING

To suggest projects to submit for funding, projects should have a generic benefit to increase use of a facility/place or enjoyment for the community

Clerk will submit details of projects to East Herts for; improvements at St Mary's, Westmill including a tea point, Lady Chapel screen, toilet facilities. WPC will also see if improved village signage, in keeping with the conservation area, could be funded. Westmill Football Club may be planning improvements which could also be funded. Agreed unanimously to act as bank recipient for locality budget grant to BFC

24.23 PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PLAN

To consider the aims and objectives of the council for 2024/25
General aims of the council -

- to spend the precept to the benefit of the parish;
- maintain parish assets;
- represent the community on planning applications and other proposals that affect the parish;
- alert relevant authorities to problems that arise or work that needs to be undertaken; and
- share information from other tiers of local government

Cllr King requested agreement for the placing of a village sign, funded by the proceeds of the Westmill Art Exhibition, this was agreed in principle subject to design and location. Cllr King would also revert to the proposed donor and see if upgrades to the village green signage would be considered instead of an emblematic village sign

24.24 PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION

To consider, review and agree council [policies and documents](#):

- Code of Conduct
- Financial Regulations
- Financial and Management Risk Assessment
- Complaints Procedure
- Publication Scheme
- Privacy & Cookies Policy
- Standing Orders
- Asset Register
- Accessibility Statement
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Updates to Financial Regulations NALC model document and Financial and Management Risk Assessment due at the next meeting. [Asset Register](#) - oak posts added, increase to £57,000
Resolved, to approve Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Financial and Management Risk Assessment, Complaints Procedure, Publication Scheme, Privacy & Cookies Policy, Standing Orders, Asset Register, Accessibility Statement, Equality and Diversity Policy. Agreed unanimously

24.25 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

[Audit requirements](#) for the year ending 2023/24 if approved, to be signed by the chairman

- To approve the Annual Accounts 2023/24
- To approve the Certificate of Exemption 2023/24
- To approve the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24
- To approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2023/24
- To approve Section 2, Accounting Statements 2023/24
- Dates of the period for the Exercise of Public Rights (Monday 3 June - Friday 12 July 2024)

Resolved, items a-f agreed unanimously and duly signed

24.26 FINANCE

- To authorise payments made in accordance with the budget
- To note receipts

PAYMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

13/02/2024	140.00	Christmas tree
29/02/2024	9.60	web hosting
06/03/2024	28.80	web hosting
11/03/2024	50.00	litter pick (11)
13/03/2024	25.00	donation GTrust
28/03/2024	486.00	salary
28/03/2024	50.00	litter pick (12)
28/03/2024	47.00	grass cut (1)

EXPECTED PAYMENTS TO SEPTEMBER

47.00	x 8 grass cuts
12.00	domain renewal
9.60	x 4 web hosting
530.83	insurance annual renewal estimate
90.00	payroll annual fee
486.00	clerk salary April-June estimate
52.00	x 4 litter pick
210.45	HAPTC annual subs
10.00	The Hundred Parishes annual subs
35.00	ICO annual fee
192.10	dog bin emptying annual fee

RECEIPTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

04/03/24 22.15 bank interest
 06/03/24 126.25 HMRC Vat refund
 26/04/24 3000.00 EHDC precept 1st payment

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

c) To explain precept calculation

The council tax calculation uses a tax base figure which is announced every December. This is influenced by exemptions and discounts. This year the tax base reduced for Westmill and the precept increased, the combination of these gives the percentage increase. 2023/24 precept was £5700 and increased by 5.26% in 2024/25 to £6000. The tax base was £169.34 in 2023/24 when the precept was £5700 which is equivalent to £33.66 per band D property. In 2024/25 the tax base reduced to £162.10 and the precept requested rose to £6000, equating to £37.10 per band D property. The band D equivalent increased by 9.95% between 2023/24 and 2024/25

d) To confirm insurance arrangements for insurable risks

Quotes reviewed by councillors and a broad cover to include the village pump was preferred

Resolved, to proceed with the quote from CAS (Ansvar) if PL and EL limits are comparable with current cover

e) To review subscriptions to outside bodies

HAPTC, Hundred Parishes, Information Commissioner's Office, Community Heartbeat Trust **noted**

f) To review expenditure under the Local Government Act 1972, s137

2023/24 limit of £2254.11 was not exceeded, 2024/25 limit is £2367.39 **noted**

g) To review clerk salary (outside the public meeting)

Resolved, to increase hourly rate as budgeted. Agreed unanimously

24.27 PLANNING

a) To receive Planning Report and current Planning Applications **noted**

Planning Application Ref	Location	Deadline/ Decision Date	Consultation Description	Decision
3/24/0307/HH	The Rectory SG9 9LL	10/05/24	Demolition of orangery and erection of single storey side and rear extension. Alterations to fenestration	Granted
3/24/0186/HH	Dial Cottage SG9 9LB	08/05/24	Conversion of carport into a single storey annexe	Granted
3/24/0010/LBC	Westmill Village Hall and Village Hall Cottage SG9 9LG	22/04/24	Replacement of roof to cottage to include a change in roof tile, timber battens and roof felt. Installation of roof insulation. Repairs to conical top and insertion of secondary glazing	Refused
3/24/0009/FUL	Westmill Village Hall and Village Hall Cottage SG9 9LG	22/04/24	Replacement of roof to cottage	Refused
3/24/0570/HH	Orchard House SG9 9LL	12/04/24	Demolition of garage. Erection of double garage	Refused
3/24/0156/HH	1 Townsend SG9 9LE	18/03/24	Single storey rear extension incorporating 4 rooflights, conversion of loft to habitable accommodation, with the insertion of rooflight to front	Granted

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
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b) To review if the 3 month conditions on the decision notice dated 5 February 2024 3/21/2509/FUL have been met
Cllr McMullen to review the requirements

24.28 HIGHWAYS

a) To receive an update on faults and repairs
Cllr Cowler advised that the dip at the south entrance to the A10 is under review

b) To receive an update on signs and road markings
Cllr Jones to query the placing of a new blue HGV sign at the entrance to the village. Any signs left behind after road works should be reported to highways, these are usually left for further works. A sign will be placed on the church wall to deter parked cars next to the very end of the wall (near the entrance to the village) as it causes difficulties for larger emergency vehicles (such as the fire engine to the nursing home) to pass

c) Safety measures on A10
Cllr Jones confirmed that highways would not fund Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). A speed/volume assessment may alter this if there was proof of a high percentage of vehicles speeding

24.29 VILLAGE GREEN

To consider further measures to prevent damage to the greens
Resolved, place sign reminding parked vehicles to leave access for larger and emergency vehicles to pass

24.30 RISK ASSESSMENT

To receive an updated risk assessment from Cllr Downes **noted**
Cllr Beaven has vacuumed the defibrillator kiosk and checks weekly updating the WebNos system. Due to heavy rainfall the noticeboard has let in a lot of water

24.31 CLERK'S REPORT

Items for information only
20s Plenty is encouraging parish councils to write to the newly elected PCC to request funding for roads. Environmental and Climate Forum meeting with East Herts via Teams 3 June 7-8.30pm.
Citizens Advice Bureaux is reducing its service due to lack of funds

24.32 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Dates proposed: 4 September, 27 November 2024, 5 February, 21 May 2025

The meeting closed at 8.30pm. The chairman thanked everyone for their contribution