

Minutes of Westmill Parish Council Meeting
held on **Wednesday 27 November 2024**
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), County Cllr Jeff Jones, District Cllr Aubrey Holt
2 members of the public

24.67 APOLOGIES

To receive and approve apologies for absence
Cllr King unavailable for reasons that are accepted. **Resolved**, to approve. Agreed unanimously

24.68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
None

24.69 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To allow members of the public and councillors to raise matters of concern
A resident enquired about the possibility of 20mph for Westmill. The pothole in Station Hill was also discussed and the absence of a QR code for the bin near the playing field was highlighted.

24.70 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

To approve the Minutes of the two Extraordinary meetings of Westmill Parish Council held on [Wednesday 9 October 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

24.71 RURAL POLICING

To receive update from officers if present, or the clerk
The clerk advised that there were no crimes reported for October. Cllr McMullen is aware of fly-tipping and criminal damage reported but not shown on the crime report

24.72 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

To receive reports from parish, district and county councillors on activities undertaken in the parish
See items on Highways, Bins and Neighbourhood Plan

24.73 FINANCE

a) To authorise payments made in accordance with the budget

PAYMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

09/09/2024	Grass cut 9 47.00	
09/09/2024	Buntingford Festival Choir 500.00	EXPECTED PAYMENTS TO FEBRUARY
01/10/2024	1&1 Internet 10.80	10.80 x 3 web hosting
01/10/2024	S Kubica July - Sept 362.70	390.00 clerk salary Oct-Dec estimate
03/10/2024	Litter pick August 52.00	52.00 x 3 litter pick
03/10/2024	Litter pick September 52.00	151.20 defibrillator annual fee
30/10/2024	1&1 Internet 10.80	200.00 St Mary donation
13/11/2024	Litter pick October 52.00	120.00 village hall hire
19/11/2024	Grass cut 10-11 94.00	120.00 Christmas tree
		10.00 batteries

b) To note receipts

RECEIPTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

02/09/24 37.63 bank interest

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

c) Bank statement verification signed by Cllr Debono and Cllr Beaven in October. **Noted**

d) To consider and approve the draft budget for 2025-26

Resolved, to keep precept at the current level and approve in principle, unless the tax base to be confirmed in December 2024, alters the tax burden significantly, then the budget will be revisited. Align clerk salary to NJC scale spine point 10 from April 2025. Agreed unanimously

24.74 PLANNING

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

Planning Application Ref	Location	Deadline/ Decision Date	Consultation Description	Comments	LPA Appeal Ref
3/24/2073/HH	2 Townsend SG9 9LE	13/12/24	Erection of single storey rear extension and front porch extension	Pending	N/A
3/24/0570/HH	Orchard House SG9 9LL	12/04/24	Demolition of garage. Erection of double garage	Appeal lodged	4/00063/ REFUSE
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	Granted	N/A
3/24/0921/FUL	Land East Of Wakeley Farm Cherry Grn	25/06/24	Change of use of the land for the siting of 2 glamping cabins. Hard surfacing for parking areas (retrospective)	Refused	N/A

24.75 HIGHWAYS

To receive an update on faults, signs and repairs

County Cllr Jones responded to the residents present regarding 20mph and will include Westmill in HCC's 2025 20mph phase which would involve carrying out a speed and volume survey. 20mph usually covers a stretch of road rather than an entire village and the criteria for 20mph is that vehicles are already travelling below 24mph. Works in Station Hill due 3-5 December and will not address the dip at the A10 junction as closing the A10 is a larger operation. Hard to reach gully works on U20 from Aspenden to Westmill scheduled for 14-16 January 2025

24.76 LIME TREE MANAGEMENT

To agree works and approve quotes

Cllr Downes to obtain quotes from 3 arborists

24.77 VILLAGE EVENTS

To arrange risk assessments and advise insurer of village events

WPC agreed to support activities in the village to enable organisers of small adhoc events to be covered under the parish council insurance arrangements. Risk assessment to be completed for 'Light the Night' event on 6 December

24.78 BINS

To receive update from Waste and Recycling team

The Shared Waste Team of North Herts and East Herts councils is encouraging people to 'take their litter home' and is removing little-used bins from the parish and will not be installing any new bins within the district. District Cllr Holt will contact the team as WPC want the bins to remain

24.79 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

To consider a Neighbourhood Plan for Westmill
 District Cllr Holt gave an overview, a neighbourhood plan has to align with the district plan and as the district plan is currently under review this may not be the best time to start the process, however, neighbourhood plans are helpful in protecting views or landscapes. If WPC wish to start the process Cllr Holt will assist. Suggested that it would be a useful exercise for the PC to familiarise itself with any segregated plots of land within the parish and of owners' plans

24.80 RISK ASSESSMENT

To receive an updated risk assessment from Cllr Downes (circulated to councillors)
 Cllr Downes asked whether it was necessary to insure the village green pump, as WPC could self-insure this item as the likely event of damage occurring is slim. In the unusual event of damage the repairs could be funded via grants. Clerk to investigate cost of insurance without the pump

24.81 T&M GREG TRUST

To receive a report on activities from Cllr King:

*Village Hall Project - Progress continues with a Listed Building Consent planning application submitted to EHC for the roof repairs. A decision is expected by the end of December 2024.
 Village Hall - To improve the efficiency of the heating of the hall an air curtain is to be installed and one ceramic wall plate replaced. If this new unit performs well two further units will be considered. The washroom to be redecorated. An old fridge in the kitchen area has been replaced.*

Playground - Monthly risk assessments continue. The Annual inspection was carried out by EHC appointed playground contractors in September, a low risk assessment was received. Some minor repairs are needed and these will be addressed by the Trust.

Allotments - Rental increases to cover water costs will come into place next year. The maintenance costs of the allotments are covered by the Trust.

Jackson's Meadow - The meadow grass is now in good condition and a local resident will continue to maintain it

Grazing field - This field will be sprayed against ragwort next Spring

Recreation Field - Tree work has been completed in October by RRT trees. WFC are now playing in a higher league due to their successes, some parking issues arise from this. The Trust is in ongoing discussions with the club to explore future plans. The Environment Agency carried out a river survey in September and found that the water quality was satisfactory, the few fish observed were healthy.

Christmas Carols 23rd December 2024 - The Trust has agreed to donate £100 towards the mulled wine and mince pies for this community event

24.82 CLERK'S REPORT

Items for information only
 Clerk obtained CiLCA qualification in September

24.57 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Proposed: 5 February, 21 May, 3 September 2025

The meeting closed at 8.46pm. The chairman thanked everyone for their contribution