

## WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF

17<sup>th</sup> September 2018

held at The Amenity Hall, Stone Cross

#### 94 Present

Councillors K Stevens, G Garner, K Saxby, T Bruce, A Lovell, J Blaker, T Comerford, P Marshall, G Walker, N Beaney and G Parsons.

District Councillor Clark, A Stevens (Clerk) and thirty five members of the public were also in attendance.

#### 95 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Perrin and Durling sent apologies for their absence which were duly accepted by the Parish Council.

County Councillor Liddiard, County Councillor Shing and District Councillor Dear sent apologies for their absence.

The meeting was then suspended to allow Questions from Members of the Public on Westham Pond.

#### 96 Questions from Members of the Public

Mr Fenner presented a petition of 510 signatures from people who it was said were expressing a vote of no confidence in the way the Parish Council manages the pond. The petition was accepted on behalf of the Parish Council by the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed those present and said that all councillors have read the emails about the pond and generally everyone wants to know what the Parish Council has been doing with management of the pond and what we are going to do with it in the future. He warned that if the tone of the meeting follows the tone of the emails we will have to close the meeting. Councillors do not want to have to close the meeting, which would not have been in any bodies interest.

Councillor Saxby thanked the Clerk for reading all the emails, including the abusive emails, and forwarding them on. He said she is doing an admirable job in difficult circumstances. There was a round of applause.

Residents expressed their complaints;

- Mr Greaves said the pond has deteriorated badly in the last three years and showed before and after photographs. He said three years ago it was clean, bright and healthy. Today it is covered with trees and growth, the amount of sludge has increased as decay falls into the pond, and there will be serious health issues as a result and it needs cleaning up.
- Mr Haffner asked the Parish Council to stop side-stepping the issue, adopt a Management Plan, and act to reduce the fish, bread and sediment and improve aquatic plants and the water feed.
- Mr Myers said the pond is an asset so why is it not being properly managed or listed on the Parish Council website.

- Mr Garrod said the Parish Council needs to make decisions tonight and asked why it has not before.
- Mrs Fenner asked if the Parish Council is aware it can apply for Heritage Funding and said they will also help with a Pond Management Plan.
- Mrs Belcher thanked everyone for coming and asked why an email from the Clerk said the inlet pipe had been cleared in 2017 and why Land and Water had not found it in 2012.
- Mrs Fenner also asked why dredging needs an archaeologist in attendance when the County Archaeologist suggested a local metal detector group could be used. She also said the Parish Council has a legal responsibility to sort out the drainage and should have found the inlet pipe by now.
- Mrs Bounds said where she lives the drains from five properties feed into a well and her garden is always wet.
- Ms Field said the problem was originally reported six years ago and there are still no answers. She understood the pond is surface water fed and a lot depends on it raining.

In reply to residents' questions Councillors;

- Said Contractors were ready to dredge the pond as part of work they were doing in 2012 and a plan was put in place which included dredging then. Dredging was not feasible in the end because the contractor could not carry out the work and keep stopping for the archaeologist so it was agreed to proceed with the work without dredging. An archaeologist needed to be present if dredging was to take place. Putting a contractor in with a metal detector will not work.
- Said before they can apply for Heritage Funding they need to get quotes.
- Pointed out the pond is a horse pond and is therefore different from other types of ponds.
- Announced that Contractors are expected on site within a week and they will be trying to find the inlet pipe.
- Confirmed there were dead fish and they have considered rehoming them but no one wants to do it.
- Said the problem is happening nationwide.
- Said the RSCPA say the fish should be left in the pond.
- Agreed the Parish Council needs to try and find the inlet pipe first and will deal with the problem if it is under its land. Councillors listened to suggestions of where the drainage pipe could be blocked and where the inlet pipe might be.
- Noted fish can be 'stunned' if need be and put in a large tank if dredging takes place.
- Confirmed a visible check of the pond takes place daily by a suitably qualified Parish Councillor.
- Confirmed the algae has been reported to the Environment Agency. They are to advise the Parish Council on how to deal with it.
- Said they would be wary of setting up an independent Advisory Committee/Working Party of residents at this time because there would be concerns about liability.
- Pointed out the Parish Council has over the years spent a lot of money on the pond and it does have the whole Parish to consider.
- Agreed the Parish Council's Committee Meeting Minutes will be on the website from now on.
- Agreed the fact that the Chairman and Clerk are married to each other but that it has no bearing on the situation.
- Confirmed that not all minutes were supplied in the Freedom of Interest Request just those relating to the Pond as per the request.
- This meeting was announced on the Facebook Page on the 8<sup>th</sup> September. Details are also on the notice boards and website.

District Councillor Clark said she has spoken to officers at Wealden and she assured residents that Wealden and the Parish Council are working together to try and solve the drainage problem. She confirmed the Parish Council is employing a contractor to dig and look for the pipe and if the pipe is found the camera search could take place.

The meeting was then re-opened.

97 Westham Pond

Councillors resolved to;

- Find out if planning permission is required for de-silting.
- Get prices to de-silt the Pond.
- Draft a Management Plan for the next Full Council Meeting.
- Tidy up the brambles, trees etc around the pond area.
- Ask Hadlow College to assess the problems at the pond at a cost of £250 as per District Councillor Dianne Dear's offer.
- Erect the same signs as there are at Lindfield pond to discourage visitors from feeding the ducks.
- Talk to Environmental Health about the wording of a poster for the notice board so visitors know what to do if they are bitten by a rat.
- Consider setting up a Management Committee in the future.

98 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Before the meeting Councillors received an email from Councillor Durling asking them to include point 6 of Nick Daine's comments about Community Engagement from the previous meeting to their comments about the Fairfield Farm application.

Councillors rejected the suggestion as the Minutes included their own comment about Community Engagement and the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman

99 Clerk's Report on Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

The Community Payback Team have now finished varnishing the benches in the Parish and the Parish Council will consider awarding a grant at the next meeting.

Councillors also agreed they had no objections to a request from Land Registry to register the land behind 9 Singleton Mill Road.

100 Disclosures of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

101 Reports from the County Councillor

County Councillor D Shing sent a written report which said;

- 'Footway surface treatment works on Dittons Road, Stone Cross - These have been delayed until 12 December 2018 due to availability issues with the County Council's sub-contractor.
- ESCC Transport Study - A transport study has been undertaken by East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council to identify the transport improvements

required to accommodate the planned housing and employment development for south Wealden as set out in Wealden's emerging Local Plan.

As part of the package of improvements, the study has identified the need to increase the capacity of various junctions in the Hailsham, Polegate and Stone Cross area, including the A22/Dittons Road junctions in Stone Cross. The County Council has recently commissioned consultants to start the design work relating to these junction improvements and have asked that they also consider improvements for pedestrians and cyclists at, and on the approaches to, the junction. This preliminary design work is anticipated to be completed by early 2019.

- Upcoming planned works - The following works are subject to change due to weather or road space availability.
  - 1) Dittons Road, Westham - 12th - 14th December. Footway works, hedge cutting and road repairs. ESCC will provide further details nearer the time.
  - 2) Rattle Road, Stone Cross - 19th - 21st September. UK Power Network connections works.
  - 3) Pevensey Road, Polegate - 24th - 26th September. ES Pipelines LTD works.
  - 4) Dittons Road, Polegate - 1st - 14th October. Gas Transportation LTD works'.

He also said that if anyone has any queries or other matters he can assist with please don't hesitate to contact him.

#### 102 Report from the District Councillors

District Councillor Dear sent a written report which said;

'I'm sorry I won't be able to attend this evening as my car has gone in today to have work done on the deep scratch.

I am still very concerned about the state of the pond and am still willing to get the expert boys from Hadlow College down to assess the problems they would have to charge a minimum of £250.00 for works carried out but it would be worth it.

Perhaps this proposal could be put to the committee this evening

Please can you keep me informed of the decision that the committee make.

After the last planning south meeting I had a word with the Head of Planning who advised me that the proposed building on Fairfield's farm camping area will not be going forward as it's not included in the local plan

That's a relief.

I have various documents on the new local plan so if there is any particular question I will try to answer.'

#### 103 Questions from Members of the Public

Mrs Molog from Pevensey Village's Partnership asked if the Parish Council has any proof the scarecrows in the Scarecrow Competition damaged trees on the Village Green, why there was a problem now when there had not been before and why the Parish Council did not raise their concerns with the Partnership sooner.

Councillor Garner said that a photograph sent by the Partnership confirmed the damage to the Memorial Tree. Councillors also said;

- the comments about the mess only resurfaced when the item came up for discussion the next year.
- Permission had not been given to put stakes into the ground as there were possible archaeological and utility pipe repercussions.
- this was the first year there were any complaints.
- they did not know at the time the scarecrows were to form part of a circus display.
- they will be reviewing their decision next year.

The Parish Council did not consult the County Archaeologist before it made its decision this year because any work previously required an archaeological dig. It will check each time in future.

District Councillor Clark, speaking as a member of the Partnership, said when they applied they had already made 15 scarecrows and the Parish Council only gave permission for a few, so the decision was made to accept an offer to put them on Market Square instead.

Carolyn Ball, Secretary and Treasurer of Westham Village Hall, asked for it to be recorded that comments made by a resident on social media about the notice board outside the Village Hall are wrong. It was not funded by nor fitted nor paid for in anyway by the Parish Council.

Residents reported the bus stop signs at Pevensey Park Road and opposite Pelham Close are missing. The Clerk will ask Stagecoach why.

Ms Little, also from Pevensey Village Partnership, asked why the Parish Council asked for the snowman on the green to be removed last Christmas. The Parish Council asked for the snowman to be removed because permission had not been given by the Parish Council and the Partnership did not know if permission was needed by Highways. Neighbouring residents complained because of the flashing lights and thought the snowman was unattractive. The Parish Council was not responsible for vandalising it though.

The meeting was then re-opened.

#### 104 Reports on Committee Meetings held

There have not been any Committee Meetings since the last Full Council Meeting.

#### 105 Reports from Outside Meetings

Councillor Lovell attended the Planning Committee South Meeting at Wealden on the 13<sup>th</sup> September. Planning Application WD/2017/1063/MAO, which is for a development of up to 90 homes on land east of Hailsham Road, was approved. It is to be connected on to mains sewage.

Councillor Blaker attended the latest Stone Cross Memorial Hall Trustees Meeting. The hall has now been refurbished and the Trust still needs more trustees.

#### 106 Wealden Local Plan

Westham Parish Council disagrees strongly with its housing allocation in the Plan because;

- the Parish does not have the infrastructure to cope.
- The Parish Council has already contributed more than its fair share of new housing.

- there has been not been a consultation on the increased housing numbers.

Councillor Lovell encouraged everyone to read the SHELAA Report because it identifies land which has been assessed for building in the District.

107 Pevensey Park Road Dog Bin

Councillors monitored the dog bin at Pevensey Park Road over the summer. There have no further reports of overflowing since the blockage was removed. Residents present confirmed they had not seen it overflowing either. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.

108 Westham Village Hall Car Park

Councillors had previously resolved to look into whether it is possible or not to put a disabled parking space on the road outside the Village Hall. The Clerk asked Highways and the Senior Traffic and Safety Officer said;

'I refer to your emails requesting that a disabled parking bay is installed on-street outside of Westham Village Hall in Peelings Lane, Westham.

This is something that we will need to look at within a parking review of Westham as provision of disabled parking bays in this situation falls outside of our approved policy which allows us to install "advisory" disabled parking bays outside of a persons' property following an assessment of their application. Advisory bays are not covered by a Traffic Regulation Order and are not legally enforceable by the Police but they can be provided relatively quickly which is why we provide them following individual applications.

The enforcement of parking restrictions in Westham is the responsibility of Sussex Police as Wealden District is not part of a Civil Parking Enforcement area (like Hastings, Eastbourne and Lewes where parking issues would be dealt with by the East Sussex County Council Parking Team). Sussex Police have however publicly stated that they will not actively enforce parking restrictions on a day to day basis unless there is an identified safety or obstruction issue and even then, only if the resources are available to them at the time the incident is reported.

We are also unable commit our limited public resources to the management of parking restrictions within the district. It is therefore our working practice to only prioritise requests for parking restrictions within Wealden if they will positively contribute to the reduction of an identified road safety issue, will be self-enforcing and are part of a broader review of parking in an area.

It is also worth noting that introducing formal parking restrictions such as double yellow lines and formal disabled parking bays on the public highway involves a very lengthy legal procedure. This legal process involves various consultation exercises and the advertisement of the proposals in the press with the reporting of any objections to the relevant committee.

I can confirm that we will hold your request on file to be fully considered as part of the Local Traffic & Safety Teams work should the resources become available to review parking in this area of Westham. I am however unable to give any indication of when we may be in a position to carry out a review of parking in Westham at the present time, but please be assured that your request will be fully considered as part of this process.

The introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in the Wealden area would bring about regular parking enforcement and would also provide the required resources to undertake

regular reviews of parking. Wealden District Council has informed us however that they are not supportive of this at the present time.

I realise that my response may be disappointing to you, however I hope this information will be of interest to you'.

109 Possible new wildlife verge – corner of Rattle Road and Gallows Lane

ESCC has received a request for a new wildlife verge on the north side of Rattle Road west of Gallows Lane and is asking the Parish Council for its comments.

Westham Parish Council voted by seven votes to four to object to the inclusion of this area under the wildlife verge scheme because Councillors would prefer the grass to be cut.

110 Grazing Licence 2018-2019

Councillors resolved to renew the grazing licence to Mr Hanscombe for the year 2018-2019.

111 Gallows Lane/Peelings Lane

Councillors considered a request to provide a new litter bin at Gallows Lane/Peelings Lane and agreed to send the litter picker there on a regular basis to see if that helps, and monitor the situation for now.

112 Fingerpost Review

This was deferred until the next meeting to allow Councillors more time to carry out site visits.

113 Christmas in the Parish

The Parish Council is waiting for quotes which it hopes to have by the next Full Council Meeting.

Councillor Saxby confirmed Hankham Village Society is planning to have a lit Christmas Tree on display in Hankham and the Society will be applying for a grant towards it from the Parish Council.

114 Questions from Parish Councillors

Councillor Garner;

- pointed out the Clerk and Chairman lost some of their week's holiday this year dealing with the problems at the Pond and asked councillors to consider compensating the Clerk.
- Asked if the Parish Council would like him to continue monitoring the Pond. All agreed they would.

Councillor Marshall asked;

- if Chaffins can remove the blackthorn when they cut the verge at Windmill Green. The blackthorn may be the responsibility of Highways. The Clerk will look into.
- If the footpath to the new Poet's Estate is for both cyclists and pedestrians and, if so, who has priority. The Clerk will ask County Councillor Daniel Shing.

Councillor Stevens reminded Councillors they have a duty of care to their employee and suggested that if the abuse continues the Clerk sends a stock answer ie; 'This matter is

being dealt with by Westham Parish Council'. Councillors agreed unanimously and said the abuse is deplorable and undemocratic. They said the Parish Council is a corporate body and must be seen to act properly, getting quotes, best price etc and be seen to do things properly. It was also noted that all the Councillors are unpaid volunteers.

## 115 Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered;

WD/2018/1846/FR - West Lodge, Hailsham Road, Stone Cross, BN24 5BS - Retrospective application for dormer – Westham Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

WD/2018/1906/F - West Lodge, Hailsham Road, Stone Cross, BN24 5BS - Proprietary acoustic fence set parallel to the existing fence to reduce traffic noise to the existing patio area and proprietary aluminium pergola to provide shade to the existing patio – Westham Parish Council has no objections to this application on any planning grounds.

WD/2018/1757/MRM - Uplands Farm, Rattle Road, Stone Cross, Westham BN24 5DT – Reserved Matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) pursuant to WD/2017/1521/MFA for the erection of 183 dwellings (including 35% affordable), access, associated car parking, levels, play areas, foul pumping station, electricity sub-station, gas governor, attenuation basin and outfall – Westham Parish Council still objects to this application because;

- The reports relate to the previous application which was for 92 dwellings and are not relevant.
- This is considerable overdevelopment for this site.
- There will be an increase in traffic and subsequent nitrogen levels and air quality. Chaos also ensues when construction starts and verges are damaged.
- The current infrastructure system cannot cope with this development.
- There is already flooding in Westham and Councillors seek reassurance this will not increase as a result of this development.
- Councillors request that an agreement is in place to make sure the Management Company manages the hedging borders.
- Councillors seek reassurance there will be adequate capacity for the extra children.

There being no further business, this meeting closed at 9.20pm.