

## **WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF**

18<sup>th</sup> February 2019

held at the Amenity Hall, Stone Cross

174 Present

Councillors K Stevens, G Garner, K Saxby, G Garner, R Perrin, T Bruce, A Lovell, J Blaker, G Walker, N Beaney and F Durling.

A Stevens (Clerk) and nineteen members of the public were also in attendance.

175 Apologies for Absence

Councillors T Comerford and P Marshall sent apologies for their absence which were duly accepted by the Parish Council.

County Councillor S Shing, District Councillor L Clark and District Councillor D Dear also sent apologies for their absence.

176 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record and were then signed by the Chairman

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

Any matters arising were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

178 Disclosures of Interests

Councillor Stevens declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in planning application WD/2019/0239/F. He left the room when the application was discussed and did not take part in the discussions or the vote.

The meeting was then suspended.

179 Reports from the County Councillor

County Councillor Shing sent a written report in which said;

Council Tax

East Sussex County Council Full Council Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February agreed the proposals for service changes and funding across East Sussex next year. This decisions about spending £375 million on vital services and proposals to make savings of £5.13 million to deliver a balanced budget in 2019/20, and also look ahead to 2020/21 and 2021/22. The latest estimates for the next two years to 2021/22 continue to show a deficit of £21.2 million.

To save £5.1 million, ESCC proposes to reduce its spending on school improvements, removing the subsidy for meals on wheels and increasing parking charges.

County Councillors agreed an increase in council tax for next year of 2.99 per cent, the equivalent of 80p extra per week for the average household in East Sussex.

With good financial management and successful lobbying of Central Government, which has resulted in some additional one-off funding, means the savings requirement for the next financial year, from service changes, is lower than first estimated.

Among the New One Off Funding to have an effect on plans for 2019/20, is money from the 75 per cent business rates retention pilot, and an additional £4.4 million for social care Support Grant 19/20.

#### The First Phase of the Hailsham – Polegate – Eastbourne Movement and Access Corridor

The Lead Member for Transport and Environment at ESCC held a meeting last June in relation to the Movement and Access Corridor and ESCC Highways have been commissioned to undertake the detailed design for the A2270/Wannock Road/Polegate High Street junction improvement Eastbourne Road bus lane (Broad Road to Huggetts Lane)Victoria Drive bus lane.

The detailed designs are expected to be completed by mid 2019 with construction being undertaken in late 2019/20 and 2020/21.

#### Dittons Road Roundabout

In relation to the Dittons Road junction improvement, ESCC Highways is finalising the design proposals for this and the A22/A27 roundabout junction to the north. Hopefully the detailed designs will be finalised in the next couple of months and it is anticipated that we will discuss the initial designs with Highways and confirm when construction will take place.

#### Cuckoo Trail

Since the report of the overgrowth and surface cracks to the Cuckoo Trail from the Dittons Road roundabout to the bend, ESCC County Highways has cleared all the overgrowth in this area and are investigating how to repair all the cracks, the repairs to the cracks are scheduled for spring.

#### Exceat Bridge Update

The project is progressing as expected and ESCC is still aiming to submit the planning application in September as previously indicated. Further site investigation works are planned for February.

ESCC are expecting formal responses from the consultees such as Natural England later this month which will help progress the project, so far the responses are positive'.

#### 180 Report from the District Councillors

There were no reports from the District Councillors on this occasion.

#### 181 Questions from Members of the Public

Mr McMillan, from Foxes Hollow Residents' Association, said;

- speeding has now become an issue through the estate so the Residents' Association has written to the County Council to see if the speed limit can be reduced. The Parish

Council will ask ESCC for some posters reminding drivers the speed limit is 30mph in the meantime.

- Parking is also becoming an issue and a request for yellow lines is being considered.
- Litter is also becoming a problem, and a shopping trolley was dumped. The Clerk will send the litter picker to Foxes Hollow more regularly.

Mr Haffner said;

- He asked the Parish Council to record meetings and not film them as it says on the agenda. He feels the recording is needed because he thinks the minutes do not necessarily reflect what happens at the meeting and the Parish Council has an obligation to be transparent.

Mrs Belcher asked where the Parish Council publicised the notice about the Pond Management Plan consultation. This was answered later on in the meeting.

Other residents asked;

- About the increased pollution in Westham High Street. More lorries, cars and trains have meant the levels and the risk to children and residents have increased significantly for the level crossing area and the Parish Council will ask ESCC if they can check the pollution levels by the school in particular. Councillor Stevens said he will see if the Parish Council can provide appropriate signage.
- If anything can be done about bad driving through the village. Westham Conservation Group is understood to be setting up a Speedwatch Group. Councillor Durling asked if it is possible to find out what they do in Ringmer because what they do seems to work there.

The meeting was then re-opened.

## 182 Reports on Committee Meetings held

There have been no Committee Meetings since the last Full Council Meeting.

## 183 Reports from Outside Meetings

Councillors Durling and Stevens attended a Protocol Meeting at Wealden for a new development of 318 homes near Rattle Stream and said.

- The developers are expected to be submitting a planning application in May and have offered councillors the chance to be on site when the Ecologist visits.
- The development is included in the new Wealden Local Plan.
- It is expected to include a covenant restricting further building so there is a break between Westham and Stone Cross.
- The Plans also include a play park.

Residents asked;

- Why there is so much development and why it all seems to take place here. The development figures are calculated using a formula imposed by Central Government and development takes place here because Wealden has a general shortage of suitable land available.
- About the effect on the existing infrastructure. Local people cannot get their children into schools in the parish already and the cumulative effect these developments is yet unknown.

Councillor Garner attended the Westham Village Hall Committee Meeting. Fundraising is going well and a recent Jumble Sale was particularly successful.

The meeting was re-suspended.

184 Westham Pond

- i. The Working Party provided the Clerk with a list of the volunteers who will be carrying out low risk gardening jobs if the Pond Management Plan is approved.

Councillors agreed to extend the public consultation period on the Plan by two weeks to allow more people time to look at it. The Plan had only been on the website a week at this stage because there had been a delay producing one of the maps. The Working Party will then consider any suggestions and bring the final draft to the next Full Council Meeting for consideration. The Parish Council will put a notice in the notice boards telling residents about the consultation in the meantime.

- ii. The item on future task sessions (based on items in the Plan) was deferred until the results of the consultation are known.
- iii. Councillors agreed they needed more time to consider the Risk Management and Method Statements and said that they will send the Working Party any questions they have in time for the next Full Council Meeting.
- iv. Councillors also agreed they were unable to make a decision on the tree works until the results of the consultation are known.
- v. Councillors resolved to fit an ownership sign at the Pond so residents know who to contact about if there are any problems there. The sign will be headed 'Westham Pond'.
- vi. Councillor Stevens updated everyone on the flooding issue. He said;

The Parish Council agreed to and subsequently had 550 tonnes of silt removed from Westham Pond. Some silt remains at the western end.

The silt was removed on the advice of the Environment Agency to allow the pond to retain more water which should help if we have another long hot summer. Some residents disagree with the method used but the Environment Agency said the silt must be removed by sealed tankers and a licensed contractor and disposed of at a registered site which it was. The Parish Council does not hold the dockets for this but regular checks were made and the Company had to account to the Environment Agency for all the amounts removed. There was no need therefore for the Parish Council to audit them. The waste was removed on a transfer note handled by the contractor.

The Parish Council did approach a contractor who was recommended by some of the residents but he said the Parish Council would need to apply for a licence which could cost an additional £10000 and find a disposal site. The Parish Council contacted ESCC to see if it was an option. The County Council said the Parish Council would have to apply for a licence through one of two firms, one of which had already quoted for the work. The Parish Council was not allowed to deposit the silt on neighbouring farmland.

Some residents asked the Parish Council to consider desilting the western end of the pond because they said it looks unsightly. Councillors resolved not to remove any more silt but agreed they will discuss ways of improving its visual impact with the Working Party. Some residents also claimed the inlet pipe has been found. Councillor

Stevens will investigate their claim. Other residents said they support the Parish Council because there is only so much money in the pot.

Councillors were also asked if they had visited the Pond. They have.

Councillor Stevens also confirmed the desilting work had been approved by the Full Council and that Councillors Garner, Lovell and he were the three councillors who considered the best option in the light of the restrictions and specialist nature of the work. He also pointed out that the deposit cheque for the work to be done had been signed and authorised by two other councillors.

The meeting was then suspended again.

185 Recording Parish Council Meetings

Councillors considered the request from Mr Haffner to record Parish Council Meetings. Councillor Stevens pointed out that the minutes are a precis of the meeting and are not a word for word account of the meeting. It was also said that the minutes are also published on the Parish Council website and if anyone feels they are not accurate they can say so.

Councillor resolved not to record Parish Council Meetings because they felt it might stop some people speaking. Councillor Durling said she would like to have known how many other Parish Councils record their meetings.

186 Playparks

Councillor Walker has consulted residents and will now meet the representative from Playdale to get costings and plans for a more inclusive play park at Castle Bolton. Once he has them, he will bring them to the next Full Council Meeting for consideration..

187 Tree Report 2019

The Tree Report is an arboricultural hazard evaluation of the Parish Council's trees.

Councillors considered the findings in the report and resolved to accept the price for the 'amber' and 'green' works. There were no 'red' works this year. The Parish Council uses a traffic light system to show the urgency of the work required.

188 Grounds Maintenance Contract

Councillors resolved to roll over the existing contract for one year. The tendering process will be reinstated next year once the work to Westham Pond has been finalised and more results of any devolution are known. Councillors unanimously agreed that the existing contractor should continue the maintenance work around the Pond until the Pond Management Plan is agreed.

Councillor Saxby asked the verges are not being cut in Hankham. The Clerk will take this up with ESCC.

189 Allotments

Councillors resolved that the allotment rents will be £15 each in 2019-2020. They also noted how much better the allotments are looking now and agreed to review the rents again in a year's time.

190 Community Infrastructure Levy

To date, the Parish Council has received £17492.18 from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Councillors discussed ways of spending the money, which is subject to certain conditions, and agreed to defer matters until the size of the 'pot' has grown to a more meaningful sum. Options could then be considered and the views of residents sought.

191 Questions from Parish Councillors

Councillor Lovell asked for an update on the new bus shelters. The Clerk has been chasing contractors and ESCC regularly, and hopes to have the licenses from the County Council before the next Full Council Meeting.

Councillor Durling asked for an update on what appears to be another access road to the new Wells Estate because the access was not allowed for in the original Plans. Councillors noted it has been blocked off temporarily and Councillor Stevens said he will chase up Wealden.

Councillor Beaney asked the Parish Council to chase ESCC about repairing the verge at the High Street end of Peelings Lane. The Clerk confirmed she will chase them up.

192 Planning Applications

The following planning application was considered;

WD/2019/0300/F - 8 Rother Avenue, Stone Cross, BN24 5PJ - Single storey rear extension – Westham Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

WD/2019/0044/LB - Wychehurst, Hankham Street, Hankham, BN24 5BG - Replacement of five windows - Westham Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

WD/2019/0079/F - 23 Dallaway Drive, Stone Cross, Westham, BN24 5FB - Part two storey and part single storey extension to the rear of the property to replace the existing conservatory. Proposed first floor extension to the side of the property above existing garage with associated alterations - Westham Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

WD/2019/0232/F - Orchard Cottage, Dittons Road, Stone Cross, BN24 5ET - Proposed two storey extension at rear - Westham Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

WD/2019/0102/F - 30 Carnforth Crescent, Eastbourne, BN23 8NJ - Proposed part garage conversion, internal alterations and provision of 3no. windows – Westham Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

WD/2019/0239/F - 16 Banner Way, Stone Cross, BN23 5PG - Proposed single storey extension to the rear with associated alterations and conversion of garage to form habitable annexe - Westham Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to this application.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

