

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Ref: **C17-02** Minutes of Council meeting held in the Community Dining Hall on 1st February 2017 at 7:00pm

Present: *Councillors* J Smith (JS) Chair, M Edwards (ME) Vice Chair, R Bowe (RB) J Downing (JD), Sarah Green (SG), M Horley (MH), H Monro (HM), P Stapley (PS), M Stratford (MS) K Darbyshire (KD) (Parish Clerk), Councillor C Maynard (CM) and 2 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from J Anderson, J Woodhead, and Councillor Johnson and accepted by those present.

2. Disclosure of interests under the Council's Code of Conduct.

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

3. Questions from Members of the Public on matters on the agenda

A member of the public wished to highlight damage to the pavement running alongside Geary Place, which looked to be caused by a large vehicle had gone onto the footpath.

4. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 11th January were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5. Tennis Court usage report

JS thanked ME and RB for producing the report. ME outlined the report's findings which concluded that the courts are very poorly used with only 5.5% utilisation, and they generate an income of less than £200 p.a. It is felt that the Tennis Club are not actively engaging the wider community, nor promoting tennis in the village or providing coaching. Furthermore, membership is dwindling and Sunday morning is the only session with a regular turn out of members. The Tennis Club do a good job of helping with the upkeep of the courts. The current booking system is open to abuse.

PS asked why there are no junior members. MS advised that she had approached the Tennis Club about coaching for the Youth Club but this had not gone ahead. The last junior coaching organised by the Council was in the summer of 2015. The previous Clerk was approached about coaching in 2016, but this had not progressed. KD opined that the coaches that she knows at Amherst Tennis Club in St Leonards may be interested in providing coaching sessions.

The report made 12 recommendations, which Councillors discussed. These included:

- Improving the visibility of the tennis courts via the Westfield website. Council discussed the possibility of having a full page advert in the Parish newsletter promoting the tennis courts. Could also ask Westfield, Robertsbridge and Claverham schools to include information in their newsletters. FaceBook pages such as 'What's on in Westfield' could also promote the courts.
- Approaching the school to encourage their participation, times could be reserved for them. Council **resolved** to ask KD to do so.
- Encourage the school to organise tennis matches against other schools. Council **resolved** to ask KD to do so.
- Investigate the engagement of a suitably qualified tennis coach. Council **resolved** to ask KD to follow up on the enquiry about coaching in 2016, and to approach Amherst Tennis Club to see if they would provide coaching. This could be on a Saturday morning, or a Monday or Friday after school, when the public have access to the courts.
- Approach the LTA for financial grants. CM opined that the Council is currently not getting good value for money from the courts, and that there are grants available.
- Put up information and posters on the noticeboards and in shop windows. Council agreed this was a good idea.

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- Unlock the courts to free access for a trial period of 6 months in 2017. Sedlescombe courts are open all the time and have experienced no vandalism. Councillors expressed concerns that people would take bikes and skateboards onto the courts and the expensive nets could get damaged. Council **resolved** not to go ahead with this recommendation.

The Tennis Club's current lease expires in 2018, so the Council may look at re-negotiating the terms of the lease. Council **resolved** to add the Tennis Courts to the April 2017 Agenda, at which time they can discuss the matter in further detail to include; renegotiating the lease, internet or alternative booking scheme, coaching etc.

6. District and County Councillor's report

CM advised that at the latest Cabinet Meeting to approve the budget for 2017/18 it was agreed to increase Council Tax by 2%. In addition there will be an Adult Social Care Levy of 3% this year and another 3% next year. This means a total of 5% increase for 2017/18. They are proposing a spend of £1m p.a. for the next 4 years on a recommendation and remedy approach to drainage problems. There are currently 70 sites with ongoing problems which will be covered under the new scheme. £1.3m has been proposed from the highways budget, to maintain the condition of roads and pavements to prevent trips and falls. The current Community Match scheme is oversubscribed, so there is a proposed increase from £100k to £250k p.a. for the next 4 years.

JS asked for an update on the Cottage Lane footpath. CM has chased ESCC, but will do so again.

ME asked about the pothole on the A28 outside Whitegates. CM explained that the repair carried out last year was under a different contractor. He will contact the Highways Steward immediately to get it repaired and look at underlying drainage issue. CM then left the meeting.

7. Clerk's report

KD provided Council with an update on the Heathland and Greenacres 'T' junction street signs, which are now in place.

RDC have informed KD that the recycling bins on Churchfield will be removed on the 6th February. She has placed notices on the bins and update the village website.

KD informed Council that she had received an e-mail from BT to say that RDC have agreed that the Parish Council can adopt the red telephone box on Churchfield. KD will arrange for payment, and MS and SG will start putting together a report on ideas for its use.

KD gave Councillors an outline of the training day she had attended to start her CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration). It should take 6-12 months to complete. Once complete the Council may be eligible for General Power of Competence.

KD is hoping to organise a Spring Tidy in conjunction with the Great British Spring Tidy. KD asked for volunteers to help with the event. ME volunteered. Council **resolved** to allow KD to organise it for 10am -12pm on Saturday 4th March, starting at the Parish Hall. MS confirmed that the hall was available.

8. Chairman of Trustees report

None

9. Chairman of the Council and other member's reports

Joan Downing commented that several of the houses on Fishponds Lane have extended their gardens onto ESCC owned land. Council **resolved** to ask KD to contact ESCC to inform them, and ask if they would restrict residents from doing so.

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JD asked if Highways could cut back the hedge on Main Road around the Churchyard, as pedestrians have to step into the road to see round it before crossing, and vehicles drive in the middle of the road to avoid it. Council explained that it was the Church's responsibility and **resolved** to ask KD to write to the Church to ask them to cut it back.

Roger Bowe has received complaints from parishioners that parents continue to park inconsiderately on Cottage Lane at school drop off/pick up. This means pedestrians have to walk around vehicles which is dangerous. The Council would encourage residents to take photos of cars causing problems, and report them on the website www.operationcrackdown.org.uk

Michael Horley has written to ESCC about the poor condition of the road at the entrance to Mill Lane. KD advised that East Sussex Highways had informed her that the road was not the responsibility of ESCC when she previously reported a pothole there. Council **resolved** to ask KD to write to ESCC to get clarification as to ownership of the land and responsibility for the road.

Min Stratford advised that there are still a number of potholes that haven't been filled at the bottom of Vicarage Lane. KD said she would report them.

Residents have asked about the possibility of creating a mini roundabout at the junction of Wheel Lane and Main Road.

MS had a couple of near misses with boys on a bike and scooter on the evening of Friday 27th January. KD advised she had a similar incident with a boy on a bike on the same day. MS has spoken to the Chair of Governors at Westfield School, who will advise the school of the incidents. The school will shortly be running a cycling proficiency course for year 6. Council **resolved** to ask KD to liaise with the Chair of Governors and Headmaster to see if anything further could be done, e.g. rolling out the cycling proficiency to the whole school, assembly on bike safety, and providing information in their newsletter.

Michael Edwards informed Councillors of an e-mail received from the Highways Liaison Officer about a scheme to plant bulbs and wild flower seeds in villages in East Sussex. Council discussed possible locations for planting, and **resolved** to ask KD to ask for bulbs and wild flowers to be planted at the following locations:

Churchfield (grass areas between Churchfield and Main Road), by the bench at the junction of Cottage Lane and Main Road, by the 'Community Hall' sign at the junction of Workhouse Lane and Main Road, and on Westfield Lane by the entrance to the footpath leading to Greenacres.

Jackie Smith has reported to Highways the various potholes on Workhouse Lane and subsidence of the footpath by Geary Place.

JS advised that unfortunately the Speedwatch group is being disbanded and will cease operating. The group is formed of a small group of volunteers, and are required to collect and drop off the speed gun from Battle Police Station, and on occasion it hasn't worked. The coordinator is stepping down and a suitable replacement has not been found.

Council **resolved** to set the date for the Parish Assembly as Tuesday 9th May. MS confirmed that the Parish Hall will be available.

10. Other Matters

10.1 Westfield Christmas Lights – Council **resolved** to postpone this agenda item to the next meeting

10.2 Parish Council FaceBook page – KD provided an outline of the Social Media for Parish Councils training session provided by SSALC that she attended. Council **resolved** to create a FaceBook page with KD as the sole administrator. KD will write a Social Media Policy for Council to consider adopting. HM proposed that the Clerk be remunerated for any

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additional hours to cover the administration of the page. It was suggested that this might be approximately an hour a week. Council **resolved** to do so and KD will monitor how much time is spent on this, so that Council may review this in due course.

10.3 Autela Payrol – Council **resolved** to adopt the mileage and expenses forms for the Clerk to use.

11. Financial

11.1 Additional Grass Cut – Council **resolved** to award the contract to The Landscape Group for additional rural and urban and grass cut/s (details to be confirmed).

11.2 Grass cutting and hedge trimming recreation facilities – KD gave a briefing of her meetings with two contractors. The Landscape Group have a local depot, will be on hand if issues arise and have provided a quote which is significantly cheaper than the current contractor. Council **resolved** to award the contract to The Landscape Group.

11.3 Monthly reports. Council **resolved** to accept the reports.

11.4 Council **resolved** to approve the attached schedule of payments and receipts

12. Dates of forthcoming events/meetings

12.1 1st March 2017 – Planning and Council meeting in the Community Hall from 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 9:00pm

Westfield Parish Council

Schedule of payments and receipts

1st February 2017

| PAYMENTS | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Payee | Item | Cost £ | Vat £ | TOTAL £ |
| K Darbyshire | Clerk's January salary | TBC | | TBC |
| B Firman | January payment for weekly playgrounds/bus shelters litter collection | 40.00 | | 40.00 |
| Paul Masters | Playground inspection January | 18.00 | | 18.00 |
| BACT | Donation | 350.00 | | 350.00 |
| Kemp & Catt Ltd | Grass cutting & hedge trimming March 2016 to Nov 2016 | 2158.82 | 431.76 | 2590.58 |
| RECEIPTS | | | | |
| Santander | January interest | 4.58 | | 4.58 |
| UK Power Networks | Rental of equipment 02.01.17 – 01.01.22 | 5.75 | | 5.75 |