

Westwell Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 5 March 2025 at 7pm, Westwell Parish Hall

1. Open Forum

No members of the public in attendance.

2. Present and apologies

Present: Cllrs Bainbridge, Drury, Bartlett, Hutchinson, Wyatt, Richards, Ward. Clerk – Sonia Young.

Apologies: Cllrs Lister and Farrington

3. Declarations of Interest

All those Cllrs living close to sites submitted under the call for sites for the 2042 Local Plan. No Cllrs have pecuniary interests to declare.

Cllr Drury has an interest in land currently subject to works by Southeast Water to extend the water main supply from Maidstone to Ashford. **(Item 14).**

Cllr Richards has an interest in land currently subject to works by Southeast Water to extend the water main supply from Maidstone to Ashford. (Item 14).

4. 4.1 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025 and matters arising.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of Westwell Parish Council held on 5th February 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Bartlett. **Seconded:** Cllr Drury. **All in agreement.** Cllrs Wyatt, Richards and Hutchinson abstained as not present at the February meeting.

Resolved:

It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

4.1.1 Matters Arising

The HiP to be discussed in greater depth under Item 11) Highways

Decision Items

5. 5.1 Planning Applications received for comment.

5.1.1 PA/2025/0293 – 1 Hoads Wood Gardens, TN25 4QB

Proposed conversion and extension of existing garage.

WPC view: This is a modest proposal for which there is already a precedent in this estate of 34 detached residential properties built in the 1980s. In the space to the boundary with the adjacent house several properties have sheds or greenhouses, as exists currently at No 1. The precedent for a side extension to replace these sheds and greenhouses has been done at No 26 which has its side garage extended to the boundary in a similar way to that proposed at No 1. Converting the integral garage to living accommodation – proposed as playroom and utility in this instance - is already the norm. The proposal retains the amenity of a double garage and will add living space. The design and materials would maintain the character of Hoads Wood Gardens.

Resolved

It was proposed to support this application

Proposed: Cllr Drury. **Seconded:** Cllr Bartlett. **All in agreement.**

Resolved.

5.2 Other planning matters

5.2 Update on planning matters in progress

5.2.1 Works at the Sandbar Business Park

The planned meeting with neighbours took place at Lake House on 28 February arranged by Cllr Wyatt. Cllr Drury has assembled a set of nine key drawings from the many separate applications to show the detail required in conditions and what the contractors have permission to build. Cllr Wyatt is preparing notes from the meeting but pending those it was agreed that WPC Chair Cllr Bainbridge will organise the next meeting to include the contractor ACS. The meeting will hope to understand the next 3–6-month schedule of work and when the groundworks will be complete; to ask that noisy activity on the site does not start before 9am; and to ask that the final noise barrier on the southern boundary of the site with Lake House is built sooner rather than later. It was also hoped that WPC might, during that meeting, find out what the final intended use for this site will be.

5.2.2 ABC Call for Sites for the Local Plan 2042

Cllr Drury said that the latest information is that the Local Plan 2042 is likely to focus on sites in and around Ashford. WPC will comment when it is known what sites have been selected

5.2.3 Elvey Cottage – appeal to Planning Inspectorate vs planning enforcement.

Ref: 3352530. In progress. The Inspector is considering written evidence. No decision yet.

6. 6.1 Financial Report

6.1.1 Approval of payments for March in accordance with the budget

WPC main account

Expenditure to approve for March 2025		Method	£
Salary payment March	Clerk	BACS	882.84
Tax and NI	HMRC	BACS	226.72
Mowing inv 5044	All Seasons Gardening Services	BACS	632.94
Training T Bartlett	NALC	BACS	52.04
Arborist	Chaucer Consultancy Services		732.00
Annual subscription	CPRE	BACS	60.00
Total			£2586.54

Income			
Total			£00.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance at 28 February 2025: £13,153.91 less unpresented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance = £13,153.91 as at 28 February 2025

WPC deposit account

Expenditure			£
Total			£00.00

Income			
10 Feb	Interest	BACS	34.07
Total			£34.07

Bank Reconciliation Balance £38, 890.65 at 28 February 2025 less un-presented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance: £38, 890.65 as at 28 February 2025

General reserve	12,814.46
Grant	2, 279
HiP	7,859.42
Deposit	15,937.77

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WPC No 2 Account

Expenditure		Cheque No	£
Total			£00.00

Income			
Total			£00.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance £3.44 at 28 February 2025. Actual balance = £3.44 at 28 February 2025.

Resolved

WPC resolved to approve the accounts as noted and payments in accordance with the budget.

Proposed: Cllr Hutchinson. **Seconded:** Cllr Bartlett. **All in agreement.**

Resolved. WPC approved the accounts as noted and payments to be made in accordance with the budget.

6.1.2 Ratification of the decision taken by email to approve the quote supplied by arborists Chaucer Consultancy Services.

Resolved

WPC resolved to ratify the decision taken by email to approve the quote supplied.

Proposed: Cllr Drury. **Seconded:** Cllr Richards. **All in agreement.**

Resolved. WPC ratified the decision.

6.2 Proposal to approve the 2024-2025 WPC Asset Register – updated register circulated to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

Resolved

WPC resolved to approve the Asset Register as presented.

Proposed: Cllr Drury. **Seconded:** Cllr Richards. **All in agreement.**

Resolved: WPC approved the 2024-2025 Asset Register.

Information items**7. 7.1 Correspondence**

Charing has passed across monies from S106 development payments that are to be used for allotments. Westwell does not have an allotment, but Cllrs agreed it would explore the appetite from parishioners for setting up such.

Action: Cllr Richards to report back at the next meeting. **Action:** Clerk to contact ABC's S106 team to find out how long WPC has to decide on this.

SLRA wrote to Katie Lam MP about the noise pollution from the M20 and to ask, specifically, when – and if – plans exist to undertake the long-promised resurfacing works to reduce the noise levels. The MP wrote to say there were no plans – short- or longer-term to do any such work. Cllr Bartlett said this was very disappointing given how long noise reduction measures have been discussed but not delivered.

ABC is amending its planning portal so that parish comments are posted immediately and not reviewed or redacted, and to widen points of access. Cllrs agreed it was a step in the right direction but that the system was far from perfect and cumbersome when downloading files. WPC will be supporting the Keep Britain's Tidy's 10th Anniversary Great British Spring Clean by going out as individuals to pick up litter. Cllrs thanked those residents who undertake litter picks within the parish throughout the year.

8. 8.1 Playground

8.1.1 Adult gym equipment – update on training sessions

Update at the next meeting.

8.1.2 Health and Safety signage

The estimate for the required signage supplied by Medash in Ashford was circulated in advance. It was proposed to accept the quote of £54 plus the additional cost of installation.

Resolved.

WPC proposed to accept the quote for signage supplied by Medash.

Proposed: Cllr Richards. **Seconded:** Cllr Ward. **All in agreement.**

Resolved.

WPC resolved to purchase the sign and install it on the recreation area near to the adult gym.

Action: Clerk

9. 9.1 Cemetery

9.1.1 Update on the installation of CCTV

Surveillance is ongoing.

9.1.2 Update on plan to install a plot map

To meet GDPR regs, an updated map is required before a plot map can be viewed by the public.

An estimate to re-do the map was circulated by the C

It was proposed to accept the quote at £45 per hour for the plot map to be redone.

Proposed: Cllr Hutchinson. **Seconded:** Cllr Drury. **All in agreement.**

Resolved

WPC resolved to approve the quote

Action: Clerk

9.1.2 Fencing of the ashes plot

Cllr Richards circulated the estimate to manufacture and install metal fencing between the ashes plot area and the burials area at the cemetery to all Cllrs before the meeting. Work to be undertaken by Mark Mealham.

Resolved

It was proposed to accept the quote as submitted

Proposed: Cllr Wyatt. **Seconded:** Cllr Ward. **All in agreement.**

Resolved

WPC resolved to commission Mark Mealham to manufacture and install the fencing.

Action: Cllrs Hutchinson and Richards.

10. 10.1 KALC

No report until after the next Ashford area meeting.

11. 11.1 Highways

Cllr Drury circulated a draft HiP for 2025 to Cllrs in advance of the meeting. Cllrs agreed that a new HiP, working with KCC, would be the most appropriate approach to addressing another sad fatality at the dangerous Potters Corner junction with the A20. The HiP will work to encompass both vehicular and pedestrian safety. The HiP will also request a 20mph speed limit for the central area of Westwell village on all access points. Also to extend the 30mph speed limit on Sandhurst Lane to the Parish Boundary with Boughton Aluph – if Boughton Aluph Parish Council agree.

Action: Cllr Drury to update the draft. Clerk to submit to East Kent Highways HiP team for initial discussion.

12. 12.1 Village Hall Management Committee

No update.

13. 13.1 Trees

The arborist assessed the two sycamores on Gold Hill and the large sycamore on the Church Green. They reported no issues with the sycamores on Gold Hill but that the sycamore on the Church Green, following high tech testing, is 80% hollow. They recommended crown lifting by 2.5m and said risk of harm was 1:3,000. Cllrs agreed that WPC insurances should be checked but that it was a priority to act on the arborist's recommendations. It was felt by Cllrs that it was appropriate at this time to undertake the crown lifting and ensure the sycamore is regularly inspected to keep it safe and standing for as long as possible. The only neighbour to the sycamore confirmed that they had discussed and accepted the risk of the tree falling and damaging their boundary wall.

Action: Cllr Farrington to speak to the ABC tree warden to get urgent approval for the work and the Clerk to speak to WPC's insurers to check that the arborist's tests and recommendations comply with policy conditions.

13.1.1

Undergrowth on Gold Hill. Cllrs Drury and Farrington reported that the undergrowth on Gold Hill was more than they could reasonably keep under control and that wide verge needed professional intervention. It was agreed to put in place a special financial reserve at year end to get this work completed in the autumn. The work will allow in more light through and keep the verge tidy in a prominent location within the parish.

14. 14.1 South East Water – mains extension

There is nothing further to report.

15. 15.1 Parish Priority Projects

No additional potential projects notified.

Action: Clerk to list projects submitted to date and circulate that to Cllrs ahead of the next meeting.

16. 16.1 Westwell Eye

No update at this time.

17. 17.1 Community Resilience Plan

Cllrs Bartlett and Ward will present a final draft at the April meeting before it moves to the next phase whereby residents will be asked to come forward to formally volunteer their help and/ or equipment.

18. 18.1 Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed to defer the Annual Parish Meeting to the end of May to allow for a guest speaker. It was agreed to maintain the two-year cycle, established during Covid, for awarding the WPC Citizenship Award.

19. 19.1 Additional Items

The meeting closed at 21.38 hrs. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 April 2025.

Chairman's Signature.....