

Westwell Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 6 August 2025 at 7pm, Westwell Village Hall, Westwell

1. Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

2. Present and apologies

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

Apologies: Cllr Hutchinson.

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.

Other Significant Interest (OSI)

Cllr Drury - Local Plan 2042.

4 4.1 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2025 and matters arising.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of Westwell Parish Council held on 2 July 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Ward. **Seconded:** Cllr Drury. **All in agreement.** Cllrs Lister, Wyatt and Farrington abstained as not present at the July meeting.

Resolved:

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

4.2 Matters Arising

- **ABC (dog) waste bin Westwell Cemetery.** The matter is ongoing. ABC denies that the bin belongs to them even though they have been sent location mapping and two different sets of photos.

- **Tarmac.** The team at Tarmac has kindly cleared the culvert adjacent to its premises on Watery Lane. WPC expressed its thanks to the team.

- **SLRA meeting with Katie Lam MP about M20 noise reduction.** A report of the meeting was circulated to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting by Cllr Bartlett. WPC chair Clive Bainbridge and WPC Vice-Chair Christine Drury attended the meeting. The SLRA is waiting to ensure that all three MPs involved in the matter of road noise from the M20 are on-board with the renewed bid to improve the surfacing to significantly reduce noise. When SLRA hears back from Kate Lam MP re her findings from offices with central responsibility, WPC will write a letter to adjacent parishes in a bid to form one united and cohesive action on this long term and unresolved issue.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to draft a letter in preparation.

- **Local Government Reorganisation.** A report from the recent KALC meeting on this topic was circulated to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting. No further information to report.

Decision Items

5 5.1 Update on planning matters in progress

5.1.1 Works at the Sandbar Business Park

Construction works continue as expected. Lighting proposals (OTH/2025/0655) appear to be still in discussion following objection from Katie Miller (Kent Downs Unit). WPC's 2nd comment has not yet been posted on the website. It was proposed to hold another liaison meeting in November.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to propose a suitable date to all parties.

5.2.2 ABC Local Plan 2042

ABC has confirmed that proposed transition into unitary authorities will not stop work on the Ashford Local Plan 2042 as there is a requirement for land development supply targets to be in place.

An eight-week consultation period has been announced by ABC. It will run from 18 August 2025 until 5pm on 13th October. Members of the public can view the documents online, in person at designated venues across the borough, or attend one of the face-to-face meetings diarised.

Action: Clerk to upload the relevant information to WPC's website.

The strategic diagram (appendix (i)) appended to the 1st stage version of the LP2042 was circulated to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting. The existing Local Plan 2030 has a strategic diagram showing areas of development. The 2nd stage version will have a similar strategic diagram reflecting the results of this stage of formal consultation.

This overall strategic map for the Ashford part of the borough is very useful as the orange areas indicate the five areas where ABC will be looking at the deliverability of sites that could deliver the edge of Ashford target: the key principle is that ABC are continuing to focus on Ashford and not embarking on new standalone settlements as Maidstone are doing at Lenham heathlands and Lidsing and Folkestone and Hythe are doing at Otterpool. Ashford is helped by having a slightly lower housing target under the new calculation method, and by progress on releasing the backlog held up by the Stodmarsh nutrient neutrality requirements for all development draining into the Stour River basin.

The areas of immediate potential impact for WPC are the diagrams for North and Northwest. ABC have noted the planning designations constraints for each: these being the SSSI designation of Hothfield Common (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and the Kent Downs National Landscape – including setting, i.e. more than just the boundary. From Planning decision 'case law' it is known that all sites north of the A20 are in that setting. The same should apply to west of Sandyhurst Lane. ABC have also noted the rural urban boundary nature of Sandyhurst Lane.

These key pages of this 1st draft local plan are pages 50-59. This is Spatial Area 3 Edge of Ashford section. Each of the five areas has its specific considerations and there are important decision criteria set out as a list of "strategic considerations" on pages 56 and 57. To deliver the 2500-2700 target in the 2030-2042 period it is likely that ABC will include more than one of the five areas in the next version of the plan.

WPC has already looked at the site submissions in and near the parish in these areas – the next task is the revisit that work against the considerations ABC has now set out.

As some councillors could be financially impacted by blight or opportunity, WPC agreed it would be sensible to separate technical work on the plan e.g. studying details and arranging workshops, from WPC's decisions on how to comment on the draft as WPC.

As the areas of search for North Ashford overlap with Boughton Aluph and Eastwell PC, WPC's technical work will ideally include dialogue that parish council as well as with SLRA. For Northwest Ashford, the overlap is with Hothfield PC and there should ideally be similar dialogue with that parish council.

WPC will organise two sessions on the Local Plan 2042 at Westwell Village Hall for residents to attend and ask questions. The two events will be publicised via the Westwell Event FB page. Dates TBC.

5.1.3 Elvey Cottage – appeal to Planning Inspectorate vs planning enforcement

WPC would like to know the relevant trigger dates for when enforcement action will happen.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to write to Heidi Mangold at ABC to find out what the action dates are following the dismissal of the homeowner's appeal.

6. 6.1 Financial Report

6.1.1 Approval of payments for July in accordance with the budget

WPC main account

Expenditure to approve for August 2025		Method	£
Salary payment August	Clerk	BACS	1048.61
Tax and NI	HMRC	BACS	429.80

Mowing inv 5252	All Seasons Gardening Services	BACS	678.60
Adult gym resident training	Hayley Orange health & Fitness	BACS	150.00
Playground inspection	RoSPA	BACS	110.40
Total			£2417.41

Income			
Deposits x 1 @ £20 each	Adult training	BACS	20.00
Memorial approval	Clive Sherwood Stonemason	BACS	150.00
Total			£170.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance at 31 July 2025: £11, 498.80 less un-presented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance = £11, 498.80 as at 31 July 2025

WPC deposit account

Expenditure			£
Total			£00.00

Income			
9 July	Interest	BACS	26.81
Total			£26.81

Bank Reconciliation Balance £46, 622.87 as at 31 July 2025 less un-presented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance: £46, 622.87 as at 31 July 2025

General reserve	17,282.68
Grant	2, 279
HiP	7,859.42
Deposit	15,937.77
Special reserves:	3264.00
£2,100 picnic tables	
£374 health safety signage	
£450 tidy undergrowth	
Gold Hill	
£340 plot map	

**Interest added to the General Reserve*

WPC No 2 Account

Expenditure		Cheque No	£
Total			£00.00

Income			
Total			£00.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance £3.44 at 31 JULY 2025. Actual balance = £3.44 at 31 July 2025.

Resolved

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

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

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

Ratification of decision taken by email to approve a spend of £62 on the cost of a plot map sign for the cemetery.

WPC resolved to ratify the decision taken by email to approve a spend of £62 on the cost of a plot map sign for Westwell Cemetery.

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

Resolved. WPC resolved to ratify the decision taken by email.

Ratification of decision taken by email to approve the Local Government Annual Salary increase of 3.2% to the Westwell Parish Clerk salary.

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

Resolved. WPC resolved to ratify the decision taken by email to increase the salary of the WPC clerk by 3.25 backdated to April 2025.

Information items

7. 7.1 Correspondence

8. 8.1 Playground

8.1.1 Adult gym equipment – update on training sessions

Cllr Farrington reported very positive feedback from the training session and said that all participants had kindly agreed that their individual training fee of £20 should be donated to WPC. WPC Cllrs agreed that another six-week training session would be a good idea. It will be paid for by the Borough Cllrs' grant given for this purpose.

Action: Cllr Farrington will canvas for new participants at Westwell Village fete, via the Westwell Eye and via Westwell Events FB page.

8.1.2 RoSPA Annual Playground Health and Safety Inspection

Cllr Farrington advised that there were no red flags and a few advisories.

She will organise for the posts of the adult gym signage to be chamfered and asked another Cllr to view the see-saw to see if they could spot any of the missing bolts referenced in the report. When spotted, they will be replaced.

The clerk will update the regular health and safety checklist to include the adult gym equipment.

8.1.3 Child Climbing Frame and grant application

Cllr Farrington will review potential play equipment solutions and propose items for Cllrs to approve by email. This will allow the Clerk to submit a grant application by 31 August to KCC Sports for a grant towards the equipment.

8.1.4 Recreation picnic tables

Cllr Farrington thanked Peter Hewitt for all his work repairing and sprucing up the village picnic benches on the recreation area. As a result of his work, WPC will not need to replace any tables.

9. 9.1 Cemetery

9.1.1 Signage

New signage with the plot map has been ordered.

9.1.2 Estimate for permanent bollard and chain barrier

Estimate from Mealham Metals is pending.

Action: Clerk to chase

9.1.3 Memorial risk assessments

St Mary's PCC has requested that WPC check all memorials in St Mary's churchyard for safety.

Cllrs Wyatt and Richards have reviewed all memorials for safety; one was laid down.

Action: Cllrs Wyatt and Richards will send a report of the checks undertaken to the Clerk.

Cllrs Wyatt and Richard will now undertake a safety review of memorials in the cemetery.

It was agreed to repeat the procedure annually to maintain monitoring.

Cllr Wyatt said that scaffolding will be going up around St Mary's to repair leaks in the roof.

The Clerk has asked the PCC for a copy of the transfer document of St Mary's Churchyard to WPC so that WPC's responsibilities are fully understood and details of when and if a faculty for any maintenance works needs to be requested.

10. 10.1 KALC Meeting

Cllr Bartlett circulated a report to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

10.1.2 WPC Response to the KALC Survey on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

See Minute Item 5.2.2

Cllr Bainbridge said he had submitted responses from WPC to the recent KALC LGR survey.

11. 11.1 Highways

11.2 HiP 2025

Cllr Drury said that WPC needs to know if the clock is already ticking on costs for the HiP 2025 so that budgets can be prepared.

Action: Clerk to contact the East Kent Highways HiP team to find out.

Cllr Lister reported that there has been bad accident outside Greggs on the A20. Cllrs are concerned that promotional flags and signage for the new Greggs retail unit are blocking visibility for road users and would like to see them removed as this is known to be a difficult junction to navigate due to the speed of vehicles on the A20.

12. 12.1 Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Farrington said finances are healthy. Door restraints have been added to the new French doors out to the recreation area to ensure safety ahead of the village fete.

13. 13.1 Parish Priority Projects

Cllr Bainbridge will update the messaging of the article that appeared in the August edition of Westwell Eye to engage residents' interest in proposed parish projects as well as solicit new suggestions. He will request a full page for it in the September issue to give it more impact. The communication will also be circulated via the Westwell Events FB page.

14. 14.1 Westwell Eye

A report will be circulated to all Cllrs for the September meeting.

15. 15.1 Community Resilience Plan

Cllrs Ward and Barlett will put a report about the Plan - and what it's all about - into the October issue of Westwell Eye.

Action: Cllr Ward to draft the article.

16. Annual Village Fete

Cllrs agreed that the new fete signage had great impact.

Cllr Farrington will check on when the extra grass cut of the recreation area will be done and let the fete organising committee know.

17. Additional Items

None

The meeting closed at 20. 42 hrs. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3 September 2025.

Chairman's Signature.....

Appendix (i)

