

Westwell Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 7pm, Westwell Parish Hall

1. Open Forum

No members of the public in attendance.

Borough Cllr Krause spoke about the proposed reorganisation of the County into unitary authorities and said the current situation and understanding of what may or may not happen was somewhat disjointed.

2. Present and apologies

Present: Cllrs Bainbridge, Drury, Hutchinson, Farrington, Lister and Wyatt. Clerk – Sonia Young.
Borough Cllr Larry Krause.

Apologies: Cllrs Bartlett, Ward and Richards

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.

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

Resolved:

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

Proposed: Cllr Drury. **Seconded:** Cllr Hutchinson. **All in agreement.** Cllrs Lister and Farrington 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

4.1.1.2 Allotments – Cllr Richards will report back at the next meeting.

4.1.1.3 M20 road surface and traffic noise. SLRA reports that Katie Lam MP is interested in meeting the Association to discuss the road noise in more detail. WPC Cllrs expressed an interest in also attending that meeting once diarised.

Action: Clerk to write to SLRA to request being looped into the meeting.

4.1.1.4 Parish Spring Clean. Chair Cllr Bainbridge reported that eight residents collected litter picking equipment and that the Facebook post on Westwell Events generated much interest. He thanked those residents who took part as well as those who litter pick the parish all year round.

Decision Items

5. 5.1 Planning Applications received for comment.

5.1.1 PA/2025/0318 – Ambleside, Maidstone Road North of Drovers Roundabout, TN25 4NR
- proposed first-floor side and rear extension over existing ground floor.

Ratification of decision taken by email

Resolved

It was proposed to ratify the decision taken by email but to also send a note to the planning officer concerned to request that WPC be able to make comment following further information revealed to WPC re access only after WPC's comment and decision were uploaded to the ABC planning portal.

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

Resolved.

It was resolved to ratify the decision taken by email and to also contact the planning officer to see if WPC might add further comment to the file.

5.2 Update on planning matters in progress

5.2.1 SE works to extend the water main from Charing to Ashford.

Part 2 of the planned water mains extension by SE Water – from Charing to Ashford - has been put on hold following a reorganisation of financial priorities. It does not look likely that this work will take place until 2030. The SE Water website has not had any additional information loaded. As such, Cllrs resolved to write to SE Water for a more detailed explanation of the postponement, and what it will mean for Ashford/parish residents in terms of water supply.

5.2.2 Works at the Sandbar Business Park

The acoustic boundary between the site and Lake House has been implemented. Cllr Bainbridge has spoken to the contractor who is happy to meet with WPC Cllrs and residents impacted by the ongoing works.

Action: Cllr Wyatt to circulate some suggested dates for all parties to meet.

5.2.3 ABC Call for Sites for the Local Plan 2042

Cllr Drury said that the latest information is that ABC will have completed a rough draft of the Local Plan 2042 by summer and will hold informal consultations at locations across the Borough in late August/September. She said it was still not clear if the sites put forward for development in the Parish would all have been assessed by that stage, or what impact the 1 May elections will have on the progress of the Plan. It was agreed to talk more about a potential Housing Needs Survey for Westwell Parish – and what will be involved – at the May meeting.

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

Ref: 3352530. In progress. A new inspector has been assigned to the Appeal.

6. 6.1 Financial Report

6.1.1 Approval of payments for April in accordance with the budget

WPC main account

Expenditure to approve for April 2025		Method	£
Salary payment April	Clerk	BACS	920.95
Tax and NI	HMRC	BACS	241.56
Mowing	All Seasons Gardening Services	BACS	632.94
Annual Subscription	KALC	BACS	569.59
Cemetery map update	RL Surveys		54.00
Expenses	Reimburse Clerk	BACS	184.42
Total			£2603.46

Income			
Total			£00.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance at 31 March 2025: £10,567.37 less unrepresented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance = £10, 567.37 as at 31 March 2025

WPC deposit account

Expenditure			£
Total			£00.00

Income			
10 Mar	Interest	BACS	28.83
Total			£28.83

Bank Reconciliation Balance £38, 920.48 as at 31 March 2025 less un-presented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance: £38, 920. 48 as at 31 March 2025

General reserve	12,844.29
Grant	2, 279
HiP	7,859.42
Deposit	15,937.77

WPC No 2 Account

Expenditure		Cheque No	£
Total			£00.00

Income			
Total			£00.00

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

Resolved

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

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

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

6.2 It was proposed to approve specific reserves at the end of the financial year 2024-2025 to complete unfinished budgeted projects as per the list circulated in advance of the meeting to all Cllrs. The proposed reserves as follows: £2,100 to purchase and install picnic tables to complete the refurbishment of the recreation area, plus £355 for required health and safety signage; £450 to complete the work to tidy up the trees and verges on Gold Hill; £2,500 to complete the installation of metal fencing at the cemetery to delineate the ashes plots, plus £340 for a plot map and noticeboard; £755 for the crown reduction of the sycamore on the St Mary's Church green. Total specific reserves £6,519.

Resolved

WPC resolved to set aside specific reserves as noted.

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

Resolved.

It was agreed to set aside the specific reserves.

6.3 Proposal to approve the quote from Tree and Grounds Maintenance Ltd for the emergency reduction of the crown on the sycamore at the Church green. The quote was circulated to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

Resolved

WPC resolved to approve the quote given the emergency of the works required and as noted by the arborists' report.

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

Resolved: WPC approved the quote.

Action: Clerk to contact TGM to get the work done as soon as possible.

Information items

7. 7.1 Correspondence

7.1.1 VE Day 80th Anniversary celebrations. The Parish will celebrate by raising the flag and lighting the beacon. Residents will be advised via the Westwell Events Facebook page.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge.

8. 8.1 Playground

8.1.1 Adult gym equipment – update on training sessions

The Clerk confirmed that the Borough Cllr's grant of £500 had been approved by Ashford Borough Council and that this would be put towards the costs of the training. Cllr Farrington said that there would be a couple of taster sessions on a Monday and Wednesday at 4pm to reach out to all residents interested in trying out the equipment before they sign up for a series of training sessions held over a period of weeks. Cllr Farrington said it was hoped that by following this route, residents could be eased into the benefits and see how easy it is to use the equipment – whatever the level of personal fitness.

Action: Cllr Farrington to draft content to promote the taster sessions within the next issue of Westwell Eye.

8.1.2 Health and Safety signage

The clerk will update the contact phone number on the signage proof sent through for approval and pay the pro-forma as presented and approved at the March meeting. Cllrs agreed that the sign could be sited on normal fence posts sunk into postcrete.

Action: Cllr Hutchinson will work with Cllr Bainbridge to install the sign once ready.

8.1.3 Picnic benches

Cllr Lister has removed one broken picnic table on the recreation area and mended another.

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

A new plan has been created by RL Surveys.

Action: Clerk to look at how to host the map via a QR code linked to the parish website.

9.1.3 Fencing of the ashes plot

Cllr Wyatt said that the length of the fencing was being revised. Update at next meeting.

10. 10.1 KALC report

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

11. 11.1 Highways

Cllr Lister said Kent Highways had filled in some potholes. He has reported several other issues via the Kent Highways website and uploaded photos.

Cllrs Drury and Lister have accepted an on-line meeting in June with East Kent Highways to progress the outline HiP submitted after the March meeting.

Cllr Lister has also cleared the mud from a number of the Parish lanes.

12. 12.1 Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Farrington said that the Community Lunch had been very popular, went well and been delivered within the agreed £250 budget. The long-awaited patio doors have been installed. It was agreed that the parking area needs attention.

13. 13.1 Trees

The Clerk said that WPC's insurers had confirmed that the agreed action of reducing the crown of the sycamore on the Church green met with policy conditions and that the wall between the green and neighbours would be covered in the event of any failure. The owners of the adjacent property have confirmed that they are aware and accept the risk. Cllr Farrington has sought – and secured – approval from the ABC tree warden for the emergency work on the tree.

14. 14.1 Parish Priority Projects

No additional potential projects notified.

Action: Clerk to list projects proposed and circulate the document to Cllrs ahead of the next meeting.

15. 15.1 Westwell Eye

The clerk circulated a report to Cllrs ahead of the meeting. It was suggested that the Eye could be used to circulate a Housing Needs Survey to all residents.

16. 16.1 Community Resilience Plan

Cllrs Bartlett and Ward circulated a draft document to all Cllrs ahead of the meeting. At the next meeting, Cllrs Bartlett and Ward will talk through the document and look at how wider community engagement in the Plan can be secured.

17. 17.1 Annual Parish Meeting

The date for the Annual Parish Meeting is Tuesday 27 May; there will be a special guest speaker. All club and society reports are aware of the date change. A proposed agenda for the

Annual Parish Meeting will be circulated to all Cllrs ahead of the May meeting for approval at the meeting.

18. 18.1 Additional Items

18.1.1 Tarmac. Cllr Bainbridge has visited the Tarmac site and spoken to the manager about the increase in nighttime offloading of aggregates. This is happening three times a week currently and Tarmac plan to increase this to daily. Cllr Bainbridge spoke to the manager about the agreed Code of Practice – which the manager was fully aware of – and said he would remind all drivers re the 20mph speed limit. Another follow up meeting is planned for 14 April; nearby residents from Watery Lane will be invited to attend.

18.1.2 Westwell Fete

Cllr Drury has handed responsibility of the fete to a new committee and given the committee a full briefing on the layout of the field, the accounts etc.

The meeting closed at 21.18hrs. The next meeting – the Annual General Meeting - will be held on Wednesday 7 May 2025.

Chairman’s Signature.....