

Westwell Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 6 November 2024 at 7pm, Westwell Parish Hall

1. Open Forum

No members of the public in attendance.

2. Present and apologies

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

Apologies: none.

3. Co-option of Cllr

Ratification of the decision taken by email to appoint Rob Ward as co-opted Cllr to Westwell Parish Council.

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

Resolved.

It was agreed to appoint Cllr Ward as a co-opted Cllr to Westwell Parish Council. Cllr Ward formally accepted the role by signing a Declaration of Acceptance. He was welcomed by all Cllrs to the council.

4. 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 Bainbridge – neighbour to planning application PA/2024/1911

5. 5.1 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2024 and matters arising

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of Westwell Parish Council held on 2nd October 2024 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Bartlett. **Seconded:** Cllr Lister. **All in agreement.** Cllrs Richards, Drury, Wyatt and Hutchinson abstained as not present at the 2 October meeting.

Resolved:

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

5.1.1 Matters Arising

Removal of picnic table due to safety concerns.

The table has not yet been taken away.

Action: Cllr Lister.

Decision Items

6. 6.1 Planning Applications received for comment

6.1.1 PA/2024/1911– Blackberry Mead Farm, Pilgrims Way, TN25

Variation of conditions 2 (Plans), 16 (Solar Panels) and 21 (Use of stable block) of PA/2023/0273 for Demolition of existing buildings. Erection of a detached replacement dwelling and outbuilding/stable with a solar array, together with associated landscaping, drainage, and a reconfigured parking area; to allow for an outbuilding with continued domestic use rather than the approved outbuilding for equestrian purposes.

WPC view: This is a minor modification to the plans for this property. The new stable block to be built is no longer required and it is proposed that part of the ménage area now be used for ground mounted solar panels that would have been on the roof of the new stable block in the

ménage area. The existing stable will still be demolished but under this application, are replaced by a domestic outbuilding of similar scale but lower down, and closer to the new dwelling house that has been approved under 2023/0273. This application meets the updated requirements of the applicants, raises no new impact issues, and slightly reduces the overall footprint within the property.

Resolved

It was proposed to support the application.

Proposed: Cllr Wyatt. **Seconded:** Cllr Richards. **All in agreement.** Chair Cllr Clive Bainbridge abstained due to a conflict of interest.

WPC resolved to support the application.

6.1.2 PA/2024/1748 and PA/2024/1699 Westwell Court, The Bull Pen, Eastwell Lane TN25 4JX

Replacement of eight windows to side elevation

WPC view: This is a comprehensively presented application to replace the windows at this property with like-for-like modern equivalents that will increase thermal efficiency and maintain the present visual presentation as closely as possible. By replicating the design, appearance, and colour of the original windows, the visual impact of the replacement will be minimal. The Bull Pen is one of several properties in this barn conversion in Westwell village that have needed to address the need for replacement window units, as the existing units have reached the end of their maintenance life. Replacing the original putty installed angle iron frames with modern slimline aluminium maintains appearance while improving thermal efficiency and eliminating leakage. This application has carefully considered all planning aspects including heritage considerations.

Resolved

It was proposed to support the application

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

WPC resolved to support the application.

6.2 Other planning matters

6.2.1 Update on works at Sandbar Business Park

No update has been received from the ABC Planning Enforcement team. WPC agreed it needed to continue to liaise with residents neighbouring the development and, if possible, the contractors and site owners as well as ABC.

Action: Chairman to contact Heidi Mangold in ABC Enforcement

6.2.2 ABC Call for sites for the Local Plan 2041 - update

WPC submitted a full response in September to the community engagement. The next stage is for ABC to collect the evidence required for the Plan, work out how to evolve the current 2030 Local Plan strategy for 2042 (documents still refer to 2041). The stated target is April 2025 for a draft plan; WPC may or may not hear sooner which sites are being considered for inclusion. ABC has received well over 300 site submissions for consideration.

5.2.3 Enforcement at Elvey Cottage

The homeowner has appealed the enforcement notice. A proposed submission to be lodged against the appeal on the Planning Inspectorate portal was circulated to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting for consideration as follows:

Ref APP/E2205/C/24/3352530. Ref CO/20/00200

Westwell Parish Council continues to be very concerned that a large residential annex has been built without permission and that it is not subservient to the listed farmstead cottage that is the adjacent primary residence, as required by planning policy. The importance of not creating harm in this way is even greater because this is in the Kent Downs National Landscape. The built structure does not conform at all to the plans approved under 17/00319/AS for a garage/home office.

Retrospective planning permission for what has been built has already been refused (20/01680) and the appeal against that refusal dismissed. On the evidence of that appeal, this appeal should also be dismissed because the appellant's ground (a) is "that planning permission should be granted," which is a repeat of the appeal that has already been dismissed.

Resolved.

It was resolved to approve the comment for submission to the Planning Inspectorate Portal.

Proposed: Cllr Bartlett. **Seconded:** Cllr Farrington. **All in agreement.** Cllr Ward abstained as he did not receive the proposed comment in advance of the meeting.

Action: Clerk to submit the comment via the portal.

The SLRA will also submit a comment.

7. 7.1 Cemetery

6.1.1 Update on the integrated scanning map

Cllr Drury circulated a final report to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting. The project is now complete, bar a few tiny matters, and a final scan map is awaited from RL Surveys for ongoing use. An excel spreadsheet will now be used to update plot ownership and log allied information.

7.2 Other cemetery matters

7.2.1 Evening disturbances at the cemetery

Cllrs have not managed to get in touch with the owner of the car driving into the cemetery late in the evenings and driving across the grass, causing damage. They will try again.

7.2.2 Replacement fencing

It was agreed to explore the idea of low-level metal or chain link fencing rather than a picket fence to replace the dead box hedge that has now been removed.

Action: Cllr Ward to secure contact details of a potential supplier, as will Cllr Richards. Cllr Richards will collate all information for discussion at the next meeting.

7.2.3 Signage at the cemetery

It was agreed that a 'plot map showing names and plots' would be good to site at the cemetery.

Action: Cllr Wyatt to contact Medash Signs for quotes

8. 8.1 Financial Report

8.1.1 Approval of payments in accordance with the budget (circulated in advance of the meeting)

WPC main account

Expenditure to approve for November 2024		Cheque No	£
Salary payment Nov	Clerk	BACS	996.94
Tax and NI	HMRC	BACS	271.21
Annual playground check	ROSPA	BACS	156.00
Mowing inv 4918	All Seasons Gardening Services	BACS	632.94
Clerk expenses Sept-Oct	Clerk		114.00
Total			£2171.09

Income			
Cemetery fee	Cleverly and Spencer	BACS	150.00
Cemetery fee	Cleverly and Spencer	BACS	150.00
Total			£300.00

Bank Reconciliation Balance at 31st October 2024: £29, 315.28 less unrepresented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance = £29, 315.28 as at 31st October 2024

WPC deposit account

Expenditure			£
Total			

Income			
9 Oct	Interest	BACS	39.16

Total			£39.16
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Bank Reconciliation Balance £47,724.49 at 31st October 2024 Less un-presented cheques as follows:

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Actual balance: £47, 724.49 as at 31st October 2024

General reserve	21,648.30
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 31st October 2024. Actual balance = £3.44 at 31st October 2024

Resolved

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

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

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

8.2 Other finance matters

8.2.1 Approval of the quote for tree work at Gold Hill

The quote was circulated in advance of the meeting to all Cllrs.

Resolved

It was proposed to accept the quote for the works as approved by ABC tree officer Phil Cook

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

It was resolved to accept the quote as circulated and confirm the works should commence as soon as possible.

Cllrs agreed that the date of the work should be notified to residents via Facebook. Cllr Drury will also visit the residents living adjacent to the proposed work to tell them.

8.2.3 Approval of the quote to repair the French drain on the playing field and the installation of a hammerhead turn to the access road to St Mary's.

Cllrs agreed that to install a hammerhead of the proportions needed for a hearse or wedding car to turn safely would impact on the roots of nearby trees. Work will instead concentrate on repairing the kerbing.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to request a new quote from Dwyer Engineering to repair the kerbing only.

Cllrs agreed that the work to repair the French drain was urgently required and agreed the quote as circulated.

Resolved

Proposal to agree the quote from Dwyer Engineering to repair the French Drain and confirm the work should happen soon.

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

It was agreed that Cllrs would approve by email the new estimate from Dwyer Engineering to repair the kerbing so that the path and drain work could be done at the same time. Any decision taken to be ratified at the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Wyatt will let the PCC know that the hammerhead will not be installed but that the kerbs will be repaired.

Information items

9. 9.1 Correspondence

Cllrs discussed the proposal from Govt to allow parish councils to hold remote meetings. The proposal is in the consultation stage. Cllrs agreed it would make meetings more accessible but wanted to think further about the full range of implications before submitting comment.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to look at the consultation forms and report back to Cllrs.

10. 10.1 Playground

Nothing to report.

10.1.1 Adult Gym Equipment update

It was agreed that following installation, expected to commence 25 November, then it would be beneficial to hold some tutored taster sessions on the equipment.

Action: Cllr Farrington to investigate who might hold these sessions, when, and the format for them. Clerk to confirm the post-installation inspection.

11. 11.1 KALC

Cllr Bartlett attended the area meeting on 14 October and will attend the AGM on 30 November when the increase to WPC's annual KALC subscription rate will be confirmed. It was agreed that Cllr Bartlett will circulate bullet points to Cllrs after each KALC meeting rather than discuss KALC minutes in the main monthly meeting.

12. 12.1 Highways

12.1.1 Conference. Cllrs Lister and Drury have registered to attend the conference on 20 November.

12.1.2 Rural crime. Cllr Lister reported that recent serious issues have arisen in the parish with lamping and hare coursing on electric quad bikes. The police are aware and local landowners are implementing their own solutions with ditching.

12.1.3 Sandyhurst Lane Road Closure. The road will be closed 18-29 November 7am to 7pm. It was agreed that details of the closure should be posted on Westwell Events' Facebook page.

12.1.4 HiP warranty. Cllr Drury confirmed that at the end of the warranty period the works will be finally signed off and handed across to the Asset and Road Maintenance Team to manage.

13. 13.1 Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Farrington said that the committee was scoping out a 'free lunch' community event to be held on a Saturday during February 2025. They have also confirmed that the agreed supplier of the patio doors (which have been pending installation all summer), must undertake the work by February 2025 or alternative quotes will be sourced. The Committee has also agreed to defer an application for a KCC grant towards the installation of solar panelling and battery storage at the hall until later in 2025 to give themselves time to prepare full quotes and better understand the economics, roof strength, and whether permission will be needed within the conservation area.

14. 14.1 Trees

14.1.1 Annual tree survey. The survey, conducted by Cllrs Richards and Farrington, was circulated to all Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

The report confirmed that the dead cherry in the cemetery needs to be removed.

Action: Cllr Farrington to secure quotes for its removal.

As 10 years have passed since the two sycamores on the village green were inspected Cllrs agreed that a new report on their state of health would be a wise move.

Action: Cllr Farrington to seek advice from ABC tree officer Phil Cook on what type of report would be best. Cllrs Farrington and Richards said that their annual visual inspections had not revealed any further apparent deterioration.

15. 15.1 Westwell Eye update

The Clerk confirmed that finances were in an improved position as most of the unpaid invoices for advertising had been chased and paid. However, expected annual income will not cover expected costs. WPC will explore its options before agreeing what level of financial support is needed to support the publication of the Westwell Eye.

Action: Cllr Bainbridge to talk to the existing printers about expected costs for 2025-2026. Cllr Hutchinson will source an alternative quote for the cost of paper and printing.

16. 16.1 Additional Items

16.1.1 Parish Memory Tree

A resident suggested that a memory tree be identified in the centre of the parish to give people the opportunity to remember the people and pets they were missing. Cllrs agreed that the 'triangle' could not be used as it was KCC Highways land.

However, the crab-apple tree next to the gates to the playing field was suggested, and Cllrs agreed that this would be ideal.

Resolved

Proposal to assign the central crab-apple tree in the village as a memory tree.

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

It was resolved to designate the central crab-apple tree as the parish Memory Tree.

16.1.2 January meeting

The January meeting of WPC was confirmed as Wednesday 15 January 2025.

The meeting closed at 21.15hrs. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 December 2024.

Chairman's Signature.....