

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING

Minutes of Wadhurst Parish Council Full Council meeting held on Thursday 2nd February 2023 at The Pavilion, Sparrows Green Recreation Ground, South View Road, Wadhurst, TN5 6TW.

Present: Cllr Gadd (Chair), Cllr C Moore, Cllr P Moore, Cllr Smith, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Griffin, Cllr Crawford.
Also present: WD Cllr Howell and Claudine Feltham (Clerk)
Member of public present: None

MINUTES

1. To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Bullock, Cllr Maggs, Cllr Edwards, Cllr Shairp and ESCC Cllr Standley.

2. To receive declarations of personal, prejudicial and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda and updates to members' register of interests.

Cllr Anderson declared his interest in agenda item 10.3 and did not take part on the discussion or decision.

Cllr Gadd declared an interest in respect of agenda items 9.10 and 10.7

Cllr C Moore declared an interest in respect of agenda item 9.10

3. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes.

None

4. County Councillor and District Councillor reports.

Cllr C Moore had a query about the fees and charges within the County report and asked what this applies to.

*Cllr Griffin advised members that he had spoken to someone from the Waters Reach development. They now have a resident's association, but report that nothing has happened on the wild flower meadow still. It should have been done before the 13th house was occupied. People have lived there for at least two years now. **Action:** WDC Cllr Howell to speak with Jo Denton about this.*

5. To consider, and approve if appropriate, which agenda items are sufficiently confidential as to warrant exclusion of members of the press and public under the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960.

Members agreed that agenda items 10.9 and 10.12 were considered as private and confidential.

6. To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 1st December 2022 as a true record.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr C Moore the minutes of 1st December 2022 were approved as a true record.*

7. To determine matters arising from the meeting on 1st December 2022 for updating and noting.

Bob Penny's retirement: members were advised that the Chair and Clerk would be taking Bob Penny out for a retirement lunch on 9th February 2023. Everyone was welcome but would need to pay for their own meal.

Resolved: *members approved for a gift, as proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr C Moore and reached unanimous approval.*

8. Chair's Announcements

8.1 Thank you to Jemma Pantrey, James Edwards and Wadhurst Warriors

Members discussed and agreed that they had all done a wonderful job with the Christmas lights, Christmas tree, grotto, Christmas events and for arranging a special visit from Father Christmas.

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Members agreed for a budget of up to £400 to take the Warriors for a bite to eat and a pint.

Action: Chair to write a letter of thanks for the Wadhurst warriors, James Edwards and Jemma Pantry and arrange gifts.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Anderson, seconded by Cllr C Moore and reached unanimous approval.

8. Finance items for decision and allocation of resources

Members agreed to consider agenda items 9.1 to 9.4 together

9.1 To approve the updated December 2022 payment list

9.2 To approve the payment lists for January 2023 and February 2023

9.3 To note the bank reconciliations for December 2022 and January 2023

9.4 To note the following RBS reports: Income and Expenditure, Ear Marked Reserves, Cash and Investment Reconciliation & Trial balance.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval agenda item 9.1-9.4 were approved.

9.5 To acknowledge and accept the Chairman and Cllr allowances report as recommended by WDC.

Resolved: members accepted the Chair and Cllr allowances as recommended by WDC. Proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Anderson and reached unanimous approval.

9.6 To acknowledge the conclusion of the internal intermediate audit (December 2022) and consider any actions / recommendations raised.

Cllr Gadd queried whether supporting papers should go on the website. Action: Clerk to check with ESALC.

Resolved: all members acknowledge the report and recommendations.

9.7 To acknowledge receipt of the grant from South East Water and consider options for spending Grant for £2500 was received from South East Water Community Chest.

The Clerk updated members that a grant of £2500 has been received from South East Water Community Chest for the community of Wadhurst. This was related to the water shortages during summer 2022.

Members commented that the communication, management and water drop off points were not acceptable when the community was without water at Christmas 2022. They used to use the car park of the recreation ground for water.

WDC Cllr Howell suggested that these thoughts were communicated to Trevor Scott and Ann Newton (WDC) and ESCC Keith Glazier and his Executive Assistant, Becky Shaw. Action: letter to be drawn up.

The Clerk suggested that the £2500 grant be used towards the Kings Coronation event costs, as this would be the best way of reaching the whole community. Resolved: this was proposed by Cllr C Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval.

9.8 To agree to using some of the existing Christmas budget for purchase of storage containers for the excess Christmas items – Cllr C Moore

There was excess budget from Christmas that could pay for the storage containers. Resolved: members approved the purchase, as proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval.

9.9 To consider using Flagstone (cash deposit platform) for the setting up on new bank accounts – Cllr C Moore

Cllr C Moore gave an overview of the service provided by Flagstone, and referred to the documents circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting. Members discussed the suggestion at length, and some members had questions over the security. Action: Cllr P Moore to email his specific enquiries to the Clerk so that she liaise with Flagstone. **Action:** Cllr Griffin to make some enquiries as he offered to. **Action:** Clerk to add to next month's agenda.

Cllr Smith took over as Chair for agenda item 9.10

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9.10 Grant application from WIH&F towards an event to mark their 100-year centenary and a re-commemoration of the hall – Cllr C Moore
Cllr C Moore declared an interest as she had spoken with them about their plans. Cllr Gadd did not take part in the discussion or decision.

10th Feb 2023 is the centenary and WIHF CIO were planning a re-commemoration community event.
Resolved: *As proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval to award a grant of £550. Action:* Clerk to process £550 payment.

Cllr Gadd took over as Chair

9. Items for decision and allocation of resources if necessary

10.1 To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 17th December 2022 and 14th January 2023.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr C Moore, and reached unanimous approval the minutes of 17th December 2022 and 14th January 2023 were adopted.*

10.2 Pavilion sewage pumps and control panel; to consider the quotes received and decide upon a contractor – Clerk (*if quotes received in time*)

The Clerk advised that she was still awaiting the formal quotation from CSG. Action: add to March agenda.

Cllr Anderson had declared an interest in the following agenda item and did not take part in the discussion or decision.

10.3 Pavilion alterations – Cllr Gadd

Cllr Gadd provided a full update to members:

When this project was first initiated Cllr Gadd contacted many local builders asking if they would quote for the works. Some she did not hear back from, some declined. After a lot of effort three quotes were obtained for the works.

It was decided at 13th October 2022 meeting that prospective builders would be asked to confirm that they would proceed on a design and build basis and complete a PQQ (pre-qualification questionnaire).

The next step was to ensure that the contractors had sufficient Health & Safety policies and insurance.

After requesting the documentation from a preferred contractor several times, and them not being able to provide such, Cllr Gadd contacted members to ask if they would agree for the second preferred contractor to undertake the work, which was agreed by majority. (Clerk note; email from Cllr Gadd dated 16.12.22).

Due to the Pavilion being used Monday to Saturday, mornings, afternoons and evenings, it was decided that the best time for the work to be started would be during the Christmas break when the hirers were taking their break. The second preferred contractor was able to carry out the work over the Christmas break. Once the works were started, the contractor was also able to identify a slightly different design that would achieve the same aim, but be far more economical.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached majority approval, members retrospectively approved the new design and contractor for the alterations work.*

10.4 Pavilion fire alarm system required upgrade – Cllr Anderson

Cllr Anderson advised members that the current system is manual with no automatic detectors. He had met with the supplier and requested a quote for an upgraded system. They had provided the quote by Cllr Anderson had some queries on it.

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Resolved: members agreed a budget of up to £10,000 for the upgraded system, and delegated the decision for which contractor to use to the Amenities Committee. The Clerk advised members that if the quote was over £5,000, they would need to get three quotes in. Proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval.

Action: Clerk to arrange a service of the system in the meantime.

10.5 Jardin d'Aubers: professional plan – update

Cllr Griffin updated members that the contract for the professional plan is being awarded to SE Environmental, and as a back up we will be asking David Eyre to audit that plan. However, we are still awaiting the lease from East Sussex Fire & Rescue (ESFR).

10.6 Jardin d'Aubers lease from ESFR (if received in time) – Cllr Griffin

Members were advised that ESFR has requested for the annual charge to be raised from £50 to £500 to cover administration costs. This was considered by the Amenities Committee (19.1.23) and due to the planned expenditure at the Jardin members proposed a figure of £200.

This was reported back to ESFR by the Clerk.

Members of full council agreed that £200 was a more reasonable sum. Members were still quite concerned that the lease had still not been received from ESFR, and wanted the Clerk to write to ESFR to advise that whilst no current lease was in place, liability for the site lay with ESFR. The essential tree works for ash die back was of particular concern. (The tree survey reports had previously been copied to ESFR). Members confirmed that they would like the tree works carried out as soon as possible, and prior to nesting season otherwise additional costs would be incurred for ecological surveys (if the works had to be carried out within nesting season). The tree works are estimated at £7,000 plus VAT. Ecological surveys would cost a minimum of £1000 plus VAT.

Cllr C Moore requested that a further meeting with Duncan Savage, ESFR be requested. **Action:** Clerk to write to Duncan Savage to request meeting.

Cllr Smith took over as Chair for the next item

10.7 Commemoration Hall toilets refurbishment – to consider quotes received and decide upon a contractor – Cllr Griffin.

Cllr Griffin gave members an overview of the quotes received so far. The majority of quotes received were over £20,000, one was over £30,000 with lots of add ons on top.

One company had quoted in the region of £19,000, and Cllr Denis has asked him to return to discuss some slight modifications to the requirements (as the flooring did not need replacing as it had manholes within it). Cllr Griffin would meet with this contractor again, and advise him that if successful then he would need to complete the relevant Health & Safety pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ). **Action:** Clerk to send the PQQ to Cllr Griffin.

Clerk reminded members that if the costs would be over £25,000 then Contracts Finder would need to be used.

Cllr Gadd resumed as Chair

10.8 The Kings Coronation; plans for an event – Cllr C Moore

Cllr C Moore advised that she had an initial conversation with the Warriors. Their thoughts are to put on a community event on the field behind the Commemoration Hall. This would take place on Sunday 7th May, from 4 p.m. Parishioners would be encouraged to attend with their own picnics. There also plan on beacon lighting, fireworks and entertainment. Their grant application would include costs for fireworks, a stage, bouncy castle hire, event insurance, porta-loos and marketing.

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The parish council budget set for 2023-2024 did include funds for a community event, and so this could be used for the Coronation event.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Griffin, seconded by Cllr C Moore and reached unanimous approval, a grant of £7500 from the parish council would be awarded, as well as the £2500 grant from South East Water (agenda item 9.7), subject to Wadhurst Warriors being the official event organisers and them arranging the required insurance and risk assessments. As per the grant policy, any funds not spent would be returned to the parish council.*

Action: *Clerk to advise Wadhurst Warriors that they have been successful and £2,500 can be paid now, and the remaining £7,500 to be paid on 1st April 2023).*

Cllr C Moore advised that the WIHF also planned to show the Kings Coronation on a large screen on 6th May 2023.

Cllr C Moore would also purchase a suitable flag.

The Clerk left the room for agenda item 10.9, Cllr Gadd would make notes of the discussion.

10.9 Recruitment and general staffing matters – Cllr Gadd

10.10 Appointment of a relief Caretaker – Cllr Gadd

The new Caretaker has identified a relief Caretaker for every other weekend and holiday cover.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval – members agreed for the relief cover to be paid £35 per weekend (to include travel costs), subject to receiving a satisfactory DBS check. Angus would need to carry out the necessary induction too.*

Action: *Cllr Gadd to advise the Caretaker and applicant.*

10.11 Tennis courts refurbishment or re surfacing – Cllr Griffin/Cllr Crawford.

Cllr Anderson explained that there were two options, one for refurbishment of the existing surfaces (approximately £3,500), the other for complete re surfacing (approximately £65-£70,000). This had been considered by the Amenities Committee (19.1.23) and it was suggested that if there was a long enough period left for the S106 funds to be spent, then the refurbishment option should be used at this stage, which would hopefully last a few years and then do the full replacement later. Members also considered the amount going into the sinking fund each year, and this would need to be increased to £5,000.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Anderson, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval, members agreed for the refurbishment of the current surface.*

(Clerks note: *costs cannot exceed £5,000 otherwise will need to get three quotes)*

The next item was considered in Private & Confidential session

10.12 St Georges Hall update – Cllr Gadd/Cllr C Moore

10.13 To approve a format, working party and budget for the Annual Parish Assembly (1st June 2023)

Members considered not having the annual parish assembly this year, as would be busy with elections and the Kings Coronation events. Resolved: as proposed by Cllr C Moore, seconded by Cllr Anderson and reached unanimous approval. Action: Clerk to find out if it is a legal requirement, and if not, then to cancel it.

10.14 Christmas 2022 round up – Cllr C Moore

10.14.1. To agree an amount of compensation for the properties that provided electricity for the Christmas lights.

Members agreed for £60 to be paid to each of the nine business that provided electricity.

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Action: Cllr Anderson to calculate the costs of the lights, and if proved more than £60 then this would be re addressed. **Action:** Cllr C Moore to send details of the businesses to the Clerk.

10.14.2 To agree the purchase of 10 sets of lights to replace ones that are broken and to be able to extend the lights slightly.

Cllr Anderson advised that when we had issues with the supplier previously, they agreed to look after us in the future, so it may be that the price can be reduced. **Action:** Clerk to send the quote to Cllr Anderson and he will liaise with them direct.

Resolved: members approved a budget of up to £1000, as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval.

10. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

11.1 Neighbourhood plan next steps: To agree the draft Neighbourhood Plan can go forward for Regulation 15 and 16 consultation.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr C Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached majority approval, members of the parish council agreed for this to be submitted to WDC.

- 11.2 To decide next steps for response to Wealden District Council's comments re the Design Code including a budget for Create Streets up to £1,500 – Cllr C Moore

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr C Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval, a budget of up to £1,500 was agreed.

11. Items for noting

12.1 Defibrillator for centre of village - update from the Clerk

Noted

12.2 Updated meetings timetable (to include the Annual Parish Assembly to take place on 1st June 2023 and October full council to take place 12th October 2023)

Noted

12.3 Update from the meeting (27.1.23) with Uplands Academy, MP Nus Ghani and members of the parish council.

Next step is to re meet on 8th February 2023. Action: Clerk to advise Uplands school and suggest time of 0930.

12. Correspondence list.

Noted

13. Urgent issues at the discretion of the Chair for noting or inclusion on future agenda

Grant application from Wadhurst Parent and Toddler Group. Cllr Griffin advised that there is a great deal of children's play equipment at St Georges Hall that could be collected and used. **Resolved:** as proposed by Cllr P Moore, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval, members agreed to reduce the rate for hire to the charities/not for profit rate, and to request for the group to look at the equipment at St Georges Hall to see what would be viable. **Action:** Clerk to advise Wadhurst Parent and Toddler Group.

Meeting closed at 2222 hours