

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of Wadhurst Parish Council full council meeting held at The Pavilion, Sparrows Green Recreation Ground, Wadhurst on Thursday 6th April 2023.

Present: Cllr Gadd (Chair), Cllr Crawford, Cllr Smith, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Edwards, Cllr Shairp, Cllr Bullock, WDC Cllr Howell, ESCC Cllr Standley and Claudine Feltham (Clerk).

There was one member of the public present.

MINUTES

1. To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Maggs, Cllr C Moore, Cllr P Moore and Cllr Griffin

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 interests in respect of agenda items: 10.2 and 10.8. and did not participate in these items.

Cllr Gadd declared interests in respect of agenda items: 10.7, 10.17, 10.20 and 10.21 and did not participate in these items.

3. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes.

A resident spoke in connection with his concerns over the parking issues in Mayfield Park (off of Mayfield Lane).

Many teachers from Sacred Heart school are parking in Mayfield Park from approx. 7.45 a.m. until 5 p.m. and this is causing an issue for the residents who live there, sometimes not being able to get into/out of their properties.

So many vehicles are parking there that it causes delivery lorries etc to drive on the verges, which now have huge ruts in them. The resident also raised concerns that an emergency vehicle, like a fire engine, would not be able to get through.

Solutions suggested to the school by the parishioner are for them to either provide sufficient parking for their staff on site, and for the grounds-person to repair the ruts in the verges. However, these are not accepted.

Cllr Gadd invited ESCC Cllr Standley to joint the discussion, who advised he was unsure if there was space on site for additional parking.

Action: Clerk to write to the school to ask if they could consider more on-site parking, and repairs to the verges on an ongoing basis.

Action: Cllr Standley to report to county about the verges being damages because of the parking issues, and also to liaise with the PCSO.

4. County Councillor and District Councillor reports.

Due to being in the pre-election period, there were no reports circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Standley (BS) advised that this would be his last meeting as our ESCC Cllr representative.

Cllr Shairp mentioned that year to date ESCC have repaired 8500 potholes – but the issue is ongoing, and the roads are continuing to break up. BS responded that a new contractor for East Sussex Highways (ESH) would be starting soon and hoped that this will improve the conditions.

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 approved for agenda items 10.10 and 10.24 to be considered as private and confidential.

6. To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 2nd March 2023 as a true record.

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith, and reached majority approval, the minutes were approved.

7. To determine matters arising from the meeting on 2nd March 2023 for updating and noting.

7.1 Water station for Wadhurst – South East Water

South Easter Water have confirmed that the Pavilion will be reinstated as a site for providing bottled water, in case of future emergencies

7.2 Bank encroaching on footpath to train station – Wealden District Council had passed this to ESH for remedial action.

Noted

Action: add to SLR agenda for update from ESH.

8. Chair's Announcements

9. Finance items for decision and allocation of resources

9.1 To approve the updated March 2023 payment list

9.2 To approve the payment list for April 2023

9.3 To note the bank reconciliations for March 2023

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

Members agreed to consider agenda items 9.1 to 9.4 together.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval.

9.5 CIL Funds and S106 funds – amounts and expenditure deadlines – RFO.

Clerk gave members an overview of the table provided.

9.6 Grant application for Cousley Wood Coronation Celebration

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith, and reached unanimous approval a grant for £410 was approved. **Action:** Clerk advise applicants and transfer funds by BACS.

9.7 Grant application from Wadhurst Toddler Group

Members considered the grant application and discussed a previous grant which was used for toys, as well as the reduced rate offered to the Toddler Group for the hall hire, and how the group could raise additional funds themselves.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval, members agreed a one-off grant of £1000 to be used against the Pavilion hall hire. **Action:** Clerk to advise the toddler group.

9.8 Grant applications from Wadhurst Parochial Church Council for a) 2022 churchyard maintenance and b) 2023 churchyard maintenance.

As updated by Cllr C Moore prior to the meeting. Members of the parish council had met with representative from the church and had discussed how the parish council would not be able to enter into a long term agreement, but could continue to make small grants through our grant application scheme for the maintenance of the churchyard as it benefits the wider community, as everyone can walk around it and enjoy quiet recreation.

Resolved: grants to be paid as requested; proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval. **Action:** Clerk to contact the church and process BACS payments.

9.9 To note the slight increase in insurance premium to cover all items on the Fixed Asset Register.

Noted

9.10 Audit: to note that the end of year audit requirements has been received from PKF Littlejohn. The internal audit is booked with Mulberry & Co 31st May 2023.

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

The deadline for final submission of the external audit (to PKF) is 3rd July 2023.

Noted

10. Items for decision and allocation of resources if necessary

10.1 To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 25th February and 11th March 2023.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Anderson, and reached unanimous approval, the minutes were adopted.

Cllr Anderson did not take part in the next item on the agenda and had declared his interest in respect of this item at the beginning of the meeting.

10.2 Pavilion alterations – Cllr Gadd

*The Clerk had circulated an update/progress report from High Weald Heritage prior to the meeting. Members considered the works already taken place during the first part of the project and were very pleased, particularly with the savings that had been made. **Resolved:** members considered the next steps and agreed for a second project to continue with the same contractor. A budget of up to £22,000 was approved, as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval (from members participating in this item). **Action:** Clerk to advise contractor.*

10.3 Memorial for parish benefactor – Cllr Gadd/Cllr C Moore

Deferred to next meeting

10.4 Jardin d'Aubers lease from ESFR – to consider the lease supplied by ESFR and the comments about the lease from our Solicitor and decide upon the next steps.

Update: Members discussed this, but agreed it needs additional time for further thoughts and comments.

Action: members to consider the documentation prior to the May 2023 parish council meeting, ready for further discussion. **Action:** Clerk to send reminder to Cllrs and add to next agenda.

10.5 Jardin d'Aubers maintenance contract. To approve the wording of the tender notice and agree for its publication.

Resolved: members agreed the content for once the lease is in place. Proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval.

10.6 Removal of diseased tree from next to the War Memorial. To note the permission has been granted by WDC and to agree upon a contractor.

Resolved: members agreed that this can be done as part of the groundsmen tasks. **Action:** Clerk to advise them.

Cllr Smith took over as Chair for agenda 10.7

10.7 Commemoration Hall toilets refurbishment – update

Update from Cllr Griffin (prior to the meeting): the order has been placed with the approved contractor and we are expecting a start date for around mid-April. Please note this does not include a new main door, this will need to be quoted for separately.

*Cllr Anderson advised that we were still awaiting Health & Safety documentation. **Action:** Clerk to chase for site specific risk assessment and method statement.*

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Anderson did not take part in agenda item 10.8 and had declared his interests in the item at the start of the meeting.

10.8 Lengthsman service; to extend the Lengthsman contract and approve a budget for works to continue from April 2023 – Cllr P Moore.

Resolved: *as per the supporting document supplied by Cllr C Moore, members approved for the Lengthsman services to continue from April, and a budget of up to £15,000 be allocated. Proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval.*

10.9 The Kings Coronation; update on the plans for the event taking place 7th May 2023 – Cllr C Moore

Update from Cllr C Moore (provided prior to this meeting): Wadhurst Warriors are leading on this event, with support from WIHF and all is in hand. Big signs have just gone up. Chris Poulton of Wadhurst Warriors is liaising with Gould Fabrications re the new Beacon shields.

10.10 Proposal for acquisition of St Georges Hall – Cllr C Moore
Considered as Private and Confidential at the end of the meeting.

10.11 Bus shelter outside of The Greyhound – to consider the suggestions by the contractor and agree a budget *(if design received in time for the meeting).*

Action: *add to the next agenda as the design and quote had not been received in time for this meeting.*

10.12 Change of wheelie bin at Pavilion to skip with lockable lid – Cllr Anderson

Cllr Anderson advised that he looked at the options for an alternative waste solution for both the Pavilion and Lengthsman, and found that a company called OMNI could provide a lockable skip, to be placed at the recreation ground (location to be confirmed) and when they collect the waste, they recycle what they can. It would also be more cost effective than our current system.

Cllr Gadd suggested a dark green skip would be favourable.

Resolved: *as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached unanimous approval, members agreed to change from Biffa Waste to OMNI. Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Anderson for details and to then place the order, and once in place, cancel the order with Biffa.*

10.13 Allotments – Cllr Griffin

No further update at this time. The Clerk had offered to help advertise their two vacant plots and had sent a sample advert for them to approve.

10.14 Consideration for a further tree inspection and to approve a budget for this – as requested by Cllr Griffin.

Resolved: *members considered the quote from Broad Oak Tree Consultants, who were used for the last tree inspection in December 2021. They have honoured to repeat the same price of £790 + VAT. Members approved for Broad Oak Tree Consultants to carry out a further inspection, as proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval. Action: Clerk to liaise with Broad Oak Tree Consultants.*

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

10.15 High Street planters

10.15.1 Request for Cllr's assistance for planting of summer bedding plants on weekend of 27th-28th May 2023 – as requested by Cllr Griffin

*Cllr Gadd, Cllr Crawford, Cllr Anderson (plus one of his sons) offered to assist. Cllr Shairp was not available on 27th, but could possibly be on 28th. **Action:** Clerk to advise Cllr Griffin.*

10.15.2 To approve a budget for additional planters – Cllr Gadd

*Last year that had been a suggestion for some extra planters for the outside railings by the Institute. Railings belong to WIHF, who were in agreement at that time. **Resolved:** members agreed a budget of up to £250 for the planters and plants, as proposed by Cllr Gadd, seconded by Cllr Crawford and reached unanimous approval. **Action:** Cllr Gadd to liaise with Cllr Griffin, WIHF and source the planters and plants. Note: please advise the Clerk if any assistance is required.*

10.16 Scout Hut – update from Cllr Griffin (via the Clerk)

Update: *Cllr Griffin has spoken to a neighbouring resident regarding the tree on his property that has partially fallen onto the hut, he has said this will be removed. The Ashdown District Commissioner for the Scouts, confirmed that they did want to get the hut back into use for a scout group in Wadhurst and would look for help from the Parish Council.*

Cllr Smith took over as Chair for agenda item 10.17.

10.17 Toilets refurbishment – to approve the slight increase in price following the site meeting
16.3.23 – Cllr Griffin/Cllr Anderson

Resolved: *Cllr Crawford, seconded by Cllr Shairp, and reached unanimous approval to agree the slight change in the specification and the price increase of £1054 to £20,653 (budget of £25,000 originally set).*

Cllr Gadd resumed as Chair

10.18 Proposal to commission an environmental report – Cllr C Moore

Bewl Fishing Lodge has been approved at appeal, and other planning applications at Bewl remain undetermined. Ecology concerns have been raised re developments at Bewl and members proposed obtaining an ecological report in order to be better informed on this topic.

*The cos are difficult to estimate exactly, but would like to budget up to £10,000 for an environment report. **Resolved:** as proposed by Cllr Shairp, seconded by Cllr Smith and reached majority approval, a budget of up to £10,000 was agreed, and delegated authority for the planning committee to decide upon a suitable ecology expert.*

10.19 Proposal for an electronic village signboard – Cllr C Moore

Cllr Smith and the Clerk advised members that following a previous decision to research the possibility of having a digital display noticeboard within the village, two companies had been able to supply quotes. One of these (Trou Digital) was able to supply the specification for this and was deemed to have better customer service.

Through discussion with Jepson's, they had agreed in principle to have a board in the window, facing onto the High Street.

*The next step would be for the Clerk to submit a formal planning enquiry, to see if this would be allowed within the conservation area. Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Gadd and reached unanimous approval, a budget of up to £3,000 for the board and planning costs was agreed, with the favoured supplier being Trou Digital. **Action:** Clerk to continue with this project.*

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Smith took over as Chair for agenda items 10.20 and 10.21

10.20 Request from a parishioner for consideration of funding a pétanque pitch on the WIHF field –
Cllr Crawford

Cllr Crawford advised that a possible location for the pétanque pitch would be on the second cricket of WIHF (Washwell Lane).

The Jardin d'Aubers was also considered as a good location, visible in the village, but had no toilet facilities.

Members agreed that they liked the idea in principle, but would need further information and costings.

Action: *Cllr Crawford to make initial enquiries and liaise with WIHF CIO about this possible project, but it would be for WIHF CIO to lead on the project as on their land.*

10.21 Solar panels project at Commem Hall – to consider the report / requests from WIHF CIO. Cllr Smith.

10.22 Solar panels project at Commem Hall – to consider the report / requests from WIHF CIO. Cllr Smith.

The Clerk gave an overview of the request and correspondence from WIHF CIO to date. Members seemed quite surprised by the value of the request (approx. £100,000) and raised queries over the WIHF own finances, and the overall proposed costs of the project. It was also commented that the contingency amount set by WIHF was very high, and queries were raised why VAT was included when they are a charity.

Cllr Crawford then added that John Mitchell of WIHF had spoken to him and said they were looking at the project again and considering scaling down. The Clerk advised she had not received this latest information.

*One member asked if the recent refurbishment works at the hall had included an insulation provision, as this was one of the best ways to save costs. **Action:** Clerk to raise this query with them.*

The amount set in the parish council's budget for 2023-2024 for grants and donations was set at £20,000, for all projects across the parish/community. As proposed by Cllr Bullock, seconded by Cllr Anderson and reached majority approval, members asked for this update to be provided to WIHF and request they provide a detailed business plan on their new proposal and members would take another look at their request.

Cllr Gadd resumed as Chair

10.23 Suggestion from a parishioner to have a Kings Coronation bench (and if council are minded to do this, then to approve a location too).

*Members suggested that this was added to the next agenda for the new council to consider. **Action:** Clerk.*

10.24 Health & Safety issues – responsibilities and lack of training/experience – The Clerk.

The Clerk advised members that she has had no formal Health and Safety (H & S) training or experience and she wished for this to be noted by the parish council. It was frequent that when appointing contractors, that their risk and method statements were requested, but she did not have the experience of qualifications to decide whether what was provided by the contractor was adequate or not.

She often relied on Cllr Anderson who has experience and qualifications to spend much time looking over reports/documentation.

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Anderson explained that if we do not have an in-house H & S expert, then we should appoint someone externally.

*Members unanimously agreed that this was needed to be addressed and we should look to appoint a contractor with the relevant experience for this section of the parish council work. **Action:** Personnel Team (Cllr C Moore, Cllr Gadd and Cllr Smith) to discuss this requirement. **Action:** Clerk to ask ESALC what are our H & S responsibilities.*

10.25 Staff matters – Cllr C Moore

Dealt with in P & C session

11. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Cllr Smith advised that members had a meeting yesterday, as WDC came back with list of questions, so they were working on responding to their questions.

12. Items for noting

12.1 Defibrillator for centre of village - update from the Clerk

Update: *The Clerk advised members that due to an electrical issue at the Commemoration Hall and then the toilets refurbishment work, it had delayed the installation of the outside, wall mounted defibrillator and case. Rather than have the defibrillator totally unavailable, she had arranged with WIHF for the defibrillator in its 'carry bag' to be available inside of The Institute (open Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Facebook and website updated with its current location and availability times.*

Members considered the training request and said for it to wait until the defibrillator has been installed, and then arrange.

12.2 Electric Charging points being installed at The Greyhound Car Park, mid-April.

Noted

13. Correspondence list.

Noted – *no queries raised.*

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

Cllr Gadd advised that Roger Bishop would be starting on the telephone kiosk refurbishment, in Durgates, within the next 3 weeks.

Meeting closed at 2127 hours.