

## WARTLING PARISH COUNCIL

### DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF

10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

This meeting was held at the Reid Hall in Boreham Street.

55 Present

Councillors K Stevens (Chairman), C Paterson, E Ashley and W Reid.

County Councillor B Bowdler, District Councillor Ray Cade, District Councillor P Doodles, A Stevens (Clerk) and eighteen members of the public were also in attendance.

56 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

57 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022, were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

58 Clerk's Report on Matters' Arising

Councillor Stevens had been due to attend the September Parish Planning Cluster Meeting but it was postponed because the District Council is still waiting to receive the housing numbers from Central Government.

59 Disclosures of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest on any items on this agenda.

The meeting was then suspended.

60 Reports from the County Councillor on matters from the County Council affecting this Parish.

County Councillor Bowdler read from his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. The County Council desperately needs more foster carers.

61 Report from the District Councillors on matters from the District Council affecting this Parish.

District Councillors Doodles and Cade circulated a copy of their report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

District Councillor Doodles also encouraged;

- i. Residents to read the press statements on the Wealden District Council website.
- ii. Residents to report all fly tipping but especially whilst it is in progress. A local teenager reportedly did just that and as a result the employee who was responsible lost their job.

62 Questions from Members of the Public

Residents asked;

- i. If there was any news about The Lamb. This was covered under 'Planning'.
- ii. For Wi-Fi to be included on the next agenda because some parts of the village still don't have fibre optics. Councillor Stevens said he will find out what the latest position is in the meantime.

The meeting was then re-opened.

## 63 Reports

### a) Planning

The owner of The Lamb is appealing against the Enforcement Notice which was served to stop him using the pub for AirBnB. The Appeal is still with the Planning Inspector.

### b) Environment North

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

### c) Footpaths

Some footpaths in the Parish need attention so Councillor Ashley agreed to send a list of the repairs needed to the Clerk so she can refer them to Rights of Way for action.

### d) Environment South

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

### e) Highways

The camper van on the Wartling Road near the entrance to Herstmoneux Castle is being dealt with by the relevant authorities. The camper van which has already been there for two months is understood to be parked on private land.

### f) Police

There was nothing new to report.

### g) Communication

Reports are still being sent out via the village email distribution list. Anyone who is not on it and would like to be is asked to contact the Parish Clerk.

### h) Speedwatch

Speedwatch continues to operate in the Parish. Six sessions took place in July and October which resulted in 19 letters being sent to offenders. Sussex Police also carried out two sessions in August and recorded another four offences.

The Parish is also on the waiting list for the new speed camera which Sussex Police plan to trial.

### i) Trees

There was nothing new to report.

## 64 Reports from outside meetings and courses attended

There were no reports from any outside meetings or courses on this occasion.

## 65 Finance Report

Councillors resolved;

- To approve the payments list to the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The payments were as follows;

		<u>£</u>
100998	A Stevens - Salary - September	384.87
100999	A Stevens - Salary - October	384.87
101000	WDALC	15.00
101001	ESCC - Pensions	225.16

- To approve the accounts to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- To continue with the existing verge cutting arrangements for 2023 (Option 2).
- The precept for 2023-2024 will be £8250. This equates to an approximate 29p a month increase per Council Band D Tax Payer and helps the Parish Council precept keep pace with inflation.
- To switch to internet banking.

## 66 Feasibility Study

Councillor Stevens and the Clerk met a Highways Traffic and Safety Officer recently to consider ways to help improve traffic safety in the parts of the Parish not included in the Feasibility Study.

The Officer;

- Confirmed the County Council has looked again at the safety of the junction of Boreham Street and Wartling Road and has fitted a new sign there to warn drivers.
- Agreed to assess Tilley Lane and get back to the Parish Council when he has done so.
- Recommended the Parish Council considers commissioning additional Feasibility Studies, one for Wartling Road and one for Tilley Lane after Tilley Lane has been assessed.

At the last meeting Councillor Stevens also agreed to find out why a Boreham Street sign seems to have been moved. There was some confusion about which sign residents were referring to so he said he will carry out another site visit and refer the matter back to Highways.

## 67 Co-option update

Councillors resolved to co-opt Mike Shine to Wartling Parish Council. Mr Shine will officially sign in at the next meeting.

## 68 Civility and Respect Pledge

Throughout the sector, there are growing concerns about the impact bullying, harassment and intimidation are having on Parish and Town Councils, Councillors, Clerks and Council Staff.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks and County Associations has responded to this by setting up a Civility and Respect Working Group to oversee the Civility and Respect Project. The Pledge is being introduced to address these issues and will enable Councils to demonstrate that they are committed to both standing up to poor behaviour across the sector and to driving through positive changes. More details about the project can be found on the NALC website.

After Councillor Stevens read out the details of the Pledge, Councillors resolved unanimously that Wartling Parish Council will sign it.

## 69 Questions from Parish Councillors

There were no questions from any of the Parish Councillors.

The meeting was then suspended again to allow comments from the floor.

Residents asked the Parish Council to object to the Brooks Farm planning application (WD/2022/2618/F) because;

- Access is onto an already dangerous lane.

- There is already enough provision for camping in the village. This application will mean there will be more visitors than residents.
- Vehicle movements will increase substantially and the lane is unsuitable.
- Visitors will have to walk on country lanes which have no pavements and drivers will be unable to comply with the rules of the Highway Code because the roads are too narrow for them to give the 1m clearance needed.
- There will be limited on-site supervision and it is unrealistic to think the noise and comings and goings can be controlled.
- More work is needed on the ecological impact. The camp site will be on land which is between two woods and so it will disrupt the countryside and obstruct the animals going between the two.
- The car park is not large enough for the number of vehicles.
- It was questioned if three toilets are sufficient for a maximum of 75 (15 x 5) people.

In answer to residents' concerns Mr Clay, the applicant, confirmed;

- He has planning permission to build a house there and will supervise the site personally. When he is unable to do so he will employ a warden to keep an eye on things.
- The location of the camp site has been chosen so it is away from the road and can't be seen from a public footpath.
- He moved in three years' ago and is not responsible for the planning history before that.
- Lighting will be restricted to the toilets and shower block.
- The camping season will be from April to September/October.
- The number of toilets and showers is governed by legislation and the application provides more than it is required to. The toilets will also be composting toilets.
- Commercial vehicle movements can be organised to help minimise disruption.

The meeting was then re-opened.

## 70 Planning Applications

WD/2022/2618/F - Brooks Farm, Boreham Lane, Wartling, BN27 1RS - Proposed change of use of the land for a 15 tent pitch campsite and the stationing of toilet and shower facilities together with associated car parking – Wartling Parish Council objects to this application because;

- i. Access is onto an already dangerous lane.
- ii. Vehicle numbers will increase substantially onto a lane which is unsuitable.
- iii. Visitors will walk on country lanes which have no pavements and drivers will be unable to comply with the rules of the Highway Code because the roads are too narrow for them to give the 1m clearance needed.
- iv. More work is needed on the ecological impact of this application because the camp site will be on land which is between two woods and so it will disrupt the countryside and obstruct the animals, particularly deer, moving between the two.
- v. The car park is not large enough for the number of vehicles.

There was no further business so the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

## **(Wealden East:- Heathfield, Horam, Hooe, Herstmonceux, Ninfield, Warbleton & Wartling parishes)**

### **Children's Services**

#### New Film Released to Encourage People to Become Foster Carers

A new film seeks to reach people who may be interested in working alongside their local authority to provide nurturing and positive homes for children and young people. Entitled 'Childhood', the film follows 'Sophie' and 'Charlie' from a difficult home situation to being supported through foster care to attend school and enjoy their hobbies and interests.

The project was coordinated by The Council Advertising Network and produced by Reel Twenty-Five. It has been jointly funded through a national collaboration between 56 local authorities across England.

View the film 'Childhood' and find out more information about fostering with East Sussex County Council [here](#). (or via the ESCC Fostering website).

#### Career Path Scheme Provides Insight and Experience to Young People

More than 20 businesses have signed up to East Sussex County Council's annual 'Open Doors' scheme. The scheme is aimed at giving young people real-life experience of the workplace as well as the opportunity to learn about possible career paths. Students will tour buildings such as courts, museums and galleries, meet employees and learn about employability skills and available career opportunities.

Supported by the East Sussex Careers Hub, the scheme will run from November 2022 until June 2023, ensuring that as many Year 7 to Year 13 students as possible can benefit. Several industries will be represented in this year's scheme, including accountancy, manufacturing, engineering and consultancy.

Businesses interested in getting involved with Open Doors and welcoming students can contact [OpenDoors@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:OpenDoors@eastsussex.gov.uk)

More information about this story can be found [here](#).

### **Communities, Economy and Transport**

#### East Sussex County Council Takes Action to Save Vital Bus Service

East Sussex County Council has agreed to subsidise several bus services that were under threat due to falling passenger numbers and rising costs. With bus use struggling to recover to pre-Covid levels alongside significant increases in operating costs, some operators are having to make changes to services – most of which involve reduced service frequencies.

From the end of October, East Sussex County Council will subsidise seven services operating across Eastbourne, Hastings and parts of Rother. The funding will initially be in place until March 2023.

Following the outcome of competitive bids, Stagecoach will continue to run the services which would have been withdrawn with funding from East Sussex County Council. This follows a range of discounts for passengers as a result of County Council funding, including a new £5 East Sussex single operator day ticket, family and group travel tickets, and an off-peak unaccompanied young person £1 flat single fare ticket.

More information about this story can be found [here](#).

#### East Sussex County Council Approves Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy

On 11 October, the Lead Member for Resources and Climate change resolved to review and approve the County Council's adoption of the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy.

Aligning with East Sussex's Environment Strategy and the Climate Emergency Plan, the policy will prepare prospective suppliers for the environmental consideration changes and expectations that will be implemented into the Council's future contracts. Its implementation is expected to increase environmental considerations across the Council's procurement activity, presenting a significant opportunity to influence a reduction in carbon emissions across the Council's services.

#### New Highways Contractor for East Sussex Announced

Balfour Beatty Living Places Ltd has been awarded the County Council's new contract for highways and infrastructure services. The contract is valued at £297 million and will run for an initial seven years from May 1, 2023. There will be an option to extend this period to a maximum of 14 years, worth up to £730 million.

Balfour Beatty Living Places will be responsible for maintaining the county's highway network and infrastructure, as well as providing winter gritting and delivering highway improvement schemes. During the extensive procurement process, bidders were asked to demonstrate how they would support the County Council's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, ensure quality of work, provide value for money and improve social wellbeing.

More information about this story can be found [here](#).

#### South East Business Initiative Programme Boosts Jobs and Profits

Since launching in July 2020, The South East Business Boost "Big Ambitions" programme has helped 85 businesses within East Sussex. The project has helped businesses in a variety of sectors, including beauty and food and drink.

From those enrolled in the programme, 55 businesses reported an increase in total turnover of £5.5 million, as well as the creation of 48 new jobs. The programme is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and East Sussex County Council. It is delivered by Digital Islands and provides advice from subject experts.

More information about this story can be found [here](#).

#### Eastbourne Library Event Supports Men's Mental Health

On November 9, the free event 'Let's Talk...Men's Mental Health' will be held at Eastbourne library. The free event will allow an opportunity for men and women to have an open conversation about men's mental health, as well as providing further information and support links.

The event will be supported by the Eastbourne-based organisation ManKind, alongside the Samaritans and The Old Bank Wellbeing Trust, who provide counselling amongst other support services. The evening will be hosted by Paul Roskilly, who established ManKind in 2020 alongside Ian Pickard.

The East Sussex library service maintains a collection of online tools and resources to support men's mental health year-round, including book recommendations, event information, and links to podcasts and forms offering help and advice.

Book a free place at the event [here](#). Urgent mental health help and advice can be found on the [NHS website](#). More information on ManKind, including advice on how to join their meetings, can be found [on their website](#).

More information about this story can be found [here](#).

#### Celebration of Apprentices Graduation Ceremony

An East Sussex graduation ceremony on 19 October celebrated the commitment and hard work of those who completed an apprenticeship between 1 September 2019, and 1 October, 2022. Four special awards were presented to celebrate the achievements of all those involved in the completion of the apprenticeships.

The first of its kind since the pandemic, the ceremony marked the importance of apprenticeships within the local economy and celebrates the contribution of local businesses and educators.

The event was organised by Sussex Council of Training Providers and was supported by East Sussex County Council and East Sussex College Group. Other sponsors included NCFE, the South East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network and OHM Energy.

Businesses can find out more information about apprenticeships [here](#).

More information about this story can be found [here](#).

For your information: **Meetings I attended in October as your County Councillor:**

ESCC Highways (private)  
Wealden Works Youth Charity in Heathfield  
ESCC/Wealden DC Councillor Working Group in Heathfield  
ESCC Council Group  
ESCC Full Council  
ESCC LM for Resources & Climate Change  
Horam Parish Council - DNA  
ESCC Homes for Ukraine  
ESCC Children in Care Awards at Bedes School  
Herstmonceux Parish Council  
ESCC Cabinet  
ESCC Flood Risk Management Training  
ESCC Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Board  
Ninfield Parish Council  
Armed Forces Covenant Training  
ESCC - ESSCP Board Briefing  
ESCC – Fostering Service CiCC in Eastbourne  
Hooe Parish Council DNA  
East & West Sussex Lord Lieutenants Awards in Horsham  
ESCC Corporate Parenting Panel  
ESCC - 4 x Weekly DCS Briefings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. B. H.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wealden East Division  
8/11/22

## **Housing**

### **South East Regional Asylum Dispersal Plan**

This Government initiative is not unexpected.

As most of us recognise, due to the significant and sustained increase in asylum seekers over the last year, a limited number of Local Authorities are taking the brunt of the responsibilities for housing and supporting asylum seekers waiting for their applications to be dealt with.

There are 25,000 asylum seekers currently living in temporary accommodation such as hotels.

It is only fair this responsibility is shared across all Local Authorities nationally as it is essential these families are treated with dignity and consideration.

There is a difference between asylum seekers and the Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees who are legally in the UK under various Government schemes. Wealden has a strong track record of being involved in these initiatives, especially the recent Ukraine Emergency.

As part of the Asylum dispersal plan, Wealden has been allocated 115 individuals, most belonging to family groups. The Government organisation "Clearsprings" is responsible for finding accommodation and supporting the asylum seekers. So, at the moment, Wealden Housing team's only involvement is confirming the suitability of any properties they choose in our area.

However, this dispersal scheme is not without its downsides for Wealden Council. This is because "Clearsprings" represents a competitor in an already challenging private rental market and this could make it even more difficult for Wealden Housing to secure private rented properties for our own needs.

Clearly, this is a developing and uncertain situation.

Government has initiated a consultation with Local Authorities on the introduction of legislation to make the Private Rented Sector (PRS) subject to the rules and requirements of the "Decent Homes" standards. Council housing providers have been required to abide by these standards since 2004 and it resulted in programmes involving bringing housing stocks up to the standard, often taking many years to meet the deadline of 2010, and at considerable cost. These years saw many Councils transferring their stock to ALMOs (Arms Length Management Companies) in order to be able to borrow money to fund the work or carried out Large Scale Stock Transfers (LSST) to Housing Associations, for the same reason.

If this current consultation leads to those standards applying to the PRS, there will need to be enforcement and this may well become the responsibility of Local Authorities and will add to the many issues in which Wealden Council is involved in policing the PRS.

## **Waste Management**

At a recent Joint Waste Contract meeting, we had a report by Biffa on the past quarter (June-August) of operations. Obviously much of this covered the end of the strike period and the recovery of the service after June.

It has been a challenging period, but a positive outcome is pay parity across the partnership has been established.

The average "missed bin" in Wealden has been 51 per 100,000 collections, but the Biffa senior manager felt more needs to be done to bring this down even further as the average across the partnership is 36. Obviously much depends on the type of areas in question with Wealden being the most rural.

The "Streets Scene" clearing is independently monitored and generally successful with 52.58 km of "high speed" cleansed during the quarter. Similarly the speed and effectiveness of fly-tip removals is encouraging along with a recent high profile prosecution for dumping asbestos, reported in the local media.

An ongoing concern is the instances of "DROPS" (Driving Recklessly On Pavements). These are captured on the cameras attached to the bin lorries and some of the recordings are very dangerous and shocking. It is incredible drivers decide to under or overtake the bin lorries whilst they are collecting bins by driving along the pavements and surprising there hasn't been any fatalities either of the operatives or pedestrians coming out of their homes. Incidents are reported to operation "Crackdown" and we are keen to ensure prosecution in order to drive the message home.

## **Crematorium Open Day**

The Open Day was well attended and much appreciated by those members of the public we were able to meet. The reasons for visits varied from returning to the place of a spouse's cremation which had taken place under difficulties during the pandemic, choosing a place for their own cremation and just general

interest. Without fail all commented favourably about the staff, buildings and grounds. A jewel in Wealden's Crown!

### **Summons issued for running a cattery without a licence in Heathfield**

Despite numerous warnings, given over the period since March of this year, it has been necessary to issue a summons to the Magistrate Court on a couple running a cattery from private premises without a licence. Whilst the licensing regime exists to protect the welfare of cats the action of the council has pleased the neighbours hugely.

### **Emergency Planning**

Planning for winter is stepping up, noting the risks from usual seasonal weather and increased risks associated with the current energy issues. The next two weeks will also see a cyber security exercise undertaken by Wealden Staff to test our readiness to respond to an attack.

Work is progressing on the proposed Parish Template, which should be ready shortly.

Wealden responded quickly and efficiently to the flooding caused by heavy rainfall which resulted in the River Uck bursting its banks

### **Safer Wealden Partnership**

You may have come across Dr Jeremy Leach either through his work in Environmental Health, the Safer Wealden Partnership or at Parish Conferences where, amongst other presentation he explained the 'Nudge Theory'. Jeremy retired at the end of October after 44 years working for the Authority. It has not gone unnoticed that Jeremy has worked at Wealden longer than about the half of the staff have been alive!

### **Press Releases on the Council's Website**

The following may be of interest:

#### **Council pledges £250K to help tackle cost of living pressures**

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/news/council-pledges-250k-to-help-tackle-cost-of-living-pressures/>

Councillors at Wealden District Council have agreed to earmark a £250,000 fund to help ease the current cost of living pressures for local residents and services.

#### **Significant increase in compliments for council**

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/news/significant-increase-in-compliments-for-council/>

Latest data shows a 547% increase in compliments from residents of Wealden for customer service delivery - and no complaints were upheld by the local government watchdog.

#### **Wealden resident fined for asbestos fly tip** <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/news/wealden-resident-fined-for-asbestos-waste/>

A Hailsham woman has been fined for her part in the fly tipping of asbestos on the Pevensey Marshes.

#### **New planning powers to deliver foul sewerage updates**

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/news/southern-water-partnership/>

A new way of working is evolving to combat sewerage and drainage issues in new developments planned across the Wealden district

### **Updates**

As usual we will give any up to minute updates at the meeting

### **Councillors Ray Cade and Pam Doodes November 2022**

