



Westmeston Parish Council

To: All Councillors

Notice is hereby given that you are summoned to attend the Meeting of Westmeston Parish Council, to be held on Wednesday 27th August 2020 at 7:30 pm by remote attendance via Zoom video conferencing when the following business will be transacted.

Nick Wiltshire
Clerk to the Council
19th August 2020

To join this Zoom Meeting please go to:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlf-yurT8oGtR_NOvlpLaoR04FoGgOCAbr

Meeting ID: 878 8563 4200

Passcode: 512648

Please ensure with any personal IT used, that your anti-virus software & computer has been updated fully as no liability will be accepted by the Council for any malicious acts/viruses etc. when using this third-party system. Telephone charges are dependent on your telephone contract (i.e. if you have inclusive minutes within your contract). Please note that Westmeston Parish Council accepts no responsibility or liability for any charges incurred by any attendee joining this call.

The meeting will be recorded for administrative purposes, & the recording will be deleted once the Minutes have been approved.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC & THE PRESS HAVE A RIGHT & ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND. Please note that any planning applications to be discussed must be viewed online at Lewes District Council's website as paper copies are no longer made available to this Parish Council.

MOBILE PHONES: Attendees are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting unless they are to be used for communicating through Zoom. Members are asked to note the Online Meeting Arrangements document for 'remote meetings' which is in place for the duration of this meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

*Members are reminded to make any declaration of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda. Members should declare their interest by stating: (a) the item they have the interest in (b) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest, whereupon they will be taking no part in the discussions on that matter, or (c) (i) whether it is a personal interest & the nature of the interest (ii) whether it is also a prejudicial interest (iii) If it is a prejudicial interest, whether they will be exercising their right to speak under **Public Forum & Questions**. They then need to re-declare their interest & the nature of the interest at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.*

3. Public Forum & Questions

Subject to Standing Order 3.d, members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. Subject to Standing Order 3.f, a member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes. A question asked by a member of the public shall not require a response or a debate. However, the chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given. A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak then stand when speaking, subject to Standing Order 3.i. Any person speaking at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting. Only one person may speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking. Business will commence once the last person has finished speaking.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th March 2020 (previously circulated) to be approved & then signed by the Chairman.

5. Chairman's Report & Urgent Items

6. Covid-19 - The provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 allow local authorities to put in place different meeting arrangements for the period from 4 April 2020 to 7 May 2021, including holding 'virtual meetings'.

(a) **Virtual Meeting Policy** – As the Council is meeting virtually it is appropriate that members consider the adoption of the draft Policy.

Recommendation – That a resolution to adopt this draft policy be adopted by Members.

(b) **Annual Meeting of Council** -In the light of COVID-19, changes in legislation were made to allow the business usually conducted at the Annual Meeting of Council (election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Committee membership, etc) to be postponed either to the next usual Annual Meeting in May 2021 or at any time during the 2020/21 Council Year once Council were able to reconvene.

Recommendation – That Members resolve whether to postpone elections of office until the Annual Meeting of Parish Council in May 2021 or hold the Annual Meeting before this.

- (c) **Dispensation for Members' non-attendance resulting from the cancellation of meetings due to Covid-19.**

Recommendation – That a resolution, to grant dispensation to all Members for non-attendance at Council meetings since March when the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced, so that no Member, through no fault of their own, falls foul of the six month rule regarding non-attendance, be adopted by Council.

7. The Annual Return for 2019/20:

- (a) To review the effectiveness of the system for internal control & approve the Governance Statement as set out in the Annual Return; &
(b) To consider the Accounting Statements.

8. To Approve the Accounting Statements by Resolution.

9. To Authorise the Chairman to sign & date the Annual Return for 2019/20.

10. To satisfy itself that the Council is exempt from a limited assurance review by the external auditor & declare that this is the case.

At the conclusion of the financial year, if the Parish Council is able to satisfy the various qualifying criteria set out on the Certificate of Exemption, & the higher of its annual gross income & gross expenditure was £25,000 or less, it will be able, if it wishes to pass a resolution at a full meeting of the Parish Council & complete & sign a Certificate of Exemption which will need to be sent to its appointed auditor (PFK Littlejohn LLP).

Recommendation – That a resolution to exempt the Council from a Limited Assurance Review by the External Auditor 2019/20 (Financial Year ended 31/03/2020) be adopted by Members.

11. Governance:

i. Review of Policies:

- a. Bring Your Own Device Policy** – following advice from the Internal Auditor this policy has been drafted for the protection of the Council & its Members;
b. Financial Regulations – following the Internal Audit, a set of Financial Regulations has been drafted in line with NALC's latest template;
c. Standing Orders – following the Internal Audit, these have been reviewed & updated, in line with NALC's latest template;
d. Document Retention Scheme – existing Standing Orders require such a Scheme;

Recommendation – That a resolution to adopt these draft policies be adopted by Members.

- ii. Code of Conduct for Members** – The Council currently does not have a Code of Conduct, however, a council must have a code of conduct which confirms the obligations of councillors when they are representing the council (Localism Act 2011, s.27(2)).

Recommendation – That a resolution to adopt this draft Code be adopted by Members.

iii. **NALC Code of Conduct Consultation (previously distributed).**

Recommendation – That following the extension of the closing date of the consultation that Members submit their comments to the Clerk by 7th September for submission as the Council's collective response.

12. Financial Matters:

Selection of insurance policy: 3 insurance companies were invited to tender & quotes for similar cover were obtained, as follows:

The Council's existing insurers, Zurich Insurance - £ 347.18; BHIB Councils Insurance - £357.10 (fixed for 3 years). Business Services at CAS Ltd. (RSA Insurance) - £248.71 (fixed for 3 years); Having purchased the Business Services at CAS Ltd. (RSA Insurance) policy it transpired that a Proposal Form was required & in the course of completing this it appeared that the Council was over-insured. As a result we have been given a refund of £40.17 & the premium will now be £198.96 rather than £248.71 for each of the next 2 years.

Recommendation – That the information be noted.

- (a) Year End Bank Reconciliation for 2019/20 (copy attached) to be approved.
- (b) Quarterly Bank Reconciliation (April-June 2020) to be received.
- (c) Statement of Receipts & Payments for 2019/20 (copy attached) to be approved.
- (d) Annual Risk Assessment (copy attached) - To receive a report from Cllrs Cathy Mills (Vice-Chairman) & Tessa Haughton following inspection of Council property for approval.
- (e) Asset Register (copy attached) to be received for approval.
- (f) The following invoices to be approved for payment:

Church Corner Maintenance: reimbursement to Cllr Cathy Mills for March & April: £70.00.

Business Services at CAS Ltd. – Annual Insurance cover: £248.71.

Mulberry & Co. – Internal Audit fee: £252.00.

Church Corner Maintenance: reimbursement to Cllr Cathy Mills for May: £35.00

ESALC Limited. – ESALC & NALC annual subscriptions for 2020/21: £104.59.

4 x Litter-Picking Traffic Signs: reimbursement to Cllr Cathy Mills: £345.60.

4 x Traffic Cones for Litter-Picking: reimbursement to Cllr Rob Mills: £19.96.

Church Corner Maintenance: reimbursement to Cllr Cathy Mills for July: £35.00.

20 x Large Product Labels: reimbursement to Cllr Cathy Mills: £22.85.

Church Corner Maintenance: reimbursement to Cllr Cathy Mills for August: £35.00.

Clerk's Office Expenses (01/04/2020 to 31/08/2020) Contribution towards use of office in Clerk's home, including computer facilities, insurance, telephone, gas & electricity plus

Zoom Standard Pro Subscription (18/08/20 to 17/09/20): reimbursement to Clerk: £144.39.

ICO Annual Fee: £35.00 Payment to be made by Direct Debit.

- (g) Re-Appointment of Internal Auditors Mulberry & Co. for 2020/21.

13. Planning:

(a) Planning Applications for consideration:

- i. **Cripps Cottage, Lewes Road, Westmeston. BN6 8RH ([SDNP/20/03278](#))** - Single storey home office in rear garden.
- ii. **Gallops Farm, Streat Lane, Westmeston, East Sussex. BN6 8SB ([LW/20/0407](#))** - Conversion of barn to single dwelling, demolition of modern brick barn with replacement extension & new garage.

(b) Planning Applications for noting comments made:

- i. **Land Adjacent To Middleton Common Farm, Middleton Common Lane, Streat. BN6 8SF – ([LW/20/0140](#))** - Change of use of agricultural land to dog day care facility (sui generis) with construction of site access, reception building & field shelter & provision of car parking. *Awaiting decision.*

Members to note the comment that was submitted regarding this Planning Application:

“Two of the issues of most concern to residents are traffic/ access safety & noise. Competence for the former lies with the Highway Authority & the latter with Environmental Health (EH).

Westmeston Parish Council has no comments to make on the development itself but does observe that the Noise Impact Assessment carried out for the applicant is based on a key assumption:

It is thought that it is extremely unlikely for more than one dog to bark at precisely the same time on site.

Making this assumption about dog behaviour - however good the dog management & enrichment - is tantamount to assuming there can never be a noise nuisance from this site. EH should look at this afresh.”

- ii. **Grimwade Farm, Spatham Lane, Westmeston, East Sussex. BN6 8XL ([LW/20/0259](#))** - (Demolition of three derelict barns & replacement with family dwelling (Resubmission following [LW/19/0152](#)). *Awaiting decision.*

Members to note the comment that was submitted regarding this Planning Application:

Westmeston Parish Council wishes to object to this application. The proposed house is not within the settlement boundary & it could only constitute an exception in terms of the Neighbourhood Development Plan if it complied with the relevant policies of the NDP & DS1 of the NDP. It is not, however, a small affordable house. Concerns have been raised by the SDNPA in relation to the location of the proposed new dwelling, its size, appropriateness & the Dark Sky Reserve (despite design changes to the previous proposal

to ameliorate light pollution). The Council supports SDNPA's concerns. With regard to the general 'superior design' argument, this is irrelevant no matter how good the design when the application fails to meet other basic criteria as indicated. Ceding weight to this argument risks granting precedence to other applications seeking to advance the 'superior design' argument (notably [SDNP/19/05295/FUL](#)).

(c) **To consider any applications received after despatch of this agenda.**

(d) **To note any Decision Notices received.**

- i. **Land at Keymer Road, Ditchling, East Sussex. ([SDNP/20/05154/FUL](#))** - To retain the use of the land on a permanent basis for one rugby pitch for Ditchling Rugby Club, with associated use of the Cricket Club Car Park & Clubhouse, following temporary permission granted under reference SDNP/16/05154/FUL. To note that in the absence of any material planning considerations WPC's Planning Lead made no comment.

To note **Grant of Planning Permission.**

- ii. **Underhill, Underhill Lane, Westmeston. BN6 8XG ([SDNP/20/01997/HOUS](#))** - Retention of temporary construction access on a permanent basis, & amendment to application no ([SDNP/19/01577/HOUS](#)) for change of materials to roof. To note Members' response of there being no material planning considerations, hence No Comment.

To note **Grant of Planning Permission.**

- iii. **Land On The East Side of Lewes Road, Lewes Road, Westmeston. ([SDNP/19/04853/FUL](#))** - Change of use of land to permit the keeping of horses & erection of stable block with improved access to the Lewes Road.

To note **Refusal of Planning Permission.**

- iv. **Ivinghoe Spatham Lane Westmeston BN6 8XH ([SDNP/19/05453/FUL](#))** - Replacement building incorporating holiday cottage, car port, stables and storage. *This application is liable for Community Infrastructure Levy and will be subject to the rates set out in the Charging Schedule (<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy/>).*

To note **Grant of Planning Permission.**

- v. **1 Church Cottages, The Street, Westmeston. BN6 8RJ ([SDNP/20/01209/HOUS](#))** - New front porch & revised fenestration to left elevation. To note Members' response of Objection based on the use of uPVC windows on a building in a Conservation Area where the vernacular material is wood for window frames.

To note **Grant of Planning Permission.**

- vi. **Land at Keymer Road, Ditchling, East Sussex. ([SDNP/20/05154/FUL](#))** - To retain the use of the land on a permanent basis for one rugby pitch for Ditchling Rugby Club, with associated use of the Cricket Club Car Park & Clubhouse, following temporary permission granted under reference SDNP/16/05154/FUL. To note that in the absence of any material planning considerations WPC's Planning Lead made no comment.

To note **Grant of Planning Permission**.

(e) **Any other matters for information only.**

- 14. **Clerk's Report (*report attached*).**
- 15. **Church Corner:** Vice-Chairman to report.
- 16. **Items for information only & referral to next agenda.**
- 17. **Date of next meeting: TBA.**