

WESTMESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on
Tuesday 10th September 2019 at 7:30 pm at the Parish Hall

Present

Councillors: Rob Mills (Chairman), Cathy Mills (Vice-Chairman), Mark Clark, Clare Farrands & Tessa Haughton

Officer: Nick Wiltshire, Clerk to the Council

Public: One

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Paul Farrands of Ditchling Parish Council. Being a resident of Spatham Lane he spoke about the campaign to have the speed limit reduced there. The Chairman responded by saying that the comments he had made would be borne in mind when the matter came up for consideration under the appropriate agenda item.

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Apologies had been received, and with the reasons outlined, were accepted from Cllrs Vincent Tickner & Kendal Golding.
- 2. To approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 9th July 2019 (previously circulated)**

Resolved – That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 9th July 2019 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

- 3. Declarations of Interest:** None.
- 4. To confirm the Appointment of Clerk to the Council**

Resolved – That the Appointment of Mr Nicholas Wiltshire as Clerk to the Council be confirmed.

5. Financial Matters:

- Payment of the following invoices was approved:
Church Corner Maintenance: reimbursement to Cllr Mrs Cathy Mills for August & September: £70.00. Cheque no. 000144
Hire of Westmeston Parish Hall for an Extraordinary Council Meeting held on Monday, 3rd June: Parish Hall Trust: £20.00 Cheque no. 000145.
- Following approval by the Council to make payment of the following grants to voluntary organisations:
Springett & Campion Educational Trust: £200.00. Cheque no. 000146.
St. Martin's Church, Westmeston: £350.00. Cheque no. 000143.

--

6. Beacon Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Implementation: Cllr Mark Clark reported he had emailed the Clerk of DPC asking about the terms of reference of the Planning Committee.

7. Beacon Parishes Traffic Group:

To consider draft application for Section 106 funding in respect of consultancy fees.

Background information was circulated to Members prior to the meeting and forms an attachment to these minutes. Some discussion ensued, culminating in a proposal being made by The Chairman and seconded by Cllr Clare Farrands. This was voted on and carried unanimously.

Resolved – That in the absence of a plan, scheme or other clearly defined course of action in respect of traffic matters, Westmeston Parish Council is unable to support the Beacon Traffic Group’s proposal of employing a traffic consultant.

8. Spatham Lane Speed Limit: The Chairman reported that the total cost estimated by Highways of £35K, could be reduced by 50% through match-funding, leaving the balance of £17.5K to be provided by the parishes of Westmeston and Ditching. Some residents in Spatham Lane are prepared to contribute. Funding could be obtained from other funding streams, such as the Rampion Community Benefit Fund, Gatwick Airport Community Trust or approaching the Police and Crime Commissioner for contributions.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

9. Planning: Westmeston Place, Lewes Road, Westmeston BN6 8RH ([SDNP/19/01316/LIS](#))

- Repair existing lean-to greenhouse. Brick walls & flint walls are to remain in place with the wooden frame to be replaced. Replacement of existing wooden windows at front of building with like for like design granted. Approved.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

10. Church Corner: Cllr Cathy Mills reported that the monthly cutting of grass and tidy continues. The Monday Group have reinstated the Finger Post to Ditchling. Some residents have expressed concerns for their safety when using the public footpath along “The Bank”. Following discussions with Highways, the suggestion from the public to install barriers was considered unsuitable for the location. It was agreed that the deteriorating bollards/edge-markers will be replaced and added to at the northern end of the exposed path.

Resolved – That this Council will continue to monitor the conditions of the Conservation Area.

11. ICO registration: Cllr Cathy Mills explained that registration was required as a list of email addresses is held by the Council. A Data Control Officer needed to be appointed. As

--

she held the list, Cllr Cathy Mills suggested herself and was proposed by Cllr Clare Farrands and seconded by Cllr Tessa Haughton. Consequently, there is a requirement to pay an annual fee of £40.00.

Resolved – That it be noted that Cllr Cathy Mills is Data Control Officer for Westmeston Parish Council and that the payment of the annual fee to the ISO be authorised.

Following approval by the Council to make this payment of £40.00: Cheque no. 000147.

12. Items for information only and referral to next agenda.

- (a) An article about the speed limit campaign in Spatham Lane appeared in a recent issue of The Brighton Argus.
- (b) ASB has occurred in the Industrial Park and The Potteries needs to be monitored.
- (c) The monthly litter pick held on Monday 2nd September was again well-supported.
- (d) The SDNP has agreed to install a boundary “Gateway” in Spatham Lane; the completion of formalities is awaited.

13. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 12th November at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8:23 pm.

Item 9. Beacon Parishes Traffic Group. To consider draft application for Section 106 funding in respect of consultancy fees.

The following is intended, in advance of the meeting, to set out the background and reasons for putting this before Council.

The Group was formed in autumn 2017, to deal with road safety issues following an incident of dangerous driving resulting in serious injury to a local resident and death of a horse on Spatham Lane.

Membership is composed of Councillors from Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat. From time to time other interested parties are invited to participate. The task of the group became linked with the aspirational issues published in Neighbourhood Plan. The main aim being road safety and traffic problems in the area.

As previously reported, the priority was improving quality of life on Spatham Lane, to counteract extreme traffic and driver behaviour perceived as criminal. To this end WPC campaigned and organised speed and traffic volume surveys, public consultations and much more. This led to commissioning a Feasibility Study resulting in recommendations to lower the national speed limit to 40 mph. Once in place, the new limit would allow changes to be made, designed to influence driver behaviour. It has to be said that WPC has been the sole driver of the campaign, with no input from DPC which is equally the benefactor on behalf of their residents. It was unreasonable to involve Streat in this scheme.

The principal hurdle remains the funding of the project. The aim is clear and results we believe to be justified. The overall cost is circa. £35000. If our application for 50%

--

(£17500) funding from ESCC is granted, each parish will need to find £8750, for a scheme that is tangible and supported.

During this time there has been much discussion within the group about an overall traffic plan for the Beacon Parishes. This is not a new concept, having been the subject of a number of extensive and expensive enquiries over the years. They all resulted in negative action without any viable project being put forward. There is clearly a Parish attitude resistant to any suggestions from the Group (i.e. From Westmeston members). The most obvious example is the deliberate obstruction of Ditchling South Street with parked vehicles. This leads to total gridlock, affecting users, including local people, both in terms of the inconvenience and the so far unmeasured effect of vehicle emissions. Other effects are the gross flouting of the traffic order on Underhill Lane and the rat run of Spatham Lane, by drivers trying to avoid the chaos. There have been opportunities to change the situation about the parking, but it appears that an influential minority prevails. The latest excuse is that the new car park will solve the problem. A recent effect was one of the parked cars being struck by a passing vehicle and pushed through a substantial flint and brick wall! Ambulance called.

Action so far is the intended application for S106 funding. This is to finance the appointment of a "traffic" consultant.

You can see from the draft that no brief in respect of any scheme, plan, change, improvement or any other recognisable project has been identified.

To throw an estimated £17628 at a "consultant" with no provable experience, (No consultant with any sense would want to work for a parish council) success or other reason to appoint him, for the purpose of advising us about nothing we have requested, is a matter that defies common sense. Common sense is the most valuable qualification and it says to me that this previously failed strategy is no place for our resident's money. It is also unknown whether ESCC Highways is prepared to accept the findings of this consultant.

In general, I cannot support this action. It is also a fact that our Parish is unable to provide the financial contribution mentioned in the draft. Our financing is due for a restructuring with a view to raising our precept for us to remain viable in future years.

Nothing prevents Ditchling councillors from going ahead with their bid because the source of funding (S106) relates to infrastructure within their parish, where the development fees were raised.

In terms of affordability, with income and precept in the region of £100000, compared with our circa £7000, they would not have a problem.

There is also the unknown factor of whether any of this money could be spent outside of the parish where it was generated.

I hope this will help when discussing this tonight.

--