

WESTMESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the council meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February 2021 at 7.30 pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors Rob Mills (Chairman), Cathy Mills (Vice-Chairman), Clare Farrands, Tessa Haughton and Vincent Tickner
Andy Beams, Locum Clerk
1 member of the public

Cllr Mark Clark attempted to connect to the meeting at 7.30pm but was unable to. The Chairman agreed to start the meeting and alter the order of business to deal with administrative and information items, with items where Cllr Clark's contribution was important deferred to later on the agenda to allow Cllr Clark to continue to try to connect to the meeting.

1 Apologies for absence: None, although subsequently Cllr Clark's apologies were noted due to being unable to connect to the meeting.

2 Declarations of interest: None.

3 Public questions: The member of the public was welcomed to the meeting. He was attending to observe and had no questions to ask.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th January 2021:

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be sent to the Chairman for signing.

5 Financial matters:

- (a) **RESOLVED:** Payment of the following invoices:
Spanglefish: Website hosting annual fee £78.00
A Beams: Locum Clerk (January) £306.25

6 Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests: Deferred pending Cllr Clark joining the meeting.

7 Staffing: Deferred pending Cllr Clark joining the meeting and to discuss in confidential session.

8 Westmeston Jubilee Oak: The Chairman reminded Members of the background to the tree planting, which was to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The tree is planted on a piece of land given to the Parish Council by a local family and the importance of future maintenance of the tree and the records relating to it was emphasised. Members were asked to forward any thoughts regarding this to the Chairman.

9 Fly tipping at Wapple Way: Cllr C Mills had prepared a supporting paper for Members and provided a verbal summary of this information. She explained the history of the disputed ownership of the land, and the fact that it was now confirmed it was owned by Plumpton College. The ESCC Rights of Way Officer is involved in discussions with the College and it is hoped a suitable solution will be reached. Members will be kept informed of any updates on the situation.

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10 Councillor Vacancy: The Chairman informed Members that Kendall Golding has resigned from the council with effect from the end of January, creating a vacancy. The Locum Clerk explained the process to follow of informing the District Council, publishing the notice of vacancy, and waiting to see if parishioners call for an election. If not, then the council will be in a position to advertise the vacancy and fill it by co-option. The Clerk will contact the District Council in the morning to commence the process.

11 Verbal updates on items for information:

Rural verges grass cutting trial: The Chairman reminded Members that currently there are two scheduled cuts per year on the main roads. This is under review, with proposals to reduce to one cut per year to save money and protect the environment. Any danger spots in relation to traffic will still be cut more frequently. The proposals are out for comment at present, and Members were requested to share any thoughts with the Chairman.

Meeting regarding sheep worrying: Cllr C Mills updated Members with details from a Zoom meeting held with the MP, a representative from the Rural Crime Team and local landowners. The MP is willing to pursue tightening legislation to support enforcement, and signage is being sent out to warn people of the problem and potential consequences.

LDALC Meeting: The minutes of the meeting had been circulated with the agenda. Cllr Tickner emphasised the meeting was looking forward to LDALC will function better, with some useful input from the WDALC Chairman, and that a new secretary is being sought to support the association. A number of member council have expressed concerns over housing quotas, and while not directly impacting Westmeston, updates on this matter will be reported in future.

At this point, the meeting was suspended to make telephone contact with Cllr Clark, who was still unable to connect via Zoom. The member of the public left the meeting at this point.

After speaking with Cllr Clark on the telephone, it was agreed to defer agenda item 6 to a future meeting. Cllr Clark confirmed he was content with the proposals for agenda item 7.

The meeting reconvened at this point.

7 Staffing:

- (a) **RESOLVED:** The draft contract was discussed and agreed, with minor changes to emphasise the need for any additional hours beyond those specified in the contract to be agreed in advance with the Chairman. Due to the infrequency of meetings, it was agreed to extend the probationary period in the contract to 26 weeks.
- (b) **RESOLVED:** The draft policies as circulated were adopted as listed below:
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Employee Expenses Policy
 - Equal opportunities Policy
 - Grievance Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Sickness Absence Policy

With regard to the recruitment process, it was noted that the published closing date on the SSALC website is Tuesday 9th February. It was agreed that initial applicants will be screened by the Locum Clerk in conjunction with a representative from Streat Parish meeting, with those deemed suitable for interview to attend for interview on Tuesday 23rd February.

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An additional meeting date of **Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 6.00pm** was agreed, with agenda items to include the item on Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests deferred from today's meeting, along with the planning application for the Cart Lodge.

DRAFT

Chairman's signature
Date