

WESTMESTON PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT WESTMESTON PARISH HALL ON 13TH MAY 2025

PRESENT : Cathy Mills – Chairman of Westmeston Parish Council
Joyce Dudeney, Clare Farrands, Paul Farrands, Tessa Haughton, Rob Mills,
Vincent Tickner

In Attendance: Paul Vidler – acting as Clerk to the Parish Meeting

1. Welcome and introduction.

The Chairman welcomed those present.

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mark Clark.

3. To confirm minutes of the previous annual meeting held on 16th May 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. To receive Chairman's report.

The second year of my tenure as Chairman has been eventful, we have had a busy year with at least two large planning applications which unfortunately are still not resolved. The application for a padel court at Mid-Sussex Golf Club and the Taylor Wimpy application for 150 houses at the northern end of our parish where we border with Wivelsfield. We have made robust objections on both of these and are very grateful for the huge support from residents and Wivelsfield Parish Council.

Road safety and traffic volumes are an ongoing problem for not only our parish but all rural parishes. The issue is getting worse as we find ourselves surrounded by housing developments which are adding thousands more vehicles on our lanes. During a meeting of local councils and the PCC in Lewes last September, this was one of the main topics and I was asked to write a letter to our MP on behalf of a number of parish and town councils which I did. It took a while but last week I had a one to one with James MacCleary which Paul Vidler was kind enough to sit in on. I wanted to put the case for a blanket 40mph limit on all unclassified roads, not just locally but nationally, as we know this is a huge problem. The result of that very positive meeting is that our MP has drafted a letter to the Secretary of State on our behalf.

As you know I was, together with Rob a founder member of the Beacon Traffic Group, I have now been invited to join the reformed group and have accepted. Unfortunately, I couldn't attend that first meeting last Tuesday, but I have all the details which I will report at our parish meeting later. I am also a part of the Underhill Lane traffic Group, representing Westmeston residents.

My report last year mentioned the ongoing problem of potholes and I am sorry to say that there has been no improvement. After 5 or 6 reports to Highways they came along and did half the job at the top of Spatham Lane, elsewhere the problems are worse than ever and great care is needed on all our Lanes. An attempt has been made by ESALC to set up a

meeting with Highways, Parish Chairmen and Balfour Beatty, the contractors but so far that has been unsuccessful.

Trevor Leggo and his team at ESALC continues to be very supportive.

At least they have cleared all the ditches throughout the parish, we hope they don't fill up with debris before the winter rains!

In September it was proposed and agreed that we needed to remove and replace the old planters at Church Corner, this was done and the new planters arrived and were installed by Steve Pearce, Brenda Hall, Rob Mills and myself. It was a wet day but we managed to get it all done and the improvement is there for all to see. Thank you to Brenda and Steve for their help, we couldn't have done it without them. Thank you also to Colin Hall who painted and tidied the phone box at Church Corner. Last year I reported that we had asked Paul Charman to take over mowing the corner and keeping it tidy, this has gone very well indeed and the corner looks so much better.

Our footpaths and bridleways continue to be heavily used and we are grateful to the Monday Group and the Jubilee Pathways Trust for the work they do in helping to keep these routes open and accessible. We continue to have a good relationship with Rights of Way, but resources are very limited and a succession of very wet winters haven't helped at all with the surface condition of a lot of our pathways. Apparently, there are approximately 2000 miles of pathways, bridleways and byways, all with a need for maintenance!

With the cancellation of local elections and the impending introduction of devolution, I believe we will have some major changes to deal with in the years to come. Information is limited but there is reason to believe that parish councils will remain unaffected but we hope will have a significant role to play. We await more details as they emerge.

I continue to hope that we will work with our neighbouring parishes and businesses for the benefit of everyone. As I mentioned last year this is particularly important on planning matters, everything that happens has an effect on all of us, there are no lines on the roads when it comes to increased traffic due to development, nuisance caused by illegal use of land and destruction of our verges and landscape by people using what little green space remains.

I would also like to mention and thank, all the volunteers who turn out to pick up all the litter on our lanes, we continue to pick up large amounts of litter and other detritus, some of which I won't mention in polite society!

Once again, I would like to say thank you to everyone for your help and support, Mark, for his work on planning, Vincent for attending numerous meetings on our behalf, Joyce, Tessa and Clare for their input and help and Rob for his unfailing support and of course Paul, who is such a support to this council.

5. To consider any other questions.

Paul Farrands asked about the challenges to Westmeston over the next 5 years. Cathy Mills responded that incursions of new development, increased traffic and increased recreational activity in the parish were the main challenges. There is a desire to encourage East Sussex CC to get traffic to relocate away from Spatham Lane.

Clare Farrands asked about the flow and volume of traffic along Underhill Lane, making it unsafe, despite being for access only. Cathy Mills responded that the Ditchling Parish Council Traffic Committee, of which she is a member, is currently considering traffic measures along the lane.

Paul Farrands asked if the South Downs National Park Authority had plans to increase parking provision in the parish. Cathy Mills responded that there were no such proposals as the authority did not own any land in the parish.

The Chairman thanked all those present and closed the meeting at 6.43pm.

These minutes will be approved at the next Annual Parish Meeting.

Signed.....

Chairman, Westmeston Parish Meeting