

WESTMESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 7.00 pm at Westmeston Parish Hall

Present: Councillors Cathy Mills, Joyce Dudeney, Clare Farrands, Tessa Haughton, Rob Mills and Vincent Tickner

Paul Vidler, Clerk

Two members of the public and PC Rosie Stainer were present.

1. **Election of Chairman:** Councillor Cathy Mills was elected Chairman.
2. **Election of Vice Chairman:** Councillor Vincent Tickner was elected Vice Chairman.
3. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Councillor Mark Clark.
4. **Declarations of interest:** Councillor Clare Farrands declared a personal interest in connection with Items 14. (b) (ii) and (iii), as she lives close to the application site.
5. **Public questions:** None.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th March 2025:

RESOLVED: The minutes of the previous meeting on 11th March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings and were signed by the Chairman.

7. Appointment of lead members:

RESOLVED: To agree the following appointments of lead members:

- (a) **Planning:** Councillors Rob Mills and Mark Clark
- (b) **Highways and Road Safety:** Councillors Cathy Mills and Rob Mills
- (c) **Rights of Way:** Councillor Joyce Dudeney
- (d) **Westmeston Common Land, Environment and Tree Warden:** Councillor Tessa Haughton
- (e) **Church Corner Maintenance:** Councillor Cathy Mills
- (f) **Website:** Councillors Cathy Mills and Mark Clark
- (g) **Internal Auditors:** Councillors Cathy Mills and Mark Clark
- (h) **East Sussex ALC:** Councillors Rob Mills and Tessa Haughton
- (i) **Lewes District ALC:** Councillor Vincent Tickner
- (j) **Beacon Traffic Group:** Councillor Cathy Mills
- (k) **Inter Council Housing Steering Group:** Councillor Vincent Tickner

8. Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Members' Code of Conduct:

RESOLVED: To agree the adoption of Version 6 of the Members' Code of Conduct. The adoption of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations was deferred to the next meeting.

9. 2025/26 Council meetings:

RESOLVED: To agree the following dates for Council meetings in 2025/26 - 8th July 2025, 9th September 2025, 11th November 2025, 13th January 2026 and 10th March 2026.

10. 2024/25 financial statement including the schedule of payments, receipts, bank reconciliation and variances:

RESOLVED: To agree the 2024/25 financial statement including the schedule of payments, receipts, bank reconciliation and variances.

11. Limited assurance review by the external auditor for the financial year 2024/25:

RESOLVED: To agree a limited assurance review by the external auditor for the financial year 2024/25. The Certificate of Exemption was signed by the Responsible Financial Officer and Chairman.

12. Annual Governance and Accountability Review 2024/25:

(a) Report from internal auditor:

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report from the internal auditor.

(b) AGAR section 1 Annual Governance Statement:

RESOLVED: To approve AGAR section 1 Annual Governance Statement which was signed by the Chairman.

(c) AGAR section 2 Accounting Statements:

RESOLVED: To approve AGAR section 2 Accounting Statements which was signed by the Chairman.

13. Financial matters:

(a) RESOLVED: To approve payment of invoices.

Payee	Reason	Amount
Cathy Mills	Bodycams for litter pickers	£119.97
Cathy Mills	Church Corner maintenance – April 2025	£35.00
LDALC	Lewes District Association of Local Councils subscription	£20.00
East Sussex ALC Limited	ESALC and NALC subscription	£96.47
East Sussex ALC Limited	Planning training	£30.00
Business Services at CAS Ltd	Annual insurance renewal	£405.01
Paul Vidler	Annual Microsoft subscription renewal	£138.24

14. Planning:

(a) Development opposite Westmeston Place, east of Lewes Road and Blackdog Farm east of Lewes Road:

NOTED: The Lewes DC planning enforcement officer had confirmed that following the serving of an enforcement notice on the land opposite Westmeston Place the unauthorised shed had been removed. There was no further update on Blackdog Farm.

(b) Planning applications:

(i) LW/25/0211 – Cumbria, Green Road, Wivelsfield Green

Demolition of garage, proposed two-storey side extension, single-storey rear extension and fenestration alterations (Resubmission).

RESOLVED: As no comment was made on the previous application, members agreed not to comment on this application.

(ii) SDNP/25/01390/LDE – Sorrento, Spatham Lane

Continued occupation of dwelling in breach of agricultural occupancy condition attached to E/69/24.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to make no comment on this application. Councillor Clare Farrands took no part in the consideration of this application.

(iii) SDNP/25/01394/LDE – Sorrento, Spatham Lane

Use of land and buildings for ancillary domestic purposes.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to make no comment on this application. Councillor Clare Farrands took no part in the consideration of this application.

(c) Inter Parish Working Group on Housing/Eton College Site/Lewes District Council Local Plan:

Councillor Vincent Tickner reported there had been no recent meeting of the Working Group. He will continue to monitor these issues.

15. Underhill Lane:

NOTED: Members noted that East Sussex Highways had completed ditch clearance.

16. Information for noting:

(a) Ditchling Parish Council Traffic Committee:

NOTED: Members noted that Councillor Cathy Mills was a member of the recently reformed Traffic Committee, formerly the Beacon Parish Traffic Group. The Committee is considering proposals to install white gates at the commencement of speed restrictions and other locations in Westmeston and Ditchling, including at Church Corner at the junction of Underhill Lane. Members considered gates would be better located at the parish boundary further to the east on the B2116 and the parish council should only contribute funding for those gates within Westmeston. Westmeston residents would be emailed for their views on the location of gates within the parish. The Clerk was requested to contact Lindfield Parish Council for its view on the impact of gates on reducing traffic speeds within its parish.

(b) Discussion with James MacCleary MP:

NOTED: Members noted that Councillor Cathy Mills and the Clerk had attended an online meeting with James MacCleary MP, who was supportive of the letter sent on behalf of Westmeston and other parishes in Lewes District about the introduction of 40 mph speed limit on unclassified rural roads and will be raising this with the Secretary of State for Transport.

17. Date of next meeting: 8th July 2025 at 6.30pm.

Meeting closed at 7.59pm.