

WESTMESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7.00 pm at Westmeston Parish Hall

Present: Councillors Cathy Mills, Joyce Dudeney, Tessa Haughton, Rob Mills and Vincent Tickner
Paul Vidler, Clerk
Two members of the public.

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:** Councillors Cathy Mills and Rob Mills declared a personal interest in connection with Item 14. (b) (i), as they live close to the application site.
5. **Public questions:** Madelaine Jones and Fred Durman referred to the speeds of traffic along the B2116 Lewes Road, in particular close to the parish hall, and the resulting danger to other road users and pedestrians and asked why the road still has a 60 mph, rather than a lower speed limit.

6. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th March 2026:**

RESOLVED: The minutes of the previous meeting on 10th March 2026 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 7 of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Members' Code of Conduct.

9. **2026/27 Council meetings:**

RESOLVED: To agree the following dates for Council meetings in 2026/27 - 14th July 2026, 8th September 2026, 10th November 2026, 12th January 2027 and 9th March 2027.

10. 2025/26 financial statement including the schedule of payments, receipts, bank reconciliation and variances:

RESOLVED: To agree the 2025/26 financial statement including the schedule of payments, receipts, bank reconciliation and variances.

11. Limited assurance review by the external auditor for the financial year 2025/26:

RESOLVED: To agree a limited assurance review by the external auditor for the financial year 2025/26. The Certificate of Exemption was signed by the Responsible Financial Officer and Chairman.

12. Annual Governance and Accountability Review 2025/26:

(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	Church Corner maintenance – March and April 2026	£76.00
Cathy Mills	McAfee subscription	£129.99
East Sussex ALC Limited	ESALC and NALC subscription	£116.86
CAS Insurance Services Ltd	Annual insurance renewal	£401.96
Paul Vidler	Clerk's salary – April to June 2026	£1,004.80
HMRC	PAYE	£251.00
Paul Vidler	Clerk's expenses – April to June 2026	£7.65
Paul Vidler	Microsoft subscription	£138.24

(b) Bank accounts:

RESOLVED: To open a new interest account following closure of NS&I account.

(c) Internal auditors:

RESOLVED: To appoint Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd as internal auditors for the 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 financial years.

14. Planning:

(a) LW/24/0820 Land South of Green Road, Wivelsfield Green:

Outline Planning Application – Outline application for the erection of up to 150 dwellings, with associated works, parking, landscaping, publicly accessible open space, land for education or community use, with access from Green Road and Eastern Road. (Amended proposals)

NOTED: An appeal has been lodged against the non-determination (deemed refusal) of the application by Lewes DC. The date for a public inquiry is awaited. The council's comments on the application have been forwarded to the planning inspector.

(b) Responses to the following applications:

(i) SDNP/26/01632/HOUS Larchfield, Spatham Lane

Erection of new triple garage.

Having declared a personal interest in this planning application, Councillors Cathy Mills and Rob Mills left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

RESOLVED: Westmeston Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds that the height of the garage is excessive and overbearing and would adversely impact the visual amenities of the area, contrary to policies SD31 of the South Downs Local Plan and CONS2 of the Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The parish council is also concerned that the upper floor of the garage could be used as a separate unit of residential accommodation. It is requested that, if approved, a condition is attached to explicitly prevent this and to ensure the use of the garage building remains ancillary to the existing house.

(ii) LW/26/0191 New Barnes, Highbridge Lane, East Chiltington

Scoping Opinion under Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) in relation to a hybrid planning application for the development of a small market town to provide up to 3,000 homes, community and education facilities, employment space, and green/blue infrastructure.

RESOLVED: To make no comment on this application.

(iii) LW/26/0194 Land East of Ditchling Road, Wivelsfield

Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) for the development of up to 62 dwellings (under ref LW/26/0189).

RESOLVED: To make no comment on this application.

(c) Submitted response to the following application:

SDNP/26/01286/LDE The Flat at Little Spatham Farm, Spatham Lane

The existing and continuous use of The Flat at Little Spatham Farm as a separate residential dwelling for in excess of four years from the date of this application.

NOTED: The following response has been submitted on this application:
Westmeston Parish Council makes no comment on this application.

(d) Inter Parish Working Group on Housing/Eton College Site/Lewes District Local Plan/South Downs Local Plan:

NOTED: Councillor Vincent Tickner reported there had been no recent meeting of the Working Group. He will continue to monitor these issues. The final consultation on the replacement South Downs Local Plan on soundness and legal compliance is taking place between 12th May and 23rd June 2026 before the plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination.

15. Lewes District ALC AGM 30 April 2026:

NOTED: Councillor Vincent Tickner attended the meeting and reported that local government devolution, the future role of parish councils, river pollution and recruitment of parish councillors was discussed.

16. Properties near Broomfields:

Following the installation of a gate blocking the access track from Streat Lane to properties near Broomfields, a request had been received from a Streat resident for the addresses of these properties to be changed from Streat Lane to Spatham Lane.

RESOLVED: To support the change of addresses of these properties.

17. B2116 Lewes Road and Spatham Lane:

Concerns from members and residents relating to the high speeds of vehicles and numerous accidents along the B2116 Lewes Road. It was considered that the extension of the 40 mph speed limit at the junction with Spatham Lane to the eastern parish boundary would reduce vehicle speeds and accidents along the B2116. In addition, following implementation of the 40 mph speed limit in Spatham Lane it was considered that the construction of a 'pinch point' at Blackbrook Farm Cottages would bring about further improvements to road safety.

RESOLVED: To pursue the extension of the 40 mph speed limit along the B2116 from the junction with Spatham Lane to the eastern parish boundary and the construction of a 'pinch point' in Spatham Lane at Blackbrook Farm Cottages.

18. Any other information for noting:

(a) James MacCleary MP summer visit:

NOTED: The visit of James MacCleary MP will take place at 6pm on 31st July 2026 at Westmeston Parish Hall.

19. Date of next meeting: 14th July 2026 at 6.30pm.

Meeting closed at 8.18pm.