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Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of Woodmancote Parish Council (WPC) held at The Pavilion, Blackstone Lane, Blackstone, Henfield BN5 9TA on 10 September 2024, 7.30pm

Present: Cllr R Noel, Cllr Austin, Cllr Batchelor, Cllr Dixon, Cllr Morris, Cllr W Noel
Others Present: Cllr Croker, The Clerk and 1 member of the public.

Cllr R Noel pointed out that the meeting may be recorded by devices within the room.

2024 - 116 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Donald.

2024 – 117 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest from councillors regarding items on the agenda.

2024 – 118 Public participation

A member of the public requested that more information is put on the website prior to meetings. Cllr R Noel pointed out that relevant financial information, draft minutes and the agenda are already uploaded to the website and that this is sufficient legally required information. The Clerk also explained that the relevant minutes are uploaded under the relevant month. Otherwise, they appear as a supporting paper or 'schedules to the meeting'; so, July's draft minutes were under July and then also as a supporting paper to the September meeting for agreement.

The member of the public also asked if the Blackstone Garages site, in Backstone, was for sale via auction and Cllr R Noel confirmed that it was.

2024 – 119 Minutes

The Minutes of the WPC Ordinary Meeting on 09 July 2024 were RESOLVED subject to the agreed amendments.

2024 – 120 Action updates from previous minutes

120.1 Blackstone Wastewater Treatment Works - Cllr Dixon reported that MTS, the contractors at the works, had agreed to repair the verges, road and entrance to the works by 14 September, but this had not been done to date because of the wet weather. He confirmed that MTS will be working extra hours on Saturdays to complete work.

120.2 Footpath from A281 to Bylsborough House – Cllr R Noel reported that he had spoken to the new footpath ranger, Steve Alexander, about clearing the surface vegetation of the path and had been told that the path – bridleway 3672 and PROW 2535 – was on the summer clearance schedule and would be done by the end of September.

120.3 Bus shelter replacements – Cllr R Noel confirmed that WSCC had released £4,320 S106 money to HDC towards the replacement bus shelters and that HDC would pay this into the Council’s bank account once work is completed. Three quotations had been received: JD fears for £2500 (inc VAT) for each shelter; The Shed Man for £7,500 for each shelter; and Sussex Timber for £2545 (excl supporting brickwork). Cllr Austin explained that JD Fears would be able to use a polypropylene support to raise the shelter off the ground to prevent future rotting. It was agreed to go ahead with JD Fears as the WPC bus shelter contractor and that Cllr R Noel would request HDC to release the funds to the Council’s bank account. Cllr R Noel thanked Cllr Austin for his hard work researching and securing the JD Fears quotation.

120.4 Potholes along Blackstone and Bramlands Lanes – Cllr R Noel reported that the WSCC contractors had visited the areas of road in poor condition but had not been informed by the WSCC surveyor of the degree of damage. So alternative resurfacing contractors, who can ‘scrape’ and re-tarmac the road, would be scheduled to carry out the work over the next month.

120.5 Adopting Councillor .gov email accounts – The Clerk explained that WPC’s current webmail and website provider, Vision ICT, had offered the best quotation (using the Cabinet Office funding for the first year) and that each Councillor had now received their new .gov email addresses and relevant logging in passwords. Councillors expressed some difficulty in using their new email addresses and the Clerk agreed to contact Vision ICT about a possible training session.

120.6 Blackstone Playing Fields trees (bordering Cuckolds Cottages) – The Clerk had visited the owner of 2 Cuckolds Cottages whose property was being affected by over-hanging playing field trees and had forwarded images of the property owners’ garden to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr R Noel had also visited the property owner. Cllr R Noel proposed that the Council would not be able to assist in cutting back the trees due to insurance reasons, and that it was not legally responsible for the trees’ ‘over-hang’ into the property’s garden. This was unanimously agreed. Cllr R Noel agreed to inform the property owner of the Council’s decision.

2024 – 121 Reports from outside bodies

121.1 WSCC – Cllr Linehan was not present at the meeting.

121.2 HDC – Cllr Croker and Cllr R Noel updated the Council:

Cllr Croker informed the Council that the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was now in its consultation stage and that the deadline for comments was 24 September 2024. He explained that there had been a change in the way the required number of homes per District was calculated; within the Southeast this represented an overall increase of 35%, but within Horsham District it would mean an increase of 41%. Notable proposed developments in the District included 81 homes in Partridge Green, 62 homes in Storrington and 265 in Steyning.

Finance – with the change of Government there were two ‘unknowns’: firstly, whether funds for social services would be transferred to WSCC; and secondly, expenditure required to get to net zero estimated at £2.4 million, mainly for buildings and vehicles. There is pressure to reduce overall expenditure and increase income;

planning, parking and garden waste charges are all set to be increased with the aim of saving £900,000 over the next year.

Cllr Noel informed the Council that the HDC offices would move in February 2024 resulting in a buildings' asset increase of 41%. Also, water neutrality continues to create problems for developers/potential development.

2024 – 122 Planning

Cllr Austin drew the Council's attention to the possible effects of the NPPF on rural communities like Woodmancote and urged the Council to respond to the document. Cllr Morris suggested that Councillors are given time to read through the proposed policy. Cllr R Noel proposed that Councillors email their responses and Cllr Morris agreed to collate these as a document for the Clerk to submit.

122.1 DC/24/1263 - Deer's Leap Wheatsheaf Road, Woodmancote Henfield. Extension of store, utility room, garages and art room. The Council agreed 'no objection' to this application.

122.2 There were no late planning applications to discuss.

122.3 Comments submitted since last meeting - DC/24/1143 - Bramcote Farm Bramlands Lane Woodmancote West Sussex. Erection of a new porch and single storey side extension. *No objection.*

122.4 Planning update – DC/24/0723 - Lower Knowle Bramlands Lane Woodmancote West Sussex. Erection of a single storey rear extension. Application Permitted

2024 – 123 Finance and Payments

123.1 Reconciled accounts - The reconciled accounts for July and August 2024 were approved.

123.2 Payments – The following payments were approved:

05.08.2024		Moore		48		External Auditor's limited assurance review.		
27.08.2024		Talk Talk		4.95		Mobile phone	Paid	
11.07.2024		Dean Wilson LLP		168		New Lease for Sussex Cricket		
02.09.2024		WSCC 8001783728		683.13		Clerk salary		
22.09.2024		Vision ITC		39.9		Setting up 7 .gov emails		
19.09.2024		Elizabeth Trundle		28		Printer cartridge		
28.08.2024		Elizabeth Trundle		3.8		VAT 'signed for' postage		
22.08.2024		Elizabeth Trundle		6.22		Mileage to Sx Crkt noticeboard & Anita Tysoe		
04.09.2024		Elizabeth Trundle		8.11		Mileage to noticeboards		
10.09.2024		Elizabeth Trundle		£6		Working from home allowance		
10.09.2024		Elizabeth Trundle		6.22		Mileage to meeting		
				Total	1002.33			

123.3 WPC VAT claim – The Clerk informed the Council that she had completed a VAT re-claim application for the period from 17 March 2023 to 27 July 2024, totally £376.19, and that this had now been paid into the WPC Unity Trust Bank current account.

2024 – 124 Blackstone Playing Fields

Cllr R Noel updated the Council regarding the new playground installation: The surveyor had sprayed the revised playground area with pink spray, preparation work would begin on 18 September and full installation of the equipment from 21-23 September.

Playground finance - Sussex Cricket had been emailed requesting that the agreed donation £10,000 be transferred to WPC as soon as possible. £1,773 of due S106 money would also be paid into the WPC account once the work was completed. Cllr R Noel had applied for £10,000 from the HDC People's Budget and a decision about this would be decided by an HDC vote later this year

2024 – 125 Community relations – residents' communications leaflet

Cllr Dixon circulated two drafts of the proposed community communications A5 double-sided leaflet. It was decided to use the leaflet with the 'woodland' background on both sides and make the following amendments: to include meeting dates; remove WhatsApp references and include Facebook; correct Cllr Austin's address to 'Old Woodhouse Farmhouse'.

Cost – 300 x A5 double-sided gloss copies would be required; Cllr Morris suggested Hello Print as the most competitively priced printers. Cllr R Noel agreed to obtain a quotation.

2024 – 126 Conversion of battery-run Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS) to solar power.

The Clerk distributed up-to-date quotations for the replacement of the battery-run SIDS to solar units from Elan City and replacement of two mounting poles from Wilbur Ltd. Cllr Dixon questioned whether the Elan city quotation included mounting kits and the Clerk agreed to check this. It was agreed that the position of the SIDS would need to be changed slightly to move the solar units away from tree shade. Cllr R Noel agreed to email the Clerk the exact position for both new solar SIDS so she could inform the contractors and inform WSCC of the position changes.

The Council agreed to go ahead with the received quotations: £1827.97 (incs VAT) for the SIDS units and £1385 (+ VAT) for the new mounting poles.

2024 – 127 Environmental issues

127.1 Bio-diversity Sub Committee – Cllr Morris confirmed that there was no update at present.

127.2 Climate Action Plan – Cllr R Noel suggested that WPC adopt a similar plan to Bramber Parish Council. Cllr Morris agreed to liaise with Sustainable Henfield and input her thoughts. Cllr R Noel agreed to produce a draft Plan to include suggestions from Councillors and residents, and this was agreed unanimously.

2024 – 128 Correspondence

The Clerk drew Cllrs attention to a forthcoming SDNP Parish Council on-line meeting on 2 October 2024 at 6.30pm offering an opportunity to learn about the key activities happening within the National Park. Cllrs R and W Noel and Cllr Batchelor expressed an interest in attending and the Clerk agreed to forward logging in details.

The Council had also received information and posters about a county-wide initiative to encourage residents to offer supporting lodgings for 16- to 25-year-olds as a 'transitional home' to independence. It was agreed that the Clerk would put the posters up on the WPC noticeboards.

2024 – 129 Items for next agenda/to note

Cllr Austin requested that the JD Fears quotation is confirmed by email. Cllr R Noel informed Councillors that the British Horse Society (BHS) is appealing against WSCC regarding its decision to maintain Footpath 2540 Furners Lane as a PROW. The appeal would be based on the BHS producing more supportive evidence for its case to change the path to a bridleway.

Cllr Morris submitted her resignation as a Councillor. Cllr R Noel thanked Cllr Morris for her help and support during her time in post.

2024 – 130 Date of next meeting

08 October 2024

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Cllr R Noel – Chair

Woodmancote Parish Council