

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WESTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 14th September 2023
7:30pm at Weston Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr Alistair Schofield (Chair) Cllr Judith Evans Cllr Stewart Clifford
Cllr Jacky Jones Cllr Steve Ludbrook Cllr Alison Williams

IN ATTENDANCE: Minutes taken by the Clerk

1 Member of Public up to and including item 2023/09/087

County and District Councillor Steve Jarvis up to and including item 2023/09/088(b)

2023/09/083 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and approved from Cllr John Cherry, Cllr Tim Moody and Cllr Matthew Hale

2023/09/084 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

2023/09/085 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

2023/09/086 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10th August 2023 were approved and duly authorised by the Chairman.

2023/09/087 PLANNING

- a) Planning Applications:
- 23/01806/LBC Woodvine Cottage. No objection.
 - 23/01805/FPH Woodvine Cottage. No objection.
 - 23/01478/FP Friends Green Farm. Objection. The revised plans are deemed insufficiently different from the original application which this Council already objected to.
 - 23/01844/FPH. Simons Close. The Clerk to request a deferral until after the October meeting.
- b) NHC Decision Notices:
- 23/01539/FPH Butts End. Permission Granted.
 - 23/01522/FPH Cowmead Cottage. Permission Granted.
 - 23/01324/S73A Highgate. Permission Granted.
 - 23/01698/FP Land adjacent to 48 Hitchin Road. Permission Refused.

2023/09/088 FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

- a) Cheque Signing. The following items were approved for payment:
- Clerk Salary (August 2023) - £316.26
 - Weston Village Hall (WVH474) - £12.00
 - Weston Village Hall Open Reach Fibre Scheme Meeting (WVH481) - £32.00
 - Castle Water (01 July – 31 Dec 2023) - £309.04
 - Clerks Expenses (WVCS CVS) - £36.00
 - A Schofield Expenses (2023/08/079b) - £308.60
 - PKF Littlejohn LLP (2022/23 AGAR) - £252.00
 - Steve Ludbrook Expenses (bin liners) - £42.97
 - Mr Roger Seifert (Grass Cutting) - £288.00
- b) WPC Email. Correspondence regarding council business should only be sent to third party individuals or organisations by the Clerk or the Chairman unless otherwise approved by the Council. Where correspondence is sent to a third party by anyone other than the Clerk, the Clerk must be copied in.

- c) Correspondence and Data Policy. The draft policy was adopted by the Council. The Clerk to place the policy on the website.
- d) 2022/23 AGAR. The external auditor has concluded the 2022/23 audit. Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR are deemed to be in accordance with proper practice. The auditor has confirmed that no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been placed on the WPC website.
- e) Weston Guide. Weston Church PCC have kindly offered to take responsibility for the printing and distribution of the guide to Weston village. Council agreed to contribute towards the printing costs of the first batch. The Clerk to write to Weston Church PCC accordingly. Cllr Jones to place a copy on the Council website.

2023/09/089 **PROJECTS.** Nothing to report.

2023/09/090 **VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT including FOOTPATHS and MAINTENANCE**

- a) Well on the Village Green. Cllrs Moody, Williams and Schofield met to discuss the practicalities and aesthetic appeal of different ways of preserving and making safe the well on the village green. Their recommendation is that we commission an openable grill to cover the well which would be set in a low-level brick surround of a similar coloured brick to the well lining. Cllr Moody had obtained approximate costs for a bespoke steel grill of £1,200. This figure could change once the precise dimensions and design is agreed. The next step is to uncover the well to clean it, take precise measurements and obtain final quotations.
- b) Defibrillator at Village Hall. Councillors expressed their thanks to Ann Hubner for obtaining the defibrillator unit from the ambulance service. It will be installed in the cabinet on the Village Hall as soon as possible. It was agreed that a basic guide to how to locate and access the defibrillators should be produced for the website and that it would be good to include it in the Information Guide also. Cllr Schofield to action.
- c) Sewage Overflow. Deferred to the next meeting.
- d) Refurbishment of the Village Sign. Deferred to the next meeting.
- e) Annual undergrowth clearance SFP19 / pathway from Church to Recreation Ground. The council wished to thank Cllr Moody for his work in clearing the path. It was noted that some additional work will be necessary to clear fallen tree branches etc. Cllr Evans reported that Rights of Way would visit Footpath 19 (School Lane) in the winter to see whether the surface was bad enough at that time of year to justify their involvement in remedial work.
- f) Fibre Broadband for Weston. This is being progressed.
- g) Christmas Events. Council extended their thanks to Alex Cherry who has kindly offered to provide a Christmas tree for the village. Councillors agreed that they would like to organise the Farther Christmas event again if possible. Cllrs Schofield, Jones and Williams to research and report back at the October meeting.
- h) Adopt a Kiosk. Cllr Jones and Cllr Williams to explore the adopt a kiosk scheme. To be discussed at the next meeting.
- i) Reported Items (ALL)
 - Cllr Evans had chased Rights of Way regarding the work they had discussed to improve footpaths 25 and 6/7. Rights of Way are contacting the landowners to request permission to progress the necessary work.
 - The faulty traffic calming sign on Fore Street has been repaired. The sign at Damask Green is going to be replaced and the sign at Hitchin Road repaired.

2023/09/091 **RECREATION GROUNDS and SPORTS FACILITIES**

- a) Leaking water in toilet at Recreation Ground. Council extended their thanks to Cllr Schofield and Cllr Clifford for investigating the leak and making repairs.
- b) Re-treating of Recreation buildings with wood preserver. Council extended their thanks to Cllr Schofield for undertaking this work.

2023/09/092 HIGHWAYS and LIGHTING

- a) Traffic Calming around Weston Primary School. Cllr Jarvis is awaiting a response from Hertfordshire Highways. Since it is unlikely that this work will be undertaken in the current financial year, this item will be removed from the agenda until April 2024.
- b) Hitchin Road safety concerns. See item (c) below:
- c) Overgrown verges impacting on road safety. Cllr Schofield met with District and County Councillor Steve Jarvis to discuss the Council's concerns regarding the safety of pedestrians walking between Weston and the bus stop on the Graveley road along Hitchin Road and the safety issues caused by overgrown verges. Unfortunately, there is very little that can be done along Hitchin Road other than provide better verge cutting at narrower points to help pedestrians stand off the road when vehicles are passing. Following the meeting, Cllr Jarvis reported that 'Highways do have agreements with some councils whereby the council undertakes verge grass cutting on their behalf. The Council agreed that we would be interested to investigate this option further and will request a draft copy of the agreement we would need to sign to fully understand our obligations.
- d) Road narrowing sign on Hatch Lane. The missing sign and overgrown sign has been reported to Highways.
- e) 20mph speed limit. Cllr Ludbrook reported that some Hertfordshire villages have managed to get 20mph speed limits. Cllr Schofield to write to those parish councils to learn more.

2023/09/093 PARISH COUNCIL POWERS

Council resolved to exclude the press and public from Agenda Item 12 in accordance with Schedule 1(2) of The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

2023/09/094 PARISH COUNCIL POWERS

This minute is confidential.

2023/09/095 MATTERS ARISING to be placed on the next Agenda.

2023/09/096 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING Thursday 12th October 2023

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 21:45

Signed.......... Chairman

Date: 12th October 2023