

Minutes



Westbourne

Parish Council

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Minutes Westbourne Parish Council's meeting which took place on Thursday 9 February 2023 at 7.15pm at The Meeting Place, North Street, Westbourne.

Present: Cllr Jane Gould, Cllr Kim Franks and Cllr Nigel Ricketts.

In attendance: Cllr Andrew Kerry-Bedell, West Sussex County Council
Clare Kennett, Clerk to the Council

Meeting chaired by Cllr Ricketts. Two members of the public and one member of the press were present.

200. To receive declarations of interest and updates to the Register of Interests:

There were no declarations of interest.

201. Apologies for absence: Cllr Lade Barker, Cllr Rob Briscoe, Cllr Richard Hitchcock and Cllr Mike Magill.

202. Flooding: Mr Nick Rule gave a presentation on flooding in Westbourne and his plans for rewilding the River Ems at Mill House to prevent future flooding. He said that flooding had been more regular since 1994, with events happening every five to ten years. Climate change was thought to be a cause, with droughts in the spring/summer and frequent rain in the autumn. Mr Rule estimated that on average around 40ml of rain would saturate the ground and any further would become surface water flowing into the river. Mr Rule had installed a new sluice at the Mill in 1993 that could take more water, and he operated this regularly at all times of the day and night to keep the river flowing to prevent flooding. Mr Rule said Westbourne millpond was a man-made pond designed to feed water over a waterwheel and thus allow Westbourne Mill to grind corn. The Mill was likely to have been once listed in the Domesday Book, but it fell into disuse in the 1930s. The level of the pond was controlled by a privately-operated slice gate that had been in his family since 1957. If the sluice gate was not managed during events of high rainfall, the mill pond would burst its banks (this had never happened over the last 66 years due to the diligence of his family and friends). Since the changes to the bank made by the NRA in 1994, were the millpond to ever overflow, it would run out of his back garden and down River Street to North Street. The vast majority of the water was fed down the main river, but some ran down the mill race and gave pleasure to the residents on the west side of North Street. The combination of sluice gate on the main river and major waterfall on the mill race prevented fish passage from lower reaches up into the millpond and beyond. Mr Rule proposed that the slice gate was removed to reduce the risk of flooding and allow fish passage, a tunnel or ditch was built at the weir to allow a small flow of water to the mill race, the riverbed was remodelled to improve ecology (meanders, pools, riffles etc). The pro's were that this greatly reduced the risk of flooding, allowed fish passage upstream, restored the millpond back to a more natural river to the benefit of wildlife, removed a very real danger to humans from the

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sluice gate, and was likely to be much cheaper than any other option. The con's were that a tunnel or ditch would be needed to ensure a flow in the mill race, it would change around 1000 years of history, there would be no large pond for geese, it prevented any possible future hydro-electric generation scheme, and there would be less oxygenation of water from the sluice gate and waterfall.

Members thanked Mr Rule for the presentation and discussed that they supported the scheme to prevent flooding and were happy to work with him to progress plans, including facilitating discussions with the Environment Agency and local residents who would need to be consulted with.

203. Westbourne Community Trust: Members **RECEIVED** an update from Mr Frank Campbell, Chair of the WCT, following planning permission which had recently been granted by Chichester District Council for 12 new affordable homes on land at Mill Road. As part of the scheme, the playground at Mill Road would be completely replaced with new equipment and layout. This included a new toddler play area which would be fenced, an older children's play area, a skate park, a multi-use games area and a running track around the perimeter. There would also be access from the school so they could make use of the facilities. The scheme would also include improvements to parking on Mill Road.

A resident asked if dogs would be allowed to use the space, and Mr Campbell said that it was likely that dogs would be required to remain on a lead as the area was predominately for the use of children and young people. He said that it was important to provide high-quality facilities for children and their families and give them opportunities to play in a safe environment.

204. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 January 2023: Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true record and there were signed as such by the Chairman.

205. Updates and issues from the minutes of 12 January 2023:

Item 185: The Clerk had contacted PCSO Broad following the meeting to ask for clarification on the crime categories listed on the police.uk website. His response was as follows: "Thank you for your email. I have checked the offences you have referred to on police.uk. Although the crime headings can appear quite startling at first glance, I would like to reassure your members there is nothing to be alarmed or concerned about within the Parish. You will understand I cannot disclose specific information owing to data protection, however please bear in mind a domestic incident for example in a private dwelling between family members could be recorded as a statistic on this platform. It is unfortunate violence and sexual offences are recorded under the same heading. Assaults of course can vary in degree from spitting (common assault) to grievous bodily harm. In relation to vehicle crime, offences are generally sporadic, quite often involving transient offenders. We have noticed victims are sometimes hesitant, in particular reporting vehicle crime as they perceive there is little value in doing so. Clearly this can create challenges in depicting crime patterns, which in turn could have a detrimental impact in relation to where officers direct their patrol activity. We would always encourage victims to report crime. Unfortunately, due to operational demands, I am not currently in a position to research all the reported crimes within the geographical location I have responsibility for. We are starting to see an uplift in our PCSO numbers which I am confident will start to have a positive impact on the District over the coming months.

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It was **AGREED** that Cllr Kim Franks would write to PCSO Broad to inform him that the Parish Council were not reassured by his email and would like there to be an improved police presence in the Parish to prevent incidents and respond to concerns to encourage residents to report matters.

Item 186: The Clerk had informed Sandra Ellis that three quotes would need to be provided to the Council before any grant funding could be issued to them to help with renovations.

Item 187: The Clerk informed members that 100 letters with details about the highways consultation had been delivered to properties on East Street and Whitechimney Row. There was also information on the website which had been promoted to residents on Facebook. The Clerk had started to receive responses which would all be listed in a report for the Council's consideration at its next meeting in March.

Item 191: The Clerk informed members that the newsletter had been designed and printed and was due to be delivered to all households in the Parish in mid-February. The posters to promote the election had been displayed in the noticeboards and in local businesses, along with correx signs on lampposts. Social media graphics had been promoted on Facebook and there was a section on the website with information about the election and the role of the Council and parish councillors.

206. Open forum: There were no comments from members of the public.

207. County Councillor's comments and questions: Members thanked County Councillor Andrew Kerry-Bedell for the report circulated prior to the meeting which was **NOTED**. In summary, it was recommended that the Parish Council applied for a TRO to move the 30mph to north of the Common on Monk's Hill and to submit the petition as evidence. Cllr Kerry-Bedell said that WSCC's Highways department had been very busy repairing surfaces, drain systems and gullies over the winter due to the weather conditions. Heavy rain along with big freezes had contributed to the problems. The bridge at Aldsworth had become an accident black spot, with a third recent incident in 18 months. This would likely need to be tackled by a community highways scheme instigated by the Parish Council and supported by local residents. Regular meetings of the Bourne road speed reduction group were taking place to discuss and plan road speed reductions across the area. Cllr Ricketts was attending on behalf of Westbourne. The Bourne Community Bus was running well but new volunteer drivers were needed and Cllr Kerry-Bedell urged residents to come forward to help with this important and vital local service. Training was available and more information could be found at www.bournebus.co.uk

208. District Councillor's comments and questions: Members thanked District Councillor Roy Briscoe for the report circulated prior to the meeting which was **NOTED**. In summary, Chichester's Local Plan Review was available for consultation until 18 March. New housing targets for the District were 650 but evidence showed that just 535 could be build in the south of the area and 40 in the north, given traffic and water neutrality issues. It seemed that this was being recognised by the government. Westbourne had been asked to provide 30 houses and Cllr Briscoe had worked to reduce the numbers, along with those in Southbourne down to 1050 from 1500. It was important to have an up to date neighbourhood plan with site allocations to ensure appropriate development. Cllr Briscoe said that two important planning appeals had been won, including at the Old Army Camp on Cemetery Lane and at

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Marlpit Lane. Court action had also been instigated against Funnel and Howard for non-compliance. Cllr Briscoe was waiting for dates from the rural crime team to discuss trespassing and theft issues faced by local farmers. The police precept was approved and will add a further £15 to a Council Tax Band D property. The District Council's application for levelling up funds from the government had been turned down but £1m of funding had been received from UKSPF which would be prioritised for schemes that were read to go. Tests showed that the water quality at Bracklesham Bay, Selsey and West Wittering had been classed as excellent. Discharges into the harbour areas from combined sewage overflows were continuing and Cllr Briscoe encouraged residents to report incidents to the Environment Agency and OFWAT. Flooding from fields was only just slowing on Woodmancote Lane. Voter ID would now be required to vote at the local elections in May and more information was available at www.chichester.gov.uk The District Council's supporting you team had helped over 500 people with the cost of living crisis. The District Council's precept would be rising by £5.26 to enable them to deliver a balanced budget and continue to provide services and facilities.

209. Police incident report: Members **NOTED** the recent crime statistics at www.police.uk that showed in December 2022 there had been five incidents of violence and sexual offences, 2 of criminal damage and arson, 1 of bicycle theft and 1 of public order.

210. HR Committee: Members **RECEIVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 and it was **AGREED** to **ADOPT** the Civility and Respect Pledge. Full details were available at <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/civility-and-respect-project#take-the-pledge> and, in brief, the Council pledged to:

- Treat other councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.
- Commit to training councillors and staff.
- Sign up to the code of conduct for councillors.
- Have good governance arrangements in place.
- Commit to seeking professional help at early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
- Call out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
- Continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council.
- Support the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the civility and respect pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

211. Joint Burial Committee: Members **RECEIVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2023 and the latest update from the Cemetery Coordinator with no further comments.

212. Annual spring clean day: Members **AGREED** to hold the event on Sunday 2 April from 2-4pm and to agree councillor attendance.

213. Annual Parish Assembly: Members **AGREED** to hold the event at 7pm on Thursday 20 April at The Meeting Place with drinks and refreshments. It was discussed that Mr Rule could be invited to speak at the meeting, and the Clerk said

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that an article had been included in the newsletter to ask any guest speakers to come forward.

214. Coronation celebrations: Members **AGREED** to hold a Big Lunch street party on Sunday 7 May at Church Road in Westbourne and review the project plan prepared by the Clerk. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would apply for the road to be closed, and once it was agreed, local residents could be informed. It was discussed that local organisations would be involved again in helping support the event.

215. Payments for approval: Members **RESOLVED** to approve the list of payments totalling £3,543.42 and due immediately (to be paid before 9 March 2023 and require advance authorisation). There were payments totalling £1,885.35 made since 12 January 2023 which members **RESOLVED** to approve retrospectively. The list of payments is available in Appendix 1.

216. Correspondence: Members **NOTED** the list of correspondence with particular reference to the following.

It was agreed to discuss the resilience and emergency plan template at the next Public Services Committee meeting in March.

It was agreed to order some dog fouling stickers to put on lampposts. The Clerk informed members that she had displayed posters at the recreation grounds and posted information on the Facebook page to discourage dog fouling. Cllr Ricketts said he would send the Clerk details of an enforcement officer who could patrol. Cllr Ricketts reported that a van was parking on North Street and obstructing the road and pavement. He would continue to put car parking notices on the windscreen.

217. Announcements and items for the next meeting: There were no announcements.

218. Date of next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 9 March 2023 at 7.15pm.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, the Council may decide by resolution to exclude the press and public from any part of the meeting under a Section Two item.

Section Two

219. HR Committee: Members **RECEIVED** the Clerk's completed Personal and Professional Development Review (PPDR) for 2022 and **AGREED** to the new targets proposed by the HR Committee for the Clerk's PPDR in 2023.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm.

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Appendix 1

Westbourne Parish Council, 9 February 2023

Agenda item 16: Payments for approval

(DD: payment made by Direct Debit, IB: payment made by Internet Banking, C: cheque payment including number, PC: payment made by petty cash, *movement of an earmarked reserve, ** paid from No 2 account)

Payments for approval		Total	Net	VAT
DD	EE Mobile phone	18.00	15.00	3.00
BACS	Confidential payments Feb 23	1,584.61	1,584.61	0.00
BACS	WSCC LGPS Jan 23	509.70	509.70	0.00
BACS	Microshade cloud storage and email accounts	128.57	107.14	21.43
BACS	MS 365	9.48	7.90	1.58
BACS	Monster Creative printing 100 copies of highways consultation letter	15.00	15.00	0.00
BACS	Monster Creative councillor recruitment campaign design and materials	180.95	153.29	27.66
BACS	Monster Creative two new signs design and print for Monk's Hill	122.11	101.76	20.35
BACS	Longmeadows, remove/replace wooden steps embankment slide Monk's Hill	975.00	975.00	0.00
		3,543.42	3,469.40	74.02
Payments for retrospective approval				
BACS	GM Support playground/defib inspections	130.00	130.00	0.00
BACS	The Woodhorn Group, 12cubic metres of playbark for Monk's Hill	1,425.35	1,187.79	237.56
BACS	Dor-2-Dor, spring newsletter delivery	330.00	275.00	55.00
		1,885.35	1,592.79	292.56