

WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



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WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES of proceedings for the monthly meeting of Washington Parish Council held on Monday 8th April 2024.

PRESENT: Cllr S. Buddell (Chairman), Cllr B. Harvey, Cllr P. Heeley, Cllr T. Keech, Cllr A. Lisher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr J. Luckin and Cllr J. Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Joan Grech (HDC).

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Ms Z Savill

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 1

ABSENT: 1

The Chairman opened the meeting at 19:30 hours.

FC/24/4/1 To Accept Apologies for absence

The Council **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** apologies for absence from Cllr Lockerbie.

Apologies were noted from Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC), Cllr Emma Beard (HDC) and Cllr Claudia Fisher (HDC) due to prior commitments.

FC/24/4/2 To Record Declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed and Agree Dispensations

The Chairman declared an interest in Agenda item FC/24/4/7 regarding the dog bins, because his wife is a recently appointed Director of the Milford Grange (Storrington) Management Company Ltd.

FC/24/4/3 To Approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the draft minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 4th March 2024 which were duly signed by the Chairman.

FC/24/4/4 Public Speaking

Mr Alex Perkins spoke in support of his application to join the Council and his enthusiasm to serve the Washington community where he has lived for many years.

FC/24/4/5 To Consider Co-option for Councillor vacancies

It was reported that one application had been received for the co-option vacancy on the Heath Common Ward from Mr Alex Perkins and that he met the eligibility requirements.

S.S.B.

The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously that Mr Perkins be co-opted and he was welcomed to the Council. Cllr Perkins signed his acceptance of office at the end of the public part of the meeting and would submit a Register of Interests within 28 days. The Council would continue to advertise the two remaining co-option vacancies on the Washington Ward.

FC/24/4/6

To Review the Council's application form and co-option process

The Council reviewed improvements to the application form document used for councillor vacancies, and the co-option process, as there was concern these may be discouraging interest.

Members suggested a number of changes, and considered feedback from Cllr Perkins as he had very recent experience of the process.

Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to seek advice from WSALC/SLCC on the co-option process and revision of the form, based on comments made, to be considered at the next meeting. Clerk to action.

FC/24/4/7

Reports from County Councillor

Councillor Marshall did not attend and sent his apologies.

FC/24/4/8

Reports from District Councillors

Cllr Grech advised of the following matters in the parish:

- **Village pub wall and landscaping scheme:** No update on matters raised at the last meeting. Cllr Grech agreed to find out what had been approved, the deadline for compliance and how this was being handled by HDC.
- **Progress on the SDNPA Link pathway:** There was no update on why the SDNPA had not progressed the project. Cllr Luckin reported that she had raised the matter with Cllr Marshall recently and that he was waiting for feedback to his separate enquiries with WSCC's Public Rights of Way. Cllr Grech agreed to find out about SDNPA's involvement in the project and its progress to report back to the Council.
- **UPVC Windows decision:** Cllr Grech agreed to seek a response from HDC on the Parish Council's and local concerns raised at the last meeting about the approved retention of UPVC windows to a property in the village's conservation area, and the wider implications on HDC's handling and interpretation of planning compliance.

FC/24/4/9

Rampion 2 Examination: To Discuss and Agree further engagement by the Council.

The Council discussed attendance at the next Open Floor Hearing in May for the examination of the Rampion 2 windfarm proposed DCO application.

Members agreed that the Council's objection to the route through the village, as expressed by residents at a public meeting, needed amplification. So too did the PC's argument that Rampion had not adequately addressed its questions during the consultation about the choice of route when there was an alternative which avoids the village.

Cllr Grech agreed to find out any further responses from the SDNPA to the Examiner's Written Questions which may be relevant to the parish, and to request the SDNPA and HDC press for compensation to the community, including local businesses, through the S106 process.

The Council considered an estimate of £400 fee for Steve Tilbury Consultancy Ltd to attend a one-day hearing. It was noted that the planning consultancy had provided excellent service in making a previous written representation for the Council, and had advised on a number of occasions without charge.

Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the following:

- To engage Mr Tilbury to speak at the next Open Floor Hearing, to reiterate the points raised at the meeting on behalf of the Council, and any others that he advises; if he cannot attend, to ask if he is able to make a written submission.
- To approve the £400 quotation. To delegate authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to approve costs up to £1,000 if required.
- For one other Councillor to attend if available, and to notify the Clerk as soon as possible so that she can confirm arrangements with the Planning Inspectorate;

Cllr Grech left the meeting

FC/24/4/10 To Report on actions and matters arising from the last meeting.
The following was reported:

Action	Progress
Seek legal advice on whether it is compulsory for the council to call an annual meeting of the electorate. Clerk to action.	Actioned. Local Council legal specialist has advised that Section 9 of the Local Government Act 1972 makes provision that there 'should' be a parish meeting for each parish but there is no sanction if the meeting is not called.
Review by WSCC Highways Authority of the Council's request for yellow-backed speed signs on London Road in Washington village. Cllr Marshall to action.	Cllr Marshall agreed (FC March 2024 meeting) to take this up with the HA and report back to the Council
Monitor for replacement of the rotten timber support on the Recreation Ground for the UK Power Network pole. Clerk to action.	Replaced.
Write to agent for the Millford Grange Residents Association seeking approval for location of dog bins in the Country Park at entrances with Goerges Lane and Hampers Lane. Clerk to action	To be actioned.

The list was noted and a further update on the following was reported:

- **Update on the Council's request for yellow backing to the 30mph signs in the village**
West Sussex Highways Principal Traffic Engineer had advised that they "would not normally consider yellow backing" the signs in London Road and the Bostal.

The Officer's email (8th April) was read out to the meeting which explained that they assessed that the signs were visible and not obscured by vegetation, and that there was no record of traffic collisions in the last 5 years. GPS data was provided to show the all day average of speed throughout the roads were well below the signed

30mph.

The Council expressed disappointment and Cllr Luckin agreed to contact Cllr Marshall to push for the improvement.

The Council also expressed disappointment that important community issues raised at the last meeting under the HDC reports, had not been progressed. The Clerk was asked to contact the Ward representatives with a brief list of the points which had been raised by way of a reminder.

FC/24/4/11 To Ratify comments delegated to the Planning & Transport Committee for the following planning applications:

SDNP/24/00903/LIS - Church Farm Cottage The Street Washington RH20 4AS

Erection of a single storey rear extension (Listed Building Consent)

The Council considered and **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** the recommendation from the Planning & Transport Committee to make **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

SDNP/24/00902/HOUS - Church Farm Cottage The Street Washington RH20 4AS

Erection of a single storey rear extension (Householder)

The Council considered and **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** the recommendation from the Planning & Transport Committee to make **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

FC/24/4/12 To Consider a response to the following planning application:

SDNP/24/01021/HOUS -Swipes Farm, The Street, Washington West Sussex, RH20 4AT

Erection of a single storey extension to the existing agricultural workers dwelling

The Council considered this application and was of the opinion that the proposed extension would be too large, resulting in overdevelopment of the site which would be harmful to its sensitive countryside location within the South Downs National Park. For this reason the Council **RESOLVED** to make an **OBJECTION** to the application.

DC/24/0380 – Woodlands Hampers Lane Storrington West Sussex

Erection of a single storey rear extension and enlargement of rear terrace.

The Council considered this application and **RESOLVED** to make **NO OBJECTION**.

FC/24/4/13 Planning: To Report any decisions and appeals on significant applications in the parish and Report HDC updates on any compliance matters

The Council noted that the following were pending investigation by HDC:

EN/24/0075 28/02/2024 Bungalow 1 Old Clayton Boarding Kennels Storrington Road Washington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 4AG

Alleged: Occupation of dwelling in breach of legal agreement attached to application DC/04/2084 which restricts it to kennel use

EN/24/0076 28/02/2024 Bungalow 2 Old Clayton Boarding Kennels Storrington Road Washington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 4AG

Alleged: Occupation of dwelling in breach of legal agreement attached to application DC/04/2084 which restricts it to kennel use

FC/24/4/14 To Report the minutes of the SSWNP Steering Group Meeting on 2nd April 2024

Cllr Heeley reported on the Steering Group (SG) meeting which he attended on 2nd April with other Washington members Cllr Keech and Cllr Lisher and the Clerk to Washington Parish Council.

It was noted that the SG welcomed three new members elected by Storrington & Sullington

Parish Council: Cllr Bill Aitkenhead, Cllr Liz Greengrass and Cllr John Loney.
Cllr Aitkenhead was elected as the new Chairman of the SG, and Cllr Heeley would continue as Vice-Chairman. As the lead Qualifying Body for the Neighbourhood Plan, Storrington & Sullington Parish Council's Clerk would act as Clerk for the SG.

Cllr Heeley advised that the SG resolved to invite HDC's Senior Neighbourhood Planning Officer to advise on what is required for HDC to endorse the NP and any changes so that it remains valid after the 5-year-expiration in September 2024. This would allow the SG Members to go back to their respective Councils to recommend a course of action on the best way forward for their parishes. It had been agreed that in view of the relatively short time frame for the review process, the SG Clerk would make the arrangement as soon as possible.

The Council thanked Cllr Heeley for his report and agreed that it was important to have HDC's feedback quickly, ideally before the next Full Council Meeting on Monday 13th May. Clerk to seek confirmation.

FC/24/4/15 To Agree action on any urgent maintenance of council property
None raised.

FC/24/4/16 To Accept Notice to Vacate Plot 4 on the Allotment and Agree new tenancy
Members considered an application for Plot 4 from a resident in neighbouring Thakeham parish. It was noted that the existing plot holder was willing to release the tenancy before it expires end of April because the applicant was keen to start working the plot.

Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the application for the new tenancy subject to the agreement terms. Clerk to advise the current plot holder on replacement of the gate post which was reported as unstable and deteriorating.

FC/24/4/17 To Consider a CIL grant application for funding towards new gable windows at the Village Hall
Members considered a grant application from the Village Hall Trustees for £590 (excluding VAT) towards the replacement of 4 gable windows in the roof of the Chanctonbury Room.

It was noted that this was part of the hall's energy efficiency improvement projects which the Council had previously supported in principle, upon recommendation by the CIL Working Party

Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** £590 grant to be awarded under powers of the Local Government Act 1972 Section 133. To advise the Trustees that the Council is unable to take on the responsibility of the VAT payment.

FC/24/4/18 To Consider a CIL grant application for funding towards water heaters at the Village Hall
Members considered a grant application from the Village Hall Trustees for £1,767 (excluding VAT) for trialling of the replacement of hot water storage with instant electric water heaters at point of use.

It was noted that this was part of a wider £3,892 project to reduce water heating costs, which the Council had previously supported in principle, upon recommendation by the CIL Working Party.

Members agreed that the grant was not additional to the value of the project originally put forward by the Trustees, but was a first step in its implementation.

Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** £1,767 under its powers of the Local Government Act 1972 Section 133. To advise the Trustees that the Council is unable to take on the responsibility of VAT payment.

S.J.B

FC/24/4/19 To Approve Payments, Report Income and Bank Reconciliation

The Council **RESOLVED** that payments totalling **£8,193.67** for the following invoices be **APPROVED**:

Voucher	Name	Description	Amount
1	NEST	Pension Mar 2024	£216.78
2	NEST	Pension backpayment May 2020-Jan 2024	£697.56
3	HMRC	Tax & NICs	£1,558.51
4	S Russell	Litter warden	£166.72
5	WSALC	Subscription	£739.26
6	Hags-Smp Ltd	Play Area safety surface	£887.11
7	Sussex Land Services Ltd	Hedge Cutting	£714.00
8	Horsham District Council	Dog bin emptying	£40.95
9	Horsham District Council	Litter Bin emptying	£9.00
10	Washington Village Hall Memorial Hall Charity	CIL Grant	£1,349.00
11-16	Z Savill	Clerks salary (net) & expenses	£1,814.78
		Total to pay	£8,193.67

FC/24/4/20 To Report back payment of the Council's staff pension contributions.

Cllr Keech advised that he had successfully set up a Direct Debit for the Council's £697.56 back payment of further contributions to NEST for the Clerk's pension, approved by Full Council in March, Minute Ref: FC/24/3/16.

The Clerk advised on an anomaly with the NEST reporting process which was not recognising the Council's new contributions paid for February and March. A warning notice had been issued and the Clerk would seek NEST's advice to resolve the matter.

FC/24/4/21 To Report the reconciled bank balance of the Council's accounts

The Council **NOTED** bank reconciliations to 31st March 2024 for the Council's following accounts:

Lloyds Treasurer's Account (current): **£52,969.62**

Nationwide Business Savings Account: **£86,634.73 + £1,634.73 annual interest**

It was agreed that the interest should be paid into the Lloyds account so that the savings remain protected under the FSCS threshold of £85,000. Clerk to action.

FC/24/4/22 To Report income received:

The Council **NOTED** receipt of the following income of **£ 3,435.78** (£1,702.64 Q3 2023.24 vat reclaimed + £1,634.73 bank interest + £98.41 allotment rent)

FC/24/4/23 To Report outstanding receipts:

The Council **NOTED** the outstanding receipts of **£10.92** allotment rents

FC/24/4/24 To Report Correspondence

The Council noted the correspondence received and no further action was required.

FC/24/4/25 Clerk's Report

Legal update

The Council noted the legal update on the public procurement threshold and other matters, advised by WSALC.

To Approve time off in lieu from 13th-14th March 2024

The Council considered the Clerk's request for three days off in lieu, additional to 8.4 hours to be carried 8.4 hours already approved at the last meeting. The Chairman advised that the Clerk had been required to work on 13th and 14th March in her annual leave and on a non-working day on 15th March to deal with a time sensitive legal matter.

Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** three days' time off in lieu. Clerk to liaise with the Chairman separately on which dates to be taken.

FC/24/4/26 To Receive items for the next agenda and Chairman's announcements

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed to a review of the Council's Communications Policy. Clerk agreed to schedule this for a Personnel Committee meeting.

FC/24/4/27 Dates and times of next meetings:

The Council noted the following meeting dates:

Full Council Meeting: Monday 13th May 2024, 7:30pm

Planning & Transport Committee: Monday 22nd April 2024, 7:00pm: Cllr Heeley and Cllr Thomas gave apologies for this meeting. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting would be quorate with the four remaining members.

Open Spaces Committee: Monday 22nd April 2024, 7:45pm: Cllr Buddell gave apologies for this meeting.

FC/24/4/28 To Consider exclusion of the Public and Press pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Council's Standing Orders from the next confidential item relating to land easement negotiations.

The Council **RESOLVED** to exclude the Public and Press from the next items relating to legal advice on land easement negotiations, and a Civility and Respect matters, minute reference **FC/24/4/22 and FC/24/4/24**

Cllr Perkins signed his acceptance of office before the Clerk as witness, and left the meeting. There were no Members of the Public or Press.

FC/24/4/29 Rampion 2 Key Terms - Option & Easement documentation and Fees [CJO-WORKSITE.FID267626]: To Discuss and Agree a response to letter from Carter Jonas.

The Council discussed the latest email dated 20th March 2024 from Carter Jonas, Rampion's appointed land agent, inviting initial queries on their Heads of Terms on access for the proposed inshore cable route on the Recreation Ground, so that they can start drafting responses. A standard letter from the agent with a similar request was received 22nd March and circulated to all before the meeting together with supporting legal documents.

Members expressed disappointment that they had not had answers to the Council's recorded letter on 20th February 2024, confirming its willingness to engage in negotiations, subject to Rampion meeting all fees reasonably incurred for professional advice.

It was noted that the developer's terms offered last March on their allowance to pay fees reasonably incurred, did not appear to have changed. The cap was significantly lower than the initial estimate for professional services required for the Council to meet its main legal obligations as a public body and charity trustee. Agents contacted by the Council previously were either unable to offer their services or work on a capped basis, owing to the complexity of the project and requirements unique to each landowner.

Members shared concerns about the negotiations process and that without the ability to engage professional advice, the Council could not be represented at the forthcoming Compulsory Land Acquisition hearings.

Following a discussion, the Council **RESOLVED** the following:

- To share initial points with Rampion's land agent on the terms previously drafted by Cllr Hanvey and Cllr Lockerbie, being matters it will be bringing to the attention of a professional advisor once the Council is in a position to engage their services.
- To reiterate the Council's disappointment not to have received an answer to the Council's letter on 20th February about fees, and that this will prejudice the Council's ability to meet the best interests of the community and as a charity trustee, and to be represented at the Rampion 2 DCO examination Compulsory land acquisition hearings in May.

FC/24/4/30 To Consider legal advice regarding a 'Civility and Respect' matter.

The Council considered information regarding a 'Civility and Respect' matter. Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** no action was required at this time.

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was closed at 9:38pm

Signed:



Dated: 13 MAY 2024

Acronyms

AIRS Action in Rural Sussex
AGAR Annual Governance and Accountability Return
CIL Community Infrastructure Levy
CPRE Council for the Protection of Rural England
CSW Community Speed Watch
DCO Development Consent Order
DPO Data Protection Officer
FSCS Financial Services Compensation Scheme
HALC Horsham Association of Local Councils
HDC Horsham District Council
HDPF Horsham District Planning Framework
HAMSVVA Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Association
ICO Information Commission Office
LGS Local Green Space
NALC National Association of Local Councils
SSWNP: Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
PCC Police Crime Commissioner
PINS Planning Inspectorate
PROW Public Rights of Way
SDNPA South Downs National Park Authority
SDNP South Downs National Park
SHELAA Strategic Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment
SID Speed Indicator Device
SLCC Society of Local Council Clerks
TPO Tree Preservation Order
TRO Traffic Regulation Order
TTRO Temporary Traffic Regulation Order
VAS Vehicle Activation Device
WPC Washington Parish Council
WRGC Washington Recreation Ground Charity
WSALC West Sussex Association of Local Councils
WSCC West Sussex County Council