



**AGREED Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday  
15<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

<p><b>Present:</b> Cllr Graham Zacharias (GZ) – Chairman; Cllr Tony Marshall (TM); Cllr Mat Cheshire (MC); Cllr; Cllr Sam Cox (SC); Cllr Jeremy Rigby (JR); Cllr Jeremy Hunt (JH WSCC); Cllr Henry Potter (HP CDC) 5 members of the public also attended.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence – PW</b></p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 2 – Co-Option of New Councillor</b> – GZ announced that Jo Ward was interested in becoming a councillor. JW was invited to give a short presentation. Following this presentation a vote was taken, SC proposed that JW be elected to the Parish Council, this was seconded by MC, all councillors unanimously agreed.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 3 – Declaration of Interests/ Dispensation Requests</b> - There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 4 - Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting</b> – to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023. It was <b>Resolved that</b> that the minutes were correct, GZ signed the minutes.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 5 – County Councillor Report</b> – Mr Jeremy Hunt, Chichester North Division – WSCC  <b>Have your say on the County Council’s budget proposals for next year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Sussex County Council is asking residents for their views on its priorities and how it proposes to spend taxpayers’ money as it works to close a £44.9m budget gap for the coming year (2024/25).</li> <li>• Cllr Paul Marshall, Leader of West Sussex County Council, said: “Inflationary costs, a growing need for services, and measures to protect the environment, mean councils across the country are having to make tough choices in order to plan for the future.</li> <li>• “We know people in our communities, especially the most vulnerable, rely on our services so it’s important we ensure our spending aligns with the priorities in <a href="#">Our Council Plan</a>, focusing on what matters most to our communities.</li> <li>• “At the same time, we are very conscious that it is not our money we are spending, but our residents’ and businesses’ money, and that it is our responsibility to ensure the money is spent well in delivering cost-effective and value for money services.”</li> <li>• The county council’s budget proposals include reductions of £11.8m alongside a possible increase of council tax of 2.99%, plus an additional adult social care precept of 2%.</li> <li>• The proposals also include an extra £53m in revenue spending on vital services including an additional £31.2m for vulnerable children and young people, £12.3m more for adults’ social care, and an extra £5m to maintain the county’s 4,000km of roads.</li> <li>• If approved, the current proposals would still leave a budget gap of £4.4m to be bridged, something which has been described as ‘challenging but achievable’.</li> <li>• The consultation asks residents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what they think are the most vital county council services</li> <li>• where they’d spend or reduce money</li> <li>• which options they feel the county council should focus on to achieve a balanced budget</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- Full details of the consultation, which is open until 10 December 2023, can be found at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/budget](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/budget). Anyone without access to the internet can visit a library or family hub to complete the consultation.

- Cllr Jeremy Hunt, West Sussex Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, said: “We know how important it is to make best use of our limited resources. And with the increased financial pressures and demands being felt by everyone we are looking at every available option to ensure we can protect vital services and invest in the priorities of Our Council Plan.

- “It’s important for us to hear the views of our residents on these matters so I would urge people to take part in the consultation and help guide our budget plans.

- “In the meantime, we are committed to continue to lobby government to recognise the funding constraints being placed on local authorities and the rising demand that is impacting local services.”

- The Cabinet is due to consider feedback from the public consultation at a meeting in January before recommending the Council Plan and budget to Full Council in February next year for a final decision.

### **Investing in Better Roads**

This is a new website covering many aspects of how we are investing in our roads. The website includes a lot of information, some key facts and some videos. I would urge you to visit the site @

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/maintaining-roads-verges-and-pavements/road-maintenance/better-roads/>

### **16 to 20 Bus Saver fares introduced**

Young people aged 16 to 20 are now able to qualify for a discounted bus fare with the launch of a new ‘16 to 20 Bus Saver’ scheme developed by West Sussex County Council alongside bus operators and funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of a national scheme to boost bus services. West Sussex received a £19m grant.

- From Sunday 22 October this year, young people were able to receive the new discounted bus fares if their journey starts or finishes anywhere within West Sussex. The ‘16 to 20 Bus Saver’ means young people can benefit from reduced child rate fares offered by their local bus operator.

- When young people reach the age of 16, they usually stop qualifying for the cheaper child-rate tickets when travelling on the bus, and often end up having to pay an adult fare. This new scheme means young people can continue to receive a discount right up until the day before their 21st birthday, giving them the freedom to travel for less - whether it’s getting to college or university, attending a job interview, traveling to work, or meeting up with friends.”

- The new scheme is expected to run until March 2025 and could be extended by bus operators if successful. To get the discount, young people just need to show a valid ID or a [Citizencard](#).

Joy added: “We want to help young people become more independent and fulfil their potential and a key focus of [Our Council Plan](#) is to enable active travel and access to education, employment and services for our residents. The new ‘16 to 20 Bus Saver’ not only helps us to do this but it also provides a more affordable and environmentally friendly travel option for young people.”

For more information on the new ‘16 to 20 Bus Saver’ scheme, visit: [www.westsussex.gov.uk/16to20BusSaver](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/16to20BusSaver)

### **WSSC’s meals on wheels service has been crowned one of the best in the country**

West Sussex County Council’s meals on wheels service has been crowned one of the best in the country after being named joint winner of a prestigious national award.

- West Sussex County Council and service provider Health & Independent Living Support (HILS) were one of four joint winners of this year’s Meals On Wheels Service of the Year prize at the National Association of Care Catering Awards, which were held on 5 October.

- Throughout the year the service offers more than just a hot meal to our customers. Delivery teams also offer a friendly face, company and someone to check they are safe and well. Alongside our service provider HILS, we have worked in partnership with other organisations to raise awareness of various wellbeing and care initiatives, as well as share important practical advice. This helps support people to

continue to live independently in their own homes, which we know is extremely important to many of our residents.

- For more information about the meals on wheels service, or to sign up to receive meals in West Sussex contact please call 0330 2000 103, email [westsussex@hils-uk.org](mailto:westsussex@hils-uk.org) or

#### **The Home Upgrade Grant.**

This is available across the county through the Warmer Homes programme. It is aimed at lower income households living in the least energy efficient homes without gas central heating. Residents can qualify for free energy efficiency improvements worth thousands of pounds. These include solid wall insulation (up to £10,000), air source heat pumps (up to £14,000) and solar panels (up to £6,000).

To qualify, residents must ensure that:

Their home is not heated by mains gas (e.g. you use electric, oil or LPG).

Their Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating is D, E, F or G (this can be checked by Warmer Homes if the resident is unsure).

They have a household income of £31,000 or under, or receive a means tested benefit.

The funding is available to owner occupiers and private rental tenants only. For private rental tenants, their landlord will be required to make a financial contribution. Residents can apply through the Warmer Homes website [www.warmerhomes.org.uk/apply](http://www.warmerhomes.org.uk/apply) or calling the freephone number - 0800 038 5757.

#### **Here to help - cost of living**

WSCC has dedicated web pages to provide you with the latest help, advice and practical support for those facing cost of living pressures. Please go to [Advice and information pages](#)

- **Local Issues**

#### **Communities Highways Project**

I understand that a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14th between our highways team and the PC (TM?) to review the proposed scheme. I presume that there will therefore be an update brought to the meeting. I apologise that I do not have any further information on these plans, but unfortunately I have not been party to the correspondence between the PC and our officers. Could I please ask that in future I am copied in to any dealings that the PC are having with the CC, as it is obviously helpful if I know what progress is - or is not - being made. I can then at least try to ensure that things progress in a timely way, or at least understand what is going on if any issues arise.

#### **Communities highway scheme - Binderton/West Dean Speed Limit reduction**

Just to let you know that West Dean PC applied for a Communities TRO scheme to implement a 50mph speed limit between West Dean and Binderton, a 40mph limit through Binderton and then a 50mph limit through to Lavant. The speed data has supported this application, as do the Sussex Police. Our TRO team have therefore confirmed that hopefully the scheme should be out for consultation prior to Christmas, but the exact timings are still to be confirmed.

Finally, please don't forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

#### **Agenda Item 6 - District Councillor Report – Mr Henry Potter, Goodwood Ward**

##### **Henry Potter**

Nothing to report of direct concern for singleton but generally, the delay in preparing the final review of the District Local Plan for presentation to the Inspectorate for adoption is slipping further into the future. This, all because of the indifference and lack of support by National Highways for the necessary works to the A27 included in the review to enable the target of 625 new homes per annum to be met. By law, the review and adoption of a new Local Plan MUST be completed by mid 2025! But there is a grave risk that this may not be met. The transport study which was carried out in 2016, is now hopelessly out of date, evidenced by the current situations surrounding Chichester. If a new transport study is deemed necessary this will take another 9 or 10 months which will take us close to this cut off date. It is hard to appreciate that an Agency, NH, responsible for transport, the back bone of our economy, can be so negative.

The most recent two meetings of the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel have really exposed the difficulties faced by our Planning Officers. And of course. The only consolation is that NH have suggested that major planning decisions should be refused or deferred until any impact on the Highways Network is resolved. Quite what will become of the Strategic Site for 1,300 new homes at Tangmere which already benefits from Outline Permission must be in doubt due to the immense impact on the A27, which is already 'at capacity'

In the meantime WSCC have proposed a review of the highways network around Chichester in order to mitigate the increased use of A and B class roads. What they could possibly do to New Road, Hunters Race and other feeder roads is far beyond my imagination.

Invites should soon be issued for any Local Authorities, PCs, schools landowners to apply for discounted tree saplings to plant in neighbourhoods. This scheme follows last years introduction of the Queens Green Canopy during which 25,000 trees were planted throughout the District. We hope it will be repeated this winter. I appreciate that The Goodwood Estate have been proactive in planting trees but if the PC would like to join this scheme and plant a few more trees throughout the parish, details can be found on the CDC Website.

The recent weather has certainly tested our resources, though I must report that, apart from localised flooding we have been luckier than most. The threat of storm Ciaran was well addressed by most responsible Authorities by issuing warnings and helpful contact details to report any incidents. As I write this it looks to have passed us by with the worst fear for us, Power Failure, not materialising. We must be thankful. Apart from the torrential rain causing flooding in exceptional places, I think it was less damaging than the '87 Storm.

At last weeks meeting (07/11) The Cabinet considered the Councils Financial Strategy and Plan for '24-'25 through to '28-'29. This includes setting the minimum level of Reserves, this is recommended by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. Also that the reserve budget of £8m set aside for the potential needs caused by the Cv19 pandemic, and unused, be returned to the General Reserve Fund. Another issue to be considered is a recommendation to increase Car Parking Charges but this will be subject to a Public Consultation which I am sure will attract much criticism from users. These are still reasonable compared to other municipalities, Winchester and Horsham are cited in the Cabinet Report, but the sight of so many empty parking spaces in our car parks at any time of day should be of great concern. I can only think of Freddie Laker whose motto was "sell 'em cheap and fill every seat" I hear many folk complain about car parking charges, any increase is unlikely to be welcome. The occupancy of the Chichester Park Hotel has now settled down and I'm pleased that the demonstrations are over. I have heard of no problems to date and I wish them well. HP reported that he had been contacted by a family member of Lady Benson, the tenant of Cucumber Farm, regarding the proposed new route of the Centurion Way through Wellhanger Wood. HP has forwarded the email to John Cross who is the District Council's representative for the SDNP and Janet Duncton who is also a member of the SDNP. GZ asked that this be discussed under the next agenda item – Public Open Forum.

**Agenda Item 7 – Public Open Forum** – An MOP raised the issue of the proposed new route of the Centurion Way through Rook Wood and Wellhanger Copse. He outlined the history of the Centurion Way Route and the concerns about the route from Cucumber Farm, in particular the fact that there is a large bat population in the area and the proximity of the route to the Game Keepers cottage. This has been raised with the SDNP and on site meetings has been held. An alternative has been suggested, however, planning permission would need to be sought. The MOP gave copies of two bat reports to the Parish Council which have been prepared by Ecologists from the Bat Group, which laid out the danger of removing a large amount of trees as this would disturb the natural habitat of the bat population (there are 10,000 bats swarming in this area) and other reptiles and animals. Currently a large number of trees have been marked and some felling took place along the proposed route even though the planning permission hasn't yet been granted. Work has now stopped and a new third route has been proposed by representatives from Cucumber Farm and Drovers Shoot, which stays well away from the bats. Another MOP who is part of the Cucumber Farm representation raised the fact that the proposed new path by the SDNP would go through a beautiful wood with lot of flora and fauna and wildlife and destroy this area

<p>given the width of the current Centurion path. She supports the new suggested route or alternatively would support the original route. JR the Parish Council Representative for the Centurion Way outlined the situation as he understood it as, 1) the residents in the area object to the new proposed route. 2) There is new ecology evidence that was not available when planning permission was granted in 2018 for the route through Wellhanger Copse. 3) There is a new suggested third route that the MOP's would like the Parish Council to support. JR pointed out that as the land is owned by The National Trust, it is possible that if they give permission there may be very little that can be done to stop it. JH pointed out that when the planning permission was raised in 2018, it would have been in the public domain and any concerned organisations would have been able to view the application and make representations. Another MOP asked if there were grounds to object to the 2018 planning application as there was supposed to be access via the Singleton Railway Station and that is not now happening, it was also suggested that it contravenes the Partnership Management Plan in the SDNP Plan. JR pointed out that the SDNP are still exploring different routes including for access to and from Hat Hill. JR asked that the Parish Council give a mandate to investigate the background to the new suggested route from Cucumber Farm. It was agreed that more information was required before taking any decisions. JR &amp; VEN are attending a pre consultation being given by the SDNP and to gain more information and will report back on what was discussed. An MOP reported back that his boss has requested that the Parish Council hold a dedicated meeting about the new plans for the Centurion Way. JH suggested that the Parish Council should gather all the relevant information and then report back at the next Parish Council Meeting. A decision can then be taken about holding a dedicated meeting for all stakeholders and interested parties. JH also reported that the issue regarding the safety and funding of the footpath from West Dean to Singleton has still not been resolved.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 8 – Council Matters</b></p> <p>Meeting Dates to be agreed – Dates were circulated prior to the meeting and were unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Policies – These were circulated prior to the meeting, apart from a couple of typo's they were unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Clerk Annual Pay Rise for 1<sup>st</sup> April'23 to 31<sup>st</sup> March'24 – GZ outlined the increase approved by NALC which amounts to a £1 an hour. The increase is backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. The increase was unanimously agreed.</p> <p>IGas Grant – The application for this grant needs to be submitted by the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024, it was agreed to apply and if successful, their would be a donation towards the Charlton Gateway's with the balance going towards the School Parking Project.</p> <p>Future Projects 2024 – GZ asked the councillors to submit to him their thoughts and ideas for future projects to be discussed at the January meeting. It was also agreed to produce a questionnaire/poster with QR code, to ask the parishioners of both Singleton and Charlton what their priorities would be. TM and JW will work together on the questionnaire and also hold an open meeting in the future.</p> <p>Village Hall VAT Accounting – GZ outlined a proposal that would enable the Village Hall to claim back VAT. Having referred to the Deed of Gift which states that the Parish Council is responsible for keeping the building in good repair and that the Village Hall Management Committee should provide the Parish Council sufficient funds to meet all expenditure. This procedure has been checked with the auditor who agreed that this procedure was okay. The email from the auditor will be attached to these minutes. An MOP asked the question about why there is a separate Village Hall Management Committee when the hall is owned by the Parish Council. GZ said that this question has been raised before and that it was too bigger question to be discussed at this meeting. He pointed out that according to the Deed of Gift the Parish Council should have two representatives on the Village Hall Management Committee which is the case and that currently they were facing a big task to ensure that the hall is legal and it has been recognised that a considerable amount of work needs to be carried out to future proof the fabric of the hall. This work has now started and the hall is now legal.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 9 - Village Matters</b></p> <p>The Leys Parking Project, Bike Racks – JR reported that there were three outstanding items to complete in the area. 1) Planting of Trees being supplied by the SDNP, which will arrive in the next few weeks. 2) EV Charging Points and 3) Bike Racks which are a condition of the grant received from Rees Jeffreys. It is</p>	

<p>proposed that we buy wooden bike posts as used by the SDNP on the Centurion Way at West Dean. These are more suitable for a rural location and would not need any maintenance. JR proposes to apply to the Rural England Prosperity Fund under the Accessibility and Active Travel section, the decision on this grant will not be until Spring 2024. Therefore, it is requested that the Parish Council provide the funds to enable the purchase of the posts and if successful the grant will cover 80% of this outlay. It was unanimously agreed to purchase the posts. JR mentioned that he is looking into the school parking and has consulted with WSCC and Landbuild and the favoured option is that the layby is extended to the end of the school playing field and the cars park nose to tail which should accommodate 15-20 cars. It was agreed to obtain further quotes from WSCC approved suppliers and then re-visit the project once we have more information. This would be a major project and would require substantial fund raising.</p> <p>Community Highway Scheme (CHS) Update –A meeting was held with the Project Manager and Engineer from WSCC, where the plans for this scheme were outlined. VN gave a brief summary what they propose to offer under the CHS Scheme. The intention is that there will be a 20 mile an hour limit on the A286 from the bottom of Town Lane to the Gateways at the North of the village. This limit will also run through Singleton Village from the A286 along the Charlton Road to where the 30 mile an hour limit currently starts between Charlton and Singleton. There will be a Courtesy Crossing by the Cricket Pitch and outside Little Drove Mews, also, at the entrance to the village by the pond. There will be a build out by the Bus Stop on the A286, North side and another Courtesy Crossing to make it safer for pedestrians to cross, this will also allow for pushchairs and wheelchairs to cross safely. The junction of Town Lane will be adapted to enable safer entry and exit from and to the A286, the 30 mile an hour limit will be extended up the hill past the Museum and the pedestrian crossing will be improved by the Museum. Work on this scheme will start later in 2024 and continue into 2025. TM will write a document which will outline the full plans, this will be circulated to all interested parties and also appear on our website.</p> <p>TRO – Charlton – TM outlined the proposal to apply for a TRO for 20 mile an hour from the Charlton sign by the entrance to Levin Down through the village to the existing 30 mile sign at the East Dean end of the village. Also, 20 mile an hour where the existing 30 signs are along Knights Hill. JH said that he would support the application and for TM to notify him when the application has been submitted and he will email the necessary department to give his official support. TM will also canvas other stakeholders for written support. It was unanimously agreed that all councillors support this application.</p> <p>Footpaths – SC raised the fact that the footpaths on the A286 and almost impassable and unsafe for pedestrians. VN said that these should be reported on the WSCC site - <a href="http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/">www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/</a> anyone can report any issue on this site. There was a discussion about whether the pathways could be cleared by volunteers. GZ suggested that we get some quotes from contractors. VN suggested that we contact the Chichester Volunteers who are supported by WSCC, contact will be forwarded to SC.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 12 – Finance</b>  Total in Current Account (14/11/23) – £11,110.54  Balance in Savings Account – £7,047.38  <b>Funds Received since 13/09/23</b>  Precept - £12,670.50  VAT Refund - £7,524.08</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 13 – Planning</b>  Reports have been circulated, posted on the notice boards and website.</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Closed – 21.10</b></p>	
<p><b>Confirmed that these minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.</b>  Signed: GRAHAM ZACHARIAS  Name &amp; Position: CHAIRMAN  Date:</p>	