

Worth Parish Council
Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on
25th July 2022 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Dorey (Chairman)
Cllr Cruickshank
Cllr Dymond
Cllr Hodsdon
Cllr Mayor
Cllr Pointer
Cllr Stewart

Cllr Casella
Cllr Gibson
Cllr King
Cllr Phillips
Cllr Webb

Mrs T Cruickshank (Deputy Clerk) 2 members of the public

63 Public Question Time

No members of the public wished to speak at this time.

64 Apologies

Apologies were noted and accepted from Cllrs Coote, Hitchcock, Lord and Williams.
Absent Cllr Scott.

65 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point of the meeting.

66 Minutes

It was agreed by all present that the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 27th June 2022 were a true and correct record.

67 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of minute taking.

68 Correspondence & Action List

Cllrs Gibson queried an item relating to ANPR cameras which was previously on the action list, he reminded Cllrs that the WSCC strategy was to amend behaviour towards speeding and that seeing your car registration flash up above your speed does this.
The Chairman advised more investigation was taking place into the provision of ANPR cameras.
Cllr Gibson said he was keen on having ANPR cameras linked to the SID.

The correspondence and action lists were NOTED.

Cllr Hodsdon arrived at 7.33pm

69 Committees

The following Committee Minutes and actions therein were NOTED.

Planning & Highways Committee, 13th & 27th June 2022
Date of next meeting, 25th July 2022

General Purposes & Finance Committee, 13th June 2022
Date of next meeting, 5th September 2022

It was NOTED that the following meeting took place; recommendations and actions from this meeting to be considered under Agenda Item 19.

HR Committee, 29th June 2022

70 County Councillors' Report

Cllr Forbes advised that the 281-bus service is continuing to use its existing route and isn't going through the Copthorne site. Metrobus are not happy to use the spine road at the moment because of on-going construction operations. There is no plan to change the proposal for the route of the service and it is still envisaged that they will ultimately use the spine road.

Cllr Forbes had sought for an update on new School provisions in Copthorne, previously there were concerns over traffic movements and the affect on air quality and noise levels, answers to these concerns are still outstanding due to the pandemic and the resulting changes to travel patterns.

He also noted that identification of funding is needed before any certainty on a new school at Heathy Wood is confirmed.

Cllr Forbes had asked for clarification on MSDC's stance on the Royal Oak pub, he had been pointed to the scrutiny committee minutes where they confirmed that yes, the Pub is an asset of community value and as it is privately owned MSDC will not be taking any action.

Cllr Forbes advised the council that planning application DM/21/3805 had been withdrawn. As it has become clearer to officers that a small area in the north-western corner of the District, within which the application site is located, is likely to be affected by a water neutrality issue.

In his capacity as County Councillor Cllr Gibson advised he had attended an interesting Justice Service presentation, where a discussion took place around integrated care, a motion was passed to increase the carers allowance. He had received a written question on the way MSDC was approaching the land swap for the Imberhorne Farm development, this will involve both Imberhorne Farm and the school, at present the link between the two does not seem to have been made, Cllr Gibson will be pressing this.

Cllr Gibson advised he was receiving an increase in correspondence around parking issues in the village.

71 District Councillors' Report

In his capacity as District Councillor Cllr Webb noted that the MSDC case officer for application DM/22/1130 Crawley Down Village Hall is minded to refuse the application.

Both councillors Webb and Gibson will ask the application to be called in if the officer is minded to approve.

In his capacity as a District Councillor Cllr Gibson noted that work was taking place 'at pace' on the next review of the Site Allocations DPD agreed at MSDC on 29th June, a working group had been set up and findings would be published this autumn.

72 Accounts & Financial Matters

Legal advice re managing land in front of Crawley Down shops

The Crawley Down Environment & Infrastructure Working Party asked the Clerk to get a quote for legal advice as to how to enter into an agreement with multiple landowners to manage the area in front of the shops in Crawley Down

The Deputy Clerk advised more information had been required, this has now been supplied by Cllr Scott. The Clerk/Deputy Clerk will now proceed to seek legal advice.

Cllr Gibson asked if this included the area between the Barbers and Mc Colls.

Cllrs NOTED this.

73 Council Land and Buildings

The Deputy Clerk referred to her report. The Sussex Film Office asked permission to be granted for promotional photos of Copthorne village for the Taylor Wimpey Development, this was due to take place on 19/7/22 but has been postponed due to the extreme heat, new date TBC.

Cllrs NOTED this information.

SKY & WIFI at the Pavilion

Comms and IT has sourced quotes for the installation of Wi-Fi at the Pavilion.

Sky Pro Package as follows - Monthly rental £24.95, installation £79.00, router £12.00 for a 24-36 month contract.

Cllrs AGREED to proceed with the Sky Pro package as above.

74 Vision Document

Both E&I Working Parties have been working on this document for some time; a copy had been shared in meeting pack.

Cllr Gibson questioned when a representative from Sussex Clubs for Young people would be attending a WPC meeting, The deputy Clerk will chase this up.

Cllr Pointer asked what 'cycle path to Crawley' meant within the document.

The Chairman said that this was a fluid document which would evolve over time and would be updated as projects progress.

Cllr Gibson noted that there was no mention of the Crawley Down pond or village hall, Cllr Hodsdon agreed that the pond had missed out of the document and that Cllr Scott would be able to give more information on the pond.

Cllrs AGREED to adopt the Vision document.

75 Community Emergency Plan

The Deputy Clerk referred to the report in the meeting pack.

Work on this Plan has been ongoing for some time, liaising with MSDC and other organisations. Its purpose is to enable the community to assist residents in the event of a local emergency. A draft copy is included in this meeting pack.

Councillors were asked to confirm if they are willing to assist in the implementation of the Plan, in the event of an emergency and whether they are willing to share mobile numbers.

Some work is still required on the plan, such as establishing rest centres, it needs to be adopted to link in with MSDC.

There is some expenditure required, a total cost of £294.25.

Item	Cost	VAT	Quantity	Total	Supplier	Notes
Loud Hailers	18.99		2	37.98	Amazon	
C batteries	11.19		2 packs of 12	22.38	Amazon	8 spares
Torches	8.99		4	35.96	Amazon	With batteries
AA batteries	8.98		1	8.98	Amazon	Pack of 24
High Vis Jackets	2.95		20	59	Amazon	17 Councillors and 3 for staff
Waterproof Clipboard	18.99		2	37.98	Amazon	
Note pads and pens	13.99		2	27.98	Amazon	22 pads and pens in total
Pay as you Go Mobile	49.99		1	49.99	Tesco	Includes PAYG SIM
£10 Tesco Mobile Top Up	10		1	0	Tesco	Free if bought with handset
Storage Box	14		1	14	Amazon	
				294.25		

The purpose of having a dedicated phone, is that a designated person will have this at all times to be alerted in the case of an emergency.

Cllr Webb had read the plan and had a list of possible amendments. The Deputy Clerk asked him to email the list to her so the plan could be amended if necessary.

Councillors AGREED to confirm they were willing to assist as stated above.

Councillors AGREED to approve the above expenditure and AGREED to adopt this Plan in principle subject to amendments.

76 CCTV Installation

The Deputy Clerk referred to her meeting report.

The Clerk has asked for a revised quotation from ChromaVision, for the supply, installation and commissioning of a CCTV system, with initially three cameras in Copthorne and three cameras in Crawley Down, this is still outstanding.

The Clerk has sought advice from the Internal Auditors, as the contract is over the £25,000 threshold as defined in Financial Regulations, as ChromaVision are the preferred supplier for Sussex Police, to confirm if this requirement can be waived.

The Deputy Clerk has chased all relevant parties in the past week with no luck, she and the Clerk will continue to do so and bring this back to a future meeting.

Councillors NOTED this.

77 Community Governance Review

The Chairman referred to the figures produced by Mulberry & Co included in the meeting pack.

These have been shared on the Council's website, with a link to this on Facebook, and have been forwarded to MSDC for information.

Councillors were asked to consider the response to the second CGR consultation from the CGR Working Party shown below.

'In the draft recommendations following the first consultation of the CGR to divide WPC into separate Parish/Village Councils, MSDC requested that "WPC and the petitioners should supply to this Review their assessment of these division costs with evidential annotations for each cost, so that MSDC may see how they have been arrived at."

Before the initial Consultation, attempts to engage with the petitioners regarding agreeing precept budget proposals in the event of a separation, or agreeing the potential costs of a split within the Council Governance Framework, had been unsuccessful. WPC took the decision therefore to appoint an independent body to perform a review agreeing that we would accept the findings of said review regardless of the outcome. Mulberry & Co have acted as auditor for WPC, as well as a number of other local authorities, for many years and Andy Beams of Mulberry was an ideal candidate to perform the review with the appropriate skills and reference knowledge the petitioners wanted.

As detailed in the report, "Andy [Beams] has over 30 years' experience in the financial sector, specialising in the local government sector since 2010. During this time, Andy has worked as a Clerk/RFO at councils of various sizes, and now works as an internal auditor, local authority consultant and trainer of local authority officers and councillors, as well as providing locum Clerk/RFO services and mentoring and support for new Clerks across the south-east of England." His independence and professional capability are beyond challenge.

The attached report is the output of his work and WPC submit this report to MSDC as independent evidence of the one-off costs of £50-60K to separate the Council, and an on-going, additional £51,750 per annum increase in overall precept to residents as a result of duplicated operating costs. We would also like to make some observations regarding the content of the report that we feel are pertinent to MSDC within the determination process.

1. We agree with Mr Beams that likening a potential CDVC to Turners Hill is not a fair comparison as Turners Hill is a much smaller Ward than CDVC would be (approx. ¼ the tax base). Therefore, we also conclude that the staffing costs projected in the proposed CDVC precept budget are inappropriate and should be at least in line with Copthorne – which would mean a further minimum £15,000 increase in the overall precept.

2. The cost of the Youth Worker will still be across both villages so we suggest the cost for the CDVC precept budget should also be £7,500 – again, a further increase in the overall precept. This is to ensure like for like comparisons, alternatively both £7,500 allocations should be deleted.
3. We have to conclude that the figure for the new office rent is too low. Research confirms CDVC would struggle to find offices at all in Crawley Down, let alone for that price, we consider this to be a considerable risk to the proposed CDVC budget and overall proposal assumptions' reliability.
4. As stated in section D. STAFFING in the report, any costs related to TUPE or potential redundancies have not been included in any estimates

So, in summary we conclude that this independent report confirms our original, well-based, objective and balanced concerns that the overall cost of splitting WPC would reasonably be £50-60K of one-off costs plus an ongoing annual increase in overall precept between the two villages of at least £74,250 and we therefore endorse the Mulberry findings which clearly evidence such.

We would also like it noted that the petitioners were given visibility of this report once produced which was then discussed at a meeting of the WPC CGR Working Party on Tue 19th July. The Working Party is made up of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of all WPC committees. Councillor John Hitchcock is one of the members and is also one of the 3 petitioning Councillors, but he did not attend the meeting or give any apologies for not attending.

We also should point out that following the draft recommendations, apart for accusing WPC and MSDC of holding Crawley Down "prisoners", the petitioners have shown nothing new that would lead us to change our stance that splitting WPC at this time would be nothing but an extremely costly exercise with little gain to either village, and we therefore fully support the draft recommendations from MSDC and urge that the final outcome of the CGR reflect these recommendations.'

Discussion took place.

The Chairman said the report from Mulberry and Co had been received and discussed at the CGR working party on 19th July.

Cllrs were asked firstly to consider accepting the report and secondly to agree a response to MSDC.

The Chairman invited questions.

Cllr Gibson said I'm confused; you employed this man (Mulberry & Co) and you seem to like only some of his answers.

The Chairman replied, no, we like all of his answers and have written observations around it.

Cllr Hodsdon noted that the council agreed to accept his (mulberry & Co) independence in a previous Full Council meeting.

Cllr Gibson questioned the figures quoted in the proposed response.

Cllr Hodsdon asked if this related to the figures in the response which were raised from queries within the report. The Chairman said yes this was all noted in the proposed response.

Cllr Gibson said there was no point discussing this and advised that the petitioners had written to Mr Beams at Mulberry & Co. (this had also been sent to the Chairman). The petitioners found the methodology sound but were concerned over inflated figures throughout. Cllr Gibson then continued to express his views on the report.

The Chairman advised that Cllr Gibson expressed his comments in his own submission to MSDC.

More discussion took place, it was agreed that the two parties would never agree the budgets.

The Chairman called for a vote.

It was AGREED with a vote of 8 for, 2 against and 2 abstentions to accept the report from Mulberry and Co and to agree the above submission to MSDC.

Cllr Gibson asked if WPC had requested the extension of deadline for submissions.

Cllr Hodsdon asked the Chairman to clarify why the deadline had been extended.

The Chairman advised that MSDC had arranged the extension as some information had been delayed and therefore had not been in the public domain for very long.

Cllr Hodsdon stated that all could be comfortable that there was no conspiracy over the decision to extend the timescale of the consultation.

Cllr Forbes left the meeting.

78 Anti-Social Behaviour

Cllr Pointer had been made aware of a potential fire in the Forest Close area, she had reminded residents that reports of ASB should be reported to the police.

Cllr Hodsdon said that he tried to attend the PCSO drop in on the 22nd July at the Parish Hub but there was no one here. The Deputy Clerk said she would check with the PCSO's.

79 Policing

The latest crime figures were NOTED.

80 Website Data

Cllr Mayor noted that the bounce rate had changed.

The website data was NOTED.

81 Representatives attending outside meetings

The Chairman referred to the Clerks report, the following meetings had been attended.

Crawley Down Village Hall AGM, 5th July, attended by Cllr Pointer

Cllr Gibson, referring to the Cllr Pointers report said he still believed it was possible to create an access road with 7/8 parking spaces to the back of the existing village hall.

Clerks Forum 14th July, attended by the Deputy Clerk

MSDC Comms 20th July, attended by the Comms and IT administrator

Cllrs **NOTED** these reports.

At this point the member of the public left the meeting.

82 Personnel

Cllr Hodsdon referred to the Clerks report.

At the HR committee meeting on 29th June, the committee had meet virtually with James Corrigan from Council HR and Governance Support to discuss HR Support.

A brief discussion took place.

Cllr Gibson noted that he had been speaking to a company called Chroma who offered an HR service for £850.00 per annum.

It was proposed by Cllr Hodsdon, seconded by Cllr Cruickshank and AGREED by all to the appoint Council HR and Governance Support as the Council's HR support provider, at a term of 3 Years at £1450 per annum.

WSSC Local Government Pension Scheme

The application to join the WSSC scheme is in progress.

Councillors NOTED this information.

Additional member of staff

The Chairman advised that the Committee has been considering the appointment of an additional member of staff to assist in securing funding. This has been deferred due to a lack of sufficient monies in general reserves.

However, in the interim, at The Chairmans suggestion, the Clerk has contacted the Clerk at East Grinstead Town Council to explore jointly employing such a person, or finding an organisation that could provide this service, with a shared partnership agreement.

The EGTC Clerk is in agreement, with the work being contracted to an organisation being the preferred option. It is her understanding that grants secured are passed to the Council, with a percentage held back as a fee.

Both Clerks are reaching out to colleagues to find suitable organisations, in order to put proposals to their respective Councils.

Councillors NOTED this information.

At this point the Chairman announced that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 the press and public would be excluded during the next item due to the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed, as it related to staffing matters.

The revised recommendation of the HR Committee was proposed by Cllr Hodsdon, seconded by Cllr Cruickshank and AGREED by all.

The Clerk will arrange interviews to take place in early August, conducted by The Clerk, Chairman and Cllr Coote.

The meeting returned to open session.

83 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday, 19th September 2022

Meeting closed at 08.52 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____