

Worth Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in the South Room, the Parish Hub, Copthorne on 18th September 2023 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Dorey (Chairman) Cllr Williams (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Bingle Cllr Casella
Cllr Coote Cllr Cruickshank
Cllr Dymond Cllr Gibson
Cllr Hodsdon Cllr King
Cllr Phillips Cllr Pointer
Cllr Stewart Cllr Wilson
Mrs J Nagy (Clerk) No members of the public

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, it was agreed that Cllr Williams would act as Vice Chair in the absence of Cllr Scott, as per SO 3 q).

91 Public Question Time

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. No members of the public wished to speak at this point of the meeting.

92 Apologies

Apologies were noted and accepted from Cllrs Lord, Kipps and Scott.

93 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations at this point in the meeting.

94 Minutes

It was agreed by all present that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24th July 2023 were a true and correct record.

95 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman had no announcements.

96 Correspondence & Action List

The correspondence and action lists were NOTED.

97 Committees

To receive and note the Minutes of

Planning & Highways Committee, 24th July 2023

Date of next meeting, 18th September 2023

General Purposes & Finance Committee, 10th July 2023

Date of next meeting, 2nd October 2023

To note that the following meeting took place, matters discussed will be reported under Agenda Item 21 –

HR Committee, 5th September 2023

Date of next meeting, 20th September 2023

98 County Councillors' Report

Cllr Gibson's written report was NOTED.

99 District Councillors' Report

Cllr Gibson's written report was NOTED.

100 Council Re-Structure

The Chairman referred to the informal meeting that was held to discuss the re-organisation proposals.

It is suggested to expand the role of the GP&F committee; to absorb the Allotments Sub Committee into a new Amenities and Assets Committee. This new committee will consider not only council-owned assets, but also those important in the community, such as the Royal Oak.

The Village working parties will continue, and it is proposed to have an overarching group, nominally called the Co-ordination Group, to be made up of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees, which, together with the Clerk, will consider and prioritise council strategy, to put to Full Council for agreement.

If the new structure is agreed, then a new meeting schedule will be considered.

Cllr Gibson suggested that all committees should have membership of all 17 councillors. The Clerk advised that any meeting with all councillors was a Council meeting and not a Committee meeting.

Cllr Gibson proposed that all Committees should have membership of 17; seconded by Cllr Bingle. This motion failed.

Heated debate ensued; Cllr Hodsdon left the meeting at 7.50pm.

Cllr Dorey proposed that the new structure be agreed; seconded by Cllr Phillips. This motion was carried by a majority vote.

It was agreed that the structure would be revised at the next Annual Council Meeting in May 2024. Revised Committee remits would be presented to the next Council meeting.

101 Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The External Auditors have returned the AGAR with following comments:

"We draw your attention to the following points. Internal controls policy refers to The Accounts and Audit Regulations 1998 and this should refer to The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The bank reconciliation figure originally provided did not equal Box 8 on Section 2 Accounting Statements. The bank reconciliation was correct and there was an input error on Box 8. This has since been amended and the corrected Section 2 has been received and agreed."

The RFO is querying the comment about the Internal Control Policy with Moore, as she cannot find this incorrect reference.

Councillors NOTED the receipt of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and the accompanying comments.

102 Accounts & Financial Matters

Migration IT data storage from server to cloud based.

This item was deferred from the last meeting, due to queries raised by Cllr Scott.

He has met with Focus the Council's IT provider, together with the Communications & IT Administrator, and is now happy that the Council agrees in principle to commission Focus to oversee migration to a cloud-based storage system, on the proviso that the accounts packages used by the Council such as Rialtas and Sage are transferable.

It was AGREED by all present to progress migration to a cloud-based system at a one-off cost of £3945. It is anticipated that accounts packages subscription charges will decrease, from £750pa to £588pa.

The Clerk and RFO will keep the Council updated.

103 Copthorne Recreation Ground

The planning application has been submitted but more information has been requested. Whilst it was agreed at the last meeting that this cost code could go over budget, the Clerk would like the additional proposed expenditure authorised before commissioning additional work.

Copthorne Working Party Cost Code 4802 was allocated £10,000 in the 2023/2024 budget.

Authorised	Reason	£
Balance of 4802 at 24 th July		3069.00
Agreed 24 th July	Aboricultural survey	1105.00
Agreed 24 ^t July	Drainage Survey	2350.00
		-386.00
Agreed 4 th September	Consultancy fee	1500.00
Agreed 4 th September	Planning Fees	235.00
To be agreed	Location and Block Plans	150.00
To be agreed	Noise Assessment	1500.00
To be agreed	Transport Assessment	2750.00
		-6521.00

It should be noted that the surveys are basic, and if additional information is required, this could incur additional cost. Sports & Play Consulting have asked for an extension from MSDC for the information to be supplied, as if the time limit is exceeded, the planning fees must be paid again.

It was AGREED by all present to vire £10,000 from general reserves into cost code 4802 to cover this expenditure, and that the additional work was authorised at a cost of £4,400 ex VAT.

104 Project Updates

CCTV

It is anticipated that installation in both villages will commence in November.

Bowers Place Parking Scheme

There has been no change since as reported to the last P&H meeting that - Mr Hitchcock is assisting with queries raised by WSCC. More work has been commissioned from the Council's planning agent, who hopes to complete mid-September.

Councillors NOTED this information.

105 Council Land and Buildings

Nothing to report

106 Website

The usage report was NOTED.

The Clerk was asked to put a link to the website on Council notice boards.

107 Anti-Social Behaviour

There were no reports of anti-social behaviour

108 Sussex Police

The latest crime figures for June and July 2023 were NOTED.

109 Representatives attending outside meetings.

Councillors Training 14th August

The Clerk asks that all who attended return the feedback forms as requested.

110 Youth Provision

Attendance and Engagement Reports

Councillors NOTED this information.

Meeting Venue in Crawley Down

The Clerk's actions in relation to securing a regular venue in Crawley Down were NOTED.

It was noted that the drop-in session on Crawley Down Green on Friday evening was very well attended.

Youth Bus (Formerly Purple Bus)

As advised, the bus was secured free of charge from the receivers for SCYP, together with its contents worth in the region of £1000. It has been taxed and insured.

The Clerk has arranged for the SCYP decals to be professionally removed at a cost of £150 + VAT.

Cllr King congratulated the Clerk on her actions in securing the youth bus at no cost to the Council.

111 Personnel

Turners Hill Clerk

The HR Committee agreed to employ Mrs Leanne Bannister, the Clerk to Turners Hill Parish Council, to Locum the management and clerking of the P&H Committees until Christmas.

Councillors NOTED this information.

Recruitment of Assistant/Deputy Clerk

Interviews with three candidates took place on Tuesday, 5th September; two of the three have been invited for second interview on Monday, 18th September, i.e., the morning of the meeting.

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 issues.

In the absence of Cllr Hodsdon as Chair of the HR Committee, the Chairman advised that the position of Assistant Clerk has been offered to a candidate, who has verbally accepted.

It was agreed that attendance at Crawley Down Working Party meetings would be part of the role of the new Assistant Clerk.

The Chairman suggested a change in the staffing structure of the office, which was agreed in principle.

The meeting returned to open session.

112 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday, 16th October 2023, to be held at the Glebe Centre in Crawley Down.

Meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____