

**MINUTES OF WHATLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY  
16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2025 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30pm**

**PRESENT:-** Councillor Fisher in the Chair  
Councillors: Clarkson, Davis, Sullivan and White  
District Councillor Burton, District and County Councillor Field  
2 Members of Public

**OPEN SESSION / LATE ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Cllr. Fisher paid tribute to the former Parish Clerk Valerie Bennett MBE who sadly passed away recently. Valerie had made many contributions to the community in addition to her role as clerk. Other roles included governorship of the local school and driving residents to hospital appointments. Initially she refused to take a salary for her parish council work.

The chair suggested a permanent village memorial to Valerie and councillors were asked to consider ideas in advance of the next meeting as to the nature of such a memorial. Her sons had indicated that her due salary would be donated back to the council and further donations and ideas for commemoration would be invited through the Whatlington News. The newsletter is due for publication in advance of Valerie's funeral on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Action: Clerk to include issue on next agenda. Steve Turner to include in newsletter.*

Cllr. Sullivan stated that the ESCC tree report on the large lime trees at Woodman's Oak was still awaited.

Steve Turner reported that the landlord of the Royal Oak (currently a Shepherd Neame tied house) has handed in his notice. The pub will be run by the staff until Shepherd Neame take a decision on its future. The pub is not currently registered as a community asset. *Action: Cllr. White to make an informal approach to Jonathan Neame regarding future plans. An invitation may subsequently be issued for Mr Neame to attend the parish assembly depending on the outcome of the approach.*

County Cllr. Field updated the meeting on devolution plans resulting from a central government white paper. Second tier local authorities (Borough and District councils such as Rother) will be abolished in favour of county authorities under mayoral control. Towns such as Eastbourne and Hastings will have their own Town Council. Many 2<sup>nd</sup> tier councils have applied to delay elections this year since the term of office for newly elected members would have been short.

A potential speaker for the parish assembly was discussed. An approach would be made to Dr. Kieran Mullan, the local MP. Written rather than verbal reports would be requested from local organisations as usual. *Action: Clerk to formally invite Dr. Mullan.*

**1) APOLOGIES**

None

**2) DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

No disclosure made

**3) MINUTES**

Minutes of the council meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 (previously circulated) were agreed by council and signed by the chair.

**4) MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**5) CORRESPONDENCE**

a) Details of A21 closures north of the village were noted.

b) An invitation from Cllr. Burton for local parish councils to share practices with Battle Town Council on climate change and biodiversity was accepted. Cllr. Sullivan would attend. *Action: Clerk to respond formally.*

c) A Public Space Protection order for the Rother District was noted.

**6) REPORT ON SPEED WATCH – STEVE TURNER**

The new speed gun has already been used and is much improved.

**7) RECRUITMENT OF NEW CLERK**

Cllr. Field advised that the job description should include a "catch-all" for any other duties as required by the council.

It was agreed that the advertisement should be amended as follows:

a) Role to be advertised at Scale point 24-26 (17.83 – 18.77 per hour currently)

b) Support offered for continuing professional development (CPD) rather than specifically CILCA qualification.

c) Meetings 5 per annum including parish assembly. Occasional special planning meetings may be required.

*Action: Clerk to amend job description and advertisement as agreed and advertise at ESALC, KALC and on website. Forward to Steve Turner for inclusion in Newsletter.*

**8) PLANNING**

The following decisions by RDC were noted:

a) RR/2024/1871/FN Cottage Wood Farm, Mill Lane. Planning Permission Required.

b) RR/2024/1782/PIP Land on West Side of Whatlington. Erection of Dwelling.

c) ENF/128/24/WHA 1 Hancox Farm Cottages. Removal of container.

**9) FINANCES**

The balances in Barclays Bank as at 31st December 2024 current account - £475.52

Deposit account -£8135.87

Direct debits

Adobe Acrobat annual subscription due 5 <sup>th</sup> Feb	£21.14
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Norton Anti-virus annual subscription due 23 <sup>rd</sup> Jan	£64.99
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Hugo Fox. Silver Service quarterly fee Oct - Dec	£71.97
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Fasthosts Email Fee Nov-Dec inclusive 2 months @ 2.88 p.c.m.	£5.76
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H.P. Instant Ink- Photocopying Dec inclusive	£5.49
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All agreed and signed

Invoice received from Averdell i.r.o. mowing and riverbank cut £440 – agreed. Cheque to be drawn following transfer from Deposit to Current account.

*Action: Clerk to check procedure for transfer from Deposit account and inform signatories.*

**11) PRECEPT REQUEST.** It was resolved to request a precept of £8200 for the 2025-26 year. This represents an increase of 10% on the 2024-25 figure and an average annual household increase of £5.56 (£0.46 per calendar month).

**12) DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Parish Assembly at 7pm Thursday March 20th

The meeting closed at 8.30p.m.

**Minutes remain in draft format until approved at the next Meeting of the Council**