

WATTISFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
THE CHAPEL, CHAPEL ROAD, WATTISFIELD
MONDAY 16 JANUARY 2023
7.30 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Geoff Wade (Chairman) (GW)
Councillor Cynthia Penn (CP)
Councillor David Dyer (DD)
Councillor Richard Meyer (RM)
Councillor Michael Elflain (ME)
Councillor Ann Telford (AT)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Garman (Parish Clerk) (CG)

Four members of public present.

GW welcomed all to the meeting.

23/001 PUBLIC FORUM

There were concerns expressed about the proposed development at 3 Hinderclay Road, Wattisfield which was considered at the previous meeting.

23/002 REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

- a) A report from County Councillor Jessica Fleming had been previously circulated and was noted.
- b) A report from District Councillor Richard Meyer had been previously circulated and this was noted. CP suggested that some items in both reports should be included in the Wattisfield Warbler.

23/003 APOLOGIES

Councillor Sarah Goodchild (SG) had offered her apologies and these were accepted. Also, County Councillor Jessica Fleming (JF) had sent her apologies.

23/004 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23/005 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

23/006 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 December 2022 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

23/007 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

23/008 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- a) The following payments were approved:
£210.00 to Wattisfield Chapel – hall hire

£2080.00 to William Prentice – maintenance of churchyard and cemetery
£190.30 to C Garman – expenses October to December 2022.

- b) The revised budget for 2023/2024 which had been previously circulated was considered. It was noted that with the suggested increase in the precept by 5% there was still a deficit on business-as-usual items of £1,430. Acknowledging that a deficit budget would need to be funded by reducing the reserves, it was considered that an 8% increase in precept was needed as a first stage to reducing the deficit £1,111 with thought being given in future years to increasing again as needed to restore to a balanced budget. If needed reserves could be used to support the deficit. Thought was given to whether business as usual items could be reduced without cutting services but this was considered not feasible. There was discussion on increasing the precept by 8% to £11,489 which equates to an increase of around £5 pa for a Band D property.

It was resolved to approve the budget presented but with a precept of £11,489 and to request this precept from MSDC.

- c) The Parish Clerk's notice of resignation was noted. There was discussion about the recruiting of a new Parish Clerk and what might be needed in the terms of hours and supporting the Village Hall Working Group. As a first stage, it was agreed to advertise for a Parish Clerk based on current hours acknowledging that there might need to be flexibility. Also, it was agreed to place the advertisement in the February's Wattisfield Warbler, on Next Door, Walsham Observer and on SALC's website with a closing date of 15 February 2023.
- d) The idea of a welcome pack for new residents was considered. A list of items was refined which would form a pack. This will be developed further and then implemented when needed with delivery of a pack by an appropriate councillor.

23/009 HIGHWAYS, TREES, CEMETERY and CHURCHYARD

- a) The progress with producing leaflets and maps showing village walks was reviewed. The walking of the village paths is still work in progress. It was suggested that a sum might be available from RM's locality budget to go towards the costs.
- b) An email from a resident about the use of the Grundle by motorcycles and damage to right of way was considered. It was thought that the issues raised were a matter for the SCC Rights of Way team.

23/010 PLANNING MATTERS

Planning application West Suffolk Council DC/22/2190/HYB relating to land at Shepherds Grove, Hepworth / Stanton was considered. It was acknowledged that this site has been earmarked for industrial purposes. However, there were concerns this would lead to a significant increase in vehicles along the A143 through Wattisfield and other villages, and greater use of the county lanes to gain access to the A14 and A11. Also, the suggested development around the new roundabout for roadside services was considered inappropriate and would urbanise this rural section of the A143.

It was resolved to draft a response to West Suffolk Council with an objection based on these concerns but to hold on sending to include possible further information from other Parish Councils.

23/011 CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence had been previously circulated and was noted. No further action was considered necessary.

23/012 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

- a) ME advised that it had been necessary to purchase new pads for the defibrillator.
- b) There was a discussion about the SID data that had recently been circulated.

- c) There was an update on the street lighting project. It was noted that all but two of the units had been replaced and there will be a delay of a couple of months on the remaining two because UKPN had to be involved.

23/013 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be Monday 20 February 2023 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Christopher Garman
Parish Clerk
18 January 2023