

WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 10TH JANUARY 2022, 7.30 PM
AT THE CLOUT, 9 HIGH STREET, WEST MALLING

Present: Mrs Trudy Dean (Chairman)
Mr Keith Mann
Ms Sara Margetts
Mrs Yvonne Smyth
Ms Min Stacpoole
Mr Peter Stevens
Mr David Thompson

Also Present: Resident

Minute		Action by	Action taken	Response
22/01	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> were received from Mrs Javens, Ms Barkham and Ms Medhurst			
22/02	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> – Mrs Dean declared an interest at minute number 22/11 as she is a KCC Member.			
22/03	<u>CASUAL VACANCY</u>			
03.1	The resignation of Mr Nick Stapleton was noted.			
03.2	It was noted that there is now one casual vacancy.			
03.3	T&MBC have notified the Parish Council that the statutory period will expire at midnight on 10 th January and that if an election is not called, the Council will be able to co-opt. It was agreed to advertise the post after the statutory period has lapsed.			
22/04	<u>MINUTES</u> - the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6 th December 2021 were approved and signed			
22/05	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u> 21/654.2 – Local Plan – Mr Mann asked if a letter had been sent to T&MBC. The Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent to T&MBC regarding communication and engagement with parish councils and that she is awaiting a response. 21/647 – temporary re-opening of public conveniences – spare key to be given to Ms Margetts in the event that there is the need to close the toilets outside of office hours.			

22/06	<u>CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</u> – none			
22/07	<u>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</u> - none			
22/08	<p><u>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</u></p> <p>Mr Thompson provided details of the report produced by the think tank Onward. Onward is a modernising think tank whose mission is to develop ideas to boost economic opportunity and strengthen communities in all parts of the United Kingdom.</p> <p>https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Double-Devo-Publication-14122021-reupload.pdf</p> <p>The report proposes an expansion of neighbourhood control through local (parish and town) councils. The report focuses on 3 core reforms: Let the people decide; strengthen the quality of governance & to expand the role of neighbourhood councils.</p> <p>It was agreed that consideration be given to writing to MHCLG in support. To be considered at February Full Council .</p> <p>Clerk to note agenda.</p>	Clerk	✓	
22/9	<u>POLICING MATTERS</u>			
9.1	<u>Police Update</u> – the Police report for December was received. Members expressed concern about the lack of detail in the reports.			
9.2	<p><u>Other Policing Matters</u></p> <p>Community Wardens – Mrs Dean confirmed that there are 69 community wardens throughout the whole of the County.</p>			
22/10	<u>LOCAL PLAN</u>			
	<p>It was noted that the call for sites exercise had started and that this will close at 5pm on 7th February.</p> <p>A letter has been sent from WMPC to T&MBC requesting that communication and engagement with parishes be an agenda item at the next Parish Partnership Panel meeting.</p>			
22/11	<u>ROTARY HOUSE</u>			
	<p>It was agreed that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (purchase of land) it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.</p> <p>The decision to appoint Smart Support to prepare a business plan (to include a Position Statement) for the Parish Council as requested by KCC and as required for finance purposes was ratified. Smart Support to meet with WMPC representatives on 11th January.</p> <p>It was agreed to cap the costs at £3000. This sum to be taken out of the Rotary House general expenses budget.</p>			
22/12	<u>AMENITIES</u>			
	<p><u>Bench at Land West of Age Concern</u></p> <p>Recommendation from the Amenities Committee to take the sum of £26.40 from the budget for Cricket Meadow, strimming of paths, benches & staples so as to make up the budget shortfall for the costs needed to repair a bench on Land West of Age Concern.</p>			

	This was agreed following a proposal from Mr Stevens which was seconded by Ms Stacpoole.			
22/13	<u>APPEAL HEARING – LAND OPP. THE PADDOCKS, BIRLING ROAD, LEYBOURNE</u>			
	<p>Receipt was noted of a letter from Leybourne Parish Council requesting financial assistance towards the Planning Inspectorate Hearing; Leybourne Parish Council having instructed a barrister and a planning consultant at an approximate cost of £6500.</p> <p>Following a general discussion, it was agreed unanimously that sum of £2000 be paid as a contribution. This sum to be taken from reserves and to be paid directly to the legal team.</p> <p>WMPC would wish to stress that they are genuinely interested in the outcome of this appeal as it will have repercussions both within the parish and also nationally.</p>			
22/14	<u>CLIMATE EMERGENCY</u>			
14.1	Minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Action Group (C&BAG) meeting held on 20 th December were received and noted.			
14.2	<p>Following the receipt of a paper drafted by the Climate & Biodiversity Action Group which detailed the ecological crisis and reasons why action needs to be taken as a matter of urgency. It was agreed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) West Malling Parish Council declare a climate emergency. 2) West Malling Parish Council will work towards making their activities zero-net carbon by 2030. 3) West Malling Parish Council working with KCC, the UK Government and other partners will work towards net-zero carbon emissions in West Malling by 2050. <p>It was agreed that new planning applications would have a standard paragraph which would reflect and reinforce the aims of WMPC.</p> <p>C&BAG paper to be added to the website following minor amendments to the text.</p>			
21/15	<u>GLADMAN APPEAL</u>			
	<p>It was noted that the Informal Hearing date of 16/17th December had been cancelled to enable a period of consultation to take place. Comments to be submitted to the Inspectorate by 13th January 2022.</p> <p>It was agreed that the following representation be submitted to the Inspectorate:</p> <p>Re: Development Site South West of West Malling Railway Station, Station Approach, West Malling, Kent.</p> <p><i>I am writing on behalf of West Malling Parish Council regarding the above appeal and your letter dated 15 December 2021, which invited comments by 13 January 2022. WMPC previously submitted comments to the Inspector on 17 June 2021. These comments update that submission.</i></p> <p>Concerns over the sensitivity of the site <i>The site sits within the historic curtilage of adjacent St Mary's Abbey, being formerly part of the agricultural land that supported it and its development. In particular it lies adjacent to the Abbey's Fair Field, upon which previous development has been rejected owing to its proximity and the potential impact on the setting of the Abbey as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The site sits within land designated as part of an extension of the Green Belt under the draft TMBC Local Plan. The aim of this extension is to preserve the distinct boundaries of the settlements of West Malling, East Malling and Larkfield and development on this site would contribute to continuous development from West Malling eastwards to the</i></p>	Clerk	✓	

proposed development at Broadwater farm and onwards to Kings Hill. WMPC supports the protection of the rural setting of the historic market town of West Malling with its exceptional 11th century Abbey and large Conservation Area based on its architectural value. WMPC is therefore keen to see high architectural standards maintained in our town, and an outline application does not allow a judgement on this crucial issue. The Parish Council has asked the Borough Council to extend the Conservation Area to include the fields granted protection by the Inspector in her Bellway Appeal decision. (APP / H2265 / W / 19 / 3227034) They have advised this would be best carried out after the completion of the Local Plan. This site (Gladman) lies alongside the putative boundary of the Conservation Area, which it would be expected to enhance, and close to the listed Station. Development on this sight will have a negative impact on the eastern approach to West Malling and the rural viewpoint from the nearby grade II listed railway station. The loss of the views upon arrival at the station are regularly cited by those using it as significant cause for concern. The rural station is part of the Blue Plaque Scheme commemorating the links with George Orwell, whose writings about his rail travels in Kent as a farm labourer record his search for employment with Mr Cronk at New Barns farm , and his stay at the ‘Spike’ across the fields at Lavenders Road and St Leonards Street respectively.

Loss of high quality agricultural land

The site sits on high quality agricultural land which should be preserved for its current use, particularly given the dwindling stock of high quality land for food production in the UK and particularly in Kent.

Increasing pressure on local services

The local area is already subject to significant pressure on local services, in particular on NHS and GP services. West Malling has recently seen the closure of its surgery in the High St and the proposed doctors surgery at the development at Leybourne Chase has not happened. Parishioners frequently complain how difficult it now is to get a Doctors’ appointment and the addition of a further 75 homes proposed in the Gladman application will make these matters worse. Local schools report they are full and West Malling children are now being placed in schools at Kings Hill, meaning travel to and from schools will now need to be by car rather than walking. This is adding to air pollution and further carbon emissions in the area.

This development will have a severe impact on local road and transport infrastructure, adding vehicles to the already congested A20 as well as adding to the number of traffic movements along a vital stretch of the A228.

WMPC has concerns that any development on this site will encourage the use of Station Approach as a short cut to West Malling Town centre via the very narrow and already congested Swan St and to East Malling and the A20 via the rural routes of Lucks Hill and Winterfield Lane.

The additional houses will mean more cars seeking parking within the town centre, where car parks are already at capacity.

Lack of detail on the proposed development

While no masterplan yet exists to judge the development’s appearance, we would request that if approved any agreed development should be set well back from, and well screened from, the A228 to minimise its affect.

The location of this site close to the A228 and its junction with the slip road to the station is very noisy. WMPC supports requests for details of how acceptable standards of acoustic protection and clean air could be provided for residential homes on this site.

Environment impact of the development

The UK government declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. KCC and TMBC declared the same in 2019 and WMPC in early 2022.

WMPC is therefore concerned to see that any development on this site should seek to minimize carbon emissions both during its build and in its design. Any permitted development should have electric charging points and solar panel roofs to all properties, adequate space for safe storage of cycles, heating systems that do not rely on gas to heat homes through either a district heating system and/or use of heat pumps.

	<p>Affordable homes for local residents <i>The Gladman application states that 40% of the homes on this site will be affordable. These are greatly needed as outlined in Gladman's Affordable Housing Statement. However, WMPC take issue with how "affordable" is defined within this statement, stating that the ability to purchase affordably is on a mortgage 3.5 times gross income. While WMPC welcomes the inclusion of affordable homes in this proposal, we do not agree that by defining "affordable" in this way will produce the type of homes that are so badly needed locally. For those in greatest housing need what is required is housing at affordable or social rent levels. Many in the greatest need are unable to get a mortgage at all. We see no evidence that any of the proposed new homes will be other than for sale.</i></p>			
22/16	<u>WMPC DRAFT BUDGET 22/23</u>			
16.1	<p><u>Council Tax Base</u></p> <p>The Council Tax Base increase for West Malling was noted. The figure for 22/23 is 1,166.63. (this being the number of equivalent Band D properties) an increase from 1,138.21</p>			
16.2	<p><u>Draft Committee Budgets / safeguarded sums / reserves & financial breakdown</u></p> <p>It was agreed that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (salaries) it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.</p> <p>Draft committee budgets were considered and the following figures were removed from the draft budget:</p> <p>Planning - £10,000 for Local Plan, the current £10,000 (2021/22) to be safeguarded at the end of the current financial year. F&GP - £2,000 for the office IT upgrade £5,000 for Rotary House general expenses</p> <p>Clerk's salary / pension / NI was agreed in closed session.</p> <p>Safeguarded sums were reviewed, general reserves and the current financial breakdown were all noted.</p> <p>Precept to be set at the extraordinary meeting on 17th January.</p>			
22/17	<u>FINANCIAL MATTERS</u>			
17.1	Accounts for payment - totalling £4,836.19 were approved - see attached.			
17.2	It was noted that payments of £4496.54 was authorised at the Amenities meeting held on 13 th December 2021.			
17.3	Financial Statement – bank reconciliation as at 31 st December 2021 was received – see attached			
22/18	<u>MATTERS FOR REPORT</u>			
18.1	<p>Amenities Committee – receipt was noted, of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2021</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
18.2	<p>Highways, Transportation & Streetlighting Committee – receipt was noted, of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 20th December 2021</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
18.3	Climate & Biodiversity Action Group – receipt was noted, of the draft minutes of the			

	meeting held on 20 th December 2021 There were no questions			
18.4	Malling Action Partnership – no report			
18.5	School Governors – no report			
18.6	Malling Society – no report			
18.7	Chamber of Commerce / Christmas Lights Committee – no report			
18.8	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council Parish Partnership Panel – it was noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on 27 th January. The Clerk confirmed that she had requested that Local Plan communication / engagement with Parish Councils be added to the agenda. Welcome Back Fund – the Clerk discussed lighting for the trees on the village green.			
18.9	KALC/NALC/ACRK/CPRE: KALC: Receipt was noted of the KALC News November / December 2021.			
22/19	<u>MEETING DATES</u> Amenities – January meeting cancelled Extraordinary meeting of Full Council – Monday 17 th January at The Clout Planning – Tuesday 25 th January at The Clout Macey’s Meadow Wednesday 19 th January 2022 – cancelled.			
22/20	<u>REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR, NICK STAPLETON</u> Mr Stapleton has notified the Clerk that T&MBC is now consulting residents of Churchfields regarding a new parking permit scheme. The consultation is to close on 30 th January.			
22/21	<u>REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR</u> - no report			
	There being no other business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.55 Signed..... Dated.....			

West Malling Parish Council						
Accounts for Payment 10th January 2022						cheques to be drawn
Kent County Council (Laser) (Single cheque 2369) (Electricity supply period November 21 at 5% VAT)				7.06	£	7.41
	VAT			0.35		
Kent County Council (Laser) (Electricity supply period November 21 at 20% VAT)				503.81	£	604.57
	VAT			100.76		
Society of Local Council Clerks (cheque 2370) (invoice MEM238248-1 - membership renewal fee)					£	215.00
Streetlights (cheque 2371) (invoice 12628 - replacement of photocell on columns 79 & 115)				154.25		£185.10
	VAT			30.85		
Four Seasons gardens Ltd (cheque 2372) (invoice 4557 - hedge cut Ryarsh Lane)				674.89	£	809.87
	VAT			134.98		
West Malling Village Hall (cheque 2373) (invoice for room hire Sep - Dec '21 - 17 hours @ £6.00 per hour)					£	102.00
ELM Header Account (single cheque 2374) (invoice 72851 Twitch Inn, estimated insurance costs £49.34, estimated electricity £99.61 & estimated water costs £17.90 from 1st Feb - 30th April 22)					£	166.85
Viking (cheque 2375) (invoice 7976744 stationery costs)				32.72	£	39.26
	VAT			6.54		
January Salaries						
Mrs Claire Christmas - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Clerk - net salary for January £1565.96 + reimbursement for fax £1.20, stamps £15.84, sundries £7.72)						£1,590.72
Mrs Sarah Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Ass Clerk - net salary for January)						£385.62
HMRC - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Deductions from salaries - January)						£591.89
Nest - authorisation to pay pension contributions by Direct Debit for January						
Employer's contributions					£	59.10
Employee's contributions					£	78.80
				TOTAL	£	4,836.19

WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL				
Financial Statement as at 31 December 2021				
Reconciliation				
Balance b/f from 2010/21				£ 115,499.31
<u>plus</u>				
total receipts 1.04.21-31.03.22				£ 138,246.73
<u>less</u>				
total payments 1.04.21-31.03.22				£ 86,944.97
			Total	£ 166,801.07
Deposit account				£ 72,055.66
Current account			£98,628.91	
			£3,883.50	
				<u>£ 94,745.41</u>
			Total	£ 166,801.07
Unpresented Cheques			Date Issued	
2345 Zurich	£	99.16	1.11.21	
2351 BML	£	94.80	6.12.21	
2359 KALC	£	144.00		
2363 Four Seasons	£	943.92	13.12.21	
2364 Four Seasons	£	519.22		
2365 Four Seasons	£	749.84		
2366 Four Seasons	£	913.56		
2368 TMBC	£	<u>419.00</u>		
	£	3,883.50		