



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Dave Kent
Clerk to the Council

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COUNCIL MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM

As advised by the Government, the scheduled conventional meeting of the Parish Council could not be held during the current Covid-19 emergency. It was agreed that a video meeting would be held to which all Councillors and the Clerk would be invited. All participants connected to the meeting from their own homes via video and audio link. No members of the public were present.

The meeting was conducted in accordance with Standing Orders as far as was possible in these unprecedented circumstances. Decisions were taken and actions were agreed, in the understanding that this process would enable the Parish Council to continue its public functions and to carry out its financial and legal obligations. It was expected that government action would retrospectively approve the action that Council was taking.

1. Council formal business

Present:

WDPC COUNCILLORS: B Freshwater (BF), A Grant (AG), S Crick (SC), J Richmond (JR), A Moore (AM), M Costley (MC) P Dunford (PD) and B Gayler (BG). D Kent (Clerk) was in attendance

1. COUNCIL FORMAL BUSINESS

1.1 The proposal to exclude members of the public was unnecessary as there were no members of the public present

1.2 Apologies were received from: Parish Councillors C Smith, B Evans, D Oliver and S Francis

1.3 Declarations of Interest: PD, a non-pecuniary interest in respect of item 2.6 as a member of the Pillowell Village Hall Committee

1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – The minutes of the meeting on 5th February were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

1.5 Co-option of councillors to fill vacancies.

It was unanimously agreed that the following co-options would be made:

Berry Hill: Stephen Yeates, Pillowell: Jackie Dale, Bream: Alison Bruce

2. Items for discussion and decision

2.1 Corona Virus Emergency

2.1 Retrospective Approval for Urgent Decisions

Council approved retrospectively the emergency actions taken to close the West Dean Centre, the public toilet and the play park for an indefinite period. It was noted that the closure would allow

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certain necessary works to be carried out at the Centre, and that there would be an opportunity to give the Centre as 'deep clean' before it re-opened.

2.2 Emergency Powers

It was noted that the agenda had not foreseen the possibility of on-line meetings. The current meeting showed the viability of on-line meetings, and Council would continue to hold such

meetings to replace conventional Council meetings on the last Wednesday of each month. In respect of emergency decisions, it was agreed that power to make decisions on behalf of the Council be delegated to a group consisting of the Chair and Deputy Chair, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, and Councillor S Crick. The Chair would have a casting vote in case of deadlock.

2.3 Definition of 'Emergency'

It was agreed that the following conditions would be regarded as emergency, and would be referred to the group identified in 2.2 above.

Matters which are a statutory obligation, such as the approval of the Annual Governance and Accounting return, the commissioning of any work necessary to complete this return, and any actions recommended by the internal or external auditor.

Any emergency actions made necessary by the current Coronavirus pandemic.

Payment of salaries and other legal commitments

Any decision required to modify on a temporary basis any Council Policy or Orders necessary to comply with any government or principal authority guidance on the current health crisis.

The decision to terminate these emergency powers when it is considered safe to do so.

2.4 Finance

2.4.1 The schedule of accounts for payment was approved

2.4.2 In view of possible uncertainty about the routing of the Dean Forest Greenway (formerly the Multi Use Track), it was agreed that:

The Clerk would circulate to Councillors the track survey drawn up by Greenways.

A meeting with Greenways seeking reassurance and confirmation that landowners of land on the proposed route were supportive would be sought.

The matter of making budgetary provision for the project for the 2020-21 Financial Year would be deferred until the next meeting after the reassurance specified above had been received.

2.4.3 A budgetary provision of £5,000 was made for any expenditure required in respect of the current national emergency.

2.5 Coronavirus Emergency

The leaflet presented to Council was approved pending amendments, additions and deletions that might be proposed by councillors before the deadline of 7.30 am the following morning. Sufficient copies for every household in the Council area would be printed.

Disappointment was expressed at the failure of Royal Mail to respond to the urgent need to distribute vital information to all addresses in the Parish Council area.

The Clerk would supply maps and street names for each Parish Council areas to all councillors and members of the public delivering leaflets.

2.6 Pillowell Recreation Trust

It was decided that, in order to represent the wishes of the Pillowell community, that the Parish Council will convene a public meeting of Pillowell residents once the current emergency is over. This meeting will be chaired by West Dean Parish Council, and nominees for Trustee positions will be invited. The three candidates with the most support at the meeting will be appointed by the Council to the Trustee positions through the Charity Commission, and then the Trust will be fully functional again.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.