



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk to the Council

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West Dean Centre
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Bream
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FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday 29th January 2025

Location: West Dean Centre, High Street, Bream

Present: Cllrs A Bruce (Chair), A Grant, B Evans, S Yeates, J Richmond, S Dunford, S Lewis, R Chance, and B Freshwater.

Deputy Clerk: P Holland

(These minutes are still in draft form until approved at a subsequent meeting of the Council)

PUBLIC FORUM		
Cllr Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting as there were no members of the public in attendance there was no Public Forum.		
25011	<u>Council Formal Business</u>	
25011.1	Co-option of Bream Councillor The applications from Elizabeth Llewellyn and Rachel Chance were received by Council. However, Elizabeth withdrew her application. Rachel was asked to leave the meeting whilst Council discussed the co-option, AG proposed that Council accept her application which was seconded by SY and Council voted unanimously to co-opt Rachel as Bream Ward Councillor. Rachel was invited back to the meeting, the Deputy Clerk advised that some paperwork needed to be completed, and this needed to be done on the Proper Officers return. Rachel was advised that she would also need to formally resign as the Pillowell Ward Councillor in writing to the Proper Officer.	Proper Officer & Councillor to complete paperwork. RC to write resignation letter.
25011.2	Apologies Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr S Francis – Operation Recovery Cllr A Moore – Family Issues	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

25012	<u>Items for Consideration and Resolution</u>	
25012.1	Finance and Staffing The budget information for WDPC and WDC was noted by Council with no questions being asked.	
25012.1i	The December 2024 expenditures for WDPC and WDC were noted. The January 2025 expenditure payment schedule, Direct Debits, Standing Orders, and credit card transactions totalling WDPC = £10,501.12 excluding VAT and WDC = £1508.30 excluding VAT were proposed by AG , seconded by RC, and agreed by resolution of Council.	
25012.1ii	It was noted that Cllrs Richmond and Costley are to authorise payments on the banking system for WDPC	
2502.iii	It was noted that Cllrs Richmond and Costley are to authorise payments on the banking system for WDC	
25012.1iv	It was noted that Cllrs Freshwater and Chance will undertake the December 2024 and January 2025 financial inspections of the WDPC and WDC accounts.	KC to arrange date and time for inspection
25012.1v	Cllr Grant and Freshwater gave a brief update of the November 2024 financial inspection, where all information was found to be good, and all questions were answered satisfactorily by the Clerk. Cllr Freshwater thanked Cllr Grant for stepping in at the last minute to enable the inspection to be carried out before the Christmas break.	
25012.1vi	The proposal to appoint GAPTC as internal auditors, were agreed as independent of Council and competent to undertake these works was proposed by Cllr Richmond, seconded by Cllr Evans, and agreed by resolution of Council.	
25012.1vii	The proposal to agree a support package from EdgeIT Systems for Year End Processes due to Clerk's resignation was discussed, Cllr Grant explained the pricing difference for the 3 packages and it was agreed that the Gold Package, which gives a full day's step by step assistance and guidance, at a cost of £420.00. should be procured, with the possibility of also needing this for the new Clerk. It was agreed that this was necessary training to safeguard the future smooth delivery of Parish finances. Purchase of the Gold Package for PH was proposed by Cllr Grant, seconded by Cllr Freshwater, and agreed by resolution of Council.	EdgeIT training to be procured
24112.2	Staffing	
25012.2i	Cllr Grant gave an update on the advert which had been placed to recruit a new Proper Officer (Clerk/RFO). The need to be diligent in accessing the needs of the Council and being mindful of the Precept when recruiting a new Clerk were discussed, with the possibility of offering help with relocation cost being put forward as a way to encourage candidates . This was taken on board by Councillors as something which could be looked at in the future.	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	Cllrs Richmond and Freshwater volunteered to sit on the interview panel alongside Cllr Grant, Chair of Staffing Committee.	Meeting to be arranged to discuss interview questions
25012.3	Governance & Scrutiny	
25012.3i	The minutes of Governance & Scrutiny Committee held on 21 st January 2025 were received and noted by Council	
25012.311	Council was asked to approve the following documents en bloc as recommended by Governance & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting of 21st January 2025. • General and Earmarked Reserves Policy • Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy • Investment Policy Cllr Chance raised a query on the Investment Policy, on point three under the heading Investment Strategy the wording " However, at the present time, it is recognised that interest rates are at an extremely low level" is used, she asked if it could be amended to "Parish will note interest rates will vary significantly from time to time and will therefore monitor for the best returns" Cllr Freshwater proposed that these be approved en bloc, along with the suggested amendment to the Investment Policy, this was seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by a vote of 7 in favour with one abstention	KC to amend Investment Policy Amended 03/02/2025
25012.3iii	CPRE Membership Renewal The renewal of the Council's CPRE membership was discussed with questions being asked as to what this gave the Council, after further discussion it was felt that the level of subscription should be raised from £74.00 to £86.00 to be paid as a one-off payment was agreed by resolution of Council.	Clerk to renew subscription Actioned 03/02/2025
25012.3iv	Neighbourhood Plan Proposal Councillor Yeates tabled a motion about the Heritage Assessment for the BHCC&EE NP, which is nearing completion, but requires the Dataset to be added to GIS System which will allow this report to be completed. The request is that three tenders are sought was proposed by Cllr Dunford seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Dunford also proposed that WDPC should thank Cllr Yeates for his expertise in compiling this report, seconded by Cllr Freshwater, and agreed by Council. Cllr Dunford asked that the Clerk contact Locality to obtain funding to cover the NP review costs.	Clerk to obtain three tenders Clerk to draft letter.
25013	<u>Items for Information – Councillors to note.</u>	
25013.1	Planning Committee The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 3rd & 17th December 2024 & 7th & 21st January 2025 were noted and approved by Council.	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	Cllr Dunford spoke of a complaint, to both FODDC and WDPC made by an applicant which is now in the hands of FODDC Monitoring Officer. Cllr Bruce advised that she had been informed that if it were felt that a meeting was needed the Monitoring Officer would invite both District and Parish Councillors to attend and a report would be given to Full Council.	
25013.2	Highways & Footpaths Committee The minutes of the Highways & Footpaths Committee held on 17th December 2024 were noted and approved by Council. Cllr Richmond spoke of the need to develop a schedule for moving and data download of the VAS units. It was noted that this has been difficult at times due to staff availability. He is formulating a possible solution and will present once more information has been gathered. Cllrs Freshwater and Grant both offered assistance to move the units if it was required. Cllr Bruce offered thanks to the committee for all the work they have done to improve road safety within West Dean. Cllr Freshwater gave an update on the flooding issues at the Gamekeepers PH, Camera investigations have taken place and Highways are now awaiting the results to enable a plan of action to be formulated.	
25013.3	Climate & Biodiversity Committee The minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee held on 19th December 2024 were noted and approved by Council. Cllr Bruce spoke on the subject of Dark Skies and the Emergency Plan. Cllr Evans raised the point that County Highways only cleaned the drains once a year having an impact this has on flooding issues.	PH to add to Highways & Footpaths Agenda
25013.4	West Dean Centre Management Committee The minutes of the West Dean Centre Management Committee held on 15th January 2025 were noted and approved by Council. Cllr Freshwater advised that the proposal he had tabled was missing from the minutes. He gave a brief rundown of its contents, and some discussion was held. PH advised that it had been agreed by the Management Committee; and that this proposal should be seen by Governance & Scrutiny Committee in the first instance before being presented to Full Council. Cllr Freshwater also spoke of the WDC Manual which the Deputy Clerk has been tasked with producing. It was agreed that the Call Out Procedure should be left until the new Clerk is in place.	PH to circulate to WD Parish Councillors

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

25013.5	Chairs Items Cllr Bruce raised the issue of flood wardens which had been talked about at the January Climate & Biodiversity Committee Meeting. She asked if any of the Councillor present were interested in taking on this role. PH informed Council that K Chaplin, FODDC, had visited the Parish Office to ask us to gauge Council opinion on the possibility of amending the eligible allocations search area to assist in finding tenants who have the need for wheelchair accommodation, there are two new build bungalows at present for which tenants will be sought. After some discussion Cllr Bruce asked PH to go back to Mr Chaplin and ask for this proposal to be put in writing. Cllr Bruce then spoke on the subject of Devolution; the lack of consultation and what effect this might have in the Forest of Dean. Cllr Freshwater proposed that a letter be sent to our MP asking what the consultation process had been or will be, as we had not yet been consulted on the subject, and it is understood that he has already made his personal decision. Can he clarify if the County Elections will take place as scheduled for May 2025. Cllr Dunford proposed that a letter be written to Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet to protest the fact that they wrote to Government requesting deferment of the County Elections without consultation and agreement of the public. It was suggested that both letters should be made open letters and sent to the press. Cllr Grant brought the thank you letter from Pillowell Silver Band to the attention of Council.	Deputy Clerk to contact K Chaplin Clerk to draft letter to MP Clerk to draft letter to GCC Cabinet
25014	Public Round-up – 10 minutes As there had been no members of the public there was not public round-up session.	
25015	<u>Forthcoming Meeting Schedule:</u>	

Feb-25				
Tues	4th February 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	18th February 2025	2.30pm	Highways & Footpaths	West Dean Centre
Tues	18th February 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	26th February 2025	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre

Mar-25				
Tues	4th March 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	18th March 2025	11.00am	Governance & Scrutiny	West Dean Centre

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

Tues	18th March 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	26th March 2025	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre
Apr-25				
Tues	1st April 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	15th April 2025	2.30pm	Highways & Footpaths	West Dean Centre
Tues	15th April 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	30th April 2025	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre
1	The Public Questions & Comments is designed to give electors the opportunity to make representations to the Council or to ask questions. It takes place before the formal meeting of the Council.			
2	The time allocated to the whole period of the open forum is 30 minutes.			
3	Whether your attendance is part of a deputation or as an individual, the spokesperson will be invited to put the case with a maximum time limit of 10 minutes. Follow up speakers will be allowed 5 minutes in total. Speakers may only speak once.			
4	The Chair will decide whether he/she can advise the deputation immediately or if he needs to sound out members and/or consult the Clerk. The Chair will then inform the deputation what action the Parish Council intends to take.			
5	The initial response by the Council will be to establish if the matter is something which the Council should be involved in as a matter of public interest or is a private matter for the electors to deal with themselves.			
6	What the Council may not be able to do at this initial stage is to attempt to solve the actual problem itself. What the Council will do is to decide the best method to deal with the problem and this can take several forms as follows – The Council can decide -			
	(i) The degree to which the Council can act as advocate on behalf of the individual or group of electors.			
	(ii) To refer the matter to a Committee of the Council for action.			
	(iii) To place the matter on a future Parish Council agenda.			
	(iv) To instruct the Clerk to make further enquiries or conduct correspondence on behalf of the deputation or arrange meetings as considered necessary.			
	(v) If the matter is already on the Council agenda the Chair will invite electors to make any points they feel are relevant regarding the agenda item. The deputation can then remain and listen to the debate in Council.			
	(vi) If, during the formal meeting, the Chair feels that the deputation has information which will be useful to the Council, the Chair with the agreement of members can invite a spokesperson to address the Council.			

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