WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Jo Miles
Clerk to the Council

Phil Holland
Deputy Clerk

Tel. Parish Office: 01594 564484 (9.00am – 3.00pm
Mon-Thur 9.00am – 1.00 pm Fri)
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Parish Office
West Dean Centre
High Street
Bream
Glos.
GL15 6JW

Meeting Date:

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Wednesday 28th May 2025

Location: **West Dean Centre, High Street, Bream**

Present: Cllrs A Bruce (Chair), A Moore, M Costley, S Dunford, J Richmond, B Freshwater, S Yeates, D Wheeler, A Betenson, S Francis and S Crick

Also Present: County Cllrs L Challis, P Camp & B Hoyland
District Cllrs J Dale & B Llewellyn

Clerks: J Miles & P Holland

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

Public Forum:

There was one members of the public in attendance, they had no questions so no public forum was held.

25050	County & District Reports	
	Cllr Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked our District Councillor's if they had anything to add to their written report. Cllr Bllewellyn added information on:- • Updates to disabled parking in FODDC Carparks • As Live Long & Better Champion work to update FODDC public computers and • Dancing with Dementia Cllr Bruce then asked the new County Councillors to introduce themselves. Cllrs L Challis and P Camp introduced themselves and gave a short piece of their backgrounds and goals as County Councillor's. Cllr Camp gave updates on:- • Local Government Restructure and the options being tabled by Gloucestershire County Council and • Fix my Street and the need to report all Highways issues through this website Cllr Freshwater asked if Cllr Camp was available during the day. Cllr Camp advised that although he worked, if given enough notice, he would be happy to attend daytime meetings.	Clerk to invite Cllr Camp to the

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		next Highways meeting
25051	**<u>Council Formal Business</u>**	<u>Actions Completed</u>
25051.1	**Co-option of Pillowell Councillor** Cllr Bruce welcomed Steve Crick to the meeting and invited him to address Council before they voted on his co-option. He firstly thanked Council for their card and flowers which had been sent. He spoke of his health and how this had made him refocus on what he felt was important, he felt he wanted to help with community improvements. Steve was asked to leave the room whilst Councillors voted, The application was discussed, proposed by Cllr Richmond, seconded by Cllr Freshwater, and agreed unanimously by Council. Cllr Crick was invited back in to the meeting and invited to take his seat at the table; he completed all necessary paperwork for acceptance of position.	**Paperwork to be sent to FODDC.** **Email account to be set up**
25051.2 **25051.2i** **25051.2ii**	**Election of Council Chair 2025/26** Councillor Bruce was re-elected unopposed as Chair of Council, proposed by Cllr Wheeler and 2nd by Cllr Betenson with a vote of 8:0 with 1 abstention. The acceptance of office of Chair of Council was completed and signed by Cllr Bruce and the Clerk.	
25051.3 **25051.3i** **25051.3ii**	**Election of Council Vice-Chair 2024/25** Councillor Grant had expressed his willingness to stand as Vice-Chair again, should no-one else be nominated. Cllr Grant was re-elected unopposed as Vice-Chair of Council, proposed by Cllr Francis and 2nd by Cllr Richmond with a vote 11:0 The acceptance of office of Vice-Chair of Council will need to be completed when Cllr Grant returns.	**Paperwork to be signed as soon as possible.**
25051.4	**Register of Members Interest (renewed annually as per the code of conduct)** It was confirmed that there were no updates to Register of Members Interests by those present.	
25051.5	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2025 were reviewed by the meeting. These were accepted by Council as an accurate record of the meeting and were approved by resolution of Council.	

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25051.6	**Review of Delegation Arrangements** There was a brief discussion on the scheme of delegation, but as no amendments were needed these were proposed by Cllr Wheeler, 2nd by Cllr Moore and approved by resolution of Council.	
25051.7 **25051.7i**	**Review of Terms of Reference for Committees** To approve the Terms of Reference of the following Committees of Council as amended May 2024: • Governance & Scrutiny Committee • Finance Committee • Planning Committee • Highways & Footpaths Committee • Climate & Biodiversity Committee The terms of reference detailed above were proposed en-bloc by Cllr Richmond and 2nd by Cllr Moore and were approved en-bloc by Council with a vote of 11:0. • Yorkley Court Solar Farm Community Fund Cllr Dunford raised an objection to the changes which had been made to the above Terms of Reference. Cllr Freshwater spoke of the setting up of the Terms of Reference and constitution of the Yorkley Court Solar Farm Panel At 7.40pm Cllr Bruce asked for the meeting to be closed to enable the ex-Clerk to speak on this subject, this was agreed by resolution of Council. The ex-Clerk advised that the changes had gone through the Forest of Dean District Council Legal Team and these Terms of Reference followed the advice received. The meeting was reopened at 7.42pm After further discussion Cllr Richmond proposed that this be given to Governance to look into again, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council.	**Clerk to retrieve all relevant communications.** **Item to be added to next Governance agenda.**
	County Cllr Hoyland arrived at 7.48pm Cllr Bruce asked to close the meeting to allow Cllr Hoyland to give her report, this was agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Hoyland apologised for being late and gave a roundup of the information on her report and asked for any questions. The meeting reopened at 7.50pm	
25051.8 **25051.8i**	**Appointment of Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs** These being required for the following committee's:-	

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	• Governance & Scrutiny (Cllr Francis Chair – Cllr Grant Vice Chair) • Planning (Cllr Dunford Chair - Cllr Evans Vice Chair) • Highways & Footpaths (Cllr Richmond Chair – Cllr Yeates Vice Chair) • Climate & Biodiversity (Cllr Bruce Chair, Cllr Yeates Vice Chair) • Finance (Cllr Grant Chair – Cllr Francis Vice Chair) • Staffing (dedicated members of committee Cllr Grant Chair, Cllr Evans Vice Chair, Cllr Wheeler, and Cllr Francis) • Multi-use Track Working Group (the Forest Gateway) appointment of representatives. (Cllr Dunford, Cllr Freshwater, Cllr Costley, and Cllr Grant) After a short discussion with all present Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs Cllr Richmond proposed that all Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs remain the same as 2024/25, seconded by Cllr Francis and agreed by resolution of Council. It was noted that certain committees will need to appoint a vice chair to cover for time of dispensations.	
25051.8ii	The dates and times of committee meetings were discussed and no changes were requested, Cllr Richmond proposed that these be set en bloc as per the appendix attached to the agenda, seconded by Cllr Francis and agreed by resolution of Council.	
25051.8iii	Cllr Freshwater agreed to remain as the reserve Councillor for the Yorkley Court Solar Farm Community Fund Committee, this was agreed by resolution of Council.	
25051.8iv	Two further Councillors as dedicated representatives on the Staffing Committee were not needed as this was covered in item 25051.8i.	
25051.9	**Review and adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations** The review of the Councils Financial Regulations (March 2025 edition) and Standing Orders had been completed by the Governance & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 20st May 2025. The New Financial Regulations had been reviewed in depth with the new financial limits being scrutinised and due diligence being completed through the review of the documents. Cllr Wheeler proposed that these be approved en-bloc by Council, this was seconded by Cllr Freshwater and approved by a vote of 11:0.	
25051.10	**Review of Representation on Other Bodies** The Council's representation on other bodies is as follows: Bells Foundation – Cllr M Costley & Cllr Richmond represent WDPC at these meetings. Road Safety Liaison Group – Cllr Richmond and the Clerk represent WDPC at these meetings.	

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	Bream Health Forum – Cllr Francis currently represents WDPC, Cllr Crick volunteered to attend when Cllr Francis is unavailable, this was agreed by resolution of Council. Police and Crime Commissioners Advocacy – Cllr Grant currently represents WDPC. Cllr Freshwater raised that Whitecroft Memorial Hall Deeds state that WDPC is allocated 1 seat which WPDC had not taken up – no volunteers came forward. Cllr Wheeler advised Council that he sat on the Coleford Area Partnership, who had requested a representative from WDPC.	**Clerk to Contact Clive Elsmore for details.**
25051.11	**To reaffirm the resolution from 2024 to enact the General Powers of Competence** It was proposed by Freshwater, Seconded by Cllr Betenson that WDPC reaffirm the resolution from 2024 to enact the General Powers of Competence, as prescribed in the Localism Act 2011, S1-8. To Council reaffirms that Council still meets the eligibility criteria enshrined in this Act, this being the following criteria: have two thirds or more of Council being elected and a CiLCA qualified Clerk. This was approved by Council with a vote of 11:0.	
25051.12 **25051.12i** **25051.12ii**	**Review and adopt the following policies and procedures.** The following policy and procedure had been reviewed by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on 20th May 2025. Cllr Francis proposed it's adoption, seconded by Cllr Richmond and approved and adopted by Council with a vote of 11:0 ▪ Absence Management Policy March 2025 The following policies and procedures had been reviewed by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20st May. Cllr Francis proposed that these be approved en-bloc as the due diligence had been completed by the committee, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and approved by Council with a vote of 11:0. ▪ Code of Conduct ▪ Complaints Policy & Procedure ▪ Data Protection Policy ▪ Community Engagement & Communication Policy ▪ Disciplinary Policy ▪ Equality & Diversity Policy ▪ Financial & Management Risk Assessment ▪ Procurement Policy ▪ Safeguarding Policy ▪ Health & Safety Policy ▪ Whistleblowing Policy ▪ Grievance Policy & Procedure ▪ Scheme of Delegation	

	▪ Publication Scheme ▪ Grants Policy ▪	
25051.13	**Review expenditure incurred under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 192 or GPOC** The S137 spend which is allocated to the Community Grant Award payments was reviewed by Council, Cllr Wheeler proposed acceptance, seconded by Cllr Dunford and approved by Council with a vote of 11:0.	
25051.14	**Determine the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council.** To agreed that ordinary meetings of Council will be held on the last Wednesday of each month, except December, for the next 13 months. Cllr Yeates moved that the status quo of Council meetings schedule and times be accepted, seconded by Cllr Betenson and approved by Council with a vote of 11:0.	
25051.15	**Apologies** The following apologies for absence and reasons were received:- • Cllr Lewis – Family Commitment • Cllr Grant – Holiday • Cllr Chance – Holiday • Cllr Evans – Dispensation These were accepted by Council and noted.	
25051.16	**Declarations of Interest** Cllr Yeates disclosed his Heritage Professional status.	
25052	**<u>Items for Consideration and Resolution</u>**	
25052.1	**Finance and Staffing** The budget monitoring information for WDPC and WDC was received and noted by Council. Cllr Dunford raised the income and expenditure account for the WDC as the past month showed a deficit. The Deputy Clerk explained that due to some income now only recorded quarterly this skews the reported figures.	
25052.1i	The May 2025 expenditure payment schedule, Direct Debits, Standing Orders, and credit card transactions totalling WDPC = £11,367.00 excluding VAT and WDC = £1789.13 excluding VAT were accepted and approved for payment .	
25052.1ii	Cllr Freshwater advised Council that the signatories for the Bank Accounts should be reaffirmed by Council for the 2025/26 year. This was proposed by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Francis, and agreed by resolution of Council.	

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25052.1iii **25052.1iv** **25052.1v** **25052.1vi** **25052.1vii** **25052.1viii**	Cllrs Bruce & Richmond are to authorise payments on the banking system for WDPC and WDC. Cllrs Dunford & Freshwater will be undertaking the financial inspection of May 2025 transactions. A report on the April financial inspection held on 14th May 2025 at 11am, to the total value of £9030.75 Debits & £117,209.80 Credits was given by Cllr Betenson The Internal Audit report from GAPTC and the recommendations for improvement, were noted and approved by Council with a vote of 11:0 The AGAR Annual Governance Statement – minute reference 24052.1vi was approved by Council with a vote of 11:0 and signed by the Chair and the Clerk at the meeting. The AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statement for 2024/25 – minute reference 24052.1vii was approved by Council with a vote of 11:0 and signed by the Chair and the Clerk at the meeting. The dates for the period for the Exercise of Public Rights, this is commencing on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 and ending on Monday 14th July 2025, were noted and approved by Council.	**Sent 30/5/24 to PK Littlejohn and to webmaster for publication on WDPC website.**
25052.2 **25052.2i**	**Governance & Scrutiny Committee** The minutes of the Governance & Scrutiny meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2025 were received and noted by Council.	
25052.3	**Heritage Report** The finalised Heritage report for the Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP review was received from Cllr Yeates, Cllr Dunford asked if it would be possible to employ Cllr Yeates to produce this type of report for all other NDPs which WDPC wish to produce. The legalities of this was questioned and Cllr Yeates advised that the ex-Clerk had already put this question to the FODDC Monitoring Officer and received an answer. Cllr Freshwater made 2 proposals • A vote of thanks be given to Cllr Yeates for all the work he had put into this document, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed unanimously by Council. • That Council note, accept and receive the Heritage report produced by Cllr Yeates, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed unanimously by Council. • Cllr Freshwater proposed that this now go to the Planning Committee for discuss how this report should be used and how WDPC move forward, seconded by Cllr Costley and agreed by Council. Cllr Richmond raised a concern that if WDPC only commissioned Cllr Yeates for his expertise it could exclude other contractors from being considered.	**Clerk to gather all relevant correspondence.** **Item for next Planning Agenda.**

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	Cllr Francis asked if it could be possible for the Bream Ward Councillors to get together to discuss starting an NDP for Bream. Cllr Dunford advised that he knew of people who would be willing to help. Cllr Wheeler noted that once Bream was done only Sling and Ellwood Parishes would be left without an NDP. It was suggested that perhaps they could be included within the Bream NDP.	
25052.4	**Clerks Report** The Clerk gave a verbal report on the following issues. • Asset Valuation on AGAR • WDPC Insurance updates and payment – Cllr Freshwater proposed that the clerk be allowed to pay the insurance premium as sent due to lack of updates, but be given delegated power to pay up to a further £1000.00 for the requested amendments, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of Council. • Scarr Bandstand request for backstop funding for unforeseen roofing charges – Council declined this request but had no issue with them reapplying for future grants. • News Letter and the need for articles • Basil Whittington Award – 3 Councillors needed - Cllrs Costley, Dunford and Richmond volunteered to sit on this working group. • FODDC Active Travel Consultation – tentative date for meeting at WDC 9th June 2025 • Request from a MOP for a key to the Cenotaph. – After some discussion Council asked for a Risk Assessment to be done and presented to the next Full Council Meeting.	**Items to be added to next Finance Meeting** **Payment added to bank 29.05.25** **Letter to be written to Friends of Scarr Bandstand** **Risk Assessment to be produced.**
	Cllr Freshwater raised the Play area at Worcester Walk, Broadwell, and asked what WDPC were going to do with it. PH said that this park is not maintained by WDPC, although it is in our Parish. Coleford Town Council have shown an interest in the site as it boarders both boundaries and have had contact previously. Cllr Bruce volunteered to speak to Coleford Town Councillor Elsmore and bring a report to the next Full Council Meeting	**AB to speak to Cllr Elsmore.**
25052.5	**Deputy Clerks Report** The Deputy Clerk reported the results of the ROSPA reports for each of the play areas and the recommendations for repairs required. The Deputy Clerk recommended that quotes be sought from these repairs which would be brought back to the next Full Council Meeting. It was noted that the specific sinking fund was available to help defray the expense. Cllr Costley Proposed this, seconded by Cllr Yeates and agreed by resolution of Council.	**Quotes to be sought for repairs to play parks.**

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	Cllr Costley raised the issue of replacing the seat in the Christchurch Bus Shelter and PH advised that a new solution was being sought.	**PH to seek quotes**
25052.6	**Draft Letter to Matt Bishop MP** Cllr Moore advised Council that the letter to Matt Bishop regarding Devolution options was still in the process of being drafted.	**Cllr Moore to bring draft letter to next Full Council meeting.**
25052.7	**Facebook Post from Berry Hill Life regarding a Proposal for a Berry Hill split from West Dean Parish Council.** Cllr Costley advised Council of the Facebook Group which had been set up to talk about this subject. The process of creating a new Parish Council was discussed, and Council agreed that it is something to keep an eye on.	
25053	**<u>Items for Information – Councillors to note.</u>**	
25053.1	**Planning Committee** Council noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on Tuesday 6th & 20th May 2025. Cllr Dunford advised Council that the FIO Request and been sent to FODDC and a reply and been received but did not fully cover both of the questions asked. Cllr Dunford also spoke of the Hoarthorns Woodland Consultation – it was agreed that this would be discussed in Chairs Items.	**FOI letter to be sent to all Councillors**
25053.2	**Grant Award Thank You Letters** Council noted the two thank you letters from WDPC Spring Grant Award recipients.	
25053.3	**Annual Parish Assembly** The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 21st May 2025 were received and noted	
25053.4	**Chairs Items** • Cllr Bruce advised Council that she and the Clerk had attended an anti-social behaviour in Bream meeting and will report to Council when the notes are received. • Cllr Dunford asked if WDPC wanted to make representation to Forestry England with regard to the Hoarthorns Woodland Consultation. Cllr Yeates had produced information which has been used to draft a letter that could be used as the basis for a WDPC response. This was agreed by Council and all present were asked to let the Clerk now if they require any amendments before it was sent.	**AB to report to Full Council** **Clerk to send WDPC consultation response to FE.**
25053.5	**Public Round-up – 10 minutes** Cllr Camp asked if he could be copied into the Hoarthorns Consultation email.	
25054	**<u>Forthcoming Meeting Schedule:</u>**	

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Jun-25				
Tues	3rd June 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	17th June 2025	2.30pm	Highways & Footpaths	West Dean Centre
Tues	17th June 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	25th June 2025	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre

Jul-25				
Tues	1st July 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	15th July 2025	11.30am	Governance & Scrutiny	West Dean Centre
Tues	15th July 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	30th July 2025	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre

Aug-25				
Tues	5th August 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	19th August 2025	2.30pm	Highways & Footpaths	West Dean Centre
Tues	19th August 2025	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	27th August 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 Chairman 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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