



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

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FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday 28th January 2025

Location: West Dean Centre, High Street, Bream

Present: Cllrs A Bruce (Chair), A Grant (Vice Chair) A Betenson, S Lewis, B Evans, S Yeates, S Dunford, J Richmond, M Bennett, S Francis, R Freshwater & D Wheeler
County Cllrs L Challis & B Hoyland

Clerks: J Miles and P Holland

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

Public Forum:

The meeting started at 19.00 with Cllr A Grant thanking everyone for attending and inviting members of the public to speak.

Representatives from Canopy attended the meeting to share details of the upcoming Bream-fest and thanked West Dean Parish Council (WDPC) for their support.

A resident from Pillowell spoke to Council over concerns relating to the repair of a wall on Upper Road, and the timing of any road closure due to a forthcoming exhibition. During discussion it was suggested that the resident speak to County Councillor B Hoyland.

Public forum ended at 19.20.

Cllr A Bruce arrived at 19:10 with Cllr Grant handing the Chair to Cllr Bruce at 19:20.

26010	<u>County & District Reports</u>	
26010.1	Reports were received from:- County Cllr L Challis, on the topics of • Highways, Potholes and Drainage – Cllr Challis is now Fix My Street Co-ordinator. • New Bus Stops Placements • Smiley Face VAS unit at Mile End • The Gloucestershire County Council budget is now approved. Cllr Freshwater asked if Cllr Challis could intervene on behalf of the Landlord of the Game Keepers Public House with regard to the drainage	

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	issues. It was noted that Cllr P Camp is the County Cllr for this area, but Cllr Challis would speak to him. District Cllr D Wheeler on the topics of:- The District's Local Plan draft, which is out for Public Consultation. If WDPC wish to make comments they need to be submitted by 18th March 2026, and this could be dealt with by WDPC Planning Committee. Cllr Dunford noted that WDPC usually had a special meeting for anything of this nature and if any members were interested to please contact him and a meeting would be arranged.	
26011	<u>Council Formal Business</u>	<u>Actions Completed</u>
26011.1	Apologies Apologies were received from County Cllrs P Camp, West Dean Parish Councillors, M Costley & A Moore, Cllr Evans stated he would be leaving the meeting early – all were accepted by Council and noted.	
26011.2	Declarations of Interest/Dispensation Requests - Cllr Yeates declared he is a Heritage Expert and also a member of BHMI . - Cllr Wheeler declared that he is Chair of the Development Management Committee at FoDDC Cllrs were reminded that declarations could be given at any point in the meeting if required.	
26011.3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th November 2025 were reviewed. Cllr Lewis raised his disagreement with the wording of item 3.4. UNESCO Biosphere Status. After discussion Cllr Dunford proposed that people attend the consultations which were about to take place then feed back to the next Full Council, seconded by Cllr Evans and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Lewis asked under what authority the Chair could remove an item from the agenda, and after discussion it was agreed this item should go to Governance & Scrutiny Committee in March 2026. The minutes were then proposed by Cllr Yeates, seconded by Cllr Richmond and accepted by a vote of 4 for and 3 abstentions as an accurate record.	
	Cllr Hoyland arrived at 19:45 at which point Cllr Bruce put to Council a suspension of the meeting to allow Cllr Hoyland to give a county report. This was agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Hoyland spoke on the topics of:- Resurfacing works	

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	• Canopy walks • Fair funding review • Grass roots funding • Waste news. Cllr Freshwater asked Cllr Hoyland about the traffic jams being caused by roadworks on the A48. He then raised the delays in repairing the wall at Upper Road, Pillowell. Cllr Hoyland took details of both points. Cllr Evans spoke on the costs of Devolution and asked Cllr Hoyland if she knew how this was split between County and District? Cllr Bennett spoke regarding works on Stag Hill. Cllr Bruce reopened the meeting at 19.55	
26012	<u>Items for Consideration and Resolution</u>	
26012.1	Finance The budget information for WDPC (West Dean Parish Council) and WDC (West Dean Centre) was noted by Council.	
26012.1i	December 2025 expenditure payment schedule, Direct Debits, Standing Orders, and credit card transactions totalling WDPC = £15,69.19 exc. VAT and WDC = £1,686.68 exc. VAT were noted, with payments having been made in December under agreement of Full Council item 25112.1v	
26012.1ii	January 2026 expenditure payment schedule, Direct Debits, Standing Orders, and credit card transactions totalling WDPC = £ 11,407.40 exc. VAT and WDC = £2,244.66 exc. VAT were received, Cllr Dunford proposed accepting these, this was seconded by Cllr Grant and agreed by resolution of the council.	
26012.1iii	Cllrs S Dunford & A Grant are to authorise January 2026 payments on the banking system for WDPC & Cllrs A Grant & M Costley for WDC	
26012.1iv	Cllrs Francis and Betenson to be contacted to arrange a meeting to reconcile the December 2025 and January 2026 accounts and financial inspection.	
20612.1v	The financial inspections report for November 2025 was received and noted by Council, giving a reconciled bank balance for WDPC of £305,333.66 and WDC of £39502.60 , including transactions for WDPC totalling £11,271.01 and WDC totalling £2,211.13 with Cllrs Wheeler and Lewis confirming all was found to be satisfactory.	
26012.1vi	The appointment of GAPTC as the internal auditor and confirmation that they are independent of Council and competent to undertake these works, was proposed by Cllr Grant, 2 nd by Cllr Evans and agreed by resolution of Council.	

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26012.2	Governance & Scrutiny Committee The minutes and notes of the Governance & Scrutiny meeting held on 20 th January 2026 were noted.	
26012.2i	Cllr Dunford mentioned that his apologies were missed, this is to be noted. Cllr Freshwater raised the point of meetings being inquorate, after further discussion it was agreed that an investigation would be made into the date and times of all meetings to see if any adjustments could be made. The recommendation to approve the amendments as indicated in Governance & Scrutiny minutes and adopt the following policies. ▪ Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy ▪ General and Earmarked Reserve Policy ▪ Investment Policy ▪ Accessibility Statement ▪ Information Technology Policy Cllr Francis proposed adoption en bloc, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council.	List to be complied of meeting information.
26012.3	Planning Committee The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 6 th & 20 th January 2026 were received and noted.	
26012.3i	The proposal that all Planning Applications received by the Parish Office are sent to the Ward Councillors for initial screening, the Planning Committee would then only look at those put forward by the Ward Councillor(s) as needing detailed assessment, was discussed and a suggestion was made that a response date be added to the bottom of the notifications. Acceptance of this was proposed by Cllr Dunford, seconded by Cllr Evans and agreed by resolution of Council	Deputy Clerk to send relevant notices to Ward Councillors
	Cllr Evans left the meeting at 20.20	
26012.4	Bream, Sling & Ellwood Heritage Report Cllr Yeates left the meeting as he had an interest in this item. The need to begin the Bream, Sling & Ellwood Heritage Report was discussed. The need for this report was discussed at length, acceptance was proposed by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Freshwater then proposed that WDPC employ Cllr Yeates to produce this report, seconded by Cllr Lewis and agreed by resolution of Council. It was agreed that the Clerk would check on the available budget.	Clerk to check budget.
20612.5	Forest of Dean Gateway A verbal report on the Forest of Dean Gateway was given by Cllr Dunford, including the current position of the Planning Application.	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

25112.6	Clerks Report The Clerk's report included:- 1. Virements, acceptance of these was proposed by Cllr Freshwater and seconded by Cllr Richmond. 2. Internal Audit recommendation to show budget versus expenditure January 26, Budget Total = £245,190.00, Expenditure = £182,076.06 3. Amendment to financial inspections 4. GAPTC membership update 5. GAPTC Fees 6. Age Friendly Town & Parish 7. Floodsax 8. Precept demand acknowledgement 9. Local Plan advanced notification 10. Email questionnaire – Assertion 10 11. Edge Gold Package 12. Yorkley Court Fund update 13. Bream Premier Store Letter These were proposed en bloc by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of Council.	Clerk to move budget as agreed Clerk to sign up for Edge Gold Package.
	Cllr Wheeler left the meeting at 21:35	
26012.7	Deputy Clerks Report The Deputy Clerk's report included:- 1. Update on 25112.7 Noise Nuisance in the West Dean Centre. 2. Legionella Testing & Documentation. The need for a written scheme was discussed, Cllr Grant proposed paying for this, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of Council. 3. Fire Safety Assessment. 4. Bowson Square Play Area Lease amendment was proposed by Cllr Dunford, seconded by Cllr Grant and agreed by resolution of Council 5. Crow Ash Play Area damage was discussed, Cllr Richmond proposed a spend of no more than £2000.00, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of Council. 6. Fruit Tree – Forestry Licence Request was discussed with agreement to hold the licence proposed by Cllr Dunford, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of Council.	2. Deputy Clerk to obtain Written Scheme 4. Deputy Clerk to liaise with Forestry England 5. Deputy Clerk to arrange repairs. 6. Deputy Clerk to liaise with mop and Forestry England.
26012.8	Sheep Liaison Group Discussion <i>This item was held in camera, under The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960,</i>	
26012.9	Forest of Dean Spring Trails Half Marathon 2026 – Consultation	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	The Temporary Road Closures - Special Events Event: Forest of Dean Spring Trails Half Marathon 2026 Consultation email, was discussed and council agreed to support this. Cllr Freshwater asked that the response include the hope that diversions will be signed professionally.	Clerk to respond.
26013	<u>Items for Information – Councillors to note.</u>	
26013.1	Scarr Bandstand Canopy Update The information sent by Friends of Scarr Bandstand as noted.	
26013.2	Biosphere Invitation The invitation which was emailed out on 21.01.26 was noted	
26013.3	Road Closure for Geotechnical Remediation Works The notification that B4234 (Forest Road Lydney) will be closed early February 2026 to late August 2026 was noted.	
26013.4	Chestnut Wood Lease It was noted that Nexus is awaiting an answer to the question posed by With answers to the question given.	
26013.5	Chairs Items 1. Cllr Freshwater noted that there were power sockets in the Ladies and Gents toilets which should be blanked off. 2. The Deputy Clerk made Council aware of the death of Mr A Day, a long serving member of Bream Library. Council agreed that their thanks for his service and hard work should be minuted. 3. Cllr Bennett brought up the possibility of a new bus stop in Bream, the Clerk/RFO advised that no budget was available at this time. Cllr Freshwater suggested that perhaps he should speak to County Cllr Hoyland.	1.Deputy Clerk to arrange electrician.
26014	Public Round-up – 10 minutes There was no Public Round-up.	
	The meeting ended at 21.50	
26015	<u>Forthcoming Meeting Schedule:</u>	

Feb-26				
Tues	3rd February 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	17th February 2026	2.30pm	Highways & Footpaths	West Dean Centre
Tues	17th February 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	25th February 2026	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre
Mar-26				

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Tues	3rd March 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	17th March 2026	11.30am	Governance & Scrutiny	West Dean Centre
Tues	17th March 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	25th March 2026	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre
Apr-26				
Tues	7th April 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	21st April 2026	2.30pm	Highways & Footpaths	West Dean Centre
Tues	21st April 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	29th April 2026	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.
- 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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