WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

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ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Date Issued: **29.05.26**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 27th May 2026 @7pm**

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

Present: Cllrs A Grant (Chair), M Bennett, S Lewis, M Costley, S Dunford, J Richmond, B Freshwater, S Yeates, D Wheeler, A Batchelor, S Francis and B Evans

Also Present: County Cllrs L Challis, P Camp & B Hoyland
District Cllr 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 were no members of the public in attendance at this meeting.

26050	**County & District Reports**	
	Cllr Grant welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked our District Cllr if they had anything to add to their written report. Cllr B Llewellyn added information on:- • Forest of Dean Biosphere Briefing. Cllr Llewellyn stated she was happy to answer any questions, this led to a discussion on the Biosphere, with the following points being raised, • Clear indication is needed on what the zones would mean for a working forest. What is said by UNESCO differs from what the FODDC has said. • Clarification is needed on what a biosphere means to for Forest Traditions. • This needs to be scoped properly, all options. • Consultation needs to be done professionally • Members of public need to be consulted • Information given out needs to be clearer • Governance needs to be addressed	

	Cllr Llewellyn said she had taken on board the points raised and would take them back to the District Council. Cllr Grant advised that if there were any other questions these could be given to the Clerks to pass on.	
26051	**<u>Council Formal Business</u>**	<u>Actions Completed</u>
26051.1 **26051.1i** **26051.1ii**	**Election of Council Chair 2026/27** Cllr Grant was nominated by Cllr Evans but declined the role. Cllr Evans then nominated Cllr Freshwater who also declined the role. Cllr Lewis put himself forward for Chair and Cllr Richmond asked if there were any other nominations, as there were not Cllr Lewis was elected as Chair of Council, proposed by Cllr Grant and seconded by Cllr Freshwater with a vote of 9:0 with 2 abstentions. The acceptance of office of Chair of Council was completed and signed by Cllr Lewis and the Clerk.	
26051.2 **26051.2i** **26051.2ii**	**Election of Council Vice-Chair 2024/26** Cllr Evans nominated Cllr Dunford who declined the role, Cllr Dunford stated that Cllr Grant had done a sterling job in the role and therefore nominated Cllr Grant as Vice-Chair again, Cllr Grant was elected as Vice-Chair of Council, proposed by Cllr Dunford and seconded by Cllr Freshwater with a vote 11:0 The acceptance of office of Vice-Chair of Council was completed and signed by Cllr Grant and the Clerk.	
26051.3	**Register of Members Interest (renewed annually as per the code of conduct)** There were 2 Cllrs whom needed to update their Register of Members Interests, they were given the appropriate forms to completed and returned to the Clerk as soon as possible. All other Cllrs signed a declaration of no changes.	**Cllr Wheeler to return form as soon as possible.**
26051.4	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting** Cllr Francis stated that the minutes of the last Annual Partish Meeting, held on 28th May 2025, should be the minutes being present at this meeting, not the minutes of the last Full Council meeting, as this was the AGM. Cllr Dunford raised a point of order stating that all Cllrs had had the Agenda for a week, if they had any issues they should have been raised before the meeting. The Clerk pointed out that this agenda followed the same format as every previous May agenda. The minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2026 were reviewed by the meeting. These were accepted by Council as an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Cllr Grant, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and approved by resolution of Council.	

26051.5	**Review of Delegation Arrangements** There was a brief discussion on the scheme of delegation, but as no amendments were needed these were proposed en bloc by Cllr Wheeler, seconded by Cllr Dunford and approved by resolution of Council.	
26051.6 **26051.6i** **26051.6ii**	**Appointment of Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs** These being required for the following committee's:- • 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) • 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) Cllr Grant proposed that the Climate & Biodiversity Committee, be discussed at the next Governance & Scrutiny Committee Meeting. After a short discussion Cllr Richmond proposed that all Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs remain the same as 2025/26, with the exception of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee ,which would be discussed at the next Governance & Scrutiny Committee Meeting, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Dunford asked if Cllrs felt that the new scheme for the Planning Committee was working as expected, Cllr Evans stated that although he was happy for the new arrangement to continue but felt that the Committee should meet sometimes to allow members of public the opportunity to raise any issues. Cllr Dunford suggested that the Committee could meet in person once every 3 months and this was agreed. The dates and times of the remaining committee meetings were discussed with no other changes requested; Cllr Richmond proposed the dates and times be set en bloc as currently set , seconded by Cllr Bennett and agreed by resolution of Council.	
	County Cllr Hoyland arrived at 7.36pm Cllr Lewis 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 her report and the following items; • The replacement of the £30K Cllrs had with new surgeries introduced • The A48 sign cleaning • Forward plan for surface dressing of road through Parkend, Yorkley, Viney Hill.	**Cllr Hoyland to arrange meeting**

Signed by Chair ________________________ Date _________

	• The need to rebuild the bridge at Whitecroft meaning the road would be closed once Forest Road reopens. This will be several months but is some time off. • The resurfacing of the railway crossing at Whitecroft whilst Forest Road is closed. Cllr Evans asked if Cllr Hoyland had any information of the Local Government Re-organisation, to which she stated that the result of which Unitary option would be introduced would be given by the Government on 17th July 2026. Cllr Grant acknowledged the residents of Parkend were grateful for the 23 bus route now operating in Parkend and asked if this could continue once Forest Road reopened, Cllr Hoyland said she would feed this back. Cllr Grant also asked about the Government stating they would help people on gas fuelled heating and nothing further being heard, Cllr Hoyland had not heard anything on this either. Cllr Dunford spoke of the meeting WDPC had been trying to organise with County Highways in relation to the Forest of Dean Gateway with little success, Cllr Hoyland agreed to speak to the appropriate officer and arrange the meeting as soon as possible. Cllr Freshwater spoke of the Road Closure at Corner Road and asked Cllr Hoyland to investigate what, if any, parking arrangements had been considered. **The meeting reopened at 7.50pm**	
  26051.6iii **26051.6iv**	**Appointment of Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs** Cllr Evans nominated Cllr Freshwater as the reserve Cllr for the Yorkley Court Solar Farm Community Fund Committee, seconded by Cllr Bennett and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Evans Proposed that the two further Cllrs as dedicated representatives on the Staffing Committee would remain the same for 2026/27, seconded by Cllr Grant and agreed by resolution of Council.	
26051.7	**Review and adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations** The review of the Councils Financial Regulations (March 2025 edition) and Standing Orders were discussed. The Clerk stated that these would be reviewed, after the receipt of the Internal Audit Report on 27.05.26, and would be presented to Governance & Scrutiny at their next meeting and brought to Full Council again after that. Cllr Wheeler proposed that these be approved en-bloc by Council, this was seconded by Cllr Yeates and approved by a vote of 12:0.	
26051.8	**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.	

Signed by Chair ________________________ Date _________

	Road Safety Liaison Group – Cllr Richmond and the Clerk represent WDPC at these meetings. Forest 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 – Cllr Freshwater proposed this be put on the next Full Council Meeting, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Wheeler advised Council that he sat on the Coleford Area Partnership, as a representative from Newland Parish Council. Cllr Dunford agreed to represent WDPC.	**Item for next meeting**
26051.9	**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. That 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 confirmed by internal Auditor as running until the next Elections. This was approved by Council with a vote of 11:0.	
26051.10	**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 were noted by Council.	
26051.11	**Standing Orders & Direct Debits** The Standing Orders and Direct Debits for WDPC & WDC for 2026/27 were reviewed. Cllr Grant proposed acceptance of these, seconded by Richmond and agreed by resolution of Council.	
26051.12	**Determine the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council.** The time and place of the ordinary meetings of Council were discussed, those at present being the last Wednesday of each month, except December, for the next 13 months, at 7pm at the West Dean Centre. Cllr Yeates proposed that the status quo of Council meetings schedule and times be accepted, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and approved by Council with a vote of 11:0.	
26051.1	**Apologies**	

Signed by Chair ________________________ Date _________

	The following apologies for absence and reasons were received:- • Cllr Betenson – Holiday • Cllr Crick – Holiday These were accepted by Council and noted.	
26051.1	**Declarations of Interest** • 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	
26052	**<u>Items for Consideration and Resolution</u>**	
26052.1	**Finance and Staffing** The budget monitoring information for WDPC and WDC was received and noted by Council.	
26052.1i	The May 2026 expenditure payment schedule, Direct Debits, Standing Orders, and credit card transactions totalling WDPC = £24,334.87 excluding VAT and WDC = £1042.73 excluding VAT were proposed by Cllr Grant, seconded by Cllr Dunford and approved for payment by resolution of Council.	**Emails sent 28.05.26 for payment authorisations.**
26052.1ii	It was noted that Cllrs Costley & Yeates for WDPC and Cllrs Costley & Grant for WDC were to authorise payments on the banking system	
26052.1iii	It was noted that Cllrs Bennett & Freshwater will be undertaking the financial inspection of May 2026 transactions.	**Clerk to arrange date for inspection.**
26052.1iv	Cllr Yeates gave a report on the April 2026 financial inspection dated 06/05/26 giving a reconciled bank balance for WDPC of £344.,343.54 and WDC of £35,434.03, including transactions for WDPC totalling £254,095.30 and WDC totalling £9,087.51, this was noted by Council.	
26052.1v	The receipt of the Internal Audit report from GALC (formally GAPTC), received on 27.05.26 was noted by Council. The Clerk advised that she would go through the report and bring any recommendations made to the Full Council meeting in June. Cllr Grant proposed acceptance of this, seconded by Cllr Costley and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Grant asked that thanks to the Clerk be noted as she had only been in the job a year and was already getting good results.	
26052.1vi	The AGAR Annual Governance Statement – minute reference 26052.1vi was proposed by Cllr Wheeler, seconded by Cllr Richmond and approved by Council with a vote of 11:0 and signed by the Chair and the Clerk at the meeting.	**Sent 28/5/26 to PK Littlejohn and to webmaster for publication on WDPC website.**
26052.1vii	The AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statement for 2025/26 – minute reference 26052.1vii was proposed by Cllr Freshwater, Seconded by Cllr Yeates and approved by Council with a vote of 11:0 and signed by the Chair and the Clerk at the meeting.	
26052.1viii	The dates for the period for the Exercise of Public Rights, commencing on Tuesday 3rd June 2026 and ending on Monday 14th July 2026, were proposed by	

Signed by Chair ________________________ Date _________

	Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Richmond, noted and approved by resolution of Council.	
26052.2 **26052.2i**	**Bus Shelter Budget** The Budget Code for Bus Shelter Purchase and Installation costs was discussed, Cllr Grant suggested a 50/50 split of the costs (between Climate & Biodiversity Fund and the Community Grant Underspend , but after some debate Cllr Freshwater proposed using the Climate & Biodiversity Fund for the whole project, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by a vote of 10:0 with 1 abstention	
26052.3	**Clerks Report** The Clerk reported on the following items • Thank you letter from GWAA – WDPC Spring Grant Award. • Thank you e-mail from Bream Gardening Society – WDPC Spring Grant Award. • Thank you e-mail from Parkend Community Orchard – WDPC Spring Grant Award. • 2026 GALC AGM – Call for motions for consideration at the GALC Annual General Meeting 2026. • GALC AGM – Saturday, 26th September 2026 at 10.00 am – Churchdown Community Centre • Biosphere Presentation Town and Parish Councils online meeting 27.4.26 • Details of FODDC Community Grant Application for Councillors to share with their ward members. • Handouts from GALC training • Resignation of Cllr Moore – e-mail received from FoDDC Electoral Services – no requests have been received for a By-Election and we can now go ahead and co-opt. • May Budget Overview • Out of Hours Support for Council Buildings Both Cinderford and Coleford use Wye Security Solutions The Clerk sought permission to contact Wye Security Solutions to obtain a quote for West Dean Parish Council, this was proposed by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Bennett and agreed by resolution of Council. The Clerk also asked for permission to move monies from the savings account to the current account, this was proposed by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Wheeler and agreed by resolution of Council.	**Clerk to obtain quote.** **Transfer put on Bank Account 28.05.26** **Clerk to attend course.**

Signed by Chair ________________________ Date _________

	The Clerk also sought permission to attend a course to be run by FVAF on signposting help resources. Proposed by Cllr Freshwaer, seconded by Cllr Costley and agreed by resolution of Council	
26052.4	**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. She reported that the only repairs required had already been approved by Council at the April 2026 meeting. Cllr Freshwater raised the Play area at Worcester Walk, Broadwell. The Deputy Clerk again re-iterated that WDPC had never maintained this park even though it lies within West Dean Parish. Cllr Richmond proposed that WDPC write to Forestry England with regard to the maintenance of this play area, believing they hold the licence for it. This was seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council.	**Letter to be written to Forestry England.**
26052.5	**Garden Shed Request** The request from Bream Community Library to place a shed in the Courtyard of the West Dean Centre was discussed, acceptance of this request was proposed by Cllr Wheeler, seconded by Cllr Grant and agreed by resolution of Council.	**Letter of agreement to be sent to Bream Library.**
26052.6	**Insurance Arrangements** The Insurance Arrangements for 2026/27 were discussed and the Clerk advised Council of the insurance for 2026/27 and of a slight amendment for which payment needed to be put onto the bank, this was approved by resolution of Council	**Amended payment added to bank 28.05.26**
26052.7	**Crossing Cottage** **This agenda item was held in closed session under The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**	
26053	**<u>Items for Information – Cllrs to note.</u>**	
26053.1	**Planning Committee** Council noted that there were no Planning Committee meetings held in May 2026, and received a list of Applications received by West Dean Parish Council within May 2026.	
26053.2	**Annual Parish Assembly** As no actions were born from this meeting the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 13th May 2026 were noted.	
26053.3	**Chairs Items** • Cllr Freshwater raised the Forest of Dean Biosphere issue, and asked for this to be an item on the next Full Council agenda. After some discussion Cllr Lewis suggested making a wish list with points to be addressed. Cllr Richmond suggested it should include what the time and effort have cost to date. After further discussion Cllr Freshwater proposed that a Freedom of Information Request be sent to FoDDC asking what the total spend on the Biosphere Project had been to date.	**Item for next agenda.**

Signed by Chair ________________________ Date __________

	Cllr Dunford proposed an amendment to this proposal to say "How much funding had come from the Council's Budget and how much had been grant funded" seconded by Cllr Grant and Agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Freshwater's proposition, with the agreed amendment was seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by a vote of 10:1 • Cllr Freshwater stated that at the last meeting Council agreed to facilitate another Sheep Liaison Group meeting, and asked for representatives from WDPC to attend the meetings, it was suggested that one Cllr from Bream and 1 Cllr from Yorkley should be chosen. Cllrs Freshwater and Bennett were appointed to represent WDPC. Cllr Freshwater then asked for the Clerk to arrange the next meeting. • Cllr Batchelor asked if it would be possible for everyone to have name badges as he was still trying to learn everyone's names. It was suggested that name cards could be produced and placed on the tables.	**Freedom of Information request to be sent to FoDDC** **SLG meeting to be arranged.** **Deputy Clerk to produce name cards**
26053.4	**Public Round-up – 10 minutes** There were no members of public at the meeting	
	The meeting finished at 8.45pm	
26054	**<u>Forthcoming Meeting Schedule:</u>**	

		Jun-26		
Tues	**2nd June 2026**	**5.00pm**	**Planning Committee**	**West Dean Centre**
Mon	**15th June 2026**	**7.00pm**	**Highways & Footpaths**	**West Dean Centre**
Tues	**16th June 2026**	**5.00pm**	**Planning Committee**	**West Dean Centre**
Weds	**24th June 2026**	**7.00pm**	**Full Council**	**West Dean Centre**
		Jul-26		
Tues	**7th July 2026**	**5.00pm**	**Planning Committee**	**West Dean Centre**
Tues	**21st July 2026**	**11.30am**	**Governance & Scrutiny**	**West Dean Centre**
Tues	**21st July 2026**	**5.00pm**	**Planning Committee**	**West Dean Centre**
Weds	**29th July 2026**	**7.00pm**	**Full Council**	**West Dean Centre**
		Aug-26		
Tues	**4th August 2026**	**5.00pm**	**Planning Committee**	**West Dean Centre**
Tues	**18th August 2026**	**2.30pm**	**Highways & Footpaths**	**West Dean Centre**

Signed by Chair _________________________ Date __________

Tues	**18th August 2026**	**5.00pm**	**Planning Committee**	**West Dean Centre**
Weds	**28th August 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. 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.

Signed by Chair ________________________ Date _________