WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

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GOVERNANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2026 published on

Present: **Cllrs A Grant, S Dunford, J Richmond, S Yeates & A Betenson**

Clerks: **J Miles & P Holland**

	MINUTES	**ACTION**
	Cllr Grant welcomed those in attendance and stated that Cllr Francis had resigned as chair of the Governance & Scrutiny Committee, and vice chair of Staffing Committee. Cllr Grant asked that a vote of thanks be recorded to Cllr Francis for chairing this committee and the good and thorough work she had done. This was reiterated by all present.	
1	**Apologies** Apologies were received from Cllr A Batchelor, B Freshwater, S Lewis & S Francis	
2	**Declaration of Interest** Cllr Yeates declared he is a Heritage Expert and also a member of BHMI Cllr Richmond declared he is a trustee of Berry Hill Memorial Institute.	
3	**Minutes of the last meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2026 were discussed and Cllr Grant explained that the expansion to the IT Policy noted in the minutes had been delayed as a new back-up system had been introduced and information on this would need to be added into the revised policy. The Clerk noted that the IT Policy currently in place was deemed as sufficient at the time of acceptance by Full Council. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Richmond, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
4	**Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies Committee Terms of Reference** The Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies Committee rebranding and terms of reference was discussed with Cllr Grant suggesting a new name of Environmental & Heritage Committee, it could encompass things such as • Climate • Neighbourhood Plans • Bus Shelters • Biosphere and other such items. Cllr Yeates suggested that the name could incorporate the wording Natural & Built after the word Environment. Cllr Dunford spoke of his misgivings that too much would be dumped onto this new Committee and that the terms of reference would need to be very	**Recommend new name to Full Council and Terms of Reference to be produced by the Clerk.**

	clear on what would be expected, this would need to be discussed in their first official meeting. Cllr Richmond proposed the working title for the former Climate & Biodiversity Emergency Committee be changed to Environmental & Heritage Committee with the terms of reference to be agreed at Full Council. Seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of Committee. Cllr Dunford raised the following points which he thought should be included in the Aimes section of the Terms of Reference • Build community resilience to counter the onset and adverse impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. • inform, educate, carry out an active dialogue and seek to change behaviours of residents, businesses and the wider community in order to take the actions needed. • To consider the Natural Built Environment within the West Dean Parish area. • To liaise closely with community groups to develop Neighbourhood Plans (NPs). The budget held by the existing Climate & Biodiversity Committee was confirm as approx. £14 thousand, and discussion followed as to the possibility of moving these funds into Council's General Reserves. After further discussion Cllr Dunford proposed that the funds should be left within the current budget for the time being to cover the cost of any work programme the Environment & Heritage Committee proposed including NPs or NP reviews, as previous funding streams for these were no longer available, and remove the delegated powers to spend. Seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of committee. The number of meetings to be held was also discussed and, as with Finance Committee it was suggested that an as and when approach would be best. Cllr Dunford proposed a minimum of 3 meetings each year, seconded by Cllr Grant and agreed by resolution of Committee	
5 **5.1**	**Scrutiny & Review of Council Policies & Procedures** The following new Policies were discussed and for Full Council resolution at the July Council Meeting were discussed: • Large Projects Policy - Thanks were noted for Cllr Freshwater's assistance on this policy. After discussion the following amendments were agreed:- 1. Capital P on Parish in first line. 2. move line 4 of the introduction to line 2 position. 3. Item 5 replace back off with delegate. 4. Item 7 replace Treasurer with Responsible Financial Officer 5. Item 9 after unresolved insert or to close the project if matters cannot be resolved. Also remove closed if the Council is sure that it is completed to their satisfaction and insert deemed completed or closed by resolution of Full Council.	 **Recommendation to present all New Policies to Full Council for acceptance. with amendments, and adoption for 2026/27**

	• VASs Policy – thanks were given to Cllr Richmond and the deputy clerk for their work on this policy. After discussion the following amendments were agreed:- 1. Item 1.3 remove two and replace with a number. Remove subsequently a further three have been bought. 2. Item 1.4 close the bracket at the end of the sentence. 3. 21. After significant add or. 4. Put GCC HD in full. 5. Item 3.2 add West Dean Parish Council may be deploying units in 40mph areas. 6. Appendix D correct spelling mistake. • Biodiversity Policy - After discussion the following amendments were agreed:- 1. Remove the Action Plan – this is something which the new committee can decide upon if they want one. 2. Put Appendix 1 on the 1st agenda of the new committee to review the details. Cllr Dunford proposed these policies, with the discussed amendments, to be presented to Full Council, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of committee. • Probationary Policy – it was noted that this Policy should have been under amendments. After discussion Cllr Grant proposed acceptance of this Policy with amendments for presentation to Full Council, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of committee. • Freedom Of Information Policy – after discussion Cllr Richmond proposed acceptance of this Policy for presentation to Full Council, seconded by Cllr Betenson and accepted by resolution of committee	
5.2	The amendments to following policies were discussed and agreed as follows for Full Council resolution at the July Council Meeting: ▪ Standing Orders v4 – proposed by Cllr Grant, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of committee. ▪ Data Protection Policy – proposed by Cllr Grant, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of committee. ▪ Dignity at Work Policy – Cllr Grant suggested an amendment that Staff be included in the new form. Cllr Betenson proposed acceptance of this policy with all amendments, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of committee. ▪ Document Retention Policy proposed by Cllr Grant, seconded by Cllr Betenson and agreed by resolution of committee. ▪ Financial Regulations Policy –. Proposed by Cllr Grant, leaving in all yellow highlighted sections, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of committee.	**Recommendation to present the Policies to Full Council for agreement of amendments and adoption for 2026/27.**

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Cllr Betenson left the meeting at 12.45pm

▪ Absence Management Policy - proposed by Cllr Dunford, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of committee.

▪ Disciplinary Policy - proposed by Cllr Dunford, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of committee.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>5.3</td><td>The following policies were proposed en bloc by Cllr Dunford for presentation to Full Council for resolution at the July Council Meeting, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of committee.

▪ Code of Conduct
• Complaints Policy & Procedure
▪ Community Engagement & Communication Policy
▪ Equality & Diversity Policy
▪ Financial & Management Risk Assessment
▪ Safeguarding Policy
▪ Health & Safety Policy
▪ Whistleblowing Policy
▪ Grievance Policy & Procedure
▪ Scheme of Delegation
▪ Publication Scheme
▪ Grants Policy
▪ Acceptable Email Use Policy
▪ Basil Whittington Award Policy vr 3
▪ CCTV Policy DPC
▪ Councillor Introduction Guide vr 3
▪ Performance Management Policy
▪ Register of Interests vr 2
▪ Social Media Policy
▪ Subject Access Request Letter vr 2
▪ Training & Development Policy vr 2</td><td>Recommendation to present the unchanged Policies to Full Council for adoption for 2026/27.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>The Clerk raised her concerns over the changing of the name on the West Dean Parish Council Credit Card, explaining that due to the previous but one clerks name not being removed when they left, both the previous clerk and present clerk have both been unable to get the bank to speak to them on changing the name. The named clerk on the card has refused to assist WDPC in any way with this. Cllr Richmond proposed that an official letter be written to the bank explaining the situation and requesting the removal of the former employee’s name, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by resolution of committee.

Cllr Dunford raised a query regarding the line of sight on the VASs units as they seem to activate too soon. Cllr Richmond asked the Deputy Clerk to refer this question to the supplier.</td><td>Letter to be sent from WDPC to Bank.

Deputy Clerk to pose question to Elan City.</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 15th September 2026 at 11.30am.</td><td></td></tr>
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	The meeting closed at 12.55pm	