



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)
Email: clerk@westdeanpc.org.uk

Parish Office
West Dean Centre
High Street
Bream
Glos.
GL15 6JW

FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Date Issued: 09.07.2026

Meeting Date: Wednesday 1st July 2026 (postponed from 24th June 2026) @7pm

Location: West Dean Centre, High Street, Bream

Present: Cllrs S Lewis (Chair), A Grant, A Betenson, S Dunford, J Richmond, B Freshwater, S Yeates, A Batchelor, B Evans, S Crick and S Francis

Also Present: County Cllr B Hoyland

Clerks: J Miles & P Holland

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

	Public Forum:	
	Representatives from GRCC (Gloucestershire Rural Community Council) attended the meeting to present Council with information on the Housing Needs Survey which will be taking place in West Dean, starting in September 2026. Council was advised that as West Dean is such a large Parish, it would be split into two parts and the survey done over two years, this would allow for time to analyse the data and get the results presented to West Dean Parish Council. This survey would show what need for Social Housing in West Dean there would be and then allow for areas to be identified for these to be built. The GRCC representative suggested that Cllrs look at the Rural Development Policy, which is on their website. After some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the GRCC representative to arrange a further meeting.	Policy to be sent out to all Cllrs. Clerk to arrange another meeting with GRCC
26060	<u>County & District Reports</u>	
	Cllr Hoyland gave an overview of her report which included :- • Fix my street	

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	• A40 over bridge works • GCC Meetings • County News • Consultations • Library Challenge 2026 and • Greener Gloucestershire She then spoke of the Road Safety Liaison Meeting she had attended. Cllr Crick asked if Cllr Hoyland had any information on the road closure by Lydney Railway Station and was advised that works were hoped to be completed by Friday 3d July, discussion was then had on the timing of the buses and trains not matching, Cllr Hoyland advised that she had written to the bus companies asking if they could amend their timetables but had received a negative reply. Cllr Evans stated that a Senior County Councillor had reported at another meeting that there is a big shake up of the Planning System coming, he asked if Cllr Hoyland had any information on this, she stated she had not heard anything on this subject. Cllr Freshwater asked Cllr Hoyland if she was aware of the rumour going around that the road closure of Forest Road, Lydney would be extended beyond August 2026, Cllr Hoyland stated she had not heard anything officially at this time. Cllr Crick noted that Coleford Road, and Brockhollands was being used as a Rat Run and the danger posed by the narrowing of the roads by hedges and vegetation, Cllr Hoyland stated that it is the responsibility of the land owner to ensure their hedges are cut back. Cllr Hoyland advised Council that Highways had completed their safety cuts on junctions and would be doing the verge cuts, information on the schedule can be found on Gloucestershire County Council's website. Cllr Freshwater raised a concern over road signs which are on the junction of Whitecroft Road Bream and Cllr Hoyland said she would speak to the Highways Officer about these. Cllr Hoyland left the meeting at 7.40pm	
26061	<u>Council Formal Business</u>	<u>Actions Completed</u>
26061.1	Apologies The following apologies for absence and reasons were received:- • Cllr Bennett – Holiday • Cllr Costley – Unwell These were accepted by Council and noted. Cllr Evans noted that there were others missing who had not sent apologies. Discussion was then held on the need for all Cllrs to offer their apologies for any meeting they are unable to attend. The Clerk noted that several Cllrs have had IT issues, but these had been resolved, as far as she was aware.	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	Further discussion was held on the rules of tendering apologies, if there was anything in Standing Orders or Code of Conduct. It was agreed that something needs to be put in place, Cllr Freshwater stated that the Clerks had already started to add a request onto all Meeting Summons for notification from Cllrs as to whether they were able to attend the meeting or not. Cllr Evans noted it was a breach of the Nolan Principles. Cllr Freshwater proposed that a reminder be sent to all Cllrs reminding them that they need to send apologies for every meeting they are unable to attend, respond to emails and phone calls, and an alternative mechanism needed to be found for contacting Cllrs should they not respond, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by a vote of 10 for and 1 abstention.	Clerk to send out reminder re meeting responses to all Cllrs.
26061.2	Declarations of Interest Cllr Yeates declared he is a Heritage Expert and also a member of BHMI.	
26061.3	Mintes of the Previous Meeting The motion by Cllr Batchelor to amendment 3.3 Sheep Liaison, to show himself not Cllr Bennett as WDPC representative was discussed and agreed by Council.	Amendment to be made.
26062	<u>Items for Consideration and Resolution</u>	
26062.1	Finance and Staffing The budget monitoring information for WDPC and WDC was received and noted by Council.	
26062.1i	The June 2026 expenditure payment schedule, Direct Debits, Standing Orders, and credit card transactions totalling WDPC = £16,936.47 excluding VAT and WDC = £912.18 excluding VAT were proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Richmond and approved for payment by resolution of Council.	
26062.1ii	It was noted that Cllrs Costley & Grant for WDC were to authorise payments on the banking system.	Emails sent 25.06.26 for authorisations.
26062.1iii	It was noted that Cllrs S Crick and A Batchelor will be undertaking the financial inspection of June 2026 transactions.	Clerk to arrange date for inspection.
26062.1iv	Cllr Freshwater gave a report on the May 2026 financial inspection dated 10/06/26, giving a reconciled bank balance for WDPC of £321,747.94 and WDC of £35,046.21, including transactions for WDPC totalling £45,144.20 and WDC totalling £4,636.42 which were undertaken by Cllrs M Bennett & B Freshwater	
26062.1v	The Internal Auditors Report for the year ended 31 st March 2026 and the Action Plan drafted by the Clerk to address and rectify any historical non-compliance and the Internal Auditors comments and recommendations were noted.	
26062.1vi	The list of expenditure transactions £500 and over, for April and May to be added to WDPC website (as per the Internal Auditors recommendations), for transparency were noted.	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

26062.2	The new Forestry England "Forest to The Sea" Report The new Forestry England "Forest to The Sea" report on water and related issues in the Forest was discussed with concerns being raised on the details given within the report. It was suggested that this be given to the Climate & Biodiversity Committee. Cllr Francis stated she thought the reconstitution of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee was to be discussed at the next Governance & Scrutiny Committee, the Deputy Clerk confirmed that it was an item on the next agenda. The Clerk asked if it would be an evening meeting, Cllr Freshwater suggested 5pm, Cllr Crick suggested 6pm to enable those who worked to attend. Cllr Dunford asked who Severn Vale Partnership were? Cllr Dunford proposed that WDCP write to Severn Vale Partnership to obtain answers, seconded by Cllr Batchelor and agreed by resolution of Council.	Letter to be written to Severn Vale Partnership.
26062.3	West Dean Parish Council's preferred requirements for the furthering of the Biosphere plan by FODDC. The thoughts of the small working group who had discussed WDPC's preferred requirements for the furthering of the Biosphere plan by FODDC were discussed. Cllr Freshwater presented a letter which had been drafted, Cllr Dunford stated that the Biosphere was discussed at the Forest of Dean District Council's Full Council meeting this week (not sure what day), the deputy Clerk advised that meeting had been held on Tuesday. Cllr Richmond proposed that the Clerks investigate the minutes of that meeting and the WDPC draft letter amended to reflect any decisions made, seconded by Cllr Dunford and Agreed by resolution of Council. It was agreed that the letter should be sent to FODDC CEO, All District Cllrs and Matt Bishop MP	Clerk to obtain minutes of FODDC Full Council meeting and letter be re-drafted. Later to be sent once amended.
26062.4	Asset Register The amendments made to the Asset Register were discussed, with the Clerk explaining the amendments. Cllr Evans proposed acceptance, seconded by Cllr Richmond and agreed by resolution of Council.	Asset Register to be amended.
26062.5	Whitcroft Memorial Hall Committee After discussion on WDPC representation on the Whitcroft Memorial Hall Committee was discussed, Cllr Lewis stated he saw no reason to have a representative on this Committee, Cllr Dunford agreed. Cllr Freshwater proposed that WDPC write to state that we would not be sending a representative, seconded by Cllr Evans and agreed by resolution of Council	Letter to be written to Whitcroft Memorial Hall Committee
26062.6	Out of Hours Keyholder Quote. The quote for out of hours keyholder cover was discussed with the Clerk giving information on all quotes received. After further discussion and questions, including the decision to charge user groups for the call out if they were responsible, Cllr Evans asked the Clerk for her recommendation and this was given. Cllr Crick asked about insurance and this query was answered. Cllr Duford proposed acceptance of the Clerk's recommendation, seconded by Cllr Betenson and agreed by resolution of Council.	Out of hours company to be engaged on contract.
	Cllr Evans left at 8.50	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

26062.7	The Basil Whittington Award 2026 The only nomination received was discussed, Cllr Richmond spoke of his disappointment that no other nominations had been received for this award. Cllr Richmond proposed awarding the prize to the nominated student, seconded by Cllr Yeates and agreed by resolution of Council. The Clerk stated she was still awaiting an answer from the school as to their assembly dates and times. Cllr Crick asked if it would be possible to get photos of the presentation for use in future Newsletters.	Clerk to obtain prize and arrange for presentation by Cllr.
26062.8	Clerks Report The Clerk gave information on the following points: • Milage allowance increase. • CAB Training, after some discussion it was agreed that no further action would be taken by the Clerk in this matter. • The June Budget overview And • The transfer of £10,000.00 which had already been made. All items were noted by Council	
	Cllr Dunford proposed suspension of Standing order for 30 minutes, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council	
26062.9	Crossing Cottage This agenda item is to be held in closed session under The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.	
26063	<u>Items for Information – Cllrs to note.</u>	
26063.1	Highways & Footpaths Committee The minutes of the Highways & Footpaths Committee held on 16 th June 2026 were presented to Council by Cllr Richmond, he spoke to Council regarding the draft letter which would be taken back to the Next Highways meeting with regard to the blanket speed limit proposed for the Forest of Dean. This led to further discussion on the subject.	
	Cllr Betenson left at 9.15pm	
26063.2	Planning Committee The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 2 nd June 2026 and 16 th June 2026 were discussed.	
26063.3	Chair's Items • Beechenhurst Meadow – the fence has gone – rumoured it will be a carpark. • The ACV for the Globe Inn Berry Hill was discussed and Cllr Richmond proposed that as the previous 2024 application had not been completed a new form would be completed and submitted, seconded by Cllr Grant and Agreed by resolution of Council. • Cllr Freshwater gave a rundown of the Sheep Liaison Meeting which had been held on Monday 29th June 2026, and advised Council that the next meeting would be held over Zoom. • Cllr Francis reminded council about the Health Forum meeting and July's Governance and Scrutiny meeting	Clerk to enquire about the rumour New ACV submitted 02.07.26
26063.4	Public Round-up – 10 minutes	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	There were no members of public at the meeting	
	The meeting finished at 9.34pm	

26064 **Forthcoming Meeting Schedule:**

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
Tues	18th August 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	28th August 2026	7.00pm	Full Council	West Dean Centre
Sep-26				
Tues	1st September 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Tues	15th September 2026	11.30am	Governance & Scrutiny	West Dean Centre
Tues	15th September 2026	5.00pm	Planning Committee	West Dean Centre
Weds	30th September 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.

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

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| (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 _____