



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL (WDPC)

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: 17/08/26

Meeting Date: Wednesday 29th July 2026 @7pm
Location: West Dean Centre, High Street, Bream

Present: Cllrs S Lewis (Chair), A Betenson, S Dunford, B Freshwater, S Yeates, A Batchelor, B Evans, S Crick, M Costley and M Bennett

Also Present: District Cllrs J Dale & B Llewellyn
County Cllr L Challis

Clerks: J Miles & P Holland

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

Due to unforeseen circumstances Cllr Lewis, Chair of Council, had advised he would be late to the meeting, and asked that a Chair be elected to preside until his arrival, as set out in Standing Orders Article 3P, in the absence of Cllr Grant, Vice Chair. Cllr Freshwater accepted his nomination by Cllr Dunford, this was seconded by Cllr Betenson and this was agreed by resolution of Council.

	Public Forum:	
	A member of public attended the meeting to present to Council work which is being done in relation to LGR Governance and how best to protect the uniqueness of the Forest of Dean when it comes to Forward Planning and Future development. This would need an to go to Legal Counsell and then be presented to our MP who would then be able to present it to the Government as a Members Bill.	
26060	<u>County & District Reports</u>	
	Cllr Dale stated her report had been sent to the Parish Office before the meeting and would be happy to take any questions. Her report included the following topics: - • Local Plan- move to the new Government 'Gateway' system. • Council voted to pause UNESCO Biosphere application process to allow extended consultation • Local Government Reorganisation • Community Grants • Forest of Beans Competition	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	• Protecting Heritage • Residents thanked for supporting waste and recycling crews during heatwave - And • Free buses in August for 5 – 15-year-olds. There were no questions from Cllrs. District Cllr B Llewellyn advised Council that the Development Committee at Forest of Dean District Council would only meet another 2 more times before responsibility for Planning Decisions was handed to Planning Officers in October 2026 and asked that Council send a representative to any meeting they are invited to. There were no questions from Cllrs. Cllr Challis spoke to Council regarding Bream residents contacting her with concerns over speeding in Bream. Ther Clerk advised that these concerns had also been raised with WDPC and would be put to the next Highways & Footpath Committee meeting. Cllr Evans asked Cllr Challis if she knew how many Councillors there would be for the Forest of Dean Under the new Unitary Authority, Cllr Challis stated she was unsure, Cllr Dale advised that this information was in her report and it would be 110 in total for the whole of the new authority with 16 for the Forest of Dean.	
	Cllr Lewis arrived at 7.05pm at which point Cllr Freshwater handed over the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.	
26061	<u>Council Formal Business</u>	<u>Actions Completed</u>
26061.1	Apologies The following apologies for absence and reasons were received:- • Cllr Grant - Holiday • Cllr Richmond – Holiday These were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Betenson and agreed by resolution of Council by Council and noted. It was noted that there were others missing who had not sent apologies.	
26061.2	Declarations of Interest • Cllr Yeates declared he is a Heritage Expert and also a trustee of Berry Hill Memorial Institute.	
26061.3	Mintes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1st July 2026 were reviewed, and these were proposed by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Betenson and accepted by resolution of Council as an accurate record	
26062	<u>Items for Consideration and Resolution</u>	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

26062.1	Finance The budget monitoring information for WDPC and WDC was noted	
26062.1i	The July 2026 expenditure payment schedule, Direct Debits, Standing Orders, and credit card transactions totalling WDPC = £15,244.82 exc. VAT and WDC = £1009.01 exc. VAT were received and proposed by Cllr Yeates, seconded by Cllr Costley and agreed by resolution of Council.	
26062.1ii	It was noted that Cllrs Costley & Yeates are to authorise payments on the banking system for WDPC & Cllrs Grant & Costley for the WDC.	Email sent 30.07.26 for payment authorisation.
26062.1iii	It was noted that Cllrs Wheeler was not responding to emails and therefore Cllr Freshwater suggested that another Cllr be asked to stand in, Cllr Bennett volunteered and this offer was accepted by all present. Therefore, it was noted that Cllr's Bennett & Betenson will undertake the July 2026 financial inspection of the WDPC and WDC accounts.	Clerk to arrange date and time for Financial Inspection.
26062.1iv	Cllr Freshwater advised Council that the June 2026 financial inspection dated 27/07/26, giving a reconciled bank balance for WDPC of £313,102.34 and WDC of £35,099.95, including transactions for WDPC totalling £55,226.04 and WDC totalling £2,912.76 which were undertaken by Cllrs Batchelor & Freshwater, had not raised any issues.	
26062.1v	The Budgeting Monitoring Report 2026/27 as at end June 2026 was received by Council, acceptance of this was proposed by Cllr Dunford, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Dunford asked that it be noted that this was going above and beyond as WDP Cllrs get the budget review every month.	
26062.2	Emergency Grant Application Cllr Yeates left the meeting for this item. The Emergency Grant Application from Berry Hill Memorial Institute, was discussed. Cllr Dunford proposed that the Clerk ask if a repair can be done, but WDPC would underwrite up to £6,000.00 if the current system was unrepairable, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Yeates rejoined the meeting.	Clerk to ask the question and release monies as necessary
26062.3	Governance & Scrutiny Committee The minutes of the Governance & Scrutiny meeting held on 21 st July 2026 were received and noted by Council. The recommendations from the Governance and Scrutiny Committee were discussed, Cllr Freshwater proposed the withholding from adoption, and further reviewing by Governance & Scrutiny Committee of the following policies due to recent events: - • Code of Conduct • Dignity at Work - And • Data Protection. Seconded by Cllr Betenson and agreed by resolution of Council.	All policies to be dated and placed on Web.

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	Cllr Dunford proposed acceptance of all three recommendations, with the omission of the three policies just voted on, en bloc, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council.	
	Cllr Lewis asked to close the meeting at 7.53 to go In Camera proposed by Cllr Dunford, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council – the meeting reopened at 8.27	
26062.4	Election of Chair of Governance & Scrutiny Committee Cllr Freshwater put himself forward as Chair of Governance & Scrutiny Committee, seconded by Cllr Bennet and agreed by resolution of Council.	Website to be updated
26062.5	Election of member of Staffing Committee Cllr Dunford put himself forward as a member of Staffing Committee, seconded by Cllr Betenson and agreed by resolution of Council.	Website to be updated
26062.6	Election of Chair & Vice Chair of Environment and Heritage Committee Cllr Freshwater proposed Cllr Yeates as Chair and Vice Chair of Environment and Heritage Committee which he declined. Cllr Bennett put himself forward for this position, seconded by Cllr Evans and agreed by resolution of Council. Cllr Yeates put himself forward as Vice Chair of Environment and Heritage Committee, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council. It was agreed that meetings should be held in the evening and that a meeting should be called as soon as possible.	Meeting to be arranged.
	Cllr Evans left at 8.25	
26062.7	Forestry England's new "Forest to The Sea" Report Discussion was held on West Dean Parish Council's participation in Forestry England's "Forest to The Sea" report on water and related issues in the Forest. Cllr Dunford proposed that the Clerk writes to ask if West Dean Parish Council could have a seat on the board but to first ask for a representative to come along and speak to the Council. This was seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of the Council.	Clerk to write letter Clerk to arrange a talk
26062.8	The Peoples Emergency Film – Showing at Yorkley Community Centre Cllr Dunford's proposal :- <i>'WDPC will support the advertising of the film showing at Yorkley Community Centre on 8th August entitled 'The People's Emergency' but within a rider stating that WDPC do this as 'information only' and that WDPC does not express any view on its content. '</i> Was discussed, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and advertisement was agreed by a vote of 9 for with 1 against.	Clerk to have advertisement put on website with banner as indicated.
26062.9	FODDC Biosphere The latest update from FODDC regarding Biosphere Update July 2026 was discussed in some depth, with discussion on how to keep this going forward, as WDPC is seen by others as a front mover on this subject.	

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	Cllr Freshwater proposed that a letter he had prepared should be sent to all those who had already been contacted by WDPC on this subject, including the press. Cllr Dunford proposed that the paragraphs of the letter be reversed and the words “to protect the Forest in the future” be added to the end of the first paragraph, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed a vote of 9 for and 1 abstention. Cllr Freshwater proposed the letter be sent as outlined above, seconded by Cllr Dunford and agreed by a vote of 9 for and 1 abstention.	Clerk to send out the letter.
26072.10	<i>Your Views Matter in Improving NHS Services In Gloucestershire</i> The Your Views Matter in Improving NHS Services In Gloucestershire project and e-mail from Sarah Brooks (Volunteer and Engagement Officer – Healthwatch Gloucestershire) was discussed, with the Clerk explaining what had been to date, and it was decided that no further action needed to be taken at this time.	
26072.11	Berry Hill & Christchurch NDP How to move the Berry Hill & Christchurch NDP Review forward, was discussed at length. Cllr Yeates spoke of the reports he had updated using the Forest Edge South NDP as a guide on how to update the layout. It was suggested that the Clerk should contact the person who did the original BH&C NDP to ask if they could assist.	Clerk to seek assistance
26072.12	Gloucestershire County Council proposal to privatise Reablement Services. Gloucestershire County Council’s proposal to privatise Reablement Services and what this would mean for service users was discussed at length, with Cllrs sharing their own experiences. Cllr Freshwater proposed that a letter be written to the County Councillors for West Dean asking if they supported privatisation of the service and why the reablement unit at Great Western Court had been closed, seconded by Cllr Yeates and agreed by resolution of Council	Letter to be written to County Cllrs.
26072.13	Clerks Report A written report from the Clerk was received which included an update on the Internal Auditors Report – Action Plan which was noted.	
26072.14	Deputy Clerks Report A written report from the Clerk was received, the deputy clerk updated the Council on the current issues at Crow Ash Play Area with natural splits in some of the wooden apparatus. Advice had been sought and was awaited. This was noted by Council.	
26063	<u>Items for Information – Cllrs to note.</u>	
26063.1	Planning Committee The list of Applications received by West Dean Parish Council in July was received and noted by Council. Cllr Dunford spoke of a Planning Enforcement issue which had been raised in Yorkley, regarding flood lights, and suggested that a letter be sent to FoDDC	Letter to be written to

Signed by Chair _____ Date _____

	Planning Enforcement stating that WDPC was worried that the injury could be caused by the current condition of the flood lights in question.	Planning Enforcement.		
	Cllr Dunford proposed suspending Standing Orders at 9.30pm, seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council.			
26063.2	Chair's Items - Cllr Francis's resignation from WDPC was received and noted by Council and it was agreed that a letter of thanks for her long and diligent service be sent. - Cllr Freshwater advised Council that the Sheep Liaison Group had been reconstituted and renamed - Cllr Lewis spoke about the £300 received from 'Am I being Unreasonable' – a donation for Parkend as a thank you for the filming that had taken place. This was proposed to be sent to Parkend Memorial Hall by Cllr Lewis (and Cllr Grant via e-mail), this was seconded by Cllr Freshwater and agreed by resolution of Council. - Cllr Lewis spoke of the vandalization in Sling and asked if anyone knew about the Polices Anti-Social behaviour movement. - Cllr Crick asked if the Police would be invited to Full Council meetings - Cllr Freshwater asked if the Police could be asked to look into the parking issues along Stagg Hill Yorkley again	Letter to be sent. 30/07/26 Clerk to send the £300 to Parkend Memorial Hall 30/07/26 Details to be looked into. Police to be included in invitation PCSO to be contacted.		
26063.4	Public Round-up – 10 minutes There were no members of public at the meeting			
	The meeting finished at 9.43pm			
26064	<u>Forthcoming Meeting Schedule:</u>			
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
	TBC	6pm	Environment & Heritage 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.
 - (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 _____