

HOE & WORTHING CIVIL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, WORTHING ON WEDNESDAY 10TH MAY 2023 AT 7.00 P.M. TO 9.00 P.M.

Present: - Celia Daniel (Chairman) and Grizelda Hubbard (Parish Clerk)

Worthing Attendees: - Richard Crisp, Mick Dunn, Tracey Green, Wendy Hough, Graham Lewis, Johanna Lewis, Mark Smith and Miranda Smith

Hoe Attendees: - Margaret Barrett, Cllr Bill Borrett, James Keith, Richard Malt, Sue Malt, James Sayer, Jennifer Tuckwell, John Tuckwell and Jane Whitcher

1. To Elect the Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Celia Daniel stated she was willing to stand as Chair for the forthcoming year. She asked if there were any other nominations but there were not. This proposal was voted upon, 7 attendees voted in favour, 6 abstained so the proposal was carried. There will not be a Vice Chairman.

Appointing a Parish Treasurer: Jane Whitcher has stood down as Treasurer, no-one came forward to volunteer and replace her.

Appointing a Minute Taker: for 2022-2023 there has been no regular person taking official minutes of parish meetings. Celia Daniel ask if there was anyone willing to take minutes for this coming year. No-one came forward.

Parish Clerk - With no Parish Treasurer and no Minute Taker, the Chairman explained an alternative could be having a Parish Administrator and what that could mean. There were no nominations for this role and in the past, residents had carried out the task as volunteers but were not willing to carry on in this way. There had been criticism, and this created a negative impact. Item 6b below details Parish Clerk full function.

2. Welcome and to receive and accept apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed those present. Apologies for absence were received from: -

WORTHING - Nancy Blake, Danny Danson, Penny Dunn, Alan Hughes, Gary Palmer, Harriet Palmer, Ted Sansom

HOE - Philip Barrett, Jules Wain, Carl Watling, Glenys Watling, Revd. Paul Cubitt

3. To declare any Interests re items listed on the agenda: not required.

4. Chairman's Report - Appendix 1 attached

Some main points are that during the year the Parish has dealt with 7 planning applications, excluding the current Breckland Local Plan. Also, the parish held 7 parish meeting distributing hard copies of all agendas, minutes and related documents to each household and notices on all noticeboards and website. Regarding Policies, in addition to the Parish Planning Policy and Procedure, the Complaints & Compliments Guidance paper was introduced and approved. In December 2020 Worthing village suffered a devastating flood which badly effected 11 homeowners. An interim report produced by the Environment Agency listed up to 19 options, ways to reduce flood risk. A meeting with them will take place by the end of May and an update will follow in August. The Chairman thanked Trevor Wood, who assisted and guided her through the process of contacting the various agencies involved.

5. To confirm and accept the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 8th March, 2023

The Chairman explained the purpose of having minutes of meetings and she agreed they should be accepted as a true record and signed off. She emphasized that minutes are intended to be a formal record of official acts and decisions, with just enough detail to provide context. They are not designed to be lengthy documents.

8th March 2023 amendment to Chairman's opening comment para 2 b) should read: what method of payment would be used to pay a Parish Clerk i.e. self-employed, PAYE, or as James Keith suggested by invoice. Mike Mullins made the meeting aware that a) The Parish Meeting not being a corporate body, cannot employ anyone in any capacity whatsoever and b)HMRC rules are unambiguous on the subject of remuneration for Parish Clerks insofar as they are classed as "office holders" and must be employed with their remuneration subject to the PAYE system. It was agreed that Celia Daniel would report back with information.

The minutes were agreed and signed off.

6. Updated Information and Matters Arising

a) Local Government Act 1972 section 137

The Chairman circulated a document (as per the website) which clearly stated how the Parish could make donations to organisations. For 2022/2023 £1,058.00 was awarded to St. Andrew's Church and £750.00 to St. Margaret's. Those were legal and appropriate donations. They were calculated by using the capped limit of £8.82 per resident. Legally no further adjustments can be made to those donations. Donations cannot be used to maintain the fabric of a church building. This year 2023/2024 residents can submit requests for further donations.

b) Parish Clerk Review

This appointment - Parish Clerk is permissible once BDC and the Secretary of State has conferred the appropriate power to the Parish Meeting. NALC and their Solicitor / Legal Team had confirmed this to be the case. The job will be advertised correctly, and interviews will take place. The Chairman together with an Interview Panel will need to be set up. Cllr Borrett expressed his views regarding having a Parish Clerk. He was not in favour of having a paid Parish Clerk and thought having a volunteer would be better. Wendy Hough proposed that a vote be carried out regarding whether to employ someone as a Parish Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer, rather than a volunteer. 2nd by Johanna Lewis. The result was 8 voted in favour, 6 voted against and 3 abstained, therefore carried forward and a paid Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer will be sought. James Keith objected to the Chairman taking a casting vote. The Chairman advised him that no casting vote was taken. Mick Dunn explained that even if removing the Chairman's one vote, a majority still existed. Salary costs for a Parish Clerk will be worked into the next budget. James Keith thought that when the precept is next set, it should be lowered because of the large bank balance.

There was some discussion regarding the need for speeding equipment.

The Chairman stated she would draft a budget plan to look at all costs including setting up an Emergency Fund so it would be possible to help residents in need.

c) King Charles 111 Coronation Grant £500

As no celebrations took place, BDC advised funds could instead be used for other commemorative items such as a tree or a plaque or refund the full amount back to BDC. Worthing's residents thought a plaque was a good idea. The idea of having another tree for Hoe (James Keith to organise quotes) near the Jubilee Tree with a plaque was thought to be acceptable.

d) Breckland Local Plan and Update

Neighbouring Parishes (CANT group) met George Freeman, M.P. at the end of March who advised that the Breckland Local Plan is a gathering of ideas project. It is a Breckland Planning strategy and it will concentrate more on small developments to try to deal with the housing crisis. On the Breckland website there is a questionnaire for everyone to complete. Breckland asks and wants ideas from residents. Question 13 requires a yes or no. Cllr Borrett reported that the key issue is that District Councillors should be written to, and they should be told that Hoe and Worthing do not want to have many new houses built. The New Town Development is being discussed and the drafted letter by CANT needs to be sent from this Parish stating the residents do not want to see this new settlement. The Parish Meeting agreed that a 2nd letter be sent to Dist. Cllr's Roger Atterwill and Richard Duffield, signed by our Chairman. Cllr Borrett also proposed a 3rd letter be sent to the Chairman at Swanton Morley stating it is hoped that the village supports the residents' views. So, to sum up, three letters will be sent, one to CANT Co-Ordinator, one to Dist. Cllrs Roger Atterwill and Richard Duffield regarding Swanton Morley developments, another separately to them both regarding Worthing Road T Junction with Station Road/North Elmham after Worthing Bridge.

7. Treasurer and Independent Examiner's Report & Adopt Finance 2022-2023 Accounts Appendix 2

Descriptive accounts were produced and circulated. Bank balance brought forward on 1st April 2022 for the Parish and the Hall totalled £5,746.73. Throughout the year, income amounted to £3,625.01. Total expenditure throughout the year was £6,080.10. The balance as of 31st March 2023 was £7,138.10.

Independent Examiner – Graham Lewis agreed to maintain the role of Independent Examiner for another year.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return had been completed and internally audited. Cllr Borrett proposed it be adopted, seconded by James Keith and carried.

The Accounting Statements need to be approved. Mr Lewis proposed they should be, seconded by Cllr Borrett and carried.

The Certificate of Exemption needs to be approved. Johanna Lewis approved the document, seconded by Wendy Hough and carried.

The date of commencement for the exercise of public right where the approved accounts and account records can be inspected will be from 5th June 2023 for a period of 30 consecutive working days, ending 14th July 2023. Please contact the Chairman to make the necessary arrangements.

All documents were later signed off by the Chairman at the end of the meeting.

The Chairman wished to thank Jane Witcher very much for the work she had carried out whilst being the Treasurer. It was much appreciated. She also wished to thank Graham Lewis for his hard work.

8. To receive reports from Local Groups connected to the Parish

a) Highways and Crime Prevention Appendix 3 – Carl Watling. Mr Watling is happy to continue with this role. A request received from Carl – your assistance is helpful please. He asked to be informed of any Highways and Maintenance issues that residents may see as they go about walking/driving through our villages.

b) Hoe Common Appendix 4 – Dick Malt, Report will be attached to the minutes.

c) St. Andrew's Church – Hoe PCC - no report submitted. James Keith - Church Warden.

d) Village Hall Appendix 5– Management Group – Events Committee – Sue Malt and Simon Brock
Susan Malt had produced a report on the Hoe and Worthing Community Hall, and it will be attached to the minutes.

e) St. Margaret's Church Appendix 6 – Worthing PCC
Report had been produced and submitted by Celia Daniel - Church Warden, covering many aspects and it will be attached to the minutes. Miranda Smith is also a Church Warden. Sharon Colk is in charge of Social Events.

f) Website and Public Information.

Mr Danson was not present so the Chairman could not say if he would be happy to continue. To be advised.

g) Regarding environmental matters, no support was offered however, Worthing village flooding concerns, Mr Lewis offered to help support this function with the Chairman.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their help over the last year. On behalf of the residents, we thanked Jane Witcher again for her help as Parish Treasurer.

All the reports were available at the meeting for the residents to obtain a copy. The Chairman asked that the residents take away the reports to study and email her with any queries they may have.

9. Planning Applications as notified via Breckland District Council

3PN/2022/0036/UC Worthing Barn Prior approval for change of use, decision extended until 2nd November 2023.

3PL/20213/0033/VAR White Waters, Mill Lane. Planning permission refused.

10. Any other Urgent business

As previously requested by the Parish, the Chairman proceeded to reinstate the Planning Committee. Peter Fishwick had offered to give his expertise on Planning matters and as a Vice Chairman. Following the view of those present, 4 residents came forward. James Sayer, Margaret Barrett, and James Keith plus Peter Fishwick for Hoe. No-one came forward from Worthing however, post meeting we have Mike Dunn and Wendy Hough representing Worthing. No Vice Chairman position required.

11. To confirm dates of the following meetings as set – a request was received during the meeting for having 2 meetings only per annum. The Chairman will keep this under review.

24th August 2023 / Hoe

26th October 2023 Parish Finance Meeting / Worthing

(Please note, **PRIOR to Finance/budget meeting, bids for funding/donations to be emailed to the Chairman by 1st October 2023 latest, thank you**)

29th February 2024 / Hoe

23rd May 2024 Annual General Meeting / Worthing

12. Items for the next meeting 24th August 2023

Draft Emergency Fund document

Update on Breckland Local Plan

Financial Report re for Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

Update on Worthing Flood Meeting

There was no further business to discuss so The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

Signed
Celia Daniel (Hoe & Worthing Parish Chairman)

Date 24th August 2023

