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Minutes of the Long Man Parish Council Meeting

held on Monday 10 March 2025 Wilmington Village Hall at 7.30pm

1. Chair's Welcome

2. Attendance & apologies for absence

Present: Councillors Tyler Butterworth (Chair), Claire Church (Vice-Chair), Helen Baulcombe, Ann Osborne, Lizzie Chisholm, Michael Bridges and Jeanne Peterson (Clerk)

Apologies: None

Other attendees: County Councillor Stephen Shing and one member of the public

3. Declarations of Interest: None

4. Minutes: The Minutes of the Long Man Parish Council Meeting held on 13 January 2025 were agreed and to be signed by the Chair as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2025: None

6. Public Discussion (15 minutes maximum):

Potential dates for the Annual Parish Assembly were discussed; 9th or 16th May 2025. A representative of the village club informed the meeting that due to VE Day celebrations on the weekend of 10th/11th the hall on the 9th May would be decked in preparation. It was decided to hold the Parish Assembly on the 16th May 2025.

7. Reports from other bodies

7.1. County Councillor Stephen Shing:

- The ESCC council tax has been raised by 4.9%. There have been significant service cuts proposed but talks are taking place to see whether unused election funds could now be used to maintain some services to keep them going for at least a year or until the unitary system starts.
- Amendments had been presented to WDC to freeze its council tax this year due to its status as one of the wealthiest district councils but this was not supported.
- Proposed works to create a two-way road at the Exceat Bridge are still under debate due to lack of ESCC funds. However, a 22-week closure of the bridge for repair works to keep it a single crossing has been deemed unacceptable by users such as the operating bus services. Other options are being looked into for funding to still try and deliver the two-lane option.
- ESCC set its budget on 4 March 2025, details will be circulated.
- As known, ESCC, WSCC and Brighton & Hove have agreed to join in application to become a unitary authority. The full council has to submit its interim plan to government on 21 March, this will be agreed at their meeting on 20 March. Boundaries and council arrangements will be agreed by central government later in summer.

7.2. **District Councillor David Greaves** was unable to attend the meeting and his report is attached to the minutes as Appendix 1

7.3. **MP James McCleary:**

A report had been circulated and attached to the minutes as Appendix 2.

An approach had also been received from the MPs parliamentary office offering that James attend a meet and greet and/or Q & As session locally in the parish during August. The clerk was asked to respond in the positive, and to look into dates and hall availability.

7.4 **Tree Warden Alison Cotton was unable to attend the meeting but had sent the following report:**

In January I met with Jo Heading at the Wilmington Junction to assess the success rate of trees planted over the last 2 years, and to plan another application for Disease Resistant Elms.

We noticed that a lot of trees had been planted in the south-east quadrant of the junction without consultation with Wealden District Council (who own the land). We realised that this planting was associated with the home of a local resident. WDC Estates Dept. have reached a decision that the trees must be removed, which they have communicated to the resident.

They had explained their reasons for the planting in an email which the PC has received. It is unfortunate that they did not communicate with myself or Jo Heading before going to so much effort and expense. They are offering to donate the trees to WDC to avoid waste, which would be in line with all our aims, including those of the Call for Nature project. I will therefore try to facilitate the replanting at agreed positions at the Junction if possible, and aim to include the resident in this process.

Following this report concerns were raised by the council about the lifting and replanting of the saplings. The clerk was asked to correspond with the tree warden to see if this could be delayed until later in the year, November, when the danger of drought is past. It would be better for the tree health and give more time for proper consideration of the new locations for planting.

7.5 **PCSO/Rural Crime Representative:** No report available.

8. Reports from Parish Councillors

8.1. **Folkington:** Nothing to report apart from the amount of general rubbish left discarded in the village by walkers and cyclists.

8.2. **Milton Street:** The stile opposite the phone box has been removed so there is no barrier to the land/road. The clerk was asked to report this to the Rights of Way team.

8.3. **Wilmington:** The following items have been reported by residents to the council and the clerk was asked to report them on to be dealt with by the relevant authorities:

- I. National Speed limit sign near the Long Man car park is damaged and insecure – to be reported to Highways
- II. The bank and walkway have deteriorated due to erosion, and in danger of collapse – to be reported to Highways
- III. New railings have been installed from the road to the pathway – to be reported to Highways
- IV. What appears to be a residential caravan is visible sited at The Vicarage – advice to be sought from SDNPA Planning
- V. Digger work has damaged the old brick gullies in The Street – this has already been reported to Highways to investigate who carried out the work and question its extent
- VI. Agricultural traffic is leaving The Street surface slippery – Councillors to discuss with farm drivers
- VII. At the Village Pound the top wooden barrier has rotted and needs replacing – research ownership

- VIII. Ongoing car works in The Street are causing a nuisance and obstructing access – seek advice from Highways
 - IX. Building signs visible for a number of years should now be removed – Councillors to discuss with the resident
- 8.4 **Clerk's Report:** Already circulated and taken as read, there were no questions. It was decided that Cllr Osborne would respond on behalf of LMPC to the ESCC Rights of Way Access Plan review.

9. Traffic & Highways

- 9.1. **A27:** A response had been received from National Highways to the ongoing questions posed by LMPC on traffic speeds, inadequate signage and excessive road lighting. This was read out at the meeting and is attached as Appendix 3
The council agreed that a comparative case for traffic signal change at Wilmington would be by looking in more detail again to the crossing at Gainsborough Lane. To compare like for like reported traffic accidents and statistics three years before up to current both for Gainsborough and Wilmington. Also compare number of residences/dwellings in each traffic catchment.
The council will prepare a FOI request to National Highways, and research dwelling numbers.
- 9.2. **Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR):** As noted earlier in the meeting under the Wilmington update, further information is being sought about the drain gully clearance carried out by digger.
It was agreed that a review of the actions agreed at the December SLR meeting and carried out to date would be helpful. The clerk will circulate relevant notes.
It was reported that the recently erected sign at the railway crossing has been knocked down already which will be communicated to Highways.
ESCC Highways have followed up with contractors about their dumping of drain clearance waste back into the same drainage system.

10. Finance

- 10.1 It was resolved to approve the accounts payable as detailed on the payments list for February/March 2025.
- 10.2 The financial reports as circulated by the clerk were approved:
- i. The Bank Reconciliation & Reserves updates to the end of February 2025
 - ii. The Budget v Actual Report at February 2025
- It was agreed that any remaining maintenance budget 2024/25 would be carried over to 2025/26 as earmarked funds due to work in progress (Milton Street notice board and asset maintenance).
It was agreed that the £250 earmarked reserve fund reported in previous years for phone box maintenance be reinstated (the clerk had been unaware that this related to a private donation toward the maintenance of the Milton Street box).
- 10.3 One quote had been received and then presented to the council for maintenance repairs to both bus shelters and the Jubilee bench at Milton Street. The council agreed the terms and asked the clerk to make the necessary arrangements including the payment of a deposit to be added to the payments list. This would be paid from reserve funds.
- 10.4 The phone box adoption contract had been received and circulated. Any electricity supply would be paid for by BT, but changes to the light bulb within the box if functional would be LMPC's responsibility as would all maintenance. It was agreed to go ahead and the Chair signed the contract on behalf of the council. The clerk will submit the adoption papers with £1 cheque. Residents will be asked to contribute ideas as to how the box could be used.
- 10.5 It was noted that the internal auditor has been appointed for assessing LMPC's end of year accounts.

11 Planning

The planning report was noted. It was agreed to submit no objection to application SDNP/25/00606/TCA. The updated planning report is attached as Appendix 4.

The clerk was asked to correspond with WDC Planning about possible soil contamination at the Polo Pitch site at Milton Gate, and also about application WD/2025/0208/FA Bluebell Farm where a mobile home has recently been placed alongside existing buildings (the application relates only to the replacement of existing agricultural buildings).

12. Emergency Planning:

It was agreed that the next stages would be to promote the self-help information via the parish magazine, and to investigate whether the Long Man Car Park could be registered as a water drop-off point for the parish.

13. Parish Council Vacancy:

There is a vacancy on the council which can now be appointed by co-option (without an election). It was agreed that details will be posted on the website, notice boards and in the parish magazine.

14. Feedback since the last council meeting from councillors attending external meetings:

- **Cllr Church and the Clerk** had attended the "Update in Planning" virtual session and the details had been circulated.
- **Cllr Osborne** had attended the SDNPA presentation to parish councils held in Lewes. This was about reviewing their overall plans for new housing development; Proposals included Alfriston Court a 25/30 bed increase, 225 new homes on the ES College site at Mountfield Road and 240 dwellings and other facilities on the County Hall site.

15. Date of next meeting –

The next Meeting of Long Man Parish Council will be the statutory Annual Meeting of the Council on Monday 12 May 2025 at Wilmington Village Hall, 7.30pm.

It was confirmed that the Annual Parish Assembly would take place on Friday 16 May 2025 and arrangements will now be made to book a speaker and to set in place the appropriate arrangements.

The meeting was declared closed at 9pm.

These Minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed:.....

Position:.....

Date:.....