

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at the Oval Office
Monday 4th December 2023 commencing at 7.00pm

Present: Chair: Cllr P Wilkinson

Cllrs: D Cooper, J Cradock, G Fuller (arr 7:06), J Honess,
E Jackson, R Hopkins, P Millard

Attending: Lesley Close, Parish Clerk and Tracey Stephens, Deputy Clerk.
1 member of the public

Absent: Cllrs P Moss and P Williams

A member of the public requested permission to plant a Silver Birch tree at Waterside Road, where there are already 2 trees. Cllrs had no objection. Cllr Jackson said she will check with B&NES.

96. Co-option

There had been no applications for co-option.

97. Apologies for absence and to consider the reasons given

There were no apologies.

98. Declarations of interest and dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

99. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting – 6th November 2023

Resolved: the minutes of 6th November 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

100. Committee and Working Group reports

(a) Environment and Development Committee – 13th November 2023

The minutes of the Environment and Development Committee meeting of 13th November 2023 were noted.

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

Signed Dated

Westfield Parish Council

(b) Finance and Personnel Committee – 22nd November 2023

The minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting of 22nd November 2023 were noted.

101. Approval of any items over £5000 and consideration of any virement

There were no items over £5,000 to consider

102. 2024/2025 Budget

It was noted that National Insurance had changed since the budget was prepared and salaries had increased.

Resolved: (1) with adjustments to the heading Salaries and National Insurance to accept the Budget for 2024/2025
(2) to thank the Clerk for her work on preparing a well-balanced budget

103. Outside Bodies reports

Mardons – Cllr Cooper reported that the Club has been contacted to establish whether it would be a good venue for a polling station. Cllr Jackson advised that the Elections Officer is meeting them in January to discuss. There had been an estate management meeting for residents in the area to discuss issues with the service charge.

Radstock Museum – Cllr Jackson reported that Friends of Radstock Museum will be holding the AGM on Thursday.

104. Creating Community Identity

Resolved: With the addition of Participation in National Events and ad hoc community gardening to accept the Community Engagement Plan as recommended by the Environment and Development committee

105. Chairman's report

Cllr Wilkinson reported on a successful Christmas lights switch on event and thanked all those that had helped at the event, with special thanks to Caitlin, Admin Assistant, for her organisation of the event. He reported that there have been 7 poppies lost from the Remembrance display. He thanked Cllr Jackson for moving the poppy wreaths to the church railings in time for the Christmas switch on. He finished by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

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Westfield Parish Council

106. Bath and North East Somerset Councillors' reports

Cllr Jackson reported on the Full Council meeting on 30th November.

Full Council took place on Thursday 30 November.

There are or were three main features.

Firstly ten members of the public spoke on subjects dear to their hearts, from public transport and WECA to the Israel/Gaza situation with a demand for a permanent ceasefire. Unsurprisingly climate change figured prominently, as there was a motion on the subject on the Council's main agenda.

I decided that important though climate change is for Westfield Waterside and other parts of the ward, the Christmas lights switch on as an incomparable community event was more important. However, I am so sorry that I could not assist with the clearing up afterwards. Everyone I have spoken to thought it was wonderful.

Secondly, there is the heavy stuff, much of it procedure, noting and approving the Avon Pension Fund Annual Report, or the Annual report on council investments. We are still scrutinising the Budget, if anyone has any particular requests. The council tax will inevitably rise. What is important for the delivery of services in Westfield is that Bath & North East Somerset Council are not in danger of a Section 144 warning. We will not go bankrupt, even if a certain amount of 'family silver' is being sold off.

Thirdly, there are motions and statements brought by councillors. Cllr Lesley Mansell brought in one for the protection of workers in the night economy, particularly women who have to use public transport after late night shifts. Alan Hale (Conservative, Keynsham) brought in one regarding road safety. I think that if the measures to educate children are implemented, the situation should improve. Unfortunately, the one on parking on pavements, which I think we badly need, given the situation in Longfellow Road, the Waterside and so on, had to be withdrawn for legal reasons. I had asked about the rural bus services, and had also asked a question about the 414's survival. Buses came in under Lesley's motion.

Related to this is the question of bringing care homes into council management and ownership. The provision in Midsomer Norton is affected by an adverse CQC report.

The latest meeting of the Local Development Forum concerned Bath and climate change issues. There do not seem to be major housing developments planned for Westfield, but plenty possibly for Radstock.

B&NES have activated the rough sleeping cold weather measures, and are concerned that those sleeping rough in rural areas are reported and brought in from the cold.

To resolve that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

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107. To open tenders for Scrub Clearance, Waterside Valley

The Clerk, under the auspices of Somer Valley Rediscovered, had gone to tender for Scrub clearance from the sites in Westfield, Midsomer Norton and Radstock.

The tenders were opened at the meeting and signed by the Chair and the Vice Chair.

Resolved: **(1)** A meeting to be held with Miriam Woolnough of Somer Valley Rediscovered to choose a contractor to do the work across all sites.

(2) to sign the Green Spaces Grant Agreement from B&NES

The meeting closed at 8:05

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Signed Dated