WILLINGALE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: C Milligan Email clerk@willingaleparishcouncil.org.uk

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
The Council met at 8.00pm on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at the Village Hall, The Street, Willingale, Essex, CM5 0SN.

Cllr N Pavyer chaired the meeting.
Present: Councillors D Stokes, J Bianchi, D Watson, S Bosworth and R Tilbrook.
In Attendance: two members of the public.

25/015. Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from the Clerk to the Council, Clare Milligan, Councillor L Fresco and PC Warren Shepherd.

25/016. Declarations of interests
There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or registerable non-pecuniary interests relating to items on the agenda.

25/017. Minutes of the Full Council meeting
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 14th January 2025 were signed and agreed. Proposed by Cllr N Pavyer, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously.

25/018. Public Question Time
No questions or comments from members of the public

25/019. Reports from County and District Councillors
There were no reports. It was agreed that efforts would be made to contact Cllr J McIvor and Cllr R Balcombe to encourage them to attend the next meeting.

25/020. Clerk's Report
There were no specific items in the Clerk's Report other than those on the agenda.

25/021. Police Report
Cllr N Pavyer read out the report from PC Warren Shepherd sent ahead of the meeting, and the contents were noted.

25/022. Financial Matters
To receive the following for ratification:
a) Bank balances, reconciliations and expenditure and income reports for January and February 2025.

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliations and the income and expenditure reports ahead of the meeting, and they were agreed. Proposed by Cllr D Stokes, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously.

On the matter of the balances noted in the Lloyds Bank Deposit account, it was agreed that the Clerk should establish a Virgin Money 30-day notice Deposit Account which offers more flexibility than the Lloyds account. Proposed by Cllr D Stokes, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously.

b) To ratify the following payments already made in February 2025:
The following payments were ratified:

Clerk's salary for February '25 - £193.92
HMRC February '25 - £41
N A Pavyer – Microsoft Office subscription for Clerk's notebook - £59.99
Village Hall – Hall hire – Meeting 14th January 2025 – £22
F J Bosworth & Sons – Litter Picking Signs - £178.90
Headford Digital – WOIW printing - £182.60
Bank Charges - £4.25

Proposed by Cllr R Tilbrook, seconded by Cllr J Bianchi and agreed unanimously.

However, the payment for "Bank Charges" was queried as the Council has free banking with Lloyds. Clerk to investigate and revert.

c) The following payments to be made in March 2025 were ratified.
HMRC March '25 - £41
Clerk's salary for March '25 - £193.92
Village Hall – Hall hire 11th March 2025 - £26

Proposed by Cllr J Bianchi, seconded by Cllr D Bosworth and agreed unanimously.

d) RCCE
It was agreed to continue membership of the RCCE and payment of the invoice when the Clerk receives it. Given that the amount of the payment was not yet known, approval was given subject to the payment not exceeding £100.

Proposed by Cllr R Tilbrook, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously.

25/023. Planning Matters
a. There were no decisions by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Planning department, to be noted for January and February 2025.

25/024. Policies for re-adoption
The following policies were discussed and reviewed:
a) WPC Reserves Policy
It was noted that the proposed policy was different to the existing policy which set out designated reserves for different areas and a more specific range of optimum reserves. That said, the more generic policy was noted and agreed. Proposed by Cllr N Pavyer, seconded by Cllr J Bianchi and agreed unanimously.
b) Publication Scheme
The minor scripting changes were noted, and regarding the section on "Decision making between meetings" the Clerks comments were noted. Councillors thought that if there was to be delegation to the Clerk, it ought to carry some form of financial limit. It was suggested that the Clerk should circulate proposed wording for that particular section. Otherwise, the updated policy was agreed. Proposed by Cllr N Pavyer, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously.
c) Equality and Diversity Policy
It was noted that this policy was unchanged, and it was agreed unanimously. Proposed by Cllr D Watson, seconded by Cllr J Bianchi.
d) Social Media Policy
It was noted that this policy was unchanged, and it was agreed unanimously. Proposed by Cllr D Watson, seconded by Cllr S Bosworth.
e) GDPR Policy
It was noted that this policy was unchanged, and it was agreed unanimously. Proposed by Cllr D Watson, seconded by Cllr S Bosworth.

25/025. Financial and Business Risk Assessment
The updated risk assessment was received and agreed, subject only to the frequency of the Council playground inspections being amended from bi-weekly to monthly per the inspections currently undertaken on behalf of the Council by Cllr J Bianchi. Proposed by Cllr J Bianchi, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously.

25/026. Asset Register

The Asset Register was received and discussed. It was agreed that the eight recently acquired litter picking signs should be added at cost i.e. £178.90. Proposed by Cllr N Pavyer, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously. The meeting recorded its thanks to Cllr S Bosworth for obtaining the signs and for the generous contribution made by FJ Bosworth & Sons.

25/027. Highways Matters

The meeting discussed Highways matters and it was mentioned that there are two quite bad potholes; one is on Silver Lane, and the other on Bassett's Lane towards the A414. Cllr D Stokes will ensure that the Silver Lane one has been reported, and Cllr J Bianchi will inspect the Bassett's Lane one and report as appropriate. Both holes have had broken bricks inserted by persons unknown, presumably local residents, to limit the impact on vehicles. Cllr N Pavyer will make further enquiries into CCTV.

25/028. Epping Forest Association of Local Council

The suggested draft constitution for the association was discussed and Cllr D Stokes provided further background information from the meeting he attended in February 2025 when the matter was original proposed at the EFDC Liaison meeting. It was noted that the constitution didn't confer powers on Parish Council representatives to make decisions. Any matters requiring decision would be brought to the individual Parish Councils. It was noted that having such a group was intended to increase leverage and influence when dealing with common matters of concern with EFDC. The constitution was agreed as written. Proposed by Cllr N Pavyer, seconded by Cllr D Watson and agreed unanimously.

25/029. Greater Essex Devolution Consultation

The Consultation was discussed (see https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/greater-essex-devolution/greater-essex-devolution-consultation) and Cllr D Stokes put more colour on the topic, again, from the February 2025 Liaison meeting. Concerns had been expressed about the financially prudent EFDC being amalgamated with Thurrock Council (which was declared bankrupt in 2022) and Southend Council (also in severe financial difficulties). Cllr R Tilbrook said that the proposals seemed to be the opposite of devolution with control being removed from the District Councils (to be abolished) and consolidated at a higher level. Cllr D Stokes said that the mantra from the Government was that "devolution" would give local councils (e.g. a new Essex Mayoral Combined Authority) more control over housing transport and adult education. It was noted that the consultation closes on 13th April 2025 and so there is insufficient time for the Council to co-ordinate and agree a corporate response. It was agreed that Cllr D Stokes would publicise the consultation on the village WhatsApp group and that all Parish Councillors would respond personally to the consultation.

25/030. Annual Litter Pick

Cllr S Bosworth provided an update on the event which will include hot beverages, and sausage rolls at Spain's Hall Farm upon arrival. Cllrs N Pavyer and L Fresco will place the eight "Caution Litter Picking" signs at the entrance roads to the village and Cllr S Bosworth had secured support from Mr Allan and FJ Bosworth &Sons. Thirty-five sets of litter picking equipment and protective clothing will be provided by EFDC and Terra Verde will collect the waste on the day. Cllr S Bosworth and FJ Bosworth were thanked for their work in arranging the event and providing support and logistics on the day and thanks were recorded to Cllr L Fresco for the communications. Cllr S Bosworth reminded the meeting that the Council should look to "hire out" the signs to neighbouring Parish Councils to recoup some of the outlay.

25/031. Willingale Neighbourhood Watch.

Cllr D Stokes referred to discussions in previous meetings about neighbourhood watch and with the recent uptick in suspicious behaviour in the village, and more fly tipping etc said that

he would like to approach local residents to set up a Willingale scheme. The meeting noted and agreed with this approach.

25/032. Annual Parish Meeting.

The previously agreed date was no longer possible as the Village Hall was already booked. The Clerk had advised that the meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June and after conferring diaries the potential dates of 9th, 16th and 23rd May were suggested, as there is good Councillor coverage on these dates. Cllr D Stokes is to check the Village Hall diary and revert. It was suggested that the Council should try and get a "guest speaker/presentation" to attract more interest to the event, possibly the Essex Rural Police Team.

25/033. Updates from Councillors and Matters for Information

Cllr D Stokes had already reported on the EFDC Liaison meeting attended on 13th February 2025. He also mentioned that he had been asked to join a meeting between Hastoe Housing Association, EFDC and the relevant landowner regarding affordable housing in the village.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.