

Westley Parish Council minutes	11 January 2018
Present: Colin Clayton (CC); Alan Green (AG); Jim Sweetman (JS); Chris Anderson (CA); Mike Spenser-Morris (MSM); Steve McClellan (SM)	
Jen Lerner (JL, Clerk); Karen Soons (SCC); Ian Houlder (SEBC)	
Apologies: Gary Smith	
46/2018. Declarations of interest: None received.	
47/2018. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2017 were approved and signed as a true record.	
48/2018. Reports from County and Borough Councillors – Karen Soons had circulated her January report. She updated us on various matters and highlighted the online reporting tool for highways problems and the Highways England site for complaints re A14. Ian Houlder reported on the current consultation on amalgamating Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils, which will affect ward sizes and numbers of councillors. Joint projects are being explored for West Suffolk, which should lead to greater efficiencies due to less duplication of work, and increased central purchasing ability. Solutions are being looked at to ease the disparity between council tax levels in the two councils. The move will also lead to more income from non council-tax sources (eg more houses so more tax payers).	
49/2018. Finance – authorisation of payments: The balance in the bank is £3649. The following payments were authorised: Clerk salary £221.61; SALC payroll services £21.60; Club hire £58.50. The clerk's annual appraisal has been carried out and resulted in a salary increase from scp 23 to scp 25, with effect from 1 November 2017.	
50/2018. Budget 2018-19 – the amended budget was discussed, including the need to allow for as yet uncertain audit costs, and possible costs around data protection. The tax base for next year is 97.14, as compared to 95.14 this year. It was proposed by CA, seconded by CC and agreed by all that the precept be kept the same, at £1692 which equates to £17.42 per band D household.	
51/2018. Village gates – MSM gave an update on the meeting that had been held recently between Jane Story (interim portfolio holder, Highways), Terry Clements (former SCC councillor for Westley), Karen Soons and MSM. Disgust was expressed at the letter outlining containing costs and employee time for SCC to carry out this work. MSM has replied to this – if not satisfactory, it was agreed that a formal complaint will be lodged.	
52/2018. Update from Highways - MSM had followed up with Guy Smith the problem caused by the loss of the dropped level kerb by the churchyard, following the resurfacing, causing the pavement and churchyard to flood in heavy rain. The work is scheduled to be carried out on 18 January, and thanks were passed on from the PCC for chasing this up.	
53/2018. Improvements to verges – the clerk had written to Michael Underwood regarding the verges, and a meeting had been held between him and CA. Michael has agreed to cut the verges between the land towards the chicane, and the crossroads, provided that a litter pick is carried out beforehand. Thanks were expressed for this generous offer.	
54/2018. Planning – DC/17/2576/HH. 3 Burrells Orchard, first floor side extension. No objection raised.	

DC/18/0017/HH. 4 Bullens Close, two storey side extension. No objection raised.

Marstons application for 'teardrop' site. An appeal is now in but as the parish council didn't raise specific objections to start with, it won't be taking up the invitation to attend.

55/2018. Correspondence – SALC Local Councillor magazine; West Suffolk electoral review (circulated); information on data protection actions to be completed by May.

Concern was expressed regarding all the legalities being placed on small parish councils such as Westley, particularly with regard to data protection and audit changes. The clerk was asked to research the number of residents required for a parish meeting rather than a parish council, to see if this would be feasible and less onerous.

56/2018. Date of next meeting – Thursday 1 March, 7.30.