

Willingdon & Jevington Parish Council



Business Plan

2018 – 2023

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Introduction

This Business Plan has been developed to set out the Parish Council's objectives and aspirations for the period 2018 - 2023. The vision has been developed by Councillors and Council staff.

Mission Statement

To make Willingdon and Jevington Parish a pleasant, safe and lively place to live, work and visit.

Aims

To ensure the Council conducts its business by means that are sustainable, environmentally friendly and present the best value towards achieving the Mission Statement. To consider long term objectives of the Council and recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee business plans (including financial management) to achieve such objectives.

To achieve our mission statement the Council will continue to:

Put in place initiatives and policies that will not only improve the Parish but will encourage a greater sense of community involvement.

Enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of the villages and to safeguard its unique identity as a parish with a large section within the South Downs National Park.

Working with other authorities to support and develop a sustainable local economy.

Encourage other partners and service providers to work effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.

Provide services that are managed to a high quality, in an efficient and effective way and that offer best value.

Conduct the business of the Parish Council by means which are transparent, sustainable and sympathetic to the environment and deliver best value.

Ensure the continuing professional development for Parish Council staff and Parish Councillors to ensure they are aware of best practice.

Be a professional, competent and caring Parish Council.

Work with residents, local authorities and other service providers, businesses and partners with the aim of achieving a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable community.

Enhance public awareness of the Parish Council's role within the community and improve communication with the community – this includes improving and regularly updating the Parish Council website, newsletters and through social media.

Seek to encourage investment in the villages and to pursue all funding opportunities, working with partner organisations to maximize grant income for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Promote local democracy by encouraging more residents to stand for election to the Parish Council when vacancies exist, and to participate in surveys of residents' requirements and opinions.

Ensure the needs of all members of the community are understood and to balance the needs of all age groups.

Work closely with local schools and Youth Workers to ensure that the needs of young people are adequately addressed.

Ensure the needs of older or disabled people are adequately addressed.

Work with other organisations to make Willingdon & Jevington a safe place to live, work and visit.

Help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents irrespective of age, culture, income, race, sexual orientation or religion, and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual cooperation.

What is the Parish Council's Role?

- To listen to and represent local people's interests.
- To improve the local environment.
- To ensure best value in relation to local taxes.
- To ensure areas of land and properties they hold as owners are administered efficiently and maintained to a high level.
- To make recommendations on planning applications, Highlight planning irregularities and encourage Wealden District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority, to ensure all planning laws are followed correctly.
- To maintain open spaces including Parish Council owned public rights of way
- To support voluntary and community groups for the benefit of the parish
- To attract Government, lottery and other grants into the local area.
- To provide leadership in the community.
- To promote and encourage local business growth.
- To ensure its own employees are managed and trained to perform their duties to the best of their ability.
- To ensure its councillors are trained and kept up to date.
- To encourage parishioners to participate in village life/activities.
- To produce a Business Plan to guide future activities and expenditure.

Overview of the Parish Council

There are three tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities. Willingdon & Jevington Parish Council is the first and local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the Villages, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. The Council sets the precept annually, manages the Parish Office and staff and, all the Council's assets. It manages the urban grass cutting, the Cemetery and maintains the Huggetts Lane Recreation Ground, Tott Yew Recreation ground and other open spaces and play areas. It is a statutory consultee on all planning applications lodged with Wealden District Council.

Wealden District Council (WDC) is the second tier and is responsible for services including housing and environmental services. WDC is also responsible for strategic planning policies for all development (including housing and employment sites).

East Sussex County Council is the third tier and its responsibilities include highways, relating to both roads and footways (pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way, fire service, health and libraries.

Residents elect nineteen Parish Councillors every four years. If there are insufficient Councillors available to be elected at this time, or if a By-Election is not called to fill a vacancy, the council can co-opt members of the public to fill the vacancies. The Council elects a Chairman and Vice-Chairman annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. The Council reports to the electorate at the Annual Parish Meeting. Our Parish Councillors are currently unpaid and commit their time to improving Willingdon & Jevington and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, work and visit.

The Parish Council owns property and land in the Parish and gains income from some of it. We hold these assets on behalf of the community and are responsible for maintaining their value.

All meetings are open to the public with a period set aside for questions. Written questions may be sent in to be answered either at the council meeting or in writing.

Willingdon & Jevington Parish Council's parish councillors who, by attending meetings, discuss, debate and decide on matters affecting local people. It has several working committees and sub-committees:

Amenities Committee	Personnel Sub Committee
Cemetery Committee	Strengthening Local Relationships
Events Committee	Business Plan Sub-Committee
Finance & General Purposes Committee	Large Development Sub-Committee
Planning & Licensing Committee	Pavilion Sub-Committee
Recreation Ground Committee	

Each Committee has delegated responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the property of the Council and the services the Council provides. On occasions it sets up short life working groups for specific tasks and invites relevant parishioners with specific expertise to participate.

Parish Councillors also serve as representatives on local management committees and organisations, as well as having elected Members who are also District and County Councillors.

The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These lay down the rules by which the Parish Council operates and conducts its business. The Standing Orders are based on a model prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Parish Councillors adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct also adopted from NALC. Committees and working groups work to terms of reference agreed in Council or in executive committee meetings.

The Parish Council is consulted by WDC on local planning applications and with ESCC on all highway matters and the effective management of flooding particularly, following the issues which have affected the Village in the past. The Parish Council also works closely with the relevant Agencies on general flooding issues and consults with the SDNP on developments within the Park.

The Precept

A “precept” is the principal way that the Council funds its duties and functions for the year. This is paid by Wealden District Council who include it as an item in their local Council Tax statement sent to every household each year. For seven years, up to 2015, the Council tax had remained frozen. However due to the increased pressure on local authorities to provide improved services and a reduction in the Council Tax Support Grant from the Central Government, there has been a need to increase the precept.

Objectives

1. To maintain effective communications between Councillors and all Members of the village community.

- Encourage parishioners to speak at Council Meetings
- Post agendas on notice boards and website – target 5 days before meeting
- Make copies of minutes accessible to public by putting full non confidential minutes on the website – target within 2 weeks of meeting
- Publish details of budget and Annual Return on website
- Post contact details of Parish, District and County Councillors and the Clerk on website and on all communications, together with details of Parish Councillors lead responsibilities and Council’s elected representatives on local organisations

2. To provide and improve facilities in the village.

Recreation

- Maintain and consider improvements to the children’s playgrounds and its fencing and ensure safety requirements to national standards are met. Regular independent inspections ensure that the play areas are monitored.
- Continue to assess the future of the children’s playground and its equipment and surfacing at Huggetts Lane Recreation Ground.
- Maintain and consider improvements to the Tott Yew Recreation Ground, including land adjacent to the play area for a Green Gym.

Amenities

- Maintain all assets in good condition.
- Maintain Jubilee Gardens and the Memorial Hall Gardens.
- Work closely with the Village Hall Management Committee in all the local halls to ensure they are being well managed and help where possible.
- Seek to ensure that Rights of Way are maintained in good condition at all times and liaise with the relevant Authorities to counter the threat of improper use.

Finance & General Purposes

- To ensure that the Council Governance and systems of work are relevant and up to date.
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Cemetery

- Investigate the possibility of purchasing land for a new cemetery, including the possibility of raising of funds from the Public Works Loan Board.
- Manage the current facility to continue to provide burial and Ashes Internment spaces for residents.

3. To maintain community safety

- Continue to be in contact regularly with Police.
- Maintain the villages emergency plan.
- Liaise with Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators.
- Monitor the parking of vehicles near to schools and shopping areas and report those which are causing a hazard or affect the local businesses.
- Take appropriate steps to deter or deal with abandoned vehicles particularly where a hazard to children or the environment is concerned.
- Liaise with Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council and Polegate Town Council to reduce the volume of HGVs travelling through the villages, in particular container vehicles which are over the legal weight limit in designated areas.

4. To protect and improve the villages by liaison with the proper authorities

- Maintain tidy appearance of the Recreation Grounds, pavilions and Children's Playgrounds by grass cutting and hedge trimming.
- Maintain footpaths in Parish ownership and ensure the maintenance of all other rights of way.
- Maintain links with East Sussex County Council on the management of trees and hedges.
- Monitor the recycling bins and dog bins in all recreation grounds to ensure they are emptied frequently.
- Monitor the village litter bins to ensure they are regularly emptied.
- Report fly tipping.
- Ensure fire extinguisher and PAT testing inspections are carried out annually.
- Continue to monitor the rail service to Polegate, Lewes and Eastbourne and the effects on residents.
- Work closely with Wealden District Council and respond to consultations on the Local Development Framework.
- Liaise with local parish and town councils to consider joint arrangements where appropriate.

5. To act efficiently and in accordance with legal requirements

- Satisfy audit requirements – target no major observations
- Pay invoices promptly.
- Collect all monies due within reasonable timescale.
- Produce, maintain and publish a Business Plan.
- Produce budget and set precept– target by December each year.
- Review Emergency Plan annually.
- Maintain asset register.
- Maintain risk register – review annually.
- Keep business procedures and policies up to date and review regularly.
- Produce quarterly newsletters and an annual report.
- Councillors and Clerk to keep abreast of legislative changes.

Community buildings and assets as of 2017:

The Councils holds certain assets on behalf of the community and these are listed in Appendix 1.

Targets for 2018-2021

Activity	Complete by:	Funds available
Planning & Licensing Committee		
▪ Investigate the need and provision of a Neighbourhood Plan	2019	Earmarked reserve
▪ Expand the partnership work with the Police and partners.	2019	N/A
Recreation Grounds Committee		
▪ Proposed new Green Gym items for Tott Yew Recreation Ground	2023	Grant Application
▪ Development of the Pavilion at Huggetts Lane Recreation Ground	2018	Earmarked reserve
▪ Development of the Pavilion at Jevington Recreation Ground	2018	Earmarked Reserve
▪ Increase the usage of the Recreation Facilities in the Villages	2017-2022	N/A
▪ Repaint items at Huggetts Lane Children's Playground	2019	General Fund
Finance & General Purposes Committee		
▪ Improve Council's reserves	2023	N/A
▪ Progress launch of Community Hub and develop the use of the office meeting room for meetings and community groups.	2017	General Fund
▪ Develop the Business Plan	2017	N/A
▪ Endeavour to pressurise Southern Rail to improve the local train service	ongoing	N/A
▪ Seek solutions for parking issues in the Village	2017-2022	General Fund
Amenities		
▪ New contract for street light maintenance	2017	General Fund
▪ Memorial Hall Gardens resurface	2017	Earmarked reserve
▪ New noticeboard at the Library	2017	General Fund
▪ New Bus shelter at Church Street	2018	Earmarked reserve
▪ New street lights as required	2019-2022	Earmarked reserve
▪ Jubilee Gardens paving	2020	Earmarked reserve
Cemetery Committee		
▪ Continued investigation into the purchase of land for Cemetery		Earmarked reserve
▪ New Footpath	2017	Earmarked reserve

The Parish Council is very aware of the profound impact that the proposed Brodricklands Farm, Hindsland and Mornings Mill Farm development will have on the village and its residents. It is therefore important that the Council is informed and understands the needs of residents in order to represent their interests.

The development of a Neighbourhood plan could enable the Council to receive the maximum amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) which will give the Council funds which will help fulfil the needs of the Community as well as ensuring that the developments provide the correct infrastructure.

This is the first Business Plan produced by the Council and it found that the process of preparing the plan gave added focus on how the Council delivers its services and a better idea for future planning. It is our intention to continue to review the plan annually, prior to the Annual Council Meeting. Please contribute to this process and forward your comments on this Business Plan to the Council.