

BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Council meeting held at Beckley Village Centre
on WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2016 7.30pm

PRESENT: Deborah Ongley (DEO) Chair, Mrs Sue Evans (SE), Mrs Tina Langmead (TL), Mrs Rebecca Parsons (RP), Mike Rowe (MRO), County Cllr Ms Angharad Davies (AED) and District Cllr. Ian Jenkins (IJ).

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk Mrs V Ades and 10 members of the public.

Public Questions – to allow questions from the public for a period not exceeding 15 minutes.

Q. How is RDC getting on with the settlement plan for the parish?

A. IJ-plan has not been finalised and a finished date is not known.

A villager expressed concerns about the cost and viability of the PC being asked to authorise carrying out a topographical survey on the Jubilee Field and Frog Field at a cost of £2,950 when it is known that these areas are subject to flooding. The field is on a slope, is next door to original brickworks so it lies on clay and is unsuitable for recreational facilities. Since the field was given to the Parish in 1977 consecutive PC's have poured money into trying to sort out the flooding problems to little or no avail.

Another villager said the land should be sold off for housing development; it would never be suitable for recreational use.

There were no more questions.

Report from County Councillor Ms Angharad Davies. The Link Road, named Combe Valley Way, opened on 17 December 2015. Journeys are reported to be much shorter, particularly hospital trips. A new highways contract (£300 million deal) has been agreed by ESCC. Costain CH2M was the preferred bidder following an extensive procurement process. The new contract starts from 1 May and will cover highways networks, including roads, pavements drainage, street lights, traffic lights, with winter gritting and highways improvement schemes. There is a fixed price for routine maintenance activities like grass cutting and this is for the life of the 7-year contract. Highways stewards will work as previously, but they will have more powers to fix minor defects themselves, so work should be carried out more efficiently. Fix My Street will work exactly as previously. ■The school improvement programme has been inspected by Ofsted and whilst some improvements have been made more work must be done at both primary and secondary levels. At the last Ofsted inspection 33 primary schools were in special measures, but younger children are now getting off to a good start resulting in ESCC being placed in the top 10% of local authorities' schools rating for 5 year olds and the aged 7 standard being significantly above national standard levels. Improvement is needed at post 16 years. Schools must work better with children at risk of exclusion and on school absences. Parents are being asked to 'get sugar smart' and look at 'Change for Life' aimed at reducing the amounts of food we all eat which contain high sugar content. A 'sugar smart' app has been developed to help parents when shopping.

■The Library Service must save £2M over the next three years and reducing the number of opening hours is being considered. Consultation is 'live' with comments appreciated.

Questions: A member of the public said he was shocked to hear of the poor level of education and felt monies spent on older people should be redirected into schools. AED said the education budget is protected.

Report from District Councillor Ian Jenkins: Nothing new to report.

Reports from the Parish Councillors:

RP had received complaints about leaves blocking gullies and ditches, especially in the Kings Bank Lane area. AED said this is an enormous task for County and it is doing what it can to keep areas clear, but residents are asked to assist where possible by clearing away leaves.

MR reported a sign hanging from its post on Peasmarsh Road, just before Bixley Lane. AED would report. He also asked when the school warning flashing lights would be operative. Previously County reported it was waiting for an electricity supply to be connected. **AED.**

TL suggested a village clean up to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday initiative with interested residents working for one hour each.

Report from the Community Support Officer. No report received.

PC meeting commenced at 7.50pm.

- 1 **Apologies for absence** were received from CB and LD both on business engagements and MM.
- 2 **Declarations of interest.** To receive any disclosures from members of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any such interest and whether the member regards the interest as a disclosable pecuniary interest under the terms of the Code of Conduct. None declared.
- 3 **Minutes** of the PC meeting held on 9 December 2015. The minutes were proposed by RP and seconded by MR as accurate and signed by DEO.
- 4 **Planning** – to consider any planning applications received from RDC and other planning matters.
RR/2015/2471/P - Beckley Motors, Main Street. Proposed demolition of petrol service station, showroom, shop, motor workshop and first floor flat and erection of one detached dwelling and garage and one pair of semi-detached dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. MRO reminded members that since 2004 the owners had tried to sell the business as a going concern, for commercial use or the land for social housing. None of these had been viable and the business finally closed in April 2015. RDC had requested more information from the applicants and this claimed market housing was the only viable plan. Concerns over drainage and flooding have been posted on-line which members felt relevant and should be noted in our comments. Councillors **supported the application 5:0.**
RR/2015/3029/L - Two Hovens Cottage, Peasmarsch Road. Erection of partition wall at first floor. Replacement of WC, shower and wash basin with new suite. Installation of shower and repairs to roof. Councillors agreed that whilst listed buildings should retain their character, improvements should be allowed to bring living standards up to date; otherwise nobody would want to buy these buildings. Councillors felt the alterations were in keeping with the building **and supported the application 5:0.**
RR/2015/3065/P - Apple Orchard, Horseshoe Lane. Proposed replacement of abandoned bungalow with single storey semi-underground dwelling of similar size. The background history of the land and property was discussed along with the proposed development. It was noted the bungalow had been demolished in the early 70s and an earlier application for a bungalow of straw bale construction had been refused in 2010. Access, flooding in the area and the fact that the site lay outside the development boundary was of concern. Councillors were **against** supporting the application **4:0** with **1 abstention.**

PLANNING CONSENTS

RR/2015/2927/FN - Stream Meadow, Stoddards Lane. Erection of building for agricultural storage. No consent required.

RR/2015/2622/P - Baytree Cottage, Northiam Road. Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of replacement oak framed orangery extension to rear.

PLANNING APPEAL: APP/U1430/W/15/315472 - Combe Lodge, Main Street. Demolition of existing colt bungalow and erection of three terraced cottages with parking.

5 **Matters arising:**

a **Better Beckley Project**

8.07pm. Meeting closed and Mr Phil Maynard of the BBP was invited to speak. He said whilst recognising there were significant problems with flooding on the Jubilee Field the recreation facilities provided were extremely poor and whilst drainage problems may preclude having a football pitch they do not preclude having an artificial pitch, a better playground and tennis courts and improvements to the Frog Field. A topographical survey is essential when applying for funding and before asking contractors what can or cannot be put on the field. It would also show if the drainage could be fixed and at what cost. BBP have considered raising funds to pay for the survey, but this would be long winded and to use money from the £10,000 set aside by the PC for the project would reduce the amount which could be used for match funding. If the project is not possible then improvements should be made to give the Beckley children better facilities than those they have at present.

Residents responses included:- **•The field** is a black hole for money and should be sold for the 20 houses which must be built in Beckley and the field alongside or behind the Village Hall purchased and as there are no drainage problems the BBP would be able to go ahead and there would also be car parking space. **•£2995 sounds excessive for this survey.** Resident felt he could obtain a cheaper quote and was asked to give the details to Mr Maynard. **•Before a decision** is made by the PC to have a survey carried out put the question to residents for opinion.

IJ said before applying for match funding a plan must be produced to validate where the money is to be used and this requires a topographical survey.

MRO said the land had been gifted to the parish for recreational use and prohibited building. Whilst the field is water logged for many months each year, preventing what can be put on it, the playground and tennis courts can be improved without this survey. He said this is residents' money and at this stage he felt such a survey was neither viable nor value for money.

Mr Maynard said those facilities may not currently be in the best places; the survey would show where are the best areas. Bourne's had offered to look at the lie of the land and say what our opportunities are. This would be FOC with a proviso they would be able to tender for any works.

SE felt parking would be a major issue as parking on the road, which is close to a bend, was dangerous and if the Village Hall car park was full or there was an event this would add to the congestion.

AED felt ESCC may be able to help with the flooding conditions.

AED/Clerk.

8.30pm the meeting recommenced.

- i. **Discuss if a PC committee should be set up to receive reports from the BBP** and if so, agree its terms of reference. Members resolved BBP should report to the full PC and that a separate PC committee would not be set up.
- ii. **Discuss the problems with drainage at the Jubilee Field and ways to rectify them.** With the matter discussed **members voted 3:2 in favour of investigating ways to improve drainage** on the recreation field and asking County to assist before a topographical survey should be considered.

More discussions followed including how funding may be applied for and when members of the public commented the Chair asked them to refrain as the meeting had recommenced.

- iii. **Discuss the merits of what a topographical survey of the area would produce and to agree to accept the cheapest of three quotes received and authorise ACAD Mapping Ltd to proceed at a cost of £2950 + VAT.** With the matter discussed **members voted 3:2 against a topographical survey** being carried out at present.
- b. **Finger post** – Furnace Lane/Moores Lane junction. Payment of half of the replacement cost has been received from ESCC and JAKK will be instructed to proceed. **Clerk.**
- c. **Bus services in Beckley** – response from Northiam and Peasmarsh PC's re sharing costs for providing a better bus service or discuss our progress in setting up a voluntary resident driver list and looking at local services where a bus may be provided. With none of the three parishes agreeing to fund the 313 bus service Beckley will continue looking for volunteer drivers. MRO reported despite extensive advertising and requests only a couple of people had shown an interest. DEO was asked to re-advertise and MRO will pursue further. **MRO/DEO.**
- d. **Village Plan –v- Neighbourhood Plan** – progress in arranging a meeting early 2016 with RDC to discuss the two plans. Councillors agreed convenient dates as 23 and 25 February with the hall being available on 23 February. IJ will approach Northiam with a view to them joining with Peasmarsh and Beckley. **IJ.**
- e. **Footpath - Bixley Lane to the Four Oaks** – update. ESCC is investigating, but has indicated the likelihood of this being provided is not promising.
- f. **Jubilee Field** – covenant details. The field was gifted to the Parish in 1977 for recreation use, with specific prohibition on building, neither domestic nor commercial.

6 **Consider purchase of business equipment** to be funded through NALC and necessary to carry out the additional work required as laid down under the Transparency Code. Councillors agreed funding should be applied for in all areas where costs are incurred.

7 **Discuss flooding** in the culvert at school and a fallen tree. CB had inspected the site and confirmed a contractor should be appointed to clear the culvert. Clerk was asked to obtain prices. **Clerk.**

8 **Consider obtaining quotes** to have all PC owned trees inspected for safety and also insurance purposes. Members resolved an inspection should be carried out. Clerk to obtain quotes. **Clerk.**

9 **Precept 2016/17:** Agree the precept recommended at £21,000 and a notice to villagers explaining where money is spent. Members resolved to keep the precept at £21,000. The Clerk felt more information should be included in the explanatory note for villagers regarding how the precept is spent. She would liaise with MRO. **Clerk/MRO.**

10 **Appointment of an external auditor:** Agreement to opt in to the arrangement for an auditor, where required, to be appointed by a new 'sector-led body' set up by NALC, effective from 2017-18, in line with

the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited guide. The closing date of 31.1.16 for opting out has been extended to 31.3.16. **February agenda.**

- 11 **Proposed federation of Beckley C of E Primary School and Peasmarsh C of E Primary School.** Consultation is under way with a meeting at Beckley School on 20th January 2016 at 6pm.
- 12 **Correspondence** – sent and received. All correspondence was by email and had been dealt with.
- 13 **Accounts** – to consider and approve accounts submitted for payment.

BVH (hall hire 11.11.15)	£11.00	Admin costs	£430.00
Mrs M Lenton	£50.00	HMRC (income tax)	£320.00

RP proposed and MRO seconded the accounts for payment.

- 14 **Public Questions** – not to exceed 15 minutes.
Resident: For a very small cost Adams of Rye sells Ordnance Survey maps which will tell you everything a topographical survey will show.
- 15 **Matters** councillors would like to have considered as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- 16 **Date of the next Parish Council meeting:** 10 February 2016.

The meeting closed at 8.54pm.