

BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council meeting held at Beckley Village Centre
on WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2016 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Christopher Broadbent (CB) Chairman, Mrs Lauren Dobson (LD), Mrs Sue Evans (SE), Mrs Tina Langmead (TL), Deborah Ongley (DEO) Vice Chair, Mrs Rebecca Parsons (RP), Mike Rowe (MRO), County Cllr Ms Angharad Davies (AD) and District Cllr. Ian Jenkins (IJ).

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk Mrs V Ades and over 70 members of the public.

Questions – to allow questions from the public for a period not exceeding 30 minutes.

CB advised the public that regarding planning applications the PC acts as a consultee to the Planning Department at RDC to whom it makes recommendations only; it is RDC who makes planning decisions.

Q. Who gave permission for the path to be dug up at the Glebe Field making it impassable and for the gate to be moved back into the field by approximately 20ft. **A.** Clerk will write to the PCC. **Clerk.**

Q. How far is the village in getting a Neighbourhood Plan drawn up? **A.** CB said despite many efforts in the past to engage with villagers to set up a working party only two people had volunteered, but neither had taken the matter further.

Questions and comments moved to planning application RR/2015/3120/P - land west of Buddens Green.

These included how had the red line around the site been changed to green; following planning refusal in 2004 and on appeal the site was tested by an Inspector who ruled out building on it; impact such a large number of houses would have on the village and its small school; site is in the countryside and is a critical part of the village, site is within an AONB, site is outside of the development boundary; findings in the SHLAA report and Core Strategy would appear not to support this site for development; houses should be in clusters of no more than 5. **Q:** With approx. 1000 people in this area are there any guidelines as to where housing should go proportionally in the village? **A:** IJ replied the Government inspector decides housing figures working on the need of the area.

CB invited volunteers to come forward to work on a Neighbourhood or Village Plan and Mr M Horton offered to help by giving advice and Roger Burroughs and Julie Conway also offered to participate.

CB said it was 8.02pm and public questions must close, but said there would be another opportunity for more questions at the end of the meeting.

Report from the County Councillor: AED reported that the savings issue continues with £78m saved to date. Further savings of £25.43m are required after a 1.99% increase in Council Tax. DCLG reports that local government will be able to keep all business rates by the end of the Parliament when the main central government grant will be phased out completely. ESCC will require a top up as a rural area with less business and industry than others. Local Authorities will be given an extra 2% flexibility on Council Tax for the £162m adult social care budget. This will be shown separately on Council Tax bills. The budget includes £65m for children's services; £61m on community, transport and the economy, and a capital spend of £129m. East and West Sussex, and Surrey have submitted a devolution prospectus which would bring additional funding for infrastructure, road, rail, digital technology and affordable housing.

Report from the District Councillor - IJ: RDC's funding from Government for 2016/17 has been reduced by £800,000 and by 2019/20 Government funding to RDC will have been reduced by approximately £6M since 2010. To bridge some of the funding gap money from reserves will be used until 2020. Majority of services have been maintained, but this may change in the future. Rother has the lowest CT rates in East Sussex. Asset Management Strategy will examine best use of RDC's owned assets which have not been devolved to local bodies. Community Grant Scheme has £10,000 available in 2016/17 to give to community projects. New Bexhill/Hastings link road should provide around 1500 new homes and 50,000sq.m of business space.

Reports from Parish Councillors:

RP has reported several large potholes. A hanging sign at the end of Bixley Lane has lost its clips and is about to fall.

Clerk report to ESCC.

DEO reported vehicles parking across footpaths and pavements, especially by the old post office, forcing pedestrians –pram pushers, children - taking dangerous actions by walking in the road. **Clerk-report to police.** With traffic still speeding in the village she asked for three more volunteers to operate speed cameras to make contact with her.

TL reported the school's flashing lights are now working.

Report from the Community Support Officer. No report.

Parish Council Meeting commenced at 8.20pm.

1 **Apologies.** None received.

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. DEO declared a personal interest in Item 5-RR/2015/3120/P - Buddens Green - Land west of Main Street, Beckley and TL declared a personal interest in Item 5 - RR/2016/192/P - Yew Park Cottage, Beckley.

3 **Minutes** of the PC meeting held on 13 January 2016 were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting and were signed by DEO who had chaired that meeting.

4 **Matters arising:**

a **Bus services in Beckley** – Consider proposal from ESCC and Renown Group to fund extra 313 bus services between Northiam, Beckley and Peasmarsh at a cost to each Parish of £1265 pa. Councillors unanimously (7:0) agreed to a 6-month trial period of the extra services and to request that at the end of the period ESCC supply numbers of concessionary and fare paying passengers who had used the services.

b **Village Plan & Neighbourhood Plan** –meeting date confirmed - Tuesday 23 February 7 - 7.15pm in Beckley Village Hall between Mr David Marlowe and Mr Norman Kwan of RDC and councillors and clerks of Beckley, Peasmarsh and Northiam Parish Councils.

5 **Planning** – to consider any planning applications received from RDC and other planning matters.

RR/2015/3120/P - Buddens Green - Land west of Main Street, Beckley. Erection of 30 dwellings (24 houses, 6 flats) with associated access road and parking spaces. Councillors noted a number of factors; previous applications to build on this site had been refused both at planning application stage and on appeal when the Inspector stated that the site was entirely inappropriate for development; development on this site diminishes one of the defining characteristics of the village in that the country comes into the village; the density of the proposal is inappropriate, especially in relation to already stretched infrastructure (school, parking) and almost zero resources (shops etc); consideration of its location in an AONB; a limited biodiversity appraisal; strength of public feeling against the development. With one member having declared an interest, members **voted unanimously (6:0) against** supporting the application and the Clerk was asked to write to the Planning Committee at RDC with its reasons. **Clerk.**

RR/2014/1639/P - Oak Cottage, Main Street, Beckley. A 30m x 20m horse exercise area constructed in an existing horse paddock. After discussion on how the paddock would be constructed councillors were satisfied and, with one declared interest, **voted unanimously 6:0 in support** of the application.

RR/2015/3137/P & RR/2015/3138/L - Methersham Manor, Hobbs Lane, Beckley. Oak framed orangery extension to east side elevation following demolition of existing porch. Councillors were satisfied that the plans were sympathetic to the existing building and voted **unanimously (7:0) to support** the application.

RR/2015/3097/P - The Old Rectory, Stoddards Lane. Erection of double garage on land accessed from Rectory Lane. Councillors felt the design of the proposed garage was extremely plain and out of keeping with the charm of the existing building and with **1 abstention voted 6:0 against** the application.

RR/2016/192/P - Yew Park Cottage, Beckley. Replace an existing conservatory with an extended kitchen/utility room. Councillors could not see a design problem and with one declared interest **supported the application 6:0.**

6 **Fallen tree from recreation ground into the garden at Greenacres.** Clerk had spoken with the home owners who had stated no damaged had been caused to their property and she had agreed they could fell the tree at its root on the recreation ground and dispose of it.

- 7 **Correspondence** – sent and received. Only email messages had been received and anything relevant had been forwarded to councillors.
- 8 **Accounts** – to consider and approve accounts submitted for payment.

BVH (hall hire 9.12.15)	£14.60	Admin costs	£600.00
Mrs M Lenton	£40.00		

The accounts were proposed for payment by RL and seconded by LD.

- 9 **Public Questions** – not to exceed 15 minutes.

Bus services in Beckley are abysmal as are many of the connection timings. CB said as reported above, ESCC and Renown are working on a new plan.

Mr Horton asked about the footpath which runs from Beckley Woods down to the east of Buddens Green and is riddled with springs and is unwalkable. Mr Baverstock said it is footpath 18 which was sold off by the landowner some years ago and now appears to have no owner. **AED will investigate.**

- 10 **Matters** councillors would like to be considered as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- 11 **Date of the next Parish Council meeting:** 9 March 2016.