

# BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Council meeting held at Beckley Village Centre on WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2016 at 7.30pm

**PRESENT:** Mrs Lauren Dobson (LD), Mrs Sue Evans (SE), Mrs Deborah Ongley (DEO) Acting chairman, Mrs Rebecca Parsons (RP), Mike Rowe (MRO) and District Cllr. Ian Jenkins.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Two members of the public.

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

**Q.** Is the PC aware of the situation at Ross Farm and could it check whether the recent erection of shelters was in breach of planning.

**A.** Clerk will follow up.

**Clerk.**

### Reports from County and District Councillors.

**District Cllr IJ** advised that the government are renewing village boundaries and discussions continue. Currently there are no firm plans to take forward a fast train service from Bexhill to Ashford, which is dependant on funding. With regard to the new bus service, joint funded by Beckley, Northiam and Peasmarsch Parish Councils, IJ advised that older residents in Peasmarsch had been turned away from the pre 9.30am bus when trying to use their concessionary passes. The matter has been taken up with Neil Maguire at ESSC. DEO commented that a similar situation had arisen for four users boarding in Northiam on the first day of the service when apparently drivers were unaware of any changes. Things have now settled down. IJ advised residents to allow extra time for journeys towards London on the A21. As part of the ongoing road improvements the section of road towards the Longfield roundabout, Tunbridge Wells area, has now been narrowed on both sides and will remain that way until April 2017. It is advised to allow an extra 30-45mins for each journey.

### Reports from Parish Councillors

**RP** reported her utter dismay following recent abuse of the newly refurbished tennis court. All parish councillors agreed it was completely disheartening when efforts had been made by villagers to provide a community resource only for it to be mistreated. The footway from the village hall towards Four Oaks needs attention as currently encroachment from the hedge is making it impassable for wheelchair users or those with buggies. Some drains within the village are showing lots of mud and grass growing out of them, this has been reported on 'fix my street'. **Cllr IJ** commented this was indeed a matter for ESSC.

**DEO** reported she had received a number of complaints re: grass cutting. These are being taken forward separately, but the PC will be kept informed of the situation. She asked that purchase of hi-vis jackets be added to the agenda for next meeting. These will be needed by councillors who have volunteered to clean the village's road signs. **LD** commented she already has 3 or 4 which she is happy to lend so no need to purchase.

### The PC meeting commenced at 7:48pm.

- 1 **Apologies** had been received from Cllrs Broadbent, Mrs Langmead, County Cllr Ms Davies and District Cllr Mooney.
- 2 **Declarations of interest.** To receive any disclosures under the Council's Code of Conduct. None declared.
- 3 **Minutes of the PC meeting held on 11 May 2016.** Corrections to include RP and MRO in those present were made then the minutes were signed by DEO.
- 4 **Planning** – to consider any planning applications received from RDC and other planning matters. *All plans are available for viewing on the RDC website.*

**RR/2016/1230/P - Broadlawns - Land adj. Whitebread Lane.** Erection of detached dwelling. Councillors noted the application is for a building outside of the development boundary and after discussion voted 4 against with 1 abstention. Councillors noted an earlier application on the same site had been refused in 2015.

**RR/2016/1442/P - Road End House, Northiam Road.** Demolition of dilapidated barn and replacement with new barn for ancillary use. Councillors felt there was insufficient information on which to make a

decision and would like more details on the proposed building materials, the planned usage (commercial gallery?) and plans for the existing roundel, which isn't mentioned in the new plans.

**Planning permissions:-**

**RR/2015/464/L-Lyndale Cottage, Main Street.** Removal of canopy and erection of porch to west elevation. Replacement first floor window to west elevation.

**RR/2015/793/L - Beckley Methodist Church, Main Street.** Variation of approved plans – internal changes (variation of conditions 2 and 4 of Listed Building Consent RR/2011/89/L).

**5 Matters arising:**

a **BBP** – Update from DEO on behalf of the BBP. Nothing to report, project still looking to find a graphic designer to help, if possible on a no fee basis. Councillors suggested approaching local design colleges as an option, perhaps a final year student would welcome the commission and be happy to do it free of charge to build their portfolio.

**6 Report on the Parish Assembly 13 May 2016.** The assembly was well attended with about 30-40 villagers present. Items were presented by the village tree warden, Better Beckley project, the Village Hall committee and Beckley Players. Parish Councillors gave an update on the new bus service and sought volunteers for the village speed watch initiative. Villagers were also asked to 'adopt a road sign' – find a sign near to their home and give it a clean with soapy water every now and then. The longest agenda item at the assembly was the item on planning. For those unable to attend MRO summarised the main points made again:

a) Beckley will not be preparing a Neighbourhood Plan as this had proved too costly and resource intensive with very few volunteers coming forward to help with its development. Instead, the village (through the PC) will work directly with Rother District council as they develop the new Local Plan.

b) Beckley needs to find suitable land for 20 new homes between now and 2028 – (set out in the Rother Core Strategy document). The 20 new homes do not need to be on one site, but only groups of 6 or more will count against Beckley's quota, therefore one, two or three sites could be found – current development boundaries could be reviewed.

c) Villagers are encouraged to make suggestions for possible sites and all views are welcomed. The **village will be consulted** prior to the new Local Plan being finalised, this will be by either public meeting or survey. Any thoughts or suggestions in the meantime should be forwarded to any member of the PC.

**Views expressed included:**

- a general preference for smaller developments
- concern that approval of a smaller site would lead to that site growing larger
- a preference to use brownfield sites whenever possible
- a reminder that smaller homes were needed not only by young families getting on the housing ladder, but also by older people wanting to downsize and this group should not be forgotten

Cllr IJ suggested that for future assemblies the PC considers inviting questions in advance in order to prepare responses. This was discussed, but the PC felt it was unnecessary as villagers should feel free to ask questions at anytime of the year and can do so freely via the PC website, at PC meetings or by contacting any of the parish councillors directly.

**7 Bixley Lane carriageway condition** - response from ESCC. The response had been referred to the home owner in Bixley Lane who had enquired from ESCC. This is not a PC matter. The general state of the lane was discussed and a suggestion made that a warning sign be placed at each end to warn vehicles, particularly larger ones, that the surface is in poor repair and considerable care must be taken to avoid damage to vehicles.

**8 Ground Maintenance contract** – discuss complaints received. Discussions ongoing with the contractors. PC in error for not showing all the areas to be cut from the outset. The tender document did not mention removal of cuttings (PC had assumed this was included when in fact it was not). Specific complaints are being dealt with directly.

**9 End of year accounts 2015/16** for forwarding to external auditors.

a **Agree Annual Governance statement** (pg 2 Annual return). Agreed and signed.

b **Agree Accounting statement for 2015/16** (pg 3 Annual return). Agreed and signed.

- 10 **HMRC and The Pensions Regulator** - pension sign-up details. This item was deferred to July meeting.
- 11 **Village Award** - discuss a suggestion for the PC to make an annual award to a villager/s for best achievement during the year which has benefitted something/someone in the village. Councillors unanimously supported the idea of a village award and agreed to defer the detail to the next meeting when it was hoped all councillors would be present. There would be a need to advertise, agree a prize, criteria etc.

8.23pm District Cllr IJ left the meeting.

- 12 **Correspondence** – sent and received. All dealt with above.
- 13 **Accounts** – to consider and approve accounts submitted for payment.  
*Amounts over £100 show reclaimable VAT where applicable.*

Recipient	VAT £	Total £	Recipient	VAT £	Total £
BVH (hall hire 13.4.16)		11.00	T Jordan (grass cutting 1.4.16 & 15.4.16)	30.00	180.00
Mrs M Lenton		40.00	P Maynard – reimbursement – Jewson's- concrete mix for tennis court		14.28
Admin costs		353.00			
HMRC – income tax		323.00	C&N Real Food–Parish Assembly food		60.00
Beckley School-donation Queen's 90 <sup>th</sup>		125.00			

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

- 14 **Public Questions** – not to exceed 15 minutes. None arising.
- 15 **Matters** councillors would like to be considered as an agenda item for the next meeting.

**Date of the next Parish Council meeting** Wednesday 20 July 2016. Extraordinary planning meeting will be held at 7.30pm on 6<sup>th</sup> July.

**The meeting closed at 8.30pm.**

*The minutes were recorded by Cllr Mrs Dobson.*