

BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 4 MAY 2021 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Tina Langmead (TL) Chairman, Roderick Chapman (RC), Ms Zoe Gleisner (ZG), Stephen Thorneycroft (ST) Mrs Natasha Vadorin (NV).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs V Ades (Clerk), District Cllrs Tony Ganly (TG) joined at 8.02pm.

1. **Election of a chairman for the ensuing year and to receive his/her declaration of acceptance of office.** TL confirmed her willingness to continue as chairman and she was proposed by ST and seconded by RC. Carried.
2. **Election of a vice-chairman for the ensuing year and to receive his/her declaration of acceptance of office.** EE confirmed by telephone his willingness to continue as vice-chairman and he was proposed by TL and seconded by ST. Carried
3. **Apologies for absence.** EE had problems logging in to the meeting – accepted. DC Tony Ganly would join the meeting after attending the RDC Full Council Meeting.
4. **Declarations of interest** whether personal or personal/pecuniary in accordance with the current Code of Conduct regarding matters on the agenda. Members are reminded that they should review their current declared interests displayed on Rother District Council's website and let the Parish Clerk know if there are any changes to what has been declared.
5. **Appointment of Council Representatives** and any other Executive or Advisory Committee that the Council agrees should be constituted for the coming year. Nominations from councillors and voting by a show of hands. The following appointments were agreed:-
 - a Planning Committee – **all councillors** are members of the Planning Committee.
 - b Parish Hall representative – **TL.**
 - c Social Secretary – **TL.**
 - d Playground and tennis court inspections – **RC.**
 - e MUGA – bookings secretary – **Mr S Bunn and ZG.**
 - f Tree Warden – undecided.
6. **Membership of External Bodies** by inviting nominations from councillors and voting by a show of hands. It was agreed to continue with membership of the three bodies and the following would be the PC's representatives:-
 - a. National Association of Local councils and Sussex Association of Local Councils. £360.00.
Representatives TL and EE.
 - b. Rother Association of Local Councils + Geosphere. £75.00 approx. **Representatives TL & NV.**
 - c. Local Council Review £17.00.
ZG confirmed she would continue to be the **PC's representative at the Police meetings.**
7. **Insurance June 2021-22** – provider (currently Zurich Insurance). The quote received from Zurich Insurance for 2021-22 for £844.24 had been circulated. The Clerk said she had not obtained other quotes as yet as Zurich's had been by far the lowest for the last two years. ZG said she felt the premium was very acceptable. Unless a better price is found the PC would accept the quote and authorise payment in June.
8. **Agree a schedule to review policy documents.** Over the next few months, the Clerk would raise any policies which required updating.
9. **Agree a schedule for meeting dates in the forthcoming year.** Members agreed the monthly meetings should continue on the first Tuesday of the month.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE MONTHLY PC MEETING

10. **Public Questions** – to allow questions (10 minutes) from members of the public following which they may leave the meeting if they wish, but must remain silent if they stay. A further period of public

question time is allowed at the end of the meeting. **Names of those speaking may be recorded and reported in the minutes.**

11. **Councillor vacancy – consider any applications with a view to appointing a new member.** TL had held a remote interview with Mr S Bunn to discuss his application to become a councillor. She felt he had a good outlook and vision for Beckley and she had recommended his appointment. Mr Bunn's application had been circulated to members and they approved his appointment. Due to Mr Bunn being away on holiday and the appointment was deferred to June.
12. **Reports from District and Parish Councillors. (No report received from County)**
District Councillors' report had been circulated.
ST reported fly tipping near to Flatropers in Bixley Lane. He said he was keeping an eye on the tree cutting at Milldown Wood.
ZG had received compliments on the standard of the tennis court at the MUGA. She had attended a Police meeting when disturbances and thefts were reported in Beckley. The PCSO had walked around Beckley on Friday evening. Residents have set up their own version of 'Neighbourhood Watch'.
TL said some residents, including children, had made a huge contribution to collecting litter in the village. She requested the PC purchase Eco badges which could be presented in school to the children it was felt had made a significant contribution to litter collection. **Badges were about £15 for 10. Carried.** In place of the Annual Residents' meeting, a newsletter had been produced and would be available for collection from the Polling station on Thursday, some would be posted through letter boxes and copies would be available in the village hall, when it opened later this month, and in the church. A letter had been sent to a resident asking that she refrained immediately from riding her horse on the Jubilee Field.
13. **To consider and approve** the signing by the Chairman of the minutes of the PC meeting of 4 May 2021 – approved for signature.
14. **PLANNING – to consider any planning applications** received from RDC and any other planning matters. None advised. **TL** advised she had read comments from a neighbour about planning application **RR/2021/325/P (D) Chestnut Garden Cottage, Main Street. Erection of detached garage with studio/home office/guest accommodation above (alternative to garage approved under extant planning permission RR/2020/419/P)** stating the Velux windows where, in fact, Juliette windows with balconies which would overlook neighbouring properties. In view of this information, members were requested to let the Clerk know if they still supported approval and the Clerk would advise RDC. **Clerk.**

8.02 – DC Tony Ganly joined the meeting.

15. **Open Spaces Society's call to local councils to grant a green.** TL reported that in the light of new planning arrangements and the call for huge housing developments, PC's are being asked to consider applying under the Town and Village Green to secure their open spaces for the public. Beckley has the Jubilee Field and the school field. Members supported the movement and **TL would deal with the application.**
16. **Annual Residents' Meeting** – arrangements during Covid. See 12 above – TL's report.
17. **Bank reconciliation** – January – 31 March 2021. **Approved.**
18. **Accounts** for approval (VAT, if applicable, shown for items exceeding £100).

Recipient	VAT £	Total £	Recipient	VAT £	Total £
Admin costs		947.04	RDC – emptying dog waste bins	156.00	936.00
C-annual urban grass cuts	101.20	607.20			

ZG proposed and TL seconded the accounts for payment.

19. **Date of next meeting – 1 June 2021 commencing 7.30pm.**
20. **Matters** for consideration as an agenda item for the next meeting. The clerk was requested to order 4 bags of bark for the children's play area. **Clerk.**
21. **Public questions** - not to exceed 10 minutes.

The meeting closed at 8.34 pm.

Report, as written, from RDC councillors is attached.

RDC - Parish Report/Notes for 2020/21

Organisation As every year we start with our finances. The pandemic has placed even greater pressure on our resources. We already had to make over £3 million in budget cuts over the next five years. The extra costs from the pandemic this year will exceed an additional £3 million. We expect most of this to be funded by the Government but not all of it.

More detailed information on the Council's finances can be read in our medium-term financial plan. You can find our strategy, past and current budgets on the Council's website at <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/1059/Budgets-and-accounts>

During the first lockdown in 2020 the Council set up the community hub in partnership with many parish councils and local community groups. Subsequently, we changed our approach but continued to play a co-ordinating role. There were other calls on our resources, for example our Environmental Health officers were very busy supporting and advising local food businesses about the new restrictions and our Housing Needs teams were busy making additional arrangements for homeless households.

We have also been helping local businesses and charities throughout the pandemic with the payment of business support grants. Something in the order of £30m has been paid out and this will continue as long as the pandemic continues to impact our local economy.

Some service delivery such as planning applications had been affected in the first lockdown but new working methods are bringing almost all services back to normal. All our committee meetings are held online and can be seen live on the Council's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1YJ8D2hTTd2fFQFuBnTyGA> or on the relevant meeting agenda pages on our website.

Corporate Plan In last year's Parish Notes we promised to consult on our Corporate Plan in the summer of 2020. Well, a global pandemic got a little in the way and our consultation started on 4 February and ends 17 March 2021. All town and parish councils received an invitation to have their say on our proposed 10 objectives and initial actions plans.

Housing You can read the progress update on our Housing and Homelessness Strategy (adopted 2019) on our website [Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 29 November 2020](#). We've been working hard to address local concerns about housing, working alongside our partners.

- a. In 2020 we established a new housing company Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd to deliver 1,000 new homes in the next 15 years to get the housing market moving. This will be a mix of homes for sale, part owned and rented and for affordable rents. A three-year business plan has been approved.
- b. In an average month in 2020/21 we had 75 households in temporary accommodation. About a third are placed in Rother and the rest in Hastings, Eastbourne and Kent. This is an increase of 23% on the previous year. Our new housing strategy committed £3 million to buy our own temporary accommodation in Rother.
- c. We continue to have 1,700 households on our housing register (all with a local connection).
- d. Last year (2019/20) 114 new affordable homes were built. For 2020, 58 new affordable homes were completed from April to December in Bexhill and Ticehurst. This includes three homes compliant to wheelchair accessible standards at Ticehurst. We expect a further 27 affordable homes will be completed between January and March 2021. In 2021/22 we have developments for 105 more affordable homes with important sites around Battle and Icklesham.

Food Hygiene Nearly 99% of Rother food businesses are broadly compliant with food hygiene standards, scoring three out of five or higher. In addition, nearly 76% of food businesses have been awarded the top score: five out five. There are 989 food businesses in Rother from cafes, takeaways, pubs and restaurants to your local grocery shop, supermarkets and even care homes and they are inspected by our Environmental Health team.

Waste and Recycling The proportion of household waste that goes for reuse, recycling and composting remains consistent at 50%.

Fly tipping We have had 783 fly tips reported to the Council between April and December 2020. This is already more than 40% more than all of 2019/20 and the highest amount for years. We detected 36 fly tips, by finding evidence during our investigations that helped us take action to prevent further offences.

Car Parks We are undertaking a review of car parks in light of the introduction of civil parking enforcement in Rother in 2020. Due to lockdowns it has been more difficult to gather data on the impact on our car parks so work will continue in 2021.

Corporate Programme Projects:

- a. The proposals for Blackfriars (Battle) have been developed with sustainability and wellbeing at the heart of the design. Blackfriars seeks to balance environmental factors to create a place which can enhance its setting and become an attractive, welcoming place to live. The master-planned design encapsulates a positive approach to all aspects of sustainable, community-driven design. 200 new homes will be provided, including 42 affordable rented properties and 28 homes for shared ownership. The principle of creating a Community Land Trust to provide housing in perpetuity for the local community is being explored, while the balance of open market units will provide opportunities for families, first time buyers, and downsizers. The Reserved Matters Planning Application was submitted in November 2020 and will be determined at RDC's Planning Committee in the spring.
- b. Architects have been appointed to start early-stage feasibility and design work on council-owned sites in Camber and Rye, with two sites each capable of delivering around ten units being explored.

In addition, an exercise to procure architects to work up detailed design proposals for 52 new residential units to the rear of the former High School in Bexhill site has begun. It is hoped that a design team will be appointed in March, and a Reserved Matters Planning Application will be submitted in the winter.

Northern Rother District Councillors Tony Ganly & Martin Mooney.