

# BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE CENTRE at 7.30pm on TUESDAY 5 OCTOBER 2021.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mrs Tina Langmead (TL) Chairman, Steve Bunn (SB), Ms Zoe Gleisner (ZG), Stephen Thorneycroft (ST) and Mrs Natasha Vadorin (ND).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs V Ades (Clerk), District Cllr Martin Mooney (MM) and two members of the public.

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- 1. Public Questions – 10 minutes.** Allow questions (**maximum 2 minutes per person**) 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.**  
**Mr Steve Bowler** said the Annual run, mass start, is on Sunday 7 November – 11am, normal route. Jubilee Field groundwork is very poor and new padlocks to the picnic benches are missing.
- 2. Apologies for absence were accepted from** PC's Ed Erith-family commitment and Rod Chapman-illness, County Cllr Paul Redstone-business and District Cllr Tony Ganly-illness.
- 3. Declarations of interest** whether personal or pecuniary in accordance with the current Code of Conduct regarding matters on the agenda. None.
- 4. Reports from County, District and Parish Councillors** – received and circulated.

### Reports from Parish Councillors:-

**ST** said Milldown was being split into 5 lots. The recently filled-in potholes in Horseshoe Lane are coming apart. **Clerk**

**ZG** - a large Oaktree at Pinebank appeared to require attention but ownership of the land was not clear. Fingerpost at Kitchenour Lane and Rye Road junction has disappeared. **Clerk to arrange replacement.**

**SB** said he had repaired the MUGA shelter and he has checked the items on the RoSPA report – some rubbers require replacing and some plastic covers also. Sovereign will let us have a key to the tennis net. 2 netball and 1 basketball net are missing; he will source replacements.

**TL** has arranged for an ecologist to look at Buddens Green to report on newts or lizards in the grass. It was agreed at the PC meeting on 2 March 2021 ZG would be a 3rd signatory for cheques. The form has to be completed and in case of illnesses NV volunteered to be the 4<sup>th</sup> signatory. ZG and NV would complete the forms on-line and submit for processing. She asked MM if there was any news on Northlands Farm as there is a lot of activity going on with hearses coming and going. MM said it was going through the normal channels. Meanwhile, Mr Hopper has accused neighbours of harassment and he is taking out an injunction. She would like to convey her thanks and appreciation to ESCC for the new road signs.

- 5. To consider and approve** the minutes of the PC meeting of 7/9/21. Approved and signed by TL.
- 6. PLANNING** – to consider any planning applications received from RDC and any other planning matters.

**RR/2021/1610/P D - 2 Bartletts Cottages - Land adj, Main Street.** Proposed construction of a detached dwellinghouse with new vehicular access. Concerns were raised over highway safety with a new driveway so close to the school entrance and it was felt it was an overbuild compared with the size of land. Members voted **5:0 against support.**

**RR/2021/1613/P D - Kingsbank House, Kings Bank Lane.** Single storey utility room extension and covered porch. Members voted **5:0 in support.**

**RR/2021/1748/P D- Knelle Dower Farm.** Construction of farm track and vehicle turning area. Members the voted **5:0 in support.**

## APPROVED APPLICATIONS:-

**RR/2021/1290/L- Lodge Field Barn, Gt Knelle Farm, Whitebread Lane.** Change of use of redundant agricultural building to holiday let.

**RR/2017/2886/P- Kingswood, Stavecrow Lane.** Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuilding and erection of replacement dwelling, together with ancillary outbuilding, improvements to access track, landscaping and woodland management measures.

**RR/2021/1215/P – Squirrells Den, Furnace Lane.** Erect glass Conservatory on west side of property. Erect double garage on east end of the property.

7. **New Fingerpost at Rectory Lane** and other fingerposts requiring renovation/replacement. Rectory Lane finger post replaced and members were happy with the new sign. The single arm fingerpost at Kitchenour Lane pointing to Wittersham has disappeared. **Clerk to get a price for replacement.** Members agreed for the refurbishment/painting of two x 3 arm fingerposts, one at Kingsbank Lane/Main Street pointing to Northiam, Peasmarsch and Broad Oak and one on the triangle at Rectory Lane/Stoddards Lane/Church Lane. Clerk will approach Phillsigns. **Clerk.**
8. **Official opening of the MUGA on 2 October – report:** Cllr Brian Drayson, Chairman of RDC, officially opened the MUGA and the new kitchen in the Village Hall. As the day was very wet the ceremony took place in the village hall, where a ribbon had been set up and was cut by Cllr Drayson. This was followed by the official opening of the new kitchen. Grateful thanks were extended to RDC who fund matched the money raised for the MUGA and granted money towards the new kitchen. Without the hard work of the PC's Chairman, Cllr Mrs Tina Langmead, in raising funds, the MUGA would not have happened.
9. **Buddens Green – Hedge and trees between grass and footpath - consider quotes.** Clerk to obtain details of insurance and public liability from the two companies who had submitted quotes. **Clerk.**
10. **Jubilee Field:-** Verti-draining system – Judges is discontinuing its groundwork section. SB and ST to arrange to meet Mr Poole at Dunedin, Main Street to discuss garden flooding at his home. **SB/ST.** TL said new locks have been fitted to the picnic benches and a new combination lock should be purchased for the gate to the field. **Clerk.**
11. **Frog Field bridge – work in progress.** SB had met with Halden, the contractors. Work had been completed and members were very happy with the result.
12. **Tree survey – EE.** **Defer to November.**
13. **Hedge cutting - Idverde** and Mrs Andrew's complaint re hedges and brambles at Bay Tree Cottage, Main Street abutting the Jubilee Field. Mrs Andrew was happy with the work, but members were dissatisfied with the standard of work on the hedges. Clerk to advise. Also, members agreed to purchase a new lock with a code number the Clerk would advise Id Verde. Also, new, stronger locks for the picnic tables would be purchased and IdVerde would turn the tables on their sides to cut beneath and not unlock them. **Clerk.**
14. **ESCC urban roads grass cutting cost – v – IdVerde quote.** Due to the poor standard of work experienced this year members felt they did not wish to commit to IdVerde and the clerk should advise ESCC we would continue with them. Clerk was asked to source local contractors for the 2022 contract. **Clerk.**
15. **Ditch alongside playing field – Mr Poole's property.** Dealt with at item 10.
16. **Gatwick Airport's northern runway project – any comments for submission.** None to submit.
17. **RDC's Public Space Protection Order consultation.** Any response by closing date Tuesday 19 October. Nothing to submit.
18. **Wreath for Remembrance Sunday** and who will lay the wreath. Members resolved to make payment of £20 for the wreath and Cllr Rod Chapman would lay the wreath.
19. **Queen's Jubilee – preliminary ideas.** TL suggested, and it was agreed a sub-committee consisting of TL, ZG and NV would be formed and their ideas for celebrations would be brought to a later meeting. RDC has a fund of £10,000 from which it will donate up to £500 towards councils coming up with the best ideas. Opening date for entries is January 2022.
20. **Directory of local businesses.** Natasha will set this up with a view to putting the information on the PC

website and on the village website.

- 21. Request from Beckley cricket club for a donation of £500.** The club is looking for funding towards a new grass mower. After consideration it was felt there were insufficient numbers of residents who benefitted from the club and members voted 4:0 against approval. The Clerk was asked to inform the club if they had a specific project in mind the council may consider it. **Clerk.**
- 22. Budget for 2022-23.** Ideas from the PC and those from members of the public are invited. No residents had suggested ideas. TL said she would like members to consider capping the precept at £23K, which we had done for the last few years, but with the improvements the PC wished to see in the village, this could be tight. Any suggestions would be put together as preliminary ideas for the November meeting.
- 23. Accounts for approval (VAT, if applicable, shown for items exceeding £100).**

Recipient		Total £	Recipient	VAT £	Total £
Admin costs - Sept		913.12	ESALC Cllr Training NV		48.00
Beckley Village Hall - Aug			Wreath		20.00
IdVerde August	34.77	208.64	Philsigns - Vicarage Lane		660.00

The accounts were proposed by ZG and seconded by TL - carried.

- 24. Matters** for consideration as an agenda item for the next meeting. TL asked for consideration to be given to the PC adopting ownership of the War Memorial. Clerk to try to ascertain who owns the land. **Clerk.**
- 25. Public questions** - not to exceed 10 minutes. Mr Steve Bowler said the precept money is invested in the village for the benefit of residents and he felt the PC should hold the current precept if it would deny the village the improvements it requires. The cost to residents would be minimal over the course of 12 months.

TL said Ms Howse has found some information on the history of who owned the Memorial which TL said she felt the PC should consider adopting. The Clerk was asked to try to find out who owned the ground on which the memorial stands. **Clerk.**

**Date of next meeting – 2 November 2021 commencing 7.30pm.**

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**Closed meeting - Clerk's annual appraisal.**

*Reports, as written, from ESCC & RDC councillors are attached.*

## ESCC – CLLR PAUL REDSTONE – REPORT OCTOBER 2021

Report to Parish Councils – October 2021 This report is written in late September and is for Parish Councils meeting in October. It is for all 7 parishes in Northern Rother. I may on occasion add parish-specific supplements.

**Budgets and Spending** As a result of some budget savings ESCC has about £8.8m to spend and is looking at a number of potential projects which are being discussed at Cabinet on the 30th September and will then be put to the full council in October. It is planned to make this available to 'programmes that meet the Council's priority outcomes' which include highways and addressing climate change. This is good for this year but currently the medium-term finance plan is forecasting deficits in each of the next three financial years, gradually rising to about £10m a year in 2024/25. However, this is subject to government spending reviews which we hope will result in a better outcome.

**Hedges** This year has been particularly bad for vegetation due to the unusual weather conditions. This can lead to more issues with hedges overgrowing pavements and roads. Normally cutting hedges is the responsibility of the landowner but I have not so far found a standard protocol for dealing with this. My recommendation on which I would welcome feedback is: [eastsussex.gov.uk](http://eastsussex.gov.uk) A. The parish council make informal contact with the landowner to ask them to cut the hedge B. If this fails, the Highways East Sussex web site is used to report an issue. The Highways Steward will then inspect it and if there is an issue contact the landowner. If there is no response, ESCC (in fact our contractor) can cut the hedges and bill the landowner C. For issues which have safety issues such as obscured road signs, anyone can go straight to B and identify it as a safety issue which will give a much faster response In theory step A could be skipped but I believe that the above process will lead to a faster response and one which is less confrontational. I would welcome feedback on this.

**Footpaths** Similar to hedges, issues can arise with footpaths, but the responsibility is with the Rights of Way Team at ESCC rather than Highways. To my surprise there appeared to be no summary document on this, so at my request the Team Manager for Rights of Way has written a onepage guide which, with slight modifications, is appended. This is draft at the moment. Note in particular that it is recommended that Parish Council informally raise issues which concern landowners with them, similar to the process for hedges, then escalate to the Rights of Way team if this does not work. Again, feedback is welcome. Cases Each month I will give summaries/updates for a sample of current cases across the Division.

**Northiam School Crossing Patrol.** The sponsor is identified, and the Parish Council agreed the steps to put this in place at a meeting earlier in September, enabling us to keep 'Lolly'. I had the honour to meet her recently at the pop-up pub in St Francis Fields.

**Flooding in Northbridge Street, Robertsbridge.** This continues to be a top issue with Huw Merriman's office dealing with National Highways (the new name for Highways England), me dealing with Highways East Sussex and Councillor Sue Prochak dealing with Rother district council. There is some small progress – for example Highways East Sussex have raised a drop kerb which was enabling relatively small amounts of rain to go into some back gardens, but the main response needs to come from National Highways. They have taken some interim measures, in particular raising a kerb in the layby and a drain but there is much more that needs to be done.

**Laybys/Verge Parking.** I have three cases where improvements to parking outside schools or other facilities are needed. This may be for safety reasons, particularly where there have been accidents or other incidents, or where the verge is being churned up or the road blocked by parking. I am always pleased to hear of ways in which we can make improvements. Funding from ESCC is limited and priority correctly tends to be given to safety issues, but there is also the ability for parish councils or others to provide half of the funding and the other to be met by a 'matched [eastsussex.gov.uk](http://eastsussex.gov.uk) funding' application. I will be happy to support such applications.

### RDC REPORT - OCTOBER 2021

A report commissioned by the LGA says these pandemic-related trends could help to "redefine" rural and coastal communities in England. However, it warns that disproportionately low wages in coastal and rural communities is making the cost of housing increasingly unaffordable for local workers.

The LGA is calling on the Government to improve digital connectivity, extend the public transport network to ensure more young people can access employment and training, and work to mitigate the impact of seasonal tourism on local housing costs.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chairman of the LGA's People and Places Board, said "Rural and coastal communities are places which have unique challenges from low income, seasonal working and poor connectivity but also significant opportunities which can be utilised as we recover from the pandemic. With a rise in homeworking, an unprecedented increase in 'staycationing' and greater appreciation for natural resources, there are significant changes taking place in the local economies of rural and coastal parts of the country.

"If many people who want to make these changes permanent are supported to do so, and the appropriate investment is made in rural and coastal communities to leverage the associated economic opportunities, there is the potential for a substantial levelling up of rural areas prosperity."

### **Key Findings**

Key Findings builds upon previous research from CPRE (Council for the Protection of Rural England) into more rural 'deserts' :-

- Bus services are essential for allowing the inadequate statutory framework for ensuring the provision of bus services for every community, and the cuts to bus funding imposed by the government over the past decade, have left a serious lack of services to meet the needs of rural towns and villages.
- Examples from public transport systems across Switzerland, Austria and Germany show that it is possible to deliver a comprehensive bus network that offers excellent connectivity to rural communities. Despite being considerably less densely populated than every region of England, the region of North Hesse in Germany has a bus system that ensures services reach every village, every hour for at least 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. A similar level of bus services would be transformational for rural England.
- Rural communities in these countries enjoy a far more comprehensive bus network than England because decent public transport is regarded as a basic right, even in remote areas. In Switzerland, minimum service frequency standards for communities of different sizes are enshrined in law. England, too, should recognise a universal basis right to public transport backed up with guaranteed service frequency standards and the government should fund local transport authorities to achieve that level of service.
- We also need bus services that are fully publicly funded with regulated contracts and timetabling designed to integrate with rail and other forms of public transport. An integrated approach to network planning timetabling and ticketing is essential to making public transport in rural areas of England a practicable, convenient and attractive option for residents in rural areas. With regulated services, we can make public transport travel a convenient and competitive alternative to driving a private car, as is essential for tackling the climate emergency.
- Our ground-breaking modelling finds that the government could deliver a bus to every village, every hour across England from 6am to midnight, 7 days per week, for £2.7 billion annually.
- There is a range of options the government could use to make a comprehensive bus network revenue neutral. By redirecting funding currently earmarked for environmentally damaging and unnecessary road building, the government could release enough money to invest in a bus service for every village, every hour.

**The views and findings expressed here are that of the sources of the reports and not those of the undersigned.**

**Cllr Martin Mooney - Northern Levels Ward**

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