

BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in THE VILLAGE CENTRE on TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2022 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Tina Langmead (TL) Chairman, Steve Bunn (SB), Rod Chapman (RC), Ed Erith (EE) and Ms Zoe Gleisner (ZG) Stephen Thorneycroft (ST) and Mrs Natasha Vadorin (NV).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs V Ades (Parish Clerk), District Cllrs Tony Ganly (TG) and Martin Mooney (MM), County Cllr Paul Redstone (PR) *arrived 7.50pm* and four members of the public.

- 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.
 - Overgrown verges at Main Street near Kingsbank Lane were forcing people to walk on road. The emergency bottle bank at the Village Hall requires the committee's authority. **Clerk.**
 - Bad road surface was reported along Beckley Road to Northiam. Running water onto the road at the Forge. Will be dangerous in cold weather if freezes. **TL report to PR.**
 - Kingsbank Lane and Furnace Lane were reported to be 'C' roads, not rural roads, and verges should be cut. Congratulations were paid to Highways for improving the signage at Carmen Pays Bridge, but a chevron sign has been knocked down. **TL report to PR.**

- 2. Apologies for absence. None.**

7.50 – Cllr Paul Redstone arrived.

- 3. Reports from County, District and Parish Councillors.** *County and District reports had been circulated.*

ZG - flashing 30 mph sign near to the school is obscured by overhanging trees. **Clerk.**

EE - in the present crises people need support and he suggested an area on the Jubilee Field could be used for growing vegetables to help villagers with the rising cost of living.

ST – more large potholes in Horseshoe Lane; some have been filled, others have not.

TL two cars stolen. Log cabins are appearing on various properties, some used as residential. She asked why some cabins are permitted whilst others require planning permission. **MM** will check on one at Church Farm Bungalow. **MM**

TL requested PR to (a) chase up the verges at Kingsbank Lane which it had been reported should receive regular cutting, (b) bad road surface from the Rose and Crown towards Northiam and (c) potholes in Horseshoe Lane. The VAS sign by Chestnut Lodge, Main Street was somewhat obscured by tree branches. Waterboard has attended to the leak at bottom of Horseshoe Lane, which runs downhill to the junction with Main Street outside Barley Mow Cottage, but it has not been resolved. Road has been dug up several times, Waterboard reported leak was from a spring, but residents dispute this. The water is now eroding the road surface. Report to PR. **PR.**

TL reminded members to declare any interests now or before the agenda item.

- 4. To consider and approve** the minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 5 July 2022. Agreed and **signed by TL.**
- 5. Planning –** to consider any planning applications received from RDC and any other planning matters.
 - RR/2022/1333/P DEL** Waters End, Furnace Lane, Erection of bolted sectional galvanised steel observatory.
 - RR/2022/1820/P DEL** Meadow Cottage, The Stream. Erection of extension as well as garage conversion and new roof to provide first floor living accommodation. **Supported 7:0**
 - RR/2022/1878/P DEL** Lynwood, Main Street, Erection of first floor side extension. **Supported 7:0**
 - RR/2022/1887/P DEL** The Spinney, Clayhill. Addition of solar panels to roof of modern detached garage.
 - RR/2022/1911/P DEL** Grove Orchard, Watermill Lane. Proposed changes to approved detached garage and annexe (RR/2019/2435/P) currently under construction. **Supported 7:0**
 - RR/2022/1966/P DEL** The Old Rectory, Stoddards Lane. Planning application for a ground mounted 30.4 kWp solar array together with cable trench up to but not entering The Old Rectory. **Supported 7:0**

RR/2022/1967/L DEL The Old Rectory, Stoddards Lane. Ground mounted 30.4 kWp solar array together with cable trench up to but not entering The Old Rectory.

8.10 - 8.15pm *The meeting was halted to allow the applicant to speak. He explained where the panels would be positioned. When asked about public footpaths he said there were two running close to the property and the panels would be seen from one footpath.*

Members **agreed (7.0)** they would **support** the application **if screening was installed** to obscure sight of the panels from the footpaths.

Notification (30.6.22)

RR/2022/890/L - Ludley Farm, Ludley Hill. Erection of agricultural storage building. A full planning application is required.

Planning Permissions granted

RR/2022/890/L - The Oaks Main Street Beckley: Replacement of single storey outhouse roof. Replace existing rafters. Replace existing wall plate/lintel. Replace existing felt. Insertion of conservation roof window. Replace existing lead box gutters and flashing with new leadwork. Replacement windows. Repair weatherboarding.

Enforcement Notice:

ENF/280/21/BEC Weald Cottage, Main Street. Concreting of front garden. Considered works have been carried out to meet building requirements. No further action required.

6. **Town Hall Renaissance** – update and consider any response from the PC to RDC. Members questioned where the money would come from to pay back a loan of £20+M. MM said income from office accommodation would fund this, but members said that was hit and miss and there was already a surplus of empty offices and shops in Bexhill. They felt the Town Hall should be sold to an organisation which would renovate it back to its former glory and other, smaller premises should be found for RDC. **Clerk.**
7. **Defibrillator for Hobbs Lane area.** Clerk is in the process of purchasing a defibrillator and housing unit.
8. **Newsletter Autumn/winter edition** – costs for advertisements. Members felt there would probably be enough content without outside advertisements. However, if this proved wrong, they would look at charges.
9. **RoSPA Reports and Open Spaces**
 - a. **RoSPA** – findings to be discussed or dealt with. **Deferred to October.**
 - b. **Bark for the play area** – six bales required. **Clerk to order.**
 - c. **MUGA** – nets –(SB). Problem sorted. It was suggested MUGA was changed to tennis courts re making bookings for the tennis court. **SB.**
 - d. **Trees** – how to proceed if we carry out our own tree inspections. A Tree inspection policy has been drawn up and will be discussed for adoption in October. **October.**
 - e. **Meadow hay** – deferred for consideration in summer 2023. Leave until 2023.
10. **RDC request for information re housing allocations** and report on meeting with Graham Maunders. RDC has been requested to look into financing a survey to homes in Beckley seeking residents’ opinions on the types of homes required. Mr Maunders has also contacted English Rural Housing Association asking them to consider their position regarding the land to the rear of Buddens Green. Hastoe Housing Association has indicated they could be interested in such a project.
11. **Bottle Station** – location confirmed to ESCC as the Village Centre. The Village Centre will be asked if in a water emergency the parking area can be used for deliveries of water. **TL.**
12. **Option to opt out of the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements.** **Members resolved to remain in the system.**
13. **Policies for adoption, review or updating** –
 - a. **Standing Orders** - update.
 - b. **Code of Conduct** - update.
The Clerk said Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct were adopted in 2020 and may not require updating.
 - c. **Transparency Act Regulations** - compliance with - for adoption. **Adopted (7.0).**

14. **RDC Town and Parish Councillors' remuneration.** Members would not apply for remuneration from RDC. Any out-of-pocket expenses incurred carrying out PC work ie attending meetings, courses etc, would be paid for by the PC.
15. **Wreath - Remembrance Day** – agree £20 to Royal British Legion. **£20 agreed.**
16. **Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration-Ed 13.** Consider purchase with 20% discount for £131.99. **Agreed (7.0).**
17. **Rural Rother Trust** – donation request. Defer to October to consider our donation budget figure. **Oct.**
18. **Bank reconciliation – 6 April – 30 June 2022** - for approval. **Agreed (7.0)** and signed by TL.
19. **Accounts** for approval (*VAT, if applicable, shown for items exceeding £100*).

Recipient	VAT £	Total £	Recipient	VAT £	Total £
Admin costs April		2159.28	KSS Air Ambulance		300.00
Beckley Village Hall- July		8.20	Eibe		38.40
John O'Conner – June/July		369.00	S Bunn reimbursement –		25.98
RoSPA		197.40	Wood-Northiam DIY		

The accounts were proposed for payment by ZG and seconded by TL – carried.

20. **Matters** for consideration as an agenda item for the next meeting.
21. **Public questions** - not to exceed 10 minutes.

Date of next meeting – 4 October 2022 commencing 7.30pm.

Reports attached from ESCC and RDC.

September report from ESCC – Councillor Paul Redstone

This report is written in late August for Parish Councils meeting in September. Some items are from information circulated by ESCC but which may not have drawn the attention of parish councillors and others.

Ukrainian Guests

More than 600 families across East Sussex have welcomed those fleeing the war in Ukraine and 1000 Ukrainians have settled in the county. This has required coordinated work by various ESCC agencies, volunteers and others. For details - <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/supporting-refugees/ukraine>

Holiday Activities

The Holiday Food and Fun programme has been expanded. There are now more than 80 providers, almost all local to East Sussex in 140 locations giving up to 27,000 places for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. More details are available at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/children-families/childcare/welcome-to-holiday-food-and-fun>

Activities available include arts and crafts, circus skills, musical theatre, sport and fitness, dance, cooking, puppet workshops, a coding workshop, and many more.

Bus Service and Reducing Bus Fares

ESCC has been recently successful in winning about £42M from central government for the 'bus back better' programme, more formally known as the Bus Service Improvement Plan. This money comes with restrictions, and it is not clear yet exactly where it will be deployed. I have been championing the need for some of this to be used to enhance the bus services in the villages of Northern Rother, particularly at evenings and weekends, which could potentially encourage much more use of buses. There are also plans for reduced bus fares, particularly for younger people.

Aside from this, I have been elected chair of the ESCC Long Term Transport Plan 4 reference group which is charged with guiding the work by our officials to produce an integrated transport plan including cars, buses, trains, cycling and walking.

You may also have seen an announcement by Transport for the South East (TfSE) of a 30-year plan for transport across 6 major counties from Hampshire to Kent with a budget of more than £40 billion. Good transport can give real benefits in terms to the economy and jobs, as well as reducing our carbon footprint and working toward net zero. The chairman of TfSE is Keith Glazier, leader of ESCC.

Disruption by Protesters of ESCC Meetings

As you may have seen in the media, a group of climate change protesters have disrupted various ESCC meetings, including Full Council on 12th July and Cabinet on 19th July. In the latter they disrupted proceedings in the Chamber which had to be suspended, then forced the cabinet to take refuge in another room. The protesters are reported to have shouted at, jostled, and intimidated cabinet members and officials. The police and security staff were eventually able to restore order, but only after over 90 minutes.

The ostensible reason for these protests is to get the East Sussex pension fund to divest from fossil fuels. This fund provides pensions for about 82,000 members who work for or previously worked for about 130 employers across the county. I am a member of the pension committee and, like all committee members, strongly believe in addressing climate change. I and my family take many actions to reduce my personal carbon footprint and also donate a lot of my time and money to a climate change charity, though I should disclose that the charity was founded and is run by one of my daughters. I believe that we all need to take action to counter climate change but this needs to be sensible, by persuasion and should not impact the residents of East Sussex more than of other countries.

Those calling for divestment seem not to understand the fiduciary limitations which are rightly placed on local authority pension funds or the fact that emissions in East Sussex are a very small proportion of the global emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases. They also presume a cause-and-effect relationship between divestment of ownership and promotion of the energy transition for which little evidence is offered. This is not a reason for doing nothing, but some campaigners seem to suggest that climate change is caused by the pension fund! In fact, the pension fund was recently awarded LAMP local government pension fund of the year 2021 and highly commended for its investment approach to climate, a fact which the demonstrators seem conveniently to ignore.

I passionately support the principles of freedom of speech and peaceful protest, but a small minority of protesters seem to not believe in the 'peaceful' part of protest. It is a reminder that we need to be ever vigilant to maintain democratic freedoms and stand up to mob rule

Cases

Each month I will give summaries/updates for a sample of current cases across Northern Rother. Below are those of interest to Beckley:-

Homewood School Bus Service

A number of children from Northiam, Beckley and Peasmarsh apparently attend Homewood school in Tenterden and travel on the 294 service provided by Hams Travel. Hams have said that this will be discontinued at the end of June. I understand that it is a discretionary service and it is also complicated because the school is, of course, in Kent.

I spoke last week to the East Sussex Lead Member for Education who is looking into it, but I think I may need to contact Kent County Council. I have to say I am not hopeful of a satisfactory outcome but this will cause significant expenditure and inconvenience to parents who then have to drive to Tenterden and back twice a day.

I have had discussions with the Principal Transport Officer at ESCC who has been speaking to the bus company and others. I also understand that Kent County Council have been looking at this and that the bus service will no longer be discontinued. I will await to see confirmation of this, but this is very promising.

Development off the Paddocks, Northiam

I have received multiple correspondence from residents and others about this development, but there are clearly several misconceptions about this, for example the need for a stopping up order. I have had multiple discussions with officials at ESCC and have passed on their comments to residents.

Some key points:

- Planning permission was granted in 2019 and mentioned stopping up orders but county have confirmed that none is required.
- Parking places are being moved not lost. In fact the number of parking places available seem to be more than guidance would require
- One part of a water drainage pipe (sometimes called a sewer though in fact it is not for foul water) is being rerouted. This was put in by a previous developer and the parish council given some funds which are held in a 'sewer account' to be used in case of problems and which I believe now total about £80k. I know of no evidence that the rerouting will cause problems. The sewer account has never been needed. *I understand that the developer has agreed with the Parish Council to fund a survey of the modified route and will await the results of this.*
- There is understandable concern amongst residents about the disruption during the construction process itself. The developer is aware of this and is building a car park for contractors within the site. They are also trying to maintain good communications with residents. ESCC officials are keeping close to this as am I. I would encourage residents to keep me informed of any issues.

I understand that there was opposition to this development and sympathise with this, but planning permission was granted and it is going ahead.

Rambler Bus 383 to Robertsbridge Community College

A few weeks ago I had a series of emails from parents saying they had been notified that this service from villages such as Beckley and Northiam to Robertsbridge was being cancelled. I raised this with ESCC Transport and also spoke to Rambler. It appears that this has now been resolved. The issue seems to be a combination of the rising costs of running the service and budget constraints, both of which I have sympathy with.

Northern Rother District Councillor's Report – September 2022

Community Grants

1. The Council's Community Grants Scheme (CGS) makes provision for up to £130,000 per annum to be made available to community groups or organisations that meet the grants criteria of Rother District Council's (RDC) CGS.
2. The Community Grants Panel has delegated authority to award grants up to £1,000. One application was awarded in Round 1 for these small grants to The Archive Resource Centre for £1,000.
3. Round 1 of the Rother CGS for 2022/23 closed on 30 June 2022. Five applications were received requesting £65,435 in total. The Panel met on 28th July 2022 and have recommended awards for five applications.
4. Cabinet is asked to consider the following applications for funding from the Council's CGS as set out in Table 1.

Applicant	Amount	Amount
	Requested	Recommended
Brede Parish Council	£11,000	£11,000
Fairlight Parish Council	£5,060	£5,060
Northiam Village Hall	£10,500	£10,500
Rye Harbour Sailability	£8,875	£8,875
Winchelsea Beach Community Assoc.	£30,000	£30,000
Total:	£65,435	£65,435

Table 1: Grants Panel Recommendations

5. Should Cabinet agree with the Panel's recommendation to award the applications as set out above, this will result in a maximum of £65,435 being awarded in Round 1. This leaves £59,565 for grants for the Round 2, 2022/23 opening on 1 October 2022 and closing 15 December 2022 (£5,000 is ring-fenced each year for the small community grants scheme).
6. Members were reminded that conditions are applied when awarding the grants which include that full funding is obtained in advance of any Rother payments being made and that RDC is acknowledged in any publicity and promotional material associated with these projects. Other specific conditions will also be applied to grants as appropriate.

Small Grants Scheme

Members are reminded that small grant applications are accepted all year round. Applicants are encouraged to make applications through the online application process. Support and advice can be accessed through Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) and it is recommended applicants contact RVA before the submission of an application. A balance of £4,000 remains for applications for 2022/23.

7. It should be noted that all applications are to be driven by community support, and need to have an element of match funding, whether their own contributions or at least funding applications submitted to the total value of the project. This is to demonstrate it is fully costed, funded and ready to go. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek funding from Parish and Town Councils.
8. Further information is available via the CGS section of the Council's website:
<https://www.rother.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-funding/community-grants-scheme/>

Councillors Martin Mooney & Tony Ganly