

# BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in THE VILLAGE CENTRE on TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2022 at 7.30pm

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs V Ades (Parish Clerk), County Cllr Paul Redstone, District Cllr Tony Ganly (TG) and four 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. A resident asked PR what had happened about the leaking water across the road at Cherry Garden Hill. **PR will investigate.**
- 2. Apologies for absence.** District Cllr Martin Mooney sent apologies.
- 3. Declarations of interest.** None.
- 4. Reports from County and District councillors (attached) and Parish Councillors.**

PR urged people to respond to the Transport Consultation which closes on 9 December. He confirmed there was no current funding to assist those wishing to create ‘warm hubs’.

TG said the Town Hall Renaissance planning application has been refused. TL said the wasted cost of that could have been spent on keeping the Rye swimming pool open.

ZG has received complaints from residents living close to the footpath which runs beside Buddens Green. Residents are being wakened very early in the morning from unacceptable vehicle noise on the footpath and barking dogs being taken for a walk. **The Clerk will try to find contact details and write.**

EE reported the terrible state of our roads and asked what could be done to improve them. **Clerk/PR.**

SB said the tennis net should be stored for the winter to prolong its life and he said he has done a temporary repair to the pully for the flag, but it will require replacing shortly.
- 5. To consider and approve** the minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 4 October 2022. Approved and signed by TL.
- 6. PLANNING** – to consider any planning applications received from RDC and any other planning matters. The following two applications were received on 4 October, the day of the last meeting, with comments required by 25 October. (See comments Item 6 – Minutes 4 October 2022). Members informed the Clerk they had no objections to either application and the Clerk informed Cllr Ganly).

**RR/2022/2264/P DEL Gate House, Horseshoe Lane.** Erection of extension to existing free standing 'gazebo' structure to create pool house building. Councillors considered this application in October and had **no objections 4:0.**

**RR/2022/2268/P DEL Goldspur, Clayhill,** Creation of vehicular access to the front of property (onto Clayhill / B2165). Notification arrived 4 October with comments required by 25 October. Councillors considered this application in October and had **no objections 4:0.**

**Enforcement Notices**

**ENF/328/21/BEC - 6 Acres Farm, Stoddards Lane.** Change of use of a site/building, failure to comply with approved drawings on planning permission, failure to comply with condition of a planning permission? Works to protected trees. Application requested.

**ENF/144/22/BEC - Church Farm Bungalow, Main Street.** Large log cabin type building has been constructed in the rear of the property behind the stable block, family of 5 residing. Application requested.
- 7. Newsletter Autumn/winter edition** – Agree method and date for distribution. Weather permitting, SB will arrange for distribution w/c 7 November.
- 8. Town Hall Renaissance** – update. Planning application refused – see 4 above.

9. **Buddens Green** – housing and update from Graham Maunders AiRS. RDC will consider a funding application from us for a housing needs survey for residents. RDC will carry out a land search to try to ascertain who owns which parts of Buddens Green.
10. **Children’s play area**
- RoSPA reports – required work. RC reported there was nothing alarming in the report for the play area. There appears to be a little corroding to some metal work and a ring on a loop on the trapeze is wearing. A joint on the roundabout measures 10mm wide and should be 8mm. Wires appear to be untwisting on the monkey frame. RC will keep an eye on the items. Members agreed no immediate work was necessary. Regarding the MUGA he reported some top dressing appears to be coming off the surface at an area close to the tennis nets. **Clerk report to Sovereign.**
  - Collection and spreading of bark. Chris Makin has very kindly attended to this. TL said a resident has kindly donated a bench, which is now on the field.
11. **Tree Management policy.** How we proceed. This policy is obligatory. ZG suggested a 3 or 5-year inspection be carried out by a qualified arborist with councillors should inspect the trees in between. She is following up contacts for the inspections and will report back. **ZG.**
12. **Jubilee Field** – discuss suggestion to use part of the field for vegetable and fruit growing to help residents during the cost-of-living crisis. EE briefly outlined his ideas for using part of the top of the field to grow produce to ‘feed the village’. Money would be required to erect a fence and possibly purchase a shed. Whilst members praised his initiative TL felt EE should involve residents to see what interest there was then draw up a feasibility plan. If there was interest and it appeared viable a she felt a committee should be set up with one or two councillors and a number of villagers. The Clerk would see if she could check on any legal implications about using part of the field for this purpose. **Clerk/EE.**
13. **Frog Field** – future habitat management and care of the pond. TL has a meeting on 12 November with Mr Banks from Northiam, who is involved with nature, wild life and habitats.
14. **Resilience and Emergency Plan** – discuss the best way forward to produce our plan. The Clerk had obtained a template which appeared would be very difficult to complete due to the uncertainty of answers required – ie details of who or what equipment was available at the time of compiling the plan may be out of date by the time an emergency may occur. People move and dispose of equipment and the council probably wouldn’t be aware. A robust plan would require a great deal of thought and time. **Deferred to 2023.**
15. **Replacement bus shelter at the Four Oaks** – discuss quotes. SB checked the condition of bus shelter and thought it might be possible to patch it up, but a replacement should be considered. An initial quote is over £5k so the Clerk will obtain two more quotes. **Clerk.**
16. **Defibrillator and casement purchases** – part funded with CIL payment. Once the housing unit is received the defibrillator will be fitted to the wall at Ebrofrost.
17. **Remembrance Sunday 13 November** – SB will lay the wreath.
18. **Closure of the pool at Rye Leisure Centre.** TL has written to Freedom Leisure and Rye Town Council expressing concerns over the closure. She said RDC has wasted a huge amount of tax payers’ money on the Town Hall Renaissance study and that money could have saved the pool.
19. **Budget 2023-24** – Discuss suggestions and ideas in addition to standard outgoings. Ideas to date include new swings and repairs. Coronation celebrations 6 May 2022. Councillors were asked to bring any final ideas to December’s meeting. No ideas had been received from residents.
20. **Accounts** for approval (*VAT, if applicable, shown for items exceeding £100*). To enable the siting of the defibrillator on Ebrofrost’s wall, a cheque for £450 has been issued to First Rescue for the housing box.

Recipient	£	Total £	Recipient	VAT £	Total £
Admin costs Sept		1094.21	Safelinks- Defibrillator	135.45	812.70
Beckley Village Hall – Oct		<del>8.20</del> 12.60	First Rescue Defib housing box	75.00	450.00
John O’Conner – Sept	30.75	184.50			

*The Clerk said the original cheque to First Rescue had been cancelled and a new one issued, as above. The October invoice from Beckley Village Hall has billed two hours = £12.60. The accounts were then proposed by*

ZG and seconded by SB – carried.

**21. Matters for consideration** as an agenda item for the next meeting.

**22. Public questions** - not to exceed 10 minutes. **None.**

**Date of next meeting – 6 December 2022 commencing 7.30pm.**

**The meeting closed at 9.10pm.**

*Reports attached from ESCC and RDC*

## **ESCC Report to Parish Councils – November 2022 - Councillor Paul Redstone**

### **Medium Term Financial Plan and Funding**

The ESCC medium-term financial plan (essentially 3 years) shows a growing, unsustainable deficit. Although ideally central government would announce plans for the level of grants to local authorities covering 3 years to allow for proper planning, for understandable reasons this has not been the case recently with only single year commitments. We are hopeful that the new government's commitment to financial honesty and prudence will help alleviate the uncertainty.

### **New Highways Contractor**

Balfour Beatty Living Places have been awarded the contract to maintain East Sussex highways, commencing May 2023. The tendering process included a requirement to show how the quality of work could be monitored, value of money, reduction of the carbon footprint of the work and increasing social value (such as developing local jobs and skills, supporting community events and projects). I know that the condition of our highways is a hot topic with most residents. We do not have enough money to bring all roads up to the condition we would all like, but this contract should allow us to get the most benefits from the funds we have.

### **Support for Keeping Warm and Cost of Living**

The rise in fuel prices and the costs of food and other essentials is causing hardship for the most vulnerable in our community. Help is available from both county and district/borough councils. From ESCC the following links may be useful:

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/support-with-the-cost-of-living>

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/support-to-stay-at-home/keep-warm>

### **East Sussex Long Term Transport Plan 4**

As required by central government, ESCC is preparing a long-term transport plan for the period to 2040. This covers road, cycling, walking, buses, rail and has the aim of producing an updated integrated plan, reflecting the future needs of our community.

We have several officials and external consultants looking at this. I chair the cross-party subcommittee monitoring and helping to guide the work.

As part of this a consultation process is starting on 31<sup>st</sup> October and will continue for 2 months. This will be online but there will also be paper versions. We are taking special care to reach out to groups such as the elderly, disabled and people of all ages.

### **Cases I am dealing with near to Beckley - summary**

#### **Development off the Paddocks, Northiam**

Following multiple correspondence from residents there are clearly several misconceptions about this development, for example the need for a stopping up order. I have had 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, and the number of places available seem to be more than guidance would require. One slot often used by Paddock residents seems to have gone. I am checking this against the approved plans.
- One part of a water drainage pipe (sometimes called a sewer though in fact it is not for foul water) is being rerouted. The parish council given funds approx. £80k by the previous developer to be used in case of problems. I know of no evidence that the rerouting will cause problems.
- The developer is aware of the residents' concerns about disruption and has built a car park for contractors within the site.

### **Emergency Water Bottle Stations**

Locations of water bottle stations in all 7 parishes in Northern Rother are being assembled with exact locations. This will go to SouthEast Water. This should simplify their emergency procedures and ensure that where we have a water problem due to power cuts or burst mains, local residents can get hold of water without having to travel outside their village.

## Northern Rother District Councillor's Report – November 2022

### S106 Affordable Housing Payments

1. The Council currently holds £377,797.49 in S106 planning contributions (or 'commuted sums') paid by developers instead of providing onsite affordable housing. For example, commuted sums are negotiated when the affordable housing planning policy does not round up to a whole house or flat. This funding is ringfenced to facilitate the development of new affordable housing provision in Rother.
2. Although there are no time limits attached to any of the payments currently held, with the oldest payment received in October 2018, there is nevertheless an expectation these funds are allocated within a reasonable timescale. Typically, these funds have been used to support viability gaps on registered provider housing schemes and to support delivery of small schemes including delivery of the former rural exception site programme; see Figure 1 below for further details of previous S106/commuted housing allocations. These payments have tended to be made in rural areas, partly as they have supported our exception site programme and due to site viability issues in rural areas.

Site	Parish/Ward	Year	Number of homes	Amount spent
Tresco House	Old Town & Worsham	2008	14	245,000
Udimore Road	Rye	2009	54	130,000
Hollenden House	Bexhill Central	2009	42	500,000
Dixter Lane	Northiam	2011	8	120,000
Hop Gardens	Staplecross	2012	8	50,000
The Orangery	Sidley	2014	58	295,000
Morris Close	Burwash	2015	10	65,000
Dairy Close	Hurst Green	2015	10	65,000
Ostlers Field	Brede	2016	13	150,000
The Maltings	Peasmarsch	2018	36	133,000

Figure 1 - previous S106/commuted housing allocations

### Cemetery Lodge, Bexhill

3. Capital funding totalling £200,000 is needed to enable BCLT to deliver the new build and refurbishment scheme of Cemetery Lodge, Bexhill and provide six new affordable homes for local people of Bexhill, as per planning application RR/2022/1233/P. It is proposed that £200,000 of the above S106 affordable housing allocation be granted to deliver this scheme.
4. This sum is required to support the considerable refurbishment costs of retaining the lodge as part of any future scheme, based on initial surveys of the building and the expertise of the Sussex Community Housing Hub (SCHH). The proposed funding streams for the scheme are set out below. All funding has been secured and agreed in principle with lenders (subject to this grant) supported by the SCHH. Any funding agreement between the Council and BCLT will be made subject to BCLT being able to demonstrate having secured the remaining funds required to deliver the whole scheme.

RDC s106/Commutated Sums	£200,000
RDC Community Housing Revenue fund (Match funding provided by HE in 2020) (received)	£11,017
Homes England Community Housing Fund (received)	£109,323
Bexhill CLT Loan	£904,814
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>£1,225,154</b>

5. Subject to planning approval (expected in November 2022) and final terms of sale of the site to BCLT (CB21/31), Cemetery Lodge will now progress to the development phase where other funding options have been established. The current indicative programme for delivery is shown below:

Cemetery Lodge	
Pre Planning Phase	Quarter 4 - 2021 / 2022
Planning Application Submission	Quarter 1 - 2022 / 2023
Start On Site	Quarter 4 - 2022 / 2023

## Community Led Housing Programme

6. Nationally, funding of the community led sector remains very uncertain. There is currently no new CHF to replace the former scheme and no sign as yet, of any renewal under the new Government administration; meaning current and new CLH schemes are at risk of being aborted at critical pre-development stage. As such, Local Authority support for both revenue and capital funds, and in any form, is critical for CLH projects to be able to progress.
7. While it is recognised there are enough CHF funds remaining to deliver this scheme (total £203,200.28), this would mean there is no funding left to support smaller revenue bids on future CLH schemes, where funding is most needed. A depletion of CLH funds may undermine our Community Led Housing Programme and devalue our service level agreement with the SCHH by reducing our shared ability to achieve agreed performance indicators included in the HH&RSS. A full breakdown of the CHF allocations to date are summarised at Appendix A.

## Conclusion

8. The affordable housing S106 budget currently remains unallocated and is recommended that further investment in the CLH programme and the Cemetery Lodge site offers the best opportunity to deliver new affordable housing provision that is driven locally, and accordance with our housing policy and corporate priorities.
9. Officers propose £200,000 of grant funding to BCLT from Council S106 Affordable Housing Fund to ensure BCLT have the remaining capital finance needed to progress this scheme to deliver six much needed affordable homes.
10. The Council's corporate plan sets out that 400 homes for affordable rent will be delivered during the planned period. This small development site is a good opportunity to move further towards meeting this ambition target. As the development climate becomes increasingly challenging and proposed national planning reforms potentially reduce the provision of affordable housing, it is important that opportunities within the Council's control are fully realised.

## Financial Implications

The council is required to use S106 funding ringfenced for affordable housing in Rother. Failing to use this fund could risk the funding being withdrawn for failure to use, especially where a time limit has been agreed for spend.

## Environmental & Sustainability

Full design for the Cemetery Lodge redevelopment and extension is being produced. There is a clear intention from BCLT with development partners to incorporate renewable technologies in the scheme. Construction methods that promote affordable warmth are also being considered. This is in line with the HH&RSS.

## Legal Implications

Grant applications for these funds has been made by BCLT. Members have previously given delegated authority to the Director of Place & Climate Change to sell the site of Cemetery Lodge to Bexhill Community Land Trust and final terms of the sale, for the purposes of delivering Community Led Housing schemes, subject achieving full planning permission and incorporating Cemetery Lodge as part of any final scheme.

## Councillors Martin Mooney & Tony Ganly