

BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs V Ades (Parish Clerk), County Cllr Paul Redstone (arrived 7.55pm), District Cllr Tony Ganly (TG) 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.
- 2. Apologies for absence** received and accepted from Cllrs E.Erith (family), S. Bunn (engagement) and Mrs N Vadorin. Cllr Redstone would arrive following attending the Peasmarsh PC meeting.
- 3. Declarations of interest.** None.
- 4. Reports from County, District and Parish Councillors.**
- 5. To consider and approve** the minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 1 November 2022. The September date in the heading was corrected to '1 November'. The minutes were agreed and signed by TL.
- 6. PLANNING –** to consider any planning applications received from RDC and any other planning matters. Full details of all applications and refusals can be viewed on the RDC planning website.
RR/2022/2529/P DEL Watcombe House, Horseshoe Lane. Erection of single storey west elevation extension. Councillors **unanimously supported the application 4:0.**
RR/2022/2629/P DEL Swallowtail Hill Farm, Hobbs Lane, Installation of solar arrays to serve the property and associated works. **unanimously supported the application 4:0.**
RR/2022/2630/P DEL Carpens, Hobbs Lane, Installation of a solar array to serve the property and associated works. **unanimously supported the application 4:0.**
RR/2022/2670/L DEL Watcombe House, Horseshoe Lane. Erection of single storey west elevation extension. **unanimously supported the application 4:0.**
PLANNING PERMISSION
RR/2022/2264/P Gate House, Horseshoe Lane. Erection of extension to existing free standing 'gazebo' structure to create pool house building.
PLANNING REFUSAL
RR/2022/2191/P - Land at Watermill Lane. Outline application for the proposed erection of a single dwelling (all matters reserved other than site access). The proposed new dwelling would sit outside of the development boundary.
ENFORCEMENT NOTICES
ENF/323/22/BEC Knell Hill Lodge, Field Opposite Whitebread Lane. Creation of entrance with hardcore path and erection of shipping container. Latest action: NFA- case being dealt with on ENF/97/22/BEC Whitebread Lane - Land at Beckley.
ENF/343/22/BEC Received: 24-11-22 Corner After Jubilee Field Kings Bank Lane. Erection Of Building.
RR/2022/2268/P Goldspur, Clayhill. Creation of vehicular access to the front of property (onto Clayhill / B2165). Application withdrawn.
ENFORCEMENTS WITH CHANGED STATUS
ENF/332/22/BEC Land to the south of Whitbread Lane. Change of use of land for the processing of timber, also container has been delivered and a structure is being erected. Current Status: Site located and photos taken. Land registry search required.
ENF/343/22/BEC Erection of building after Jubilee Field Kings Bank Lane. No Further Action - Planning permission granted - PP granted. Building has planning permission
RR/2014/2556/P King's Bank Lane - land to the west of. Erection of two stables. Permission Granted 16/12/2014

ENF/97/22/BEC Whitebread Lane. Change of use of land for commercial use - Latest action: Land inspected. Noted that hardcore has been imported and laid between the highway and steel gateway. No other equipment or materials seen. Photos taken.

7. **Newsletter Autumn/winter edition** – delivered with the Church magazine. Members unanimously agreed to make a payment of £120 to the six people who delivered the Spring and Autumn newsletters to homes throughout the village.
8. **Defibrillator** – is now situated on the wall at Ebrofrost. A sign will be erected indicating where the box is.
9. **Housing Needs in Beckley**
 - a. **Buddens Green** – housing and update from Graham Maunders AiRS. No further movement from the housing associations who have expressed initial interest.
 - b. **Survey** - consider funding 50% of cost of survey (up to £1326 total to PC), to be carried out by AiRS to ascertain the type of accommodation required in Beckley. In the light of the government’s announcement this week about relooking at the housing allocations, members decided to defer submitting the application to RDC until further information is available.
10. **Jubilee Field – children’s play area and MUGA**
 - a. **Children’s play area** - collection and spreading of bark – members expressed their thanks to Chris Makin for collecting and spreading the park.
 - b. **MUGA**
 - b1.** Response from Sovereign re defective top surface coat on the MUGA. Sovereign Sports quoted £560 to carry out a deep clean/moss treatment, including localised touch ups and repairs. Members agreed this work was required if repair was included. **Clerk to check.**
 - b2.** Discuss a 10-year maintenance agreement with Sovereign at a total cost of approx. £2800. No longer available. Above item (b1) refers.
 - c. **Vegetable plot** - Further discuss use part of the field for vegetable and fruit growing to help residents during the cost-of-living crisis. Cllr Erith not present to discuss. **January.**
11. **Flooding from the Jubilee Field** – into adjacent gardens. County’s Area Steward will investigate and report back. **January.**
12. **Frog Field** –
 - a. Future habitat management and care of the pond. TL had met with Brian Banks, a Northiam resident, who is interested in wild life habitat, but he felt the Frog Field was too much for him to manage.
 - b. Lund fund. Papers being submitted to claim the grant.
13. **Tree Management policy** - ZG will obtain quotes from tree management companies. **ZG.**
14. **Replacement bus shelter at the Four Oaks** – discuss quotes. Two quotes received. Clerk to obtain two more quotes. **Clerk.**
15. **Community Led Planning and Resilience** – AiRS/HELAA – areas the PC may wish to consider. Under consideration.
16. **Change of date for May 2023 AGM meeting** – suggest Wednesday 10 or Thursday 11 May 2023 to meet with timescale dates following the elections on 4 May 2023. **Clerk to arrange and confirm date.**
17. **Bank Reconciliation 6 July – 5 October 2022** – sign off. Agreed and signed by TL
18. **Budget 2023-24** – With no further ideas submitted by councillors or residents, it was **unanimously agreed (4.0) the precept would remain at £25k.**
19. **Accounts for approval (VAT, if applicable, shown for items exceeding £100).**

| Recipient | VAT £ | Total £ | Recipient | VAT £ | Total £ |
|----------------------------|-------|---------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Admin costs Nov | | 1098.66 | RALC Subs £30 + Geosphere £50 | | 80.00 |
| Beckley Village Hall - Nov | | 12.60 | Mrs T Langmead – printer ink | | 14.10 |
| John O’Conner – Sept | 30.75 | 184.50 | | | |
| | | | | | |

Payments proposed by ZG, 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 – 3 January 2023 commencing 7.30pm.

Reports attached from ESCC and RDC

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

Medium Term Financial Plan and Funding

The budget deficits forecast in the medium term at county remain a major concern. The autumn statement provided some news on this. Local authorities can now increase council tax by 3% without a referendum (previously 2%) and additionally the adult social care premium by 2%. Of course, at a time when many are facing financial hardship any increase is undesirable.

The budget depends upon the settlement from the government. We should know around 21 December.

Fire and Rescue Service Budget

The East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) is managed by the Fire Authority which has ESCC and Brighton and Hove Councillors. I am a member of the Fire Authority and have also just become chair of the Policy and Resources Panel following the sad death of the Brighton and Hove councillor who previously chaired it. ESFRS is funded by a separate precept, collected with council tax.

The service faces significant financial challenges with a forecast deficit of about £3m next year out of a budget of about £42M. Some of this could be funded by increases in the precept but this is limited, so some changes to the service are being discussed as you may have seen in the media. However, there is some misleading information being circulated so I would be sceptical of any scaremongering stories you read. I would encourage you to the proper assessments and strategy.

New Strategy for SEND children

A new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy to enable young people to reach their full potential in every area of life has been launched. The strategy will be used to inform the work of everyone with children and young people with SEND across the county, providing them with the opportunities and support they need to achieve their ambitions and prepare for adult life.

Families, schools, and other professionals from services in areas such as social care and health took part in a ten-month consultation process to develop the strategy, including extensive work with children and young people to identify areas for improvement.

An East Sussex SEND Strategy Governance Board has been established which will oversee SEND work across the county and monitor the delivery of the strategy.

The SEND Strategy 2022-2025 is available online. [here](#)

A short video about the strategy can be viewed [here](#).

I have a particular interest in SEND children in East Sussex as a member of the ESCC Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel which decides on some individual cases concerning free transport for school for children or young adults, most of whom have SEND. I am also a governor of two schools and have special reporting responsibility for SEND. Providing for the needs of a growing number of SEND children is a challenge and taking an increasing budget, but such children deserve our support.

(In the interests of disclosure, I should add that I have a granddaughter with Down's Syndrome, though she is not in East Sussex).

East Sussex residents encouraged to discover their past at The Keep

Residents across the county are being encouraged to find out more about their family history with free access to over six million digitised Sussex parish records. The digitised documents span 457 years of Sussex history and include details of baptisms, confirmations and marriages alongside birth and death records. These records are now available to search online via Ancestry, the world's largest genealogy website, with free access available at The Keep.

The entire Sussex Parish Registers collection has been brought online through an exclusive collaboration between the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office, the West Sussex Record Office and Ancestry.

The records were digitised over the course of the pandemic whilst visitor access to The Keep was limited.

Those interested in researching their family background but are unsure where to begin may benefit from attending one of the centre's visitor induction sessions, whilst 'Welcome Wednesdays' offer an opportunity for first-time visitors to learn more about The Keep and the specifics of research conducted at the centre. More information about these sessions can be found [here](#). Free access to Ancestry is also available at all libraries across East and West Sussex.

Rother District Council – Report December 2022

East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy.

Cabinet received Minute OSC22/27 arising from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) held on 17 October 2022 that had considered the East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy written by the operational housing managers across all five districts and boroughs. The Policy outlined the standards applied to the size and location of Temporary Accommodation (TA) as well as the processes and procedures to follow. The Policy applied both within district or borough, and outside of the placement authority area.

Members queried the position of Ukrainian refugees who may be coming to the end of their stay with host families and what impact this might have on the Council in terms of housing. The East Sussex County Council Lead Member for Adult Social Care advised that the Government had provided additional funding of £495,000 to continue to provide host family support payments. It was confirmed that there was a multi-agency approved resettlement approach across East Sussex which took account of employment and educational access needs.

Cabinet was pleased to recommend that the East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy be approved and adopted as this would provide a consistent approach across East Sussex.

Rother District Council Owned/Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy:

Cabinet received Minute OSC22/28 arising from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) held on 17 October 2022 that had considered the proposed Rother District Council Owned / Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy. In 2020, Rother District Council had become a Registered Provider of accommodation and thus far, owned 24 units of accommodation and one unit of accommodation that the Council leased and managed. The number of units of accommodation the Council owned and leased was set to rise further as the scale of the Temporary Accommodation Support Scheme and leasing scheme were increased.

The Complaints Handling Policy would apply to all activity undertaken by Council staff or contractors that might be involved in property management and support of tenants. An annual report would be made to the Audit and Standards Committee whose remit included an overview of all complaint handling, in accordance with the statutory requirement; should more frequent reports be requested, i.e. twice yearly, this could be accommodated, although very few complaints were likely.

Cabinet was pleased to acknowledge that this Policy was required as a direct consequence of the Council becoming a registered provider of accommodation and recommended that the Rother District Council Owned / Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy be approved and adopted.

Section 106 funds to support Community led housing -Cemetery Lodge, Bexhill:

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services regarding the allocation of Section 106 funding to facilitate the development of affordable housing. This funding would be used to facilitate delivery of a new affordable housing development, via a community led housing scheme in Bexhill, which was utilising a Council-owned site at Cemetery Lodge (CL) (to now be known as Parker House, named after the Edwardian Architect who designed the original building).

The development was being led by Bexhill Community Land Trust (BCLT). Their aim was to access affordable homes in perpetuity to create vibrant communities with access to educational, recreational and employment opportunities. It was noted that alternative funding options including the allocation of the remaining Rother Community Housing Fund (CHF) grant had been considered. However, using the CHF would mean that there would be no support for other projects. Whilst it was accepted that by providing this site to the BCLT, the Council was foregoing a potential capital receipt, the Council's responsibility to provide housing opportunities and create sustainable local communities was the priority factor, and consistent with corporate plan priorities. Members also noted the level of external grant funding and additional financing BCLT were harnessing to deliver the development.

Members were advised that the Council currently held £377,797.49 of Section 106 planning contributions (money received from developers). There was no time limit to allocate this funding. Capital funding of £200,000 was required to enable BCLT to deliver six new affordable homes at CL. The funding would be used for refurbishment costs and retaining the CL as part of any future scheme, based on initial surveys and the expertise of the Sussex Community Housing Hub (SCHH). The report identified the proposed funding streams and all funding had been secured and agreed in principle with lenders supported by SCHH. Any funding agreement between the Council and BCLT would be subject to BCLT securing the remaining funds required to deliver the whole scheme. Subject to planning permission being granted (expected in November 2022), CL would progress to the development phase where other funding options had been established.

Cabinet was supportive of the Capital Funding programme being updated and agreed that £200,000 be granted to BCLT to deliver the affordable housing scheme at CL, Bexhill and that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Housing and Community Services in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homes to agree the final terms of the grant. Members agreed that this site was a good opportunity to meet the Council's affordable housing target and in view of current challenging and future proposed national planning reforms, it was considered important that these opportunities were fully realised.

Procurement Strategy 2022/2023 update:

Consideration was given to the procurement strategy update that detailed procurement activity during the first two quarters of the current financial year and progress made against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) underpinning the Strategy .

1. savings were on target to be achieved by the year-end;
2. a tailored training programme was being put in place by service area; Member training was also to be arranged and had been on hold due to the regulatory changes that were expected;
3. the social value target was being achieved and would be monitored going forward;
4. a cross-Council sustainable procurement policy was being developed to include a climate change policy;
5. there was a 22% increase in engagement with Small and Medium Enterprises and local businesses and an in-person event would be held next year to network and disseminate procurement changes;
6. work would start soon on next year's forward plan of procurement activity;
7. in the first instance, Members should advise Rother District Council officers of any information in relation to good procurement practices identified within the community which would be passed to the ESPH; and
8. it was not possible to provide a list of approved suppliers as this would assume that a level of due diligence had been undertaken and give rise to possible legal action – a list of possible suppliers could be provided.

It was noted that progress in some areas had been restricted due to the COVID pandemic, which was reflected in the setting of the targets outlined in Appendix B to the report. The half yearly review of the Procurement Strategy highlighted the developments that had been made in the first two quarters of 2022/23. Further progress was required before the targets could be met, and these would be reported to Cabinet at the end of the financial year.

Members queried the current position regarding the repair / replacement of the Water Feature / Fountain on Bexhill Promenade. Officers will investigate the status of this project and report back.

Councillors Martin Mooney & Tony Ganly