



BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in THE VILLAGE CENTRE on TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2023 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors, Mr Steve Bunn (SB), Mrs Catherine Penny (CP) and Mr Joel Mitchell (JM).

IN ATTENDANCE: County Cllr Paul Redstone (PR), District Cllr Tony Biggs (TB), The Clerk M Philo and three members of the public.

1. Public Questions at 7.30pm

Councillor Ed Erith tendered his resignation due to family health reasons.

Notice: Talk about the Village Map of 1815- Friday 24th November at 7.30pm Village Centre

A resident queried the need to completely close Bickley Lane for the limited amount of repair works that had been carried out.

The race organisers thanked residents for their understanding during the recent 10k Race. The weather was good: 275 runners entered the race whilst 250 crossed the line.

Following the roadside ditch clearing on some Beckley roads, a resident queried if the areas below residents' drives had been also been cleared as would be required to ensure no blockages.

Various comments and queries were raised with regard to the recent repairs to Main Street:

- The choice of laying a hard band around the new tarmac rather than sealing with hot tar had not lasted and left gaps that will turn into the future potholes.
- Undated highways letters to residents made it difficult for residents to keep track of changes to works scheduling.
- Many felt that there was a greater need to repair the road between Beckley and Northiam rather than the works completed in Beckley.

The meeting convened at 7.45pm

2. Apologies

Councillors Vadorin and Thorneycroft. The council approved Councillor Vadorin's absence for the last months due to an infected pet bite. District Councillor Ganly was absent due to poor health. The council wished him a speedy recovery.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. The Meeting adjourned for Reports from County and District Councillors 7.43pm

District Councillors Reports

Councillor Ganly had sent a written report. Councillor Biggs advised that Northiam Parish Council Office had been vandalised.

County Councillor Report

Councillor Redstone had looked at The Rose and Crown Bus Shelter and found the crack did not appear to originate from the ground as would be expected if it had resulted from the ground works. It was noted that too much time had passed to argue the crack had been caused by the South East water vehicle hitting the shelter.

5. The Meeting reconvened at 8.01 pm

6. Approval of the Minutes of 10th October 2023

Following amendment, the minutes were unanimously agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed.

7. Planning

- i. **Applications considered:**
RR/2023/2036/P King's Bank Oast, Kings Bank Lane: Proposed two storey extension. It was resolved to support.
- ii. **Planning Permission Approved:**
RR/2023/1641/P Beckley Gallery, Peasmarsh Road: Erection of North and South single storey extensions with pitched tiled roof and minor changes to fenestrations.
Approved
- iii. **Planning Applications Refused: none.**
- iv. **Enforcement**
 - a. ENF/201/23/BEC Field/Land at Escheatlands Farm, Furnace Lane: Mobile home delivered, sewage tanks and other works.
 - b. ENF/163/23/BEC Land at main Street – Kings Bank RR/2021/2253/FN – Land being used for private use of horses. Update: officer unable to find location.
 - c. ENF/332/22/BEC Land South of Whitbread Lane – Change of use for the storage and processing of timber together with stationing of storage container. Update – no further action. Negotiated resolution.

For notification only (no comment to be made) – None

8. Finances

- i. Financial Report. The Lloyds Bank account was now set up. The next step is organising online banking with two signatories to sign. The clerk and Steve Bunn were dealing with their forms.
- ii. Monthly Running Balances (considering unrepresented cheques) 31st October 2023
£41,472.23.
- iii. Budget for 2023-2024
A basic first draft budget had been circulated. Councillors will check the condition of the benches on Jubilee Fields. It was advised that the flag pole needed a new rope and only the fingerpost on Mainstreet opposite Rectory Lane needed refurbishing. One telephone box had been painted in 2023 and enough paint remained to paint the other box. The clerk was asked to contact the village hall to see if it might need a donation from the parish council towards a project next year. The council had significant reserves which auditors would require to be ear marked for projects otherwise the council should reduce these by reducing the precept.

9. Jubilee Fields, Play Area and MUGA Repairs and Improvements

- i. Report on regular checks of Jubilee Field: nothing to report.
- ii. Jubilee Field – gap in hedge opposite the village hall
Councillor Bunn offered to rope off gap when replacement tree saplings planted.
- iii. Ditch Clearance to resolve flooding of neighbouring property
Various efforts have been made to obtain quotes from contractors. Only one has been deemed capable. **It was resolved to contract Nigel Gibbs & Son to clear undergrowth and**

raise ditch tree canopy to allow the ditch to be cleared and clear the ditch, £2,800 plus vat. Note all planted trees will be kept.

iv. **Frog Field Tidy Up/ Wildflower Meadow**

The parish council works calendar marks October for a tidy of Frog Field. The clerk met a conservation expert on site and was advised that some possible small areas of clearance for butterflies might be advisable and clearance around the pond would be due in a few years. The Clerk advised that their inspection of the wildflower meadow had revealed some yellow rattle. Advice was provided that the meadow was seeded in 2022. Councillors considered it appropriate to continue to try to get the meadow going so the meadow should be cut and cleared. John O'Conner had provided a quote of £250. The conservation team would be more appropriate to get the meadow going (perhaps more seeding in small areas) and work on Frog Field to increase biodiversity. The conservation team TVC charged £400 for 10 to 2pm with equipment provided.

v. **Frog Field Information Board**

The printer required a higher specification to print the information sheet for the board. A designer had to be used. **The information board text and design were agreed and it was resolved to pay the cost £50.**

vi. **Shelter Repair**

Delivery of the perspex had to be postponed due to the roadworks on Main Street but had now been received. Councillors Bunn and Thorneycroft have volunteered to install the new perspex.

10. Land at Buddens Green

- i. Following discussion, as the advisory committee would have no authority to make decisions on behalf of the council, all councillors would try to attend any discussions to better understand all information imparted under discovery.
- ii. The clerk was still obtaining quotes to clear the field.

11. Bus Shelters, Defibrillators and Noticeboards

- i. Hobbs Lane End of Main Street Bus Shelter Noticeboard
Refurbishment of the noticeboard has been completed and been installed. The Chairman thanked Councillor Bunn for an excellent job. It has been noted that some of the shelter ship lap has slipped and is broken.
- ii. Bus Shelter opposite the pub crack in wall. Update – see county councillor report.
- iii. The Village Hall will consider the request for permission for two AED signs on the car park entrance walls at their next meeting in January.

12. Resilience Planning

Deferred to the next meeting.

13. Clerk's Probation

It was resolved that Councillors Vadorin and Penny or Mitchell would complete the appraisal.

14. Fingerpost Refurbishment

Having sought quotes from a respected local capable contractor and ascertained a similar price, to assist with keeping the fingerpost drier, the clerk contracted Finger Posts Limited. A 50% deposit was paid. The post has been collected and will be back in a couple of weeks.

15. Accounts

Interim payments:

£698.00 Finger Posts Signs Limited – deposit fee for refurbishing the Main Street/Kings Bank Lane Fingerpost.

It was unanimously agreed to draw the following cheques

£213.95 John O’Conner October Grass Cutting Fee invoice 102099 (vat £35.66)

£252.00 PKF Littlejohn LLP – external audit fee (vat£42)

£9.49 Refund Steve Bunn – Materials for Four Oaks noticeboard refurbishment

£26.00 M Philo October to cover room for office

£698.00 Finger Posts Signs Limited – remainder fee for refurbishing the Main Street/Kings Bank Lane Fingerpost.

£80.00 RALC 2023 Subscription.

£738.84 Clerk’s Salary

£12.60 Village Hall October Hire

£12.60 Lost cheque replacement £31.50 has been cancelled and only £12.60 needs to be re written.

16. Information for Councillors

- i. Police focus groups – online – 28th November 2pm-4pm. Councillor Mitchell will attend.
- ii. There has been a spate of thefts from front gardens in the village.
- iii. Residential Development in Rother Event – Thursday 2nd November was deferred due to Storm Ciaran. The new date is 11th January 2023.
- iv. Rother Annual Parish Meeting 5th December 2pm to 4pm Brede Village Hall. Two representatives. Councillor Mitchell may attend.
- v. Kings Bank Lane night road closure 20/21 November for patching works.
- vi. Civility and Respect Survey. Councillors requested information on the pledge.
- vii. Clerk’s email cannot be removed from the website alone as it is attached to org.uk. All emails would have to be moved to 365. The clerk was requested to have the laptop reviewed for suitability and to present the council with information on the email being hosted by Microsoft 365 at the next meeting and details of the options from the website host.
- viii. The clerk had check with the insurers and it had been confirmed that having the clerk running the PAYE/payroll and being an employee would contravene a policy condition and thus negate the council’s fidelity cover. The options were that a councillor ran it or a payroll provider be contracted. Price is about £10 a month for the service.
- ix. Rother District Council has opened a public consultation on the reduction of services for next year to make ends meet which include closing public toilets and reducing management of the public realm (e.g., parks, bins, benches and buildings). The council only consults online so it is important for residents to make their views heard.
- x. The clerk had checked and that with prior agreement from the county council, a county councillor could stand in, should it be known in advance, that there would not be sufficient parish councillors to meet.

17. Matters for consideration as an agenda item for the next meeting

Additional signatories for the Lloyd’s Bank Account
Council emails

Payroll provider
Deferred items.

18. Public Questions

None.

Date of next meeting – 12th December 2023 commencing 7.30pm village hall.

Meeting closed at 9.10 pm.