



BECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in THE VILLAGE CENTRE on TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2023 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors, Mrs Natasha Vadorin, Mrs Catherine Penny (CP) and Mr Stephen Thorneycroft.

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

1. Public Questions at 7.30pm

A member of the public raised their concern regarding what they thought was incorrect information regarding appeal costs during the recent Rother District Council Planning Committee Meeting.

The Old Vineyard Planning Application

A spokesperson for the neighbouring residents, requested the application be called in and considered by the planning committee and also expressed the following concerns:

- A pink notice could not be found.
- The site is outside the development boundary.
- The approved application for a property opposite was not comparable and should not be allowed to set a precedent.
- Approval for this application would set a precedent and lead to further applications.
- The access is close to a bend and telegraph pole resulting in poor visibility when exiting the site.
- The speed of cars traveling the A268 was well in excess of the 30mph speed limit
- Vehicles traveling using the road included heavy goods vehicles.
- There is no pavement and thus no safe pedestrian access to the village.
- Habit for rare dormice, gold finches and great crested newts would be damaged by the removal of the section of hedges and trees.

The meeting convened at 7.42pm

2. Apologies

Councillor Bunn who was away on holiday. Councillor Mitchell was attending his father's book signing. It was resolved to approve their absence.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

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

i. County Councillor Report

Councillor Vadorin advised that Four Oaks Round About lines were still missing and that the position of the Give Way Lines had been moved further back making exiting from the properties on the round about difficult. Councillor Redstone would make enquiries.

ii. **District Councillors Reports**

Councillor Ganly's written report had been circulated and made available to the public. Councillor Biggs advised residents to lock their sheds to prevent theft of tools and bikes. There had been break-ins at Broad Oak. A free energy heating check for homes is available to those with income below £30,000 from Energise South Coast.

5. The Meeting reconvened at 7.45 pm

6. Approval of the Minutes of 14th November 2023

The minutes were unanimously agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed.

7. Planning

i. **Applications considered:**

- a. **RR/2023/2389/P Old Teachers House, Main Street: single storey extension to replace existing conservatory, double garage and associated hard standing. It was unanimously resolved to support.**

- b. **RR/2023/2450/P Rogers Wood Farm, Whitebread Lane: Proposed side elevation with accommodation within roof space, including dormer windows and internal and external works. It was unanimously resolved to support.**

- c. **RR/2023/2332/P Ilex Cottage, Main Street: Proposed erection of a self-contained log cabin style annexe. It was unanimously resolved to support.**

- d. **RR/2023/2317/P The Old Vineyard, Whitebread Lane: Erection of two detached houses with garages served by new vehicular access and relocation of field entrance. It was unanimously resolved to object for the following reasons:**
 - **The site is in an Area of Natural Beauty (AONB).**
 - **The development will have an effect on biodiversity due to the loss of the hedges, trees and in turn animals losing their homes which will affect dormice, great crested newts and goldfinches referred to in the ecology report.**
 - **The new access is close to a bend on a busy A road (used by heavy goods vehicles and summer visitors who do not know the road), with poor visibility when exiting the site.**
 - **The area of the new access is subject to flooding during rain.**
 - **There is no safe passage to the village as there is no footpath whilst the homes are large and it would be reasonable to consider young children will be living in these dwellings.**
 - **If the district had seen the required number of residences built then the site would not have been considered appropriate. The reasons for this remain unchanged.**

It was further unanimously agreed to request Councillor Ganly to call-in the application.

ii. **Planning Permission Approved:**

- a. **RR/2023/2036/P King's Bank Oast, Kings Bank Lane: Proposed two storey extension. Approved conditionally.**

- b. RR/2023/1944/P Eastlands Cottage: Variation of condition 3 on RR/2023/845/P to allow accommodation to be occupied by friends as well as family. Approved conditionally.
- c. RR/2023/1691/P Little Heron House, Hobbs Lane: Demolition of disused stable block and replacement with an ancillary building to provide a plant room and guest accommodation. Change of use of land to domestic curtilage and associated works. Approved conditionally.
- d. RR/2022/2763/P Church Farm Bungalow, Main Street: Retrospective application for the erection of a wooden cabin to be used as ancillary living accommodation. Approved conditionally.
- e. 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**

RR/2023/425/P Goldspur, Clayhill: Creation of a new vehicular access at the front of the property, directly onto B216J/Clayhill.

iv. **Enforcement**

ENF/144/22 BEC Church Farm Bungalow, Main Street – No further action as planning permission granted.

v. **For notification only – None**

8. Finances

- i. Bank Statement had been delayed.
- ii. Payroll Provider

It was unanimously resolved to Contract Maiden Accountancy to provide the parish council with payroll services. Cost £10 plus vat per month.

iii. Budget for 2024-2025

A second draft with more detail had been circulated to councillors. Decisions made at this meeting would be included in the budget which was currently around £22,000. An estimate of the funds held at the end of March 2024 would be provided at the January Meeting and the council could choose to reduce these by reducing the precept if there was no reason to hold these funds.

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

- i. Report on regular checks of Jubilee Field: nothing to report.
- ii. Wildflower Meadow
John O’Conner had been instructed to cut and clear. The work should be completed shortly.
- iii. Jubilee Field – Gap in Hedge
Awaiting better weather.
- iv. Ditch Clearance to resolve flooding
The work had been successfully completed and the neighbouring flooded property owner

was happy with the work.

v. Frog Field Information Board

The printer ready design has been sent to the board manufacturer.

vi. Shelter

Awaiting drier weather.

vii. Junior and Toddler Climbing Frame

Deferred to the next meeting.

viii. Grass Cutting Contract for Jubilee Fields

It was unanimously resolved to contract John O’Conner to cut the grass and hedges on Jubilee Fields, Frog Field and Buddens Green. Annual estimate £3,410.62 plus vat. Billing would be monthly.

ix. **Highways**

Councillor Thorneycroft raised the poor road condition of Horseshoe Lane. Recent ditch clearing had made it worse. The area by the bowls club is now flooding.

Councillor Vadorin raised the poor behaviour of the workers resurfacing the road along Main Street. Councillor Redstone would look into it.

Gigaclear workers had been found to be very amenable.

10. Land at Buddens Green

i. Councillors had a discussion session about Community Land Trusts

ii. **It was unanimously resolved to contract John O’Conner to clear the field allocated for affordable housing (arising will not be removed).** Cost £650 plus vat.

11. Bus Shelters, Defibrillators and Noticeboards

Four Oaks/Main Street Bus Shelter has been repaired.

12. Fingerpost Maintenance

Opposite King’s Bank Lane: awaiting the fingerpost return

13. Urban Verg Cuts

Highways will provide two cuts for free on a safety basis. **It was unanimously resolved to the contract East Sussex Highways to carry out up to four additional cuts £497 plus vat.** Previous year £391 plus vat.

14. Civility and Respect Pledge

i. **It was unanimously resolved to agree a Dignity at Work Policy.**

ii. **It was unanimously resolved to sign up to the civility and respect pledge**
Statement

- a. Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.
- b. Our council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.
- c. Our council has signed up to Code of Conduct for Councillors.
- d. Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.

- e. Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
- f. Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when if and when it happens.
- g. Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme.
- h. Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

15. Publication Scheme

It was unanimously resolved to update the publication scheme to the most recent version provided by the Information Commissioner.

16. Accounts

It was unanimously agreed to draw the following cheques

| | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| £738.84 | Clerk's Salary |
| £12.60 | Village Hall November Hire |
| £37.20 | Iden Parish Council: Set of inks |
| £40.45 | Refund C Penny: Keys for noticeboard |
| £26.00 | M Philo: Office cost |

17. Information for Councillors

None.

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

Additional signatories for the Lloyd's Bank Account

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.

19. Public Questions 8.40pm

A member of the public requested that the urban verges be cut so as to allow the wild flowers to grow and flower.

A member of the public reported that the entrance to the school field flooded in the rain and a sand bag had placed to redirect water. Councillor Penny would investigate.

A resident mentioned that the garden bins were not collected during the resurfacing works. Councillor Redstone would make enquiries.

There was a discussion about the distance from which some planning officers worked.

The Meeting reconvened at 8.55 pm

20. Date of next meeting – 9 January 2024 commencing 7.30pm.

21. Pursuant to section 102 of the public bodies (admission to meeting) Act 1960, It was resolved, because of the confidential nature of business transacted, the Public and Press leave the meeting during the Clerk's Appraisal that had taken place. The probation period had been completed and the clerk's salary increased as per the terms of the offer. Back pay may be due. The council is considering a pension as autoenrollment level will soon be reached. Employment terms were amended to fund the Clerk's travel expenses, to share the cost of the Clerk's mobile phone with the clerk's other employers. A review of the clerk's hours was scheduled for 6 months.

Meeting closed at 9.10 pm.