

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 15th February 2021, 7pm remote meeting via Zoom

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Cruse, Driver, Grant, Lewis, Skeet and Thomas	
In Attendance	Cllrs Dawlings and Holden; C Levett, Clerk. 2 parishioners	
Item		Action Responsibility
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Cllr Warne.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The Parish Council minutes from the meeting held on 18 th January 2021 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ITEMS	<p>a. <u>War Memorial</u> A note was published online and in the Magazine looking for someone to maintain the War Memorial Garden for approximately 4 hours per month between April and November. The Parish Council had received two expressions of interest and unanimously agreed to accept the kind offer of Mr and Mrs Durtnell to volunteer for this role.</p> <p>b. <u>Iden Green Well</u> In addition to the roof damage which Cllr Lewis had noted, Cllr Grant reported rotting timber support on top of the stone wall. The grass bank butts up against the stone wall at the rear of the well structure and over the years this has caused the water run-off from the bank to sit on top of the wall next to the timber, causing it to rot. This needs to be assessed for repair/replacement. The Historic England website indicates that the first course of action is to contact the Conservation Officer and Cllr Thomas had emailed Mark Stephenson, TWBC Conservation Officer. Cllr Thomas also advised that Tim Duncan, Chartered Surveyor and parishioner, has kindly offered to look at the wells to give an assessment. If any repairs are like-for-like it may be that Listed Building Consent is not required.</p> <p>c. <u>Walkhurst Road Land Bequest</u> Cllr Thomas has received correspondence from interested parishioners. The Clerk contacted the executors who advised that they are still waiting on legal advice and that any discussion prior to receiving this advice would be futile. Rolvenden Parish Council had also received a similar bequest and have instructed solicitors to handle. The Parish Council felt there was no reason to appoint a solicitor at this stage, and that no work could start until the Parish Council has full ownership.</p>	
5. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<p>Cllr Holden :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Holden apologised to the Parish Council for his recent vote against the TWBC Draft Local Plan and emphasised that this was not a vote against Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan to which he will give his support and encouragement. • KCC has agreed a 5% increase in council tax, with 3% ringfenced for adult social care. • KCC has received £10m from central government to help with the recovery, particularly aimed at those who have suffered as a result of the pandemic, for businesses and digital support. KCC will also be providing £500,000 for business recovery. • As reported previously, KCC Environment and Transport Committee opposed the government 48 tonne intermodal freight trial proposal, and has written to the government. • As reported previously, neonicotinoid pesticides are to be reintroduced in East Anglia to protect sugar beet crops and this is happening in 12 other European countries. KCC has written to government and to 12 European governments as well opposing this. • Operation Brock : there has been no real impact yet following Brexit and freight traffic is lower than would have been expected due to the pandemic. • A grant of £2,500 has been given to Wellbeing in the Weald, a hub for local services and events that help to promote physical, mental and social health. 	

Chairman..... Date.....

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These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.

	<p>Cllr Thomas asked about any progress on the tree grant which Cllr Holden had provided. The Clerk advised that the order was placed last autumn for the trees and the grant had been received. There have been delays from the nursery providing and planting the trees, but the Benenden Village Trust has been chasing.</p> <p>Cllr Dawlings :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been confirmed that elections will take place on 6th May. These will be for the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent County Councillor and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councillor. The votes will be counted over a number of days. Postal voting is recommended. • Vaccinations continue to be rolled out with those patients of Cranbrook surgeries attending Headcorn Aerodrome. TWBC staff have been helping with the bookings. • TWBC Draft Local Plan has been approved and an 8-week consultation period will begin March/April. Cllr Dawlings supported the draft. • Benenden Village Trust has appointed a contractor for the new playground at Iden Green and continues to fundraise for this project. • TWBC has been drawing on reserves this financial year, and next financial year will draw on £2m from reserves. Other judgements will be made during the course of the year once it becomes clearer if income is improving and what savings can be made. 	
6. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	Bi-weekly KALC Area Committee meetings continue, which the Clerk is attending.	
7. NDP	<p>Cllr Thomas corrected an error to the December meeting stating that the examiner had been appointed. The examiner, John Slater, has been selected but the documents to appoint him have not yet been signed.</p> <p>He has received all documents relating to the plan, including the Regulation 16 representations and the TWBC summary, and he hopes to make his site visit to Benenden once the current COVID 19 travel restrictions are eased. He will not necessarily meet with the Parish Council but the Parish Council does have contact with him. Any other contact should go through TWBC.</p>	
8. PLANNING	<p>a. Planning Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 00221 FULL Land Adjacent To Springhill Oast, Standen Street Variation of Conditions 2 Approved Plans and 6 Landscaping and Ecology of Planning Permission 20 01041 FULL - Substitution of reinforced grass. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minor amendment to Conditions 2 and 6 of approved plans. ➤ Reinforced grass grid forming driveway and parking spaces will not be practical - tendency for grass grids to sink into the ground. Substitute loose pea shingle with treated timber edge instead. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 00142 FULL Pelham, Walkhurst Road Extension to garage to provide workshop, home gym and living accommodation above. <p>This application seeks changes to the previously approved scheme under 19/01630/FULL extension to garage to provide garden store and living accommodation above and is based on the previously approved scheme re: dimensions, concept and functions and at the same size.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improves upon the previous design by introducing better natural light into the building via improved fenestration to the stairwell and upper accommodation rooms. ➤ Upgrades the visual aesthetics of the building, more in keeping with the host dwelling, while maintaining architectural features typical of the area. 	

- Exercise fitness room to be located at rear ground floor of the extension.
- Materials remain identical to approved application with matching tiled roof and hangings.
- Windows in west elevation (all required to be obscure glazed in the previous consent) have been removed except one bathroom window to be obscure glazed.
- 2 velux roof lights added to increase natural light to accommodation.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application with a request for a condition that if consent is granted the building shall be used for ancillary purposes only in connection with the main dwelling, and not for any other purpose.

- **20 03636 FULL** Pympne Manor, Pympne Road. Installation of biomass boiler in existing outbuilding including external flue to existing roof

- To be located in an existing shed at Pympne Manor Farm, located on the farm access track, north of the Manor.
- Farm and Manor have separate access tracks.
- Shed is screened from the access track to the Manor by trees.
- Only visible change will be external flue which will be screened by existing trees.
- Boiler will supply heat to the farm and manor and fuelled using wood chips sourced from the Estate's own woodlands.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.

- **21 00091 FULL** Moorlands, Woodcock Lane. Erection of a garage/store

- Exactly same size and height 3.60m x 3.30m x 3.20m high as previously withdrawn application (20/01466/FULL).
- To be positioned 2m back from the lane (and the front of the pub) and 1m away from the PRoW. Existing hedge (sparse) to screen the shed. Ground will be excavated to driveway level to lower the building.
- Elevation drawings show a triple pane window in the north elevation backing onto the lane.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to object to this application on the following grounds :

1. The Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2006 states: 'outbuildings, including garages, should not normally be in front of domestic properties nor infringe on the street scene.' The property is set back from the lane and is separated from the Grade II Listed Woodcock Inn by PRoW WC335 running alongside the boundaries of both the subject property and the Inn. The siting of the garage in the front corner alongside the PRoW, close to the Listed building would form a dominant presence within the site and be visually intrusive on the character and appearance of the rural lane.
2. The intention is to lower the ground levels to enable access to the garage from the existing driveway; this would interfere with tree roots and potentially involve the removal of a silver birch.
3. The proposal does not respect the context of the site and would detract from the character of the AONB, a significant rural lane, and a Listed Building. It is contrary to EN1, EN25 of the Local Plan 2006, Core Policy 14 of the Core Strategy 2010, the NPPF, and the Alterations and Extensions SPD 2006.

The Parish Council also strongly objects to a window facing the lane and, if consent is granted, any window should be located in the east elevation.

- **21 00130 FULL** Twysden Cottage, Coldharbour Road. Demolition of existing shed and existing prefabricated double garage, replace with a traditional timber frame barn style garage and

store; associated landscaping works

- Off Coldharbour Road just before Babbs Lane, on track leading to Parsonage Wood. Only 5 houses on RHS of the track.
- Replaces prefab garage with timber-framed oak 3 bay car barn, double timber doors with cast iron hinges to each bay, cat slide roof.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.

- **21 00293 FULL** Stream Cottage , Coldharbour Road. Demolition of existing barn and erection of a replacement building for the creation of a single holiday let and the erection of incidental outbuilding
- The Parish Council supported the previous proposal for the conversion to a holiday-let (20/02054/FULL) and TWBC granted.
- The proposal now is to demolish and rebuild (instead of conversion) for the (main) reasons given below:
 - The structural condition of the timber-framed building is poor and conversion would require significant rebuild elements and upgrades.
 - Cheapest and most efficient solution is demolition and rebuild.
 - Replacement building identical in footprint, structure and appearance to previously approved conversion, with increased insulation over a conversion standard, will conserve energy, be more environmentally friendly, reduced carbon footprint and an EV Charging Point installed.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application and requests outdoor lighting conditions because of the remoteness of the location. Any outdoor lights must be at the entry points only, at low level, at low wattage, operated by motion sensors, and must not be left on all night. TWBC Local Plan Policy EN8 and the emerging Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 15 Draft Policy BD5 refers. Reason: To protect the dark skies of the parish. This condition was requested for the consented application for conversion (20/02054/FULL), but was not imposed in the decision notice. The Parish Council also requests that, if this application is granted, a similar condition to (4) of the previous consent regarding use only as holiday-let accommodation is imposed.

b. Other Planning Matters

- 18/03183/AGRIC and 20/03721/AGRIC Sponden Lane

Communication from a Sandhurst parishioner had been circulated. The second application has since been refused. If another application is submitted and Sandhurst Parish Council objects to this and would like Benenden Parish Council to support any objection it will consider this at an appropriate time.

- **Appeal APP/M2270/W/20/3256867** against the decision of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to refuse outline planning permission for the erection of 7 dwellings with associated access through Field House. (Planning application reference number 19/03480/OUT)

In addition to comments submitted to TWBC on 23rd January 2020 relating to 19/03480/OUT, Benenden Parish Council unanimously agreed the following comments to the Inspector:

1. The paragraph 6.4.22 written in the appellant's Statement of Case dated July 2020 is incorrect:

“Benenden Neighbourhood Plan”

“6.4.22 Benenden NDP has been subject to informal consultation. However, at the time of writing it holds limited weight in the planning process as it is still at the pre Regulation 14 consultation stage.”

In July 2020 the Regulation 14 consultation stage of the Benenden Neighbourhood Plan was complete. This date for completion of this consultation stage was 31 October 2019. Since then the Regulation 16 consultation has been carried out, and this consultation closed on 11 December 2020. At the time of writing the Benenden NDP has been submitted by the LPA to the independent examiner. Notwithstanding the outcome of the examination and COVID-19 restrictions, the referendum on the plan is due to take place on 6 May 2021. We would therefore request that, in light of the advanced stage of the Benenden NDP, due consideration is taken to the non-compliance of the subject site to the following policies set out in the NDP:

2. Policy HS1 Site allocation and number of new dwellings:

This policy sets out the BNDP proposed sites for allocation as agreed with TWBC to fulfil the LPA’s housing target for Benenden Parish. Between 85 to 95 new dwellings are allocated over 4 sites. The site subject to this appeal is not an allocated site for housing in the BNDP.

3. Policy LE1 Protect and enhance the countryside:

Development in the countryside is to be limited in order to conserve and enhance the High Weald AONB; views from public areas; formal and informal recreational amenities, as well as biodiversity. Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined in the Local Plan priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside. A proposal for development will only be permitted where:

- a) It would conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB, including the tranquility and dark skies of the countryside, and must have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan;*
- b) It would not have an adverse effect on the character or landscape setting of settlements (including the designated Conservation Areas) or other historic ‘dens’;*
- c) It would maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points, in particular those defined at Figs. 10 & 11 maps;*
- e) It would be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.*

4. Policy LE2 Distinctive Views:

Identifies View 13 looking south-east from Iden Green Recreation Ground (as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal) as one which should not be adversely impacted by development.

5. Policy HS5 Windfall Sites:

Windfall residential development such as infilling, redevelopment, conversion or extension will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- b) Outside the LBD, as defined in the Local Plan, on previously developed land (PDL), or the conversion of appropriate rural buildings, which are not currently in business use.*

6. Policy HS6 Housing Density:

The density of new housing should be comparable with the densities adjoining the proposed development in order to maintain the character and distinctiveness of the location.

7. Policy BD1 General Design Policy:

Proposals for all forms of new development must plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive building and landscaping design. Designers must demonstrate that they have sought to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be sympathetic to local distinctiveness</i> • <i>protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings</i> • <i>create designs that are sympathetic to the aesthetic qualities for traditional rural settlements and buildings found in the High Weald AONB</i> <p>8. Policy BD2 General Appearance Residential Developments: <i>Any new housing development should conserve the distinctive character of the local existing built environment, should respect the density, footprint, separation and features of the surrounding area, and the scale and bulk of new buildings should be in keeping with the local area.</i></p> <p>9. Policy T2 Improving road safety and the impact of traffic: <i>Proposals for any new housing or commercial development will be required to demonstrate that road access to and from developments provides safe access to, and transit past, new housing...</i></p> <p>In conclusion, Benenden Parish Council respectfully requests that this appeal be dismissed.</p>																																											
9. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT	<p>Cllr Driver had reported 3 of the signs at Benenden Crossroads as faulty. KCC Highways advised that these items are already noted in the Benenden Highways Improvement Plan and will be actioned in the next financial year.</p> <p>Cllr Holden advised that he has raised the poor design of the crossroads and will endeavour to make this a higher priority with KHS.</p> <p>Cllr Thomas advised that one of the school signs had been twisted and that she would report it to KHS.</p> <p>Cllr Thomas had reported the flooding at Cherryfields. It is not clear if this had been dealt with by KHS or if the flooding had drained. Drain issues had been sorted when Cherryfields was transferred from TWBC to the Parish Council but some flooding still continues. Cllr Dawlings suggested checking the records from the time to see what action was taken.</p>	SH NT																																										
10. RESOURCING / FINANCE	<p>a. <u>Monthly Finance</u></p> <p>TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st January 2021</p> <p>Brought forward 90801.75</p> <p>Income</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 1310 1369 1377"> <thead> <tr> <th>Payee</th> <th>Reference</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>TOTAL 0.00</p> <p>Expenditure</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="261 1451 1369 1736"> <thead> <tr> <th>Supplier</th> <th>Reference</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>DD John Lewis</td> <td>Broadband</td> <td>9.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Thompsett Landscaping</td> <td>Grounds Maintenance</td> <td>90.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS TP Jones</td> <td>Payroll Q3</td> <td>57.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Tenterden Twilight</td> <td>Public Toilets</td> <td>410.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS ASL</td> <td>Printing</td> <td>8.54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS EDF Energy</td> <td>Public Toilets</td> <td>42.48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS HMRC</td> <td>Employer Contributions Q3</td> <td>161.46</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>TOTAL 780.00</p> <p>Reconciled with bank statement 041 31st January 2021 90021.75</p> <p>February 2021 Payments</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="261 1839 1369 1980"> <tbody> <tr> <td>DD John Lewis</td> <td>Broadband</td> <td>9.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD Information Commissioner's Office</td> <td>Annual Data Protection Fee</td> <td>35.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD CF Corporate Finance</td> <td>Copier Lease Rental</td> <td>180.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS C Levett</td> <td>Clerk's Salary</td> <td>935.12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Payee	Reference	Amount				Supplier	Reference	Amount	DD John Lewis	Broadband	9.92	BACS Thompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	90.00	BACS TP Jones	Payroll Q3	57.60	BACS Tenterden Twilight	Public Toilets	410.00	BACS ASL	Printing	8.54	BACS EDF Energy	Public Toilets	42.48	BACS HMRC	Employer Contributions Q3	161.46	DD John Lewis	Broadband	9.92	DD Information Commissioner's Office	Annual Data Protection Fee	35.00	DD CF Corporate Finance	Copier Lease Rental	180.00	BACS C Levett	Clerk's Salary	935.12	
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	BACS	Microsoft	Annual Renewal	59.99	
	BACS	Krystal Hosting Ltd	Annual Domain Renewal	14.39	
	BACS	Zoom Video Communications	Remote Meetings	14.39	
	BACS	Tenterden Twilight	Public Toilets	410.00	
	BACS	Business Stream	Public Toilets	3.38	
	BACS	123-reg	NDP	115.06	
	TOTAL			2712.37	
	<p>b. <u>Tunbridge Wells & District Samaritans Donation Request</u> The Parish Council unanimously agreed a donation of £200 and acknowledged the work of the Samaritans and similar organisations, especially during this difficult period.</p>				
11. CORRESPONDENCE/ PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS	No other items.				
12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION	No other items.				
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Monday 15 th March 2021 7pm, remote details to be confirmed.				
	The meeting closed at 8.05pm				

Clerk to the Parish Council, 15th February 2021