

## PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

### Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 7pm via Zoom

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cruse, Driver, Grant, Hagan, Lewis, Presgrave and Thomas	
In Attendance	Cllrs Dawlings and Warne; C Levett - Clerk	
<b>Item</b>		<b>Action Responsibility</b>
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies received from Cllrs Cochrane.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	There were no declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The Parish Council minutes from the meeting held on 21 <sup>st</sup> November were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<p>Cllr Warne has attended a number of events and meetings :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Weald Joint Advisory Committee quarterly meeting – discussion about the problems of damage being caused by roe deer to woodlands, and the closure of an abattoir at Mayfield and how this might impact on the landscape as much land is currently used as grazing pastures.</li> <li>• Love Where We Live Awards – celebrating volunteering across the borough.</li> <li>• West Kent Domestic Abuse – presentations from various organisations and agencies involved in addressing the issue.</li> <li>• Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel – appointment of Tim Smith, new Chief Constable for Kent.</li> <li>• Parish Chairs Group</li> <li>• Full Council meeting takes place on 14<sup>th</sup> December - the draft budget will be discussed and consideration to how savings can be made; there is an online budget consultation which parishioners are encouraged to take part in; a vote on the electoral review will take place deciding whether BC elections will remain as election by thirds or change to all out elections; Cllr Warne confirmed that all out elections every 4 years would provide financial savings for TW.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Dawlings reported :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marble Meadow Agricultural/Forestry Notification for shed for forestry purposes. The withdrawn permitted development rights does not include forestry, although there is no definition of what might be allowed. This means that all the plots would be allowed a “forestry” building of some description. There remains the issue of the access tracks having been put down without planning permission but it is unlikely that this will be applied for as it would be refused. The situation is unsatisfactory and Cllr Dawlings will consider the next steps.</li> <li>• Terry Hughes, TWBC Community Safety Manager, has advised that he would be willing to pass one CCTV camera to BPC to help with the issues regarding the public toilets, antisocial behaviour and vandalism. The Clerk to contact.</li> <li>• Cllr Dawlings has been appointed as Vice Chair of BVT. Martin Dickson was appointed as the new Chair in July, and 3 new Trustees have been appointed. There have been a number of positive changes and the Trust is keen to refocus on the community.</li> </ul>	TD  CL
5. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KALC Area Committee, Goudhurst, 29<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr Thomas reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Matthew Scott (<b>Kent Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>) reported at the KALC AGM that PCSOs would not be scrapped, as stated in the press. Current proposals involve PCSOs being offered the opportunity to retrain as police officers.</li> <li>❖ <b>TW Local Plan</b> – more evidence required for Tudeley rural settlement.</li> <li>❖ <b>Sandhurst PC</b> has restarted work on its NDP – largely due to the Benenden NDP now being in place, and concerns that local landowners will see Sandhurst as an easier target.</li> <li>❖ Minutes from previous meeting (Cllr Thomas could not attend) set out that <b>training on fund raising</b> and how to recruit new members would be advantageous, and this will be looked into.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Parish Chairmen’s Group meeting, TW Town Hall, 6<sup>th</sup> December. Cllr Thomas reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Cost of Living support hub</b> – request to make residents aware of website <a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support</a> and add any service provided locally. The</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>Clerk has posted details on PC website and facebook page, and shared with BAT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Boundary Commission</b> Electoral Review – ongoing. Extraordinary Meeting at TWBC (called by Cllr Dawlings) was successful in that the recommendation was to support the majority view of parishes for ‘all out’ Borough Councillor elections rather than the current election by thirds. Considered by and passed through the General Purposes Committee. To be considered by Full Council on 14<sup>th</sup> December. There may be boundary changes for Borough Councillor parish representation as a result, which may adversely affect Benenden.</li> <li>❖ <b>TWBC – Draft Budget 2023/24</b> – having been extremely efficient for some years, TW now has a deficit of £1.4m. Growth is important and there has been very little growth in the TW population. Cap of 3% rise for Council Tax. Parish Councils have no cap on precept increase.</li> <li>❖ <b>Local Plan</b> update from Ellen Gilbert (Acting Planning Policy Manager). Currently going through which of the 3 options supported by the Inspector for the plan. Aware of possible changes to Housing Supply numbers – but cannot take into account until made law.</li> </ul>	
6. PLANNING	<p>a. <u>Applications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>22/03317/FULL Pypmne Manor, Pypmne Road</b> Erection of tennis court and associated landscaping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: AONB; Outside LBD</li> <li>❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: Pypmne Manor and barn.</li> <li>❖ APPLICATION FORM INFO : Drawings show ‘reduced length tennis court’; 2.75m high domestic court fencing with access gate.</li> <li>❖ Located to south of Cottage away from Manor (ie to north of Manor and swimming pool and glasshouse) and surrounded by trees so not harmful to listed buildings.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application</b> with request that condition is imposed for no floodlighting or lighting of the area.</p> </li> <li>• <b>22/03188/FULL and 22/03189/LBC Field Farm House, Coldharbour Road, Iden Green TN17 4HF</b> Refurbishment of a derelict barn for use as a short term holiday let <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Derelict barn referred to in supported applications 22/03185/FULL and 22/03186/LBC.</li> <li>❖ FROM D&amp;A STATEMENT: Farm site approx 46.5 acres, including main house, coach house, threshing barn, swimming pool, tennis court, cob field; likely constructed early 18th century, used as traditional threshing barn; suggestions of later additions with majority of cladding sourced from off-site; roof tiles modern peg tile and aerial photos from 1960s show barn roof finish fully stripped suggesting wholesale replacement of roof fabric at this stage; new mezzanine level to accommodate second bedroom (no ensuite/wc on mezzanine level).</li> <li>❖ Pre-app advice sought March 2022 and site visit by Planning Officer, Conservation Officer and agent in May, and likely that the application would be supported.</li> <li>❖ The approach to new windows was also acceptable in principle.</li> <li>❖ CO’s comments ‘Conversion to separate holiday use will require justification as this will slightly sever the relationship with the main house, but I acknowledge that this is different to a separate residential use as it will remain in the same ownership’.</li> <li>❖ CO has now commented further, agreeing in principle with the conversion, but not happy with certain aspects of the application as it stands. The main concern is the change in appearance externally. Supports proposed windows in principle but an issue of how they can be fitted within the framework of the barn.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application</b> subject to the works being satisfactory to the Conservation Officer and, if consent is granted, requests conditions appropriate to holiday lets, their management and retention as tourist accommodation, together with a condition that the details of any proposed lighting scheme is submitted for approval prior to installation, to protect this rural location from light pollution, Policy BD5 of the BNDP refers.</p> </li> <li>• <b>22/03288/FULL Millers Meadow, Cranbrook Road</b> Erection of single storey rear extension, alterations to front porch, external materials and fenestration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ SITE CONSTRAINTS: AONB; Outside LBD; Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3; Potential Archaeological Importance; Apps or Equivalent Only (including Res Matters) 2 consult KCC on</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<p>major apps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ SITE HISTORY: 78/00353 Outline Dwelling — refused; 78/01397 Outline Dwelling — approved; 13/03095/HOUSE Conversion of part of existing garage to habitable room and remainder into a garden tool store - approved.</li> <li>❖ LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: School Lodge Grade II opposite; Corner Cottages Grade II Listed same side of the road to west. None affected by proposal.</li> <li>❖ APPLICATION FORM INFO: Pre-app advice not sought; Front and side tiles to match neighbouring properties, rear elevation off-white render.</li> <li>❖ GENERAL COMMENTS: No D&amp;A or planning statement.</li> <li>❖ PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH: Permitted Development Rights.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application</b> with conditions for outdoor lighting to comply with BD5 Dark Skies.</p> <p>b. <u>Other Planning Matters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BENENDEN PLACE FOLLY</b></li> <li>❖ Concerns about the light pollution radiating from the folly at Benenden Place. The lights are very bright and intrusive.</li> <li>❖ The lighting condition of application 17/02578 is that : <i>No external lighting shall be installed unless previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To protect the appearance of the area, the environment and wildlife from light pollution.</i> This condition has not yet been discharged.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to report this to TWBC Planning Enforcement.</b> Parishioners are also urged to report any breaches of planning to TWBC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>22/03185/FULL and 22/03186/LBC Field Farm House, Coldharbour Road, Iden Green TN17 4HF</b> Amendment to description to add retrospective consent for new entrance gates</li> <li>❖ The Parish Council supported this application, but the gate has now been added to the application for the main house. The Parish Council may not be consulted again on this item.</li> <li>❖ The Parish Council has previously discussed this and expressed concern about the gates. Parishioners have also commented.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to formally object to the gates as erected</b> as they are incongruous in the landscape and harm the character of the location. Prior to the gates being installed, access to Field Farm House was unobtrusive and had the appearance of a simple farm access track; vehicles delivering to the property trying to gain access will obstruct the single track highway and the entrance to Chapel Lane on a dangerous bend. This could become a major issue with the works being carried out at the property and large delivery vehicles being on site. BPC suggests that they could be repositioned further down the access track to remove them from sight and to avoid vehicles causing an obstruction on the highway.</p>	
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<p>a. <u>Highways Improvement Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Driver has requested the new wooden fingerpost for Benenden Crossroads from Highways. No response has been received. Cllr Driver to chase.</li> <li>• Cllr Thomas raised an issue of a distracting bright light at the entrance/exit to Hartley Dyke Farmshop on Hartley Road, Cranbrook. Cllr Warne will speak to the owners.</li> </ul> <p>b. <u>The Green</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The no parking signs have been received. Cllr Hagan to arrange for them to be fixed in place.</li> </ul> <p>c. <u>Iden Green</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been further damage to the triangle. Parish Councillors are urged to note any environmental breaches or damage caused by vehicles, to include noting number plates and/or company logos on vehicles plus time and date of incident.</li> </ul>	<p>PD</p> <p>NW</p> <p>GH</p> <p>ALL</p>
8. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<p>a. <u>Monthly Finance</u></p> <p>TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st November 2022</p> <p>Brought forward</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>86578.42</b></p>	

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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.*

Income			
	Payee	Reference	Amount
TOTAL			<b>0.00</b>
Expenditure			
	Supplier	Reference	Amount
DD	Corporate Finance	Copier Lease	180.00
BACS	Commercial Services	Grounds Maintenance Green	221.24
BACS	C Levett	Clerk's Salary	972.33
BACS	Arnold Cole Trust	Trust Rent	2.50
BACS	Business Stream	Public Toilets	98.72
BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	98.40
BACS	Iden Green Pavilion	Meeting Hire	14.00
BACS	C Levett	Telephone	31.56
BACS	Benenden's Shop	Village Tidy	59.30
BACS	BT	Office Phone	144.75
BACS	Anthony Hicks	Wells	3102.00
BACS	Iden Signs	No Parking Signs	71.10
BACS	edf	Public Toilets	185.79
TOTAL			<b>5181.69</b>
Reconciled with bank statement 071 30th November 2022			<b>81396.73</b>

b. Resourcing Committee Meeting

The minutes of the Resourcing Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November were circulated prior to the meeting and the information in the minutes explained and noted.

i. Parish Council Financial Regulations – the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the Financial Regulations.

ii. Parish Council Standing Orders – the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the Standing Orders.

iii. Budget 2023/24 – the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the 2023/24 budget.

INCOME	PROPOSED 2023- 2024
Precept	46000
Wells Donations	1500
WI Printing	40
KCC Wildflower Meadow Grant	1000
Server Recharge	120
INCOME	48660
VAT	4000
TOTAL INCOME	52660
EXPENDITURE (net)	PROPOSED 2023 -2024
Allotments	400
Audit	590
Bank Charges	72
Staffing Costs	14403
Defibrillator	0

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General Maintenance	1500
Grounds Maintenance	2000
Hall Hire/Meetings	190
Highways	4520
Insurance	1000
Office Costs	850
Payroll	203
S137/grants/donations	500
Subscriptions	740
Toilets	0
Training/Councillor Expenses	72
Village Tidy	150
War Memorial	320
Website/Server	150
Wells	20000
Wildflower Meadow	1000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>48660</b>
VAT	5000
	<b>53660</b>

iv. Precept 2023/24 – **the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve a precept of £46,000.** Based on the advised taxbase the current Band D equivalent of a precept of £46,000 represents an increase of 11.3% from £43.82 to £48.76. An increase of £4.94 for the year.

The Parish Council has been extremely prudent financially for a long time, and the accident and the cost of the wells has taken a large amount from reserves. The ideal sum for reserves is 1½ x precept and will still hopefully be maintained.

v. Donations – the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the donations recommended by the Resourcing Committee.

vi. Clerk’s Salary – the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve an increase in the Clerk’s salary in line with the national pay award.

vii. Warm Welcome Space – Cllr Presgrave reported on a Benenden and Sandhurst initiative to provide a free warm community space, offering a warm drink, biscuits and company, open to anyone. This will run on Friday and Sunday afternoons, 1-3pm, in the Memorial Hall, and in Sandhurst on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, from the beginning of January till the end of March. Cllr Presgrave asked if the Parish Council would be able to provide financial support for this project. Cllr Thomas requested that a grant application form is submitted and will be considered by the Parish Council. The Clerk will help to promote this initiative and anyone able to help as a volunteer during the sessions should contact Cllr Presgrave.

CL

9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE

a. Beacon Field Wildflower Meadow

- The Clerk has written to Alan Hardy, KCC Estates Surveyor, regarding the draft heads of terms with the comments and queries which the Parish Council had raised. A response is awaited. The Clerk to chase.

CL

b. Parish Wells

- As part of the budget planning for 2023/24 the Parish Council unanimously agreed to the put on hold the work to Iden Green Well. The Clerk to contact Anthony Hicks and advise.
- Another grant application to Sussex Lund will be made next year for the Iden Green Well.

CL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Hagan will establish what basic maintenance is needed on the Well.</li> <li>• The Clerk has chased the insurance company regarding the insured value and settlement offer. The insurance company has chased the loss adjustor.</li> <li>• The Clerk has found it extremely difficult to contact Openreach and will be writing to their Head Office.</li> </ul> <p>c. <u>Village Asset/Maintenance Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaz Stapley has looked at the work set out in the maintenance report and sought quotes for materials from building suppliers.</li> <li>• An additional column to be added to the maintenance report to include costs and values.</li> </ul>	GH CL GH
10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p>a. <u>Bequest/Allotments</u> :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having signed the Land Registry Transfer form and returned this to the solicitor for the signatures of the executors as instructed, the solicitor then advised that they had submitted their own application to register the land and the title is now held in the names of the executors.</li> <li>• A new, correct transfer form TS1 has been received and again signed by Cllrs Thomas and Grant and witnessed by the Clerk and returned to the solicitor.</li> <li>• The solicitor confirmed the specific area designated for allotments and that the remaining land will be retained by the executors and continue to be grazed.</li> <li>• The allotment land is separated from the remaining field by a fence which is in disrepair, and needs to be replaced by a sturdy, stock proof fence protecting the allotment from livestock and securing the livestock. It has been agreed that the executors will pay and arrange for the fence to be replaced, and that the Parish Council will be responsible for future maintenance.</li> </ul> <p>b. <u>Public Toilets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been further vandalism. The toilets have been locked and out of use since the PC made the decision to close them. The door to the ladies' toilets has been severely damaged and forced open, and it is impossible to close the door. Cllr Hagan has boarded up the doors.</li> <li>• As part of the budget planning for 2023/24 the existing budget heading has been removed.</li> <li>• The Parish Council unanimously agreed that the toilets should remain closed, and that quotes and funding sought for a more fit for purpose facility which would include some refurbishment of the existing building and one accessible cubicle. The Clerk to circulate a rough estimate already obtained.</li> <li>• A reconfiguration of the existing space may also provide some village storage space.</li> </ul> <p>c. <u>Iden Green Defibrillator</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Lewis to order new signs for the defibrillator.</li> <li>• Cllr Lewis, working with the Congregational Church, will look into training provision.</li> </ul>	CL JL JL
11. COMMUNICATION	<p><u>Village Magazine</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benenden Magazine achieved second place in the A4 magazine category in the 2022 National Parish Magazine Awards out of 450 entries, and winner of the Best Editor category.</li> <li>• The Clerk had circulated the rota for Parish Councillor magazine articles.</li> </ul>	
12. CORRESPONDENCE/ PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Clerk has been in communication with residents and the appropriate people to try to resolve issues of flooding at a house in The Street, and housing issues at Pullington Cottages.</li> <li>• Cllr Thomas encouraged everyone to report any flooding as Cherryfields.</li> </ul>	ALL
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> January, 7pm, Quinlan Centre, Benenden Hospital.	
	The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.	

C Levett, Clerk to Benenden Parish Council, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022

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