

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 11th December 2023, 7pm, Memorial Hall

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Cruse, Driver, Grant, Hagan, Lewis, Presgrave and Thomas.	
In Attendance	Cllrs Holden and Warne. C Levett, Clerk.	
Item		Action Responsibility
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Cllr Dawlings.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	Cllr Thomas declared an interest in planning application 23/03257/FULL Beacon Mill Cottage, Rolvenden Road.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The Parish Council minutes from the meeting held on 20 th November were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Plan : Revised Plan to be discussed at Full Council meeting 13th December. Changes proposed include removing Tudeley Village proposal, reducing quantum at Paddock Wood and reducing length of the Plan. Concerns were expressed about the removal of Tudeley Village and the impact of this on the rest of the Borough, especially the AONB, but it is likely that this proposal will re-emerge when work starts almost immediately on the new Local Plan. If approved by Full Council, consultation will commence in January and last for at least 6 weeks. ● Women’s Safety After Dark : Cllr Warne joined the Reclaim the Night Walk in Tunbridge Wells and joined the Community Safety Unit in Paddock Wood raising the profile of safety. ● Cranbrook Windmill : Concerns have been raised that KCC plans to sell Union Mill. Cllr Holden has expressed his concerns about this. The proposed plans will now go out to public consultation. ● KCC Budget : Cllr Holden reported that the budget deficit is likely to be around £26million and work is being done to avoid a Section 114 notice. There is pressure on discretionary and statutory services, and it may be that these will have to be done to a lesser standard and expense. ● Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roadworks and road closures : Ongoing complaints. As previously reported, Cllr Holden is working to create an inspectorate regarding road closures and setting a target to reduce road closures by 2,000 per year. It was also commented that signage is not clear and the road closed should be named on signs; utility companies abusing emergency powers and fines imposed are not a deterrent; damage to lanes because of diverted traffic. ○ HIP : Cllr Driver again expressed his frustrations in dealing with KCC Highways and the lack of response and action. Cllr Driver to forward emails to Cllr Holden again. ○ Cherryfields : Whilst the flooding has eased there are ongoing issues. The Clerk to forward emails to Cllr Holden. ● Wildflower Meadow : Cllr Thomas advised Cllr Holden of the ongoing issues and lack of action from KCC regarding the lease of the land and KCC’s contribution towards. The Clerk to email Cllr Holden with details. ● Feoffee Almshouse Application : Cllr Dawlings reported some issues regarding the development. Cllrs Thomas and Warne will seek further information. 	<p>PD</p> <p>CL</p> <p>CL</p> <p>NT/NW</p>
5. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parish Chairs Meeting : Cllr Thomas attending on 12th December. Cllr Warne advised that she and the KALC Area Committee Chair had met with TW Head of Planning and raised the concerns expressed about lack of reference to NDPs in officers’ delegated reports. Ellen Gilbert, TW Planning, will be attending the meeting to report back on this. 	
6. PLANNING	<p><u>a. Applications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 23/03186/FULL 15 Rothermere Close. Installation of conservatory at the front of property 	

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

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

- SITE CONSTRAINTS: Parish Wide BNDP Policies; AONB; inside LBD1.
- SITE HISTORY: No planning applications since built.
- LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: None in proximity.
- GENERAL COMMENTS: Staggered terraced row of 8 properties with gap between nos 10 to 17. Part of larger scheme for 30 dwellings built 1973. Infill between two attached properties 15 and 17 giving flush front wall. Additional floor space 3.89 sq m. No 13 has infilled with conservatory type construction (no consent). No 11 has infilled with brick and tiled roof construction between it and no 12 (permission granted 2002).

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.

- **23/03248/LBC Benenden C Of E Primary School, The Green.** 2 no dormer windows to be replaced with 2 no conservation rooflights (Amendment from approved consent 22/02278/LBC)
 - Building Two North elevation facing across access track to The Grange towards Ash Lawn.
 - BPC response to 22/02278/LBC expressed concern about dormer windows on north elevation facing Ash Lawn and requested these were altered to Heritage/Conservation rooflights to conserve and protect curtilage of Grade II Listed Ash Lawn and to reduce light emission.
 - This amendment is as BPC requested.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.

- **23/02708/TPO Grange Cottage , The Green.** Cherry - reduction in branch overhang by 3 metres
 - SITE CONSTRAINTS: Parish Wide BNDP Policies; TPO; Benenden Conservation Area.
 - LISTED BUILDINGS IN PROXIMITY: Former Benenden CEPS; Ash Lawn; The Grange Historic Park and Garden
 - APPLICATION FORM INFO: Tree located along drive to The Grange, which is also access track to 3 residential properties including Grange Cottage. Tree overhangs boundary fence and garden of Grange Cottage and restricts light. Tree is thought to be owned by The Grange and Manager has given verbal consent. Proposal to reduce overhanging branch back to boundary.
 - GENERAL COMMENTS: The 'branch' is actually one of the bifurcated trunks of the tree.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application subject to the works being satisfactory to the Tree Officer.

- **23/03257/FULL Beacon Mill Cottage, Rolvenden Road.** Conversion and extension of agricultural building into residential dwelling together with revised roof, associated change of use of land to residential curtilage, construction of a detached garage (Resubmission of planning approval ref: 20/01215/FULL (Part-retrospective).
 - Alteration of roof structure to include installation of solar panels and additional glazing to some elevations. Also small single storey utility room extension on east elevation. Detached garage proposed in previously approved residential curtilage.
 - Roof of single storey utility of corrugated galvanised sheeting. Main roof zinc sheeting.
 - Powder coated aluminium windows and doors in grey.
 - Main walls of brick plinth (existing) with black weatherboarding.
 - Garage 3-bay car barn type of oak frame with one bay having double doors. 8.5m x 6.3m.
 - No mention of BNDP.
 - BPC requested external lighting conditions be applied to the consent granted under 20/01215/FULL — no lighting conditions were imposed.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application with request for external lighting conditions under this amendment to comply with BD5 of BNDP.

b. Other Planning Matters

i. Benenden Hospital Site Development

- Letters received from Benenden Health had been circulated regarding use of the Quinlan Centre as a community space, which BPC had rejected, and a lease offer for the pavilion adjacent to the old cricket pitch for use as a community hall on a full repairing and insuring lease on a peppercorn rent basis for a period of 10 years.
- Further discussions will be held with Esquire as to the deliverability of this building as a fit for

	<p>purpose and practical space for some 87 new households, as well as existing residents at East End, together with the compliance requirements for public use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accepting a 10-year lease on a pepper corn rent initially might be agreeable whilst it is established how much the building will be used and whether it will become a drain on BPC resources. At the end of 10 years BPC might want to hand the building back to the hospital, or to a residents committee. ○ However the condition of the building will be the subject of some discussion and negotiation with Esquire to achieve a fit-for-purpose building. The pavilion/community space has been included on the site plan. Esquire has advised that a surveyor will be looking at the building and giving an assessment of the works required to bring the building up to a fit for purpose space and that this will inform the next stages of design/feasibility. ○ Esquire has confirmed that they are in discussion with the primary school with regard to a financial contribution towards a new minibus and also is in discussion with TWBC as to how this can link to the permission, or if it sits outside of the s106 planning contributions agreement. ○ A site visit for parish councillors has been arranged, with access to SEQ, on Saturday 16th December, 9.30am. The TWBC Planning Officer will also be making a site visit with TWBC Tree Officer. ○ The planning application, 23/03274/FULL, has now been validated and the closing date is 19th January, with a target planning committee date of 27th March. The application will be discussed fully at the PC meeting on 15th January, and Esquire have been invited to attend. <p>ii. 23/02067/FULL Proposed Development of Photovoltaic Solar Array, Battery Storage and Associated Infrastructure (Resubmission of 22/01695/FULL) Land At Netters Farm, Attwaters Lane, Hawkhurst – application withdrawn by applicant.</p>																																																																															
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	Nothing to report.																																																																															
8. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<p>a. Monthly Finance</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Brought forward</td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: right;">100448.26</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Income</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Payee</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Reference</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">B&IG WI</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Copying</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">2.10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2.10</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Expenditure</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Supplier</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Reference</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">DD Nest</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Pension</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">155.62</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS Employee</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Staffing Costs</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">1040.42</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS o2</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Telephone</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">31.56</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS Tompsett Landscaping</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Grounds Maintenance</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">390.91</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS EDF</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Public Toilets</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">83.70</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS Benenden Magazine</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Jazz & Blues Advert</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">64.80</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS Business Stream</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Public Toilets</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">22.34</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS Peter Ellis</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Defibrillator Battery</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">346.80</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS IG Pavilion</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Meeting Hire</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">16.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS RBL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Poppy Wreath</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">20.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2172.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reconciled with bank statement 088 30th November 2023</td> <td style="text-align: right;">98278.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Approved payments for December 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">DD Nest</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Pension</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">138.42</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Unity Trust Bank</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Quarterly Charge</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">18.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS Employee</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Staffing Costs</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">1594.68</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BACS o2</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Telephone</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">31.56</td> </tr> </table>	Brought forward	100448.26	Income		Payee	Reference	B&IG WI	Copying		2.10	TOTAL	2.10	Expenditure		Supplier	Reference	DD Nest	Pension		155.62	BACS Employee	Staffing Costs		1040.42	BACS o2	Telephone		31.56	BACS Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance		390.91	BACS EDF	Public Toilets		83.70	BACS Benenden Magazine	Jazz & Blues Advert		64.80	BACS Business Stream	Public Toilets		22.34	BACS Peter Ellis	Defibrillator Battery		346.80	BACS IG Pavilion	Meeting Hire		16.00	BACS RBL	Poppy Wreath		20.00	TOTAL	2172.15	Reconciled with bank statement 088 30th November 2023	98278.21	Approved payments for December 2023		DD Nest	Pension		138.42	Unity Trust Bank	Quarterly Charge		18.00	BACS Employee	Staffing Costs		1594.68	BACS o2	Telephone		31.56	
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BACS	C Levett	Postage	6.00
BACS	HMRC	Employer Contributions Q 3	622.58
BACS	Benenden's Shop	Village Tidy	60.30
BACS	Iden Signs	Banner	81.60
BACS	London County Contracts	Public Toilets	17797.50
TOTAL			20350.64

b. Resourcing Committee Meeting The minutes of the Resourcing Committee meeting held on 27th November were circulated and the information in the minutes explained and noted. Cllr Cochrane commented that the past year has been a costly one and that BPC should aim to start building its reserves again.

i. BPC Financial Regulations : **the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the Financial Regulations.**

ii. BPC Standing Orders : **the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the Standing Orders.**

iii. Budget Proposals 2024/25 : **the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the 2023/24 budget.**

INCOME	PROPOSED 2024 - 2025
Precept	49750
Wells Donations/Fundraising	2000
WI Printing	30
KCC Wildflower Meadow Grant	1400
Server Recharge	160
Bank Interest	1000
Insurance	0
Laptop Recharge	0
Allotment Grant	0
INCOME	54340
VAT	9000
TOTAL INCOME	63340
EXPENDITURE (net)	PROPOSED 2024-2025
Allotments	0
Audit	700
Bank Charges	150
Staffing Costs - salary, pension, contributions	15000
Defibrillator	200
General Maintenance	2500
Grounds Maintenance	3000
Hall Hire/Meetings	250
Insurance	1500
Office Costs/Website	1200
Payroll	250
S137/grants/donations	7000
Subscriptions	800
Toilets	9000
Training/Councillor Expenses	100
Village Tidy	200
War Memorial	390

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	<p>iv. Precept 2024/25 : the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve a precept of £49,750. Based on the advised taxbase (957.65) the current Band D equivalent of a precept of £49,750 represents an increase of 6.5% from £48.76 to £51.95. An increase of £3.19 for the year.</p> <p>v. Clerk's Salary : the Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve an increase in the Clerk's salary in line with the national pay award.</p>														
9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<p><u>a. Beacon Field Wildflower Meadow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cllr Driver is meeting with Benenden School in January to discuss habitat development at the School and what help the School might be able to give to the Beacon Field Wildflower Meadow. ○ The Bumblebee Conservation Trust has been in touch with the School. <p><u>b. Village Asset/Maintenance Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Noticeboards : The Clerk has chased for a quote to refurbish the noticeboards. ○ Cllr Hagan to follow up other outstanding items. <p><u>c. Parish Wells</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cllr Grant to request the donation agreed from WKPS of £1,500 before the end of the financial year. 		<p>GH</p> <p>PG</p>												
10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p><u>a. Allotments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most membership/tenancy applications received and paid. Outstanding applications being chased and will be re-allocated to those on waitlist if needed. ● First full face to face meeting of Allotment Committee 10th December. ● Grant application of £2,700 to KCC (Sean Holden, Members Grant) submitted to cover mains water, placing standpipes, and replacing the bottom boundary fence. Once the grant has been approved and received SE Water will be commissioned to install water from mains to a stand-pipe (est £1,300) and volunteers will then install three standpipes on site for allotmentees. Boundary fence at bottom of field is not secure. Likely to hire kit and have team of volunteers to install stock-proof fencing. ● There has been activity on the plots but poor weather in part is hampering progress, and preparing new beds is proving challenging. ● <u>Structure Applications</u> - Committee has received two applications for structures, and has agreed key principals for applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does proposed structure meet guidelines in tenancy agreement? Is it a shed / fruit cage / polytunnel / greenhouse (something predominantly horticultural rather than an outdoor bar for example). ○ Does it meet dimensions in tenancy agreement - maximum size of 1.83m (6ft) x 1.22m (4ft) x max height 2.5m (8ft). ○ Is it sited with consideration for other allotment holders? Our predominant concern at the moment is causing shade to other plots. The site faces south-east, and plots run north-east/south-west. However the overall aspect is open, and shade may only be a consideration where plots immediately abut a proposed structure. We will consider applications on a case-by-case basis. ○ Is it a permanent 'temporary'? Should be relatively easy for new allotment holder to take over if existing holder leaves. ○ To be reviewed after 6-9 months' time. ○ Applications will be made to the Committee using the agreed application form, which should be fully completed, and recommend to the Parish Council. 														

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Application 1 – Plot 9A Shed and fruit cage. Shed is 6’*8’*4’, wood, glass window, corrugated iron roof. Postcrete or metal supports for shed. Fruit cage 12’*6’*6’. ○ Allotment Association Committee comments: Shed dimensions fine; Committee would prefer metal supports rather than postcrete; Position on plot is north-eastern corner, angled, and in front of 2 compost bins; Fruit cage is sited acceptably. ○ Recommend acceptance of shed application subject to (1) pegging out proposed site and compost bins to check shade impact (2) metal posts rather than postcrete. ○ Recommend acceptance of fruit cage application. ❖ Application 2 – Plots 5A&B Shed only, 6’*4’*8’, wooden one door shed with glass window, placed on sand and paving slabs. ○ Allotment Association Committee comments: Shed size and construction fine. Sketch could be clearer (show North for example). Plot 5A&B are at bottom (southern-most) end of field, and under tree-line should be southern side of these plots. ○ Recommend acceptance. <p>The Parish Council agreed to these recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BPC agreed that no signage should be placed at the site other than the name of the allotment site. ● BPC agreed that a representative should attend Committee meetings. <p>b. Public Toilets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construction is underway and started 4th December as scheduled. ● Post meeting note : the date for completion is 16th January, not December. ● It was agreed that the toilets would be open 8am to 8pm. ● The timed door lock will have a control/override keypad in the new service area. An exit button will be placed inside the cubicle in case someone is in there when the door locks at 8pm. ● Quotes had been received from 4 contractors for cleaning the toilet and assumed 1 hour cleaning per day. Costs for consumables are additional. ● The Clerk had posted the contract opportunity on the website and facebook but there had been no local response. ● The Parish Council unanimously agreed to award the contract to F&C Cleaning Services. ● It was agreed to discuss the remaining space in the building once the toilet has been completed. 	
11. CORRESPONDENCE/ PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS	No items.	
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 15 th January 2024, 7pm, Quinlan Centre, Benenden Hospital	
	The meeting closed at 8.25pm.	

C Levett, Clerk to Benenden Parish Councillor, 11th December 2023