

**PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN**

**Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September, 7pm, Memorial Hall**

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Driver, Grant, Hagan, Lewis and Thomas; Cllrs Dawlings and Holden; C Levett, Clerk.1 parishioner for Planning item.	
<b>Item</b>		Action Responsibility
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Cllrs Cruse, Presgrave and Neville.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> July and the Planning Meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> August were unanimously approved as correct records of the meetings.	
4. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<p>Cllr Holden reported :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of the new government’s housing strategy could see an increase of 58% in the housing allocation in Kent, an extra 8,000 homes. The allocation for some London boroughs has been reduced. At present there does not appear to an increase in funding for infrastructure. A decision on the new Thames crossing had been deferred until after the election and it is still not clear what will happen.</li> <li>• KCC has the ability to use some money from the Household Support Fund and may be able to use this to support for those hardest hit by the loss of the winter fuel allowance.</li> <li>• There may be some impact from VAT being charged on private school fees. There are 95 private schools in Kent serving 19,000 pupils. Those schools with fewer than 200 pupils are most at risk of closure if they become unviable and places will need to be found for pupils in the county’s education system.</li> <li>• Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council continue to work with KCC on ideas for a new school.</li> <li>• The new entry and exit process for the EU is due to come into place on 10<sup>th</sup> November. The start date has already been deferred and there are concerns that the system is still not ready to be implemented.</li> <li>• Pressures remain with home to school transport for Special Educational Needs children, with costs nearing £100million.</li> <li>• The road closure inspectors are doing all they can to mitigate the effects on residents. £95,000 has been raised from 1,300 fines issued.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Dawlings reported :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new government target for housing for Tunbridge Wells has seen an increase from 650 to over 1.000 new homes per year. TW Head of Planning assures that the protections for the High Weald remain in place. It is likely that the Tudeley Village proposal will be reconsidered. There is no infrastructure in place for more houses.</li> <li>• The new government has suggested there should be more devolution of powers from central to local government. This will be discussed in the first instance with KCC.</li> <li>• TW Draft Strategic Plan is currently out for public consultation (until 13<sup>th</sup> October). It is important that the cabinet understands the needs of rural parishes and not just focus on Tunbridge Wells.</li> <li>• The new Chief Executive of Town and Country Housing will be attending the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Dawlings will try to address the issues of undesirable tenants.</li> </ul> <p>Report received from Cllr Neville :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability : TWBC is consulting on its Climate Change strategy.</li> <li>• Cabinet update 25th July 2024 : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No changes are made to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26, except for a percentage increase to the income bands in line with the DWP annual percentage uprating increase.</li> <li>○ The creation of a Community Support Fund (Covid Recovery) to the value of £100,000 for 2024/25, to be funded from the remaining Contain Outbreak Management Fund and spent by 30 September 2024, leaving the originally budgeted £100k to be allocated to other community projects, (which are yet to be decided).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• West Kent Rural Grants application period has been extended and there is around £60K</li> </ul>	

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>available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next Full Council meeting is on 2nd October</li> </ul>	
5. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KALC TW Area Committee meeting took place on 11<sup>th</sup> September. Cllr Thomas was unable to attend and minutes of the meeting have not yet been received.</li> <li>• Cllr Thomas to attend the Parish Chairs meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September. S106 contributions and CIL are on the agenda.</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of Parish Councillors was reviewed and agreed : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Allotments – Benenden Allotment Association, Cllrs Grant, Presgrave</li> <li>❖ Assets/maintenance – Cllrs Hagan, Lewis</li> <li>❖ Bank signatories – Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Lewis, Thomas</li> <li>❖ Bank reconciliation check – Cllr Presgrave</li> <li>❖ Community co-ordinator – Cllr Lewis</li> <li>❖ Highways – Cllr Driver</li> <li>❖ Lorry Watch – Cllrs Cruse, Presgrave</li> <li>❖ Parish Wells – Cllr Beveridge</li> <li>❖ Planning – Cllrs Beveridge, Grant, Thomas</li> <li>❖ Resourcing committee – Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Hagan, Thomas</li> <li>❖ Village Tidy – Cllr Cochrane</li> <li>❖ Website/social media – Cllr Driver</li> <li>❖ Wildflower meadow – Cllr Driver</li> <li>❖ Defibrillators – Peter Ellis</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
6. PLANNING	<p><u>a. Applications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>23/02523/FULL Uphill , New Pond Road.</b> Erection of 22 no. dwellings with associated access works, tree works, landscaping and parking, following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings. Revised details. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Email communication from Woolf Bond and the response from TWBC Planning Officer had been circulated.</li> <li>○ BPC discussed the additional information received on this application, being an independent Financial Viability Review carried out on the applicant's Viability Report in June 2024. The result of this review being that no affordable housing is being proposed.</li> <li>○ The Parish Council unanimously agreed that this proposal by the applicant is unacceptable due to non-compliance with the made Benenden Neighbourhood Plan Site Specific Policy 2 (SSP2 1): <i>Provide a residential development of 18-20 C3 dwellings, with 40% affordable housing in accordance with TWBC policy and a mix of type and size integrated throughout the development to help meet locally identified needs (see Policy HS1).</i></li> <li>○ The Parish Council commented that there are a number of Registered Providers with affordable housing in Benenden, holding a smaller numbers of units than proposed for this site.</li> <li>○ The Parish Council welcomes further discussion in relation to the amount and type of affordable housing that would better respond to local need, in line with the affordable housing officer's comments made in December 2023.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>24/02187/FULL Timber Building And Land Dingledden.</b> Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 24/01131/FULL - Amendments to approved plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Condition 2 of previous consent relates to approved plans under that consent. This application proposes amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mezzanine floor - 1 master bedroom with ensuite in west part of barn. See amendment to roof structure.</li> <li>○ Roof structure - proposed amendment to form a flat roof through the middle of the building to enable better internal height and adjust sloping roof angles. Ridge height will remain the same as previous consent. No visual changes to the elevations as a result of the flat roof section. Roof to be of slate.</li> <li>○ Cart style garage - smaller cat slide cart style garage positioned farther back from the lane within the plot.</li> <li>○ External lighting is covered by Condition 7 of the previous consent and uses down lighting wall lights and bollards.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to make no comment.</b></p> </li> </ul>	

	<p><b>b. Other planning matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 24/02099/AGRIC Prior Notification Hill Top Farm, Hinksden Road. Prior Notification of agricultural development - Erection of agricultural building.</li> <li>○ Application for a second agricultural building and TWBC has decided that prior approval is required. The applicant will need to provide more information and evidence to justify the need.</li> <li>● Apple Pie Farm</li> <li>○ Cllr Dawlings confirmed that the Article 4 Directives at Apple Pie Farm have been made permanent.</li> <li>● Planning decisions</li> <li>○ The Parish Council is pleased to note that in some cases more consideration is being taken of BNDP policies when reaching planning application decisions and setting conditions.</li> </ul>																																																																														
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<p><b>a. Highways Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Clerk has attempted to contact UKPN regarding the reinstatement of the Woodcock Lane ditch, and is waiting for a response.</li> </ul> <p><b>b. Lorry Watch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cllr Neville requested, on behalf of residents of Bishopden Road, that BPC sets up a Lorry Watch scheme.</li> <li>● Details of the scheme and how to set one up can be found on the KCC website <a href="#">Lorry Watch - Kent County Council</a></li> <li>● The Clerk has approached Cllr Cruse asking if he would take the lead on this and it was agreed to ask Cllrs Cruse and Presgrave to carry out the initial research and contact KCC.</li> </ul> <p><b>c. Flyposting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It was agreed to remove the Dulwich Prep sign currently at the crossroads. The Clerk to finalise a policy.</li> </ul>	<b>CL</b>																																																																													
8. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<p><b>a. Monthly Finance</b></p> <p>TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st August 2024</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Brought Forward Current Account</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>22549.88</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brought Forward Savings Account</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>50203.42</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brought forward</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>72753.30</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Payee</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Reference</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Amount</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">B&amp;IG WI</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Copying</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.80</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>1.80</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenditure</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Supplier</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Reference</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Amount</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Employee</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Staffing Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1113.61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS o2</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Telephone</td> <td style="text-align: right;">31.80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS F&amp;C Cleaning</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Public Toilet</td> <td style="text-align: right;">702.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Tompsett Landscaping</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Grounds Maintenance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">312.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Edf</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Public Toilet</td> <td style="text-align: right;">130.98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS A J Gallagher</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Insurance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1340.72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS ASL</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Printing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">30.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Advanced Tree Solutions</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">IG oak Tree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">570.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Business Stream</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Public Toilet</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23.83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Peter Ellis</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Defibrillators</td> <td style="text-align: right;">156.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BACS Memorial Hall</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Meeting Hire</td> <td style="text-align: right;">18.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>4429.69</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>68325.41</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current account bank statement 099 31st August 2024</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>18121.99</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Savings account bank statement 004 31st August 2024</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>50203.42</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reconciled</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>68325.41</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Approved payments September 2024</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>DD Nest</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Pension</td> <td style="text-align: right;">253.65</td> </tr> </table>	Brought Forward Current Account	<b>22549.88</b>	Brought Forward Savings Account	<b>50203.42</b>	Brought forward	<b>72753.30</b>	Income		Payee	Reference	Amount	B&IG WI	Copying	1.80	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1.80</b>	Expenditure			Supplier	Reference	Amount	BACS Employee	Staffing Costs	1113.61	BACS o2	Telephone	31.80	BACS F&C Cleaning	Public Toilet	702.00	BACS Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	312.00	BACS Edf	Public Toilet	130.98	BACS A J Gallagher	Insurance	1340.72	BACS ASL	Printing	30.00	BACS Advanced Tree Solutions	IG oak Tree	570.00	BACS Business Stream	Public Toilet	23.83	BACS Peter Ellis	Defibrillators	156.75	BACS Memorial Hall	Meeting Hire	18.00	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4429.69</b>	Balance		<b>68325.41</b>	Current account bank statement 099 31st August 2024		<b>18121.99</b>	Savings account bank statement 004 31st August 2024		<b>50203.42</b>	Reconciled		<b>68325.41</b>	Approved payments September 2024			DD Nest	Pension	253.65	
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9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<p><u>a. Beacon Field Wildflower Meadow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris Thomas has been asked to carry out a cut and collect this month. The Clerk to follow up to ensure this happens.</li> <li>• The Clerk has chased KCC and their solicitor again for a draft of the final lease agreement. The last draft which was sent was still incorrect.</li> </ul> <p><u>b. Village Asset/Maintenance Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Hagan had reviewed and updated the asset report. It was agreed that the bus shelters and salt bins which are not BPC responsibilities should be monitored. It was agreed that a record of benches around the village (not those on BVT land) should be logged and monitored.</li> <li>• Flagpole : the new flagpole now in place and BPC thanks the PCC for its donation of £500 and Cllr Holden's recommendation and support for an application to Combined Member Grant Scheme for £1,500. A request has been received for new flags and costs will be sought.</li> <li>• Telephone Kiosk : the work on the Benenden phone kiosk is complete. BPC thanks Phil Robbins for his voluntary work refurbishing this and for the financial donations from parishioners to help meet the costs of refurbishment. Volunteers are sought to refurbish the Iden Green kiosk.</li> <li>• Cllr Lewis commented on the gateway and light on the path leading to Iden Green Pavilion. It is unclear who owns and is responsible for these. The archway itself was given by TWBC and the electricity for the light is paid for by the pavilion. The Clerk to try to establish responsibility.</li> </ul> <p><u>c. Parish Wells</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bollards : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ KCC Highways has confirmed that a S115 application needs to be made for the erection of bollards. The cost of the application seems to be £400 and, assuming there will be a small amount of excavation, BPC will need to ensure/complete a Controlled Waste Transfer Note (SWL7).</li> <li>○ It had been suggested three cast iron bollards be installed in front of the Benenden Well structure, which would be set in concrete below ground level at a depth of 300mm but it was agreed that further research should be carried out as concerns were raised about the effectiveness of these bollards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Iden Green Well Lettering : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Anthony Hicks has advised that the stone mason has looked at the damaged stone and the only method of repair in order to re-instate the inscription would be to cut the front face off the existing stone, and quoted an approximate price of £800-900 + VAT.</li> <li>○ It was agreed to seek advice and quotes from local stone carvers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>d. Village Tidy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes place on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November.</li> <li>• Cllr Cochrane will take delivery of the equipment and distribute from Benenden's Shop.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CL</b></p> <p><b>CL</b></p> <p><b>GB</b></p>																																								

10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p><b>a. Allotments</b> Report from Allotment Association :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main water installation underway. Trench is dug and signed-off as fit for purpose by Southern Water. However digging the trench was much slower than planned and no progress made down the length of the site. Although 1, maybe 2, standpipes can be installed.</li> <li>• Southern Water will connect to mains on 4<sup>th</sup> November. This is later than anticipated as SW advised that they need to ‘traffic manage’ Walkhurst Road during connection which requires 12 weeks’ notice to KCC.</li> <li>• Committee will review how to best manage provision of convenient access to water at bottom of the site.</li> <li>• Money remaining from existing grants to go towards repairs of fencing at the bottom of field.</li> <li>• Work to start on funding the parking area. Need to agree a specification to secure quotes and progress with grant applications.</li> <li>• Social event lined up for early October.</li> <li>• Bank account balance of £1,487; £400 of which is committed to water and fencing projects.</li> <li>• 2 vacant plots.</li> </ul> <p><b>b. Benenden Bowls Club Water Supply</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request received from Benenden Bowls Club to take its water supply from the supply to the public toilets, with a sub-meter fitted, to assist with the water to the bowls green and club. The bowls club could be charged for their usage.</li> <li>• Currently there is a supply that runs from the pavement to the bowls club, in an old metal pipe with very low pressure, behind the toilet block.</li> <li>• The Clerk had asked a number of questions and requested further information from the Bowls Club, but has not yet received a response. BPC cannot agree to this until this is received.</li> </ul>	
11. CORRESPONDENCE/ PARISHIONER QUESTIONS	<p><b>a. East End</b> A parishioner has raised concerns about the hospital site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requesting the windows of the houses on the northern quadrant are not boarded up and that there are lights on timers in the houses until they are knocked down and that the hospital patrols the area as previously.</li> <li>• There has been criminal damage on the south side and this is now happening on the north side since the tenants have moved out. A resident’s shed has been broken into and the abandoned houses and derelict look of the site has attracted interest.</li> <li>• Concerns were also raised about the length of the construction period and the unsightly environment.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Thomas has forwarded the concerns to the Hospital Director and will be requesting a meeting to discuss issues that may arise during the development of the site.</p> <p><b>b. Benenden Bonfire and Fireworks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication from the Benenden Bonfire Committee was circulated giving details of this year’s event on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, setting out pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements, parking, cones and signage</li> </ul> <p><b>c. Request for contribution to restore historic milk churn stand at Nineveh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Grant had received communication from the residents of Nineveh Cottage regarding recently uncovered remnants of a milk churn stand which they would like to restore.</li> <li>• They are trying to raise funding for the restoration and asked if BPC would make a contribution. Cllr Grant has sent them some funding resources and asked for costs of the project.</li> <li>• BPC would need more information about costs and other funding before discussing further, bearing in mind the requirements for making a Section 137 contribution.</li> </ul>	
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2024, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion	
	The meeting closed at 8.50pm.	

C Levett, Clerk to Benenden Parish Councillor, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024