



Bearsted Parish Council

Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at the King George V Memorial Hall, Egremont Road on Tuesday 21st February 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Mike Harris (Chair) Cllr Mark Peters
Cllr Carolyn Smith (Vice Chair) Cllr Denis Spooner
Cllr Richard Ash MBE Cllr Sean Turner
Cllr David Hall

Also, in attendance was the Administrator Joanne Upton, Cllr Frank Jagger and six members of the public.

Reports from members of the public

One member of the public spoke about the Church Lane Car Park drainage issues and mentioned a previous resolution by the Environment Committee to progress works.

1. Declarations of intention to record

The Administrator declared that the meeting was to be recorded for minuting purposes.

2. Apologies and absences

Apologies were duly noted for Cllr English.

3. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying

Cllr Hall declared a family connection so would not vote on item 10e.

Cllr Smith declared an interest in Bearsted CAN as a member.

4. To elect a new Chairperson

Cllr Hall proposed Cllr Harris for Chair, seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with all in favour.

Cllr Hall proposed Cllr Smith for Vice Chair, seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with all in favour.

5. Signing of the Minutes of the last meeting

a) The minutes from 18th October 2022 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

b) The minutes from 6th February 2023 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

6. General Maintenance (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10 and Highways Act 1980 s96)

a) Pond fence. The administrator mentioned that since the quote had been provided the fencing had been vandalised further and may increase the cost of the quote. Cllr Harris stated this is a health and safety risk and proposed the Committee approve up to £2000 to repair the fences, seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.

b) Tree maintenance Hampson Way. Cllr Ash stated the previous resolution was to have the tree investigated, the report states that the tree is not dangerous to the neighbouring property. Cllr Spooner proposed not to cut back the tree but that the resident can and dispose of the branches in Meadow Bank, seconded by Cllr Harris and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

- c) Repairs to the electrical box on the Green. Cllr Hall proposed to accept the quote from Copper Leaf as this is a safety issue. Seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

- d) New padlock for the electrical box on the Green. Cllr Ash requested that the Environment Committee have delegated authority to allow the office to purchase necessary safety items without the need to wait for a committee meeting. Cllr Ash proposed to accept the quote, seconded by Cllr Harris and resolved with all in favour.
- e) Warings Contract. Cllr Spooner proposed to accept the prices for 2023/2024, seconded by Cllr Peters resolved with six in favour and one abstention. Including the cost to verti-drain the Elizabeth Harvie Field at the same time as the Cricket pitch.

7. **Bearsted Green** (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10)

- a) Correspondence: Fish in the pond. The committee agreed to monitor the situation.
- b) To consider the use of cricket covers on the cricket square: Cllr Harris mentioned the potential for vandalism, any damage would be at the cost and responsibility of the Cricket Club. Cllr Harris stated that this may be of concern to residents of the Green. Cllr Spooner proposed to approve the covers as a trial and review after the cricket season finishes in September, seconded by Cllr Harris resolved with all in favour.
- c) Bike stand location. Cllr Peters offered to provide guidance. Cllr Smith proposed that Cllr Peters meet with the resident that requested the stands to agree the position for the new bike stand. Seconded by Cllr Harris and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR PETERS

- d) Impact of fitness groups using the Green. The Administrator advised that this has been raised by Warings due to the extreme wet weather. It was agreed to talk to the fitness groups to discuss options to minimise damage. Proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR PETERS

- e) Flooding on the Green. Cllr Hall confirmed that he has written to the KCC Drainage Manager who has confirmed the drainage system is too shallow, Cllr Hall suggested BPC may need to look to fund improvements. Cllr Jagger advised that this has previously been passed from KCC to Southern Water due to foul water. It was agreed Cllr Hall will report back to Full Council on the response from KCC.

ACTION: CLLR HALL

- f) Memorial bench on the Green. Cllr Hall proposed that Cllr Ash meet with the Cricket Club to establish the location for the bench, seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR ASH

8. **Meadow Bank** (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10)

Cllr Spooner recommended that BPC needs to get advice on how to manage Meadow Bank as a nature reserve and a Management Plan is required. Cllr Harris proposed to defer until the next meeting, seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with all in favour.

9. **Open Spaces** (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10)

- a) Temporary flood lights on the EHF. Cllr Harris proposed to allow for a 12 month trial to be reviewed next year, seconded by Cllr Hall resolved with all in favour.

- b) Tree Inspection and quote to cut back Larch on the Green. Cllr Harris proposed to accept the quote, seconded by Cllr Peters resolved with all in favour.
- c) Proposal for all trees on BPC land to be inspected. Cllr Harris advised that a contractor should be employed to inspect all BPC insurable assets. A tree specialist should inspect annually and councillors should continue to inspect quarterly. Cllr Hall proposed that BPC obtain three quotes for annual inspections, seconded by Cllr Ash resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

- d) Maintenance of the bank opposite the train station. Cllr Harris stated that this is owned by KCC and clarified that BPC have a cultivation licence with KCC to maintain it. Cllr Harris proposed the Community Payback team assist with clearing weeds, BPC to review in 12 months to evaluate if the cost to maintain is warranted. Seconded by Cllr Peters resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR PETER

10. Allotments (Small Holding and Allotment Act 1908 ss23,25)

- a) Padlock for Church Lane Allotments. The Administrator raised concerns over the cost of a replacement Mul-T-Lock and additional keys, requested an alternative be considered. A member of the public advised that the Mul-T-Lock can be refurbished or a new lock provided to match existing keys.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

- b) Maintenance at the Street Allotment site. A member of the public advised that the hedges will be cut down with the new housing development so maintenance work would be minimal. The committee suggested the Administrator speak to Warings.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

- c) Letter to Church Lane allotment holders. Cllr Hall proposed to send a letter to plot holders to confirm the Notice to Terminate has been removed with an apology for the delay. Seconded by Cllr Ash resolved with six in favour and one abstention.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

- d) Refund plot deposit. The Administrator advised that the procedure for terminating a contract had not been followed correctly and requested approval to refund a £30 deposit. Cllr Harris proposed to refund, seconded by Cllr Ash resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

11. Church Lane Car Park (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s57(1)(a) and LGA 1972s126)

Anti-social Behaviour. The Committee discussed on going anti-social behaviour. Cllr Harris advised that a gate is unlikely to resolve the issues and likely to be damaged several times per year. Cllr Harris advised that a Public Space Protection Order could be requested but if provided would need to be enforced by MBC. It was agreed that Cllr Hall and Cllr Spooner would raise concerns at the Ward Cluster meeting and report back.

Drainage. Cllr Harris acknowledged that due to several Councillors leaving this has not been actioned. Cllr Hall agreed to contact KCC drainage. The committee agreed they will contact a few drainage consultants for advice.

12. Asset Checks and Meter Readings

Cllr Harris advised that play area inspections must be carried out by someone qualified, including the basic weekly inspections. Cllr Hall proposed investigating costs for a specialist to carry out operational weekly inspections to replace the monthly ones and continue with the annual inspections. Costs to be put forward to Full Council. Seconded by Cllr Peters and resolved with all in favour.

The remaining asset checks will continue to be carried out by Councillors and to review the process for these at the next meeting.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

13. Community Project

Cllr Hall confirmed he has a meeting with the resident next week and will report back to the Full Council.

14. Beautification of Bearsted

The Committee agreed to defer this until the next meeting.

15. Sustainability Policy

Cllr Hall proposed that all BPC policies should consider sustainability and that this should be deferred to the Finance and General Policy Committee, seconded by Cllr Spooner resolved with all in favour.

16. General Correspondence

a) Youth Committee. Cllr Harris suggested that Bearsted CAN should host meetings for younger residents and that a BPC Councillor will attend and bring back to the Committee items raised that BPC can assist with. Cllr Smith will liaise with Bearsted CAN.

ACTION: CLLR SMITH

b) Flood Warden. Cllr Harris advised that Flood Plans are not created at Parish level and that the Borough would have a Flood Plan in place with contingent procedures which include emergency services. It was agreed that as Bearsted does not experience major flooding no action would be taken.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR

c) Plastic Free Communities. The committee agreed that the group can send an invite to BPC and a Councillor will attend the meeting. Cllr Smith to respond to the group.

ACTION: CLLR SMITH

17. Future Agenda Items

Meadow Bank
Church Lane Car Park
Asset Checks and Meter Readings
Community Project
Beautification of Bearsted

18. Date of next Meeting, 18th April 2023.

There being no further business to transact, the meeting ended at 10:24pm

Signed.....Date.....