



Minutes of the Full Council meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at King George Memorial Hall, Manor Rise on Tuesday 11th July 2023 at 7.30pm

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| Present: | Cllr David Hall (Chairman) | Cllr Alan Rowe |
| | Cllr Denis Spooner (Vice Chair) | Cllr Val Springett |
| | Cllr Richard Ash MBE | Cllr Denis Spooner |
| | Cllr Clive English | Cllr Sean Turner |
| | Cllr Mike Harris | Cllr Christopher Waters |

Also, in attendance were the Acting Clerk Joanne Upton, the Deputy Clerk Amy Bush, the Administrator Lauren White and 1 member of the public.

Cllr Hall introduced the new Administrator to the Council.

Reports from members of the public

There were no reports from members of the public.

1. Declarations of intention to record.

The Deputy Clerk declared the meeting would be recorded for minuting.

2. Apologies and absences.

Apologies were received and noted for Cllr's Peters and Smith.

3. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying.

Cllr English declared he was a member of the Democratic and General Purpose Committee.

4. Signing of the Minutes of the last meeting.

Cllr Turner questioned if the Sustainability statement and Procurement Procedures statement should be included in the Committee's Terms of Reference rather than the Scheme of Delegation. The Acting Clerk confirmed the minutes state Scheme of Delegation as this was stated in the meeting but it has since been agreed these will go into the TORs. Cllr Turner also requested the legislation for sustainability policies to be included in Committee meeting papers.

The minutes of the Full Council on 13th June 2023 were agreed as a true record and duly signed with all in favour.

5. Reports:

- a) **Borough Councillors:** Cllr Spooner advised that the comments on the Community Governance Review reflect BPC from last year and the Democratic and General Purpose Committee acknowledged that this reflects historical issues and noted that BPC has now moved forward. Cllr Waters asked about BPC Planning members attending MBC meetings when BPC have called a planning application to committee. Cllr Spooner and Cllr English confirmed that objections in person have more influence than those received in writing. Cllr Ash noted that it costs money to call an application to committee so it is important that objections are raised in person. Cllr Springett stated that calling to committee sparks debate and ensures both opinions are fully considered. Cllr Springett advised that the planning application for Nethermount was discussed at Committee and she will be attending a meeting next week with the applicant and the Planning Officer to put forward a proposal from the neighbour for consideration. Cllr English noted that we had not received a report from the KCC Councillor and it was agreed that the Chairman writes to Sir Paul Carter to raise concerns about highways matters.

ACTION: CLLR HALL

- b) Community Warden: Cllr Hall read out the report from the Community Warden regarding fly tipping in Water Lane, which has been reported to MBC. Cllr Springett advised that MBC can look to install cameras in this area with permission from the landowner. Cllr Ash asked how we refer residents to the Community Warden and how many residents does she look after. Cllr Hall agreed he would ask her to attend the September Full Council meeting.

ACTION: CLLR HALL

- c) Police: The Acting Clerk advised that Sargent Paul Cook visited the Parish Office and met with the Chairman, Acting Clerk and the Community Warden. The Beat Officer would initially be covering a large area but this should reduce by January 2024 when they have more Officers. The Beat Officer had been in touch to confirm he will visit the Parish office soon.
- d) Clerk: The Acting Clerk advised the Council that payments in August will still need to be approved and the payments and financial information will be sent via email, Cllr's will need to approve them which is then ratified at the September meeting. The Acting Clerk advised that the Madginford Hall Committee has requested a BPC Councillor joins the committee as per their constitution which also gives BPC a discounted hire rate. Cllr English agreed to join their Committee and Cllr Turner agreed to be a substitute.

ACTION: OFFICE/CLLR ENGLISH

The Acting Clerk invited Councillors to visit Playscheme but this needs to be arranged with the office, help may also be required for registration in the mornings.

- e) Chairman: The Chairman reported that he attended a meeting with Helen Whatley on the 30th June and raised the issues of road closures, Operation Brock and the train service, Helen Whatley has agreed to speak to the Transport Minister. She will also investigate funding to support the Shopper bus after the initial two-year funding period. Cllr Hall invited all Councillors to the celebration of a former Councillor on the 22nd July. The Chairman advised that he would be arranging an informal meeting with the HR Committee and office staff to discuss the office structure going forward but welcomed all Councillors to attend or provide comments and suggestions. Cllr Springett thanked the office staff for their hard work. Cllr Turner noted that the office is not suitable for the Parish's needs. Cllr Springett advised BPC should request money from developments be allocated towards the cost of improving the Parish Office. Cllr Hall stated that the office staff are starting work on the Fireworks event and will need support from the Council in preparing and volunteering for this event. He has agreed to be the Site/ Health & Safety Manager and suggested that we seek advice from Outset on changes to Health and Safety legislation. Cllr Hall confirmed the previous resolution that he has delegated authority to make decisions which would subsequently be ratified at Full Council. The Acting Clerk asked Cllr Springett for an update on licensing for the event. It was confirmed a license for music and road closures is required. Cllr Springett and Cllr English will assist the office with this.

ACTION: OFFICE/CLLR's ENGLISH & SPRINGETT

6. Co-option

- a) Cllr Hall explained that James Day has previously attended a Full Council and Planning Committee meeting and was happy to be co-opted in absentia. Cllr Ash proposed to co-opt James Day which was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.
- b) Cllr English proposed to accept James Day on the Communications and Planning Committees, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

7. Committee Meeting and Working Group Reports

- a) Environment Committee: Cllr Harris advised that three quotes had been obtained and sent with the application for the Rural England Funding Grant to update the play equipment at the Bearsted Woodland Trust. The Committee referred residents to MBC & KCC regarding Rosemary Road open area and footpath maintenance. Streetlamps are being investigated to replace the damaged bollard lights on the Church Landway. Approval was given to the office for a 5 year fixed wire inspection to be undertaken. Cllr Harris proposed to accept the quote for £101.20 to repair the damage to the Church Landway gate, this was seconded by Cllr Rowe and resolved with all in favour. Cllr Harris advised the Committee discussed complaints received about the cricket covers, which were agreed as a trial for this season, conversations took place regarding the

possibility that the wicket area had been extended, the Committee decided that BPC would not request these to be moved back if it was established the area had been increased. The Committee have agreed to undertake some maintenance work at the Church Lane allotment site but shared paths are to be maintained by the tenants.

A quote for £36,000 was obtained to alleviate the drainage issues at the car park, but this was deemed too expensive and the level of works unnecessary to resolve the problems. It was agreed that Cllr Jagger will approach consultants for further advice.

Cllr Jagger will attend a meeting regarding the Grass Pitch funding and report back.

Quotes were considered to resurface the Church Landway but it was decided to defer pending potential extensions to the tennis club on the land opposite.

Medway Valley Partnership will be approached to provide advice and recommendation for maintenance of the pond.

Cllr Harris proposed to remove all the small planters under the notice boards and focus on maintaining 3 large planters, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

Cllr Jagger stated that there is a problem with the pond water and the company that fitted the valve needs to be contacted to come and check it as the water is at least 2ft below the required level.

ACTION: OFFICE

- b) Planning Committee: Cllr Ash advised he was elected as Chairman and Cllr Turner as Vice Chair but Cllr Turner had decided to step down until he felt more qualified for the position. The Committee had recommended approval on several applications and refusal on one, which may get called to committee. The Committee has agreed its statement of Principles of Sustainability but felt that there was no need for a statement for Procurement Processes as they do not spend money as a Committee. The outcome from the Gypsy & Traveller Consultation is still pending. Cllr Springett advised that she approached MBC regarding the 21-day decision process but was not given any other options except to request an extension for each application. Cllr English confirmed that you can add a holding comment with further information being added at a later date.
- c) Traffic Committee: Cllr Ash reported that he was elected as Chairman and Cllr Springett as Vice Chair. The Committee has agreed its statement of Principles of Sustainability and were reviewing the statement for Procurement Processes. The A20 gateway has now been completed, which BPC paid for and thanked ex Cllr Joanna Tribley for all her hard work towards this project. The double yellow lines at the junctions of Ashford Road/The Landway and Greensands/Ragstone Road have now been completed. The Consultation for parking restrictions in Cavendish/Copsewood and Shirley Way has now gone out, we are awaiting the results. The station crossing is still with the KCC design team. Cllr's Spooner and Springett are composing a letter in response to KCC's comments regarding highways. Cllr's Ash, Springett and Spooner and members of Thurnham and Hollingbourne Parish Councils attended a meeting with KCC. It was discussed that the installation of traffic islands at various locations between Otham Lane and the Park Gate Inn on the A20 are being considered to reduce the speed of traffic. KCC are looking into signage options to help reduce vehicle speeds on Otham Lane, Pilgrims Way, Water Lane and Thurnham Lane. Cllr Springett stated the KCC comments were made in a consultation document so BPC should consider responding to the consultation.
- d) Reports from members of the Council for outside bodies: Cllr Ash advised that he attended the AGM of KALC and was elected as a member of the Joint Transport Board. At the meeting concern was expressed with the Ward Cluster meetings. Bearsted is in a cluster with Otham and Downswood. The next meeting will be on the 12th of September when Cllr's Ash and Springett will attend. There were no updates on the MBC local plan. The Parish Charter which is the link between Borough and Parish Councils is still in draft phase and there is still no updated wording for the Code of Conduct Policy. Cllr English reported that through the Community Rail Partnership enforcement of ticketing on the trains has increased with many fines being issued. There will be a consultation on the

future of train station ticket offices and proposed that BPC write in support of keeping the ticket office at Bearsted, this was seconded by Cllr Rowe and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR ENGLISH

8. Policies

- a) Email Policy: Cllr Hall proposed to adopt the amended policy, which was seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with all in favour.
- b) Risk Management: Cllr Hall proposed to adopt the revised policy, which was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.
- c) Confidential Disclosure Policy: It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

9. Finance (Accounts and Audit Regulation 2011/817)

- a) Resolution to approve/ratify quotations or payments.
 - i. Food for celebration on the 22nd. The Acting Clerk requested a budget of £250 depending on final numbers attending, this was proposed by Cllr English, seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.
 - ii. Plaque for celebration on the 22nd. Cllr Hall proposed to accept the quotation of £365, this was seconded by Cllr Rowe and resolved with all in favour.
 - iii. Church Landway gate repairs. This item has already been voted on and approved.
 - iv. Adobe Standard for Teams. Cllr Springett proposed to accept the quotation, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.
- b) Grants and Donations requests:
No requests.
- c) Authorise payments: Cllr Jagger asked about the costs for inflatables, these are for playscheme. Cllr Ash queried the payment to Preventative Healthcare Co. The Acting Clerk confirmed this was the Occupational Health assessment preapproved by the Council for a member of staff. Cllr English proposed to accept the payments, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.
- d) Finance Reports: Cllr Ash noted that the Full Council had already spent a large proportion of its budget this year. Cllr Hall proposed to accept the reports, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.
- e) Balances of accounts: Cllr Hall proposed to accept the statements, this was seconded by Cllr Rowe and resolved with all in favour. Cllr Jagger queried the interest being earned. Cllr Hall agreed that the bank account will be reviewed by the Finance Committee at the September meeting.
- f) NatWest Signatories: The Acting Clerk reported that we only have one current Councillor as a signatory for these accounts and Cllr's Hall, Smith and Spooner had agreed to become signatories on the account. Cllr Hall proposed to accept this, which was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.

10. GDPR

The Council suggested arranging one day time and one evening training session and then arranging a third date for those who are unable to attend either of these. The Deputy Clerk suggested finding alternative training that can be undertaken in own time rather than attending a zoom training session. Cllr Waters suggested Outset may also be able to arrange GDPR training. Cllr Waters reported receiving multiple rogue emails. Cllr English explained as they come from gmail addresses and each address is slightly different systems are unable to block or screen these. Cllr Waters raised the concern that BPC is at risk from attachments within these emails. It was agreed that the office will speak to the email provider to establish if there is a process for screening attachments.

ACTION: OFFICE

11. Mynn Awards

Cllr Hall confirmed that Cllr Spooner, himself and a member of the public has agreed to host and judge the Mynn awards which will be held before the November Full Council Meeting. The Acting Clerk advised that advertising for this should start soon.

ACTION: CLLR's HALL/SPOONER

12. Ashford Road Post Office.

Cllr Rowe advised that many older residents are very worried about losing this service in Bearsted. Cllr Hall confirmed that BPC should offer assistance to potential businesses interested in taking over the Post Office service and agreed to defer this to the Communications Committee to decide how to advertise this in the village.

13. Community Governance Review.

BPC are not commenting on this review, so no further action is required.

14. Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr English confirmed that the legislation states this document must be signed within two months of the election so Cllr Mark Peters is no longer a Councillor. He is not disqualified and can be co-opted or elected at a future date. The Council agreed the Chairman will write to Mark Peters to advise the situation and that he would be welcome to return should he wish to.

ACTION: CLLR HALL

15. Code of Conduct Complaints.

Cllr Hall reported that MBC has not upheld two Code of Conduct complaints. Cllr Ash requested that the results of Code of Conducts should be listed on our news page and not under policies. It was agreed to move the Code of Conduct result currently on our website to News.

ACTION: OFFICE

16. Trophies at the library.

Cllr Turner advised that there are several Community Award trophies being stored at the library who have asked if we would like them back. Cllr Spooner advised these were not awarded by BPC and are linked to the Madginford Hall.

ACTION: OFFICE

17. Future Agenda Items

Confidential Disclosure Policy.
Fireworks.
GDPR Training.
Smarts Cottage Footpath.

18. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 12th September 2023

There being no further business to transact, the meeting closed at 22.00 hrs

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