



**Minutes of the Full Council meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at Madginford Hall,
Egremont Road on Tuesday 12th September 2023 at 7.30pm**

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|----------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Present: | Cllr David Hall (Chairman) | Cllr Frank Jagger |
| | Cllr Denis Spooner (Vice Chair) | Cllr Martha Monday |
| | Cllr Richard Ash MBE | Cllr Carolyn Smith |
| | Cllr Pat Catt | Cllr Val Springett |
| | Cllr James Day | Cllr Sean Turner |
| | Cllr Clive English | |

Also, in attendance were the Acting Clerk Joanne Upton, the Deputy Clerk Amy Bush, and 2 members of the public.

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 purposes.

2. Apologies and absences.

Apologies were received and noted for Cllr's M. Harris, A. Rowe and C. Waters.

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

None declared.

4. Signing of the Minutes of the last meeting.

Cllr Jagger noted that his name had been missed off the attendees. Cllr Hall proposed to accept the minutes of the Full Council on 11th July as a true record, with that amendment. This was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.

5. To resolve to go into closed session and to exclude the press and public at item 15, Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 in accordance with standing order 21 (xi) Legal Matters

This was proposed by Cllr Spooner, seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.

6. Reports:

a) Borough Councillors: Cllr Jagger enquired about urgent items on agendas, as he wanted to update the Council on the sewage works on the Green. Cllr English explained that urgent items can be raised but not voted on. Cllr Hall confirmed he would be raising this under the Chairmans report and could be discussed then.

Cllr Spooner advised the Council that the application for Aldi had been refused. Reasons included that the land has been designated for medical and science purposes and the effect on the landscape.

Cllr Springett advised that the Nethermount planning application is due to be reviewed by the planning committee next week, after the objector offered a reasonable compromise.

b) Community Warden: The Acting Clerk advised the Warden is currently off sick so no report had been received.

c) Police: The Acting Clerk advised that no report had been received.

d) Clerk: The Acting Clerk has completed the ILCA training and advised the Council that a further training course, ILCA to CiLCA was needed before being able to undertake the CiLCA qualification. Cllr Ash proposed to approve the cost at £120 plus VAT for the training. This was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: ACTING CLERK

Councillors were reminded to complete the GDPR training.

ACTION: ALL CLLR's

New road names were noted for the Cross Keys development.

The Acting Clerk provided an update on this years Summer Playscheme and thanked the Councillors who helped with registration. There was a deficit of £950.76, which included additional hours incurred by office staff at £846.89, which had not been included in previous years, there was an unforeseen additional £40 cost for storage boxes due to the sewage leak and BPC were still waiting on a £250 agreed donation from Boxley Parish Council. The playscheme was extremely successful and had received great feedback from parents. The Council thanked the office staff for their hard work and efforts in organising and managing the event.

- e) Chairman: The Chairman reported that he had written to Helen Whatley on behalf of the Parish Council and the community regarding the chaos on the roads, through lack of signage, co-ordination and communication. The Council were not notified of the additional works on Ware Street. The Shopper bus route and times have been affected, resulting in less people using the service. Cllr English also noted that the notices for road closures have been issued late. Cllr Spooner stated that there needs to be more details on the road closed/diversion signs to indicate where roads are closed as currently signs indicate the whole road is closed. Cllr Hall advised that works had begun on the sewage system at the Green. Cllr Jagger advised he had spoken to the foreman who works for Southern Water who advised that the pipe which runs from the manhole outside Bell House to the manhole at Church Lane, 20-30 meters long had collapsed. The surface water gullies currently connect directly to the foul water system and the foreman has been instructed to repair the pipe and then reconnect the surface water gullies to the foul water pipe. This is unlikely to resolve the issue going forward and requested KCC involvement for a resolution. Cllr Hall suggested he meet with Cllr Jagger on site and liaise with KCC urgently.

ACTION: CLLR's HALL/JAGGER

7. Co-option

Two applications were received to join the Parish Council, Martha Monday and Pat Catt, both applicants spoke about their interests and reasons for wanting to join.

Cllr English proposed to co-opt Martha Monday, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

Cllr English proposed to co-opt Pat Catt, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with all in favour.

Cllr's Monday and Catt signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting at 20.00hrs.

Cllr Hall proposed to accept Cllr Monday onto the Planning and Communications Committees. This was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

Cllr Ash proposed to accept Cllr Catt onto the Communications and Environment Committees. This was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

8. Committee Meeting and Working Group Reports

- a) Communications Committee: Cllr Hall advised that the Committee had discussed the Parish noticeboards and recommended decommissioning the one at the Holy Cross Church and removing the one at Hog Hill, repairing it and using it to replace the damaged one on the Ashford Road. Cllr Ash queried the reason for this as both are located in areas with high footfall. It was agreed to defer this back to the Communications Committee for further discussion. Cllr Springett suggested Councillors view the noticeboards and provide suggestions on which ones could be removed. Cllr Smith requested a list of locations be provided to all Councillors.

ACTION: OFFICE /ALL CLLR's

- b) Planning Committee: Cllr Ash advised that no Vice Chair has been elected yet. An MBC Enforcement Officer had attended the last meeting and provided an excellent briefing on planning enforcement. The Committee had reviewed 6 applications, recommending approval for four. "No objection" was recommend on one application leaving it to MBC to decide. "No Comment" was provided for the last application as the objector highlighted relevant policies to support their objection.

Three committee members had attended the Introduction to Planning training. Cllr Ash proposed to adopt the Scheme of Delegation, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with ten in favour and one abstention. Cllr English confirmed this is a stand-alone Scheme of Delegation but would also be written into the main Scheme of Delegation.

ACTION: CLLR ENGLISH

- c) Finance Committee: Cllr Hall advised that the committee is reviewing the bank accounts. It was decided BPC will continue with the Unity account but Cllr's Smith and Jagger are looking at alternative options for the savings accounts. Cllr Jagger stated that suitable alternatives are likely to have annual interest and we would still not receive monthly statements. The Acting Clerk advised that the Finance Officer must have visual confirmation of the balance in order to complete quarterly VAT returns. Therefore, the Council needs accounts that can be accessed via online banking.

Cllr Hall confirmed the committee has been reviewing all its leases and inconsistencies were highlighted. They are difficult to understand due to language used and it is difficult to establish if BPC and the lease holder are acting compliantly. Cllr Hall proposed that the Council grant him delegated authority to seek a legal professional to review the leases and provide an easy to understand report and then report back to the Finance Committee. This was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR HALL

The Committee discussed the need to extend the Parish Office, the office staff are to write a wish list of requirements, and this will be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting.

ACTION: OFFICE

- d) HR Committee: Cllr Hall advised the Committee met to agree the process for advertising the Clerk vacancy.

Cllr Jagger raised concerns that the office should be open 5 days per week and that the job advert should contain more clarity on the role and responsibilities of the Clerk and RFO. It was agreed these concerns are important issues that need to be addressed but appointing a Clerk is the priority. Cllr Hall proposed to advertise the vacancy for two weeks on the Parish website and KALC website. This was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with nine in favour and two against.

- e) Reports from members of the Council for outside bodies: Cllr English advised that he would be attending the Kent Rail Summit and welcomed other Councillors to attend.

9. Policies

- a) Procurement Procedure Policy: Cllr English proposed to adopt the policy, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with ten in favour and two abstentions.
- b) Confidential Disclosure Policy: Cllr English proposed to adopt the updated policy, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with ten in favour and two abstentions.
- c) Environmental & Sustainability Policy: Cllr Turner requested the relevant Acts to be added to the policy and to replace the wording 'its influence over others' with 'its example to others' and add 'after relevant investigation' under the tree section. Cllr English proposed to adopt the policy with these amendments, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with ten in favour and two abstentions.

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

- a) Resolution to approve/ratify quotations or payments.
- i. 5 year fixed wire inspection for Parish Office. Cllr Hall proposed to accept the Voltage Electrical quote at £220 plus VAT, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with ten in favour, one against and one abstention.
 - ii. Additional keys for the Church Landway gate. Cllr Hall proposed to allow two additional keys to the Scout group, charge a deposit and obtain names and contact details of all keyholders. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.
 - iii. Ratify the cost of welding repairs to the Elizabeth Harvie Field fencing. Cllr English proposed to accept the quote from Flash Welding, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.
 - iv. Ratify the cost to remove all the planters under noticeboards. Cllr Smith proposed to accept the quote from Lee Harrison, this was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.

b) Grants and Donations requests:

No requests.

c) Ratify August Payments: Cllr Hall proposed to accept the payments, which was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with eleven in favour and one abstention.

d) Authorise September payments: Cllr Jagger queried why the date on the reports shows the American way with the month first, the Acting Clerk advised this will be looked into as it is received from the Finance Officer and added to papers with the day showing first and Cllr Jagger requested dates to be added to the finance report.

ACTION: ACTING CLERK

Cllr Jagger queried why we have separate bank accounts for Environment and Land funds. Cllr English confirmed this is not best practice and Cllr Spooner advised this is historical and due to Project A.

ACTION: FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr English proposed to accept the payments which was seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with ten in favour and two abstentions.

e) Finance Reports & review of budgets: Cllr Ash noted that the Full Council has already spent a large proportion of its budget this year and this needs to be monitored. The Council accepted the Finance reports.

f) Balances of accounts: These were duly noted.

11. Fireworks

Cllr Hall advised that the Premises licence is due to be approved. Cllr Hall asked the Council to consider the cost of the tickets for this year's event and explained the previous issues of not charging for a child ticket. To comply with licence and insurance requirements Cllr Hall proposed to charge £10 per adult ticket and £2 per child ticket and limit ticket sales to 3000. This will be a ticketed event only with no admissions on the night. This was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour. The Acting Clerk advised that the contractor who usually transports fencing and road signs is unavailable this year and we need to hire a transit van, Cllr Ash proposed to accept the cost of up to £100, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: OFFICE

12. Christmas Market

Cllr Hall confirmed the Market Manager is organising this event with help from BPC. Cllr Hall explained the cost implications should the event have to be cancelled. Cllr Springett proposed the Chairman finds a cancellation insurance policy for this event, BPC to pay the Market Manager £2,000 if the event is cancelled which can be claimed back via the insurance policy. BPC should consider an annual cancellation policy going forward to cover all events. This was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR HALL/OFFICE

13. Mynn Awards

The Deputy Clerk advised only four nominations had been received so far and further advertising for this is needed. The Mynn Awards Committee will need to arrange a meeting prior to the next Communication Committee meeting to review the nominations.

ACTION: MYNN AWARDS COMMITTEE/OFFICE

14. Internal Audit

The Acting Clerk explained that the Internal Auditor is semi retiring this year and will no longer be a member of the accounting body but that he is still qualified to undertake the audit. Cllr English proposed to continue using the Internal Auditor, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

15. Frequency of Committee Meetings

Cllr Jagger suggested that certain committees may need to meet more often than every two months. Cllr Jagger has concerns that it is too long between meetings and this delays necessary action being taken on important issues in the village. The Acting Clerk advised that there are no available Tuesdays to hold additional meetings and the Council would need to consider holding

meetings on other evenings. The Council agreed this needs more thought on how it could be managed.

ACTION: COUNCIL

16. The Council moved to closed session and excluded the press and public, Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 in accordance with standing order 10 (xi) Legal Matters

Cllr Spooner updated the Council on an on-going legal matter. Cllr Spooner proposed BPC writes a formal letter of complaint to KCC and request confirmation on intended action. This was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with eleven in favour and one abstention.

ACTION: CLLR SPOONER

17. Future Agenda Items

Frequency of committee meetings.

Fireworks.

GDPR Training.

Legal Matter.

18. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 10th October 2023

There being no further business to transact, the meeting closed at 22.20 hrs

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