

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at Bearsted Golf Club on Tuesday 2nd April 2024 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr David Hall (Chairman)

Cllr Denis Spooner (Vice Chair)

Cllr Richard Ash (MBE)

Cllr Pat Catt

Cllr Clive English

Cllr Frank Jagger

Cllr Martha Monday

Cllr Alan Rowe

Cllr Val Springett

Cllr Carolyn Smith

Cllr Chris Water

Also, in attendance were The Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Gordon Newton, The Clerk Joanne Upton, The Deputy Clerk Amy Bush, the Administrator Lauren White and approximately 75 members of the public.

Apologies were received and duly noted for Cllr's James Day, Mike Harris & Sean Turner





Bearsted Annual Parish Meeting 2024

Welcome and overview from the Chairman.

Cllr Hall welcomed the Mayor and members of the public and thanked the Bearsted Golf Club for hosting the APM.

Cllr Hall reported the Council has worked hard over the last 12 months prioritising good governance and improving our policies & procedures and he thanked the office staff for their support.

Cllr Hall thanked Cllr's Harris and Rowe for their hard work & support over the last year, as they have decided not to stand in the May election.

Cllr Hall invited the Bearsted Woodland Trust to speak as part of the Community Groups reports.

Mr Wale reported the BWT is in its 20th year. It is a private charity trust with no external funding and is run by volunteers. They have a tree management and bench sponsorship programme. He spoke about various initiatives including, litter picking teams and science days with Thurnham Infants School.

The thanks they receive from the community makes their hard work worthwhile.



Your Parish Council



**Chairman
Cllr David Hall**



**Vice Chair
Cllr Denis
Spooner**



**Cllr Richard
Ash MBE**



**Cllr Clive
English**



**Cllr James
Day**



**Cllr Mike
Harris**



**Cllr Frank
Jagger**



Cllr Pat Catt



**Cllr Martha
Monday**



**Cllr Alan
Rowe**



**Cllr Val
Springett**



**Cllr Carolyn
Smith**



**Cllr Sean
Turner**



**Cllr Chris
Waters**



Committees and Working Groups

Minute ref: 2026

Full Council – Monthly meeting

Environment – Monthly meeting (currently)

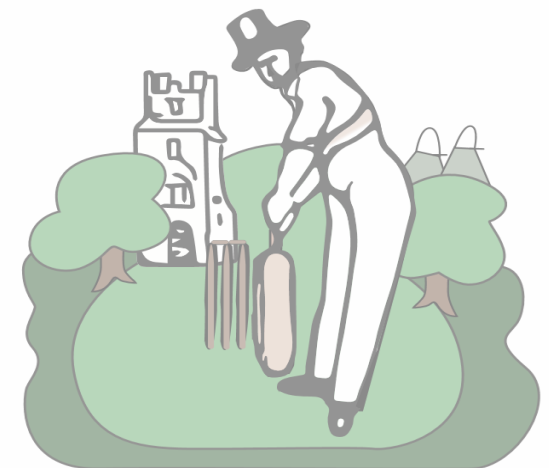
Communications – Bi-monthly meeting

Traffic and Transport – Bi-monthly meeting

Planning working group – As required

Finance working group – Monthly meeting

HR – As required



The Environment Committee

Minute ref: 2027



Chairman
Cllr Mike Harris



Vice Chair
Cllr Carolyn Smith



Cllr Richard Ash MBE



Cllr Denis Spooner



Cllr Pat Catt



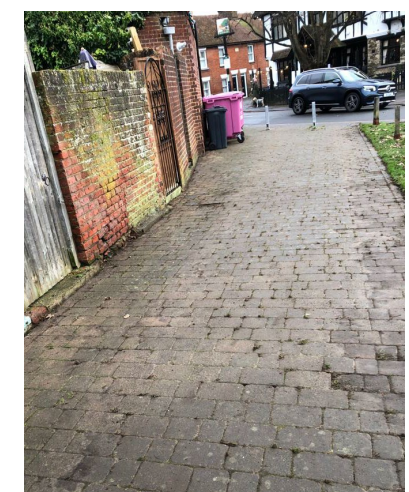
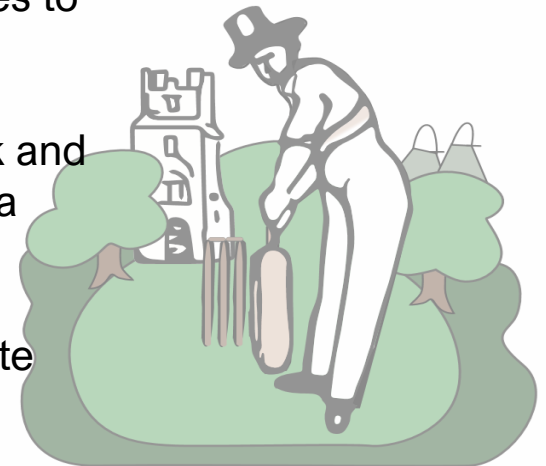
Cllr Frank Jagger

Maintaining and improving our open spaces and facilities.
Ensuring a safe environment for residents and visitors.

Cllr Smith reported on the new lamps installed on the Church Landway and the new bench on the Ashford Road. The return of Community Pay back scheme and the work they have undertaken around the village. Working closely with both allotment sites to make improvements.

Future projects include, work on a drainage solution at the Church Lane car park and working with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to turn Meadow Bank into a nature reserve and make improvements to the village pond.

Acknowledgement was given to Bearsted CAN on their work on the bank opposite the train station.



Communications Committee



**Chairman
Cllr David
Hall**



**Vice Chair
Cllr Denis
Spooner**



**Cllr Clive
English**



Cllr Pat Catt



**Cllr Sean
Turner**



**Cllr James
Day**



**Cllr Martha
Monday**

Planning of our local events and sharing Council news through our website, Facebook and Newsletter.

Cllr Hall thanked Vanessa Flanagan & her team for running a fantastic Christmas Market in 2023 and for her continued commitment managing the monthly Bearsted Market.

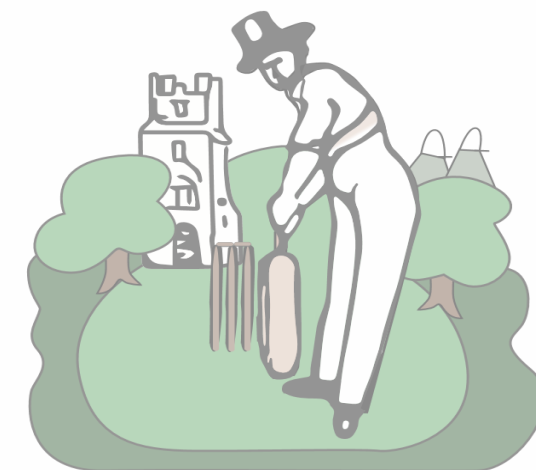
Thanks was given to Amanda for running the playscheme which hosts 120 children per day and is a wonderful experience for children and supports working families during school holidays.

Old Time Music event will be paused for this year while we investigate alternatives.

The Fireworks display was attended by approx. 3000 people in 2023.

The Green and The Elizabeth Harvie field also host external events. These include productions from the Hazlett Theatre, Classic Cars on the Green and the annual Bearsted Fayre.

Football and Fitness Clubs also take place on our open spaces.



Traffic and Transport Committee

Minute ref: 2029



Chairman
Cllr Richard Ash MBE



Vice Chair
Cllr Val Springett



Cllr Alan
Rowe



Cllr Denis
Spooner

Working with the community and KCC Highways to improve the safety of our roads.

Cllr Ash reported the A20 gateway was funded by BPC to help reduce speeding on the Ashford Road.

He spoke about the many initiatives the Committee are working on including double yellow lines at various locations, new signage & road markings in Otham Lane and a pedestrian crossing at the train station.

The Community Bus has been successfully initiated, in spite of all the road works and is funded by Bearsted and Detling Parish Council with the support of a KCC grant.

He thank Cllr Springett for her work setting up the Coordinated Parishes Traffic Group who are working on reducing speed and weight limits on county lanes and reducing the speed limit on the A20, Ashford Road.



Planning Committee



Chairman
Cllr Richard Ash MBE



Cllr James Day



Cllr Martha Monday



Cllr Chris Waters



Cllr Alan Rowe

Providing recommendations to MBC on planning applications when needed.

Cllr Ash noted that BPC are only consultees and the MBC are the decision makers.

MBC agreed with 92% of the comments made by BPC on applications.

Conservation area appraisal and management plan is under review and working closely with the Parish Council.

Future of Planning Committee: A committee will no longer meet monthly to discuss planning applications. Instead, applications will be reviewed by a working group and referred to Full Council if a comment is needed.

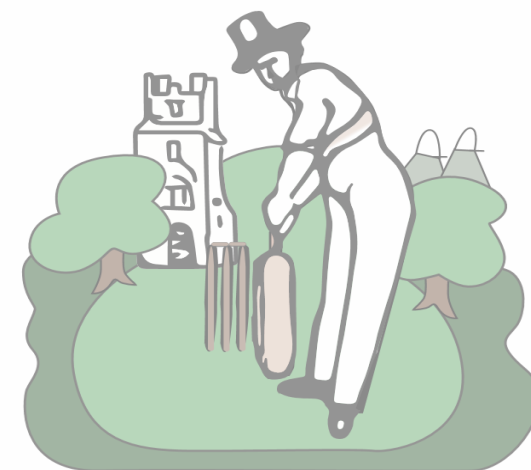
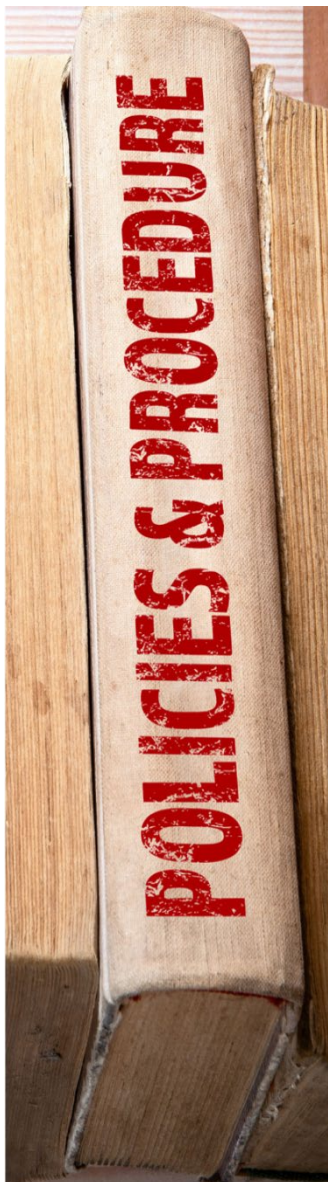


The Finance and General Policy Committee

Overseeing the Council finances and developing our policies and procedures.

Cllr Hall explained the importance of good governance and the hard work the Council have undertaken to ensure policies are up to date. He thanked Cllr English for his hard work.

A new working group with Full Council responsibility.
From March 2024 a Finance working group will consider all financial matters and make recommendations to Full Council. Changes and updates to policies will be considered and approved at Full Council meetings.



The Mynn Awards

Bearsted Parish Council are very proud to celebrate the achievements and contributions made by the residents of Bearsted.

In 2023 awards were given in November to individuals and groups around the Parish who went above and beyond.

We have invited those winners today and would like to share some of their stories with you.

The awards will commence again in 2025 and will be celebrated annually in April as part of the APM.



The 2023 Annual Mynn Awards took place on 14th November at Madginford Hall. Bearsted Parish Council was delighted to receive so many nominations. Awards were presented to our residents for Service to the Community and Local Volunteering.



Bearsted walking group

Established 2016, the group meet weekly at Holy Cross church. This engaging local team of leaders bring people together to enjoy walking and talking.

Chris Dobson, Paul and Sue Eaton, Steve and Mary West, Trewin Lawes, Belinda Bishop, Jeanette Ward and Alison Woodcock



Our local litter pickers

We are very grateful to all of the residents who give up their time rain or shine to keep the Parish looking tidy and litter free.

Jo Wilkinson, Alan Thorpe, Vivien Bowles, Gary Palmer, Alan and Christine Thomas, John Williams, John Paxter and Nicola Hart



Tracy Bosman

Tracy was nominated for her dedication to animal welfare across Kent. She has been a key contributor on the local Facebook hub advising and helping many residents. As well as animal welfare Tracy plays a key role in the supply of humanitarian aid in Ukraine.



Paul Stewart

Our landlord at The Oak on the Green, Paul has gone above and beyond in so many ways. He has set up a fantastic community social football group enjoyed by many residents. He always helps to promote events and activities within the Parish and has supported and raised money for many charities. Thank you Paul!



Joann Corby

Joann was awarded for her excellent work at Madginford Library running many activities for local children, helping to engage them in the library. This included reintroducing the much loved baby and toddler group Rhyme Time. Joann is friendly, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and creative. She's a great asset not just to the library, but also the community at large.

Bearsted Friendship Group

Marion Brooks and Shân Lythgoe were awarded for their work with the Bearsted Friendship Group. Each week they arrange for around 20 residents to get together, for those who do not have much social contact. Shân and Marion give up their spare time to arrange activities and promote the group.

Shân Lythgoe – The Girl Guides

Shân was also recognised for many years of service leading the Girl Guides. As well as establishing the Girl Guide units in the area she was key in the opening of the first Rainbows unit for Bearsted back in 1993. Now taking a step back from her leading role she continues to be heavily involved in District fundraising, challenge hikes, activity days and camps/sleepovers for the various units in Bearsted.



Canon John Corbyn

Canon John Corbyn, now retired was awarded for his long service to the community. He has been the Vicar at Holy Cross Church, Bearsted for more than 21 years, conducting hundreds of Baptisms , Marriage Ceremonies and Funerals as well as Sunday and weekday services. He also set up the church Toddler groups, involved himself in the various societies and social groups. He served our residents going above and beyond as a committed pastor, visiting parishioners in Care Homes, in hospitals, in their homes, wherever they are and whatever their needs.

Bearsted Parish Council also awarded highly commended certificates for service to the community

Shelagh, Paula, Sue and Lesley from the Ashford Road Post Office

The ladies at the Bearsted Post Office were nominated for their customer service. They are supportive and welcoming to their visitors deserve recognition for their loyalty. They were presented with a highly commended award.



Kayleigh Poynton - Bearsted Railway ticket office

Kayleigh was nominated for her friendly, cheerful and helpful service at the Bearsted tickets office. Always approachable she goes out of her way to be helpful. She is an asset within our community and has been recognised for this with a highly commended award.



Cllr Pat Marshall MBE – A celebration of 50 years



On Saturday 22nd July, Bearsted Parish Council hosted an event to celebrate the many achievements of former Councillor Pat Marshall MBE. This was attended by many current and former Parish and Borough Councillors along with her friends and former colleagues.

Tributes were paid to Pat for her service to the community and her time given to so many organisations including, Maidstone Borough Council, Bearsted Parish Council, Madginford Schools, the Women's Institute, Madginford Hall and the Bearsted Fayre. The Mayor of Maidstone Cllr Gordon Newton and Chairman of Bearsted Parish Council Cllr David Hall unveiled a plaque to mark Pats achievements along with the naming of the large hall as the Pat Marshall room.



Community Clubs and Groups

Paul – Bearsted Footie Group: Paul started the group in 2022, which raises money for charities, it also enables men to come together to provide a support network. Last year they raised £3000 for the Making Miracles charity and this year they are supporting the Heart of Kent Hospice and have adopted a Shaun the Sheep, called Oakley.

Philip – Church Lane Allotments: Philip has been Chair since April 23 and thanked BPC, the Environment Committee and the Deputy Clerk, Amy for their support. The CLAA has signed up to Plastic Free Bearsted and working on the Digging for Giving initiative which will provide food to local food banks. The action plan for the next year is to make improvement to the site, it's management and CLAA run events.

Barbara - Coop Group: Barbara advised the group is owned by its members and they work with and try to connect local not for profit groups to enable working together to achieve goals. Recently supported and worked with MADAM, Making Miracles and Plastic Free Bearsted.

Erika & Jane - Bearsted CAN: Erika spoke about the many initiatives including the Repair Café, Roseacre School art competition, People Planet Pint night, Fish & Chips nights, thanking both the Holy Cross Church and The Yeoman Pub for their support in hosting many of the events.

Jane spoke Plastic Free Bearsted and working towards accreditation in the next 12-18 months.

Steve - Golf Club: The golf club has been running since 1895 as a members club, owned by members and run by an elected committee. They currently have approximately 500 members with a thriving veteran and junior sections. The club house venue is available to hire for all events and thanked the new catering team who took over last year.

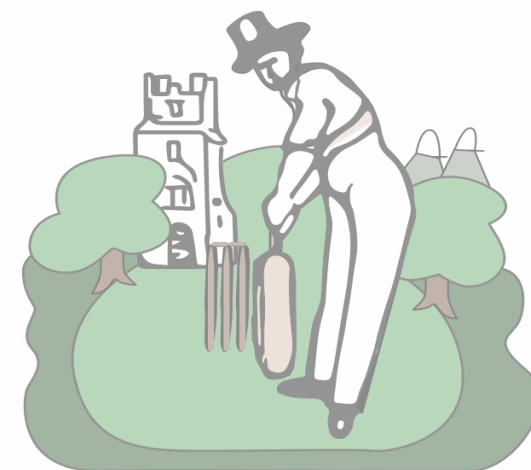
Gavin & Richard – Tennis Club: The Chairman Gavin spoke about the various social events and raising money for charities, this year they are supporting the Bearsted Woodland Trust. Membership stands at approximately 600, 70% of these are local and 30% coming from surrounding areas. They have 29 teams in Kent Leagues and cater for all ages. Richard the Vice Chair reported they are progressing with the project to put two new courts on the land opposite the tennis club. No trees will need to be felled and the topsoil will be redistributed, he also confirmed the contractor will guarantee to repair the Church Landway surface.



Marion – Lions: They meet once a month to raise money for various charities, including putting 19 defibrillators into schools. They have many social events and welcomed all residents.

David on behalf of the Cricket Club: Cllr Hall reported on behalf of the Cricket Club, this year they will be celebrating 275 years of Cricket on the Green with various events including a Gala Dinner at the Mercure Hotel on the 13th of April. Drone footage has been used for images in a new book being produced on the history of the club and with the support of BPC they have planted a new larch tree on the village Green.

The meeting took a short break for residents to speak to Councillors and members of the Community Groups.



Questions and Comments

Minute ref: 2039

The meeting reconvened for residents to ask questions to the Council.

One resident asked about the building at the train station. The Council advised that the rail company are unlikely to sell the land and this has previously been considered by BPC.

One resident asked if an additional stop could be added the Community Bus route. The Council advised that this is a joint service with Detling and due to commitments of the bus provider, with school runs it is unachievable to add an additional stop on this route.

One resident mentioned camper vans parking in the Church Lane car park. The Council will monitor the situation.

Finally, we would like to remind all our guests that it is an election year!

In May all wards of the Borough, and all Councillor vacancies including Parish Councils will be up for election at the same time.

The election will take place on Thursday 2nd May.

Thank you for attending this evening and we hope to see you again in 2025.

