



**Minutes of the Full Council meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at Madginford Hall,
Egremont Road on Tuesday 15th October 2024 at 7.30pm**

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

Also, in attendance were the Clerk Joanne Upton, the Deputy Clerk Amy Bush and Sir Paul Carter, KCC Councillor. There were no members of the public.

Reports from members of the public

There were no 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 duly noted for Cllr's Neil Francis, Denis Spooner, Sean Turner and Chris Waters.

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

There were none.

4. To resolve to go into closed session and to exclude the press and public at item 14 (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 in accordance with standing order 10 (xi) HR & Legal Matters.

This was unanimously agreed.

5. Signing of the Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Full Council meeting 17th September 2024 were agreed as a true record.

6. Reports:

- a) Borough Councillors: Sir Paul Carter advised the Notcutts road improvements should restart in Spring next year. The Joint Transport Board are looking at speed reduction options for the A20 from Lenham to Bearsted. There is likely to be more housing demanded under the new Labour government. He has concerns over the decision to include more special needs children in mainstream schools and is working to transform Primary Care supporting the elderly and vulnerable and reducing their use of hospitals and emergency services. Cllr Hall ask Sir Paul Carter to take a look at Hog Hill as the road surface is wearing away and could be potentially dangerous to pedestrians. Cllr Ash mentioned that Hill Brow and Mynn Crescent have the same problems with the road surface. Cllr English advised that the Lidsing development will be going ahead. The obstruction to building more parks has been removed and they want to develop the River Len and Meadow Bank nature reserves. Cllr Ash asked which MBC Councillors should report to Bearsted Parish Council. It was agreed the Chair would review this with the Clerk and report back.

ACTION: CHAIR / CLERK

- b) Community Warden: The Community Warden had been off sick and has been catching up on welfare visits.

- c) Police: No report received. Cllr Hall reported that he had met with the Beat Officer after a report of young boys damaging the Green with bikes. The Beat Office spoke to the boys and they have not been back since.
- d) Clerk: The Clerk reported that Cllr Day had stepped down from the Communications Committee to join the Planning Committee and Richard Darke had stepped down from the Council due to personal reasons.
The Clerk asked for volunteers for the Fireworks event, delivery letters, scanning tickets and litter picking.
Opus Energy had sold our accounts to EDF, one account is on a fixed term contract but the other two have now been move to Tomato Energy for cost savings and are now fixed until 2027.
The Clerk requested all Councillors set up the disclaimer and signature on the new email system.
- e) Chairman: Cllr Hall updated Sir Paul Carter on the loss of the Thameslink and asked for his support. BPC have a meeting arranged with Helen Whately on the 6th December 2025. Cllr Hall also asked Sir Paul to support the Council for moving the closure of the M20 from junction 7 to 8 when Operation Brock is in place due to the level of heavy vehicles coming through the village.

7. Committee Meeting and Working Group Reports

- a) Finance Working Group: Cllr Hall reported that the Finance Working Group had reviewed the financial papers and recommended approval. The Clerk advised the Cambridge & Counties Bank 5 year fixed rate can be applied for, the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is under way and the office is still waiting for contact from the Valuations department regarding the tax charges on the car park.

ACTION: CLERK

- b) Environment Committee: Cllr Smith reported the Committee are working with the Cricket Club to assist with preparing a risk assessment/safety procedure for training practice, following a couple of complaints from residents.

ACTION: CLERK

The Holy Cross Church are looking to close another section of the graveyard which can then be passed to BPC to maintain. The Clerk noted that currently BPC cuts the grass in the closed section but should be responsible for all maintenance. Cllr Jagger noted that when the application is made for BPC to take over the second closed section, we have one year to pass this to MBC.

ACTION: CLERK/ CLLR SMITH

Cllr Smith proposed to accept the cost of £222 to hire a skip for a day to clear out the office and BPC allotment shed, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLERK

Sir Paul Carter offered to speak to a contact at KCC regarding the crisscross drain covers required at the Green.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Smith proposed to accept the Timpson quote of £183 plus VAT to replace the padlock at the Church Lane Allotments, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: DEPUTY CLERK

Cllr Smith proposed to accept the Green Stripe quote of £384 per year to maintain the 3 large and 2 small planters. This was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with 10 in favour and one against.

Cllr Smith proposed to accept the Lee Harrison quote for £286 to repair the large planter on the A20, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with 10 in favour and one against.

ACTION: OFFICE

- c) Communications Committee: Cllr Hall reported that anyone can now nominate residents turning 100 via our website. There will not be a Christmas Market this year but BPC are organising a Christmas lights switch on which will take place after the normal Market on the Green, which will start at 3.30pm and Madginford School and the Rock Choir will be singing. Cllr Hall proposed to accept the quote from Green Barnes for £2294.44 for a new notice board at the Holy Cross Church, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: DEPUTY CLERK

Cllr Hall proposed to accept the cost of £1495 for load testing for the Christmas lights, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: DEPUTY CLERK

- d) Planning Working Group: Cllr Ash reported that the last meeting was not quorate but they discussed the Cherry Trees development and recommended approval providing on street parking was not lost. Cllr Springett advised the Council that she has raised an objection on this application today, for overdevelopment of the site and the access is nearer to the blind bend in the road.
- e) Reports from members of the Council for outside bodies: Cllr Ash advised MBC & KCC have adopted the Model Code of Conduct and KALC would like Parish Councils to do the same. It was agreed Cllr English will send a copy to the Clerk and once the Council have reviewed this, it can be adopted. Cllr English advised the draft version of the Parish Charter is not yet available.

ACTION: CLLR ENGLISH / CLERK

Cllr Ash attended a ward cluster meeting, Bearsted has very low levels of crime except for some fly tipping and MBC have suggested they may set up a camera at the Yeoman car park due to the level of rubbish being left there.

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

- a) Resolution to approve/ratify quotations or payments: Cllr Hall proposed to accept the cost of £224 to Clear Councils for event cover for Fireworks, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.
- b) Grants and Donations: Cllr Hall proposed to approve the £500 grant request from Kent Air Ambulance. This was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.
- c) Authorise October payments: Cllr Hall proposed to accept the payments, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.
- d) Finance reports: Cllr Hall proposed to accept the reports this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.
- e) Balance of accounts: Cllr Jagger noted the bank statement had not been received for the Unity current account, so the Council is unable to reconcile this account. Cllr Hall proposed to accept the balance of all other accounts, this was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.
Cllr Jagger requested the title on the reconciled statement for the Unity Instant Access account be changed.

ACTION: CLERK

9. Policies

- a) Financial Regulations: The Clerk explained that the internal auditor recommended adopting the new NALC Model Financial Regulations. The Council agreed that as our Financial Regulations were written to incorporate several other policies that BPC should stick with our own version. Cllr Hall proposed to adopt our existing policy with an amendment from £25,000 to £30,000 for the Contract Finder limit, this was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with 10 in favour and 1 abstention.
- b) Procurement Policy: Cllr Hall proposed to adopt the policy, with an amendment from £25,000 to £30,000 for the Contract Finder limit, was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.
- c) Tree Management Policy: Cllr Hall proposed to adopt the policy, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with all in favour.
- d) Privacy Policy: Cllr Hall proposed to adopt the policy, which was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.
- e) Civility & Respect Policy: Cllr Hall proposed to adopt the policy, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.
It was agreed the frequency of when the policy is to be reviewed should be added to the end of each policy.

10. Church Lane Car Park

- a) Drainage: Cllr Jagger provided a revised specification from Evans & Langford and explained the proposed surface and underground solution. Cllr Day suggested

approaching a Quantity Surveyor for an indication on what the potential costs of the project before going out to tender. Cllr English proposed to employ a QS to advise up to a cost of £3000, this was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR JAGGER / CLERK

- b) Signage for Church Lane: Cllr Springett advised that KCC will not give permission for warning signs on Church Lane, suggested a pedestrian warning sign could be installed at the exit of the car park. Cllr Springett proposed to install a temporary sign with a cost of up to £300, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour. If the sign has an effect, then a permanent sign can be investigated.

ACTION: CLLR JAGGER / CLERK

11. Lithium Batteries Safety Bill

Cllr Hall proposed to support the bill, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

12. Meeting Dates for 2025

Cllr Hall proposed to agree the dates, with 2 changes to Traffic & Comms dates, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

13. Community Warden Service

The Clerk reported that KCC will be withdrawing the Community Warden Service from Bearsted. KCC are looking at options for Parishes to retain their Wardens. The Clerk has contacted KCC and is awaiting further information on this. The Council agreed to defer this item, pending further information.

14. Closed Session

The Council moved into closed session to discuss HR and Legal Matters.

15. Future Agenda Items

Leases.

Office extension.

Finance.

Policies.

Church Lane Car Park

16. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 12th November 2024

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

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