



**Minutes of the Full Council meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at Madginford Hall,
Egremont Road on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7.30pm**

Present:	Cllr Richard Ash MBE (Acting Chair)	Cllr Jodie Pottage
	Cllr Pat Catt	Cllr Carolyn Smith
	Cllr Clive English	Cllr Denis Spooner
	Cllr David Hall	Cllr Sean Turner
	Cllr Frank Jagger	Cllr Chris Waters
	Cllr Kapil Kaushik	

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

Reports from members of the public

One member of the public reported an accident at the Church Lane allotment site due to tree cuttings and brambles being left on the path by the Tennis Club.

1. Declarations of intention to record.

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

2. To elect a Chairperson

In the absence of any nominations for the position of Chair, Cllr Ash agreed to Chair this meeting only, this was seconded by Cllr English and resolved with all in favour.

Cllr Ash took the Chair

3. Apologies and absences.

Apologies were received and duly noted for Cllr's Neil Francis, Martha Monday and Val Springett.

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

There were none declared.

5. Signing of the Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes, parts one and two, of the Full Council meeting 11th February 2025 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

6. Reports:

- a) Borough Councillors: Cllr Turner thanked Cllr Spooner for a very detailed report. Cllr Turner questioned whether BPC is safe, under devolution and whether safeguards are needed. Cllr English explained that the Borough Council cannot legally make changes without community engagement and consultation and that the Government is looking at unparished areas rather than making changes to those already with a parish council. 'Devolution arising from Borough reports' in light of Maidstone's unparished areas potentially becoming a Town Council, Cllr Turner asked Cllr English about the validity of the recent announcement of selected community neighbourhood Boards being democratic". Cllr Turner asked for a definition of 'Affordable Housing', Cllr English advised this is housing fixed at the social rent level. Cllr Turner asked how we can be sure citizens attending the Citizens Assemblies are from this area. Cllr Spooner confirmed that it cannot be guaranteed.

- b) Police: No report received.
- c) Clerk: The Council applauded the Deputy Clerk for completing the iLCA training. The Clerk reported that the CPS will be working at Meadow Bank this Sunday and the Clerk will meet the team.
As the Church Lane car park will be closed for up to a month for the drainage project, it will likely take place in March next year to accommodate the various clubs and local events.
- d) Chairman: There was no report.

7. Committee Meeting and Working Group Reports

a) Traffic Committee:

Cllr Ash reported he had attended a meeting with Cllr Springett and a KCC Highways Officer to discuss the Parish's Highway Improvement Plan. The plans for single yellow lines outside Roseacre School, double yellow lines on Sandy Mount and Manor Close are all in process but KCC have refused the build out at Roundwell due to sight lines. KCC suggested looking at the pedestrian refuge islands by the Esso garage and one by Otham Lane in next year's budget. The Coordinated Parish Traffic Group have been successful in working with KCC to get the speed limit on the A20, which will be reduced to 40mph from Bearsted to J8. Cllr Springett has been working on a 'mini brock' to help reduce the number of large lorries coming through the village when the motorway is shut. The Speed Watch volunteers have been working on the A20 and Ware Street. Work has not yet started on either the Notcutts or Willington Street schemes. The Committee has also been looking at parking by Madginford shops as it appears some cars are parking there all day and MBC may look to impose parking restrictions.

- b) Planning Committee: Cllr Ash reported the Committee had reviewed six applications. Three were recommended for approval. One was the BPC office extension which they were unable to comment on. The Committee requested details of the biodiversity net gain for removing the hedge at 21 Birling Avenue. The Clerk reported MBC has responded to advise the general biodiversity gain condition does not apply to this type of application and KCC have written to the resident to cut back the tree from overhanging the footpath. Cllr English requested a copy of the email from MBC to investigate further.

ACTION: Clerk / Cllr English

The Committee recommended refusal for 2 Hill Cottages as excessive development. The Planning Officer has called this to committee. Cllr English will try to attend the meeting.

ACTION: Cllr English

The Kent Minerals & Waste plan was reviewed with no comment to make.

Cllr English advised MBC are working on a Landscape Character Assessment and advised that due to a lack of planning applications MBC will not have a 5 year Housing Land Supply agreement on the 1st April, which means developers have more leeway.

- c) Finance Working Group: Cllr Jagger reported the Committee had discussed the Grants & Donations Policy and establishing clearer criteria for setting the budget and for deciding the amount to award each application. Cllr Jagger suggested the budget should be set as a percentage of the precept. It was suggested that the criteria should include proof of costs either receipts or quotes and to consider whether retrospective claims should be allowed. This will be considered at the next Finance Working Group meeting.

ACTION: Finance Working Group

Cllr Jagger advised the Committee reviewed the Finance items and recommend approval for all except the grant request from Bearsted Medical Patient Participation Group and requested FC to discuss and decide on the appropriate amount.

There was no update on the Parish office extension planning application.

There was no update on the bid for the shopper bus.

- d) Communications Committee: Cllr Hall reported that the Market Manager is investigating options for hard surfaces for the Market during the winter months. Cllr Hall advised that due to the events last year, at Southport, himself and the office undertook a review of our policies and insurances for the summer playscheme event. Due to many changes in legislation our insurance provider is no longer happy to insure this event.

The Deputy Clerk has spent many hours trying to source a suitable insurance cover but to no avail. Therefore, the Parish Council are no longer able to run this event but are looking at options to support other local childcare facilities to run their own events. A statement to release publicly was read out by Cllr Hall.

One member of the public was invited to speak and requested the Council allows some more time before announcing this. Cllr Hall proposed to approve the statement and give delegated authority to himself, as Chair of Communications, and the Deputy Clerk to agree when to make the announcement. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour. Cllr Hall noted the Committee also approved costs for LRH Property Maintenance of £155 to fit the noticeboard at the Green shops and £135 for new composite legs for the noticeboard on the Green.

- e) Reports from members of the Council for outside bodies: Cllr Ash reported the model Code of Conduct is due to be sent out from MBC. The Parish Charter review has been delayed until after the County Elections in May.

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

a) Resolution to approve/ratify quotations or payments:

Cllr Jagger proposed to approve the cost of £290 to MVCP for an additional officer to cut down the Ash trees with Ash Dieback at Meadow Bank. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

b) Grants and Donations:

- i. Patient Participation Group: Cllr Jagger proposed to give £1000 towards the cost of a new crash trolley. This was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with nine in favour, one against and one abstention.
- ii. Bearsted CAN: Cllr Hall proposed to approve the £145 request for seeds and a noticeboard at the Station Bank Nature Reserve. This was seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with eight in favour and three against. Cllr Hall agreed that new criteria for Grant payments was necessary which may preclude paying retrospectively. However, this has not yet been decided, and CAN have put a huge voluntary effort into improving the nature reserve opposite the railway station which has improved the appearance significantly.

- c) Authorise March payments: Cllr Jagger proposed to accept the payments, this was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.

- d) Finance reports: Cllr Jagger proposed to accept the reports this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

- e) Balance of accounts: Cllr Waters asked if the balances were covered up to £85,000 by the FSCS and if so, why some were over that amount. The Clerk confirmed that there were very few fixed rate accounts available to Parish Councils and the amounts invested into each account had been approved by the Council last year. Cllr Waters requested confirmation that the £85,000 is covered by the FSCS.

ACTION: Clerk

The balances were duly noted.

9. Policies

- a) Lone Worker Policy: Cllr English proposed to adopt the policy, which was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.
- b) Paternity Pay & Leave Policy: Cllr Ash proposed to adopt the policy, which was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with all in favour.
- c) Training & Development Policy: Cllr Smith proposed to adopt the policy, which was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.
- d) Procurement Procedure Policy: Cllr Ash proposed to adopt the policy, with two amendments, this was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.

10. Leases

Cllr Hall advised that the wording has now been agreed with the Tennis Club and Outset will be sending over the final version which will be signed at the next Full Council meeting, in April, by Cllr's English & Jagger. The Council thanked Cllr's Hall, Springett, Jagger and Waters for their hard work.

11. Future Agenda Items

Policies

Standing items

Tennis Club lease - signing

12. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 15th April 2025

There being no further business to transact, the meeting closed at 20.49 hrs

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