



Bearsted Parish Council

Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at Madginford Hall, Egremont Road on Tuesday 8th April 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Carolyn Smith (Chair) Cllr Frank Jagger
Cllr Richard Ash MBE Cllr Jodie Pottage

Also, in attendance was the Clerk, Joanne Upton, a KCC Community & Domestic Energy Support officer and two members of Bearsted CAN and two 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 Clerk declared that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes.

2. Apologies and absences

Apologies and reasons were duly noted for Cllr Denis Spooner. Cllr English was absent.

3. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying

Cllr Smith declared a friendship with the residents concerning item 11b, therefore would not vote on this.

4. Signing of the Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes from 4th February 2025 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

5. Green Homes Open Event

The KCC Energy Support Officer gave a presentation on what a Green Homes Open Event would involve which would focus on air heat pumps whilst also discussing other energy saving initiatives for the home. The event would likely be arranged for October, with a public meeting and then a visit to a local home with a heat pump. Cllr Smith proposed to support the event, which was seconded by Cllr Pottage and resolved with all in favour.

6. Clerk report

The Clerk requested permission to gift all the playscheme equipment to the childcare provider looking to set up a playscheme, failing that to the school where most of it is stored. Cllr Smith proposed to allow this, which was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

The Clerk asked Cllr's to start considering areas within Bearsted that the Council may want to take responsibility for should the option arise under the new devolution process. The Clerk updated the Committee on a previous complaint about a resident at the Upper Chimes using part of Meadow Bank as their back garden. It had been agreed by BPC many years ago to allow this due to the residents garden fence boundary being incorrectly placed by the builder. The resident is aware that the area is open to members of the public.

Planning permission has been granted for the Beech Tree work on the footpath between St Faiths & Roseacre Lane, as per the advice given by an MBC Tree Specialist. Two further quotes are being sourced, Cllr Jagger proposed to proceed with the work providing the cost is no more than the original quote of £1250 +VAT. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

7. **Church Landway/Church Lane Car Park** (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s57(1)(a) and LGA 1972s126)

- a) Car park drainage: The Clerk explained there were a few queries outstanding on the specification and once these have been answered by Evans & Langford this can go out to tender.
- b) Car park gravel surface: Cllr Jagger suggested removing the gravel, as this was only added for decorative purposes and would help to prevent the grill at the entrance from filling up. It was agreed to check this with Evans & Langford. Cllr Jagger suggested using some of the gravel to fill the area above the steps where large puddles form.
- c) Church Landway potholes: Cllr Jagger advised there are several large potholes which were created by the work vehicles using the Landway to build the new tennis courts. This needs to be investigated and the Clerk will confirm responsibility as it is a KCC public footpath.

ACTION: Clerk

8. **General Maintenance** (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10 and Highways Act 1980 s96)

- a) Community Payback Scheme: The Clerk reported that the team had cleared a lot of the brambles at Meadow Bank and will be working at the Holy Cross again this month.
- b) Play area repairs: Cllr Smith proposed that Playdale undertake the repairs at the Bearsted Woodland Trust and Safeplay complete the repairs at the Green. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.
- c) Holy Cross war memorial: Cllr Jagger proposed not to have the memorial cleaned, the previous time there were concerns raised about the damage caused. This was seconded by Cllr Pottage and resolved three in favour and one abstention.
- d) Defibrillator: The Committee considered the cost for a climate controlled box, installation and aftercare. It was agreed the Clerk should source additional quotes from companies that can undertake all three elements.
- e) Benches: The Committee confirmed once a quote has been received from LRH Maintenance to proceed with the work to replace two slats and polish 3 plaques, as this is within Clerks delegated authority.

ACTION: Clerk

9. **Bearsted Green** (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10)

- a) Cricket Club, Safety procedures during practice: Cllr Jagger stated "I am concerned that by placing warning notices the Council and the Cricket Club are recognising that there is a safety risk to the public and are abdicating responsibility to provide a safe public space, which could be achieved by only allowing the use of cricket balls at pre agreed matches and training sessions." It was agreed the Clerk will seek further legal advice on this.
The Committee agreed that the permanent signs should be fairly small and placed on posts approximately 3ft high.
- b) Noticeboard: The Committee considered Cllr Turners suggestion to reposition the noticeboard on the Green to nearer the entrance by the White Horse to face visitors as they walk onto the Green.
- c) Road Gullies: The Clerk advised that 3 reports have been made to KCC but no response or action yet. Cllr Jagger suggested asking Cllr English for some advice or guidance.
- d) The Pond: The Committee agreed it would be sensible to concrete in the large rocks to prevent them being thrown into the pond. This item was deferred as still waiting on quotes.

ACTION: Clerk

10. Allotments (Small Holding and Allotment Act 1908 ss23,25)

- a) Car park side fencing: Cllr Smith proposed to delay this project due to budgets and there is more work from the allotment holders to clear items from the boundary. This was seconded by Cllr Pottage and resolved with all in favour.
- b) Hedge between Tennis Club and Allotments: Cllr Jagger advised the Tennis Club had agreed to a height reduction to 2.4m and cut away from the fence. This has not been done and further works are required.

ACTION: Clerk

11. Open Spaces (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10)

- a) Meadow Bank: The Clerk advised that there are four workdays booked for the May & June when the steps will be installed.
- b) Aldington Road: The Clerk advised that a tree in Meadow Bank had fallen and damaged the fence of a property in Aldington Road. The overgrown vegetation from Meadow Bank but also in the garden had caused irreparable damage to the fence and the resident has asked if the Council can assist with costs. Part of the problem is the steep drop behind the properties into Meadow Bank, makes maintenance difficult, but is now part of the plan for Meadow Bank to clear vegetation away from the boundaries.
Cllr Jagger proposed to accept the Waring's quote of £480 to fell two dead trees and clear 1 meter behind boundary line. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with three in favour and one abstention. Cllr Ash proposed to pay £500 toward the cost of the fence, this was seconded by Cllr Pottage, it was unresolved with two in favour and two abstentions. It was agreed to establish how much of the fencing quote relates to the part of the fence that was damaged before considering the contribution.
- c) Spot Lane Local Nature Reserve: The Clerk advised that Downswood PC Councillors were meeting with MBC to establish workdays for volunteers and BPC would support by advertising for volunteers.

ACTION: Clerk

12. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to consider.

13. Future Agenda Items

- Allotments
- Pond updates
- Community Pay Back Scheme
- Church Lane car park
- Road drain gullies

14. Date of next Meeting, 10th June 2025

There being no further business to transact, the meeting ended at 21:20

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