Bearsted Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting of Bearsted Parish Council

Madginford Hall, Egremont Road, Bearsted on Tuesday 14th July 2026 at 7.15pm

Present:

Cllr Jodie Pottage (Vice Chair), Cllr Richard Ash MBE, Cllr David Hall, Cllr Max Huseyin, Cllr Frank Jagger, Cllr Marie Selby, Cllr Denis Spooner, Cllr Val Springett, Cllr Sean Turner,

Also, in attendance was the Clerk Joanne Upton, KCC Cllr Spencer Dixon and 3 members of the public.

Reports from members of the public

One resident spoke as a member of the Bearsted Woodland Trust in support of the proposal to look at CCTV cameras to help deal with anti-social behaviour and vandalism. The Trust has seen an escalation in incidents which is becoming unmanageable in terms of time and costs for the volunteers.
Another member of the public spoke in support of CCTV cameras and reference a resident who sadly recently passed away and had put up with numerous anti-social incidents and there is a duty to ensure no other residents have to endure the effect this has on their health and wellbeing.

Cllr Pottage chaired the meeting.

1. **Declarations of intention to record**
   The Chair declared the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes.

2. **Apologies and Absences**
   Apologies were received and duly noted for Cllr's Kaushik, Monday, Smith and Waters. Cllr's Catt and English were absent.

3. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying**
   There were none declared.

4. **Signing of the minutes of the last meeting**
   The minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 16th June were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Cllr Pottage proposed to move to item 11, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.

11. Cllr Springett raised the motion to consider CCTV cameras around the village to help tackle the rise in anti-social behaviour and crime. Over the past couple of years these incidents have been escalating in severity and frequency. The Clerk has been to Headcorn Parish Council for a demonstration of their CCTV system, which would be suitable for BPC needs. The system is effective and efficient. They have advised a 25% drop in anti-social behaviour since the cameras have been installed. BPC currently have a reserve of £65,000 for a community project which could be used to fund this. Cllr Huseyin noted that the CCTV will not address the root cause and the Council should look at working with schools and local groups to discuss social and community responsibility, this will be added to the Communication agenda as a standing item, to discuss other initiatives to help tackle the issues, Cllr Pottage proposed the Clerk obtains quotes and further information on available systems, the Communications Committee will produce communications to advise the public and invite feedback and questions. This was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.

The members of the public left the meeting.

5. **Reports**
   a) Borough Councillors: Cllr Spooner's report was noted.
   b) KCC Councillor: Cllr Dixon asked for feedback on the new road work signs which state the name of the road that is closed. The Council agreed these are a great improvement.
   He met with KCC drainage and the Clerk to discuss a filter system for the pond and are awaiting more details and confirmation of when this will be installed.

The bus stop grant is being finalised. The Clerk confirmed that the KCC advised that the bus stop grant is not available for general cleaning and maintenance.
Cllr Dixon and Cllr Turner met with Madginford School, and he is able to fund the remaining balance of their Bike Ability project.
KCC are also looking into providing a safe bike route to the new pump track at the old park & ride site to provide a safe route for children to ride there.

c) Community Warden: The report was noted.
d) Police: There was no report. Cllr Huseyin noted that we have more presence from our Community Warden than our local beat officer. This is due to him covering a much larger area and there being no cover when he is off duty. Cllr Springett has spoken to our local beat officer and he will speak to his Sargent about cover when he is off duty.
e) Clerk: Downswood Parish Council have now employed the Community Warden for one day per week. The Community Warden will now be local for 4 days per week servicing Bearsted and Downswood.
The Clerk advised that rules under the Localism Act 2011 have changed and Councillors no longer need to publish their home address. The Councillors wishing to have their home address removed will let the Clerk know so these can be redacted.
HMRC have increased mileage allowance from £0.45 to £0.55 per mile for first 10,000 miles.
Warings have been instructed to clear an unmanaged allotment plot for £270 as several complaints were received and the growth and weeds are now affecting neighbouring plots.
The Council previously approved the cost of a new Chairman's Honours Board at £615 +VAT in 2025, the cost has now increased to £675 +VAT.
Works to repair the black metal fence at the Elizabeth Harvie Field have been approved for £425+VAT with Flash Welding, this was a safety issue. The work will be completed on Wednesday 15th and Cllr Springett is putting up signs to encourage residents not to climb on the fence.
Payments will need to be approved in the August recess; the Deputy Clerk will email this out in the first week of August.
The office may need to be closed for some days over the school holidays due to childcare for the staff, but this should be resolved going forward with a new member of staff being employed soon. Interviews are taking place in the next two weeks.
f) Chairman: The Chair advised that the Environment Committee meeting was cancelled, and urgent items have been added to the FC agenda.

6. Committee Meeting and Working Group Reports

a) Planning Committee: Cllr Ash reported that he was reappointed as Chair of the Committee and Cllr Monday as Vice Chair. 5 applications were reviewed: 4 'no objections but would like to see approved' and one 'no objection'.
To reduce the number of Committee meetings and time/money spent, the Committee recommend including planning applications on the Full Council agenda for consideration. The Planning Committee members will continue to review the applications and vote on these at Full Council. The out of committee applications will be considered under the same process as used currently. Cllr Ash proposed to move Planning to Full Council, this was seconded by Cllr Pottage and resolved with all in favour.
b) Finance Working Group: Cllr Ash proposed to accept the 2.5% increase to the hourly pay for the Finance Officer in line with RPI and their contract. This was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.
Cllr Ash proposed to move £65,000 to the Unity Instant Access account with a view to invest in another fixed rate account once the Hampshire account expires in September. This was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.
c) Reports from member of the Council for outside bodies: Cllr Ash attended the KALC AGM, the Chair and Vice remain the same. The Gypsy and Travelling Show People DPD has been abandoned but sites can still be put forward under the Local Plan Call for Sites, this consultation ends on the 23rd August 2026. Parish elections will remain in 2028 and 2032. Parking on footpaths is now illegal and there is a Parish Conference on the 16th September.

7. Finance (Account and Audit Regulation 2011/817)

a) Resolution to approve/ratify quotations or payments:

KCC: £2795 survey for pedestrian crossing at Roundwell. Cllr Jagger noted that KCC asked for a contribution not for the full amount. Cllr Pottage proposed to give the Clerk delegated authority to negotiate the contribution with KCC, with authority to pay the full amount if needed. This was seconded by Cllr Ash, who noted this was within the Traffic Committee budget and resolved with 8 in favour and 1 against.

b) Grants and Donations: Bearsted & Thurnham Fayre. £732 for toilet hire. Cllr Ash proposed to approve the grant, this was seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with all in favour.
c) Authorise July Payments: Cllr Ash proposed to approve the payments, this was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.
d) Finance Reports: Cllr Ash proposed to approve the reports, this was seconded by Cllr Hall and resolved with all in favour.
e) Balance of Bank Accounts: Cllr Ash proposed to approve the balances, this was seconded by Cllr Spooner and resolved with all in favour.

8. Policies

Internal Control Policy: Cllr Pottage proposed to adopt the policy, which was seconded by Cllr Jagger and resolved with all in favour.

9. Play Area Repairs

All quotes have not been received so this item was deferred.

10. Leases

a) To elect a Chairperson for the Leases Working Group: Cllr Ash proposed Cllr Hall as Chair, this was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.
b) To consider the revised rent proposal: Cllr Hall proposed to accept the revised rental amount at £1915 per annum, which is halfway between our independent valuation and the independent valuation on behalf of KCC. But that we only agree to back date this to July 2025 when the rent review took place and not to August 24 when it was due. This was seconded by Cllr Springett and resolved with all in favour.
c) To consider the response to offer to purchase the land: Cllr Hall advised we have now received official confirmation that KCC have rejected BPC's offer to purchase the land. BPC are disappointed in the lack of communication and professionalism by KCC. It was agreed that the Clerk will now write to the Cabinet Member for property. Cllr Dixon suggested that this might be something to pursue later under the new Unitary Authority.

11. Antisocial Behaviour

This item has already been discussed.

12. Future Agenda Items

Office lease policies and standing items.

13. Date of next meeting, 15th September 2026

There being no further business to transact, the meeting ended at 20:51 hrs.

Signed………………………………………. Date……………………………………