

Berwick Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council held on the Thursday 27th January 2022 at 7pm in Berwick Village Hall.

57. Present

Cllrs S Carnie (Acting Chairman), V Burrough, T Mills, D Robinson and B Smith.

County Councillor N Bennett, Alison Stevens (Clerk) and seven members of the public were also in attendance.

58. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Winter. The reasons for his apologies were accepted by the Parish Council.

59. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

The meeting was then suspended.

60. Report from the County Councillor

County Councillor Bennett reported that;

- It is budget setting time at the County Council. The County Council is set to increase its share of the Council Tax by £1.33 per Council Tax Band D property.
- If the rise is agreed there will be no need to make any further savings, including those planned to children's services. Money will also be set aside to cover wage costs and inflation.

61. Report from the District Councillor

There was no report from the District Councillor on this occasion.

62. Public Question Time

The Acting Chairman began by asking who wanted to speak and said questions will be organised so everyone has the chance to ask theirs and any clarification requested will be made at the end.

A member of the public asked why we are told there are no plans for an off road system (A27) when there are options on the table. County Councillor Bennett said there are no options for an off road system there are only plans for improvements to the existing road. Residents are however being asked for permission to access their gardens for an environmental search some of whom are looking at their legal position if they do so.

A second member of the public reported;

- the hedge running up to the garage has been left in a mess and asked the Parish Council to contact First Aid to ask them to tidy it.
- The field still floods next to his property and a sink hole has opened up in the road. The Clerk said she will report the sink hole to Highways and copy in the County Councillor.

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A third resident asked for an update on the gate which is missing opposite Beacon View. The matter has been reported in turn to ESCC, Rights of Way and Sustran all of whom deny responsibility. The Clerk is currently in contact with Land Registry to see who owns the gate and will ask Firle Estates if they own it in the meantime.

The meeting was then re-opened.

63. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 25th November 2021 (previously distributed).

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 25th November 2021 were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Acting Chairman.

64. Clerk's Report on Matters Arising from those Minutes

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

65. Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered;

WD/2021/2617/MEA - Land to the north of Lower Claverham Farm, Berwick, BN26 6TJ, and east of Mount Pleasant Farm, Chalvington, BN27 3TB - Construction of a Solar Farm, to include the installation of solar photovoltaic panels to generate up to 49.9mw of electricity, with substation, temporary construction compound, inverters, fencing, access tracks, cctv, landscaping and other associated works – Berwick Parish Council supports this application in principle but is concerned about;

- i. The effect it will have on the existing woodland
- ii. Its scale and intensity.
- iii. Its proximity to the Vanguard Way, the South Downs National Park and Arlington Reservoir.
- iv. The cumulative effect of having yet another solar farm in such close proximity.

SDNP/22/00325/LIS and SDNP/21/06425/HOUS - Frensham Cottage, The Village, Berwick, BN26 6SP - Demolish small existing garage and part of outbuilding, and rebuild new garage and Workshop – Berwick Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to these applications.

Village Plan Survey

Councillor Dexter read his summary of the Village Plan Survey, which was as follows;

'53 responses were received from 120 surveys sent out. It should be noted that not all respondents chose to answer all questions, percentages reported reflecting those of respondents to that section.

54% of respondents were satisfied with the available leisure facilities. Cycling, walking with and without dogs were the most common activities reported. Multiple suggestions were put forward for improvements with the most popular being a shop and improvements to the existing play park.

36% of respondents had an issue considered crime and safety was a concern with the largest concern being speeding cars, suggesting a safety issue with the road rather than a high crime.

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Youth facilities in use predominantly were in the area of the playing field. With suggestions of improvement focusing on updating the equipment with an emphasis on older children, with a youth club being a potential solution for this.

The most common form of transport used daily was that of a car with several people using the train service. Improvement of cycle routes would persuade the majority of people to use this method of transportation. Though a footpath up the reservoir and better maintenance of existing footpaths generally was the most common recommendation of improvement.

The road section had a significant response, parking does not appear to generally be a concern but there are some localised issues that may need exploring, in particular with the provisioning of parking at any new dwellings. It was felt traffic calming measures where required; the most popular being speed cameras and speed bumps.

Individual plots and small developments have the most support and there is strong objection to large developments. Generally, the respondents felt that two and three-bed homes, with a slight preference for affordable housing for local people, were most suitable. Maintaining the rural aspect of dwellings in the village was also important.

In common with the rest of the survey infrastructure that required improvement appeared to focus on pavements and roads. A concern raised here is a lack of medical facilities (doctors and dentistry) as well as communication connectivity (mobile and broadband connections).

The majority of the parish appears to be favour reducing noise and light pollution, including support of a dark skies policy. As well as the promoting and preservation of biodiversity. Preservation of the existing boundaries is a concern, and any future development should be kept in keeping with the rural character, scale and location of the existing settlement.

The most significant support of business was for a village shop, the majority of respondents run small businesses from home. Of which poor-quality broadband was a significant concern.

Parish matters appear to be well received by the current means, and generally appear to match how they are currently received. There is a note about emails being improved.'

Councillors thanked Councillor Dexter for his sterling report and agreed the next stages are;

- i. To take into account the findings from the planning questions when commenting on future planning applications.
- ii. To take into account the findings of the planning questions at future Parish Cluster Meetings.
- iii. To produce a Forward Plan.

66. Councillors resolved unanimously to support Chiddingly Parish Council in its effort to convince Central Government to modify its planning policies.
67. Update on the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) – At the Wealden District Association of Local Councils' Meeting held on 12th January 2022, Mr Chris Bending, Head of Policy and Economic Development at Wealden District Council told those present the SHELAA has been delayed because of technical issues but work on the Local Plan is ongoing and won't be delayed as a result.

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Updates on the Plan's progress will be fed back to Parish and Town Councils through the Cluster Meetings.

68. Reports from Parish Councillors

i: Berwick Playing Field – A further site visit established the need for two new goal posts so Councillors resolved to buy two and asked the Clerk to arrange for them to be fitted.

ii: Highways and Transport Matters

- a. At the last meeting Councillors discussed the possibility of reducing the speed limit in Station Road, Common Lane and alongside Arlington Reservoir and decided to look into the option of commissioning a Feasibility Study. They discussed the matter in more detail at this meeting and agreed to ask residents for their suggestions via the Parish News and WhatsApp. Ideas will then be taken forward to the next Full Council meeting for further consideration.
- b. The Parish Council has received the following update from National Highways on the situation with RIS3;

'I'm writing to you on behalf of National Highways to update you on the A27 Lewes to Polegate project.

The A27 Lewes to Polegate scheme is part of the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3). At this very early stage, we're looking at different options that will be assessed against a variety of factors including safety, environmental, traffic and economic.

So far, we've undertaken non-intrusive walking surveys to observe and record local wildlife and habitats, perform assessments of seasonal ecology, identify any notable landscape and archaeological features and analyse drainage systems. We've written to landowners within the area to seek permission to access their land for these surveys. We've also held meetings with Maria Caulfield MP & Caroline Ansell MP to keep them up to date with the project's early progress.

In 2022, we'll also be engaging with those who live and work in the area, the wider community and landowners as part of the options development work before a public consultation in 2023.

We're working together with the A27 East of Lewes project team. Construction is due for completion in 2023. For more information on works currently under construction, please visit the project website.

Further information about the scheme can be found at:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/pipeline-of-possible-future-schemes/>

69. Reports from Outside Bodies

- i. Village Hall Committee – The Parish Council understands the lighting situation reported at the last meeting has now been addressed.
- ii. Cuckmere Community Bus (CCB) – The CCB service is now back to operating at pre-Covid levels. The new bus has been delayed and an electric bus is being trialled. More drivers and a new Treasurer are needed.

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- iii. Tree Warden – There was nothing new to report on this occasion.
- iv. Cuckmere Community Flood Forum – The situation at 13 Downsway reported in the public session will also be reported to the Flood Forum.
- v. South Downs National Park – There was nothing new to report.
- vi. Parish Planning Cluster – Councillor Winter is unable to attend the next Cluster Meeting so Councillor Mills will take his place.

70. Finance

i: Approval of payments and receipts – Councillors approved the following payments;

		£
101233	Berwick Village Hall - Hall Hire	64.00
101234	Mass Media - Website	50.40
101235	A Stevens - Salary – November	460.26
101236	A Stevens - Salary - December	460.26
101237	HMRC - PAYE	345.00
101238	ESCC Pension	329.96

ii: Councillors resolved to approve the accounts to 31st December 2021.

71. Lighting at the Village Hall

This was covered under the Village Hall Report.

72. Queens Platinum Jubilee

Councillors discussed ways to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee and decided to ask residents via its website, the Berwick Parish News and WhatsApp for ideas and see if they would like to organise an event or have any events planned.

73. Assets of Community Value

Councillors discussed whether or not to apply to nominate the pubs in the Parish as Assets of Community Value which if successful would give residents the opportunity to bid to buy them should they ever come up for sale.

More details about Assets of Community Value can be found at;

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/partnerships-and-localism/town-and-parish-councils-ordnance-survey-mapping/community-right-to-bid-assets-of-community-value/>

Councillor Mills will ask both publicans how they feel about the suggestion and report back so that Councillors can decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal at their next Full Council Meeting.

The Village Hall was also suggested.

74. Questions from Parish Councillors

Councillor Burrough said she has now fitted the 'no dog mess' signs at the Berwick Way and on the footpath which runs behind Berwick Station and Ludlay Drive and was thanked by those present.

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Councillor Robinson announced his intention to stand down after the next meeting.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.00pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:
