

Berwick Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council held on Wednesday 27th March 2024 at 7:00pm. This meeting took place in Berwick Village Hall.

68. Present

Cllr K Winter (Chairman), G Barham, V Burrough, S Carnie, B Smith and T Mills.

County Councillor N Bennett and A Stevens (Parish Clerk). There were two members of the public present.

69. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence from any Parish Councillors.

District Councillor A Wilson sent apologies for her absence,

70. Declarations of Interests

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

The meeting was then suspended.

71. County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Nick Bennett;

- Asked residents to consider becoming foster parents because there is an urgent need for more. He asked anyone who is interested to contact him at cllr.nick.bennett@eastsussex.gov.uk Parish Councillor Sally Carnie said she can also help and can be contacted via berwickparishcouncil@aol.com
- Said ESCC is currently working on sustainability issues.
- Added that ESCC is going to issue its Annual Performance Report shortly.

72. District Councillor's Report

District Councillor Wilson sent in a written report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

73. Public Question Time

Mr Cooper:

- asked if the Parish Council is going to include its village plan with its response to the Wealden Local Plan consultation. Councillor Winter confirmed it did last time and will do so again. Mr Cooper also felt that it was ironic Wealden is consulting on its Local Plan and its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan at the same time.
- Said that within the Local Plan is a policy map which shows some of the development boundaries are next to ancient woodland and areas with priority habitat.

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Mr Cooper also said that when planning application WD/2016/1659/MAJ was approved, one of the conditions was that the developer must include a suitable drainage scheme but there was no mention of it in the Decision notice. Councillor Winter said he will take the matter up with Planning.

The meeting was then re-opened.

74. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 24th January 2024

The draft minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 24th January 2024 were read by all, confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

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

The Clerk asked if the Parish Council would like to vote for a candidate in the latest South Downs National Park Authority Board elections. Councillors declined the offer.

76. Planning Applications – There were no planning applications for commenting on at this meeting.

77. New Premises Licence Application – Application 29341 – Alfriston Gardens – for on and off sales of alcohol Monday to Sunday 10:00 to 00:00 hrs and late night refreshment Monday to Sunday 23:00 to 00.00 hrs – Berwick Parish Council would like to see the Sunday trading hours reduced so the neighbours get a rest.

78. Wealden Local Plan Consultation – Councillors deferred making a response to a specially convened meeting on the 26th April. This will allow them more time to read the reports and attend a public exhibition so they can make a more informed decision.

79. Reports from Parish Councillors

- i. Berwick Playing Field – The Parish Council would like to officially thank Carole Vine for all her help with the ground. Thanks to Ms Vine, the number of bookings has increased substantially.
- ii. Highways and Transport Matters – At the last meeting it was resolved to ask residents to display the litter posters on their fences to help deter people from dropping litter in the parish. The posters were distributed via WhatsApp. Anyone without a laminator was invited to contact the Clerk for copies.

Parking at the junction of Common Lane and Station Road remains a problem so Councillors Burrough and Mills met those who use the field and in turn park on the grass verges. They asked the Clerk to write to the owner of the field and ask them to cut back their hedge so those parking on the verges can park on the hard standing.

Parking also remains a problem on the verge by the Common Lane entrance to the Berwick Way. Because the land there is owned by East Sussex County Council it was agreed to ask the County Councillor if he had any solutions. They will also consider putting bollards with reflective posts there at the next Full Council Meeting.

80. Reports from Outside Bodies

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- i. Village Hall Committee – There was nothing to report from the Village Hall.
- ii. Cuckmere Community Bus – Cuckmere Buses have bought another new bus which is now waiting to be painted,
- iii. Tree Warden – The Tree Warden reported that a large number of dead trees have been identified with yellow notices in the woodland by the lambing barn on Ludlay Lane. He said that presumably this is a prelude to felling them following the ash dieback epidemic. A similar activity has also been taking place in Ludlay Coppice.
- iv. Cuckmere Community Flood Forum – There was nothing new to report.
- v. South Downs National Park – There was nothing to report from the South Downs National Park Authority.

81. Finance

- i. Approval of payments to date – Councillors approved the following payments;

		£
101339	Mass Media - Website	18.00
101340	Berwick Village Hall – Hall Hire	60.00
101341	A Stevens - Salary - January	513.02
101342	A Stevens - Salary – February	513.22
101343	ESCC - Pension	352.62
101344	PAYE	551.00

- ii. Approval of accounts to date – Councillors resolved to approve the accounts to the 29th February 2024. Councillor Smith asked if the £5000 request from Mr Tuffnell and the £1000 donated by C Matthews is identified separately in the accounts. Both amounts are shown in the year end reserves.
- iii. At the last meeting Councillors resolved to replace the three speed detector devices in Station Road with ones that show drivers' speed with a smiley face to indicate whether or not they are driving too fast and have a fourth fitted as they leave the village. The County Council has rejected its request.
- iv. Councillor Mills is looking into upgrading the play equipment at the Recreation Ground and will report back after he has met potential contractors.

82. Defibrillator – Councillor Mills has risk assessed the defibrillator outside the Village Hall and found it to be in good working order.

83. Questions from Parish Councillors

Councillors asked the Clerk to:

- i. Ask Network Rail for an option for people to cross on foot when the crossing is temporarily closed.
- ii. Contact the MP again because the rail company is not always dropping children off in the village when they have to use the rail replacement service.
- iii. Ask for those responsible to cut the hedge which runs alongside the Berwick Way in Station Road.
- iv. Include an article in the next edition of the Village News to ask residents who have hedges which border public footpaths to cut them back to the boundary of their properties.
- v. Commission another Speed Survey so this will be an item on the next agenda.

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84. IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM ON THIS AGENDA, THE PRESS AND PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT

84.1 Berwick Parish Council resolved;

- to appoint Lyn Kemp as its permanent Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer from 1st May 2024.
- Ms Kemp is to be paid LC2 Scale 28 pro rata.

There were no further questions and this meeting closed at 8.05pm

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____

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Report from District Councillor Wilson

My report centres on two major consultations which Wealden District Council is undertaking.

The first is the consultation (the Reg 18 Consultation) on the draft Local Plan, which started on 15 March and runs until 5pm on 10 May 2024. The draft Local Plan can be found on Wealden's Planning Policy Consultation Portal -

<https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kpse/event/2726CE98-03BA-4520-8558-361BAA45F784/section/s16388779747831>

Comments need to be submitted via the portal, and it is important to note this, as comments submitted in other ways, for example, by email, cannot be considered. It is a large document, and perhaps quite daunting at first. But I would urge residents and the Parish Council to take the time to look at the draft plan, as it will shape Wealden's housing, economy and environment over the next 15 years.

To assist residents, the Council will be holding face to face exhibitions across the District. A list of venues, dates and times appears here:

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/wealden-local-plan/>

The exhibitions will be attended by officers and councillors, so will provide a valuable opportunity for residents to ask questions about the draft plan.

There is also a virtual exhibition which can be viewed online and is designed for those who cannot make it to any of the face to face meetings:

<https://wealdenlp.exhibition.app/>

The planning policy team are keen to stress that they would like to hear about aspects of the draft plan which residents like, as well as aspects which they do not like. Responses to the draft plan which are based on sound material planning policy reasons will carry more weight than those which are not (so, for example, comments which centre on the impact of a policy or allocation on property prices will not carry weight, whereas those which consider the impact on the landscape character of an area, or on the impact on biodiversity, will carry greater weight).

Secondly, I want to say a few words about Wealden's new Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, which it is in the process of developing. The Council wants to hear from residents and organisations across the district to ensure that the new strategy meets the needs of local communities, and to this end it has devised two questionnaires (one for residents and one for organisations, such as businesses and Parish Councils) which take around 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaires are to be found on Wealden's new community engagement hub Let's Talk Wealden:

<https://letstalk.wealden.gov.uk/hub-page/climate-change>

There is a lot that can be done at District Council level to reduce emissions - over 33% of emissions can be influenced by the Council. Wealden also faces a number of threats from climate change, from rising sea levels affecting our coastal communities to flooding, water shortages and the impacts of heatwaves. I would encourage as many residents and organisations as possible to complete the surveys, as we all have a stake in the development of an effective climate change strategy for the district.

Please note that the deadline for this consultation is also 10 May 2024, at 12pm.

Apologies for the length of this report. There is just one last thing I would like to mention. Wealden has been awarded funding for a Community Orchard Grants Programme, under which Parish Councils and community groups are encouraged to apply for funding to plant fruit and nut trees. Grants of between £1,000 and £3,500 are available - please see the link below for more details -

<https://letstalk.wealden.gov.uk/wealden-community-orchard-grants-programme>

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