

Berwick Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Berwick Parish Council held at the Berwick Village Hall on 27th May 2021 at 7.30pm.

1. Present

Cllrs K Winter (Chairman), V Burrough, S Carnie and B Smith.

District Councillor D Watts, Alison Stevens (Clerk) and five members of the public were also in attendance.

2. Election of Chairman

Councillor Burrough proposed and Councillor Smith seconded Councillor Winter for the role of Chairman. Councillor Winter duly accepted the role of Chairman.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Burrough proposed and Councillor Winter seconded Councillor Carnie for the role of Vice-Chairman. Councillor Carnie duly accepted the role of Vice-Chairman.

4. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robinson and the reasons for his apologies were accepted by the Full Council.

The meeting was then suspended.

5. Public Question Time

Residents asked;

- Why there are no agendas, minutes or terms of reference for Parish Planning Cluster Meetings and why residents have to rely on the notes of those who attend instead. Councillor Winter explained the meetings are really informal and said he has often asked residents to let him know if they have any questions they would like him to raise, but no one ever gets back to him.

The Clerk suggested it might be better to direct questions to Chris Bending at Wealden because the Cluster Meetings are Wealden meetings. She then read the following response from him when the Parish Council raised the issue in March; '...Can I ask you to reassure your members that the District Council is happy to support you in the conversations. It is WDC (Wealden District Council) that has decided the form and regularity of these meetings and something that we are happy to explain to any concerned residents. We want a constructive conversation with our Town & Parish Councils through these meetings and not for this to be a significant burden on your representative on the panel. If you have members of the public asking these questions, and your Council does not feel it is for them, then please do feel free to direct these questions to us.'

Berwick Parish Council

District Councillor Watts agreed to take the matter up with Mr Bending again. Residents said they would also like to know if the meetings are operational or whether they form part of the consultation process.

Councillor Winter attended the latest Cluster meeting, which was held on the 24th May, and said the conversation then was mostly about solar farms, nothing was said about Berwick. Those who attended were asked what their residents would like to see sustained in their villages so he asked those present at this meeting what they would like to see sustained. Suggestions included a footpath to the reservoir, the completion of the Berwick Way and better broadband. The pub, garage and post office were also suggested but were thought to be doing well anyway. A village shop was suggested by some but rejected by others.

Those present felt Councillor Winter needed a mandate from more residents so councillors agreed to carry out a survey and review the Parish Plan.

Residents were encouraged to lobby the Government and their MPs, in the meantime, to get the point across that the housing numbers need to be reduced.

- Why the Parish Council does not make more use of the WhatsApp page - The WhatsApp page does not reach out to all residents.
- Why the responses from ten Berwick residents to the Direction of Travel consultation appear to have been removed from the online portal - Councillor Watts said he will find out.
- Why the Parish Council was not told about a planning application for 2500 houses at Upper Dicker. The Clerk said she had planned to notify residents under 'Planning' but did so at this point instead. She said Arlington Parish Council has been approached by a developer (Grosvenor) who want to build 2500 homes between Hempstead Lane and Coldharbour Road. No planning application has been received and the land still has to be assessed to see if it is suitable. Arlington Parish Council hosted a public meeting for its residents on the 18th May so they could meet the developers and find out more. Details of the proposals can be found at Grosvenor.com. There is also a dedicated email address for anyone to ask questions which is; northwest.hailsham@grosvenor.com

7. Reports from County and District Councillors

District Councillor Watts said;

- Wealden has now resumed live meetings. The first was the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on the 17th May.
- At its last Full Council Meeting District Councillor Ron Reed, from Crowborough, was appointed Chairman of Wealden District Council and District Councillor Angela Snell, from Polegate, was appointed Deputy Chairman. The Deputy Leader, Ann Newton, is understood to be setting up meetings with the four local MPs to try and get the housing numbers reduced because the numbers, which include some of Eastbourne's allocation, are not sustainable.
- The Wealden hub continues to operate but has not received any calls recently.

Berwick Parish Council

- He attended the virtual meeting hosted by Arlington Parish Council on the 18th May and thought Grosvenor were disappointing. He also pointed out the land they want to build on was rejected, when it was assessed before.

Maria Caulfield MP, sent the following report;

'Sorry I can't join you this evening. I just wanted to update you on a couple of issues.

1) A27 Litter

From Monday, for four nights, Lewes District Council Environment First team have been removing litter from along the westbound carriageway of the A27. They will be deploying their dedicated highways Street Cleansing Crew and Mechanical Sweepers to remove as much litter and detritus as possible from the westbound side of the A27.

Working alongside accredited traffic management specialists, they will install lane closures between Beddingham Roundabout through to the Falmer slip road (AMEX Stadium junction). It is anticipated that the Eastbound side of the A27 will be addressed in late June (subject to approval and ETMS work schedules), the dates of which will confirm once known.

2) A27 Consultation

We all know that the stretch between Lewes and Polegate has seen a significant increase in accidents over the last two years. Work is taking place now to improve the safety at critical junctions. Highways England will be leading a public consultation later this year about the long-term future of the road to try and make it safer and less congested.

3) Local housing and planning

We obviously have a number of applications for large scale housing being made or proposed for the local area. I am working with a number of groups on this, especially with reference to the Eton college site which I will be opposing and will call in with the Secretary of State should an application come forward. I have also this week, called in the large Mornings Mills development in Polegate. We cannot accept large scale plans which are not included in draft local plans and I know in Berwick residents are concerned about the acumen of applications coming forward in Wealden overall.

4) Covid

Those aged 30 and over and those who will turn 30 before 1st July 2021 are now eligible to book their Covid vaccinations in. Planned Step 3 easements have gone ahead as of Monday 17th May and we hope to keep to the timescale that has been set out by the PM. Step 4 is due to take place no earlier than 21st June 2021. Local grants are still available if there are local businesses struggling as we return to normal.

5) Traffic safety

With one of my other villages we had a productive meeting with Sussex police recently and the new community team who are keen to support villages with road safety and speeding. I would be happy to arrange a meeting if this would be helpful.

Berwick Parish Council

6) Virtual meetings

While the Government did not get a chance to extend the current provisions, they are keen to introduce this in the long-term. There is a government consultation on this, and we are urging all local councils to take part in this so we can have virtual options in the future'.

The meeting was then re-opened.

8. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th March 2021 and the 22nd April 2021 (previously distributed) and Clerk's Report on any Matters Arising from those Minutes.

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on 25th March 2021 and 22nd April 2021 were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

All matters arising were included elsewhere on the agenda.

9. To appoint Councillors to serve as Representatives of the Parish Council on the following bodies;

East Sussex ALC Ltd (to attend the AGM)	Vacant
Wealden District Association of Local Councils	Cllr Carnie
Village Hall Committee	Cllr Burrough
Tree Warden	Mr D Carnie
Cuckmere Flood Forum	Councillor Winter
Cuckmere Community Bus	Councillor Smith
SDNP	Councillor Robinson

10. Payment of Annual Subscriptions and Insurance

Councillors resolved unanimously that the following subscriptions and insurance are paid for 2021-2022;

Wealden District Association of Local Councils
East Sussex Association of Local Councils
Zurich Insurance
Information Commissioner

11. Meeting Dates 2021-2022

Councillors agreed the meeting dates for 2021-2022 will be;

22nd July 2021
30th September 2021
25th November 2021
27th January 2022
24th March 2022
26th May 2022

Meetings will be held in Berwick Village Hall, Covid-19 rules permitting.

Berwick Parish Council

Additional meetings may be called to discuss planning applications when consultation deadlines fall outside these dates.

12. Bank Signatories

Councillors agreed the signatories for 2021-2022 will be Councillor Burrough, Councillor Winter, Councillor Smith and the Clerk.

13. Code of Conduct

Councillors resolved to accept the Code of Conduct introduced by Wealden District Council under the Localism Act 2012.

14. To adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Councillors resolved to accept the latest Standing Orders (2021) and Financial Regulations (2021) as recommended by NALC which had been distributed before the meeting.

15. General Power of Competence

Berwick Parish Council resolved that it meets the prescribed conditions for the General Power of Competence.

16. Planning Applications

There were no planning applications for Berwick Parish Council to comment on at this meeting.

It was noted that Wealden District Council has received a planning application for a Polo Pitch at Milton Gate. The statutory consultee for Milton Gate is Long Man Parish. Details of this application can be found at <http://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=151966>

17. Reports

- i: Berwick Playing Field – The broken swing has now been replaced and the lock for the pedestrian gate has been repaired.
- ii: Highways and Transport Matters –
 - i. Highways England says it has an intelligent system to keep traffic to a minimum whilst the works at Polegate are taking place.

The Police Traffic Management Officer has looked at the matter and his first observation is that HGVs are not permitted on some of these roads due to weight limit but he is raising this with Highways because there needs to be appropriate signage and a suitable route organised.

Berwick Parish Council

Sussex Police is also looking to deploy some resources to the area to act as a deterrent for speeding and reckless driving. The PCSO is to be there as much as possible.

Berwick Parish Council also resolved to commission another Speed Survey in Station Road which it can then use as evidence.

- ii. Councillor Winter said he will carry out a site visit to look at two broken gates on the Berwick Way and will report back what needs doing.
- iii. The burst pipe in Station Road has been reported to the utility company and is expected to be repaired on the evening of the 2nd June.

18. Finance

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

		£
101194	ESCC - Pension	327.24
101195	ESCC - Verge Cutting	302.40
101196	ESALC - Subscriptions	101.50
101197	Firle - Rent	100.00
101198	Foster Landscapes - Play Park Repairs	338.36
101199	Mass Media - Website	100.80
101200	Peter Frost - Auditor	97.50
101201	S Goacher - Payroll Services	176.17
101202	Zurich - Insurance	1377.48
101203	A Stevens - Salary - March	448.19
101204	A Stevens - Salary - April	1159.27
101205	ESCC - Pension	551.59

- ii: Councillors resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement to 31st March 2021.
- iii: Berwick Parish Council resolved to confirm its Exemption Status to 31st March 2021.
- iv: Councillors resolved to approve the accounts, the risk management document, the asset schedule and the internal audit arrangements for the financial year to 31st March 2021.

19. To consider co-opting additional Parish Councillors

Having carefully considered his application, Councillors resolved to co-opt Tom Mills on to Berwick Parish Council.

20. Questions from Parish Councillors

The Clerk said she would like to put Mr Tuffnell's bequest for the Berwick Way on the next agenda and asked Councillors to think about what they would like the money spent on in the meantime.

There being no further business, this meeting closed at 8.30pm

Berwick Parish Council

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____