

BERWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council
on Wednesday 25th September 2024 at 7pm
This meeting took place in Berwick Village Hall

Present: Councillors Smith, Barham and Mills

County Councillor N Bennett, District Councillor A Wilson, Lynette Kemp (Clerk to the Council) and one member of the public were in attendance.

Election of Chair for this meeting

Proposed by Councillor Mills and seconded by Councillor Barham, Councillor Smith was elected Chair for this meeting.

38. Apologies for absence – Cllrs Winter, Carnie and Burrough
39. Declarations of Interests – There were no declarations of interest or changes to the Register of Interest.
40. It was **RESOLVED** there were no confidential items on the agenda.

The meeting was suspended to allow the following:

41. County Councillor's Report
There will be a meeting of cabinet tomorrow (26th September), to discuss how savings might be made to address the funding gap the authority may face next year, which could be in excess of £50 million. The adult social care budget represents 48% of the council's net budget, and changes will need to be made in this area. Children's Services budget requirements have also risen significantly. There is determination to save services even if not the current provision. Funding information has not been provided by Government. All MPs are on board and there has been cross party talks over the last three months. The County Council has received good audits and Ofsted reports but have still hit a brick wall. Setting a balanced budget is a legal requirement.
42. District Councillor's Report
Wealden District Council is in the process of setting the budget, there will be reports in February. A Climate Change policy is currently being written. Reforms to the NPPF have not been particularly good news, WDC have sent a response to the NPPF consultation. The five year housing target has not been met, and the position has not improved. Due to areas of ANOB increased housing targets will put pressure on the Low Weald. Part of the draft Local Plan was a call for sites, these sites have now been published, this does not mean they have been assessed. There will likely be revisions to the draft Local Plan as a result of the revised NPPF.

There were no questions from the public.

The meeting was then re-opened.

43. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2024, were read, approved and signed by the Acting Chair.

44. Clerk's report on Matters Arising from those Minutes

The matters are covered on this agenda.

45. Planning

- i. No planning applications have been received from Wealden District Council prior to the publication of this agenda
- ii. No planning applications have been received from South Downs National Park prior to the publication of this agenda.
- iii. Planning applications received between the issue of this agenda and the date of this meeting:

WD/2024/1994/PIP Permission in Principle Application for the demolition and replacement of an existing dwelling and erection of 9 additional dwellings – Land adjacent to Cranford Industrial Estate, Station Road, Berwick

Councillors discussed the application, notification has now been received that the application is 'incomplete' and is no longer viewable on the WDC website.

- iv. To note any decisions made by Wealden District Council or South Downs National Park Authority since the last meeting.

None

46. Speed Surveys

The speed surveys of the last five years, with the exception of 2020 due to Covid, were reviewed. The average speeds are increasing. It appears that traffic is travelling faster after being held at the crossing gates for longer. Use by heavy lorries is increasing. Installation of speed cameras was not supported by the feasibility study undertaken in 2023, the possibility of Speedwatch was discussed.

47. Reports from outside bodies

- a) ESALC Ltd – no report.
- b) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – no report
- c) Village Hall Committee – the 100Club to date has sold 55 tickets.
- d) Tree Warden – a report from the tree warden was submitted prior to the meeting

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- The wooded section of the Vanguard Way footpath which runs parallel with Princes Field houses has become overgrown, two willows have been cut back which were completely blocking the path, further work will be needed as the season progresses.

- A large proportion of the hedgerow and verge has been dug out in the vicinity of the Japanese Knotweed reported on the A27, it is assumed it has now been removed.
- e) Cuckmere Flood Forum – no report.
- f) Cuckmere Community Bus – Cllr Smith reported there was still a shortage of drivers, passenger numbers are now back to pre-pandemic levels. Another new bus is to be paid for in October, costs continue to rise, tyres are particularly expensive.
- g) SDNPA – Cllr Mills reported that sections of the Cuckmere River’s banks have been raised by 1.5 metres and some dredging works have been carried out. It is hoped that Alfriston will see some improvement.
- h) Parish Cluster – nothing to report.
- i) Working Group Against Overdevelopment – nothing to report.

48. Updates on the following:

- a) Defibrillator Risk Assessment – Cllr Mills will check the expiry date of the pads.
- b) Playground Inspections – the playground is checked monthly, and a report sent to the Clerk, no areas of concern currently.
- c) Playground upgrade – Cllr Mills is investigating options.

49. Parish Maintenance

- a) Verges/Hedges
Verges, hedges and trees continue to cause concern, the clerk was asked to submit an article to the Village News. The ESCC information regarding landowners’ responsibilities relating to hedges has now been placed on the noticeboards and on the website.
- b) The Berwick Way
The Berwick Way verges have now been cut, there is an area on the southern section that remains overgrown, the clerk was asked to obtain quotations for the work to be carried out.
- c) The Recreation Ground
Reports have been received that trees are overhanging the recreation ground and making ground maintenance difficult, this will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

50. Finance

- a) Approval of payments since 24th July 2024.
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments.

101364	L Kemp	July Salary	£	527.94
101365	HMRC	Replaces cheque no. 101358	£	47.72
101366	East Sussex Pension Fund	August pension payment	£	161.81
101367	L Kemp	August Salary	£	527.94
101368	CAB	Grant	£	200.00
101369	HMRC	Tax & Ni	£	103.40
101370	Mass Media	Website	£	50.40
101371	Jerome Champagne	Maintenance	£	325.00
101372	Go Pest	Wasp nests	£	110.00
101373	L Kemp	September Salary	£	527.94
101374	HMRC	Tax & Ni	£	103.40
101375	East Sussex Pension Fund	September pension payment	£	161.81
101376	Berwick Village Hall	Hall hire	£	20.00
DD	Team 4	Payroll	£	12.00
DD	Team 4	Payroll	£	12.00
DD	Wealden DC	Dog bins	£	165.00

b) To approve the bank reconciliations for July and August 2024.

The clerk explained that due to change of correspondence address the August bank statement had not been received, the August reconciliation will be presented at the next meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the July bank reconciliation.

c) To approve the accounts to date

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the accounts to end of July.

d) To approve grant applications

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to grant the sum of £200 to Cuckmere Community Buses.

51. Questions from Parish Councillors

The clerk was asked to obtain quotations for repair of the noticeboard at the Post Office.

The meeting closed at 8pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of the next meeting 27th November 2024