

# *BETHERSDEN PARISH COUNCIL*

*Parish Clerk*

*Colin Tearle*

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*Sunnyslawns*

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*Densole*

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*CT18 7BL*

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018 in Bethersden Village Hall at 1930hrs

## **PRESENT**

Councillors: A Boyd (Chairman), I Anderson, K Brannan, P Buss, K Cordrey, J Crannis, S Dacre, K Mitchell, R Orchard, and C Tearle (Parish Clerk).

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Cllr A Pickering (ABC) and 19 members of the public.

Public questions and comments

Please refer to Appendix B.

## **146/2018 Apologies**

None

## **147/2018 Personnel Statement of the Parish Council Chairman**

Please refer to Appendix A.

## **148/2018 Appointment of a new Parish Clerk**

As this point the Locum Parish Clerk declared a DPI and left the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr A Boyd and seconded by Cllr K Brannan that Mr C D Tearle becomes the new Parish Clerk subject to agreeing satisfactory terms and conditions. This was resolved by 5 votes in favor, 3 against and 1 abstention.

The Locum Parish Clerk returned to the meeting.

## **149/2018 Minutes of the Meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018.**

It was resolved to approve them.

## **150/2018 Minutes of the Meeting of the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018.**

It was agreed to defer these.

## **151/2018 Declarations of Interest**

C D Tearle – DPI 148/2018

Cllr K Brannan – DPI 154/2018 - 18/00978/AS

## 152/2018 Finance

- a) It was resolved to note and approve the bank balances and payments.

Balances as at 30th July 2018	£
Lloyds Bank - George Field Account	60,904.25
Lloyds Bank – Treasurer`s Account	72,437.88
Co-op Account	10,038.59
<b>INCOME</b>	
Lloyds Bank Interest	2.34
HMRC – VAT Refund	990.89
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
M Shaw – Parish Clerk (July 2018)	967.59
C Tearle – Locum Clerk (July 2018)	1,158.10
C Tearle – Expenses (July 2018)	200.28
M Shaw – Expenses (Dec 2017 to July 2018)	699.57
Countrywide Grounds Maintenance (Aug 2018)	284.06
Countrywide Grounds Maintenance (Aug 2018)	216.30
ROSPA Play Safety	117.60
Southern Electric (Direct Debit)	235.59
KALC (Employment Law Workshop)	72.00
Aldwinkle (Surfer adult exercise equipment spares)	120.43
Water Choice	32.40

n.b. All invoices were made available for checking to Councillors.

- b) Bank Mandates

- i) It was resolved to change the postal address of the Parish Council with the banks.
- ii) It was resolved to authorize the Parish Clerk to make the necessary changes to the bank mandate.

- c) Monthly Invoices

Until now the current practice had been to bring the invoices for payment to the monthly council meeting for examination by any councillors and to verify for the signing of the cheques. It was resolved that from next month these would also be scanned and sent out with the agenda.

- d) The Parish Council noted the request to inspect the Parish Council`s records (that which pertains to the 2017/18 audit) from Cllr I Anderson, who was accompanied by Cllr R Orchard under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. This was carried out in Bethersden Village Hall on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at 1000hrs.

## 153/2018 Parish Clerk`s Report

The Council was advised that he is now in the process of slowly going through the Council files, as he sorts and moves them from Mrs Shaw`s house. Some of these, such as the old Minute books and accounts, have already been deposited into the new safe in the church.

## 154/2018 Planning

### a) Permitted Planning Applications

**18/00563/AS**-Forge Dene, Ashford Rd, Bethersden.  
Erection of garage/storage building.

**18/00821/AS**-Little Etchden, Etchden Rd, Bethersden, TN26 3DS.  
Lawful development certificate – proposed – single storey detached outbuilding for domestic use.

### b) Prior approval not required

**18/00650AS**-Sandhurst, Bethersden Rd, Smarden, Ashford, TN27 8QT.  
Prior approval for associated operational development in accordance with prior approval 16/00375/AS (Prior approval for change of use agricultural barn and land within its curtilage to one dwelling).

### c) Withdrawn by the applicant

**18/00272AS**-Barn, Gable Hook Farm, Ashford Rd, Bethersden.  
Demolition of derelict barn and erection of a new dwelling.

**18/00494/AS**-Pilgrims Rest, Old Surrenden Manor Rd, Bethersden, TN26 3DJ.  
Relocation of existing access.

### d) To consider the following applications

**18/00147/AS**-Fair View, Bull Lane, Bethersden, TN26 3HA  
Proposed two storey side extension, first floor rear extension, replacement porch, detached garage.  
**The Council resolved to support this application.**

**18/00395/CONA/AS**- Chilmington Green, Great Chart Bypass, Great Chart, Ashford.  
Discharge of condition 2.

**18/00456/AS**-Land north of Bethersden Wastewater Treatment Works, Norton Lane, Bethersden.  
Discharge condition 2, 3 & 4.  
**It was resolved that although agreed the Council would like a condition added that would prevent future housing on the site.**

**18/00911/AS**-Parcel A, E and F (part), land at Chilmington Green, Ashford Rd, Great Chart.  
Reserved matters application for the Construction of 153 dwellings on Parcels A,E and F (in part), Main AAP Phase 1, together with associated roads, parking, landscaping public open space and infrastructure.

**18/00951/AS**-Tawney Owl Barn, Smarden Rd, Bethersden, Ashford, TN26 3HE.  
Conversion of agricultural building to a dwelling house including PV panels together with associated hard-standing and revised vehicular access.  
**It was resolved to submit no comment**

At this point Cllr K Brannan left the meeting.

**18/00978/AS**-Unit 2, Wissenden Corner, Wissenden Lane, Bethersden TN26 3EL.  
Prior approval for change of use of building and land from light industrial and office use to three no. dwelling houses.  
**It was resolved to object on the grounds of housing expansion in the countryside and inadequate infrastructure.**

At this point Cllr K Brannan returned to the meeting.

**18/01061/AS**-Whitehall Fm, Brissenden Green Lane, Bethersden TN26 3BJ.  
Proposed Storage Barn/Garage.

**It was resolved to support this application on the basis that it would generally tidy up the site appearance overall and that the proposed new access would have limited use.**

**18/01066/AS**-Land known as the Colt Ponds, Pluckley Rd, Bethersden.  
Siting of four mobile log cabins (caravans) and construction/repair of pedestrian tracks for fishing holiday and general holiday use.

**It was resolved to support this application.**

**18/01099/AS**-15 Chester Ave, Bethersden, TN26 3BN.  
Demolition of existing extension and conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension with decking.

**It was resolved to support this application.**

### **155/2018 Future Council Meetings**

It was resolved to reduce the number of Council Meetings from 12 to 10. The Parish Clerk would present a revised schedule to Councilors at the next meeting.

### **156/2018 ROSPA Play Safety Report**

The contents of the report (previously circulated) was noted by Members, and it was resolved to ask Cllr K Cordrey to examine the sites in the report and submit a report to the Council in time for the next Meeting.

### **157/2018 Speed Watch**

Currently the Council has its own equipment which is not being used for lack of volunteers. It has decided to give some publicity to this via the notice board, web-site, parish magazine and various shops and pubs in the hope of putting a team together.

### **158/2018 Transport Regulation Order Public Consultation – 7.5 Tonne Weight Limit Restriction**

The Council agreed to conduct this survey from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2018. It was agreed that as far as possible all dwellings in the Parish would have a copy delivered as well as circulating this in the local shops, pubs and on the web-site.

The format of final document was discussed and agreed.

### **159/2018 Bethersden Email Accounts**

A decision on when to switch over was deferred, although the Parish Clerk requested that in future all email communication should only go to the Bethersden email account.

### **160/2018 Date of the Next Meeting**

This will be on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 in Bethersden Village Hall at 1930hrs.

## **Appendix A**

### Statement by the Chairman

Over the last 18 months as many of you will have observed, this Parish Council has been inhibited by conflict the likes of which has never been experienced before.

This conflict has had very serious damage both to the good name of parish councillor's as well as the Council itself - despite pleas from past and present Chairmen, members of the community, senior members of KALC and others to pull together for the benefit of the parish - but to no avail.

Notices have deliberately not been displayed in order to prevent the public from attending meetings. You will recall the debacle when your Council Meeting had to be postponed as it had not had the three clear days on the notice board. This is petty manipulation.

Our previous Parish Clerk has been reduced from a competent person, to a person stressed out through the constant barrage of negative and bullying emails over most of 2017, culminating with a serious heart complication that will affect her for the rest of her life.

The first Locum Clerk was so stressed she was seeking help from KALC caused by the pressure, and now history is repeating itself as our current Locum Clerk has to suffer a continuous barrage of emails, demands, unlawful requirements and orders and is thus suffering the same barbaric behaviour- 60 emails from three Councillors since 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

The extent of the time it has taken to hand over from Mary to Colin off of Mary's computer to the Parish computer, loading the new accounts package and data has been massive, involving computer experts, and this has cut down on the available time for routine matters.

A demand was made for inspection of the accounts by Councillor Anderson under the guise of being an elector and not a councillor, (once elected a councillor is a councillor 24/7) with Councillor Orchard "advising" rummaged through the Parish accounts. They proceeded to compare the Clerk's paperwork against the pile of paperwork they bought with them, indicating to me that they had the answers already written with them. I had to rebuke both Councillors for bullying the Clerk. These figures have already been audited by the Parish Council's Internal Auditor - a professional auditor and passed.

Colin spent 35 hours of his time researching and collating finances together, as he only took over the control as RFO on the 20<sup>th</sup> July, 19 days ago when Mary resigned.

All this - yours and my money – your parish funds wasted for no real purpose other than to stress the Clerk

The common thread, is lust for control of the Council, with the negative opposition to the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan, the minutes, the finances, the progress of work for the benefit of the community, depriving members of the knowledge of public meetings and having no regards towards the costs to you and I - the tax payers – with these constant excessive demands and criticism.

This Council has had negative reporting against it to Historic England, the Audit Commission, KALC, Ashford Borough Council, the Monitoring Officer, the Neighbourhood Plan inspector and others, said to be from "concerned electors", often not disclosing the real source. Most of the communications use similar phraseology within their text as if from a common source.

I applied for a freedom of information to Historic England which in its return, although the authors of the emails are redacted, it appears to be in terms that I am familiar with.

The Parish Council have had, on advice of KALC, all the processes and documents revamped as it was said that this would rectify the problems - but again to no avail and ignored, and we appear to be back in the same position as at the end of last year, which is why I am saying what I am saying.

Last year the Parish Council and Ashford Borough Council received an information request regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. This request came from a gentleman in Surrey and the person was a company director of a business involving a Parish Councillor in this parish, which was vehemently denied at a Parish Council meeting. However Company House returns report of them as two Directors of the same Company.

At the request of four Councillors, a special meeting of the Council was held to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan to go forward to Ashford Borough Council. Those four Councillors - failed to attend. They all used similar phraseology within their apology for absence. It was quoted that it was feared that the community would approach and threaten them with **pitchforks.** This process could have been dealt with at the previous Parish Council meeting avoiding the Parish in a further drain on its finances – our money

A sheaf of leaflets handed round at that meeting, promoted by the “New Regime”. Encouraging the attendees to reject the Parish Councils plan and instead read and follow theirs - but when the ownership of this document was questioned a few Parish Council meetings ago it was denied that they knew anything about it, the new regime, or the author of the document.

There has been three objecting Councillors to the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan. They submitted 50 pages, incorporating answers given by ABC to the Information request made by the gentleman in Surrey, each objecting to the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan to the BNP Inspector appraising the plan., containing again the common phraseology and submissions of the common mind.

The BNP inspector and the ABC officer also rebuked the Councillor for directly contacting them directly behind the back of the Parish Council and trying to influence them.

This in turn caused additional work for the Parish Clerk.

These submissions totally ignored the efforts of 50 of your fellow parishioners who after 44 months of hard work created a complicated Neighbourhood plan on behalf of the community to protect and promote the wishes of the community until 2030.

The final conclusion in these objections was the first indication of these Councillors ambitions, to quote, “**in conclusion the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan be returned by Ashford Borough Council, to the Parish, shelved for two years and then reappraised by different Councillors and community members.**”

Before anyone discredits my relationship with the Locum Clerk, I met him at a KALC meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 when he approached me and reminded me that he had traded for Dalgety Agricultural Merchants in Pluckley 40 years previously and he knew me from then and he further advised me he was a Parish Clerk. He is also known to Mary. I took a note of his contact details.

When the meeting between the KALC committee in the spring was being held, Linda Headley said she would not take the minutes as she wished to take part. I rang Colin and asked if he would take the minutes of the meeting - as the minutes had to be recorded. On his arrival, Linda decided she would record the minutes after all.

During December to March, you as parishioners at the Parish Council meetings - were prevented from asking the questions in the open session you wished to make. This prevention was not lawful.

When Mary fell and broke her wrist I needed another Locum Clerk quickly and Colin agreed to work as Locum Clerk, on a much reduced fee, on the understanding he would not be responsible for the Parish finances which remained with Mary. Mary wanted to return to work on 6<sup>th</sup> March but was persuaded by myself and the previous Locum Clerk, not to take up the control until after the March Parish Council Meeting, but the final hand over was not completed until April.

You will be aware at the Parish Meeting I warned you that it was likely that you would be recorded. What you were not informed was that Parish Council members were threatened with legal action should anyone refer to Mary Shaw’s resignation letter, received that day, or its contents, which contained a Councillors name.

The Locum Clerk was threatened also, and when I returned home after the meeting a similar threat had been issued to me by email.

This is an example of what this Council and its officers have been reduced to - legal threats and bullying, alarm and distress - hoping to force our resignations

However the free speech of all Councillors is protected in Council Meetings by law, provided it is truthful and not malicious

The law at present has no sanctions against wayward parish councilors.

We are - if you like the "old school" councillors - anxious to progress with the matters that benefit you the electorate. It is so sad and unnecessary for the present situation to exist but I fear it is so ingrained as you have witnessed on so many occasions, that only the election next year will rectify it when you will be able to put in place, on the Parish Council, those you wish to serve you

There is no empathy or respect, the lust for control is overwhelming, the association with those of higher position who could be of use are used then cast aside and the determination to destroy or discredit anyone who stands in their way either legally or illegally prevails regardless of the health or sanity of the victim

I as Chairman, and Keith Brannan as Vice Chairman, plus other members of the Council are determined to run this Parish Council for the benefit of the parish and not capitulate to bullying - just to let other Councillors decry, bully and create a situation where this Parish Council can be deemed dysfunctional.

### **Appendix B**

Mrs Rye an ex parish clerk gave some forthright views, which were not very complimentary, on how she saw the Council struggling to conduct its business.

Mr G Williams

He expressed concern about the level of harassment that went on, and the need to change for members to change for the benefit of the Parish.

Mrs Mary Marshall

Raised the issue of the surface and width of the footpath across George Field.

Ms Tees

Asked if there had been any developments on the Neighbourhood Plan since the last meeting.

Cllr A Pickering (ABC)

ABC have had a good year winning a national award for staff engagement. It also has the lowest Community Charge in the County without cutting services.

With recycling only 5% goes to landfill with the rest being incinerated to produce electricity.

Hi-definition cameras are being phased out to be replaced by face and number plate recognition ones.

Travellers Site, called Hatchenden, High Halden – Hopefully the final hearing will be on the 5<sup>th</sup> September. Three of the five caravans have been removed, which has now become a criminal action because they are ignoring a court injunction.

The Oldbury planning application has been "called-in" to the Development Control Committee in September.