

Bethersden Parish Council

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Minutes of the Bethersden Parish Council meeting held on the 8th June 2022 at 1900hrs in Bethersden Village Hall.

Reports

Please see Appendix A

49/2022 Present

Cllrs: A Boyd (Chairman), E Allen, K Brannan, S Buckman, G Burnett, P Buss, J Crannis, K Mitchell and C Tearle (Parish Clerk).

50/2022 Attending

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

51/2022 Apologies of Absence

Cllr P Boyd

52/2022 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11th May 2022

It was resolved to approve these.

53/2022 Declarations of Interest

None

54/2022 Planning Applications

None

55/2022 Chairman`s Report

Vandalism - Unfortunately, vandalism continues in the village with graffiti now on the surface of the recreation field carpark. A report from Ashford Police indicates they have asked Ashford Borough Council to remove the obscene graffiti from the back of the Youth Shelter and will instruct police officers to attend more frequently. The images on the inside of the shelter have been painted over, by the village handyman. Quotations to prepare and paint the shelter with a final coat of anti-graffiti paint has been invited. Female tennis players had to watch youths trespassing on the roof of the pavilion at the recreation field and then had to put up with gestures as they drove away from the carpark.

The riding of electric scooters on The Street continues.

A car had its rear screen put through with a shot from a catapult while parked in one of the villages housing estates drives.

A face-to-face meeting with KCC Highways regards the crossing for the A28, speeding traffic and path extension was negatively received. It was reiterated that the requirements for a crossing do not meet the number of users required by Kent County Council. The footpath extension requires a £8000 non-refundable deposit for KCC to assess the suitability and drainage requirements for such a path. Apparently KCC rates the A28 road

30mph speed limit to be under the true speed capacity of the road. The traffic users recognise this capacity and so they travel at higher speed. This is why through traffic exceed the 30mph limits. The KCC officer indicated she would discuss in identifying possible sites for the SID with the KCC SID officer.

Telephone discussions took place, with the KCC Highway officer responsible, regards the Speed Indicator Device [SID]. He will refuse any other make of SID being installed on the road, other than the one approved by him and provided by KCC. The cost of the supply and installation by KCC is £8000 – is twice the cost of alternative machines. The mounting posts can only be installed by approved KCC contractors. The speed meter must hook onto the pole and be secured by a padlock, any model bolting on will be refused. He will remove any other models in the vicinity of the road, including if the post being in private land or boundary. He will not advise the Parish Council where to put the SID – it will be for the Parish Council to suggest sites and he will consider them. He will not accept points where the Police have approved Speed Watch sites. The SID can only be put in the 30mph area and the SID must not record or indicate more than 40mph. to deter road users seeing how high they can get the indicator to read. There must be at least 3 sites for the meter poles to be erected in the village. Previously Mill Road was considered as a site.

The centre post of the kick wall was welded on the to the frame to stiffen the wall following concerns expressed by basketball users last month.

The basket swing and the kick wall is being used successfully.

Welcome signs of continuing work on the flood mitigation throughout the parish by the agencies involved, with engineers and operatives surveying and opening up and clearing identified areas of the drainage system, that showed problems, for rectification. Suggestions have been made for an early meeting to be held to discuss progress with the Agencies.

A problem seems to have occurred with the tennis court surface - an area is not level and water is laying on the surface. This has been reported to the contractors. Painting of the court has been postponed until this has been rectified.

The spare cast iron village sign has been recovered and is being kept safe by the Vice-Chairman

The cricket club has erected and retained up the poles both sides of the cricket field against planning permission.

The defibrillator at the Village Hall was used in an Emergency recently. The pads and battery require replacing but these are sourced from China and current supplies are challenging due to covid restrictions. It may be the Council would consider to purchase a replacement unit in the meanwhile.

The beacon post and its head have been installed and thanks expressed to Mark Mealham for his most generous contribution to the community and Four Seasons for their groundwork. We also thank the Laws family for cutting up the wood for the Queens Beacon and filling the Beacon head for the platinum celebration.

The memorial plaque for the Beacon has been produced and thanks to Cllr Buss who fixed to the Beacon post.

Disappointment is expressed regarding our contractors cutting the George Field. This was due to be cut on Thursday 2nd June but as it is a Bank Holiday, they planned to delay the cut to the 6th June leaving long grass for the Jubilee Events. The Clerk asked that it should in fact be cut before the jubilee celebrations. They said that it would be done as an “extra cut” and charge £250 to be cut before the Jubilee. This work was dreadful with misses and long grass left a very poor job. The company was informed with photos backing up our complaints. Following a strong representation to the company, a fulsome apology was received and the ground was cut properly on Thursday. This allowed the participants of the Big Lunch on Sunday to enjoy sitting on the grass. This contact will be reviewed next year.

Sincere thanks go to Tracey Laws for the design, contents and organisation of the Queen’s Jubilee. The “invitation” leaflet has received widespread compliments n received regards the quality of the leaflet and its contents. 700 printed invitations were delivered, thanks to Cllr Crannis and her team for the time and effort bundling and hand delivering and posting the leaflets, some were posted out to the outlying areas of the parish. There were small pockets of the community who had to be revisited as delivery had not been received. Also included is Trevor Laws who laboured over a hot chainsaw to provide the wood for the Beacon.

The Queens Jubilee celebrations have been a great success and our sincere thanks to our “Pageant Master” Tracy Laws for her great contributions along with her willing supporters organising over the 4-day weekend. Everything went very well – the cinema was well supported, the Beacon lighting a success - except for the panic lighting – it shone over a large crowd of people who were fed sausage rolls and Pimm’s by Janis, Nigel, Sam and Tracey in aid of the Restoration of the St. Margaret’s Bells and frame. The Jubilee tea in the church was well attended as was the exhibition of “Bethersden Life” and background by the history society and the Friends of St. Margaret’s, organ music accompanied tea and the ringing of the Church Bells which unfortunately not heard within the church. The evening “Open Mic” in the village hall was joined by 70 attendees.

The competitors in the Hobby horse competition run by Gareth and Titch Burnet were well supported and was very much enjoyed by competitors and audience alike. A cricket match was held on the Bull Field following a problem with numbers of players available. A tennis match held early in the day. The Barn Dance in the village hall was a sell-out, and was a success with all participants enjoying the entertainment.

As a community we must avoid the new developments in the village becoming self-contained and from feeling they are not part of the Bethersden Community as a whole - we should encourage and welcome them into the whole village activities.

Thanks are expressed to two unsung heroes of the parish - Don & Joan Amos, who have recently given up one of their numerous duties as village hall booking organiser, they have quietly and diligently worked and support so many of the village enterprises over copious years, from bell ringing to British Legion flag carrier, the maintenance of the church yard and security of the church and cricket club trustee. The booking of the Village Hall is now on line -<https://www.bethersdenvillagehall.com/book>

The transfer of the Street Cottage graveyard land to the church is still not complete! It is understood that the relevant planning permission by Ashford Borough Council is still not considered/granted, therefore holding up the consecration and use of the land.

The boundary of The George Field is still incomplete. Representation from the solicitor of George Grove development is still awaited.

The road Wissenden Lane is getting like a third world dirt track through Lamberden Woods. KCC have stated that they cannot surface the road until the roadside ditches are made out and the road surface dry. The multi lotting of the woodland plots means many people - those facing the road on either side - have to be contacted to be advised to act in their riparian duty to clean their respective section of the roadside ditch.

Cllr Crannis is the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall committee and is resigning the position. The Parish Council will need to have a new representative on this important part of the organisation for the village community.

It has been suggested that a list of Parish Assets that are held/stored by individual councillors or member of the public is made up so their existence is not forgotten over time.

We still await quotation for the plaque suggested to go on the Jubilee monument.

The tennis court at the recreation ground is causing grave concerns as it is not draining properly whereas the MUGA is. The clerk is in contact with the company and further monies are being retained until it is satisfactory resolved.

56/2022 A28

Cllr G Burnett was pleased with the recent site meeting with two KCC Highways representatives. One of the topics discussed was the siting of Speed Indicator Devices.

57/2022 Clerk`s Report

All the electrical circuits at the recreation ground have been tested, (including the pavilion) and have now received a current electrical certificate.

58/2022 Finance

- a) It was resolved to approve the schedule of payments and the current bank balances.

Balances as at 02/06/2022	£
Co-op Account	20,038.59
Lloyds Bank – Treasurers Account	40,031.63
Lloyds Bank – George Field Account	21,128.01
INCOME	
Bank Interest	0.16
EXPENDITURE	
C Tearle (Salary May)	1206.40
C Tearle (Expenses May)	146.96
All Clear Services (May)	
Countrywide (June George Field)	310.28
Countrywide (June Rec Grnd)	236.27
Zoom Video Communications	14.39
Lionel Robbins (Internal Auditor)	90.00
E T Bass & Sons (T/Pavilion Electrical Cert. & Repairs)	575.00

White Cliffs Engraving (Brass Plaque - Beacon)	65.00
B&Q (benches/flower beds at the Jubilee Memorial)	64.94
William Breakall (Welding Repairs)	87.50
Countrywide (Extra Cut G/Field)	300.00

- b) It was resolved to note and approve the report of the Internal Auditor. It was not thought any action was needed to taken.
- c) It was resolved to approve the statement of Internal Control which was signed by the Chairman and the Responsible Financial Officer.
- d) It was resolved that the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman and the Parish Clerk as required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.
- e) It was resolved that the Accounting Statement for the year ended 31st March 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.
- f) It was resolved to approve the accounting statements and bank reconciliation for the financial year 2020/21
- g) It was resolved to appoint Mr L Robbins as the Internal Auditor for the forthcoming municipal year.
- h) Minor Asset Register – Cllr K Mitchell brought to the attention of Members the need for such a register as there were several things, owned by Bethersden PC being stored by various residents. This was to be reviewed at the next meeting.

59/2022 57/2021 Chairman`s Allowance

A wide- ranging debate discussed the costs incurred by the whoever the office holder is. This has come to the fore this year which has involved the Chairman having extra duties associated with the Jubilee and last year`s flooding which is still ongoing a name but a few.

It was resolved to allocate an annual Chairman`s Allowance of £300 to be used at the Chairman`s discretion.

60/2022 Platinum Jubilee Report

Both Cllr A Boyd and Mrs T Laws gave comprehensive reports on the recent four day event. A vote of thanks was expressed to Mrs Laws and family for all hard work she had put in, especially with the organisation of the day. Cllrs Allen and Buckman were asked to purchase a bouquet as a mark of appreciation.

Mrs Laws reported that her daughter will be compiling a list of all those who helped to put the event together. A suggestion that was made is that a Role of Honour be compiled for those who helped.

61/2022 Date of the Next Council Meeting

This will be on Wednesday 13th July 2022 in Bethersden Village Hall at 1900hrs.

Appendix A

Cllr A Pickering (ABC)

ABC has now paid out most of the government grants to those in most need due to Covid.
The planning department is now back up to full strength.

Dr Robert Taylor, Cllr Pickering`s predecessor has recently passed away.

Mr M McBrien

Talked about the need to slow down traffic on the A28, the need to find suitable sites and put up our SID.