

Bethersden Parish Council

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Minutes of the Bethersden Parish Council meeting held on the 28th September 2022 at 1900hrs in Bethersden Village Hall.

The meeting started with a one-minute silence as a mark of respect to Queen Elizabeth II.

Reports

Please see Appendix A

75/2022 Present

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

76/2022 Attending

Cllr. J Blanford (ABC), and 17 members of the public.

77/2022 Apologies of Absence

Cllrs A Pickering (ABC), P Boyd, P Buss and K Michell.

78/2022 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13th July 2022

It was resolved to approve these.

79/2022 Declarations of Interest

- a) Cllr G Burnett DPI – Planning 88/2022 (PA/2022/2007)
- b) Cllr K Brannan DPI – Planning 88/2022 (PA/2022/2007)
- c) Cllr S Buckman DPI – 94/2022

80/2022 Jarvis Homes

Mr T Bax on behalf of Jarvis Homes did a presentation of the planning application shortly to be presented. There is to be two bungalows and four houses in the scheme with wheelchair access designed into the bungalows. He was thanked for coming.

81/2022 Kompan (Recreation Ground Plan Area)

A wide ranging discussion was had with Mr McDonald of Kompan. It was decided that Cllrs E Allen and S Buckman work with him so that we have some firm proposal for Members at the next council meeting.

82/2022 Planning Applications

- d) Stevenson Brothers Site – Members were not very impressed with H Halden wanting to put all the social housing associated with the scheme proposed for High Halden being built in Bethersden especially as it looks as if the money for extra facilities will be CIL which will go to Ashford BC and not S106 which will be for the parish.

To consider the following applications

22/01056/AS-Mill Hill Cottage, Pluckley Rd, Bethersden, TN26 3DD

Replacement of existing single storey side extensions with two new single storey side extensions and replacement of first floor cladding.

The Parish Council has agreed to support this application.

22/01109/AS-Oakwood Cottage, Etchden Rd, Bethersden, TN23 3BZ

Change of use of land for the keeping of horses and erection of stables/tractor building, with removal of hardstanding.

It was resolved to support this application

At this point Cllrs G Burnett and S Buckman withdrew from the meeting.

PA/2022/2007-Wissenden Corner, Unit 1, Wissenden Lane, Bethersden, TN26 3EL

Conversion of existing commercial unit into a single dwelling.

Following a presentation by the applicant with various questions asked, the Council resolved to support this application.

At this point Cllrs G Burnett and K Brannan rejoined the meeting.

PA/2022/2111-High Oak Oast, Woodchurch Rd, Bethersden, TN26 3JY

Replacement barn for agricultural purposes.

It was resolved to support this application.

PA/2022/2177-The Meadows, Pluckley Rd, Bethersden, TN26 3ET

Proposed first floor extension, single storey rear extension and front atrium entrance.

It was resolved not to support this application as it is considered to out of character with its surrounds.

PA/2022/2244-The Beeches, Ashford Rd, Bethersden, TN26 3AS

Variation of Condition 8 (details of drainage works) of approved planning application 18/--251/AS (Provision of four detached 3 & 4 bedroom dwellings, with garaging/carports and amenity curtilages). We are proposing a new surface water drainage proposal that follows the surface water drainage by utilising onsite filtration rather than discharge into the public sewer network.

It was resolved to ask ABC for a deferral until after the next Council meeting.

83/2022 Chairman`s Report

Your council welcomes you all back tonight. It seems a long time ago since we attended a Parish Council meeting. The following report is to assist you in catching up with some of the events regarding the work of the Parish Council over the holiday and mourning period.

Speed meters- the last member of the Speed Watch group has now left the village and the group ceases to exist! The speed Watch meter and equipment join the Speed Indicator Device [SID] in storage while speeders roar along the A28 at a speed **they** consider appropriate!

The clerk has now received correspondence, from the officer of KCC in charge, regards the SID. Further investigations continue to test the veracity of the officer's claims. He will not accept our version of Speed Indicator Device, that there are now safe places to post it, and proposes a static speed warning device of the type on the Tenterden side of High Halden - at a cost of £10000 payable by the parish. The SID purchased by the Parish was just over £4000.

Your council had communications from yet another very concerned mother, who lives on the southside of the A28. She has two children and another due this Autumn. All four are to regularly cross the A28 road - with a pram - and taking her two children in hand, -at risk of being killed or injured – because KCC say “it her choice to cross the road at “her own risk”, and in any case “the speed limit is too low for the design of the road”. There is a kerb construction obviously lowered to aid wheeled crossing - between Stevenson's and Forge Hill junction but it is said not to be a KCC approved crossing place. This crossing was installed by Jacobs for KCC when the speed limit was dropped to 30mph! We are looking **at mirrors** to see if that can give warning of approaching traffic from around the corners.

So where does KCC accept there is a safe crossing place over the A28? They have blocked any **affordable** solutions suggested, by the Parish Council, which are chargeable to the community, despite the high KCC community charge

Viewing the vast improvements on the A20 at Charing makes one jealous and annoyed especially when noting the inaction from at least 2011 on the A28 through Betersden. Below is part of the script from a report by the then parish A28 road traffic group. in **2011 that is 11 years ago!** Does that sound familiar?

KHS staff have been unhelpful and unsympathetic to this request “can't do – won't do”

Is it right for the people living on the South side of the A28 in the village to become isolated from the village because they live there and cannot safely cross a fast dangerous road other than by car – do most families have a first or second car to use? It is not fair!

Exploratory works continue to be carried out on the Betersden Stream by the Environment Agency, Cllr Buss & myself have been with them for three out of the four days of their visits in Forge Fields. The KCC investigation contractors have also been working on the surface water drainage in the village. We have been advised that work on the KCC drainage system between Kiln Lane and Forge Corner commences from 3rd October 2022! onwards - which is fantastic news! We are so pleased that both agencies

are now working up computer models based on the recent extensive research work of the water channels and road drainage. They assure the parish council they will then share their conclusions with the Parish Council and public!

The developer of The Beeches has applied for changes in the surface drainage systems planned for the site, these have been referred to the Environment and KCC Highways drainage departments.

The problem with the unacceptable non-drainage surface of one of the tennis courts is still not resolved. The contractor has pressure washed the new surface with water - that failed to work, then washed it with a form of solution - that has again failed to work. They are not denying that the surface is unfit for purpose and is supporting action to rectify it. They say they are talking to the tarmac surface material suppliers to get agreement for a solution. They have been under continual pressure from the parish council to make the surface perform correctly or start the resurfacing process again - which we believe is the only real solution!

The posts around the cricket pitch, along the A28 have now been removed as per the current planning permission. The additional planning application has still not been resolved.

The graveyard extension has now been granted planning permission with conditions. Ground investigations are demanded and the Parish Council is asked by the Church Warden if this cost of this is covered by the financial assistance provided by the parish council for the original purchase agreement made when the parish council obtained the land for use of the church.

The boundary transfer of The George Field is still legally uncomplete, communications have again been held with the developer. It appears the developer's lawyers are not getting on with it.

The George Field attenuation tank continues to frustrate. The arrangement for a meeting between the Parish Council, the Borough Councillor and the Ashford Borough Council drainage expert is still awaited, further copies of the Free Flow report has been sent to the parties.

No further reports regard the future of the George Public House

Further comments regard the erection of a "commemorative shelter" on the George Field have been received. A councillor has had indications that £10000 is available. This was discussed previously at a council meeting in 13/4/2022 for the Queens Jubilee.

The Defibrillators have been busy. Replacement parts have been sourced and purchased - all the three units are now available to be used and registered with Circuit the Registry for the National Heart Foundation and the National Ambulance Service. The village hall unit is now due for renewal. We have been notified that a unit is now also available at the cricket ground

Investigation into the possible provision of a monitored Cctv system, with the ABC Monitoring company, for the recreation field following invasion of the football pitch by vehicle, a broken windscreen glass was spread over the car park, take away rubbish on the car park despite a bin being within 15 feet from a rubbish bin , serious criminal damage to the pavilion, vandalism and anti-social behaviour has continued. A fire extinguisher was

let off in the pavilion, smothering the room, the electrical plant, light meters and outside in powder, this was witnessed as they went on to the youth shelter. Finally, the extinguisher was thrown in the pond! They were heard in the street to say that “we now run this village”. Youths have run about, several times, on the roof of the pavilion, breaking tiles, frightening tennis players and being loud and aggressive to villagers in the street This is youth terrorism and I fear that retribution may descend upon them. The police have been informed and extra patrols promised. It could be hoped that their parents could stop this.

The Village Hall has adopted a more constrictive mode of booking operations. Other venues are being considered.

ABC have agreed to remove the obscene graffiti from the rear of the youth shelter and on the tarmac on the carpark.

The following weekend [three weeks ago] the ref’s room at the pavilion was entered, seven youths were reported to have entered the Pavilion, by the centre “refs” door having obtained the door code from the tennis club wall, then broke through the door at the back and taken out tennis equipment to the youth shelter and field, where they pelted cars in the car park with balls, causing some car owners to have to leave. Further equipment was removed some thrown up into the trees They were observed driving off in two cars – one, a small silver one. Police has advised placing installing cameras, anti-climb paint on the pavilion roof and also installing spiked bars to deter climbing. Further tiles now will now have to be replaced. Again, the police say they will increase patrols. A thank you to the people who stuck in and helped clear up the equipment they could reach.

Looking forward into the Winter months and the expected stress on our community both economically and socially, should we be looking to assist the vulnerable in our community? Paula at The Bull Public House is in the process of assessing the availability and viability of its premises as a community centre in cold weather and also offering low-cost meals.

The road Wissenden Lane is still not repaired, but one adjacent woodland owner has cleaned out the roadside ditch on his part of the verge stretch and it is understood that the other riparian owners have been approached in order for the whole length of road to be repaired. There is now serious risk of damage to the tyres and wheels passing over the potholes and it is understood that KCC Highways is liable. Rumour has it that work could start soon but with winter and rain approaching it may again be delayed.

Representative of the parish council attended an exhibition of the proposed redevelopment of the Stevenson’s Rocking Horse sites at High Halden and Bethersden. Suggestions were made that the Bethersden site be redeveloped to provide the affordable house that would normally be on the redeveloped site at High Halden. This would provide up to 10 affordable units for Bethersden.

The French Gruson community have been in touch to ask if we wish to rekindle the twinning organisation between our two communities. A public meeting is to be held in the village on 3rd October at the village hall 7pm to assess your interest. We would appreciate a good turn out to be able to have your views.

St. Margaret’s Church Bell ringers are creating a fund in order to collect £89000 in order to renovate the 6 church bells and the hanging frame. The wooden frame is to be replaced with a metal one. It was last replaced in 1753 and contains one of the oldest bells in Kent - cast in 1335,

Jarvis Homes is researching the prospects of a providing small development on the Beacon Field. Jarvis homes was the initial developer for the Courtlands site. We are advised to expect a planning application in the next two weeks

84/2022 Clerk`s Report

ABC have agreed to the release of £15,348.45 of Bethersden`s S106 monies for the recently built basketball court and basket swing.

85/2022 Finance

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

Balances as at 02/09/2022	£
Co-op Account	21,128.01
Lloyds Bank – Treasurers Account	33,661.13
Lloyds Bank – George Field Account	17,583.95
INCOME	
ABC - S106 monies	15,348.48
Bank Interest	0.77
EXPENDITURE	
C Tearle (Salary July/Aug)	1990.60
C Tearle (Expenses July/Aug)	182.61
Serious Graphics Ltd	35.00
Countrywide (Aug George Field)	310.28
Countrywide (Aug Rec Grnd)	236.27
Countrywide (Sept George Field)	310.28
Countrywide (Sept Rec. Grnd)	236.27
Zoom Video Communications(Aug)	14.36
Zoom Video Communications (Sept)	14.36
WI – (Village Hall Invoice)	66.00
WI – (Village Hall Invoice)	75.00
All Clear Services – 0042	444.80
All Clear Services – 0043	502.89
Best Host (Economy Package)	42.00
Bethersden Village Hall (Twinning Meeting) *	25.00
Bethersden Village Hall (C/Meeting)	91.00
Bethersden Village Hall (Jubilee W/End)	280.00
Bethersden Village Hall (Defib Electrics)	45.00
Total Office (Defibs) *	647.82
Seton UK (Fire Extinguisher Tennis Pavilion)	58.08
P S Lyons (Jubilee Picnic Event)	150.00
Leo Lyons Digital (PC Website etc)	180.00
Leo Lyons Digital ((Migration of old website to new)	375.00
Gallagher (Insurance Renewal)	1,833.74
PKF Littlejohn (External Auditor)	480.00
KALC – (Finance & Chairmanship Conference)	132.00

- b) It was resolved to note and accept the comments of the External Auditor and to take no action as they accepted the reasons given by the Parish Clerk for this.
- c) It was resolved to renew the current insurance policy.

86/2022 Recreation Ground

- a) The current state of one of the tennis court surfaces was discussed. The company concerned have accept full liability for this and are with their suppliers seeking to rectify this.
- b) Children`s Play Area – This was deferred to the next meeting.
- c) CCTV – In views of the recent upsurge in vandalism to P/Council assets especially at the recreation ground it was decided to pursue researching the installation of CCTV at the ground.

87/2022 Bethersden Churchyard

A request has been made on behalf of the Bethersden Parochial Church for both practical and financial assistance in getting operational the recent agreed churchyard extension which was financed by the Parish Council along with the planning application. The Clerk has been asked to investigate this matter further as the work involved in the request does not appear to be straight forward.

88/2022 George Field Attenuation Tank

Cllr J Blanford (ABC) gave an over view of the current situation. Two years ago the Parish Clerk, Council Chairman, Cllr J Blanford met with the relevant officer on site in an attempt to resolve matters which were put on hold because of Covid. However since then no progress has been made.

NB. It should be noted that this scheme was signed off by the responsible ABC officer as fit for purpose. A commissioned ABC report clearly states it is not fit for purpose.

At the moment the issue appears to be going from one department of ABC to the other like pass the parcel with all manner of excuses being given..

89/2022 Bethersden WI Centenary

It was resolved to allow the planting of crocuses in the George Field in October to mark their centenary.

90/2022 Twinning Gruson

A public meeting will take place in Bethersden Village Hall on Monday 3rd October 2022 at 7pm.to discuss the way forward in view of all the problems of the last two years.

91/2022 A28 Speed Review

The Parish Council was appraised of the email of the 16th September 2022 sent by the KCC Highways Traffic Operations & Technology Manager. In this email he has said that basically all equipment that is used to monitor speed on the highway must only be purchase through the KCC although such an apparent route is more expensive and a he will not permit the equipment purchased by BPC (a multi-site Speed Indicator Devise – SID) to be used, despite this unit being used in other Local Authority areas

nationwide. Various excuses are given which are rejected by the Parish Council because they are not sustainable.

An offer to has recently been made to erect a Vehicle Activating Sign (VAS) near the cricket pitch for £10K. This would be permanently fixed in one location, as against the SID purchased by the Council for £3.5K. which could also stay at a permanent site.

92/2022 Date of the Next Meetings

These will be on Wednesday 12th October and the 23rd November 2022 in Bethersden Village Hall at 1900hrs.

93/2022 Exclusion of the Public

To resolve to exclude the public and the press from the meeting for the following item of business by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

At this point Cllr S Buckman withdrew from the meeting

94/2022 Small Works Contract

The basis of a fresh works contract was agreed. Further discussions are to held at the meeting.