

BETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2022

MINUTES of the **BETCHWORTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** held on **Monday 28 March 2022** at 7.30pm., **Betchworth War Memorial Village Hall, Station Road**

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman (Julie Hardy) welcomed everyone to the Meeting and particularly our invited guest, Inspector Karen Coyne our Borough Commander.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Helyn Clack, Joosje Hamilton, Brockham Parish Council, Tim Kenny (The Poland Trust) and the following organisations Betchworth & Buckland Childrens Nursery, FABB, Betchworth Parish Magazine, Barley Mow Residents Association, Brockham Green Horticultural Society, Pebblecombe WI, JJ Franks, The North Downs Primary School, Betchworth Village Hall, Betchworth United Charities and Re-Betchworth. Although these groups were unable to attend we would like to thank them for contributing to the meeting with their reports.

3. SURREY POLICE REPORT

MV Borough Commander Inspector Karen Coyne gave an address to the meeting, the slides which show contact and our overall statistics are included in the presentation which can be seen here.

4. PRESENTATION BY Karen Wilson, 'Tobin Tubes and Tit-Bits' – The Early Years of Betchworth Village Hall

Councillor Hardy introduced local resident Karen Wilson as our guest speaker. Karen looks after the Betchworth Archives. We would like to thank Karen for her informative presentation.

5. MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021

Cllr Hardy stated that the minutes have been displayed on our website and invited the councillors to propose and second. They were proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Rogers before being signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Hardy gave the following report:

Well, it has been another atypical year with Coronavirus still lurking. We continued our Parish Council meetings on Zoom until last June when we were allowed to meet face to face and chose the larger area of the village hall rather than the Hamilton Room so that we could more safely distance from each other.

Despite that, there has been a lot going on and I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors who give up their time and energy on behalf of the village.

Ed Winter is our Vice Chairman and our footpath officer as you will hear later. He also represents the council on Gatwick issues along with Ian Wilson.

Ian is responsible for the allotments and burial ground too. Our long term burial ground caretaker, Bernard Hawkins, retired from his role last October and now the clerk and Ian look after it. Thanks for all your help, Bernard over very many years.

Colin Rogers is the Chairman of the finance group which reviews and sets the yearly budget.

Graham Randall has taken on Highways; not an easy task, and he will give you the latest updates.

Martin Higgins is our planning expert. He is also on the Re-Betchworth group and we will have updates from them too later.

Hilary Edwards resigned from the PC in November to pursue other interests but she still checks the play equipment on the Goulburn Green for us and is an active member of the Re-Betchworth group. Thank you Hilary for all your work for the PC.

We therefore have a vacancy on the PC which we think may well be filled shortly.

The Parish Clerk and responsible financial officer role is vital to the council so when Marion Hallett resigned in September we were delighted to recruit Cheryl Sexton so quickly. Thanks to Marion for putting up with us all and to Cheryl for stepping into the breach and taking us on!

Thanks also to our two District Councillors, Paul Potter and Simon Budd and Our County Councillor, Helyn Clack who regularly come to meetings and help with our queries.

The agenda and minutes of all our meetings are posted on the four village notice boards and on our website. Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings on the first Monday of the month.

Here is an outline of some of the things we have been doing.

Four new noticeboards around the village.

Defibrillator replacement pads and batteries at BVH and on Gadbrook Road.

Kissing gates purchased.

Speed surveys on key roads.

Litter pick equipment bought and 2 successful litter picks.

Cleaning of war memorial in churchyard.

Maintenance of Burial Ground and Goulburn Green.

Rejuvenating of orchard on Goulburn Green.

Commented and represented Betchworth on a number of consultations:

- . Gatwick
- . Boundary review.
- . Burial Grounds.
- . AONB

Discussion of about 36 planning applications

COVID grants given to;

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Goulburn Green grass and wilding project
Supply and installation of sewage pump for church loo.

GRANTS given to Re – Betchworth for;

Orchard pruning.
Timber for hedgehog feeding stations.
Leaflets and t-shirts

Cllr Hardy invited Cllr Edwards to deliver his Footpath Report and Cllr Randall to deliver his Highways Report, which can be seen in the overall presentation.

7. BETCHWORTH PARISH ACCOUNTS 2021/2022

The draft accounts were displayed. Clerk Cheryl Sexton gave a brief report outlining income and expenditure over the past year:

Firstly allow me to introduce myself I am Cheryl and have taken over as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for your beautiful village. I look forward to meeting with you all over the course of time and would like to remind you that you can contact me on email or phone if you want to discuss anything.

So today I am here to briefly talk about the end of year accounts for Betchworth Parish Council.

Our accounts for 2020/2021 were fully audited and approved in September 2021 and I confirm that our bank balances remained in a healthy position.

Our draft Accounts for 2021/22 are now almost complete with a couple of days to go before the Financial Year End which is on Thursday. These accounts will be internally audited in April by Mulberry and Co, before being sent to PKF Littlejohn for external audit.

The Precept amount received from MVDC remained the same in 2021/22, this was to reflect the current climate, but the Council Tax Support Grant and Concurrent Grant rose by 2%. You will see that income from the burial ground has decreased significantly. We believe that this is due to the increased charges for non-residents which we have aligned with other burial grounds and parishes. During this financial year we received a substantial grant of £61k 'Community Infrastructure Levy' from MVDC this was in respect of the Snowerhill and The Firs developments. There are strict guidelines as to how we can spend this money, we have reached out to the

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community for ideas which I thank you for and we will look to investigate our priorities this year. If you would like any further information on this please let me know. Allotment income was received, and the rates will continue to remain the same for 2021/22; £35 for a full plot and £17.50 for half (6 full plots in total). Due to the receipt of the CIL money the overall income received for 21/22 has increased by just under 50% (from last year).

Moving to expenditure, administration costs increased (27%), this is due to the replacement of the existing Clerk and paying for 2 of us together during a handover period, as well as an increase in training expenditure. There was also a significant increase in costs for the Parish Council meetings as The Village Hall was used rather than The Hamilton Room to allow safe social distancing, we are pleased that we have now been given reduced rates for 2022. Spending of S137 money was again low, (for those of you unaware, the council needs to have a legal power to spend any money, S137 enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure and is reported separately.) this year it covered speed surveys and the maintenance of the defibrillators. Expenditure in the burialground rose this year due to the levelling of the ground and a new noticeboard.

We have fulfilled a couple of capital projects this year. The first being the completion of the landmark fingerpost at the top of The Street, and the second the purchase and installation of the new noticeboards that you will see around Betchworth. We have also used our COVID grant paid last year to provide a donation to the church for the supply and installation of a sewage pump, we contributed to the Re-wilding Project and purchased a number of kissing gates that will be replacing some old stiles this year. We were also able to provide a grant to Re-Betchworth which allowed them to continue with their great work which supported a number of their exciting initiatives such as bringing our Orchard back to fruitful production, the assembly of a number of Hedgehog Feeding Stations, as well as helping with their communication strategy with leaflet and T-Shirt production.

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The Parish Council budgeted to cover all capital expenditure from their reserves, However, with the income from the CIL money this means that again the cash reserves are unexpectedly high and our bank balances show a significant overall increase from last year.

Final audited accounts will be posted onto website later in the year.

Our Finance Group is chaired by Councillor Colin Rogers and is accompanied by Julie our Chair, our Vice Chair Ed Winter, Councillor Ian Wilson and myself as RFO. Our budget is set annually and reviewed regularly.

Internal Auditors Mulberry and Co were scrupulously thorough when auditing our accounts last year, and as such the Finance Group have agreed to retain their services. We continue to be very grateful for their support.

Copies of the revised approved draft unaudited accounts (based on 31/3/22) are now available on the website [\(please click here\)](#).

8. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Representatives from our local organisations submitted and delivered written reports which can be found [on our website \(please click here\)](#)

9. ADDRESS BY SURREY COUNTY COUNCILLOR HELYN CLACK

Sadly as Cllr Helyn Clack sent her apologies we were not able to receive an address from her. Cllr Clack has kindly offered to delivery an address at our Parish meeting in due course.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked all of those attending and closed the meeting at 8.49pm.