

BETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the **MEETING** of the **BETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL** held on **MONDAY 4th December 2023**, commencing at 8pm in The Hamilton Room, Betchworth

Councillors (Cllrs) present:

Cllr Ed Winter (EW) Chairman
Cllr Graham Randall (GR)
Cllr Martin Higgins (MH)
Cllr Ian Wilson (IW)
Alice Laidler (AL)

Attending:

District Councillor Budd (SB)
District Councillor Keay (PK)
Member of the Public (MOP) who
arrived at 8.40pm

Apologies:

Cllr Robert Ashdown (RA)
Cllr Julie Hardy (JH)

Apologies:

District Councillor Potter (PP)
County Councillor Clack (HC)

In attendance: Cheryl Sexton (CS), Clerk & RFO

Minute #	Agenda item	Who
	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
255	Apologies were received from Cllr Robert Ashdown, Cllr Hardy, District Councillor Potter and County Councillor Clack.	
	CO-OPTION OF A NEW COUNCILLOR	
256	Councillors unanimously agreed the co-option of Mrs Alice Laidler as Councillor. Alice officially accepted the position and confirmed by signing an Acceptance of Office in the presence of councillors. Alice was welcomed to the Parish Council.	
	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
257	No declarations of interest were received.	
	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	
258	The minutes of the meeting held on 6 th November 2023 were approved and signed by Councillor Winter.	
	OPEN FORUM	
259	The Clerk informed Council that a request has been received from a parishioner who is keen to look at what can be done in Betchworth for renewable energy and suggested a wind/river turbine. Council would like to thank the parishioner for their request and will share some information with them regarding the issues with river turbines,	CS

	but would welcome their ideas on what could be done. The Clerk and Chair are due to meet with The Estate next week and will discuss their experience with river turbines and explore other possibilities with them as well as discussing with Re-Betchworth and report back to parishioner.	
260	Cllr Higgins raised a question received from a parishioner to ask if Council have any objection to a Wassailing event to take place at on Goulburn Green, Council stated that they had no objection to respectable wassailing taking place providing the trees are divested of any decorations within a fortnight. Cllr Higgins to report back to the parishioner.	MH
	COMMUNITY POLICE REPORT	
261	The police report with incidents for November 2023 was displayed, discussed, and acknowledged.	
	TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS	
262	Cllr Winter provided the Footpaths Officers report, the issues of overgrown vegetation onto footpaths and the highway was highlighted again. Clerk to issue another article in the Parish Magazine and PC email to remind homeowners of their responsibility.	CS
263	It was noted that a mobility scooter has been driving down The Street and concern was raised over safety. Clerk to ascertain if driver can use a footpath and if so it was agreed to remove/move the bollard on The School Path to allow safe passage for the mobility scooter. It was noted that mobility scooters are allowed to go on pedestrian areas, and this would not affect the cycling prohibition on the school path.	CS
264	A Highways report was displayed and presented by Cllr Randall, discussions were had around each topic. A copy of the report will be added to the website 'supporting files' with the minutes and on the noticeboards. Actions arising from the report and discussions:	
265	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern over the commercial waste that has been left on estate land by the telephone exchange building. Chair to discuss at next meeting with The Estate. It was noted that the waste has yet to be removed. Any further waste found should be reported to MVDC immediately for removal. 	JH
266	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk to speak to District Cllr Potter regarding the hedges outside of Atkinson House to get these cut back by Clarion due to the overgrowth onto the road. 	CS
267	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed in principle the need to replace the Gateway on Station Road due to the presence of rot and general poor appearance of the timber framework. District Cllr Keay raised the general consensus across the county regarding gateways 	CS

	and the need to replace ones that are no longer fit for purpose. She noted that there might be an opportunity to procure a discount if the parishes worked together on replacements. It was noted that the original gateway was installed as part of the Dorking Rural Box initiative and agreed that we would raise with County Cllr Clack in the first instance to replace providing her with the quote and design obtained.	
268	The proposal for the installation of bollards opposite Something Special was displayed and discussed. The final estimate from SCC Highways is £851.26 and it was noted that SCC do not have the funds to complete this work. It was unanimously approved that Betchworth Parish Council would fund this initiative from the CIL funding and agreed that the asset and maintenance will stay with SCC Highways. It was noted that SCC Highways have agreed to maintain the bollards. The purchase order was formally approved under minute 300.	CS
269	Cllr Randall provided Council with an update on the Brockham Traffic Calming Initiative and stated that Betchworth would be formally consulted. Concern raised on the impact that it may have on sending traffic down The Street to avoid the reduction in speed. The effect of action taken in either Brockham or Betchworth affects the other and needs to be considered. Full details of the traffic calming proposal can be found on https://www.brockham.org/traffic-and-road-safety .	GR
270	Cllr Winter updated Council on the Gatwick Consultation; the Inspectors are due to announce full details of the process that will be taken next at the end of January. There will be a 6 month period for further representations both written and verbal.	
	COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATIONS	
271	Member of the public (MOP) from Re-Betchworth entered the meeting at 8.40pm as they were there to discuss an item covered under agenda item 10 it was agreed to bring this agenda item up the running order.	
272	Cllr Winter welcomed the member of Re-Betchworth to the meeting and allowed them to present their paper requesting support from Betchworth Parish Council in their application to seek funding to explore the potential of a Community Biodiversity Park. It was noted that the community interest is high based on the takeup and feedback from the new nature WhatsApp group. A discussion about the proposal took place and it was suggested to look at other parks where councils have also instigated such initiatives. Betchworth Parish Council unanimously gave support to the proposal. The Clerk will write a letter of support.	CS

273	MOP left the meeting at 8.55pm and the council resumed back to the proposed order of the agenda.	
274	PLANNING New Applications (1) MO/2023/1412 Pipers, The Street, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7DJ Erection of single storey side and front extensions, new pitched roof over existing side extension, creation of dormer to front, with changes to fenestration and external materials. Replacement raised patio with balustrade. (Amended Description). <p style="text-align: right;">No Comment</p>	
275	Decisions (2) MO/2023/1355 Highveld, Pebble Hill Road, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7BP Removal of a chimney, replace hipped roof side extension with flat roof side extension and Juliet balcony to replace existing first floor window at the southern end of the eastern elevation. <p style="text-align: right;">Approved with Conditions</p>	
276	MO/2023/1378 Great Oaks, Snowerhill Road, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7AQ Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development in respect of a single storey rear extension. <p style="text-align: right;">Approved</p>	
277	AMENITIES It was acknowledged that the play equipment was checked on 6 th & 19 th November. Due to holidays it was agreed that Cllr Wilson would completed the checks in December.	IW
278	It was acknowledged that all 3 defibrillators were inspected by Cllrs Hardy and Winter.	
279	It was noted that there were no new memorial requests to approve this month.	
280	The Clerk displayed the final design and business case for the replacement gate on Goulburn Green following a site visit attended by Cllrs and Farm Fencing which was approved. Council approved to give Farm Fencing the go ahead to install the new gate and release up to £1500 from CIL funding to cover the costs.	CS
281	The revised Burial Ground rates for April 2024 were discussed, acknowledged and unanimously approved, these will be displayed on the website 1 month prior to taking effect.	

	POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
282	The Clerk displayed a proposed policy for Council to consider for Biodiversity. This was discussed and unanimously approved to adopt following the amendment to delete the last bullet point and make explicit that any planting must use UK bulbs.	CS
	CLERKS UPDATE	
283	Clerk displayed the revised Clerks Report which will be added to the website 'supporting files' with the minutes, highlighting areas in red since the issuing of the agenda. No further comment.	
284	Ongoing action log was acknowledged.	
285	The Clerk updated Council on the Grounds Maintenance Tenders, these will be brought to January meeting to consider and approve.	CS
286	District Cllrs Keay & Budd left the meeting at 9.15pm.	
	FINANCE	
287	The revised budget for 2023/24 which was recommended by the Finance Group for approval was presented and acknowledged by Council.	
288	The guiding principles for the 2024/25 budget were approved by the Finance Group and signed by Cllr Winter at the meeting.	
289	The proposed budget for 2024/25 which was recommended by the Finance Group for approval at Council was presented and formally approved. Cllr Winter signed and dated this at the meeting, Cllr Hardy will sign outside of the meeting.	JH
290	The precept was agreed in principle at £17,425.26 which is an increase overall of 15% to start to bring the precept into line with the Council Running Costs. It was discussed that over previous years the precept has only been covering direct staff costs and has been able to do so due to the surplus of money that has been generated from the burial ground. The precept should cover the overall Council Running Costs therefore it was agreed as part of the guiding principles to increase the precept over a 2 year period to ensure that the Parish Council's running costs are covered correctly. Mole Valley District Council are yet to declare the latest Tax Base costs to allow Betchworth Parish Council to calculate what this increase equates to for parishioners. To be brought to January's meeting to formally approve.	
291	The amendments to the financial regulations based on comments from internal audit were acknowledged and approved to adopt.	CS

292	The Finance Risk Register for 2024/25 was recommended by the Finance Group for approval and was formally approved.																
293	The Clerk presented the business case for the new laptop which was approved and will be added to the asset register, the invoice was formally signed under minute 299.	CS															
294	Council acknowledged the receipt of £1,705.71 (£50.71 interest & £1655 Burial Ground).																
295	Betchworth Parish Council have again agreed to issue a grant invitation to all local groups to apply for a grant for the 2024/25 financial year.	CS															
296	Council acknowledged the successful completion of the interim Internal Audit and agreed the following responses to the 4 actions Clerk to respond back to internal audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All councillors will sign a formal acceptance to receive information by electronic means 2. Agendas have been amended to summons Parish Councillors 3. The Financial Regulations have been amended and approved under minute 291. 4. The Council considered the recommendation for a dual access authorisation on the bank account and agreed that the existing process in place is sufficient 5. The Council agreed to update the transparency information on the website. 	CS CS CS CS CS															
297	Clerk displayed the Monthly Financial Summary which was discussed and acknowledged.																
298	The following payments which were made in November (IB00610 was approved by the Finance Group on 14 th November and IB00611 was approved by Chair on 17 th November, these were for emergency bags of stone to allow the footpath by The Coombe safe to walk on) these were formally ratified and approved by Cllrs Winter & Wilson.																
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>IB00610</td><td>G Randall</td><td>£104.37</td></tr> <tr> <td>IB00611</td><td>G Randall</td><td>£104.37</td></tr> </table>	IB00610	G Randall	£104.37	IB00611	G Randall	£104.37										
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299	The following amounts were approved for payment in December 2023 by Cllrs Winter & Wilson																
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>IB00612</td><td>HSBC Monthly Bank Charge</td><td>£5.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>IB00613</td><td>Cheryl Sexton – Salary & expenses</td><td>£1632.68</td></tr> <tr> <td>IB00614</td><td>HMRC – NI & Tax (November)</td><td>£342.39</td></tr> <tr> <td>IB00615</td><td>Hamilton Room (2 x Mtg)</td><td>£30.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>IB00616</td><td>Cheryl Sexton (Annual Hosting)</td><td>£100.92</td></tr> </table>	IB00612	HSBC Monthly Bank Charge	£5.00	IB00613	Cheryl Sexton – Salary & expenses	£1632.68	IB00614	HMRC – NI & Tax (November)	£342.39	IB00615	Hamilton Room (2 x Mtg)	£30.00	IB00616	Cheryl Sexton (Annual Hosting)	£100.92	
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300	IB00617	Mulberry & Co (Audit)	£208.50	
	IB00618	DLG Computers (Laptop)	£649.97	
	IB00619	Josh Flynn Gardening Serv (November)	£724.80	
	IB00620	Josh Flynn Gardening Serv (Tree)	£300.00	
	IB00621	SLCC Membership Fees	£183.00	
	IB00622	Josh Flynn Gardening Weed/Path Clear	£192.00**	
	<p>** It was noted that this amount differed to the published agenda due to a calculating error on the invoice.</p> <p>The Purchase Order (PO0017) for the amount of £851.26 for the bollards opposite Something Special was formally signed by Cllr Winter following approval under minute 268.</p>			
301	<p>FUTURE MEETING DATES</p> <p>The following dates were acknowledged:</p> <p>a. Next Parish Council Meetings - 8th January. 5th February</p> <p>b. MVDC Clerk Meeting – 6th December – Clerk</p> <p>c. Meeting with The Estate – 11th December – Clerk & Chairman</p> <p>d. SALC Clerk Meeting – 16th January – Clerk</p> <p>e. SALC Councillors Meeting – 17th January - Councillors</p>			CS
302	<p>PARISH MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Invitation for email address, signposting of minutes and Highway report and reminder regarding responsibility of overgrown vegetation.</p>			
303	<p>MEETING CLOSED AT 9.40pm</p>			
	<p>THIS IS A CONTROLLED DOCUMENT – Betchworth Parish Council will NOT be held responsible for content when downloaded from the website.</p>			