

BENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: David Hawes

Clerk: Allison Spyer

14 Barley View, North Waltham, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG25 2ST
Tel: 07786 063570 Email: clerk.bentworth@parish.hants.gov.uk

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

1st May 2018, 8pm, Jubilee Hall, Bentworth

Present:

**ACTION
FOR**

Parish Councillors	Clerk	District & County Councillors	Others
Veronica Parker Jenny Lewis Paul Mellish Jane Costigan Chris Hurley Abbey George	Allison Spyer	Mark Kemp-Gee	18 members of the public in attendance

1 Apologies for Absence:

David Hawes

Minutes of 2017 APM:

proposed and seconded with unanimous agreement from the rest of the council

2 Matters arising:

There were no matters arising.

3 Chairpersons Report: Annual review. David Hawes

Once again, we have run with a councillor short throughout the year however we have not experienced the extremely high churn rate as in our previous years. Running with only seven out of eight councillors does put unnecessary pressure on the current voluntary team. If you or someone you know may be interested in joining the council please approach one of the councillors or the clerk. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Abby for joining Chris on the highways section of the council. Many thanks.

In no particular order I will now go over the events since the last APM.

The Participatory Budget of £1000.00 had a good response in no small part due to it being held in conjunction with a Neighbourhood meeting in Jubilee Hall. The short list came down to three Parish projects. Red telephone box by the green, Village Party and a film club. The voting was as follows:- Phone box - 19 votes, village party - 22 votes and the film club - 32 votes. Tony Brooking is organising the club and the first film night viewing will be "The Darkest Hour" on Tuesday the 12th of June in the Jubilee Hall at 7 pm. We hope this will be well attended and supported.

Speed Watch - to be honest we continue to struggle to get enough volunteers. Those we do have are not always available so we do need more hands to the pump. Even if you can only attend once a month that would improve the situation. Although we have a date in the diary every week we do struggle to cover it as we do not have sufficient volunteers. The police say that we should have three persons attending at any one time. Speeding vehicles above 35mph in the 30mph limit have their registration number, type of vehicle and colour noted by the volunteers. This is entered into the system by the Police. Then a letter is sent to the vehicle owner. In addition to the letters going out our local PCSO visits anyone who has had 2 letters, and if the person does not live locally they contact the police force where they do live and they pay them a visit. So far in 2017 / 2018 eighty letters have been sent with three regular offenders identified.

A really big thank you to the small band of volunteers who give up their time in an effort to make the parish safer for pedestrians, young and old, horses, pets and other law-abiding drivers. Thank you.

The village green continues to offer a place to sit and picnic plus hold pop up "Star" events. Thanks to Matt for his mowing and Murray for the use of his mower. A big thank you to both.

The smaller greens at Holt End have been eroded over time leaving the entrance in a similar state to that of the pull-in by the post box prior to it being upgraded. In conjunction with EHDC the drainage culvert at Holt End was cleaned removing a blockage and the ditches cleared by the Parish. Once this was complete a set of Dragons Teeth were fixed reducing the erosion around the bank. We would like to thank Julian for mowing and keeping the Holt End greens in good condition. Thank you.

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EHDC have reduced the annual grass cutting from nine times a year to six. The council is reviewing any actions it can take to keep the Parish beautiful.

Once again there has been an abundant amount of wild garlic along the field side of the village green and throughout the village. I note that a number of parishioners took advantage of this crop. Including myself.

The village flight pond liner is full and holding water. Many thanks to Stella and the Garden Club for superbly planting the surrounding area and we have now seen the second year of snow drops in bloom.

The Neighbourhood Plan was going at a pace during the year with one well supported public meeting. The committee members headed by Boyd all have put in an unbelievable amount of time, effort and knowledge into this project. The sites have been displayed and opinions gathered. Unfortunately, it looks like the Government and hence EHDC have changed the rules regarding the allocation of numbers of dwellings. So, the site issue is now on hold but the background work required for the final submission continues. Many thanks to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee and observers.

High viz jackets and litter pickers have been acquired and used, the oak tree on the green has had its crown lifted, super-fast Broadband is now up and running to Box 12 plus the finger post on the green has been excellently renovated.

The commemorative notice board, on the entrance to the Jubilee Hall, to Paddy Ward has been taken in hand by the Alton Menshed team and fully refurbished.

The Care Group has been excellently organised and run by Fred for over 22years. She has now handed the reins over to Jackie Crawford as Chair and Jackie Cleveland as treasurer. Many thanks to Fred for all the years of effort and service.

And finally, just a quick reminder that this year's village fete is on Saturday the 7th of July at 2pm. Please make sure that you and your family support this fun and fundraising event.

My apologies for not being in attendance this evening as Sandra recently fractured her ankle and she is convalescing on the Isle of Wight with myself.

Thank you to Veronica for standing in for me during this difficult time.

As always, many thanks to all the Parish councillors and of course our learned clerk Alli for her efforts and council knowledge. Thank you all for attending.

4 Financial Report: Allison Spyer

Description of expenditure	2017 – 2018 Budget	2017 – 2018 Actual Spend	% Breakdown	2018 – 2019 Budget
Clerks Wages & expenses	6600.00	6198.00	94%	6900.00
Cllr Expenses	51.00			150.00
Chairman's Allowance	75.00			75.00
Benches, bus shelter & pond	700.00	3203.00	447%	1200.00
Insurance	430.00	425.00	99%	435.00
Grants / donations	500.00	17.00	3.9%	500.00
Training	250.00	180.00	72%	250.00
Hall Hire	450.00	373.00	83%	450.00
Audit Fees	375.00	350.00	93%	375.00
Subscriptions	250.00	269.00	107%	250.00
P Budgeting	500.00	76.00	15%	500.00
Data Protection	35.00	35.00	100%	35.00
Laptop / tech support	250.00	729.00	291%	600.00
Website	200.00	112.00	56%	200.00
Neighbourhood Plan	-	7639.00		5200.00
Misc	-	100.00		250.00
Totals	10,666.00	19706.00		18220.00

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NP inclusive of 5K refund so actual amount spent is £2439.00. There are two areas where we have gone well over budget. Laptop & tech support because we bought a new parish laptop. Village maintenance, benches and pond we spent £470 on planting for the pond, £600 on tree maintenance, £360 for ditch clearing, £415 for sign painting and the rest made up in small miscellaneous items such as bus-stop glass, noticeboard repairs and litter pick equipment.

INCOME, Last year, current year and next year;

Income	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 – 2019
Precept	11,016.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Grants	4,700.00	6782.00	6200.00 minimum
VAT Refund	107.00	694.00	Unknown
	15,823.00	17,476.00	

It was agreed to keep the precept at £10,000.00. The cost of the Neighbourhood plan should be covered by the grant from Groundworks UK. If we take the costings of the NP out then we have budgeted for a spend of around £13,000.00, the main items being pond & repairs around the village.

5 County Councillors Report: Mark Kemp-Gee

MNKG re-elected to HCC in May 2017, receiving over 70% of those voting, some 40% - very high for a local election. Reappointed as Chairman of the Hampshire Pension Fund (including all district councils in Hampshire) valued at £7 billion. Reappointed as Chairman of the Members Code of Conduct Panel.

County Matters:

Council Tax has gone up by 5.4% for those of us in East Hampshire – but Hampshire has the lowest Council Tax of all English Counties except Somerset.

Central Government Grant to help pay for all County Services is less than half what it was in 2010 and by 2020 it will be eliminated and replaced by allowing us to keep some of our business rates but not ALL our business rates unfortunately!

We are now spending over £500 million alone in adult social care a year and keenly await the Government White Paper to be produced this summer to learn how we are to cope with this overwhelming problem and the interaction with the NHS going forward.

Four County Councils in England are thought to be under great financial pressure, including Surrey, we are proud that Hampshire is one of the best managed despite the acute cutbacks we have had to make as our Government Grant has been cut to ribbons.

County is once more attempting to put together a Combined Strategic and Economic Authority without an elected mayor, including Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight for greater (in size) Hampshire whilst continuing its opposition to try and split Hampshire into two local authorities and consign East Hampshire to Solent City!

Bentworth Matters:

Survey to monitor HGV traffic through the village. Unfortunately, did not provide enough evidence to restrict them but this can be revisited.

There is a constant battle to repair pot holes and drainage maintenance & highway repairs should be mindful of old buildings in village. New 40 MPH limit at New Copse and new village gateways.

Holt Lane traffic speeding – community traffic calming initiative possibility / SLI's – liaising with Speed Watch. Money has been donated for comfortable chairs for the Jubilee Hall, and the Post Office in Medstead. Received a £7000 grant to help keep it open.

6 District Councillors Report: Tony Costigan

I have had a conversation with the Council in relation to the major brick bridge that is near the French Horn in Alton. As you know it is due for replacement and the project was forecast to start in September this year and was expected to last 4 months.

The intention is to widen the bridge so that there are two normal sized lanes as opposed to the 1.5 that it is at present. In other words, cars and HGVs can pass each other.

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There will be major traffic diversions whilst the work is in progress, some of which is destined to come through Bentworth. Residents should see signs in place already and this will also affect Weald, Four Marks and Bedstead. The cottage that has been exposed since the hedge was removed will be demolished and the access to Winchester Road will be closed (this is where the Builders Merchants is).

The Star Inn

A meeting has been scheduled between me and the new owners on 10th. May. I am inviting comments from residents or any questions that they want answers to. The owners were overwhelmed by the objections received to the planning application which is due to be rejected within the next two weeks. The planning officer has an extraordinary workload and is running late. I have asked the director to bring proof of ownership as I would like to know who I am dealing with before we start.

The grass cutting to the verges in the area should start shortly. Thank you to the litter pickers - they did a great job as always.

The sports centre in Alton has been delayed due to planning queries; it was due to start summer 2019 and would not be finished until 2020. I will, of course, keep the village updated as to progress.

Finally, EHDC are starting to use the rewards of the investment portfolio and am pleased to report that the parking charges in Alton are due for review. They are considering all sorts of options, e.g. the first hour is free. This is at an early stage and nothing is confirmed. Watch the press for further details.

7 Electors Open Forum - The following questions were asked by resident's present:

Q. Will the Alton Recycle Centre stay open?

A. Yes as far as MKG knows.

Q. What other traffic calming measures could be introduced?

A. MKG suggested white lines down the side of the road making the road look narrower, speed indication signs & crossing points with red tarmac. *MKG agreed to chase HCC for the beige tarmac by the village gates that should have been installed. MKG agreed to investigate the effectiveness of rumble strips. MKG also suggested the Parish Council revisit speed limit indicators that were put forward many years ago but were very unpopular at the time.*

Q. What is the HGV threshold and why does it have to be met before the County will restrict the large lorries to come through the village.

A. While MKG is wholly supportive of HGV restrictions, before he can do anything the regulations have to be evidence based and the results of the survey did not support this.

Q. When will the village be resurfaced?

A. *MKG unsure and will look into it.*

Q. There are many building signs going up along the A33, are they allowed?

A. Some may have permission and others not. *MKG to check.*

Finally, it was reported that at the last litter pick the smallest amount of litter was collected this is because a local resident is litter picking daily. It was agreed the PC would write a formal letter thanking him.

8 Closure of Meeting: Veronica Parker closed the meeting at 8.55pm

Signed Date