BENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Neal Day
Clerk: Louisa Thomson
Email: clerk@bentworthparishcouncil.org

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

4th June 2024, Jubilee Hall

Present:

Parish Councillors	Clerk	District & County Councillors	Others
Neal Day Scott Neville Simon Lane David Eyre-Brooke	Louisa Thomson	Tony Costigan Mark Kemp-Gee	Members of the public in attendance

1 Apologies for Absence:
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Parish Councillors Nikki White, Christian Browning and Veronica Parker.

2. Chairman's Report – Neal Day

What a difference a year makes!!
The last year has been and interesting one for the PC. Back in November 2022 we had gone from a full council with 8 councillors to just 3.
May 2023 elections saw an uncontested Parish Council election in Bentworth and we gained Scott Neville and we have subsequently co-opted 3 further councillors.
Having 7 "active" councillors we have been able to assign roles to improve our effectiveness and the value delivered to the community.

Introduce each councillor in order of length of service

Veronica Parker(apologies)
Neal (Chairman)
Nikki White (Vice Chair Person) (apologies)
Scott Neville
Simon Lane
David Eyre Brooke
Christian Browning (apologies)

Village Tidy
We have managed 2 litter picks in the year and our next will be extend to be a village tidy. If successful, this will continue in place of litter picks but is dependent on support from villagers.

Christmas Celebrations
As has been the tradition the Parish Council organised the purchase of a village Christmas Tree. The turning on of the lights had a good turn out and the wine and minced pies went down well.

Remembrance Sunday
In November Councillors attended the remembrance Sunday service and laid a wreath as a mark of respect from the village.

Village Fete support
The 2024 is being supported by the parish council who will insure the event. Parish councillors have joined the organising team to assist.

Communications
Our first issue of Bentworth Parish Council News was delivered in December 2023 and was well received. The 2nd issue will be delivered in the next few days and will be twice the size of issue 1. We intend to deliver issues twice annually.
We have made significant changes to the PC website. From May you can subscribe to updates which will automatically send Meeting Notices, Agendas, Minutes and other notifications. We encourage villagers to sign up. You can also contact the parish council using Hello@bentworthparishcouncil.org and on doing so you will receive an acknowledgement to confirm your request was received.

Speed Cameras
We now have the speed cameras and have agreed initial trip limits. We await approval from Hants County Council for installation and hopefully we will see an enforcement or fine process adopted in due course.

The pond
The village pond ownership has been contentious. We have initiated a project to identify the options available to repair/restore/replace/remove the pond and the cost associated with each option along with ongoing maintenance costs. Depending on the outcome we will determine the possibility to request formal ownership and registry of the land.

Highways
Our first highways reporting session resulted in several potholes being reported. We wish to remind however, that anyone can report a pothole, general road condition issues and flooding using the Hants CC website.

Village Maintenance
In 2023 we reviewed the listed Parish Council assets and made amendments. We took the time to perform a survey of each asset and performed a review of any concerns.
The bench around the oak tree was kindly repaired. By Ian who built it originally. The main notice board on the village green gave cause for concern. The heavy oak base has severe decay, and we have subsequently tendered for repairs to be carried out. A reputable local company has been selected to carry out he work which is now scheduled.
Cutting of the village green grass will continue throughout 2024.

Councillor Surgeries
This was a new idea for 2024. We have held two to date and are pleased to report that they have been successful in giving people an opportunity to come and discuss concerns and ideas on a 1-2-1 basis over a coffee. More surgeries are planned.

Planning
We have seen a large number of applications in the past year requiring the planning team to meet more regularly. The application at land adjacent to Glebe Fields is of concern for the village with the sudden change in the application from 6 retirement bungalows to a far more substantial development.
The risk of developers putting forward a deluge of new applications in East Hants has been increased due to a successful appeal in Four Marks where the aggressive land agent convinced the government assessor that East Hants has not met their 4-year land and housing availability target.
We await the response from East Hants District Council to address concerns of over development and to minimise the impact of the speculative development throughout Bentworth and East Hampshire.

In the past month developers have submitted applications for 2 sites in Medstead. 1 for 50 houses and 1 for 73 houses. This is on our doorstep, and we should be aware. It has a major impact on Bentworth with increased traffic and more strain on the existing weak infrastructure that we have today.

If residents of Bentworth want to be engaged with the emerging local plan it would be advisable to form a new Neighbourhood Plan Support Group. This would be developed to align with the new local plan but would also establish an agreement on priorities for Bentworth Parish. A NPSG existed 7 years ago in Bentworth and some of the documentation could still be available.
If you are interested in forming an NPSG please let the PC know and we will try to help you.

Thank You
I would like to thank all of the Parish Councillors. They all volunteer their time to improve people lives. I am delighted that they work as a team and are very supportive of each other and in adopting new ideas that bring benefits to Bentworth and I look forward to working with them over the coming year.
I would also like to thank the residents of Bentworth. Our Parish Council meetings are always well attended (for a small village) and those in attendance actively participate in the public sessions.

3. County Councillor Report – Mark Kemp-Gee

Thank you for the invitation to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.

- The Chairman's report is a testament to the achievements in the last year.
- Executive Member of Hampshire County Council Highways has had a one-to-one meeting with Councillor Ransley to see what has been achieved.
- Sorry the on-road footway is taking so long but hopefully will be completed in the spring.

BENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Chairperson: Jane Costigan

Clerk: Louisa Thomson

Email: clerk@bentworthparishcouncil.org

- The County Council Council Tax has increased by 5% which is the maximum increase without a referendum. Two fifths is allocated to adult social care however the spend on this is much more, £600 million. Adult social care needs reform, reform o the finance package. Hampshire County Council are having to fund savings of £120 million from 2025 onwards, there is currently a consultation running. Increasingly more councils are going bust. Higher Council Tax is needed, more than 5% increase.

- 20MPH initiative – there isn't much support from the police to implement this. It would be funded by Parish Councils.

- Hampshire County Council have increased the budget by £15 million this year and for the next two years for Highways patching roads, this isn't a long-term solution, more money needs to be invested.

- East Hampshire District Council have responded well to the Hampshire County Council consultation.

- Not in favour of the 1,200 new homes development at Neatham Down, there must be a better way to spread housing around the area.

4. East Hampshire District Councillor Report – Tony Costigan

Glebe Fields – Comments closed on the changed application on the 21st May, awaiting the planning officers recommendations. If approval is given the application will go before a full planning committee and I will support objection to the application.

AutoSpeed Watch Cameras – 3 have been supplied to Bentworth, it's a shame they aren't up yet.

Eighteen cameras have been supplied across the district. The cameras can be used to track vehicles across the district without MOT's, insurance and tax, this information can be sent to the police.

East Hampshire District Council are looking into using the Public Place Protection Order that may be used to fine speeders.

Chairman Neal Day thanked all those present and closed the meeting at 7.45pm.

Signed ……...

Chair Bentworth Parish Council

Date ……1st April 2025……