

BEENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11th September 2017

Mr G. Bowsher (GRB) Chair

Mrs J. Johnson

Mrs G. Harman

Mrs S. Jones

Mr G. Bragg

Mr P. McEwen

Mrs L. Rumens Clerk

Mr K Chopping District Councillor

Members of the public 7

Guests from West Berkshire District Council Nick Carter & Jo Naylor

Actions

55. **Public Forum.**

A fifteen minute period for members of the public to raise matters of concern.

A parishioner spoke to lend her support for the planned projects on the Recreation Ground. She also asked that parking be considered when the Council looks at planning applications where on street parking could be impacted.

Another resident voiced her support for the Rec projects.

Mrs Liming advised that the Parish Plan questionnaire was ready to be launched, she awaits guidance from the Parish Council. A Councillor added that Mrs Liming still needs additional support from a Councillor. Mrs Liming went on to report that the 'Pop up tea room' continues to run. Also a road map of the village is being put together for the emergency services to make it easier to find residences. A councillor asked about the questionnaire and it was explained that it is needed in order to generate sufficient response from the parish.

56. **Apologies for absence.** Received from Mrs Bunce.

57. **Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 31st July 2017**

These were approved by the Chair with the agreement of the Council

58. **Register of Interests from Parish Councillors**

Mrs Harman declared interest in a planning application no 17/02232/COND1.

59. **Devolution of Services from District to Parish Council. A discussion with West Berkshire Council officers.**

Mr Carter from West Berkshire Council began by stressing that devolution was voluntary. West Berkshire Council itself has not taken on anymore services from central government. He suggested that Beenham consider what could be improved if devolved to the Parish. Smaller Parish Councils are encouraged to work together where applicable. Jo Naylor went on to explain that West Berkshire Council has set up a web portal with information on services that can be devolved. An expression of interest can be logged here for them to consider. Up to £12,000 can be claimed to assist devolution projects.

Q. Can devolution be reversed? **A.** If there is a statutory requirement for the service some arrangement would have to be put in place

Q. A question about liability was asked. **A.** It depends, liability for cleaning road signs, for example, is still that of the District authority.

Q. A question was asked about permissions when cutting vegetation **A.** This can still to be reported to the district authority. Procedure still needs to be followed, usually by giving the owner a chance to carry out the work themselves.

Q. A question was asked about the ownership of the Community Room, could it be devolved to the Parish Council? **A.** The answer was yes, although there are obviously issues to be resolved with the school.

Q. Have you considered devolving minor planning applications to the Parish Council? **A.** It has been considered but other authorities who had tried it had not found it to be effective. It could be revisited.

Q. Is there a time limit on devolving services? **A.** No, it is an ongoing process.

Q. Will networking with other small parishes be organised? **A.** Aside from the clerks' forum, at which councillors are also welcome, councils should look towards their neighbours for obvious partnerships.

Q. Social services provisions were raised **A.** It has not really been looked at yet but West Berkshire Council would welcome a conversation about it.

The chairman thanked Nick Carter and Jo Naylor for attending.

60. **Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting not referred to elsewhere.**

i. **Parish Council Policies Update. Report from Mrs Rumens.**

Mrs Rumens will be looking at the council's Code of Conduct over the next month to see whether updates are required.

ii. **Parish Plan Updates. Review Quotes and agree suppliers for Recreation Ground Projects.**

Quotes for the new zip wire on the Rec were discussed and the preferred option from Sutcliffe's presented. A councillor asked how long the zip wire will be and was informed that purchase of the 25m equipment is proposed. The maximum height is just under 4m.

A councillor re-iterated that the zip wire will need tensioning more frequently in the first year and raised concern that there is an ongoing additional cost. Also it was asked if additional work was needed to compensate for a slope at the desired site. The answer was that the site will need to be assessed and the ramp might need to be raised marginally. The chairman advised taking Sutcliffe's advice on this.

The council was told that the price quoted included all work required to assemble the zip wire. However it is considered prudent to ask an independent inspector to examine the zip wire once it is installed. The tensioning is not a safety issue, it is a performance issue. The chairman asked Councillors to vote in favour of the preferred quote. Five were in favour.

The Youth Shelter was considered next. A question was asked about hard standing and it was confirmed that this is included in the preferred quote. The chairman asked for the Council to vote in favour of the preferred quote from Caloo. Support from councillors was unanimous.

Finally the exercise equipment was considered. The preferred option was also from Caloo. Again support from Councillors was unanimous. It is hope installation will take place with a few months.

A vote of thanks was made specifically to Jo Naylor from West Berkshire Council for her help and to West Berkshire Council generally for their contribution to the funding. The Chairman thanked all those who contributed to the project.

iii. **Discuss depositing Beenham Parish records with the Berkshire Record Office.**

Mrs Rumens explained again that Berkshire Records Office would be happy to have certain types documents from the Parish. Time would need to be spent categorising existing documents in order to make a deposit. A discussion on this was deferred again for the next meeting. A councillor suggested that if there is space to store it in the Community Room that is sufficient.

iv. **Councillor email addresses, update from Mrs Jones.**

Mrs Jones explained the options for having a Beenhamonline email address and asked Councillors to let her know if they want an email address.

v. **Social media, increase use to inform the community. Discussion led by Mrs Jones**

Mrs Jones asked about how other Councillors felt about the use of Social Media to spread the word about what the Parish Council does. There were some initial positive reactions. A councillor expressed the opinion that Facebook should not replace any other method of communication and others agreed. Mrs Rumens suggested that guidelines would be needed to regulate the use. Concern was expressed by a parishioner about use of Facebook from a personal information perspective. The chairman asked for a proposal to be brought to the next meeting so that the Parish Council can make a decision. Mrs Rumens will gather information from fellow clerks to help inform the proposal.

vi. **Neighbourhood Watch, update after attending recent event by Mrs Jones**

Mrs Jones found the event most informative and has signed up as a coordinator. She is hoping to put information on the website soon. The next event is in November and will be mentioned in the notes.

vii. **Parish Notes, an apology**

The wrong date for this Parish Council meeting was published in the Notes for which an apology was given.

LR

ALL

SJ
LR

SJ

61. **Finance.** The Chairman asked Mr McEwen to take over responsibility for Finance and he agreed.

i. **Receipts.** Noted

ii. **Payments**

Jackie Johnson	Reimbursement for new Urn	£53.99	Local Government Act 1972, s.133
Jackie Johnson	Reimbursement for keys and locks for the community facilities	£39.99	Local Government Act 1972, s.133
CSB Electrical	Replace old interior light fittings and install 3 ELD outside lights and associated works	£1,305.00	Local Government Act 1972, s.133
HMRC	Taxes	£53.00	
AD Clark Grounds Maintenance	Grass Cutting	£110.00	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19
Mazars LLP	External Auditor's Fees	£240.00	The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
Beenham Primary School	Shared Costs Bill 2015/16	£3,404.28	Local Government Act 1972, s.133
Berkshire Association of Local Councils	Fundamental Councillor Training Course	£48.00	S111 of LGA 1972
Jackie Homick	Reimbursement for cleaning materials	£16.67	Local Government Act 1972, s.133

iii. **Statement of Receipts & Payments.** Noted

iv. **Other matters**

a) **Community Room Issues:**

i) **Registration of Community Room as an Emergency Shelter, update, Mrs Rumens.**

This needs progressing in September

ii) **Current Maintenance Issues** Mr Bowsher thanked Mrs Johnson for getting the lights mended. LR

There are still some other minor issues that need sorting out. The fence by the car park has incurred damage. It was suggested that if it could be fixed for under £250 then the current contractor fixing minor issues should do it. A new urn has been purchased for the kitchen. A bin and a first aid box are also required. A parishioner offered to donate a bin. Regarding the First Box it was suggested to have a separate plaster box. Mrs Jones to purchase. JJ

iii) **Ongoing Maintenance Plan** This has not been progressed. A local handyman was suggested and his hourly rate will be sought. SJ

iv) **Replacing tables, update, Mrs Harman.** A discussion ensued about the tables available. Mrs Harman to investigate a couple more options. JJ

b) **Annual Return**

The Auditors have signed and returned the Annual Statement. This now needs to be publicised on the noticeboards and websites and parishioners given 30 days to request a copy. It was agreed to publicise this by Friday 15th September. GH

c) **Bank signatories, progress update from Mrs Rumens and new signatories.**

Mrs Bunce has completed identification checks at the bank but the paperwork has not reached head office. Mrs Rumens to keep an eye on this. Mrs Rumens also confirmed that she can transfer funds from one account to the other when necessary. LR

d) **Consider the revised shared costs bill from the School**

The presenting councillor suggested that the Parish Council pay the 2015/16 bill but stated that the agreement needs continuing discussions with the school for future years. It was agreed to pay the invoice without prejudice. LR

e) **The Clerk seeks permission to attend the next meeting of the local Clerk's Forum**

This will take approximately 3 hours. Permission was granted

62. **Comments from the West Berkshire Councillor**

The boundary commission have decided in favour of reducing the number of West Berkshire wards and therefore councillors from 52 to 43 instead of the 42 suggested by WBC. Surprisingly the rearrangement includes some wards with three councillors, of which Beenham would be one. This is now out for consultation until the end of October and will be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

63. **Planning.**

i. **Applications for consideration:**

17/02174/HOUSE	Pembroke Back Lane Beenham Reading Berkshire RG7 5NG	No objections
17/02059/HOUSE	Holly Cottage Clay Lane Beenham Reading Berkshire RG7 5PA	No objections

- 17/02259/TPW 2 Shire Cottages The Strouds Beenham Reading Berkshire RG7 5NW Noted
**** Mrs Harman left the room for the next item ****
- 16/00519/FULD Land Opposite Six Bells The Green Beenham Noted
- ii. **Additional planning correspondence: 17/01498/CERTP:** Noted
64. **Highways.**
- i. **M4 Junctions 12 to 13 Hermitage (West Berkshire) – Bridge Refurbishment Works:** Noted
- ii. **Notification of West Berkshire Council Permit Scheme - New Legal Order:** Noted
65. **Environment**
- i. **Replacement of the goal post. Reports from Mrs Harman/Mr Bowsher** It is anticipated that within the next few weeks these will be in situ. **GH GRB**
- ii. **Recreation Ground Footpaths. Update on available funding from Mrs Rumens.** Funding is available through a member's bid. The deadline for applications is 27th October. Mr Bragg to work on bid forms which Mrs Rumens will forward. **GB**
- iii. **Trees and additional maintenance required on the Rec. Report from Mrs Harman** Mrs Harman will draw up a spec for the work needed on the trees. AD Clark have suggested the application of weed killer on the Rec. It was agreed to revisit when renewing grass cutting contract. A councillor mentioned that when the contract is renewed new play equipment needs to be considered. **GH**
- iv. **Toilet unit at Aldermaston Wharf, update from Mrs Rumens** Mrs Rumens contacted the Canals and Rivers Trust and was informed that the toilets should now be open. This is not the feedback the Council had received so they would welcome any other user experiences on which they can act. The Trust said they will remove the Council's contact details as they are now the managers of the unit.
66. **Councillors' comments.**
- Some of the village waste bins still don't have signs the Council purchased earlier in the year on them, Mr Bowsher to action. Also the dog waste bin on Church View isn't closing properly. Mrs Harman to ask her contact if she can help. **GB GH**
- A couple of parishioners have asked about the Chairman's pecuniary interest in a recent planning application to which the Council logged 'no objections'. The Chairman confirmed that he does have an interest in the applicant's business and he felt he had registered it at the time. He was unaware at the time that he needed to take any further action.
- Where Gigaclear have re-dug sections of their trenches the ground has not resettled and this is creating a trip hazard. Who should be contacted? Mrs Rumens recommended contacting West Berkshire Council Dominic Boeck and will provide the Councillor with his contact details. **LR**
- A councillor reported that a hypodermic needle and syringe were discovered on the Rec on Friday 8th September. Reports on social media suggest that others have been found elsewhere in the parish. The item was disposed of at the local surgery. West Berkshire Council said that such items should be reported to them and left in situ until they can come and collect them. Mrs Rumens to take advice on what other Parish Councils do. **LR**
67. **Correspondence received since the last meeting not referred to elsewhere.**
- i. **Email from Berkshire Association of Local Councils: 2017 Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 28 November 2017:** Noted
- ii. **Aldermaston Wharf - Speeding Issues, email from West Berkshire Council:** Noted
- iii. **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Annual Review 2016-17:** Noted
- iv. **Theale Library Relaunch info from West Berkshire Council:** Poster to be added to the Community Notice Board **SJ**
- v. **Letter from the WI regarding litter picking in Beenham** The letter enquired as to whether the WI are covered by the Council's insurance when they are carrying out litter picks. The advice was that they are not and they should contact their county association to see what cover they may already have.
- vi. **Email from West Berkshire Council regarding litter bins at Aldermaston Wharf** West Berkshire Council have reported to the Clerk that the litter bin at Aldermaston Wharf is overflowing and they have received complaints. They can empty the bin for £44.34 per annum although they are due to renegotiate their contract in January 2018. The Council agreed that they would have to go ahead with getting the district authority to empty the bin. **LR**
68. **Date of the next meeting.** Monday 2nd October 2017