

## **English Bicknor Parish Council**

Minutes of the bi-monthly meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall – Chairman

Councillor Mr D. Gunter

Councillor Mrs A. Bowen

Councillor Mrs. D. Owen

Councillor Mr K. Braithwaite

Also present were County Councillor Mr T. Hale and District Councillor Mr T. Gwilliam

### **981. Apologies and welcome**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mr J. Carrick.

### **982. Public Forum**

No members of the public were present.

### **983. Reading and confirmation of the minutes of the last bi-monthly meeting**

The minutes of the December meeting were proposed by Cllr Gunter, seconded by Cllr Braithwaite and agreed by all present, following which they were signed by the chairman.

### **984. Matters arising from the minutes of the last bi-monthly meeting**

**969 Football Club** A letter was sent to Mr P. Howard to say that the Parish Council were pleased to view the proposals to extend the Village Hall to provide enhanced facilities for the Football Club, and confirmed that the Parish Council would respond to the planning application when it was forwarded by the District Council. The planning application was discussed at a planning meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January and comments forwarded.

**571 School Safety Zone** As nothing further had been heard from Mr P. Gwilliam, the clerk contacted the Dean Archaeological Group. Their chairman, Mr P. Riches, replied to say that he was aware of the situation, but the last time he spoke with Mr Froud, he too was waiting to hear from Mr Gwilliam. Mr Riches will speak to Mr Froud next week.

**673.3 Traffic signs at the top of Church Hill** County Cllr Hale is still hoping to get larger signs.

**690 BT telephone box, English Bicknor** The former BT box has been refurbished by the father of local resident Mrs N. Grubb. Mr B. Hardy, who lives in Yorkshire, has put four shelves and a noticeboard in the box and charged for materials only. Councillors are very pleased with the completed work. The clerk will write a letter of thanks to both Mr Hardy and to Mrs Grubb, who arranged the refurbishment and paid for the noticeboard. Photographs of the completed works will be put in the Parish magazine and sent to the local press along with a short report suggesting that the box can now be used for book or magazine swaps and for parishioners to put up notices.

**754.1 Speeding in Hillersland** The Parish Council have received confirmation from the Growing Our Communities Fund Project that the grant application was successful and £2,259.39 will be paid into the Parish Council bank account in the first week of February to cover the cost of the speed sign for Hillersland. Cllr Braithwaite and County Cllr Hale will now order the posts and speed sign and inform County Highways where the three posts are to be positioned along Hillersland Road. The Parish Council agreed that the invoice can be paid before the next meeting if necessary in order for the sign to be delivered. The chairman thanked Cllr Braithwaite and County Cllr Hale for all their work on this matter.

**782.2 Street lighting in Hillersland** Saska will not come out to look at lighting levels for a second time. However, Hillersland may benefit from new funding for street lighting which has been included in the County Council budget.

**780.3 Warning sign hanging from footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock** The next inspection of the sign is now due. County Cllr Hale will check and report to the clerk.

**870.4 Silt across Redhouse Lane** Mr A. Middlecote confirmed on 20<sup>th</sup> December that Redhouse Lane has been cleared; he had checked himself and said that a good job had been done.

**908 Overhanging roadside vegetation on Junction Hill** Highways re-assigned this work to the Tree Inspector, who reported in January that no defects were identified.

**937.3 Drain at the bottom of Church Hill** This work has been added to the minor works programme to be considered in the financial year 2020/21.

**949 Eastbach Road** A further section of Eastbach Road is due to be resurfaced in 2021.

**951.1 New Councillor** No-one has yet shown an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor.

**951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock** A meeting between Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Highways is due to take place at Cannop, but no date has yet been arranged.

**951.4 Repairs to flagstaff at Symonds Yat Rock** The permanent repairs have now been carried out, with no charge to the Parish Council for either labour or new parts. A letter of thanks will be sent to Mr J. Britton for doing this. It was agreed that the clerk should go ahead and buy new flags for the flagstaff, as requested by Mr Britton.

**965.1 Route of Gloucester bus** District Cllr Gwilliam confirmed that, following lobbying, each day one bus going to Gloucester will go through Christchurch.

**966.2 Dead wood on Chapel Hill and near Sterts Farm** Following an inspection, Highways have forwarded letters to landowners.

**966.4 Trees on verge along Ross Road** This concern was re-assigned to the Safety Inspector, but on 6<sup>th</sup> January he confirmed that he found no safety issues here.

**972 Blocked drains** All the drains were cleared in December 2019.

**975. Defibrillator** The Community Heartbeat Trust will provide a contract, costing £135 plus VAT (which the Parish Council can claim back) per year, but the contract has to be for a minimum of 4 years (total cost of £540 to the Parish Council). This includes an annual check, but not regular checks. The clerk was asked to go ahead and arrange a contract for the defibrillator.

**976. Precept** A precept request for £3900 has been forwarded to the District Council.

**978.1 Gateways into the Forest of Dean** A letter was sent to Cllr O'Neill. A reply has been received which says that further information will be forwarded following consultation with the Verderers and others. Some financial support will come from the District Council, but he hoped for further support from other bodies.

**979.3 Parish Website** Mr P. Scott is finding it difficult to update the Parish website and has asked that someone else takes it over. The web fee has increased by over 40% this year, but as Mr Scott is not currently in a position to check for another provider, he has generously offered to pay the increased amount himself, then look for a new provider. The clerk will put a notice in the Parish magazine and on noticeboards asking for a volunteer to update the website.

**980 Meetings in 2020** Meeting dates have been confirmed as set at the December meeting. However, the hall has been booked out to a new martial arts group on three Mondays each month until the end of March, with an option to continue if the group attracts enough interest. The Parish Council have therefore been allocated the bar. It was agreed that the bar was not a suitable venue for Parish Council meetings, especially the Parish Assembly in May, so the clerk will ask for dates in May when the main hall is available and circulate these to councillors. It was agreed to pursue other possible venues. The clerk will also contact Mr P. Gwilliam to point out that the bar was not unlocked for the Parish Council meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, so councillors had to disrupt the group meeting in the main hall in order to get into the bar and to get out tables.

## **985. Report of the County Councillor**

County Cllr Hale reported that the budget goes to Full Council this week. He outlined the budget proposals, which include £1m towards addressing climate change and £5m to upgrade street lighting and traffic lights. Grove Road, Christchurch, is due to be resurfaced later this year, but in view of the dangerous state of the road, he will ask if this could be brought forward.

## **986. Report of the District Councillor**

District Cllr Gwilliam reported that the District Council can deliver a balanced budget with no cuts to services, but this will mean an increase of 2.4% in council tax, as the Council is now receiving over £4m less from Central Government than in 2013. The Meals on Wheels service is threatened with closure, which will impact on lunch clubs. Discussions are continuing with Homes England regarding the Five Acres site. Cllr Gwilliam holds a surgery for members of the public at Berry Hill Hut between 10am and 12 noon on the last Saturday of every month. The clerk will include this in the Parish newsletter and on the noticeboards.

## **987. Planning matters**

(661) P1512/19/FUL Folly House, Ross Road, English Bicknor – change of use of existing ancillary annexe to a holiday let.

Full permission was granted on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019, but a note attached to the permission says that vehicular access to the proposed holiday let is still subject to condition requiring sufficient visibility to be maintained.

(662) P1597/19/FUL Bicknor Cottage, Ross Road, English Bicknor – variation of condition 02 of planning permission P0270/19/FUL to allow for the addition of a porch, chimney, roof opening and 2 enlarged rooflights.

Full permission was granted on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019, though two of the 7 conditions relate to the vehicular access, which requires roadside frontage boundaries to be set back in order to provide adequate visibility.

(663) P1612/19/FUL Bicknor Cottage, Ross Road – installation of 2 air source heat pumps to serve the main dwelling and coach house (holiday let).

Full permission was granted on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019.

(664) P1684/19/FUL Peacehaven Cottage, Hillersland – erection of a garden room with associated works.

This application is still pending.

At a planning meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January, the following application was considered:

(665) P1914/19/FUL English Bicknor Village Hall – erection of a single storey rear/side extension.

Councillors support this application, which will provide enhanced facilities in the future for the thriving Football Club

and will be an asset for the whole community.

**988. Accounts for payment**

- 1) Clerk's wages and expenses - £354.40
- 2) PAYE on clerk's wages - £84.53
- 3) Web licence - £87.00
- 4) Mrs N. Grubb – materials to refurbish BT box - £52.22

A copy of the overview of finances had previously been circulated, while copies of the latest bank statement were available at the meeting. Acceptance of the accounts and payments was proposed by Cllr Braithwaite, seconded by Cllr Gunter and agreed by all present. The clerk has not yet received notification that councillors Bowen and Braithwaite can sign cheques, so she will ask at the bank.

**989. Highway matters**

County Cllr Hale will ask the Lengthsmen to clear the ditches in Redhouse Lane, where a parishioner reported a problem with water flowing across the road. The Lengthsmen will also be asked to spray the weeds, though it was felt that more than one spraying will be required. The list of outstanding highway matters was gone through and updated.

**990. Wild Boar**

County Cllr Hale reported that there are problems with poachers killing Wild Boar.

**991. Correspondence received since last meeting**

1. An e-mail has been received from a parishioner who is concerned at the poor drainage in Redhouse Lane. The clerk passed her concerns on to County Highways and will reply to Mrs Carruthers regarding any action taken to deal with the problem.
2. A letter has been received from the Coleford Area MCTI Partnership regarding the Coleford Area Strategic Plan Review. The clerk will ask Cllr Carrick whether he thinks that someone from the Partnership would give a talk about the Strategic Plan Review at the Parish Assembly. Otherwise, it was felt that the Parish Council could again approach Mrs S Middleton.
3. A meeting of the Parish and Town Councils is to be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 6pm at the Council Chamber in the Council Offices. Cllr Mrs Drinkall hopes to attend this meeting.

**992. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council**

1. Cllr Braithwaite reported that the state of the roads in Hillersland has worsened.
2. Cllr Drinkall asked that the clerk contact the Review to ask that more copies of the Forest Review newspaper be delivered, as there are no newspapers left by Wednesday afternoon. The clerk will also inform the Review that there are now shelves for the papers to be placed on.
3. Cllr Mrs Drinkall has started to update the Parish Activity list. She explained that this is a list of what is going on in the Parish and is delivered by the Parish Council to families when they move into the Parish.
4. The clerk reported that she has completed a re-declaration of compliance with the Pensions Regulator, as required under The Pensions Act 2008.

**993. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of English Bicknor Parish Council will be held at 7pm on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April in the bar of English Bicknor Village Hall.

