

### **English Bicknor Parish Council**

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall – Chairman  
Councillor Mr D. Gunter  
Councillor Mr P. Warden

Councillor Mr K. Braithwaite - vice-chairman  
Councillor Mrs A. Bowen

Also present was County Cllr Mr T. Hale.

#### **212 Apologies and welcome**

Apologies were received from Cllr J. Carrick.

#### **213. Public Forum**

No members of the public were present.

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

The minutes of the bi-monthly Parish Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 were proposed, seconded and agreed by all present, following which they were signed by the chairman.

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

**177. Play equipment on playing fields** The e-mail from GAPTC advising that the Parish Council can only reclaim VAT on items which remain in its ownership and are insured by the Council, was forwarded to the Village Hall Committee. District Cllr T. Gwilliam, who had indicated that he might be able to provide information on any available grants for play equipment, was contacted and a reply received from Mr. A. Knott at the District Council, which was forwarded to Mr P. Gwilliam. Cllr Warden, who has represented the Parish Council at meetings of the Village Hall Committee, reported that a large donation had now been received towards the cost of the play equipment, and plans for further fund-raising are in hand. The two local charities – the Lucy Machen Charity and the English Bicknor Parochial Charities – have agreed to fund the cost of on-going maintenance.

**754.1 Hardstanding for speed camera van** Mr A. Middlecote of County Highways has arranged to meet with the Police in April. The clerk will contact him to ask if Cllr Braithwaite could be included in this meeting.

**951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock** Forestry England were contacted to ask if they could put up a sign advising of the entrance to the car park at Symonds Yat Rock, following which a new sign has been placed at this location. County Highways have confirmed that they have arranged for the damaged signs on the roadside to be repaired and the Parking Team will re-paint the yellow lines. At the suggestion of District Cllr T. Gwilliam, Cllr P Hyett was asked to bring this matter up at the Community Safety Partnership meeting in February, but no response has been received from him. Councillors still feel that a warning sign is required on the bends before the entrance to the main car park, and to this end, the clerk will write to Mr A. Middlecote at County Highways asking if he would meet with councillors at Symonds Yat Rock to explain their concerns. Now that trees have been cleared, a sign has become visible on the left hand side of the road after driving up the hill and under the footbridge. It was agreed that signage would be better placed on the right hand side of the road and the clerk will communicate this to County Highways.

**951.3 Community Speedwatch camera** Cllr P. Hyett agreed to bring this matter up at the Community Safety Partnership meeting in February, and a letter was written to Mr C. Nelson, the Police & Crime Commissioner, but no reply has been received from either. The clerk will write again to Mr Nelson.

**82.1 Verge near Dove Cottage** County Highways have confirmed that this verge has now been repaired.

**84.5 Designation of Redhouse Lane** Mr A. Middlecote has indicated that County Highways will look at the options available during the summer.

**106.9 Man-hole cover in playing fields** Mr Wilce from Two Rivers promised to have a look at the problem and will ask for a price from their tree surgeon before he can commit to the tree being removed. It was confirmed that there have been no reports of a build-up of water since the works were completed, in spite of the very heavy rain during March.

**159 Footpaths in Eastbach** Councillors will check whether all the work on these footpaths REB24/1 and REB14/1 has been carried out.

**162.2 Parish website** The invoice for the domain name was received a few days after the February meeting. As this invoice would have been overdue by the April meeting, the invoice was paid by the clerk, who will claim back the amount of £19.18.

**174.3 Dead tree on the corner of Smithy Close** A new ornamental cherry tree has been planted here.

**186.1 Warning sign on footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock** Recently the road had been closed for half a day as a large lorry had driven down over the hill and had to be pulled back up the hill. County Highways have agreed that a new sign could be placed hanging under the bridge, as long as the cost is funded from County Cllr T. Hale's budget. It was noted that the signs which the Parish Council has asked for – pictures of a lorry, coach and trailer with a line through – are the signs which are in place on the Herefordshire side of the hill.

**195. Sunken drain outside Whitehouse** This has been repaired.

**196. Missing post at entrance to Village Hall** To date, the missing post has not been replaced, so the pedestrian gate cannot be securely closed.

**206. Bottom of Junction Hill** County Highways have confirmed that this part of the road is in English Bicknor Parish. The clerk will write to Highways to ask when the promised verge markers are to be installed.

**207 AONB grants for kissing gates** Cllr Mrs Drinkall will put together a list of landowners in the Parish on whose land kissing gates might be beneficial.

**209.1 Elections Act 2022** Details of the new voting requirements were placed in the Parish magazine and on the noticeboards. Councillors have completed and submitted their nomination forms to the District Council.

**209.3 Resignation of Cllr Mrs Owen** A card of thanks was forwarded to Mrs Owen.

**210.2 Litter pick** A litter pick was requested, but to date has not been carried out, so the clerk will chase up this matter.

**210.3 Fridge dumped on Forestry land** This fridge was removed before the clerk had contacted Forestry England.

**210.4 Resignation of clerk** Notices have been placed on the Parish noticeboards and in the Parish magazine and details of the vacancy sent to local Parish Councils. Interest has been expressed by a local resident, who has forwarded a letter including her relevant skills and experience. An interview will be arranged for later this month.

**211 Next meeting of the Parish Council** It was agreed that the Annual Meeting will begin at 6.15pm on 15<sup>th</sup> May, with the Parish Assembly beginning at 7pm on the same evening.

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

County Cllr T. Hale was pleased to report that agreement has been reached regarding the footbridge across the River Wye at Lydbrook, which will now be owned and repaired by Gloucestershire County Council. New steps onto the bridge will be suitable for those with disabilities. However, more funding is required for further work to be carried out on the bridge.

## **217. Planning matters**

(688) P1558/22/FUL Abbeville, Symonds Yat Rock,  
Erection of a first floor dormer style extension and internal alterations  
Full permission, with 5 conditions, was granted on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

## **218. Accounts for payment**

Miss W. Lawrence – clerk's wages and expenses - £387.06

HMRC – income tax on clerk's wages - £93.04

Miss Wendy Lawrence – domain name for website - £19.18

Community Heartbeat – annual support cost for defibrillator - £162.00

GAPTC – annual membership - £117.73

A copy of the end-of-year finances had previously been circulated, while the latest bank statement was available to view at the meeting. Acceptance of the accounts and all payments was proposed, seconded, and agreed by all present. The Certificate of Exemption for the annual audit was also agreed and signed by the chairman.

## **219. Highway matters**

1. The list of outstanding highway matters was updated.

2. Councillors queried whether pavement weed spraying through English Bicknor had been carried out as advised by Mr A Middlecote of County Highways, as there was no sign of this being done.

3. After the recent heavy rain and high winds, many trees and branches have broken off and fallen across nearby roads. The clerk was therefore asked to contact County Highways to ask if safety checks could be carried out on the Beech trees on Chapel Hill and on the Oak trees further along the road near Sterts Farm.

4. Concern was expressed at the large number of heavy, container lorries now coming through English Bicknor to and from the Lydbrook Stowfield industrial site. It was felt that further damage to the verges will be caused if two lorries meet. The clerk will write to Mr A. Middlecote of County Highways to ask if the lorries could arrive at the site via English Bicknor, but leave in the opposite direction, via Kerne Bridge.

## **220. Correspondence received since last meeting**

1. A letter has been received from Lydcare, who are very active in the Parish. Unfortunately, the Parish Council are unable to help this very worthwhile charity. It was agreed that the clerk should suggest that they contact both the Lucy Machen Charity and the English Bicknor Parochial Charities, providing contact details.

2. The Wye Valley AONB forwarded details of a seminar on conserving and protecting water resources, held on 16<sup>th</sup> March. No councillors were able to attend this event.

3. An e-mail was received from Mr P. Gwilliam asking if the Parish Council could provide dog waste bins on the playing fields. After discussion, it was agreed to ask the Village Hall Committee what the problem is, as councillors felt that signage may be a way to solve any problems of dog waste on the playing fields.

## **221. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council**

1. Cllr P. Warden gave a report as the Parish Council rep to the Village Hall Committee (VHC). A Junior Football Academy will be using the playing fields during the summer for training. A contract is to be drawn up between the Village Hall Committee and the Academy. The VHC is looking at how they will manage the flow of cars, as they may need parking for up to seventy cars. The VHC have asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the trees along the edge of the playing fields. It was confirmed that the lease between the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee states that the Trustees must 'keep all hedges, fences, trees and gates upon the demised premise always in good repair and condition.' It was also confirmed that as the VHC own the village hall and the land on which it is situated, they are able to register the village hall with the Land Registry.

2. Cllr Gunter attended a second open meeting about the future of Cannop Ponds on 30<sup>th</sup>

March. At this meeting, Forestry England set out four options for the future of the ponds, two of which are to change the ponds into a wetland area. Cllr Gunter reported that if parishioners are in favour of option 1, which is to repair the ponds and keep them as they are, a petition can be found on-line at [change.org](http://change.org) – Save Cannop Ponds, while forms are available to be signed for those with no internet access.

3. Cllr Mrs Bowen will arrange for the top of the Lime Kilns to be sprayed.

**222. Date of next meeting**