

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd October 2023 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mr D. Gunter (Chair)
 Councillor Mr K. Braithwaite (Deputy Chair)
 Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall
 Councillor Mrs A. Bowen
 Councillor Mr H. Cole

268. Apologies and welcome.

Councillor Terry Hale has sent his apologies in that he will be late to the meeting, hoping to attend at around 7.30 pm.

Apologies received from Cllr Cole and Cllr Gwilliam.

269. Public Forum.

No members of the public were present.

270. Reading and confirmation of the minutes of the last bi-monthly meeting.

There were issues with some aspects of the previous minutes in relation to accuracy, wording and detail. Certain points need to be expanded on. The Clerk will conference with Councillor Drinkall at a later date to make these corrections and present these back to the Council for review and signing at the meeting of the 5th of December 2023.

Simon Andrewes, the website manager, will provide the Clerk with the access codes needed to update the website. This will enable the Clerk to update the website directly.

754.1 Hard standing for Speed Camera Van.

Cllr Braithwaite advised that at a meeting he had attended it was agreed between the police officials that some form of enforcement would be needed at the road. The area by the telephone box would be a good site to set up a hand held device. So far, it has been reported that one enforcement action had been made by a detection vehicle.

951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock.

Andrew Middlecote of county highways met with Councillors, agreed that vegetation will be cut back. A sign indicating the car park will be placed on the back of the current sign and the yellow lines would be cleared of debris. Since the meeting no update has been received.

951.3 Community Speed Watch Camera.

Cllr Braithwaite informed the Council that he had met up with two members of the police. This meeting was held at Hillersland by the phone box. The results were that the proposed site for a speed camera pole was accepted. Since this meeting Cllr Braithwaite had heard nothing further. He will chase up the supply of the camera equipment.

84.5 Redhouse lane.

Andrew Middlecote of county highways was informed of the possibilities of the Councillors clearing the silt and raised no objections. Hopefully this will be done late autumn.

106.9 Two Rivers.

A response was received from two Rivers to contribute 50% of the cost to this. It was also reported that the fence was damaged when the tree was removed.

County Cllr Terry Hale enters at 7:45

159. Footpaths.

Regarding REB24/1, no further updates had been received.

186.1 Warning sign on the footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock.

No updates from Andrew Middlecote on the costs of a new hanging sign. Cllr Braithwaite will search for sign quotes, noting that the sign will need to be made of aluminium.

206. Bottom of Junction Hill.

Verge markers have been installed but as work is continuing at this location, this item may need to be revisited.

207.AONB Grants for kissing gates.

The Chairman read out from an email he had received. In summary, there are two options available. First, subsidise the kissing gates and install them. This could be funded through Gloucestershire County Council public rights of way fund. This would be in liaison with Jeff Wheeler, Public rights of way officer.

The second option is to approach farming and protection of landscapes for funding. This would need to be applied for. This applies for people with footpaths cutting through their land. Prospective gate owners should be referred to them. Cllr Gwilliam will be asked to hand over a list who may be interested in this.

219.2 Pavement weed spraying.

The Clerk will contact with Andrew Middlecote at county highways to suggest burning the weeds as an option.

219.3 Safety checks on Beech and Oak trees in Parish.

It was reported that Gloucester Highways had recently killed off much of the ivy over the local oak trees near Sterts farm. County highways will undertake a safety check on the trees on either side of Chapel Hill.

219.4 Lorries travelling to Stowfield Industrial site.

Nothing to report.

249. Highways matters.

Cllr Cole had looked into the problem of water leaking from the spring into junction hill and felt work might be required by Forestry England.

250. Wild Boar.

The Clerk reported that he had the information on how to report boar sightings to the website. There was debate as to which agency has the responsibility of dealing with the dead animals depending on the location of the corpse in relation to the road, or if it is found in the woodlands. It was stressed that Forestry England has a responsibility for disease control in relation to dead animals.

The new and alternative lines of communication to report these will be added to the Council's website and notice boards.

258. Correspondence.

There was no correspondence received.

260. Planning application.

Discussion was had on when a meeting was needed to consider a applications. There was debate on whether the Council has a legal responsibility to publicise all planning applications and convene a formal meeting so that Parishioners can see and comment on the plans. Essentially, could the Council decide comments on a planning application without a meeting. The clerk would get clarification on this from GAPTC and report back.

P1174/23/TCA Crown reduction of approx 15% and crown lifting to a height of approx 2 metres to four trees adjacent to neighbour's fence and garage to prevent branches from contacting neighbour's property, and in addition to allow more light into that part of the garden. Trees to be reduced are T1 (Lime), T2 (London Plane), T3 (Lime) and T4 (Lime), all situated along the perimeter of the property and overhanging the neighbour's property. All trees were planted at the same time and are approx 15m high and 1m from neighbouring property.

The Council supported this application without a meeting and it was granted permission on 27th September 2023.

262. Payments.

Since the last meeting payment to the Village Hall had been made and this was challenged by several Councillors as it had been resolved at the meeting not to pay the invoice until clarification was sought.

Debate remained on the uncertainty of the recent number of hall bookings, especially as it was not clear how the Hall defines a booking or a booking slot.

The Clerk will approach the Village Hall for a precise schedule of their fees, as well as a confirmation of their booking records over the last period. If the Council has been overcharged in any way, this will put the Council in credit.

The Clerk was asked to provide a financial report to the Council at the next meeting as well as a preliminary budget for the next financial year.

263. Highways Matters.

An update will be sent to Councillors before next meeting.

The sign entering the Village near Dryslade farm has still not been repaired.

266. Any other matter affecting the Parish Council.

The VAS was placed in English Bicknor but as of yet the hedges have not been trimmed.

County Councillor Terry Hale had contributed to various items on the agenda and then left the meeting.

270. Report from the District Councillor.

None received.

271. Accounts for payment.

Mr Jonathan Martin – clerk's wages, office allowance and expenses - £535.83

HMRC – income tax on clerk's wages - £133.96

Proposed. Councillor Drinkall.

Seconded. Councillor Braithwaite.

Resolved.

272. Vandalism of flagpole on Symonds Yat Rock. A summary of the events concerning the vandalism of the flagpole are as follows:

The damage was done in the early hours of Monday Bank holiday morning.

The now broken pole was thrown over the edge of the nearby cliff.

Days later, the fire brigade collected the pole.

Forestry England secured it to the base with a chain.

Part of the mechanism used for raising the flags has also been lost, perhaps at an earlier date.

The Council's insurance arrangements have been checked and a report made.

Quotes to replace the flagpole have been collected from;

Mteck; 1,327.00 (+VAT)

AJ Louder; 1,500.00 (+VAT)

A Quote for the repair of the flagpole from Hampshire Flags was to be gathered.

The options are; that a new fibreglass pole would need precise measurements to be joined with the base. The raising mechanism would also need to be built into the pole. This option would carry a 10 year warranty.

The options are to either repair or replace the flagpole or remove the flagpole permanently. Other alternative funding for the repair outside of an insurance claim could be, the build back better fund, Wydean tourist board or the forestry England.

It was noted that this was the fourth time that the flagpole had been vandalised in the previous 20 years.

The Clerk will inform the insurers of the delay in making a claim, in light of developing the above options.

273. New Highway matters.

The Chairman read out the traffic order from highways at the Christchurch crossroads. The Chairman has asked via email what they were going to do about diverted traffic. County Cllr Hale had explained that for health and safety reasons, the entire road needs to be closed down completely. The buses would also need to be redirected. This would cause massive local disruption. The set dates for that November 30th to December 6th.

The Clerk would email Highways for further information, including the locations of the alternative routes and disseminate this further by the Council's channels. A further request to highways would be made to Highways to increase the publicity of this.

274. Footpaths in the Parish.

No new issued raised.

275. Wildlife in the Parish.

No new issues raised.

276. Correspondence received since last meeting.

No correspondence received.

277. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council.

Cllr Drinkall passed on complaints regarding the noise from motorbike scrambling at Dryslade farm. The Clerk was requested to ask Cllr Gwilliam to advertise when these events are to take place so that local residents can make their arrangements accordingly.

278. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting would be held on December 5th.

Ended. 10:07pm