

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the bi-monthly meeting held on 7th October 2019 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall – Chairman

Councillor Mr D. Gunter

Councillor Mrs A. Bowen

Councillor Mr J. Carrick

Councillor Mrs. D. Owen

Councillor Mr K. Braithwaite

Also present were County Councillor Mr T. Hale, PCSO G. Jayne, PCSO Lang, Ms D Liss and Ms E. O'Haire

954. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from District Councillor Mr T Gwilliam. The chairman welcomed PCSO Georgianna Jayne and PCSO Lang to the meeting, and also welcomed Ms D. Liss and Ms E. O'Haire from the Pesticide Free Forest campaign group.

955. Public Forum

PCSO Jayne introduced herself and confirmed that she will attend future Parish Council meetings if she is on duty. She confirmed that police resources are limited and asked that for non-emergencies the internet should be used to contact the police on the Gloucestershire Police website. In response to concerns by councillors at the level of rural crime, PCSO Jayne expressed sympathy and an awareness that rural communities are vulnerable, but explained that staffing levels are low and police respond as quickly as they can. She also confirmed that the police have no authority on Forestry Commission land.

Ms E. O'Haire explained that Pesticide Free Forest is part of an international campaign called Pesticide Free Towns. Their 3 aims are to raise awareness of the issues involved in using pesticides; encouraging organisations to become pesticide free and offering alternatives. County Cllr Hale confirmed that the County Council view is that each Council should decide on how weeds and grass cutting are dealt with in their own Parish or town.

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

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

957. Matters arising from the minutes of the last bi-monthly meeting

571 School Safety Zone County Cllr Hale, Mr A. Middlecote and Parish Councillors met at the school in August. Mr A. Middlecote will seek advice from the Traffic Regulation Team to see if zig-zags are suitable for this location. The clerk will write to ask if he has any further information, and also write to the school to ask if parents could be asked to park away from the double bends and to also ask if a 'walking bus' from the Village Hall car park would be considered by parents in the interests of road safety and to encourage children to be active.

673.3 Traffic signs at the top of Church Hill Mr A. Middlecote has confirmed that Highways have no plans to change the arrows, so County Cllr Hale will buy larger signs from his budget. It was yet again confirmed that the larger signs were the original, the smaller ones being substituted after two of the bollards were hit by a vehicle.

690 BT telephone box, English Bicknor Cllr Mrs Drinkall has contacted the glazier regarding the broken panes of glass, which have still not been replaced, and left telephone messages for the contact at Forest Holidays regarding the refurbishment of the box.

754.1 Speed surveys in the Parish /speeding in Hillersland The wheelie bin stickers have been put on residents' bins, while 40mph warning signs supplied by County Cllr Hale have been attached to posts. County Cllr Hale will liaise with Cllr Braithwaite over details of a flashing speed sign for Hillersland Road.

782.2 Street lighting in Hillersland Saska insist they will only put extra street light poles if the Parish Council will pay for them. County Cllr Hale hopes he can arrange a site meeting with Saska.

870.3 Sign hanging from footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock The next inspection is now due.

870.4 Silt across Redhouse Lane Mr A. Middlecote has confirmed that the bobcat sweeper cleared some of the silt, but a works order will be raised to clear the remainder of the silt.

898.3 Litter Pick in English Bicknor The yellow suitcase dumped near Sterts Farm has been removed.

908 Overhanging roadside vegetation on Junction Hill A job has been raised and a job number given by County Highways. The clerk will inform County Highways that vegetation is now overhanging the road at the bottom of the hill, 150 yards after the junction with the Eastbach Road.

930 Bus service through English Bicknor The new time-table is almost the same through English Bicknor, and there is still a service to Ross. However, there is now no stop near Lydney Hospital as the service now goes through Whitecroft. The clerk will write to Mr J. O'Neill of Stagecoach.

931 Police Community Support Officer Sergeant Nick Rogers has confirmed that PCSO Georgianna (George) Jayne and PCSO Dawn Teague will be covering English Bicknor Parish.

934. Highway matters - weeds The weeds around the traffic island have been cleared by Cllr Mrs Owen. It was agreed that weeds do need spraying to get rid of them, but this does need to be carried out at the correct time of year.

935. Footpath REB29/1 The broken sign on footpath REB29/1 has been replaced.

937.3 Drain at the bottom of Church Hill Mr A. Middlecote has looked at the damaged pipe in the field and spoken with the landowner, who has suggested that the pipe across the field needs to be replaced and a new headwall installed. A works scheme will need to be developed and the budget found for these works to proceed.

949. Highway Matters – Eastbach Road Mr A Middlecote confirmed that currently £150 million is being invested in the county's A, B and C roads, but even this will not cover the outstanding works. All roads are surveyed using a scanning machine which gives data readings for texture, skid resistance, cracking and deformation. This is coupled with pothole data and then potential sites visited, inspected and verified by an engineer.

Mr Middlecote promised that Highways will continue to visit Eastbach as part of their highway safety inspections to ensure that the road remains in a safe and usable condition, but the further two stretches which had been scheduled for resurfacing will not be done at the moment.

950. Footpaths in the Parish – Wysis Way Mr J. Wheeler, the PROW Officer, agreed that the Wysis Way sign in Hillersland is not showing the correct route and he does not know who put the arrow in place. Cllr Braithwaite has taken it down. The clerk will contact Mr Wheeler to explain that the signs were put up for a sponsored run, but not taken down when the run was over.

951.1 Councillor A letter of thanks has been sent to Mr C. Drew and the District Council notified that he is no longer a Parish Councillor. The District Council have confirmed that we are able to co-opt a new councillor. A note will be put in the Parish magazine saying that there is a vacancy for a councillor on the Parish Council.

951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock Mr A. Middlecote of County Highways, has advised that to change the current speed limit would require a Traffic Regulation Order, which cost between £10k and £15k, and that schemes including additional traffic calming measures would cost more. He feels that reducing the speed between Redinhorne and the Herefordshire border would be unlikely to meet the necessary criteria. Following a letter from District Cllr Mr T. Gwilliam, officers from Herefordshire County Council have confirmed that they would be happy to work with officers from Gloucestershire County Council with a view to identifying (and then implementing) any necessary changes to the speed limit at Symonds Yat. County Cllr Hale hopes to have a site meeting with officers from Herefordshire and Gloucestershire in the near future.

951.3 Map of car parks near English Bicknor school and church A letter of thanks has been sent to Mr Warden-Heggie.

951.4 Repairs to flagstaff at Symonds Yat Rock James Britton has confirmed that he will carry out the repairs to the flagpole, but is not sure when he will be able to do this.

952. Grit bins in the parish A map showing the location of the salt bins in Hillersland has been forwarded to Highways. The clerk and councillors have checked the location of salt bins in English Bicknor and will confirm these to Highways.

958. Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr T. Hale confirmed that Traffic Regulation Orders cost about £15,000, but the District Council are to write to the Secretary of State to try to get the process simplified. Concern had been expressed at the risk of 5G (generation) phones, but Cllr Braithwaite was able to reassure the Council that there is nothing to be concerned about.

959. Planning matters

(653) P0120/19/LD1 Hopyard Cottage, Ross Road, English Bicknor

Application under Section 191 to determine whether the occupation of the dwelling without compliance with occupancy condition (holiday let) is lawful.

A Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use was issued on 16th August 2019

(655) P0270/19/FUL Bicknor Cottage, Ross Road, English Bicknor

Conversion of existing outbuilding to holiday let incorporating timber decking, conversion of existing outhouse to wash facilities and utilities room with associated parking, landscaping and works. Creation of a new vehicular access.

Full permission was granted on 9th August

There are 8 conditions attached to this permission, relating to the new vehicular access, holiday let and trees. 6 notes also attached confirm that permission has to be sought from Amey before works on the new access can begin; the District Council want confirmation that no bats are present at the site.

(660) P0778/19/FUL Lower Tump Farm, Tump Lane, English Bicknor
Erection of a first floor extension over existing single storey.
Full permission granted on 27th September 2019.

960. Accounts for Payment

- 1) Clerk's wages and expenses - £349.37
- 2) PAYE on clerk's wages - £84.52
- 3) Forest of Dean District Council – Election expenses - £147.00

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 proposed payments was proposed by Cllr Carrick seconded by Cllr Braithwaite and agreed by all present. The clerk will ask the bank for a new signatory form for Cllr Mrs Bowen to complete.

961. Parish Council representative to the Lucy Machen Charity

Following the resignation of Mr C. Drew, a new representative is required for the Lucy Machen Charity. Cllr K. Braithwaite agreed to take on this role. The clerk will pass his contact details on to Mr D. Cummings.

962. Highway Matters

County Highways had been sent a copy of the outstanding highway matters, which was returned with their own updates. This list was considered, but many jobs are still awaiting completion.

963. Footpaths in the Parish

Cllr Gunter reported that a group of walkers had dumped a pile of rubbish on a footpath near a stile. It was agreed that this is very anti-social, but there is little the Parish Council can do.

964. Wild Boar

Once again there are signs of boar activity in Hillersland.

965. Correspondence received since last meeting

1. An e-mail has been received concerning the change to the bus routes through Berry Hill. Previously, people living in English Bicknor could catch the Gloucester bus from Christchurch, but now they have to travel into Coleford. The clerk will write to Mr O'Neill to ask why the Gloucester bus cannot be routed from Five Acres through Berry Hill and Christchurch rather than residents of those communities having to travel into Coleford to get the Gloucester bus.
2. Details have been received of a course called Citizen Aid for the public, which teaches life saving skills at a cost of £20 per person. The clerk will put details of the course on the noticeboards and in the magazine.
3. Dial-a-Ride from Lydney have written to ask for a donation towards their work. The clerk will write to say that unfortunately the Parish Council does not have the funds to send a donation.
4. An e-mail has been received from Mark Bick about a presentation on 10th October entitled 'Climate Emergency – what Towns and Parishes can do'. Cllr Carrick will attend.

966. Any other matters affecting the Parish Councillor

1. Cllr Carrick noted that the Football Club may have taken over responsibility for mowing the playing fields. The clerk will investigate.
2. Cllr Mrs Drinkall rang County Highways after a large branch came down in Chapel Hill following recent storms. There is now a lot of dead wood between Sterts Farm and the bottom of Chapel Hill and hedges have blown in towards the highway. The clerk will ask Highways to check the trees and hedges in this location.

3. The defibrillator outside the village hall was taken from the box recently for use in an emergency situation, but was not used as the ambulance service arrived. However, there was a delay as the village hall postcode was not on the outside of the box. It was noted that anyone wanting to use the defibrillator needs to have a mobile phone, a pair of glasses (if used) and the post code of the village hall in order to access the defibrillator. The clerk has been informed by Community Heartbeat that a check needs to be undertaken now that the defibrillator has been taken out of the box. She will contact Mr K. Dickens to ask about the delay in response.

4. The 6 trees on the verge opposite the barn just past Cowmeadow Farm need maintenance. The branches need cutting back as they are restricting visibility when exiting the field gate in a high vehicle. The clerk will inform County Highways.

967. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 2nd December at 7pm at English Bicknor Village Hall.