

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th December 2020 at English Bicknor Village Hall. The meeting was held in compliance with the new Special Conditions of Hire during Covid-19 drawn up by the Village Hall Committee.

Those present were as follows:

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

Councillor Mr K. Braithwaite
Councillor Mrs A. Bowen

Councillor Mr J. Carrick
Councillor Mr P. Warden

Councillor Mrs Owen

28. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from County Cllr Mr T. Hale. Cllr Mrs Drinkall welcomed Cllr Warden, who was attending his first meeting as a Parish Councillor.

29. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

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

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

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

571 Extension to the car park on the Glebe land Cllr Braithwaite suggested that extending the car park on the Glebe should be a separate issue to school safety. The chairman explained that complaints concerning inconsiderate parking near the school have come to the Parish Council, therefore the Council have spent many years trying to find a solution to the problem. In the past, members of the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee had worked together on this issue, but at the moment no-one from the Village Hall Committee feels able to commit to this project, although they own the land. Councillors agreed that representatives from other bodies would be needed in order to move the car parking issue forward. The new minute heading was agreed.

Car parking at the school The clerk was asked to contact our PCSO to ask if she could attend and speak to parents about parking safely near the school, i.e. not parking on the double bend between Castle House and Church House.

673.3 Traffic signs at the top of Church Hill The larger arrow signs are now in place. County Cllr Hale has been thanked for his persistence in obtaining the required signs.

690 BT telephone box, English Bicknor Cllr Braithwaite offered to seal the hole in the BT box with sealant.

754.1 Speeding in Hillersland Cllr Braithwaite presented the latest figures from the speed camera in Hillersland, which shows a maximum speed of 77mph. The average speed continues to be above 40mph every day in the mornings and evenings. County Cllr Hale will use the data to ask for speed checks at those times. The chair thanked Cllr Braithwaite for all his work on this.

Speed signs for English Bicknor A letter was sent to thank Mr Warden-Heggie, with which he was very pleased. Mr A. Middlecote of County Highways met with Cllr Mrs Drinkall, Cllr Carrick and County Cllr Hale to see and agree on the proposed locations for a speed sign in English Bicknor. Cllr Mrs Drinkall has spoken to property owners to discuss the exact location of the posts. Mr & Mrs Grubb agreed to be responsible for putting the sign up and liaising with Cllr Braithwaite to bring it from Hillersland to English Bicknor. Cllr Braithwaite offered to deal with the data from the speed sign when it is based in English Bicknor. The clerk will write to Mr A. Middlecote of County Highways to ask for taller poles and to ask that he let us know when they are due to be put

in place.

782.2 Street lighting in Hillersland To date, only a few residents have been asked for their views on the street lighting in Hillersland, but the feeling is that more posts are not required, but lights which will give a wider spread of light would be welcome.

870.4 Silt across Redhouse Lane This has been cleared. The clerk was asked to write to thank Mr Middlecote, as a good job has been done of clearing the silt and drains in Redhouse Lane.

951.2`Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock This is still being monitored.

972 Blocked drains All silt and vegetation had been cleared from the drains at the bottom of Chapel Hill. However, they are now blocked again with leaves and soil. The clerk will write to Mr A. Middlecote at County Highways to thank him for clearing the drains, but also to ask whether the cover on the drains could be the reason why they are blocked so frequently.

979.3 Parish website A letter was sent to Mr Scott thanking him for all his work.

989 Lengthsmen The lengthsmen did a good job of scraping the weeds in part of the village and some pavements are now wider. However, new shoots are already appearing. The clerk will contact County Cllr Hale.

991.1 Drainage in Redhouse Lane The drainage issues in Redhouse Lane have been dealt with.

11.4 Seat at Godwins Lane The clerk has been advised that a suitable wooden bench could be supplied by Forest Products at Cinderford for less than £200. The clerk has also received information on the company who supplied the plastic seats to Coleford Town Council. The clerk will contact the company to ask whether the seats need securing into the ground, to ask their weight and also whether plastic seats can be marked to say that they belong to the Parish Council.

11.5 Village entry gates Highways confirmed that village entry gates can result in up to a 5% reduction in vehicle speeds. Councillors were concerned there may be insufficient width on the grass verge, and that any site deemed appropriate may result in the gates being damaged by grass cutting machines. It was agreed to wait and see the results from the speed camera when it is located in English Bicknor.

23. Highways – broken stiles Cllr Mrs Bowen was thanked for repairing the stile at the bottom of Redhouse Lane on footpath REB16/1, which is on her land. She will check to see if the other stile reported broken is also on land owned by her.

26.3 Tree at corner of Redhouse Lane A letter of thanks was sent to Mr P. Roberts.

26.4 Lime Kilns Overgrown vegetation on the Lime Kilns will be cleared in the Spring.

32. Accounts for payment

Miss W. Lawrence – clerk's wages, office allowance and expenses £423.46

HMRC – income tax on clerk's wages - £84.52

English Bicknor Village Hall – annual mowing grant - £300.00

English Bicknor Village Hall – rent for meetings - £30

A copy of the overview of finances had previously been circulated, while the latest bank statement was available to view at the meeting.. Acceptance of the accounts and payments were proposed by Cllr Carrick seconded by Cllr Mrs Owen and agreed by all present. Bank forms were signed by the clerk and chairman and handed to Cllr Warden to complete and return to the bank.

33. Precept for 2021/22

A copy of the budget calculation for the next financial year had previously been circulated by the clerk. Cllr Carrick proposed that the precept for 2021/22 be set at £3,900, which was seconded by Cllr Braithwaite and agreed by all councillors. The clerk will make this request to the District Council.

34. Highway matters

The list of outstanding highway matters was updated. On Tump Lane, at the corner just past

Eastbach Court, a sign saying English Bicknor has been pushed right into the hedge. The clerk will report this to County Highways and add it to the highways list.

35. Footpaths in the Parish

1. At Bridleway REB32/1 near to Millway Cottage, a footpath sign has been knocked and the flag completely taken off.
2. At the opposite end of the same bridleway on Tump Lane, the footpath sign has been uprooted and pushed against a tree.

The clerk will report the above items to the Public Rights of Way Officer, but also ask if there is any strategy with regard to flags being knocked off by hedgecutters, as there are a large number of flags which have been damaged in this way in our Parish.

3. On footpath REB5/2, where it meets Hillersland Road, the stile is intact but is covered in barbed wire. Cllr Bowen will check this stile.

36. Wild Boar

Wild Boar are still active in the Parish, but there was nothing further to report.

37. Correspondence received since last meeting

1. An e-mail has been received from PCSO Jayne about a parking issue at Folly Lane in Hillersland, which she had dealt with.
2. An e-mail has been received from Gloucestershire Health and Care advising of a public consultation and survey concerning proposals for the new community hospital in the Forest of Dean. Cllr Mrs Drinkall encouraged councillors to complete the survey.
3. An e-mail has been received from the Forest Voluntary Action Forum inviting Councillors to a Zoom meeting on Monday 14th December.
4. The County Council have forwarded details of the Ash Dieback Project, whereby work crews are carrying out essential work around the county to remove unsafe trees that are infected with ash dieback. Private landowners will be advised of trees that are infected and considered to be of risk to highway users and the required action to be taken.

38. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council

1. Coleford Area Partnership have started an initiative with local schools to plant acorns, which will then be planted out in 2022 for the Queen's Jubilee. It is planned to extend the current tree avenues within the Forest, which could include the avenue of trees coming into English Bicknor, then going out of the village down Junction Hill. Landowners would need to be involved as these trees would have to be planted on private land. This scheme also ties in with the Queen's Green Canopy initiative.
2. The clerk will check the stock of paper she has for printing up the minutes.
3. The drain at the bottom of Church Hill is completely blocked. The clerk will inform highways.

39. Dates of meetings in 2021

Bi-monthly meetings in 2021 were set for the following dates; 1st February, 12th April, 7th June, 2nd August, 4th October and 6th December, with the Annual Meeting and Parish Assembly on 10th May. These are all Mondays and meetings will start at 7pm. The clerk will confirm these dates with the Village Hall. These dates are of course also dependent on any Covid-19 regulations in place at the time of each meeting.

