

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th June 2023 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall	Councillor Mr K. Braithwaite	Councillor Mr P. Gwilliam
Councillor Mr D. Gunter	Councillor Mrs A. Bowen	
Councillor Mr P. Warden	Councillor Mr H. Cole	

Also present was County Cllr Mr T. Hale.

239. Election of Parish Council chairman

Cllr D. Gunter was proposed and seconded. There were no other proposals. Cllr Gunter confirmed that he was happy to stand as chairman, so he was duly appointed after those present had voted in favour.

240. Election of vice-chairman

Cllr Braithwaite was proposed and seconded. There were no other proposals. Cllr Braithwaite indicated that he was willing to stand, following which he was appointed after everyone present voted in favour.

241 Apologies and welcome

The new Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Gunter, thanked the outgoing chair, Cllr Mrs Drinkall, for all her work for the Parish, and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new Parish Council following the elections in May.

242. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

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

The minutes of the bi-monthly Parish Council meeting held on 3rd April 2023 were proposed, seconded and agreed by all present, following which they were signed by the chairman.

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

177. Play equipment on playing fields The Village Hall Committee have received a donation of £2000 towards the cost of new play equipment and is currently applying for grants. Cllr Gwilliam confirmed that the District Council had given helpful advice with regard to this.

754.1 Hardstanding for speed camera van in Hillersland The police have still not confirmed their approval of the location for the speed camera van, but in the meantime they have agreed to carry out some trial speed enforcement with a handheld speed gun.

951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock The clerk was asked to write to Mr A. Middlecote at County Highways to say how pleased they are to see a sign on the bends approaching Symonds Yat Rock advising that the maximum speed is 30mph. Mr D. Edwards of Forestry England has written to Mr Middlecote to ask whether County Highways will replace some of their signs at Symonds Yat Rock which have either been very badly damaged or have been removed. Highways have agreed to his request to remove the thick layer of mud which is covering the double yellow lines, to repaint the yellow lines and to look at the drains at this location. Forestry England have placed a large sign at the entrance to the car park at Symonds Yat Rock, but there is no parking icon on the sign. The clerk will write to Forestry England to ask if this could be added to the sign.

951.3 Community Speedwatch Camera A second letter was sent on to the Police & Crime Commissioner, but no reply has been received. The clerk was asked to contact Community Speedwatch to ask if they can help.

84.5 Designation of Redhouse Lane Mr A. Middlecote has again stated that he would look at the options for Redhouse Lane in the summer. The clerk will write to ask when a decision will be made. Cllr Mrs Bowen will check whether there is a ditch under the hedge at this location.

106.9 Man-hole cover in playing fields The weeping willow tree has now been removed by Two Rivers Housing, who have indicated that they would be happy to replace this tree with a suitable tree or shrub. It was reported that when the tree was removed, part of a fence was damaged. The clerk will write to Two

Rivers to ask if this could be put right. In spite of very heavy rain in May, there have been no reports of any build up of water.

159 Footpaths in Eastbach Cllr Gunter reported that the PROW Officer, Mr J. Wheeler, is aware of the problems with footpath REB24/1 and he will contact the landowner. The Parish Council have still not heard from the landowners with regard to the stile on footpath REB14/1, so the clerk will contact Mr Wheeler about this matter.

186.1 Warning sign on footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock Mr. A.Middlecote of County Highways is prepared to have a site meeting with councillors to discuss a new sign here. The clerk will ask him to provide dates when he could meet with councillors. Mr D Edwards of Forestry England wrote to County Highways to confirm that they have given permission for a new sign to be attached to the bridge, as they feel that the sign was very effective in preventing vehicles getting stuck and blocking the road for hours on end.

196. Missing post at entrance to Village Hall The missing post is to be replaced.

206. Bottom of Junction Hill Mr Middlecote will find out when the verge markers are to be installed.

207. AONB grants for kissing gates Cllr Mrs Drinkall passed to the clerk a list of smaller landowners in the Parish who are able to apply for free kissing gates from an AONB scheme to run in 2024. Cllr Gunter will speak to an officer at the AONB for further information on this matter.

210.4 Resignation of clerk An interview was held, but the candidate decided not to take up the position. Subsequently, further adverts were placed. A candidate who is currently clerk to another parish council has agreed to meet with councillors to discuss a way forward on Tuesday 6th June. It was agreed that four councillors should be present at this meeting. The clerk will ask the candidate to forward a completed application form or a CV before the meeting.

219.2 Pavement weed spraying Mr Middlecote advised that the weed spraying had been carried out in summer 2022 and that there were no plans to spray in April 2023, but he will add the weeds to the lengthsman's list for this year. The chairman explained why it would not be ideal for councillors to spray pavement weeds themselves, although strimming could be carried out.

219.3 Safety checks on Beech and Oak trees in Parish A safety check has been requested and agreed to by County Highways.

219.4 Lorries travelling to Stowfield Industrial site Mr Middlecote explained that the introduction of a one-way system and the installation of parking restrictions would require a Traffic Regulations Order, which would cost £15,000. He also advised that if the lorries were causing a noise or other nuisance, the Environment team at the District Council could be contacted. County Cllr Terry Hale has agreed to speak to the owner of the business park to explain the concerns of both Lydbrook and English Bicknor Parish Councils.

220.1 Lydcare A letter was sent to Lydcare, giving contact details for the Lucy Machen Charity and the English Bicknor Parochial Charities.

220.3 Dog waste bins on playing fields Mr P. Gwilliam confirmed that as it is now acceptable to place dog waste in with general waste, a black bin from the District Council had been placed near the play area. Stickers had been added to indicate that the bin is to be used for dog waste and general waste.

221.3 Lime Kilns Cllr Mrs Bowen confirmed that the top of the Lime Kilns was sprayed in May.

245. Approval of and matters arising from the minutes of the Annual meeting

The minutes of the annual meeting were proposed, seconded and agreed by all, following which they were signed by the chairman.

237. Parish Council Insurance The Parish Council insurers have confirmed that, in the event of a claim, the Parish Council would receive the stated value of the item, less £100 excess. Currently the Parish Council are in the second year of a 3-year agreement whereby the insurance cost does not increase.

246. Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr T. Hale was pleased to confirm that the road through Shortstanding is to be resurfaced.

247. Planning matters

There were no planning matters.

248. Accounts for payment:

Miss W. Lawrence – clerk's wages, office allowance and expenses - £540.63

HMRC – income tax on clerk's wages - £104.67

Mrs S. Stratford – annual audit - £70.00

Community First Trading Limited – insurance renewal - £232.58

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 all payments was proposed, seconded, and agreed by all present. It was confirmed that the District Council had been unable to forward either an invoice or an estimate for election costs as they are still waiting for invoices from some of their suppliers.

249. Highway Matters

Water is spilling across the carriageway at the S bend on Junction Hill, thought to be from a blocked drain. Cllrs Gwilliam and Cole will investigate.

250. Wild Boar

The clerk was asked to contact Forestry England for advice on how to deal with dead boar.

251. Correspondence received since last meeting

A letter has been received from the Village Hall Committee stating that costs totalling £1104 had been incurred by them after flooding was found to be caused by the drain in the playing fields being blocked. It was suggested that a letter jointly from the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council should be sent to Two Rivers Housing to ask if they would reimburse the costs, or a part of the costs, as the storm water pipe had been blocked by roots from a tree on their land. The clerk will outline this proposed course of action to the Village Hall Committee, also suggesting that copies of all invoices should be forwarded with the letter.

252. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council

1. It was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to Mr J. Carrick, who had retired after serving as a Parish Councillor for many years.
2. The clerk, who will step down following this meeting, was thanked for all her work on behalf of the Parish.

253. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is booked for Monday 7th August, but this may change when a new clerk is appointed.