

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th December 2022 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

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

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

Also present were Mr P. Gwilliam and Mr. S. Andrewes

188. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs D. Owen, Cllr P. Warden and Cllr J. Carrick

189. Public Forum

Mr P. Gwilliam confirmed that he has now registered with the Biffa charity for a grant towards the cost of new play equipment on the playing fields. The only extra cost once the equipment is bought will be a further £40 on the annual insurance cover. The cost of the yearly inspections will be included in the current fee to inspect the equipment already on the playing fields, and this will be taken over by Bicknor Bears. Mr Gwilliam was asked to provide the Parish Council with a breakdown of purchase and running costs, and where this money would come from. This could then be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council, when hopefully more councillors would be present.

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

The minutes of the bi-monthly Parish Council meeting held on 3rd October 2022 were proposed, seconded and agreed by all present, following which they were signed by the chairman.

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

177. Play equipment on playing fields Details of several associations from whom grants might be obtained were passed on to Mr P. Gwilliam by the clerk. The National Playing Fields Association are only giving grants to places which are registered as a Field in Trust. GAPTC have confirmed that if the Parish Council were to buy the play equipment and reclaim the VAT, then the equipment must remain as an asset belonging to the Parish Council and must appear on the Register of Assets.

754.1 Hardstanding for speed camera van Mr A. Middlecote of County Highways confirmed that he had been unable to arrange a meeting to discuss this matter. The clerk will ask to be informed when a date is arranged, and pass this on to Cllr Braithwaite.

951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock Mr Middlecote advised that all road signs must conform to those in Traffic Signs Regulations, and concealed entrance signs are not authorised signs, unless they have been especially authorised by the Secretary of State. The clerk will pass this information on to the residents at Symonds Yat Rock who initially expressed concerns of near accidents at this location.

951.3 Community Speedwatch Camera Mr M. Parker of Community Speedwatch has confirmed that they are still awaiting confirmation from the police.

82.1 Verge near Dove Cottage Mr A. Middlecote advised in October that this work had been assigned to the Lengthsmen.

84.3 Redhouse Lane road name sign The clerk has again contacted the District Council to say that the old sign has still not been replaced.

84.5 Designation of Redhouse Lane Complaints are still being received from walkers at the poor state of Redhouse Lane. The clerk will ask Mr Middlecote if he will walk this lane with Cllr Drinkall during the winter months.

102 Loose cast-iron cover This loose cover, located opposite the entrance to Cowmeadow

Farm, was repaired at the end of November.

106.8 Ditch along Bicknor Street County Highways confirmed that their Street Works Team had asked Gigaclear to clear out the ditch and they are happy with the work carried out.

106.9 Man-hole cover in playing fields Cllr Gunter contacted County Highways after heavy rain left both the road between the Village Hall and Yew Tree Cottage and the car park at the village hall, under water. A manhole had been dug out on 5th December, so it was hoped that work would now be carried out to ensure no further flooding occurs. Councillors were reminded that floodsax are available from Cllr Mrs Bowen.

116.2 Wheelie bin stickers All the wheelie bin stickers have now been given out.

135.2 Trees on Parish Council land at Redhouse Lane Mr Maxfield has now completed the works on these trees and an invoice forwarded to the clerk.

159 Footpaths in Eastbach Cllr Mrs Drinkall was able to clarify several areas which need attention on footpaths REB24/1 and REB14/1. On REB24/1, two stiles need attention, one field is totally overgrown and impassable, there is a broken gate and some waymark arrows are missing or pointing in the wrong direction. Regarding REB14/1 at Upper Tump, the approach to the field via steps is very steep. The clerk will write to the land owner to ask if more steps can be added.

162.2 Parish website Mr Andrewes circulated a sheet outlining the structure of the English Bicknor website containing information on the Parish, the village hall, the Church, as well as items of Parish Council business, the parish activity list and holiday accommodation in the parish. He outlined his plans to update the site, which was welcomed by councillors and was thanked for agreeing to take on this role.

172 Overgrown tree at 'The Glebe' This tree has now been cut back.

174.3 Dead tree on the corner of Smithy Close The dead tree has been removed. Mr Wilce of Two Rivers is currently waiting for a price for a replacement tree, following which he will need to obtain a decision on funding.

174.5 Parish magazine Judith Brickwood has been receiving items for the Parish magazine, but she has moved from the area and has asked for someone to take over from January 2023.

183.1 Flashing warning sign at school The lights are now working and come on at the correct time.

183.2 White markings at the junction of Tump Lane New white lines have now been re-painted at this junction.

186.1 Warning Sign on footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock The Police removed the sign in August after noticing that it was in poor condition. They contacted Forestry England, who disposed of it because it was rotten. The sign was originally put in place in September 2015 at the instigation of the police and was made by the police handyman. The police paid for the sign, but then gifted it to the Parish Council, who were responsible for regular inspections and insurance cover. The clerk will write to County Highways and the Police to say that the Parish Council feel that a replacement sign is necessary, as since the sign was put in place, the Parish Council have not been made aware of any vehicles being stuck on the hill.

186.3 Noisy Fastershire Cabinet A Fastershire engineer has been to check this cabinet on the verge outside Bicknor House, and has confirmed that the noise is not excessive and is caused by fans inside.

186.4 Broadband connection to Dove Cottage and Millway Cottage Mr Chris Smart of Fastershire has sent a very comprehensive explanation as to why these properties have not been connected to fibre broadband, and his letter has been forwarded to the property owners.

192. Planning matters

(683) Erection of a first floor extension at The Grange, Christchurch

This application is still pending.

(684) Removal of condition relating to agricultural occupancy at Oak Farm, English Bicknor
Full permission was granted on 18th October 2022 – there were no conditions attached.

(685) Erection of a time single-storey granny annexe at 3 Orchard Close, English Bicknor

Full permission was granted on 1st November

(686) An application received by the Parish Council on 6th October for the temporary stationing of a single caravan on land at Hillersland, was withdrawn on 11th November.

(687) P1497/22/FUL The Rock, Hillersland

Erection of a single-storey extension and porch with decking and associated works for the benefit of a disabled person.

(688) P1558/22/FUL Abbeville, Symonds Yat Rock

Erection of a first floor dormer style extension and internal alterations

The Parish Council support both the above two planning applications.

193. Accounts for payment

Miss W. Lawrence – clerk's wages, office allowance and expenses - £475.33

HMRC – income tax on clerk's wages - £95.67

English Bicknor Village Hall – annual mowing grant - £350.00

English Bicknor Village Hall – rent for meetings - £45.00

Mr D. Maxfield – payment for work on Redhouse Lane trees - £125.00

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. The clerk had been informed by the National Association of Local Councils of a wage rise from 1st April 2023. This was approved by councillors.

194. Precept for 2023/24

Prior to the meeting, the clerk had circulated a budget calculation for the coming year. This budget was accepted, although it was agreed not to put any further sum into the parish election fund.

There were concerns that not increasing the precept request this year may result in a huge increase in the next two or three years, but after discussion it was agreed to ask the District Council for £4,250, an increase of £85 on the amount requested in December 2021.

195. Highway matters

The list of outstanding highway matters was updated. It was noted that there has been no communication regarding the sunken drain outside Whitehouse, which was first reported in April. The clerk will contact Highways again about this matter.

196. Wild Boar

It was reported that at the entrance to the village hall, there is no post between the pedestrian gate and the cattle grid, so the gate cannot be closed. The clerk will contact the Village Hall Committee on this matter, as wild boar could gain access to the playing fields.

197. Correspondence received since the last meeting

1. A letter has been received from Mark Tabberer, saying that he has resigned as a Trustee of English Bicknor Village Hall.

2. An invitation has been received from the District Council to a carol service at St Stephen's Church, Cinderford, on 6th December.

198. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council

The Parish Activity list has been updated by Cllr Mrs Drinkall. It was pointed out that it should appear in the Parish Council section of the website.

199. Dates of meetings in 2023