

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th February 2023 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

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

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

Also present were County Cllr Mr T. Hale, District Cllr Mr T. Gwilliam, Mr P. Gwilliam, Mrs A. Watkins and Mr N. Watkins

200. Apologies and welcome

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

201. Public Forum

Mr P. Gwilliam had received a quote for new play equipment on the playing fields. A cradle swing suitable for disabled children and a climbing frame with safety net and flooring would cost a total of £15,570.00 including VAT, delivery and installation. Grants are being pursued, but Mr Gwilliam advised that Biffa Grants are only available to Parish Councils.

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

The minutes of the bi-monthly Parish Council meeting held on 5th December 2022 were proposed, seconded and agreed by all present, following which they were signed by the chairman.

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

177. Play equipment on playing fields The Parish Council support the Village Hall Committee's initiative in purchasing play equipment for the playing fields, but cannot buy the equipment and re-claim the VAT if the equipment is to be maintained and insured by the Village Hall Committee. The e-mail from GAPTC which advises of this will be forwarded to the Village Hall Committee. It was proposed and seconded that the Parish Council will help where possible and to this end will write to District Cllr T. Gwilliam, who is able to provide details of where grants can be obtained for play equipment and possibly the use of a bid writer.

754.1 Hardstanding for speed camera van Mr A. Middlecote has e-mailed the police with the proposed location at Hillersland and asked them for a meeting.

951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock Residents at Symonds Yat Rock forwarded to the clerk a spreadsheet detailing all incidents in the area during 2022, which was forwarded to Gloucestershire Highways. This includes the latest incident in December, when a car was written off. District Cllr Gwilliam advised that District Cllr P. Hiatt will be meeting with the Community Safety Partnership on Friday and suggested that the clerk contact him before that date with details of the problems at this location. The clerk was also asked to write to Forestry England to ask if they could put up a sign advising of the entrance to the car park, as at the moment visitors to the area are confused as to its exact location.

951.3 Community Speedwatch camera County Cllr Hale has now had two cancelled meetings with Mr Parker of Community Speedwatch. The clerk will contact the Police and Crime Commissioner to ask for his help, as councillors think it was at a meeting he held that the Parish Council were first introduced to Community Speedwatch. The clerk will also send details of this issue to District Cllr P. Hiatt.

82.1 Verge near Dove Cottage Mr A Middlecote has confirmed that this was added to the Lengthsmen's list, and he will chase it up.

84.3 Redhouse Lane road name sign A new sign has now been placed here.

84.5 Designation of Redhouse Lane Mr A. Middlecote met with Cllr Mrs Drinkall, Cllr Braithwaite and County Cllr T. Hale on 31st January to walk along this lane. At that time the lane

was dry, but, depending on his budget, Mr Middlecote may be able to have some of the mud moved and perhaps gulleys put in place. The clerk will write to Mr Middlecote to give him the name of the owner of the adjacent field.

106.9 Man-hole cover in playing fields Mr Gwilliam explained that he had been contacted by Mr N. Choat of County Highways, who asked the Village Hall Committee to disconnect an overflow pipe from the septic tank, which it was felt was causing the blockage to the drainage in the playing fields. On digging down, it was found that the drainage pipe was also blocked by roots from a tree. A new pipe from the septic tank, provided by Mr Choat, was put in place and the ditch filled in. County Highways have subsequently jetted the pipes through, and Mr Gwilliam confirmed that the tree roots had not been cleared out of the pipe. The clerk was asked to write to Two Rivers with a request for them to remove the Willow Tree and grind out its stump to prevent re-growth, with the explanation that the roots from the tree on their land has caused a blockage in drainage pipes and the Parish Council are concerned that these roots will work their way through the join where a new pipe was put in place and cause further blockages, and further flooding, in the future.

159 Footpaths in Eastbach Letters were forwarded to the three landowners on whose land footpaths required attention. The clerk has been advised that one of the top slats on a stile on footpath REB24/1 has been removed, therefore making the stile much easier to use.

162.2 Parish website Mr S. Andrewes confirmed that the renewal for the website is due at the end of August, at a cost of £34.99, though he may change to another provider which may be slightly more expensive. The renewal for the domain name is due this month. This cost £19.18 in 2021 and lasts for 2 years. Softdata Internet have been contacted and asked to forward the renewal invoice to the clerk.

174.3 Dead tree on the corner of Smithy Close Mr Wilce of Two Rivers has confirmed that a replacement tree has been ordered and will be planted as soon as the weather improves.

186.1 Warning sign on footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock The Police and Forestry England have no objection to the Parish Council replacing the sign, but are unable to provide a new sign. County Highways also have no objection to a new sign being installed. County Cllr Hale will ask Highways if there is a suitable sign which they could provide.

194. Precept for 2023/24 A precept request for £4,250 was forwarded to the District Council.

195. Sunken drain outside Whitehouse Mr Middlecote looked at this drain when he met with councillors in January.

196. Missing post at entrance to Village Hall A replacement post will be put in place by the Village Hall Committee.

198. Parish Activity List This list has now been updated and a copy placed on the Parish website. Hard copies have been given to Cllr Mrs Drinkall for circulation to new residents in the Parish.

199. Dates for meetings in 2023 All the dates for meetings which were put forward for 2023 have been confirmed.

204. Planning matters

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

This application was refused permission on 26/1/23

(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.

Full permission was granted on 6/1/23

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

Erection of a first floor dormer style extension and internal alterations

This application is still pending.

205. Accounts for payment:

Miss W. Lawrence – clerk's wages and expenses - £400.38

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

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 advised that she has re-registered with the Pensions Regulator on behalf of the Parish Council.

206. Highway Matters

At the bottom of Junction Hill, where tree felling has taken place, there is a large drop into a brook on the outer side of the bend. The clerk will write to County Highways to ask if a barrier could be placed here, and will copy her e-mail to Lydbrook PC, as this part of the road may be in their parish.

207. Footpaths in the Parish

The AONB has grants to supply kissing gates or self-closing gates to farmers and other land-owners. Applications are now closed for the current financial year, but these grants may be available again in 2024. It was agreed that landowners in the parish should be contacted later this year to inform them of this scheme. Cllr Gunter informed the Council of meetings he has held with the AONB concerning a project on his land to get rid of a culvert and to create a wetland.

208. Wild Boar

It was reported that wild boar are still active in the parish.

209. Correspondence received since last meeting

1. Correspondence has been received from the District Council advising that the Elections Act 2022 states that all those who wish to vote in person at an election must provide photographic ID to prove their identity before they will be issued with a ballot paper. The clerk will put this information on the parish noticeboards and in the parish magazine. This requirement will be in force for the elections on 4th May 2023.
2. An e-mail was received from the treasurer of the Village Hall Committee asking who pays for the electricity supply to the defibrillator and asking whether its installation was a Parish Council project. The clerk has replied to this query.
3. A letter of resignation, on health grounds, has been received from Cllr Mrs Owen. A letter will be sent thanking her for her contribution to the Parish Council over many years.
4. An invitation was received from Forestry England to a workshop to discuss the future of Cannop Ponds. Cllr Gunter attended on behalf of the Parish Council and gave a brief report. Further meetings will be held in the future.

210. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council

1. A resident offered several thousand daffodil bulbs to the Parish Council. Cllr Mrs Drinkall distributed and organised the planting of the bulbs in English Bicknor village by more than twenty parishioners. A letter of thanks will be sent to Mr M. Butler for providing the bulbs.
2. The clerk will contact the District Council to request a litter pick along the road between Dryslade Farm and Sterts Farm, where there is no pavement.
3. The clerk will advise Forestry England of a fridge which has been dumped on land owned by them at Carterspiece.
4. The clerk advised that she plans to retire from her position. It was agreed to ask GAPTC for advice on this matter, and the position will be advertised in the parish magazine, on the parish noticeboards and with other parish councils.

211. The next meeting of the Parish Council