

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th October 2021 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall – Chairman	Councillor Mr K. Braithwaite - vice-chairman
Councillor Mr D. Gunter	Councillor Mrs A. Bowen
Councillor Mr P. Warden	Councillor Mr J. Carrick
County Councillor Mr T. Hale	

Also present were Mr P. Gwilliam, representing the Village Hall Committee, Mrs. S. Shelbourn and Mrs A. Watkins..

86. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from PCSO Jayne. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the three members of the public.

87. Public Forum

Mr P. Gwilliam spoke on behalf of the Village Hall Committee. He explained that the Football Club had asked for permission to extend the hall, and the Village Hall Committee had paid for the planning application, the architect's fees, the cost of new fire regulations and contributed £6,000. The only payment received by the Village Hall Committee from the Football Club is the profit from bar sales. The Football Club had not asked permission to put the railings around the football pitch. A new fire system needs to be put in place at a cost of £1,800. Recently it was discovered that a member of the football club had copied the keys to the village hall, including keys to the safe, although permission was not given by the Village Hall Committee for this. Since this discovery, both parties have met together to discuss a way forward. Mr. Gwilliam confirmed that the new changing rooms are an asset to the village hall.

Mrs Watkins asked if the rumour of a wedding business being run from the village hall had come from the Parish Council. Mrs Watkins was given a copy of the minutes of the August Parish Council meeting, which she could see made no mention of any such business. Mr Gwilliam confirmed that as the village hall is a charity, no private business could be run from the premises. Mention was made of an e-mail received from District Cllr T. Gwilliam. As this e-mail was not to hand, the clerk will investigate its contents.

Mrs Shelbourn confirmed that the Village Hall Committee had given permission for a gate to be constructed giving access between her property and the playing fields. She explained that the gate had been in place in the wooden fence for about eight years and it was a short cut to the village hall. It was noted that the gate is adjacent to her holiday let and a notice saying 'Please clear up after your dog' was an indication that the gate was being used by holiday makers to exercise their dogs on the playing fields. The Parish Council asked for sight of the minutes of the Village Hall Committee meeting where permission had been given, as permission should have been sought from the Parish Council, as owners of the playing fields.

88. Reading and confirmation of the minutes of the last Parish Council meetings

The minutes of the bi-monthly Parish Council meeting held on 2nd August 2021, were proposed by Cllr Warden and seconded by Cllr Braithwaite. After being agreed by all present, the minutes were signed by the chairman.

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

74. Public Forum – English Bicknor Football Club A meeting was held on 11th August between representatives of English Bicknor Football Club and the Trustees of the Playing Fields at which all issues of concern were discussed and an agreement reached on these issues. A letter was sent to the Village Hall Committee expressing hope that the issues would be resolved, receipt of which has been acknowledged but no response has been received.

76/571 Parking at school PCSO Jayne was asked if she would attend any meeting arranged between the Parish Council and the school to discuss parking near the school. Cllr Warden has confirmed that on the whole parking on the bends has improved with only three or four vehicles parking here regularly,

but on 27th September there were nine vehicles parked on the bends and through traffic was held up as a result. A photo showing the vehicles parked on the bends has been forwarded to County Cllr T. Hale, Mr B. Watkins of Gloucestershire Highways and PCSO Jayne, who replied that as the cars are only parked for fifteen minutes at the start and end of each school day, she did not feel it was a problem. Cllr Warden agreed to continue to monitor the parking on the bends. The school has asked parents not to park at the top of Balls Hill, which could mean that the situation may improve once parents are once again able to park in this location.

754.1 Speeding in Hillersland A further two reports were compiled by Cllr Braithwaite in August and forwarded to Mrs D. Powell at Gloucestershire Police and to Mr B. Watkins of County Highways. Mrs D. Powell will add Hillersland Road to her list for a speed survey to be carried out, but she has a long list so could not give a date.

Speed Sign for English Bicknor County Cllr Hale was thanked for obtaining the mounting harnesses required for the poles from Drybrook Parish Council, who did not need them. Cllr Braithwaite has placed these and the straps which he bought onto the poles, and will place the VAS in English Bicknor when the current road works are completed. Cllr Mrs Drinkall will contact the landowner of the adjacent field, as the hedge needs to be cut before the VAS can be put in place. The height of the poles also needs to be looked at with regard to safety when putting the VAS in position. It was hoped that having a VAS in place near to the school may help with the issue of parking by confirming the speeds of vehicles on the bends.

782.2 Street lighting in Hillersland County Cllr Hale reported that Saskia are looking at street lighting generally, including the spread of light.

951.2 Speed limit approaching Symonds Yat Rock The clerk wrote to Mr A Middlecote, who replied that The Road Safety Team maintains statistics on all personal injury road collision records within the county. The data for Symonds Yat Rock shows that there has been no personal injury collision in the last five years. The site is not on the County accident hot spot list and it is unlikely to secure funding for a safety improvement scheme. On 2nd September an e-mail was received from Mr & Mrs Wallis, who live at Symonds Yat Rock and who first approached the Parish Council about their concerns at this location. Their e-mail said that they had witnessed a near-miss that day and had sent details to Gloucestershire Highways.

26.4 Lime Kilns Cllr Warden confirmed that he has sprayed the vegetation on the Lime Kilns.

34. Sign on Tump Lane The Parish Council asked if this sign head could be cleaned, but Highways have advised that a new sign will be ordered.

37.4 Ash Dieback Project A letter was forwarded to the Ash Dieback Team including data stating the number of vehicles using the road. The reply received said that they will not start surveying C roads at all until next year, and due to the high number of C roads within the county, they have to look at traffic volumes and could not say when they will get to the road through Hillersland to Symonds Yat Rock. They again stated that anyone who has concerns about particular trees should get in touch with them. It was reported that Forestry England have surveyed the Ash trees in the area.

38.3 Drain at the bottom of Church Hill This has now been repaired, though a new grip is required.

48.7 English Bicknor Sign The new English Bicknor sign at the top of Junction Hill is now in place, although the view of the sign is obscured by overgrown vegetation. The lengthsman will be asked to clear this vegetation.

49.2 and 3 Footpaths in the parish Lots of vegetation has been cleared by the PROW team from footpaths REB47 and 48, although there are still fallen trees on both paths. The clerk will write to the PROW Officer to thank him and his team.

50. The Definitive Map Cllr Carrick has checked the Definitive Map on-line and was able to confirm that all the footpaths shown on the map owned by the Parish Council do appear on the Definitive Map. The Parish Council do not know whether there are any footpaths on the current Ordnance Survey Map which are not on the map held by the Parish Council. The clerk will ask when it will be possible to view the Definitive Map, and ask whether the District Council has a copy.

51. Flood Defence The District Council have confirmed that four packs of Floodsax (each pack contains 5 Floodsax), have been allocated to the Parish Council. Cllr Mrs Bowen agreed that they could be stored at her property. Her contact details have been passed on to the District Council.

52. Emergency Scheme of Delegation for the Clerk As no further national lockdowns are planned, it was felt that the period of emergency powers for the clerk should now terminate. This was proposed by Cllr Carrick, seconded by Cllr Braithwaite and agreed by all present.

53. Painting of telephone box in English Bicknor A letter of thanks was sent to Mr Jago and Mr Shipley.

55.1 Litter pick A letter of thanks was sent to English Bicknor W.I. for carrying out a litter pick.

55.5 Royal British Legion Figures The secretary of the Village Hall Committee confirmed the figures are to be placed next to the old BT boxes owned by the Parish Council. The figures have been ordered, but not yet delivered.

82.1 Verge near Dove Cottage Highways have carried out a safety inspection and confirmed that the verge is to be repaired.

82.2 Hole near Cherrypips Cottage, Hillersland Highways have confirmed that this hole was dug by Severn Trent Water in preparation for a new water connection, which has now been made.

83.1 Gate from private residence onto playing fields Councillors have spoken to the property owner about this gate. It was felt that by allowing a gate to be placed between the playing fields and a private property, the boundary was compromised as it constituted a private right of way. The Village Hall Chairman had confirmed that the Village Hall Committee had closed up a gateway and re-instated the boundary from another property on the other side of the playing fields. As previously mentioned in these minutes, Mrs Shelbourn reported that permission had been obtained from the Village Hall Committee for the gate, which they use as a shortcut to the village hall. It was also accessible by their holiday let visitors to exercise dogs on the playing fields and there was a sign stating 'Please clean up after your dogs' adjacent to the gate. It was mentioned that the gate would be useful for maintenance of the wooden fence from the playing fields. The Parish Council have asked the Village Hall Committee for a copy of the minutes when permission was given for this gate.

83.6 Police and Crime Commissioner's roadshow Cllr Warden and Cllr Mrs Drinkall attended this event, where they had the opportunity to speak with Ms D. Powell of Gloucestershire Police. The clerk was asked to contact her to re-iterate that the Parish Council would like a speed survey carried out in Hillersland. The Police Commissioner confirmed that he wants to recruit 300 staff to help with his priorities of anti-social behaviour, speeding, rural crime and crime against women.

83.7 Grass cutting grant The clerk has written to the Village Hall Committee to confirm that the grass cutting grant will be discussed at the December meeting of the Parish Council, when the budget is set. The clerk could find no written agreement concerning the amount the Parish Council donates towards grass cutting costs.

84.1 Trees on verge opposite Cowmeadow Farm Highways have confirmed that the tree inspector attended the site, but could not see any visual problems with the line of trees. However, Highways did not contact Cllr Gunter direct, as requested. County Cllr Hale will try to arrange a meeting with Mr A. Middlecote to look at this line of trees.

84.3 Road name signs At the end of August, the District Council confirmed that they will arrange for new signs to be ordered and put in place, but as they order new street signs in bulk, this may take a few weeks.

84.4 Drain cover in Ross Road The old, iron drain cover has now been replaced.

84.5 Designation of Redhouse Lane PROW Officer J. Wheeler confirmed that Redhouse Lane is a Class 5 road from end to end and therefore the responsibility of Highways. Mr A. Middlecote of Highways agreed with this, but offered to look at the road with County Cllr Hale the next time they meet up.

90. Report of the County Councillor

The warning sign hanging from the footbridge at Symonds Yat Rock had been repaired from County Cllr Hale's budget. He has met with representatives of Gigaclear to discuss the signage while works are being carried out in English Bicknor, and asked them to keep the road open when possible. Cllr Braithwaite pointed out that there are no plans to lay fibre cables in Hillersland, although internet speeds are very poor. The clerk will write to ask Gigaclear whether they will be putting fibre broadband in Hillersland. County Cllr Hale has funding to help people following the pandemic. He asked for feedback on the new hospital and GP surgery provision.

91. Planning matters

Planning permission has been granted for the following:

(670) Lower Carterspiece Farm, Carterspiece – change of use of land for the siting of a shepherd hut. Permission, including 10 conditions, was granted on 3rd September 2021.

(671) 2 Murrells Road, English Bicknor – erection of a single storey side link extension and single storey garage and workshop. Full permission was granted on 17th September.

(677) The Laurels, Godwins Lane – Erection of double garage and porch. Full permission was granted on 7th September.

(678) Folly House, Ross Road – Erection of a single storey double garage. Full permission was granted on 15th September.

Planning applications (675) at Ferndale, Hillersland and (676) at The Bungalow, Blackthorns Farm, are still pending.

92. Accounts for payment:

Miss W. Lawrence – clerk's wages and expenses -£386.84

HMRC – income tax on clerk's wages - £93.96

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 was proposed by Cllr Warden seconded by Cllr Carrick and agreed by all present.

93. Highway matters

The list of outstanding highway matters was updated, with several of the works having been completed.

94. Wild Boar

Wild Boar have recently been very active in Christchurch and Mile End.

95. Queen's Platinum Jubilee Trees

The Honourable Company of Gloucestershire offered two Oak trees to each Town and Parish Council, to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty. Cllr Bowen agreed to have these trees on land owned by her, on the triangle approaching her farmyard and adjacent to a public footpath, where they will be seen by members of the public. The trees were ordered and will be delivered to Cllr Bowen from December. Forestry England have agreed to supply stakes and guards for the trees.

96. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council

1. The clerk was asked to write to thank Mr R. Fyffe and Mr S. Sproat, who have cleared moss and lichen from the traffic island at the top of Church Hill.

2. It has been reported to the Parish Council that cars have been parked on the grass outside bungalows between the telephone box and the bungalows at Smithy Close. The clerk will write to Two Rivers to ask them to remind their tenants not to park on the grass.

97. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 6th December, starting at 7pm.

