

BENINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

e-mail: clerk.beningtonpc@yahoo.co.uk

Benington Parish Council Meeting

11 September, 2013 8.00 pm

Benington School

Minutes

Present: H E L Jones (Chair) K Mays
R Bott M Spicer
C Brown

In attendance: P C Harrison (Clerk), and 8 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and reported that the repair work to the War Memorial in St Peter's Churchyard is now complete. The Clerk to inform East Herts Council.

30. Apologies: Apologies of absence were received from Cllr Ken Grundy.

31. Declaration of Interests : None.

32. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10 July, 2013 were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

b) Review of Actions

- Letter to Recreation Club. Completed
- Parish Magazine to include article re: anti-social behaviour. Completed
- Cinder Path between Three Stiles and Town Lane. Reported.
Cllr Bott to check the path adjacent to 69 Town Lane leading to 16 Blacksmiths Hill as it seems that this path has still not been cleared.

33. Roads

Highways to be informed of the following:

- Pot holes in Town Lane by the bank and opposite 35 Town Lane.
- Path in need of repair outside the school.

Cllr Spicer reported that paths from the village shop to Oaktree close and also outside 148 Town Lane are scheduled for repair by Highways.

34. Planning

34.1 Decisions:

LPA Ref: 3/12/2063/FP

Garage site to the North of 9 Three Stiles, Benington, Herts SG2 7LD
Demolition of the existing 3 no. garage blocks and erection of 4 no. two storey semi-detached houses with three bedrooms, private amenity space and car parking.

BPC Objection.

EHC Permission Refused.

LPA Ref: 3/13/0938/FP

21 Whempstead Road, Benington, Herts SG2 7BX

Single storey rear extension.

BPC No Objection.

EHC Permission Granted.

LPA Ref: 3/13/0762/FP

7 Town Lane, Benington, Herts SG2 7LA

Replacement of rear boundary fence.

BPC No Objection.

EHC Permission Refused.

LPA Ref: 3/13/1168/FP/JS

2 Blacksmiths Hill, Benington, Herts SG2 7LQ

Conversion into two dwellings with changes to fenestration including new front entrance and associated landscaping.

BPC No Decision.

EHC Permission Granted.

34.2 Planning applications received since the last Parish Council Meeting, but not discussed at the meeting.

LPA Ref: 3/13/1332/FP

Benington Park Farm, Benington, Herts SG2 7BU

Change of use and alterations of barns to create two dwellings, involving the demolition of the Dutch barn and construction of a double garage.

BPC No Objection.

LPA Ref: 3/13/1461/FP

88 Whempstead Road, Benington, SG2 7DE

Change of use of land from pasture to residential garden.

BPC No Objection

34.3 LPA Ref: 3/13/1272/PC – Cabbage Green

This application has been withdrawn.

35. Recreational Facilities

35.1 Playground

Cllr Mays reported that the new playground equipment has been very well received, and it is being used and enjoyed by children of all ages. Some concerns were expressed regarding the Birds Nest Swing, but Timberline has now deemed this safe to use. The top bar of the swing will be replaced but again, in the meantime, it has been certified safe to use. Cllr Mays also reported that a grant may be available for repair of one of the original items of equipment in the playground, the Agility – Multi Play with Slide.

The annual inspection of the playground has now been completed and some items are either in need of small repairs or are to be monitored against further deterioration. Cllr Richard Bott reported that he has carried out some of the repairs mentioned in the report. The Clerk to forward book of spare parts to Cllr Bott. Although considered to be low risk in the report, the underside of the roundabout platform and the playing surface is in excess of 110 mm and contravenes the requirements of BS EN 1176 Part 5. This item to be adjusted, possibly by using extra rubber mats. Items mentioned in the report were all considered to be either low or very low risk.

36. School

The Chairman read out the following update on the school from Cllr Ken Grundy:-
From September this year with the new pupil intake there are in total 116 pupils attending the school. Over the summer break a new library has been formed in place of the IT unit, as the school now has white boards and laptop computers. The lighting in the main hall was improved. With the new mobile classroom the school is now geared up for 116 pupils and a very good year ahead.

37. Finance

37.1 Expenditure and Income from 11.07.13 to 11.09.13

Date Paid	Name	Details	Total
26.07.13	Philip Dean Ltd	Planning Report	£ 240.00
29.07.13	Mr Peter Kingsnorth	Website Maintenance	£ 120.00
29.07.13	Frank Cooper & Son	Grass Cutting	£ 169.20
29.07.13	BDO LLP	Audit of Annual Return Year Ended March 2013.	£ 120.00
31.07.13	Mr Stuart Dudley	Litter Picking	£ 120.00
05.08.13	BT Payment Services	New Parish Council Telephone Line and Rental.	£ 183.15
16.08.13	Philip Dean Ltd	Professional Services	£ 255.00
16.08.13	Frank Cooper & Son	Grass Cutting	£ 169.20
16.08.13	Mrs P Harrison	Expenses, New Telephone, Postage and Stationery	£ 106.12
30.08.13	Mr Stuart Dudley	Litter Picking	£ 120.00
30.08.13	East Herts Council	Annual Playground Inspection	£ 55.86
11.09.13	Frank Cooper & Son	Grass Cutting	£ 169.20

Income from 11.07.13 to 11.09.13

East Herts Council	New Homes Bonus	£1981.00
HM Revenue & Customs	VAT Repayment	£ 895.34

37.2 Annual Return

The Parish Council approved and accepted the audited Annual Return for the year ended 31 March, 2013.

38. Correspondence Received

(a) **Herts Air Ambulance – Request for grant August 2013.**

It was agreed to donate £100.00 to the Herts Air Ambulance.

(b) **Came & Company Parish Council Insurance – Renewal Documents.**

Came & Company has offered a 5% reduction on this year's insurance premium if the Parish Council sign up for a further long term agreement next year. It was agreed not to take up this offer as other companies were offering better value for money. Quotes will be obtained next September when the existing long term agreement with Came & Company expires.

- (c) **Consultation on Revised List of Validation Requirements for Planning and Listed Building consent applications – July 2013.**
The above document was circulated to all Councillors. No action necessary.
- (d) **East Herts Rural Parish Conference – 13 September, 2013.**
The Chairman to attend the above conference.
- (e) **Letter from Peter Warren, Chairman of the BRGCT – 10.09.13**
The Chairman stated that a letter has been received from Peter Warren in answer to the Parish Council's request to approach Stone King Solicitors. The Chairman summarised the letter and read out the last paragraph which stated that: "The Charity Commission have advised the Management Committee to have no further dealings with the Parish Council on these matters, if the Parish Council wish to know their Responsibilities, Liabilities and ownership of the Land, the Parish Council should contact the Charity Commission in writing at the address below. Emails and phone calls will not be accepted."

It was resolved to write to the Charity Commission.

39. Brick Bus Shelter – Town Lane

The article in the Parish Magazine requesting information regarding anti-social behaviour in the bus shelter received a response from one resident, stating that occasionally young adults and children sit in the bus shelter, but they are not noisy and no rudeness or anti-social behaviour has been encountered. The Chairman and Cllr Bott canvassed approximately 14 residents in the area, and only 3 thought that the bus shelter caused a problem. At the meeting it became apparent that the bus shelter is used by people waiting for buses, and a discussion ensued on various modifications of the building to make it safer and discourage anti-social behaviour.

Cllr Spicer suggested that the situation is monitored, and the Chairman proposed that for the time being the shelter is left as it is; Cllr Bott seconded the motion and all were in agreement.

40. Winter Gritting – Whempstead Road to A602

Cllr Ken Crofton has been successful at County Council in obtaining financing for the gritting of the Whempstead Road from the Whempstead crossroads to the A602. The Chairman reported that he has contacted Mr Roger Melbourne regarding this work but unfortunately he is not interested. The Chairman said that he would continue to investigate companies that specialise in gritting blue routes. Highways are required to come out and grit blue routes if a complaint is received regarding a hazardous area of road. The Chairman to contact Watton-at-Stone Parish Council regarding this matter, as this area of road comes under their Parish.

41. Village Shop

Cllr Brown reported that the Village Shop Development Group has agreed to go ahead with a pre-planning application at a cost of £400.00 which would be reduced by 25% if approached through the Parish Council. A second questionnaire to the village to assess financial commitment and support was also suggested. Cllr Brown to approach the Plunkett Foundation for their guidance and support with the project.

The favoured site is now behind the Village Hall, adjacent to where the container used to be situated, although the Village Hall Committee has expressed concern about losing parking places. Cllr Brown said that the shop would be in the form of a temporary building, such as a modified portakabin which can be made to look quite attractive as per the community shop in Elsworth, Cambridge.

42. Stevenage Borough's Local Plan 1st Consultation – Revised Documents

Cllr Spicer reported that a meeting has not yet been arranged with Roy Falder the Clerk at Aston, to discuss the above Consultation and the Neighbourhood Plan.

43. Wheelie Bins

The Chairman reported that two complaints have been received regarding the siting of both colour wheelie bins on the green opposite St Peter's Church. The law is that bins should be kept within the boundary of the property. Cllr Bott stated that he had contacted Environmental Services at East Herts Council and their policy is to remove bins if they are not kept inside the property boundary. Cllr Mays said that help is available for disabled people and people over retirement age.

It was resolved to write to the two residents involved, explaining the legalities and the fact that help is available if they meet the criteria.

44. Members' Points of Information

Cllr Spicer stated that the verges in the village were looking very overgrown.

45. Date of next meeting: 13 November, 2013 at 8.00 pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05 pm.

46. Meeting Reopened

The Chairman reopened the meeting to discuss granting funds to the Recreation Club for November 5th Bonfire and Firework celebrations for the village. It was agreed to grant £300.00 towards this event on production of receipts from the Recreation Club.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.