

# BENINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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## Benington Annual Parish Council Meeting

11 May 2016 7.30 pm

Benington School

### Minutes

**Present:** B Morcom (Chair) K Daniel  
B Taylor J Jaques  
M Hughes

**In attendance:** J Haire (Clerk), and 8 members of the public (including 1 member of the public who arrived late and left early)

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01. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from R Bott due to family matters.
02. **Election of Chairman and signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Cllr Morcom asked for nominations for the election of Chairman.  
Cllr Morcom nominated Richard Bott, whom he advised was willing to stand again. Cllr Jo Jaques seconded the motion. Richard Bott was duly elected and will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the next available meeting.
03. **Election of Vice Chairman and signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Cllr Jo Jaques nominated Bob Morcom for the office of Vice-Chairman.  
Cllr Kate Daniel seconded the motion, and Bob Morcom was duly elected and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
04. **Declaration of Interests :** None
05. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**
  - a) **Acceptance**
    - **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 9 March 2016**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the Minutes be approved. In the absence of the Chairman, the Minutes were signed by the Vice-Chairman.
  - b) **Review of Actions**
    - **BT flooding problem outside the village hall.** Cllr Morcom stated that he wished to wait until Cllr Hughes joined the meeting in view of Cllr Hughes' involvement in this matter (please see below under 07).
    - **Defibrillator** Cllr Morcom advised that one defibrillator had been installed in the entrance to the Village Hall, and the other defibrillator would be installed the following week outside Ernest Doe. CPR classes, which would involve watching a video, would be arranged shortly, one for parents in the morning after the school drop-off, and one in the evening. Cllr Taylor to request his partner conduct the training in view of her expertise. **Action: Cllr Taylor**
    - **Bus Shelter Library** Outstanding - the Chairman had measured for the shelves but they had not been made. **Action: Cllr Bott**
    - **Pond fence** Cllr Taylor reported that he had made the temporary repairs to the fence which was found to be rotten in places. He was hopeful that his

suppliers would donate the required wood. The Duck Lane side of the pond was fairly overgrown, and two posts were completely rotten. It was agreed that Cllr Taylor would cut the growth back and make safe an area of the fence which had fallen into the pond. Cllr Morcom offered to assist.

**Action: Cllrs Morcom and Taylor**

- **Lamp post and path subsidence** – the Clerk had again chased Highways who were unable to give a satisfactory update. Clerk to continue to follow up.  
**Action: J Haire**
- **Request for donation from Hertford Museum** – Cllr Jaques had received no response to her enquiry as to what the Museum would use a donation for. Parish Councillors agreed that the matter be closed.
- **Field next to the Bell Public House** – Cllr Morcom reported that the Chairman had spoken to Steve Rogers who keeps his ponies in the field. Mr Rogers does not have any ponies there at the moment and is giving the paddock a rest; he was also pretty certain that he does not have rats.
- **Tree cutting in Whempstead Lane and clearing debris** – Cllr Jaques reported that she had contacted UK Power Networks regarding this, and been advised that a further survey was to be done.  
**Action: Cllr Jaques**
- Cllr Hughes to establish who was responsible for hedge cutting, the Landowner or Council.  
**Action: Cllr Hughes**
- **Request for Centrebus to drop Mr and Mrs Shaw at the top of Stoopers Hill** – in view of Mr Shaw's difficulty in walking up the hill to their home. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk would write to Centrebus regarding this request.  
**Action: J Haire**
- **Street Light on Town Lane** – not working. This had been reported by the Clerk, and followed up the previous week. Highways were unable to advise when this street light would be repaired.  
**Action: J Haire**
- **Damaged street light Old School Green** - Ringway had been called out to make safe the above lighting column following vehicle damage. The Parish Council had obtained quotes in respect of the necessary repairs which had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to this meeting. In view of the sums involved it was agreed that the quotes would be forwarded to the Parish Insurers with a view to claiming on the Parish Council insurance.

## 06 Village Pond

- **Pond Report** Cllr Daniel reported that Herts University had carried out a Wildlife Survey on 13 & 14 April (at sunrise and sunset respectively) on the village pond and other ponds close by. They had visited ponds in the gardens of Robin Mills in Duck Lane, Tony Fordham at Pound Cottage and Kimberley Crozier at the Croft. The aim had been to assess the presence of protected flora and fauna species in the pond prior to refurbishment, and to make preliminary recommendations for how the pond could be improved for wildlife in the future. Five Great Crested Newts had been found. Cllr Hughes joined the meeting at 19.48. Desilting the pond could be an option to consider, but this should only be undertaken in the winter months between December and February. The Report recommended that feeding of waterfowl (including ducks) should be avoided in the pond to prevent nutrient build up. Placing a notice to this effect by the pond was discussed and it was agreed that a decision regarding this

would be postponed until the refurbishment had started. The overall water quality was assessed as being poor. Overall the wildlife diversity of the pond was low and could be substantially improved through the provision of more vegetation. This could be achieved through the addition of floating rafts of vegetation along the perimeter of the pond. The addition of a few log piles should also be considered to provide additional habitats for wildlife.

- Cllr Daniel reported that Robin Mills had suggested that to prevent pollution of the pond from water running off the road, the pipe bringing water from the road be temporarily connected to the exit pipe to establish if this made any difference.
- The question of other methods of protecting the pond from water that had run off the road was discussed. It was agreed that filtration was not an option due to maintenance difficulties.
- Cllr Daniel reported that Countryside Management would be happy to re-engage when the pond had been cleaned up.
- Two or three mothers from the village had asked why there was no life ring by the pond. No decision was taken about this.
- Following a request from a member of the public, the Parish Councillors agreed that the Pond Report could be posted on the Benington Village Website.

## 07 Roads

- **Drainage issue** – Cllr Hughes reported that BT had done one part of the required work and Highways would connect what BT had done to the drainage system. No date was available for when this work would be carried out. **Action: Cllr Hughes**
- **Gulleys** - Cllr Morcom reported that Shanahan had flushed through four gulleys on Walkern Road and this appeared to have improved the situation.
- **Bollards outside the school** Cllr Hughes reported that Cllr Crofton had advised that this request had been assessed by Highways who confirmed to the Parish Council that bollards cannot be installed on this footway because the footway was not wide enough.

## 08 Planning

- Planning Application 3/16/0477/PNHH - Proposal: Single storey rear extension Depth 8 metres, Maximum height 4 metres , Eaves Height 3.2metres, Alteration to roof to extend dormer at 2 Whempstead Road Benington Stevenage.
- Planning Application Consultation 3/16/0701/HH - 72 Whempstead Road Benington Stevenage - Two storey front and side extension. Single storey rear extension. Alterations to fenestration. Associated drive and front garden landscaping.
- Planning Application Consultation 3/16/0742/HH - Longacre High Elms Lane Benington - Double storey side extension.
- Planning Application Decision 3/16/0340/PNHH - Longacre High Elms Lane Benington - Single storey rear extension - it was decided that Prior Approval is not Required
- Planning Application Decision 3/16/0230/LBC – Pound Cottage, Benington - Retention of limecrete floor slabs; replacement windows and doors to rear

corridor; and dry lining section of front wall– granted with conditions. Cllr Hughes confirmed that Parish Council had no objections in respect of this Application. Due to the sensitive nature of this property and its Listed Status the Parish Council are happy that the Conservation Officer will carry out a detailed and thorough review of any proposals prior to granting consent.

- Planning Application Decision 3/16/0477/PNHH - Proposal: Single storey rear extension Depth 8 metres, Maximum height 4 metres , Eaves Height 3.2metres, Alteration to roof to extend dormer at 2 Whempstead Road Benington Stevenage. It was decided that Prior Approval is not Required.
- Planning Application Decision 3/16/0388/HH
- Planning Application Decision 3/16/0389/LBC – Woodlands, Benington - Single Storey Replacement Extension – granted – with conditions.
- Planning Application Consultation 3/16/0843/HH – The Old Rectory, 2 Walkern Road, Benington. - Replace existing conservatory with new side and roof section - positioning on original dwarf walls and renew internal flooring and decoration.

The above Planning Notifications were read out by the Cllr Morcom. There were no objections by BPC to any of the applications or consultations.

- **Future Planning Development for Benington**

Cllr Morcom reported that he had been asked at short notice to attend a Planning Meeting in Hertford the previous week. Every Council had been given a target of the number of houses to be built under the National Planning Guidelines, but the Planners admitted that this was a mess. The District Plan for E Herts Council had shown 15,000 dwellings were to be built by 2031. During a 2014 consultation villages had been classified into Groups 1, 2 or 3. The 6 villages in Group 1 would have a minimum of 10% expansion. Group 2 villages would have infill (Benington being in Group 2), and Group 3 villages would have restricted development. Virtually no Councils could satisfy the targets, including E Herts. To try to resolve this situation there was a proposal to get rid of the village groups to allow more infill. Cllr Morcom concluded that Benington would be developed – the question being how best to manage this. The meeting was interesting, and attended by many members from E Herts Parish Councils. The government had disrespected many of the boundaries, and there was a lot of argument regarding the lack of provision of infrastructure to support the development. The Council would put a paper together to be presented to a Panel in July; it would be published for consultation on 15 September.

## **09 Recreational Facilities**

- Cllr Morcom advised that the Chairman had installed the two new litter bins that were requested by Benington Recreation Ground Charitable Trust at the last Benington Parish Council Meeting.
- Estimates for Benington Playground Inspection recommendations had been received from the BRGCT. In view of the sums involved it was agreed that the Parish Council would seek alternative quotes.

## **10 Fair**

- Mr Hawes had provided a wish list of capital items for the Parish Council to consider purchasing. He confirmed that the intention was for the items to also

be available for other groups in the village to use, and that they would be stored in a locked container. Discussion took place regarding insurance for the items, and the insurance cover required should these items be hired out. Mr Hawes agreed to investigate public liability insurance in this respect. The Chairman had been in discussion with Mr Hawes regarding insurance, and it was agreed that the Councillors would communicate further with the Chairman by email to reach a decision as to what would be offered to the Fair. It was noted that if the Parish Council purchase the items VAT could be reclaimed. Prior to the meeting the Chairman had indicated that he may be able to loan a generator to the Fair.

## 11 School

- Cllr Jaques reported that newer School Staff and Governors were attending Safeguard training the following week.
- There had been investigation into how the School could become an Academy, but the School had been given a reprieve.

## 12 Finance

### 12.1 To fix the amount of the Chairman's Allowance in pursuance of section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972

The Chairman's allowance was agreed at £50.00 as in previous years.

### 12.2 Accounts Expenditure and Income 10.03.16 to 10.05.16

Date Paid	Name	Details	Total
04.04.16	McCash and Hay	Prof Services re PAYE & Filing online returns end of year with Inland Revenue	£ 54.00
04.04.16	Tina Piggott	Litter Picking	£ 130.00
04.04.16	Peter Kingsnorth	Website Maintenance Jan – Mar 16 and renewal of domain name	£ 140.00
04.04.16	Julie Haire	Clerk Salary March 16	£ 300.00
06.05.16	Tina Piggott	Litter Picking	£ 130.00
06.05.16	Richard Bott	Advancescape – 2 Litter bins for Recreation Ground	£ 278.00
06.05.16	UH Ventures	Pond Report	£ 180.00
06.05.16	Julie Haire	Clerk Salary April 2016 & Telephone and Broadband 1 Oct 2015 to 30 Apr 2016	£ 440.00

### Income 10.03.16 to 10.05.16

East Herts Council Precept £8,682.50.

### 12.3 Accounts for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter

The accounts for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2015/2016 were presented to the meeting. Cllr Morcom confirmed that the Audit had been completed by McCash and Hay.

### 12.4 Approval of the Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

Cllr Morcom took the Parish Council through the Section 1 - Annual governance statement, and the standard questions were answered as follows:

We acknowledge as members of the Benington Parish Council our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016 that,	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements, which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the Council to conduct its business or on its finances.	Yes
4. We have provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' right in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes
5. We have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Yes
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this Council and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	Yes
9. Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	N/A

The Accounting statements 2015/16 were presented. Cllr Morcom proposed that both the Section 1 - Annual Governance statement 2015/16 and Section 2 - Accounting statements 2015/16 be approved by the Parish Council and that the Chairman and the Clerk sign the Annual Return. Cllr Hughes seconded the motion and all present were in favour. In view of his absence from the meeting, the Chairman would sign the following day. The Clerk duly signed Sections 1 & 2 of the Annual Return.

The Clerk to return all relevant documentation to BDO by 11th July 2016.

**Action: J. Haire**

### 13 Correspondence received

- **Email to Parish Clerk from Peter Warren regarding certificates in respect of the Playground Equipment.** The Parish Clerk had spoken to the BRGCT's insurers and the matter was resolved.
- **Correspondence from Dorothy Tulloch re construction of a double garage at the front of 64 Walkern Road.** The Parish Clerk had established that Planning Permission had not been applied for. The Planning Enforcement Officer had visited the site and the residents invited to apply for Planning Permission within 28 days which expires on 23 May 2016.

- **Estimate for grass cutting at Recreation Ground** The Parish Clerk spoke to a member of staff at Frank Cooper and Son Ltd. regarding the proposed price increase, following which it was agreed the price would remain as last year.

#### **14 Members' Points of Information**

- None

#### **15 To fix the dates and times of ordinary meetings of the Council for the ensuing year**

It was agreed that the ordinary Parish Council meetings would be held on the second Wednesday, every other month, throughout the year (with the exception of July 2016 – see below). Dates as follows:

20 July 2016	14 September 2016	09 November 2016
11 January 2017	08 March 2017	10 May 2017

These dates may be subject to change.

All meetings to be held at 8.00 pm except the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 14 May, 2016 which will commence at 7.30pm and will be followed by the Annual Parish Meeting.

**16 Date of Next Meeting** Wednesday 20 July 2016 at 8.00 pm in the School. **Please note this has been rescheduled from 13 July** which was previously advertised, to enable attendance by all Councillors.

The Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 8.49 pm.