

BENINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Benington Parish Council Meeting
12 July 2017 8.00 pm
Poppy Room, Village Hall

Minutes

Present: B Morcom (Vice Chairman) K Daniel
J Jaques S James
R Hewlett (after co-opted)

In attendance: J Haire (Clerk), and 6 members of the public

01. Apologies: Chairman R Bott

02. Co-opt to vacancy for Parish Councillor

The Clerk had been notified by Electoral Services that they had not received a request for an election. An application had been received for the vacancy from Mr Rob Hewlett. Vice Chairman Morcom proposed that the Council co-opt Mr Rob Hewlett as Councillor to the Benington Parish Council. This was seconded by Cllr Jaques and carried unanimously. Mr Hewlett duly signed the Acceptance of Office and participated in the meeting.

03. Declaration of Interests : Cllr Jacques declared an interest in Planning Application 3/17/1103/HH- High Chantry 36 Blacksmiths Hill - Single storey front, side and rear extension

04. Minutes of the Last Meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 10 May 2017**
Parish Councillors agreed that the Minutes be approved. The Minutes were signed by the Vice Chairman.

b) Review of Actions

- **Lamp post and path subsidence** – no update **Action: J Haire**
- **Restore bank outside the new house on Whempstead Road** - the residents had confirmed this would be done after the landscaping, which was nearing completion. **Action: J Haire**
- **Replacement Litter Bin by Brick Bus Shelter** - a replacement bin had been delivered and the Chairman would pour a concrete base and install it. **Action: R Bott**
- **Damaged streetlight 146 Town Lane** – insurance claim ongoing. **Action: J Haire**
- **Refurbishing village benches** - thanks were expressed to those volunteers who had refurbished the benches, Cllr Morcom, Colin Nixon, Clare Baker and Chairman Bott. The Bus Shelters had not been refurbished. Chairman Bott would be pleased to hear from anyone willing to volunteer as part of a team to carry out the refurbishment. **Action: R Bott**

- **Advertising Benington Website** - Chairman Bott had spoken to Mr Ian Richardson at Ernest Doe and this was followed by a proposal from the Clerk. Mr Richardson had responded offering £25 per month, payable on an annual basis, and advising that in the future regular marketing material would be provided by the company marketing Manager. Councillors present agreed to accept this offer with a proposed start date of 1 August 2017. Clerk to arrange. **Action: J Haire**

05. Village Pond

Pond Report Cllr Daniel reported that the pond was looking good and the new planting establishing well. An increase in the number of ducks on the pond had been noted, approximately 28 at one time, and there were also some young moorhens. There was a need to cut back some elder which had not been treated during the refurbishment due to proximity to the hawthorn and dog rose, and she would arrange that. **Action: K Daniel**

Cllr Jaques advised that the ducks were no longer being fed bread since the display of the notice explaining this was bad for them. However, children would like to feed the ducks and there had been a request for a machine dispensing duck food. A resident had volunteered to look after such a machine. Clerk to investigate machines. **Action: J Haire**

06 Roads

- **Drainage issue** – Ringway had ordered a detailed CCTV drainage investigation re the drainage problems in Walkern Road. Residents had received letters informing of the upcoming road closure. The work was scheduled for 31st July.
- **Upgrading street lighting** - The Parish Council had received an email from Herts County Council offering the opportunity of conversion of the streetlighting owned by the Parish (at Parish cost) to LED & CMS. Herts County Council owned streetlighting in Blacksmiths Hill has already been converted. LED – or light emitting diode – lights considerably reduce maintenance costs, use much less energy than conventional lighting, improve visibility and reduce light pollution. The new lighting will be controlled by a wireless Central Management System (known as CMS), allowing lights to be monitored from a central point. This reduces inspection costs and makes it easier to spot and repair any faults. The new CMS system will allow light levels to be reduced during the night. Once the new lights are installed, light levels will be reduced between 11pm and 12 midnight. Part night lighting (i.e. lights are not on) operates between 12 midnight and 6am. With the agreement of Councillors, the Clerk requested costs, following which Cllrs Morcom and James met HCC's Consultant from Ducreux. Provisional figures are as follows: structural testing of the existing 33 street BPC owned lighting units £500, upgrading to LED CMS £10-£11,000. Depending on the outcome of the structural testing there may also be a number of columns which require replacement at £1100 – 1200 per unit. Benington Parish Council own these 33 streetlights because in 1974 when a new town planning act resulted in Councils adopting streetlighting, these Benington streetlights were not eligible for adoption because many were not positioned at the required distance.

Following a recent enquiry from BPC, Ducreux has indicated that Herts County Council would adopt these streetlights if upgraded as above. Should this take place, all future Parish liability, including maintenance and energy costs would cease, saving the Parish Council £1300 per annum, as well as the liability for failed columns. Councillors present agreed to pursue this proposal. Thanks were expressed to Councillor Crofton who had pledged £2,000 towards the cost of the upgrade. The Clerk will investigate whether there are any grants available towards the funding of this.

07 Planning

The Vice Chairman read the following Planning notices:

- Planning Application Decision 3/17/0719/HH - The Croft - Permission granted to rebuild small brick wall abutting listed building to the front of The Croft
- Planning Application Consultation 3/17/1145/OUT- Gosmore Paddock - Outline planning application for the development of up to 13 dwellings including access. Benington Parish Council objected as previously.
- Planning Application Decision 3/17/0745/HH - 70 Walkern Road - Single storey extension - granted
- Planning Application Consultation 3/17/1103/HH- High Chantry 36 Blacksmiths Hill - Single storey front, side and rear extension - no objection
- Planning Application Decision 3/17/0829/HH - Pond Cottage, 38 Hebing End - Replacement of existing conservatory with orangery-style extension - granted
- Planning Application Decision 3/17/0804/LBC - Woodlands Whempstead Road - PROPOSAL: Removal of; rear brick chimney and external boiler, internal wall between hall - granted
- Planning Application Decision 3/17/0806/LBC - Woodlands Whempstead Road - Single storey rear addition - refused
- Planning Application Consultation 3/17/1326/VAR - The Red Barn Benington Park Farm Benington - Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) of 3/15/0306/VAR - Demolition of modern barn and ancillary building, conversion of brick barn to 3 dwellings and construction of 2 cartlodges - Internal alterations to add one further bedroom to each unit. Add a utility room to each unit with direct access to the outside. Modifications to the fenestration of all units. - no objection
- E/16/0049/ENF Old Mead Barn, 64 Walkern Road, Benington - enforcement notice was appealed by the residents, but the Appeal was dismissed. There is a 3 month compliance period which means the building has to be removed by 03 October 2017.
- Unauthorised Gypsy Development Wheelwrights Farm, Rowney Lane, Little Munden - request from Lois Dewhurst - Friends of Rowney Lane - Benington Parish Council objected
- Wheelwrights Farm, Rowney Lane, Little Munden - the owner had challenged East Herts decision to refuse retrospective planning permission. Benington Parish Council objected as previously.

08 Recreational Facilities

- No update.

09 Fair

- Mike Hawes provided the following update relating to the Fair 2016. The items that were purchased by the Parish Council (barbecue, popcorn machine game) made a massive financial difference, even in just their first year of use. We also clearly look forward to benefitting from those items again this year and in future years, allowing more profit to be generated and thus donated. Thank you also for the continued help with the insurance. All of this resulted in 2016 being a record year for donations to the charities and good causes of Benington and the surrounding area.

10 School

- Cllr Jaques reported that celebrations had been arranged at the school the following Monday to say goodbye to Head Teacher, Mrs Jenny Stevens after 15 years in the post. Councillors agreed to send flowers to Mrs Stevens on behalf of the Parish Council. The school had won an interschool sports competition for the 9th time in 10 years. The PC was meeting in the village hall because the older pupils were giving a concert in the school. Good results had been achieved in the SATS. Year 1 students did very well in phonics screening (the understanding of words and sounds). **Action: Jo Jaques**

11 Finance

11.1 Accounts Expenditure and Income 11.05.17 to 11.07.17

Date Paid	Name	Details	Total
03.06.17	Frank Cooper	Cutting grass at Recreation Ground and Children's Playground and strim round obstacles	£181.20
03.06.17	CCL Woodworkers Ltd	Repair vandalized bench from the bottom of Three Styles	£288.00
03.06.17	Broxap	Replacement Litter Bin by Bus Shelter Bottom of Stoopers Hill	£287.94
03.06.17	Tina Piggott	Litter Picking May 2017	£150.00
03.06.17	Clearwater	6 pre-planted coir pallets for pond, treatment of stumps, pond chalk	£1,968.00
03.06.17	Julie Haire	Clerk Salary & Telephone and Broadband Allowance May 2017	£320.00
03.07.17	Frank Cooper	Cutting grass at Recreation Ground and Children's Playground	£313.20
03.07.17	Tina Piggott	Litter Picking June 2017	£150.00
03.07.17	Julie Haire	Clerk Salary & Telephone and Broadband Allowance June 2017	£320.00
03.07.17	Characters Signs	Benington Fair Annual Date Stickers	£35.64
03.07.17	P Kingsnorth	Website Maintenance 1 Ap - 30June 2017	£144.00

Income from 10.05.17 to 12.07.17

07.07.17	Herts Association of	Transparency grant	£540.00
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	Parish & Town Councils		
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11.2 Accounts for the 1st Quarter

The accounts for the 1st Quarter of 2017/2018 were presented to the meeting. The Clerk had returned all relevant documentation to BDO in respect of the external audit.

12 Correspondence received

- Email from John Dickinson re untidy drive and hedge at 13 Town Lane, former residence of Brenda Harris
- Cllr Mark Hughes - letter of resignation from the Parish Council
- Email from Robert Hewlett expressing interest in becoming a Parish Councillor
- 10 letters of objection re the development of Gosmore Paddock
- 2 Letters from CPRE advising they continue to oppose Gosmore Paddock development
- Crime stats for May (0)
- Physical Activity Strategy Consultation document from E Herts Council
- Letter from Stanstead Airport advising they will shortly begin a local community consultation in advance of submitting a planning application to increase capacity.

13 Members' Points of Information

- Ernest Doe had agreed to advertise on the Benington Village website.
- Cllr Daniel reported that between the pond and the school the hedges/brambles were overhanging the footpath and causing an obstruction. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the residents requesting these be cut back. **Action: J Haire**
- It was reported that the road sign at the T junction at the top of Church Green had been vandalized and the Stevenage arm was missing. Clerk to report to Highways. **Action: J Haire**
- The books in bus shelter at Burns Green were being ruined by damp from the tree overhanging the bus shelter and the streetlight. Cllr Morcom agreed to speak to Richard Bott with a view to the tree being cut back. Councillors were pleased to learn that the library was being used.
- Councillors agreed to Cllr Daniel's suggestion that a plaque be placed on the pond fence 'Pond restored by Benington Parish Council 2017'. Clerk to arrange **Action: J Haire**
- Traffic calming was discussed, which would initially require an assessment. It was agreed that the Vice Chairman would contact the Police to establish the best way to approach this. **Action: B Morcom**

14 Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 8.00 pm in the School

The Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 9 pm.