

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN
Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024, 7pm,
Quinlan Centre Benenden Hospital

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Cruse, Driver, Grant, Hagan, Lewis, Presgrave and Thomas; Cllrs Dawlings, Holden and Neville; C Levett, Clerk. 1 member of the public.	
Item		Action Responsibility
1. APOLOGIES	No apologies received. Cllr Holden gave apologies for December meeting.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 21 st October were unanimously approved as correct records of the meetings.	
4. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<p>Cllr Dawlings reported :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TW Strategic Plan – over 300 responses to the consultation were received, which have not yet been shared, and this has delayed the process whilst the responses are considered. • Finances must be in place to deliver the Strategic Plan. • The waste collection contract will be renewed in 2027, and this is currently estimated to be an additional £4m, which needs to be factored in. • Attended the Local Government Association Conference. There was some discussion about local government reorganisation and the most likely outcome of mayoral combined authorities. There are some powers which could be devolved to Parish Councils. <p>Full report from Cllr Neville circulated :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance Sunday – will attend Benenden service next year. • Transport - funding from Hawkhurst Copthall development available for bus service, suggested to Etchingham station. There is a petition for improved services connecting Etchingham, Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Tenterden. • Support Weald Schooling - TWBC Leader meeting with KCC end of November and requests as much direct experience as possible of the negative impact since the closure of High Weald Academy. Residents should email info@supportwealdschooling.co.uk with a brief account of experiences regarding : school journey; when at school; homeschooling; exclusion. • Waste - lobbied portfolio holder to expand recycling collections to include soft plastics (LDPE) which have reduced general household waste by up to 50% elsewhere. • Love Where We Live awards – encourage nominations of residents and community groups. • Empty Homes Policy 2023-28 Action Plan - 569 empty properties in last year's data. As of April 2025, all second homes will be subject to 200% Council tax. • Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2021-26 Action Plan: Prevent Homelessness and End Rough Sleeping - Landlord incentive scheme collaborates with Rent Guarantee to provide landlord insurance should a tenant default on their rent. <p>Cllr Holden reported :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025/26 KCC budget currently being considered. The final settlement from central government is awaited. • Special educational needs costs continue to rise and need to be brought under control. • Increases in employer NI costs and the minimum wage will cost KCC approx £20m per year. • Chaired Environment and Transport Committee meeting including KCC's Climate Change Adaptation Plan and Kent's Plan Bee. • The Leader of the County Council visited Kiev. More than 1,600 families in Kent have taken in Ukrainian nationals and this is warmly accepted and appreciated. 	
5. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KALC TW Area Committee Meeting takes place on 19th November. • Parish Chairs Group meets in December. 	
6. PLANNING	<p><u>a. Applications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/02582/FULL Old Eaton Oast, Goddards Green Road. Excavation of earth and installation of swimming pool, pool hut, heat pump, water filtration system and associated electrics; 	

Chairman..... Date.....

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These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.

	<p>associated earthworks, installation of a patio area and associated planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Excavation of earth for swimming pool shell and building of swimming pool 11.22m x 3.77m. Works include pool hut H1640mm, W1760mm, D800mm to house heat pump, water filtration system and associated electrics. ❖ Levelling of earth around pool and build of patio area around pool and associated planting. ❖ Works will not affect any trees or hedges on the property. ❖ No alterations to vehicle or pedestrian access, car parking. No PRoWs affected. Not visible from roads. ❖ Located at end of long garden, positioned next to approved Summer House 22/02099/FULL. BPC supported. Note: lighting conditions were not imposed in the approval decision. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application with request for lighting conditions for the summer house and pool area to comply with BNDP BD5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/02674/FULL Old Manor House, Cranbrook Road. Replace 42m of close board broken fence ❖ Corresponding LBC application not proceeded with and application returned leaving FULL application in place to be determined. 24/02675/LBC Replace 42m of close board broken fence on Cranbrook Road. To match existing close boarded fence on Cranbrook Road and New Pond Road corner. To same height and in same position. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to object to the proposal on the following grounds :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Location of significant historic importance as it falls within Benenden Conservation Area with many historic and Listed buildings. Subject property and Gateway and recently restored Queen's Well are Grade II Listed. Fencing behind the Well and around the corner, where new fencing is to join, erected a few years ago and from the planning history appears to have no planning permission. ❖ Application does not comply with numerous Constraints in this location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submission Local Plan 2021: EN16 Landscape within the Built Environment, Historic Environment; Conservation Area EN5. ○ Local Plan 2006: EN22 Area of Landscape Importance, EN23 Importance Landscape Approach ○ High Weald National Landscape ○ BNDP Policies: LE1 Protect and Enhance the Countryside, BD1 General Design Policy, BD4 Landscaping b) relating to plot boundaries and avoidance of solid fencing, and c) existing rural streetscape. ❖ BPC requests that the fencing (including that continuing around the corner and behind the Well) is positioned to enable planting of native hedgerow in front of fence to mitigate visual impact on street scene. Consideration needs to be given to fencing/hedging where it joins the brick walls either side of the Gateway to the Old Manor House. ❖ All approaches to the crossroads are of green hedging and a long run of close boarded fencing will be out of character in the location. ❖ The boundary treatment of one of the oldest houses in the parish, in such a prominent location, should serve to protect and enhance this historic environment, and rectify the harsh visual impact of the existing fencing on the corner and behind the Well. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/02357/FULL St Georges Church. Single-storey extension to Southwest corner & wheelchair access to North porch ❖ 38 constraints because of location. ❖ Subject property is Grade II*, numerous other Listings in vicinity. ❖ The church has ecclesiastical exemption from listed building consent. Internal works within proposals fall under remit of the Diocese Faculty system. Disabled ramp and extension require planning permission from LPA. ❖ Materials of Wealden Sandstone. ❖ Net additional gross internal floorspace 12.5 sqm. ❖ Extension is to provide much-needed WC accommodation. Access for the disabled and/or wheelchair users to be improved to give level access to North and West entrances. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/02736/FULL Beacon Oaks Cottage, Rolvenden Road. Variation of Condition 2 of Planning 	
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	<p>Permission 24/01590/FULL - Addition of two roof dormers and amendments to external fenestration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Altered scheme for living/dining area to be extended to align with existing on north side of dwelling, with porch extension on north side, to allow for toilet, utility/boot room and main entrance. ❖ 2 no. dormers to be added to maximise usable bedroom space in loft. Dormers are double gable end, finished in horizontal timber cladding and not overlooking neighbouring properties. ❖ Floor level of new element to north raised to be consistent throughout, with existing level of retained slab. ❖ External lighting conditioned under 5 in consent 24/01590/FULL. As Condition 2 under amendment, Condition 5 still stands. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application and requests that, if consent is granted, Condition (5) of the consent under 24/01590/FULL regarding external lighting (even though extant), is reiterated to ensure that any external lighting complies with BNDP Policy BD5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/00875/FULL School Farm, Cranbrook Road. Replacement of existing dwelling to create four bedroom dwelling, together with associated garage and car parking ❖ BPC first reviewed application (for five beds) when submitted in May 2024 and unanimously agreed to support and lighting conditions requested. ❖ The application stalled because of the comments of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conservation Officer: Historic farmstead dating from early post medieval period. The Borough Historic Landscape Characterisation Study identified the site as unchanged in landscape terms since the medieval period. Change in character of the land, as well as significantly larger area size of proposed house, would be harmful to significance of listed building next door. Formality of landscaping would be at odds with existing character, and would appear that historic landscape features are likely to be lost. The CO could not support the proposal. ○ Landscape & Biodiversity Officer: BNG loss or gain is needed under TWBC Core Policy CP4. Proposal would alter character of development and consequently its effect on local character/settlement character. Development would be more obtrusive than that it replaces and/or the extant consented development. ❖ Original proposal - extend existing building to create a horseshoe across plot with formal landscaping to front and a garage. ❖ Revised proposal - extend existing building (reduced from 5 to 4 beds) for more compact arrangement and in keeping with character and appearance of existing structure and landscape. No formal landscaping to front and no garage. Parking to be next to holiday let, with footpath to dwelling. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application subject to the revised proposal being satisfactory to the Conservation Officer and requests lighting conditions to comply with BNDP BD5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springhill Oast Applications : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 10 constraints including BNDP Policies and LE1 Panoramic Views. ❖ Many applications for conversion of farm buildings to residential. ❖ Springhill Farm House Grade II Listed. • 24/02699/FULL Springhill Oast, Standen Street. (Retrospective) Conversion of ground floor of former car port to create annexe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Planning consent under 15/506160/FULL for construction of detached garage with storeroom over. Constructed in 2016 as per approved scheme. ❖ Works completed to convert to extra space in 2020. ❖ Application to regularise the internal works and converted ground floor to living space and changes first floor from storeroom to bedroom with shower and wc. Ancillary residential use to the main house. ❖ No alteration to the size of the building. ❖ Materials in keeping and character. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/02700/FULL Springhill Oast, Standen Street. Extension and conversion of stables to garaging 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Conversion of redundant stables to garaging. Extension to accommodate a modern style car. EV point will be installed. Car barn style. Weatherboard to match existing, plain clay tile roof. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/02698/FULL Springhill Oast, Standen Street. Retrospective. Swimming pool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Pool installed by previous owner without planning consent in 2015. Application to regularise. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <p><u>b. Other Planning Matters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23/03274/FULL Benenden Hospital Development, Goddards Green Road ○ 24/02620/SUB Submission of Details in relation to Condition 26 – Refurbished Community Building. Prior to the commencement of above ground works on any phase of the development, details of the refurbished community building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include a plan indicating the design, materials, hours of use, details of external lighting and timescales for implementation. The approved works shall be completed in accordance with the agreed timetable. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and be maintained thereafter. Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development in the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the residential amenities of the existing and future dwellings and in compliance with the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan. ❖ Straightforward revised internal layout, with disabled toilet and small kitchen area. ❖ Refurbishment of the existing exterior shingle cladding. ❖ Existing windows to be removed. 6 new UPVC windows and a door to be installed. ❖ BPC to request downward PIR lighting. <p>Some objections have been received by those concerned about parking. Cllr Thomas will raise this and other issues with the Hospital Director.</p> <p>BPC notes the submission of other details in relation to conditions, which are technical and specialised and not something BPC can make any comment on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Condition 3 - Construction Management & Logistics Plan ○ Condition 4 - Material Selection Summary ○ Condition 5a - Preliminary Risk Assessment, 5b - Site Investigation Scheme, 5c - Appraisal & Remediation Strategy ○ Condition 10 - Acoustic Report ○ Condition 11 - Substation Acoustic Report ○ Condition 21 - Arboricultural Method Statement ○ Condition 23 - Archaeological buildings assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23/02523/FULL Uphill, New Pond Road ○ A list of recreational projects that require funding has been forwarded to the Planning Officer. This includes the allotments and Benenden Playground. The Planning Officer advised that Iden Green Playground is not close enough to the development to be included. ○ The developer believes it has done all required to co-operate with TWBC and address the issues raised and expect the application to go to Committee in December with no affordable housing. ○ If this is the case, BPC will attend the Committee and present arguments to include affordable housing ○ BPC feels that the developer should adapt its scheme to make it more viable. 	
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Driver reported the ditch issues on Woodcock Lane to KCC Highways and the matter is under investigation. • A resident raised concerns about egress/access for properties on a lane which joins The Street. Cars parked on both sides of the lane makes joining the Street by car unsafe, as there is no line of sight in either direction. Cllr Driver made a site visit and agrees that, although most traffic is slow moving, it is difficult. The resident would like to install a convex safety mirror opposite the entrance on the scout hut ground and Cllr Driver advised that permission would need to be sought from the Scouts Association. The parishioner has made contact with the Scouts Association. The Clerk had sought advice from Kent Highways but had received no response. 	
8. RESOURCING/	<u>a. Monthly Finance</u>	

FINANCE	TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st October 2024		
	Brought Forward Current Account		40014.72
	Brought Forward Savings Account		50551.41
	Brought forward		90566.13
	Income		
	Payee	Reference	Amount
	TOTAL		0.00
	Expenditure		
	Supplier	Reference	Amount
	FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge 5.40
	BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs 1113.61
	BACS	o2	Telephone 31.80
	BACS	F&C Cleaning	Public Toilet 690.00
	BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance 312.00
	BACS	Memorial Hall	Meeting Hire 18.00
	BACS	Iden Green Pavilion	Meeting Hire 16.00
	BACS	TP Jones	Payroll Q2 63.40
	BACS	Forvis Mazars	Audit 378.00
	TOTAL		2628.21
	Balance		87937.92
	Current account bank statement 102 31st October 2024		12386.51
	Savings account bank statement 006 31st October 2024		75551.41
	Reconciled		87937.92
	Approved payments November 2024		
	DD	Nest	Pension 169.10
	FEE	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge 5.40
	BACS	Employee	Staffing Costs 1113.81
	BACS	o2	Telephone 31.80
	BACS	F&C Cleaning	Public Toilet 1482.00
	BACS	Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance 558.00
	BACS	Business Stream	Public Toilet 27.32
	BACS	Iden Green Pavilion	Meeting Hire 16.00
	BACS	A Thomas	Beacon Field Mowing 200.00
	BACS	RBL Appeal	Poppy Wreath 20.00
	BACS	G Hagan	Flags 288.59
	BACS	A Durnell	War Memorial 331.92
	CQ NO 017	KCC	Highways Licence Application 395.00
	TOTAL		3756.94
	All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO		
	Cllr Thomas commented that she has thanked Alex Durnell for his attention to the War Memorial Garden.		
	<u>b. Resourcing Committee Meeting</u>		
	Meeting takes place on 3 rd December and the committee will be considering the budget and precept for 2025/26.		
9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<u>a. Beacon Field Wildflower Meadow</u>		
	i. Lease Agreement		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The various terms and wording of the lease agreement with KCC have now been clarified, amended and agreed. KCC's solicitor will now issue the engrossment lease, Warning Notice and Statutory 		

	<p>Declaration.</p> <p>ii. Mowing/Saplings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPC had been struggling to find someone to cut the field at a reasonable cost, and was contacted by a contractor who was able to carry out a cut the following day at a cost of £200. Unfortunately the very few saplings remaining from the original KCC planting were mown down. These few saplings were all that remain of the original planting of some 60 saplings which were intended to form a grove of native species in the corner of the field. The trees were simply planted and abandoned. With no aftercare almost all the trees died within a couple of years. When BPC took over the field only 6-10 were left. A grove of 60 trees could be managed as a single entity which as they matured would shade the ground and keep down unwanted weed species. A few saplings with a scattered distribution would not provide that shade and were always vulnerable to accidental damage. A parishioner has requested that they are replaced. The loss is unfortunate and unintentional. It is possible that the saplings may not have died but could potentially regrow from the rootstock. Replanting the few Rowans would again leave them vulnerable and there are not sufficient volunteer resources to look after them. The Parish Council agreed not to replace the trees. <p>iii. Habitat Work Party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Took place on 8th November with BCT and a handful of volunteers. The group raked up and removed about a third of the arisings from the recent cut and planted out some White Dead Nettle and Foxgloves and sowed some Yellow Rattle seeds. <p><u>b. Village Asset/Maintenance Report</u></p> <p>i. Flags</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Hagan agreed the design, size, composition, finish etc of a new Union Flag and St Georges flag with Robin Dalton Holmes. These were ordered and have been received. Cost £288.59. <p><u>c. Parish Wells</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Beveridge completed the KCC Highways licence application form SWL2 for the installation of 3 bollards at Benenden Well and this has been submitted to KCC. The cost of the application was £395. The application needs to be in place at least three months in advance of the works and a proposed construction date of May 2025 had been included. Forms SWL4, SWL5 and SWL7 would need to be completed at least 10 days before work starts. A quote to carry out the installation of the bollards had been received for £615. However the licence requires that a contractor must have a minimum £5m Public Liability Insurance and the contractor's liability insurance is £2m. Cllr Beveridge met with Fox Construction, whose public liability insurance is £5m. However the work is complicated and outside of the scope of works that they are well versed in. The works are close to the road and the busy junction. To be able to work safely they would need to close off a section of the road no doubt with traffic lights. Parish Councillors also discussed if the bollards need to be Hostile Vehicle Mitigation compliant. The bollards would need to be joined together on a reinforced concrete raft for them to be effective. Parish Councillors considered all the facts and agreed to not go ahead with the project. There is some uncertainty as to how much protection the bollards would actually provide; the bollards may create additional hazards; very high costs to install bollards; the Well is covered by insurance; the value of the Well was increased following the refurbishment. The Clerk will cancel the licence application to Highways. <p><u>d. Village Tidy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Took place on 9th November. 30 parishioners took part on the day, covering a very wide area of the village, with others helping during the week before. TWBC had thanked BPC for carrying out its village tidy. 	CL
10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/	Report from Allotment Association :	

COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mains water connected and one standpipe in place, to be extended down towards the bottom of the site later this year. • 21 individuals jointly or singly renting plots. • The 2 vacant plots are small and under oak trees. BAA will convert one to a communal compost. • A specification for the parking area needs to be agreed so that quotes can be sought and grant applications made. • Rent and subscription invoices have been issued. • Report back to Kent Community Foundation (provided nearly £2,000 of grant funding) underway. • £2,086 in bank account; £400 of which is remaining from grant funding and committed to water and fencing projects. 	
11. CORRESPONDENCE/ PARISHIONER QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Benenden Scout Hut</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Scout Hut is for sale and the Weald Table Tennis Club, which is currently based in the village hall, has an interest in purchasing it and welcomes input and interest from other local groups that may wish to have shared use or innovative ideas to re-invigorate the building. The acquisition of dedicated facilities safeguards the long-term future of the sport in the local area and WTTTC has a ring-fenced fund to support this. ○ BPC highlighted that there are already a number of community spaces in Benenden and Iden Green, with another at East End as well as the Church in the near future. Some of the existing community spaces are already struggling financially. • <u>Hedgerow Management Survey/Consultation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cllr Lewis highlighted the consultation Consultation on the regulatory approach and use of civil sanctions for hedgerow management - Introduction - Defra - Citizen Space and suggested that BPC respond to this. ○ Cllrs Driver, Grant and Lewis to give this further consideration. 	PD/PG/ JL
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 9 th December, 7pm, Memorial Hall	
	The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.	

C Levett, Clerk to Benenden Parish Councillor, 18th November 2024