

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 21st July 2025, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion

Present	Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane, Cruse, Grant, Lewis; Cllr Dawlings; C Levett, Clerk.	
Item		Action Responsibility
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Cllrs Driver, Hagan, Thomas, Russell, Neville and Palmer.	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	No declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 16 th June were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting.	
4. REPORTS BY COUNTY/ BOROUGH COUNCILLORS	<p>Cllr Dawlings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended Local Government Association Conference for a number of years and talks given by the main political parties. There has been criticism of Local Government Reorganisation and introduction of mayors, which will lead to a loss in the number of elected councillors. Uphill appeal. Congratulated BPC on its representation to the Planning Inspectorate and himself emphasised the need for affordable housing highlighting for those on lower wages who work in Benenden at the schools, the hospital, Cranden Diamonds etc. <p>Cllr Russell, full report circulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of policy and not yet sat on a committee, as they have all been cancelled. Attended training on variety of topics and met officers who head up service areas. Meeting held with highways officers to work on HIPs. S106 funds from TWBC and MBC to be discussed with rural bus team. Request to install 20mph zone on Whites Lane might be possible. Contact with Kent Police Crime Commissioner and business crime manager from TW Safe Town Partnership to discuss crime and help for retailers in Cranbrook. <p>Cllr Neville, full report circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended LGA Conference. Noted the success of self-cleaning public toilets. Our Radical History Project. The Amelia Scott houses a rich collection relating to those whose actions shaped the borough. The project aims to work with young people through exhibitions and digital teaching resources, inspiring young people to engage with democracy by highlighting the contributions of local people who fought for social justice and equality, and encourage them to become active citizens. KCC book banning. Raised with KCC Leader as removing books should be decided by qualified librarians and any KCC decision needs to go through the appropriate committee for scrutiny. Hawkhurst traffic lights. New 4-way lights now in operation. Repairs to the carriageway etc should be underway soon. Reform of planning committees technical consultation runs from 28th May until 23rd July. Intention to modernise the way planning committees operate by introducing a national scheme of delegation so there is greater consistency and certainty about which decisions go to the committee; requiring separate, smaller committees for strategic development; introducing a requirement for mandatory training for all planning committee members. Road, Footway and Cycleway Works listed. Strategic Plan link: https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/strategic-plan-2024-32-project-updates and copy of Full Council meeting 16th July circulated. Reassessment of commitment to net zero within the Borough Climate Change Strategy Report to align with national targets. Royal Victoria Place Feasibility Study Report caused some concern and a proposed amendment to the recommendations that 4 (i) be altered to include 'economic communities.' was unanimously voted through. Motion to recommit to 2026 elections was passed. <p>Cllr Palmer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hawkhurst traffic lights have now been commissioned and hopefully people will start to return to the village to shop. Work is due to start on moving the junction at end of Heartenoak Road by Hawkhurst House Care Home and will take some time to complete. The works were part of the conditions for the build for Hawkhurst House and will make the junction much safer and improve the sight lines. 	
5. REPORTS BY CHAIR AND PARISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clerk attended a Clerk's meeting on 26th June. TWBC Chief Executive emphasised the fact 	

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COUNCILLORS	<p>that Local Government Reorganisation does not directly affect parish/town councils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TWBC intends to ensure that any new unitary develops strong and robust mechanisms for local engagement. • TWBC has provided a list of land and property assets within the parish. 	
6. PLANNING	<p>a. <u>Applications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25/01343/FULL Former Dairy Building, Walkhurst Road. Change of use and extension of former dairy building into a new dwelling. Conversion of existing atcost barn into a garage with change of use of the land to form an associated garden, parking & biodiversity enhancements ❖ Site Constraints: Total of 10 constraints inc. BNDP policies. ❖ Listed Buildings In Proximity: Burnt House Grade II and Scribbins Grade II not affected by proposal. ❖ Application form information: Existing gross internal floorspace 296.82 sq.m Net additional floorspace after development 39.62 sq.m. Total new gross internal floorspace 336.44 sq.m. ❖ Planning Statement Info: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total land ownership 8.71ha of mainly improved grassland with scattered trees and shrub. ○ PRoW WC350 runs through the site to connect with WC351; WC350 currently obstructed by a dilapidated outbuilding on site. Ancient Woodland borders site to north, east and south. ○ Proposal to convert and extend existing former dairy building as main residential unit and convert existing atcost barn to form associated garage, with necessary parking, garden land and landscape enhancements. ○ Single storey to a 1.5 storey, 4-bed dwelling. Small extension increasing the footprint by 25%. ○ Rectangular form with pitched roof, gabled on either end as existing. ○ Horizontal timber cladding, facing brickwork, aluminium fenestration and tiled roofing. ○ Garden area to east and south of dwelling, with an area dedicated to landscaping enhancements to west. ○ Removal of existing outbuildings on site reinstates PRoW as designated by KCC. ○ Appearance of building will retain agricultural character rather than domestic in nature. ○ New native species hedge to eastern and southern boundaries of garden. • General Comments: Existing access point provides good sightlines in both directions for access and egress though care is needed when entering site from Benenden direction turning right into site on bend. Planning Statement quotes many policies of the NPPF and TWBC Local Plan; Kent Design Guide (parking); HWNL Management Plan; Historic England Guidance Note - Settings and Views. The Planning Statement is comprehensive but does not mention BNDP at all. For the record the proposal complies with BNDP policies: LE3 Public Rights of Way (PRoW), LE4 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow, LE8 Features to Encourage Wildlife, HS3 b) & c) Windfall Sites - outside LBD on PDL, conversion of rural buildings not currently in business use; Scale, design and appearance of BNDP design policy, BD2 General Appearance, BD6 Parking. <p>Cllrs Beveridge and Grant made a site visit and met with the applicant and raised the following concerns which the applicant discuss with the planning agent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstatement/repair of stile to left of field gate and securing correction of KCC PRoW route maps to show access and egress from footpaths to Walkhurst Road - applicant has no intention to divert paths or block access from Walkhurst Road; currently stile is inaccessible and dangerous and a steel field gate has been placed behind to prevent sheep from straying; Suggest kissing gate at location to make it accessible to all. • Proposed block plan showing location of PRW WC350 with route passing very close to existing north end of dairy building. The 2 PRoWs should meet at stile at Walkhurst Road rather than joining together within site. • Atcost building - derelict hay barn constructed of reinforced concrete columns; concrete has decayed and shows reinforcement rods within; partial cladding of corrugated sheeting to west elevation; corrugated sheet roof. The building is vast and dominates the former dairy building. Proposal to clad in horizontal timber on all elevations with 2 double doors at north end and a double door at east elevation. Its partially open aspect as a hay barn is an acceptable agricultural building, but given its condition, height and size it would cause more domination over the dairy building and be highly visible across the valley along the footpaths. Suggest its replacement with an oak framed car barn or similar to lower height and lessen dominance. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support the proposals for the dairy building but objects to the proposals for the atcost barn and will write to the Planning Officer accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25/01571/FULL 1 Century Cottage, Rolvenden Road. Single storey side extension 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Site Constraints: 13 in total inc. BNDP ❖ Site History: 93/01271/FULL Construction of private driveway and associated footpath realignment – approved. ❖ Listed Buildings In Proximity: Tudor Cottage Grade II - no impact. ❖ Application Form Info: Walls existing render, proposed render; Roof existing plain tiles, proposed plain tiles and concealed felted flat roof; Windows existing UPVC, proposed UPVC; Doors existing timber and UPVC, proposed UPVC; No trees affected; Existing parking arrangements unaltered; Pre-app advice not sought. ❖ General Comments: 1 & 2 Century Cottages form a pair of single storey 1-bed semi-detached properties. No. 2 carried out a similar extension 21/03687/FULL to add a master bedroom with ensuite creating a 2-bed dwelling. BPC supported. The proposal for No. 1 extends the property to the west repositioning the kitchen and adding a bedroom. The former kitchen becomes a small 3rd bedroom. <p>A neighbour has raised an issue of a Deed of Grant which prohibits the building of any structure within a distance of 1.52 metres either side of a cable/easement strip which runs across the property. The resident has made TWBC Planning aware of this situation.</p> <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application noting the comments raised by the neighbour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25/01526/FULL Barefield Cranbrook Road. Partial single and two-storey extension with new dormer windows ❖ Previous application 24/02398/FULL for two storey and single storey rear extension with internal reconfiguration approved by TWBC (BPC supported). ❖ Key objective for alterations to this 1.5 storey property is to gain height in roof space, light to ground floor and improved layout of the accommodation. ❖ Comprehensive Design, Access and Heritage Statement for the revised scheme. <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.</p> <p>b. <u>Other Planning Matters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23/02523/FULL Uphill, New Pond Road. Appeal APP/M2270/W/25/3366410. BPC has submitted its comments to the Planning Inspectorate and forwarded to TWBC Planning Officer. • 25/00907/FULL Beacon Farm, Rolvenden Road. TWBC has issued an addendum to its delegated report, which corrected inconsistencies and clarified that the use of the building remains restricted to Class E(g) (formerly Class B1), and planning permission would be required for use other than Class E. • 19/00822/HYBRID Almshouse Development, Walkhurst Road. Concerns raised by resident of Walkhurst Lodge regarding the first floor windows of the house facing Walkhurst Road which direct views into their first floor rooms 20 metres away impacting on privacy. The resident has made a formal complaint to TWBC but with no satisfactory outcome. It was agreed that BPC would raise with Canham Homes and discuss the possibility of window resizing and for tree planting within the site to screen both properties. 	NT
7. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS & TRANSPORT	<p>a. <u>Highways Improvement Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllrs Rob Wormington and Astra Birch, Portfolio Holders for Environment and Sustainability and Housing and Communities advise that up to £25,000 is available to help fund HIP items. • HIPs need to be received by KCC by 31st October latest and the outcome should be known early 2026. • There are certain criteria which must be met. TWBC will need to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Prioritised list of projects. ❖ Funding for projects needs to include KCC officer cost estimates. ❖ Projects need to be supported by KCC – with relevant surveys etc completed. • Cllr Beveridge and the Clerk have reviewed and updated the HIP for this exercise and the 3 identified priorities remain the same – Benenden Crossroads, Mill Street approach towards Iden Green Crossroads and B2086 West of Benenden Crossroads. • Previous comments from KCC have been removed on the basis that this information may be out of date; a new officer may have different opinions; BPC would like the document looked at afresh; funding available through TWBC grant. • The HIP will be sent with a covering email setting out that BPC has been working on a HIP since 2019, with limited outcomes to date and that BPC had previously been advised by the then Highways Community Engagement Officer that he was seeking further advice, but BPC heard 	CL

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	<u>b. Speedwatch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Clerk has contacted an Iden Green resident, who had indicated he is happy to register and lead on a Speedwatch group for Iden Green. The Clerk has advised of the steps involved.Other residents have indicated a wish to get involved.Once the group has been set up, it will advise what equipment it needs/wants. <u>c. Walkhurst Road/War Memorial</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">There has been significant damage to the verge of the War Memorial garden caused by the lorries from the Canham Homes site.Cllr Cruse has provided photographs of the damage and contacted the site manager who has contacted Kent Highways.Lorries will not return to site until the problem has been addressed.																																																																								
8. RESOURCING/ FINANCE	<u>a. Monthly Finance</u> TRANSACTIONS FROM 1st June 2025 Brought Forward Current Account10794.19 Brought Forward Savings Account91464.34 Brought forward102258.53 Income <table><tr><td>Payee</td><td>Reference</td><td>Amount</td></tr><tr><td>UTB</td><td>Bank Interest</td><td>445.21</td></tr><tr><td>B&IG WI</td><td>Printing</td><td>3.60</td></tr></table> TOTAL448.81 Expenditure <table><tr><td>Supplier</td><td>Reference</td><td>Amount</td></tr><tr><td>DD Nest</td><td>Pension</td><td>178.92</td></tr><tr><td>DD HugoFox</td><td>Website</td><td>23.99</td></tr><tr><td>DD Corporate Finance</td><td>Printer Lease</td><td>238.80</td></tr><tr><td>FEE Unity Trust Bank</td><td>Monthly Charge</td><td>6.00</td></tr><tr><td>BACS Benenden's</td><td>Village Tidy Refreshments</td><td>72.80</td></tr><tr><td>BACS Employee</td><td>Staffing Costs</td><td>1122.59</td></tr><tr><td>BACS o2</td><td>Telephone</td><td>33.24</td></tr><tr><td>BACS F&C Cleaning Services</td><td>Public Toilets</td><td>747.76</td></tr><tr><td>BACS Iden Green Pavilion</td><td>Meeting Hire</td><td>16.00</td></tr><tr><td>BACS Tompsett Landscaping</td><td>Grounds Maintenance</td><td>984.47</td></tr><tr><td>BACS HMRC</td><td>Employer Contributions Q1</td><td>699.76</td></tr><tr><td>BACS D Buckett</td><td>Internal Audit</td><td>400.20</td></tr></table> TOTAL4524.53 Balance98182.81 Current account bank statement 110 30th June 20256273.26 Savings account bank statement 014 30th June 202591909.55 Reconciled98182.81 July 2025 Approved Payments <table><tr><td>DD Nest</td><td>Pension</td><td>89.46</td></tr><tr><td>DD HugoFox</td><td>Website</td><td>23.99</td></tr><tr><td>FEE Unity Trust Bank</td><td>Monthly Charge</td><td>6.00</td></tr><tr><td>BACS Employee</td><td>Staffing Costs</td><td>1122.39</td></tr><tr><td>BACS o2</td><td>Telephone</td><td>33.24</td></tr><tr><td>BACS Amazon</td><td>Paper</td><td>16.69</td></tr><tr><td>BACS F&C Cleaning Services</td><td>Public Toilets</td><td>766.34</td></tr></table>			Payee	Reference	Amount	UTB	Bank Interest	445.21	B&IG WI	Printing	3.60	Supplier	Reference	Amount	DD Nest	Pension	178.92	DD HugoFox	Website	23.99	DD Corporate Finance	Printer Lease	238.80	FEE Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00	BACS Benenden's	Village Tidy Refreshments	72.80	BACS Employee	Staffing Costs	1122.59	BACS o2	Telephone	33.24	BACS F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilets	747.76	BACS Iden Green Pavilion	Meeting Hire	16.00	BACS Tompsett Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance	984.47	BACS HMRC	Employer Contributions Q1	699.76	BACS D Buckett	Internal Audit	400.20	DD Nest	Pension	89.46	DD HugoFox	Website	23.99	FEE Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	6.00	BACS Employee	Staffing Costs	1122.39	BACS o2	Telephone	33.24	BACS Amazon	Paper	16.69	BACS F&C Cleaning Services	Public Toilets	766.34	
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	<p>BACS Iden Green Pavilion Meeting Hire 16.00</p> <p>BACS A Durnell War Memorial 381.60</p> <p>BACS Building and Safety Supplies Ltd Defibrillator Pads 88.00</p> <p>BACS Tompsett Landscaping Grounds Maintenance 887.27</p> <p>BACS TP Jones Payroll Q1 63.40</p> <p>BACS KALC Annual Subscription 997.64</p> <p>BACS Krystal Website Hosting 239.99</p> <p>BACS Iden Green Congregational Church Defib power donation 100.00</p> <p>BACS Air Ambulance Donation 100.00</p> <p>BACS Home-Start Donation 100.00</p> <p>BACS Castle Water Public Toilets 82.22</p> <p>TOTAL 5114.23</p> <p>All invoices listed have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £10,000 transferred from Savings to Current Account <p>b. Resourcing Committee Meeting Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June and accompanying documents were circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit Report – this had been considered and discussed by the Committee. Reserves Policy – the Committee recommended for approval and this was unanimously agreed. IT Policy - the Committee recommended for approval and this was unanimously agreed. Employee pension – the Committee recommended to increase the current employer contribution rate from 3% to 5% with immediate effect and this was unanimously agreed. Insurance renewal quote received from current insurers at £1,375.94, compared to £1,340.72 for 2024/25. The Clerk is seeking additional quotes and will discuss with the Resourcing Committee for agreement before the renewal date of 1st August. The Parish Council agreed that the slight increase in the current premium is acceptable. Donation requests – the Committee recommended donations of £100 to each Air Ambulance, Home-Start and IG Congregational Church and recommends for approval and this was unanimously agreed. edf – the Clerk has received no response to the last email sent on 20th June, and has received another bill for £2,770.66. 	
9. ENVIRONMENT & MAINTENANCE	<p>a. Beacon Field Wildflower Meadow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Cochrane will liaise with Cllr Driver regarding any actions. Cllr Cochrane has arranged a cut of the Wildflower Meadow with ACT at a cost of £250. A margin will be left around the edge of the field for the benefit of wildlife. The parishioner who raised concerns last year about the saplings which were mown has advised that they are growing and is keen that they survive. Cllr Cochrane has provided some stakes and the parishioner will tape them off before the cut. <p>b. Public Toilets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The toilet roll holder and the baby changing unit have fallen/been pulled from the wall. Cllr Grant will attempt to repair. <p>c. Dark Sky Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Grant, who currently holds BPC's dark sky meter, proposes that readings are taken across the parish, with parish councillors sharing responsibility for this. Readings can only be taken on clear nights when there is no moonlight. Readings could be marked on a map and changes monitored as more housing developments are completed in the parish. Parishioners could also be invited to take part. Cllr Grant to start taking readings, consider how this might work and report back. 	<p>PG</p> <p>PG</p>
10. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS/ COMMUNITY	<p>a. Allotments Report received from Benenden Allotment Association:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water: established that need a commercial water supplier and chasing Southern Water for 	

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	<p>relevant reference number.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plots: 22 individuals either jointly or singly renting plots. 1 vacant quarter plot available, with 1 interested party inspecting the site. • Finance: Kent Community Foundation grant monitoring from completed and submitted; £2,804 in bank account; water bill yet to be received. • Parking area: to be reconsidered to ensure less environmental impact. • Structure application: storage shed; wooden; 6ftx4ft; no other structures on plot; to sit on a base of concrete paving slabs. Cllr Grant recommends approval and this was unanimously agreed. • Fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plottolders 13a & 13b installed fence posts set in postcrete around part of their plot and had started to install rails between the posts. ○ Cllr Grant and BAA representative met on site and discussed the way forward. ○ Posts and rails are too 'structural' and the posts should be temporary but it would be too disruptive to ask for their removal. The allotment plot is the only outside space that the tenants have. The plot is extremely neat and tidy and is productive. ○ Cllr Grant and BAA propose to enter into an agreement with the plottolders setting out the terms of the continued presence of the posts. This was agreed by BPC. ○ Cllr Grant and BAA propose that the application to erect an allotment structure used by tenants is revised to include fencing proposals. This was agreed by BPC. <p><u>b. PC Website/email addresses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk has been approved by Nominet and the Central Digital and Data Office and is now live. • The Clerk will highlight on existing website and facebook page and include something for the September magazine, and invite parishioner feedback. • Parish Councillor email addresses will move to .gov.uk addresses. The Clerk to contact HugoFox to see how this is achieved and what Parish Councillors might need to do. <p><u>c. Benenden Cricket Club</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCC had written to BPC to highlight issues facing the club (circulated). • The main issue is the lack of secure and appropriate storage of equipment. • BCC requests assistance in identifying a suitable solution for storage, ideally close to the Green. • In 2024 BPC had attempted to assist with this issue and had made suggestions to BCC. • BPC is happy to support where it can but does not have any appropriate facility. • BPC suggests that BCC speaks to those who had offered outdoor storage to see if this is still available and consider making this space secure. If this is an open sided barn type structure it might be relatively easy to clad and put a door and lock on to secure. BPC would consider supporting BCC if it looks at this option. 	CL
11. CORRESPONDENCE /PARISHIONER QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from parishioner to KCC regarding the misrouting of footpaths WC 350 and WC 351 off Walkhurst Road, first raised in 2021 and evidence provided at the time and repeated, with an urgent request to re-establish the footpath route. • Iden Green Jazz and Blues takes place on 23rd August. Any offers of help would be appreciated. • Numerous signs around the village advertising the Balfour Winery Rosé Festival. The Clerk to contact them with details of BPC Flyposting Policy. 	CL
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 15 th September, 7pm	
	The meeting closed at 8.25pm.	