PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Resourcing Committee meeting of the Council held on Monday 23rd June 2025, 7:00pm

Present: Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane (Committee Chair), Hagan and Thomas; Caroline Levett – Clerk/RFO

1 Apologies 2 Declarations	No apologies. No declarations of interest.							
Of Interest								
3 Minutes Of Previous	The minutes of the meeting held on 3 rd December 2024 were unanimously approved and							
Meeting	signed by the Chair of the Committee.							
4 Budget Monitoring	Details of income and expenditure 01/04/25 to the second of the sec	:o 20/06/26 w	ere circulate	ed. Income				
	£38,946; expenditure £9,708.							
	• Bank account balances at 01/04/25 £68,738.76; at 20/06/25 £97,743.60.							
	INCOME	BUDGET 2025/26	A+ 20/06/2E	PROJECTED				
	Precept	52000	At 20/06/25 26000	TO 31/03/26 52000				
	WI Printing	20	7	25				
	Server Recharge	120	0	120				
	Bank Interest	800	0	900				
	Dank interest		26007					
	KCC Wildflower Meadow Grant	52940 7000	7000	53045 7000				
	VAT	59940 9000	33007 5939	60045 3500				
	TOTAL INCOME	68940	38946	63545				
	EXPENDITURE (net)	BUDGET 2025/26	At 20/06/25	PROJECTED TO 31/03/26				
	Audit	700	400	800				
	Bank Charges	100	18	72				
	Staffing Costs - salary, pension, contributions	17000	4336	17500				
	Defibrillator	200	0	200				
	General Maintenance	2000	0	2000				
	Grounds Maintenance - Cherryfields, The Green	3000	861	3000				
	Grounds Maintenance – BVT	5000	959	5000				
	Hall Hire/Meetings	300	177	400				
	Insurance	1400	0	1400				
			_					
	Office Costs/Website	1200 300	123	1200				
	Payroll S127/grants/denstions			10000				
	S137/grants/donations	10000	0	10000				
	Subscriptions	900	35	900				
	Training/Counciller Evpanson	9500	1918	9000				
	Training/Councillor Expenses	100	0	100				
	Volunteer Refreshments	300	61	300				
	War Memorial	700	43	500				
	Miscellaneous	240	0	240				
		52940	8931	52912				
	Wildflower Meadow		0	500				
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE NET	52940	8931	53412				
	VAT	6000	778	3500				
ı	TOTAL EXPENDITURE GROSS	58940	9708	56912	1			

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	the wildflower meadow, and received a Members Grant of £1,000. The Committee unanimously agreed to seek quotes to carry out a cut and collect and a	
	quote to carry out just a cut as soon as possible.	CL
	• The current S137 limit is £11.10 per elector, which gives the Parish Council the ability to spend up to £16,294.80 (1468 registered electors).	
5 Internal Audit	The internal audit report 2024/25 was circulated. Items to note:	
Report		
	a. <u>Reserves</u>	
	BPC has generally strived to keep reserves, general and earmarked, of 1.5 x its precept figure. In recent years this has included earmarked projects such as the parish wells and toilet refurbishment.	
	• The 2025 edition of the Good Councillors Guide to Finance sets out that a council should typically hold between 3 and 12 months' expenditure as a general reserve.	
	The Committee unanimously agreed a new Reserves Policy, which includes an intent to maintain a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months as its General Reserves.	
	b. Website	
	The website change to a new .gov.uk website address is progressing and confirmation is awaited from Nominet and the Central Digital and Data Office.	
	• BPC had approved the silver package support with Hugo Fox, at £23.99 gross/£19.99 net per month.	
	• The domain for the existing website is hosted by Krystal Hosting and is shared by BPC, BVT, BVH, Benenden's Shop and Standen Fruit Farm. The annual renewal is due for this now (£239.99 gross/£199.99 net), at a cost of £40 to each organisation.	
	The Committee unanimously agreed this annual renewal to allow each organisation the time to create a new website and so that the information on all 5 websites and emails are not immediately lost.	
	c. Email Addresses	
	 All parish/town councils are being encouraged to use .gov.uk email addresses for all councillors and staff. 	
	• The Committee unanimously agreed to switch email addresses to a .gov.uk address through HugoFox at a cost of £17.49 + VAT per month for 10 email addresses (9 parish councillors plus clerk).	
	• Each email account has 10GB of storage (equivalent of half a million plain text emails) and unlimited support.	
	BPC currently has 11 email addresses, including one for Benenden Allotment Association. The Committee agreed that it would be more appropriate now that BAA has its own separate email address. The Clerk to raise with BAA.	CL
	d. IT Policy	
	For the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 there will be a new	
	assertion regarding digital and data compliance and part of which will require BPC to have an IT policy in place.	
	The Committee unanimously agreed a new IT Policy.	
	The Clerk to give consideration as to how BPC achieves requirements for all parish councillors and employees to receive relevant training/awareness.	CL
	e. <u>Employee pension</u>	
	The Committee unanimously agreed to increase the current employer contribution rate from 3% to 5% with immediate effect.	

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	f. Committee Meetings	
	Although not included in the report, the internal auditor suggests that the Committee	
	meets more frequently than twice a year.	
	The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November/early December to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept The Committee currently meets in late November to consider precept to consider p	
	setting, to meet TWBC deadlines, and late June/early July to consider the internal	
	auditor's report and before insurance is due for renewal (1st August).	
	 Additionally the Committee discusses important items and reaches decisions by email to take to whole Parish Council. 	
	• The Committee agreed to trial an additional meeting in May 2026, before the full Parish	
	Council meeting.	
6 Financial	BPC Financial Regulations Paragraphs 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11 were amended in March to	
Regulations	reflect The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024 which came into	
	effect March 2025. This was noted at BPC meeting.	
	BPC Financial Regulations will be reviewed by Committee in December 2025.	
7 Asset Register	 No changes to be made to the Asset Register. 	
	• Insurance values will be updated once insurance renewal has been completed.	
8 Insurance	Insurance renewal is due 1 st August.	
Renewal	• The Clerk had requested details from current insurer Gallagher/Hiscox but this had not been received in time for the meeting.	
	The Clerk had attempted to contact Zurich Municipal, as recommended by the internal auditor, but had not received a call back.	
	 Cllr Cochrane suggested contacting NFU. 	
	 The Clerk will continue attempting to obtain 3 quotes and share these with the Committee once received. 	CL
9 Donation	The Committee had previously agreed to allocate £500 in total for charity donations with	
Requests	a donation of £100 to each charity.	
	a defiation of 2100 to each enamy.	
	• 2024/25 donations were £100 each to Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance, Home-Start	
	South West Kent, TW Counselling Centre.	
	Details of requests received were circulated :	
	Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance: £500 request.	
	❖ Home-Start South West Kent: £500 request.	
	Citizens Advice North and West Kent: grant application form not completed and no	
	specific amount requested.	
	• The Committee agreed donations of £100 to Air Ambulance and Home-Start, and would	
	consider a request from Citizens Advice if the correct form is received.	
	The Committee agreed to consider increasing donation amounts at its meeting in	
	December, depending on BPC's financial situation at the time.	
	Iden Green Congregational Church	
	❖ BPC had agreed (November 2023) to contribute £50 annually towards the cost of	
	electricity for the defibrillator in the church porch.	
	One payment was made of £50 in January 2024.	۵.
	The Clerk to write to IGCC to ensure that they make an annual request.	CL
	A sum of £100 covering 2024/25 and 2025/26 was agreed by the Committee.	
	The Committee noted that it is necessale that requests will be made by Benearder Village	
	 The Committee noted that it is possible that requests will be made by Benenden Village Trust and Benenden's Shop during the financial year, and will consider these fully if/when 	
	received.	
10 edf/IG	To note, as previously advised :	
Telephone Kiosk	To note, as previously advised.	
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The clerk received a letter from edf dated 23rd April (received beginning of May) which said "we know it's taken longer than we'd hoped to send you an up-to-date invoice. We're sorry for how much this has inconvenienced you and thank you for your patience. We understand how getting a catch-up bill may have impacted on your business".

The clerk then received 3 separate invoices dated 23^{rd} April, the last one being for £2,337.09 for the period 1^{st} April 2024 – 1^{st} April 2025.

The clerk wrote to edf setting out everything since 2022, when BPC made a request to edf for the electricity supply to be turned off/removed with immediate effect as there is no need for an electricity supply and no electricity is being used. The clerk repeated that the unmetered supply is to a disused telephone kiosk, which did used to house a defibrillator but hasn't for a long time. That BPC had initially challenged the charge and investigated a metered supply but was told this was not possible. That over the years BPC had been passed around edf's sme customer services, large business, business moves, service removal, I&C customer operation teams, and contact was attempted via email, telephone calls and WhatsApp chats, with no team taking responsibility or helping and at one point the clerk was told that "edf does not work on unmetered accounts". That BPC had made contact with UK Power Networks to carry out a disconnection of supply (removing the cable from within the telephone box) which would come at some cost to BPC and that we'd completed the necessary forms, and chased UKPN numerous times, but heard nothing back from UKPN.

The Clerk has said that the whole situation is most unsatisfactory, that BPC has attempted to take action to resolve, and made it most clear at all times that it did not want or need the power supply, that no electricity was being used and requested that the power supply was turned off and that BPC does not feel it is responsible for the outstanding balance, and this is a charge for no electricity actually being used, and that if necessary BPC will now escalate the matter and make a formal complaint.

edf referred this to a company called LCS debt resolution. The Clerk shared all the information with them. LCS advised that edf responded "unable to see that the request has been raised with our customer service team and ask BPC to get in touch"

The Clerk emailed the address given by LCS (midmarketcustomercontact2023@edfenergy.com) repeating all of the above on 20th June.

No further response yet from edf.

11 Speedwatch

Finances will need to allocated for Speedwatch equipment, as agreed by whole PC 16th June, but this is difficult to determine at the moment.

The Clerk advised that the website Community Speedwatch UK contains information for setting up a group, and that contact will need to be made by email to the Kent Police Speedwatch Team.

Anyone involved needs to have passed a theoretical training and quiz with a 90% pass-rate before any application moves forward for serious consideration.

There is equipment available through Community Speedwatch UK - starter kit with a pocket radar £445.50 + VAT; roadside intermediate kit with radar gun £1,684.00 + VAT. Pocket radar from Roadside Technologies £276.00 + VAT.

Once a Speedwatch team has been created the Committee/Parish Council will consider any request for equipment it may require. The Clerk to discuss with Cllr Lewis.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

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