BERWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council
on Wednesday 22nd January 2025 at 7pm
This meeting took place in Berwick Village Hall

Present: Councillors Winter (Chair), Carnie, Smith, Burroughs, Mills and Barham
County Councillor N Bennett, District Councillor A Wilson
There was one member of the public
The Clerk was in attendance

69. Apologies for absence - All members were present.

70. Declarations of Interests – There were no declarations of interest or changes to the Register of Interests.

71. Confidential Items on the agenda – It was **RESOLVED** there were no confidential items on the agenda

72. District Councillor's Report – Cllr Alison Wilson

- A Climate Change Strategy Event had taken place in December. The green paper consultation can be found on the Let's Talk Wealden website. The consultation is open until 8th February 2025.
- The Government are keen to move forward with local government re-organisation and devolution. In East Sussex there will be one unitary authority. Wealden, Rother and Lewes District Councils will cease to exist. There will be a strategic mayor covering East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove. This is quite dramatic and fast moving.

County Councillor's Report – Cllr Nick Bennett

- Devolution was announced quickly by the Government. A letter was received just before Christmas inviting application for the fast-track scheme. Hence there was not a green paper. The Leader of the Council has met with government minister James McMahon. A request to delay the elections due in May has been made, this is a ministerial decision. This is an unusual step, but it was felt necessary by officers and members due to purdah and the training of possibly one hundred new councillors will take time. Unitary authorities with a Mayor will have financial benefits as well as opportunities in planning, infrastructure, and environmental issues.
- In answer to Parish Councillors comments:
  Cllr Bennett did not consider dualling of the A27 will take place.
  A seminar had recently taken place regarding planning proposals at the Oakleigh site bordering Laughton and the Grosvenor site between Hailsham and Arlington.

Cllr Wilson confirmed that work was still going ahead on the Wealden Draft Local Plan.

73. Public Questions – There were no questions from members of the public.

The meeting was then re-opened.

74. Minutes of the previous meeting - the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2024 were read, approved and signed by the Chair.

75. Clerk's report on matters arising from those minutes – all items were included on the following agenda.

76. Planning

i. Planning applications received from Wealden District Council (prior to the publication of the agenda) – No applications were received.

ii. Planning applications received from SDNPA (prior to the publication of the agenda) - No applications were received.

iii. Planning applications received between the date of the publication of the agenda and the date of the meeting – No applications were received.

iv. Decisions made by Wealden District Council and SDNPA since the last meeting –

WD/2024/1994/PIP – Demolition and replacement of an existing dwelling and erection of 8 no. additional dwellings. Land adj to Cranford Industrial Estate, Station Road, Berwick. BN26 6TF - **REFUSED**

WD/2024/2759/F – Proposed two-storey extension to the rear and internal alterations. 1 Coppice Cottages, Station Road, Berwick BN26 6TG – **REFUSED**

77. Reports from outside bodies

a) East Sussex Association of Local Councils – the clerk recently attended the Clerks' Forum
b) Wealden District Association of Local Council – the minutes of the recent meeting were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.
c) Village Hall Committee – nothing further to report.
d) Tree Warden – nothing further to report.
e) Cuckmere Flood Forum – nothing further to report.
f) Cuckmere Community Buses – Cllr Smith reported that a profit had been made in the previous financial year. Drivers are needed.
g) SDNPA – Currently there is a Regulation 18 Consultation on the Local Plan, details can be found on the SDNPA website.

78. Updates

a) Defibrillator risk assessments - the Clerk now carries out the risk assessments and the defibrillator is registered with The Circuit.
b) Playground inspections – the Clerk confirmed that the inspection had been carried out by Wicksteed but is still waiting for the report.
c) Playground upgrade – the inspection report is required before this can be taken forward.

79. Parish Maintenance

a) Verges/Hedges - Councillors noted that the verge in the area of The Pound has now been designated a "Meadow" verge by ESCC rather than a "Wildlife" verge. Cutting will still take place yearly but the cuttings will not be removed.
b) The Berwick Way Maintenance – the clerk was able to obtain one quotation for the replacement of the southern barrier. Following review Councillors **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation in the sum of £398.20.
c) The Berwick Way Benches – following the recent clearing works on The Berwick Way Councillors agreed that a more robust seat than previously chosen would be appropriate. Following review of the options and samples it was **RESOLVED** that the Surrey Seat 1.8m from Earth Anchors was appropriate. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotations for engraving the seat and to obtain quotations for replacement of the paving slabs supporting the bench, as the current slabs are broken.
d) The Recreation Ground including tree works – the Clerk has written to the agent dealing with the Ludlay Estate asking that he forward the request for the trees to be trimmed to the relevant persons now dealing with estate matters.

80. Road Safety Issues

a) Speedwatch - It was **RESOLVED** that this should be reviewed later in the year.
b) To note traffic issues brought to the attention of the Council – speeding continues to be a concern. The Clerk was asked to arrange the speed survey for 2025, it was **RESOLVED** that monitoring equipment should be arranged for a second site.
c) To note highway issues brought to the attention of the Council – the Clerk has reported deteriorating road markings at Chilver Bridge Road bridge. East Sussex Highways said that this matter will be dealt with before the end of March. The Clerk has also reported the water leak on The Berwick Way. It was reported that a number of trees in the Parish are overhanging the highway, in some cases impairing sight lines at junctions. The Clerk was asked to find suitable guidance material to distribute.

81. Consultations and Surveys

a) Transport for the South East – Draft Transport Strategy Consultation - Cllr Mills will review the online consultation and email colleagues.
b) Government Consultation on strengthening the standard and conduct framework for local authorities - Councillors to review the online consultation.
c) Wealden District Council's Climate Green Paper Survey – Councillors noted the closing date is now 16th February 2025.

82. Website and gov.uk domains

Councillors reviewed the Clerk's report regarding gov.uk domains which are recommended by SAPPP (Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel) formerly the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance. All Councillors should have gov.uk email addresses. Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the domain will be changed to an appropriate gov.uk domain. The Clerk also reported that the website was in need of a refresh and suggested that updating the website should be the responsibility of the Clerk. It was noted that the current web hosts had provided a very good service. It was **RESOLVED** that Parish Web and Host be appointed web hosts and the Clerk will update the new website. It was noted that there will be a small annual saving.

83. Finance

a) The following schedule of payments since the last meeting on 25th September 2024 was **APPROVED**

101386	HMRC	48	Tax & NI	£351.16
101387	L Kemp	49	Salary Dec	543.76
101388	East Sussex Pension	50	Pension DEC	166.99
101389	Jerome Champage	51	Mowing	85.00
101390	Mass Media	52	Website	50.40
101391	H J hecks	53	Hedge cutting	£624.00
101392	Jerome Champage	56	Mowing	595.00
101393	L Kemp	57	Salary Jan	543.96
101394	East Sussex Pension	58	Pension Jan	166.99
101395	Berwick Village Hall	59	Hall hire	40.00
dd	Team4	54	Payroll Nov	12.00
dd	Wealden DC	55	Dog bins	165.00
dd	Team4	59	Payroll Dec	12.00
				3356.26

b) Bank reconciliations for November and December – **APPROVED**
c) Accounts to date – **APPROVED**

84. Questions from Councillors - There were no questions from Councillors

85. The next planned Full Council Meeting will be held on 26th March 2025.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm