



CONTACT - Paul Richards, Parish Clerk

EMAIL - bramberparishclerk@gmail.com

The Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the Bramber Parish Council that took place at the Beeding and Bramber Village Hall on Wednesday 20th December 2023 at 7:00pm.

Present: Cllr A. Blakelock (Chair), Cllr S. Blakelock, Cllr H. Bayford, Cllr D. Croker, Cllr M. Croker, Cllr Green and Cllr Tilley.

In attendance: HDC Cllr Noel and Paul Richards (Parish Clerk).

Members of the public – none.

173. Apologies for absence – Cllr Goodall and Cllr Kitson.

174. Declarations of interest – Cllrs M and D Croker advised they would leave the meeting when item 181 was discussed as they were neighbours to the applicant for DC/23/2186.

175. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 15th November 2023.

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Meeting held on 15th November 2023, circulated previously, were **AGREED** by the Members, and were duly signed by the Chair. Cllr Green thanked her colleagues for agreeing to a dispensation relating to her non-attendance.

176. Matters arising - none.

177. Public Session – none.

178. Reports.

a) HDC – Cllr R. Noel reported that:

- The Regulation 19 version of the draft Local Plan was approved by HDC on 11th December 2023. The submission to the Examiner will offer slightly more planning ‘weight’ whilst it is being reviewed;
- A new app has been produced that includes the domestic bin schedule;
- New financial commitments make the medium-term fiscal outlook less certain. Food waste collection, carbon neutralisation and refurbishment of the Capitol are all projects that will increase pressure on the finances;

19:09 – Cllr D. Croker joined the meeting

- Garden waste fees are set to increase, and Horsham Town car park charges are to double. No decision on the Council Tax settlement has been made however Council Tax support grants will increase by £195. Cllr M. Croker suggested that any Council Tax increase would be capped at 2.99%; and
- A proposed River Charter (to include the Adur, Arun and Rother) will build on existing work. The draft Charter is at an early stage of development and will incorporate support from several agencies and organisations.

b) Neighbourhood Wardens.

- Members noted that the last report contained very few incidents and reports relating to Bramber;
- Cllr Goodall had reported that vandalism had been spotted on the new Railway Information Boards. Cllr M. Croker advised that he would check the damage and asked the Clerk to get the Wardens to patrol the area adjacent to the Boards; and

- The Clerk provided an update on the last Joint Parish Wardens meeting and asked that the Wardens not be allocated to the new Immediate Justice initiative from Sussex Police as this was matter for the HDC Community Team and not the Wardens.
- c) **Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee** – a meeting in January 2024 is planned.
- d) **Joint Parishes Youth Committee** – Cllr Bayford advised that:
- the committee met twice during December to agree the employment details for the new youth team;
 - Steyning Grammar School had now supported the new proposed scheme and the Steyning Cricket Club had offered meeting room facilities;
 - The revised Memorandum of Understanding, circulated previously, was **AGREED** and the Clerk was asked to sign it on behalf of the BPC;
 - Grant funding will be sought to improve income;
 - The Clerk advised that BPC had not incurred service charges since the previous supplier had ceased trading. It was **RESOLVED** to assist the funding of the new service from the balance of these fees that amounted to £1,885. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangement to transfer the funds. Cllr M. Croker also asked the Clerk to verify who the “Team Leaders” were in the provided job descriptions.
- e) **HALC** – The Chair advised that no meeting had been held. She also reported the sad news that the Chairman of HALC, Malcolm Eastwood, had passed away. Members agreed that he would be sadly missed and had contributed much to HALC and the local parishes.
- f) **Village Hall** – the next meeting is scheduled for 15th January 2024.
- g) **Website** – Cllr Tilley reported on a normal level of activity for the period. The website is expected to achieve 10,000 visits since it first opened in 2018. The Clerk was asked to send Cllr Tilley the recent ‘How to be a Councillor’ guide.
- h) **The Steyning and District Community Partnership cycling/footpath project** – The Chair provided an update that included:
- the last meeting was in early December.
 - It was hoped that funding would be secured in the 2024/25 budget. However, due to other WSCC priorities, works might not be completed until 2025;
 - Having assessed the situation, the Working Party is suggesting a staged approach in 2024 by developing the ‘Saltings Loop’ (from the Post Office at Upper Beeding to the pumping station). This, in turn, could be linked to the ‘Walks for All’ paths and the planned Upper Beeding PC footpath upgrade (from the Post Office along the east bank of the river to Dawn Crescent). Tenders have been sent to four potential contractors and are due for return by 10th January 2024;
 - Cllr M. Croker had a different view on WSCC budget timing. The Chair advised that WSCC Cllr Linehan had stayed for 30 minutes to explain WSCC’s position;
 - Cllr M. Croker reported WSCC Highways intention to install two new ‘Pedestrian’ warning signs on the approaches to Beeding Bridge. Cllrs Tilley and M. Croker agreed to investigate the installation and report back; and
 - Cllr S. Blakelock expressed concern that residents cannot walk from Steyning to Upper Beeding as the White Bridge remained shut.

179. Public Toilet.

- **Drains** – Cllr M. Croker advised that he, Cllr Kitson, and a local resident (who lived next door to the public toilets) had reviewed the ongoing issue of blocked drains at the public toilets. Their findings, circulated previously, were reviewed. Cllr M. Croker reported that he had now acquired a Southern Water sewer system plan that showed that they were responsible for the

connections between the various drain chambers. He was also in liaison with HDC who had approached Southern Water for comment on their responsibilities. He advised that the local resident had submitted a claim to BPC for a blocked drain repair caused by a disposable nappy flushed down from the public toilet. Members **AGREED**, as a one-off goodwill payment, to reimburse the resident £175.80. Any future claims should be directed to Southern Water who it is believed, are responsible. Members asked the Clerk to ensure the necessary signage was in place at the public toilets to dissuade users from flushing unsuitable material down the toilet; and

- **Proposal to increase opening hours** - to be discussed at item 180.

180. Finance and General Purposes.

- To note the Clerk's 2023/24 pay rise – noted.
- Draft Budget 2024/25 - the Clerk presented the latest version of the draft budget, circulated previously, with options for 365 day or partial opening hours for the public toilet. After review and discussion, Members voted, by majority, to open the public toilet as per the existing arrangements i.e. every day of the week from May to December and with Friday, Saturday and Sunday opening hours for the rest of the year. This decision would be revisited should the impact of increased visitors to Bramber Brooks cause a significant rise in demand for the toilets. Members then **RESOLVED** to approved version 7 of the draft budget that returned a precept request of £37,564.64 to HDC. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary precept request to HDC;
- Payments for December 2023 – approved.
- Members asked the Clerk to investigate the creation of a savings account to allow for the inclusion of bank interest as income. Members also **AGREED** to investigate moving the existing bank account (and new savings account) to an ethical bank.

181. Planning.

a) Applications.

- DC/23/2086 - Greylands, Maudlyn Park, Bramber - Erection of an orangery to replace existing conservatory. Erection of a single storey front extension to form a porch and shower room.

20:30 – Cllrs M and D Croker left the meeting

Members voted, unanimously, to SUPPORT the application.

20:30 – Cllrs M and D Croker re-joined the meeting

b) Other Planning matters – none.

182. Highways and Public Rights of Way.

- Cllr M. Croker reported that he had repaired and reinstalled the Bollard adjacent to the Indian Restaurant that had been knocked over; and
- Cllr. M. Croker asked for a Community Speedwatch update. The Clerk advised that two groups were now established and had completed recent campaigns in Clays Hill and The Street.

183. Consultations – none.

184. English Heritage/Bramber Castle.

- Cllr Green referred to the update, circulated previously, related to overgrown vegetation adjacent to Castle Lane and the car park. She advised that whereas the National Trust owned the land, English Heritage had taken on the responsibility for it. EH had advised that vegetation would be cut back in January however this would depend upon the issue of the necessary road closure permissions. Cllr Green had arranged to meet the EH Landscape Manager on site and will encourage the requirement for more frequent cut back; and
- The Chair referred to the plan to create a community orchard on the part of the field to the west of the Castle. The Orchard Committee plan to meet with EH and the National Trust regarding this matter on 16th January 2024. Cllr agreed to attend this meeting as well.

185. Environment and Parish Actions.

- The Chair reported on a well-attended and excellent Christmas Carol event; and
- The Clerk was asked to arrange the transfer of the new Railway information Boards to the BPC asset register as BPC will now assume ownership of them.

186. Climate Action Plan.

- The Chair referred to the draft action plan, circulated previously. An update on the action plan has been sent to “Your Steyning” but has yet to be published;
- One action from the plan was to switch to an ethical bank. This was agreed previously during the meeting;
- The Chair suggested that BPC contact the Bramber Society to ask them to present at a future BPC meeting. The Chair agreed to contact the Chair of the Society and make the necessary arrangements;
- A joint meeting of Steyning, Upper Beeding and Bramber parishes will be arranged for January to ensure collaboration on their respective climate action plans. An ‘umbrella’ plan has been suggested to cover all three parishes where relevant;
- Cllr Tilley suggested that the achievements section of the plan could include the installation of the tree planted for the Queen’s Green Canopy campaign. The Chair agreed to include this; and
- Cllr S. Blakelock suggested that the open space created by the new entrance to Bramber Brooks could be a likely location for new trees.

187. Correspondence – the report, circulated previously, was noted.

188. Items for inclusion on the next Agenda.

- Ethical Banking.

189. Date of the next meetings.

- The next **Ordinary Parish Council meeting** will be on Wednesday 17th January 2024 at the Beeding and Bramber Village Hall commencing 7pm.
- **Planning Meeting** – TBA subject to receipt of planning applications.

The meeting closed at 20:53.

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....

Appendix A – Payments

Payments 20th December 2023					
Income since last meeting	Amount				
Bramber Society	£ 2,300.84				
TOTAL INCOME	£ 2,300.84				
BALANCES ON ACCOUNT					
Current Account (Treasurers)	£ 22,137.05	30/11/2023			
EARMARKED RESERVES					
NHP reserve	£ 1,380.00				
Emergency reserve	£ 1,000.00				
Elections	£ 1,500.00				
AVAILABLE RESERVES	£ 3,880.00				
PAYMENTS SINCE LAST MEETING	Invoiced Services	Voucher	Payment	Value	
Julie Bakter	Toilet Cleaning - November	98	BACS	£	151.20
Paul Richards	Clerk's salary - November	99	BACS	£	549.28
NEST	Clerk's pension - November	100	DD	£	86.75
Chichester Payroll Services	Payroll costs	101	BACS	£	15.00
HMRC	PAYE - November	102	BACS	£	144.60
PAYMENTS TO APPROVE			TOTAL	£	946.83
Business Stream	Water supply to toilets - 7 Sept to 6 December 23	103	BACS	£	92.50
D J Flynn	Supply Christmas Tree	104	BACS	£	160.00
Beeding & Bramber Village Hall	Meeting 15 Nov 2023	105	BACS	£	20.00
EDF	Toilet Electricity	106	DD	£	44.00
Paul Richards	Mileage	107	BACS	£	77.40
Paul Richards	Parking	108	BACS	£	2.60
Paul Richards	AAA Batteries - Emergency Store	109	BACS	£	14.97
Paul Richards	AA Batteries - Emergency Store	110	BACS	£	25.50
Paul Richards	First Aid kit - emergency store	111	BACS	£	37.95
Paul Richards	First Aid kit - emergency store	112	BACS	£	37.95
Paul Richards	C cell Batteries - Emergency Store	113	BACS	£	9.99
Paul Richards	First Aid kit - emergency store	114	BACS	£	37.95
PAYMENTS TO APPROVE			TOTAL	£	560.81
	Position at bank on 30/11/2023	£	22,137.05		
	New payments to approve	£	1,507.64		
	CASHFLOW POSITION AS AT 30/11/2023	£	23,644.69		
	Earmarked reserves	-£	3,880.00		
	RESERVE/BUDGET POSITION AS AT 30/11/2023	£	19,764.69		