

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 10th January 2024

Present: Cllrs Alison Stevenson (AS) – Chairman, Lloyd Thompsett (LT), Massi Smith (MS), Nick Major (NM) and Nick Beecroft (NB), Paul Williams (PW), Manouchehr Nahvi (MN), Jo Blundell (JB), Helen Caudrey (HC) and Ian Black (IB).

787. Declarations of personal or pecuniary interest in any agenda item listed

Cllrs MS, JB, IB, NB all declared a personal interest in item 8, Stumble Cottage planning application DM/23/0657.

788. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Nicky Gould (NG).

789. Public Participation

None

790. To confirm the Precept amount for Financial Year 2024-2025

Agenda item 13 was brought forward - The precept amount of £77,192 was unanimously agreed by all Cllrs present – the slight increase of £194 is due to the tax base increasing by 0.25% but band B & D figures will remain the same as previous year for residents.

791. To confirm budget figures for Financial Year 2024-2025

Agenda item 14 was brought forward, and Cllr LT left the meeting after the budget figures were presented and a decision made. The budget figures were unanimously approved by all Cllrs attending.

792. Matters currently being pursued, report from the Clerk

- Clerk has asked contractor ‘Street Lights’ to escalate the ongoing issue with UK Power Networks of the missing Lantern outside the Telephone exchange on Stockcroft Road.
- The installation of the 16 new LED lanterns, which works has been delayed due to supplier issues; sourcing secondary isolation parts is now looking likely to commence soon.

793. Updates on Planning applications:

Number	Site/Address	Proposal	Decision/ Decision Date
DM/23/1420	Land adjacent to Balcombe House, London Road	Development Management Procedure Discharge of Condition - Withdrawn	4th January 2024 Withdrawn
DM/23/1659	Highly Manor Hotel, Crawley Lane	The use of land for the stationing of portacabins providing offices (RETROSPECTIVE)	Refusal 22 nd December 2023
DM/23/2632	Meadow Terrance, Mill Lane	Demolition of 4 GARAGES. (Demolition method statement received 16/11)	Approval Given 12 th December 2023
DM/23/3070	3-4 St James Cottages, Haywards Heath Road	T1 Yew – Reduce Canopy by 1 Metre, back to previous points.	No objection 3 rd January 2024

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DM/23/3017	Little Bowders, Haywards Heath Road.	Trees in a Conservation Area T1 Conifer - Fell.	No Objection 20 th December 2023
DM/23/2905	Network Rail London to Brighton Railway - Balcombe Station to Ouse Valley Viaduct, London Road	Retrospective application for the provision of a temporary access route followed by reinstatement planting in relation to emergency railway embankment stabilisation works to the South of Balcombe Station, West Sussex.	No Objection 20 th December 2023

794. Planning - to consider the following applications:

Number	Site/Address	Proposal	Assigned
DM/23/0657	Stumble Cottage, Oldlands Avenue, RH17 6LY	Two storey side extension, new porch to front elevation, demolition of existing garage and erection of new garage. Amended plans received 18.08.2023 and 06.09.2023 showing revisions to porch and fenestration. Amended plans received 08.12.2023 and 19.12.2023 showing further changes to proposed fenestration and cladding.	PW
Balcombe Parish Council commented that the porch we had previously commented on appears to be the same in the revised plans, however the changes we requested to the fenestration facing the road has been made is an improvement and as such we have no objections to this application.			
DM/23/1289	Washlands, Brantridge Lane, RH17 6JR	Create a new access gateway to field with a new 5 bar gate and hardstanding area (Corrected ownership certificate received on 21 December 2023)	NM
Balcombe Parish Council's previous concerns regarding the gate being set back have been addressed. No objections.			
DM/24/0016	To The Front Of 13 Oldlands Avenue, RH17 6LY	3 x Lime Trees - Re-Pollard	AS
Balcombe Parish Council were unable to access the application with details of how much the trees are to be pollarded as there are no details in the application. BPC would like to clarify if all three trees are owned by the applicant. BPC commented that in opinion the trees are currently a reasonable size and a good shape. They are shorter than the one immediately adjacent to the north-east and those opposite. BPC feel the application for tree works is a year or two too early to re-pollard these.			
DM/24/0011	Little Bretts, Haywards Heath Road, RH17 6PG	Re-roof main roof and roof to side extension. Replace guttering. Replace oak to edge of front/side elevation and gable end. Refix/replace vertical tiling between main roof and low-level roof.	MN
Balcombe Parish Council have no objections.			
DM/24/0007	Land To the Front Of 18 And 19 Oldlands Avenue	Tree Surgery Proposal: 3 x lime Trees - trim growth back to pollard points.	AS

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Balcombe Parish Council object to the pollarding of the three lime trees and commented that the trees barely have any branches. The regrowth from the last pollarding is very immature. Excessive pollarding risks the loss of these trees.

795. **To confirm any changes to Balcombe Parish Council Policies.**

The following policies were reviewed, and any changes made were unanimously agreed by all Cllrs present:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Financial & Management Risk assessment
- Code of Conduct

796. **Receive an update from: "Recreation, play, youth, halls, schools/ Neighbourhood Plan/ Planning & New Development/ Traffic/ Public Transport/ Energy/ Admin and Assurance/Health.**

Recreation, play, youth, halls, schools – Cllr LT has chased the meeting with MSDC regarding the recreation ground. No further updates.

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllrs MS, AS, MN & NB attended an MSDC meeting remotely on the 18th December that consulted Town and Parish Councils with regards to Mid Sussex's District Plan proposals. Many of the questions Mid Sussex were asked concerned the proposed Cuck-Stye development. The development is not allocated in the newest district plan and MSDC have already addressed land supply over the next 5-year period.

Planning & New Development – BPC responded in December to Shanly Homes' email regarding management of the proposed village car park; however no further response has been received to date. Clerk to chase.

Traffic – A meeting took place with West Sussex Highways Manager Adam Denby (AD) on 5th January 24. BPC are awaiting a formal response to the village 20mph Community Highway Scheme (CHS). AD confirmed verbally that The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) application for the north of the village is able to be implemented, and speed reduced to 40mph (Cowdray Arms junction to current 40mph before the approach to the village). The residents of the London Road would like however to make a CHS application for this to be reduced to 30mph and in order for the application to progress BPC are required to approve it. BPC to finalise response to WSCC. Other items followed up at the meeting included: The Centre of the Village buff road surface - Adam, was going to talk to the Internal Safety Team-no progress, Adam still needs to do it as this is holding up progress. Rumble strip/ripple print reinstatement and repair - It's in progress, WSCC do not have any competent team members so likely that it will be contracted out.

School Crossing - no update, Cllr AS informed AD that the school crossing has been on WSCC's list since 2013! AD said he would look into it.

AD to consider the installation of a fixed post outside Bretts Orchard with a concealed entrance sign - the answer is no; we can only get a retractable one as concealed entrance signs are no longer commissionable.

Public Transport – Cllr NB with support of the public transport working group members wrote to Metro Bus company regarding bus number 271 to see if they would consider rerouting it to service Balcombe on route to Handcross. Unfortunately, although a response and reason was received the verdict was no. A notice was placed on the bus shelter by the junction to Stoney Lane in December to request for any residents who use the shelter/stop make contact with BPC. No responses have been received to date and therefore no immediate need to make improvements to the shelter have been identified. Train Station works – Cllr NM had emailed the train company

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to try and obtain a response with regards to the partial road closure by the station entrance. Cllr NM said that sensors have been placed on the road to identify movement. Cllrs NM and AS to feedback to BPC if a response is obtained. AS has written to BAM.

Energy – FFBR are awaiting an update as to if their appeal to the High Court will be heard. A £3000 provision has been placed in the 24-25 budget in case any advice or provisions need to be put in place to safeguard the residents/school should the exploration works commence at the Lower Stumble site.

Admin and Assurance – Budget for Financial Year 24-25 has been agreed.

Health - Cllr JB confirmed that Patient Participation meetings – facilitated by the surgery in Handcross are taking place. JB spoke about her concerns that Balcombe residents are not being offered appointments at the Balcombe Surgery. JB to try address this with the surgery with the support of Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator Julie Mitchell.

797. Financial

a.) December's Cashbook and Receipts were approved.

798. Correspondence

Information was shared with Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

799. Exchange of Information

Apologies formally given by Cllrs NM and NB for the next meeting in February.
A Traffic working group/catch up meeting is to be confirmed.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 10.04pm

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE
Wednesday 7th February 2024 – at 8:00pm - Bramble Hall**

Signed Chairman: Date: