

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 6th March 2024

Present: Cllrs Alison Stevenson (AS) – Chairman, Paul Williams (PW), Manouchehr Nahvi (MN), Jo Blundell (JB), Massi Smith (MS), Nick Major (NM) and Nick Beecroft (NB), Nicky Gould (NG).

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

Cllrs JB – personal interest in Stumble Cottage.

AS – personal interests in Scouts grant application & Parish Rooms planning application.

MS – personal interest in planning applications for Stumble Cottage, Wynstay Cottage and Parish Rooms.

MN – personal interest in planning application for Diamond Cottage.

815. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Lloyd Thompsett (LT), Helen Caudrey (HC), and Ian Black (IB).

816. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th February 2024

The minutes were approved and signed by the chairman

817. Public Participation

Two members of the public were in attendance to represent the Scout grant application.

Item 12a. was brought forward – To consider grant application for financial year 24/25 from - 1st Scouts Group Balcombe - £4,500.

The two members of the public were asked questions by members the parish councillors including how the Scouts plan to raise the funds for the minibus. The members of the public stated that the remaining funds were to be raised in the community including at the fete through the barbecue sales £1500-£2000. Fire-works event, and another event to be confirmed. Other village organisations had been approached to obtain further funds. They were asked questions relating to the size of the minibus they intend to purchase in which there are likely to be 16 seats. The number of children who would benefit would be approximately 60-70 and be utilised by cubs, scouts and beavers for activities on a twice weekly basis. Questions were also asked relating to if the Scouts may hire out their bus to other village organisations. This would be an area potentially to investigate as may generate further funds. Balcombe Parish Council resolved to grant £3,500 from financial year 2023/24.

818. Matters currently being pursued, report from the Clerk

- Clerk has again chased UK Power Network to reinstate the missing Lantern outside the Telephone exchange on Stockcroft Road.
- The Street Lights contractors are progressing with the installation of the 16 new LED lanterns.
- Unfortunately, BPC received confirmation from WSCC that the 20mph Zone application through the Community Highway scheme has been rejected. BPC are awaiting further communications regarding the reasons as to why the scheme was unsuccessful.
- The pavilion on the recreation ground has now had the back flat roof section re-felted after weather damage and the hip tiles have also been replaced. Luckily the majority of the repairs were paid for via the insurance.

Updates on Planning applications:

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Number	Site/Address	Proposal	Decision/ Decision Date
DM/23/2559	Russetings Care Home, Mill Lane	Rear and side extensions, internal alterations, associated parking and landscaping. Amended elevations (removing tree detail) and site/block plan with drainage detail received on 04.01.2024.	Decision date Permission Granted 14 th February 2024
DM/24/0209	Avon House, Stockcroft Road	(T1) Maple – Reduce Crown by 5-8M	Decision Date 1 st March 2024 No objection

Planning - to consider the following applications:

Number	Site/Address	Proposal	Assigned
DM/23/0657	Stumble Cottage, Oldlands Avenue	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. Additional elevational drawings received 08.02.2024 showing existing and proposed garage.	Nicky
Balcombe Parish Council have no objections			
DM/24/0355	Glenmore, Deanland Road	1 x Willow - Raise canopy by 1m. Cut back lower branches, overhanging garden back to previous pruning points, by approx. 4m.	Nick M
Balcombe Parish Council have no objections to the tree works but raised the question regarding the thinning out of the foliage that the amount has not been defined in application.			
DM/24/0357	2 Diamond Cottages Bretts Orchard	Fruit tree in back garden - reduce height by 4 metres.	Manouche
Balcombe Parish Council highlighted that there were no photographs and that as BPC were unable to access the tree/view the tree that they were unable to comment. BPC felt that this was an inadequate application due to insufficient information.			
DM/24/034	Balcombe Parish Rooms Stockcroft Road	Improve accessibility by creating step free access. This will be achieved by replacing a double window with double french doors. Internally a larger accessible toilet will be created by converting the current two small toilets.	
Balcombe Parish Council had no objections to the application. AS declared a personal interest in this application as she assisted in helping the Parish Rooms committee to make the application in order to progress their claim to Mid Sussex District Council to obtain Section 106 funds to partially fund the works. AS was given dispensation to remain in the room.			
DM/24/0274	Wynstay Cottage, Stockcroft Road	Trees in a Conservation Area Beech Tree - Fell	Alison

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Balcombe Parish Council commented that they would like the tree officer to ensure that the tree is dead prior to removal.			
DM/24/0532	Clayhurst, Stockcroft Road	Trees in a Conservation Area Conifer (T1) - Fell	Jo
Balcombe Parish Council had no objections; however, they would like to see a replacement with a native species.			

819. 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 – No updates regarding the applicant of the school patrol person. Or the meeting with Mid Sussex to progress the playground on the recreation ground.

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr AS submitted a response to Mid Sussex’ District Plan 2021-2039 and circulated this amongst councillors for approval.

Planning & New Development – Clerk is communicating with Shanly Homes’ with regards to a number of questions which require confirmation prior to any decision regarding a possible transfer of the village car park to the Parish Council; Shanly Homes/ MSDC are yet to provide the management plan or legal documents.

Traffic – Clerk is waiting a further response from West Sussex County Council with regards to points raised by BPC concerning the rejection of the village 20mph zone Community Highway Scheme (CHS). A scoring matrix has been provided for the 20mph but there has been no further progress for the village enhancement scheme.

Public Transport – BPC previously requested that Balcombe Estate look to utilise a section of their land to accommodate additional cars for the station. Unfortunately, no decisions can be made on additional land for the train station until Probate has been finalised (Simon Greenwood’s passing). The train station subsidence works are ongoing. Cllrs AS and NM offered to try and obtain an update from their contacts.

Energy – FFBR are still awaiting an update as to if their appeal to the High Court will be heard. Angus Energy has just announced that they have obtained a £20 million pound loan facility from Trafigura.

Admin and Assurance – Clerk confirmed that various utility prices are increasing including Microsoft office 365 and Clerk is in the progress of obtaining new street light energy contracts. The rates are likely to be considerably higher than what was obtained 3 years ago.

Health - Cllr JB confirmed that she is continuing to attend patient Participation meetings at the surgery in Handcross and has requested obtain information from the previous meeting.

820. To consider the following Grant Applications for Financial Year 24-25 (item brought forward from Agenda order):

- b. 4 Sight Vision Support – it was approved to grant £110 as requested in order to benefit two residents of Balcombe with the continued support from the charity.

821. Financial - (item brought forward from Agenda order)

- a.) February’s Cashbook and Receipts was approved. Payments included a payment to Street Lights for £821.24 for the quarterly payment of the maintenance contract, David Gould £74.40 for the pavilion, Mulberry & Co £60 training course and £128.70 interim audit, B-9 Fire & Security for the maintenance of the fire extinguishers (inc new fire blankets) in the pavilion and Bramble Hall £118.78, CPRE donation £60, Stephen Malthouse – village green maintenance £405, Airtech Ltd for Boiler maintenance at Bramble Hall £337.20, EFP Gritting £360.

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823. Correspondence

Information was shared with Cllrs in advance of the meeting. AS emailed District Councillor Gary Marsh regarding the amount of litter along the verge of the London Road especially from the Cowdray arms north of the village highlighting this presented a hazard to wildlife. The parish Council had received communication from a concerned resident on Newlands regarding the lack of parking. Tickets are being given to cars parked illegally on the yellow lines.

824. Exchange of Information

Alex and Pam Henderson and Rosemary Robertson are now registered with WSCC as volunteer footpath inspectors. Please continue to report any problems with footpaths to prow@westsussex.gov.uk or alternatively to the Henderson's or Rosemary or via the clerk Parish.clerk@balcombeparishcouncil.com

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 9.44pm

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE
Wednesday 10th April 2024 – at 8:00pm - Bramble Hall**