

BERDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on **Monday 10 July 2023** at 8.00pm. Present: Pete Hewitt, Kathleen Merino, Harry Wadsworth, Duncan Murdoch, Diane Holt, Debbie Thomson, Janice Loughlin (from 8.30pm), Ray Gooding (from 9pm).

Members of the public: Bronwen Rowton (leaves 8.20pm)

312.0	Apologies: Nick Lawler (holiday)
312.1	Declarations of interest: No
312.3	Approve minutes of Berden Parish Council from 19 June 2023 Approved and signed.
312.2	Public Participation Session with respect to path cutting on this Agenda. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bronwen Rowton spoke for herself and on behalf of several others in the village regarding concerns that most footpaths have not yet been cut this year. She pointed out the dangers from brambles, uneven ground, grass at shoulder level height and unseen rabbit holes and the impact on the enjoyment of walking at this time of year. Some paths are completely inaccessible.• Harry, who has taken on the contract from Essex County Council this year, has cut two paths so far and had hoped to have them done by the end of July but is having problems with his mower. A discussion was had as to whether it may be possible to find outside help but this was thought unlikely at this time of year. It was decided that as this mower is not up to the job a heavy-duty mower should be hired w/c 17 July.• Pete and Duncan have offered to help Harry.• Diane noted that there is no money in the grass cutting budget but if any extra funding is required it could come from reserves or efficiencies in other areas of the budget.
312.4	The Clerk's Report was noted and it was agreed that Debbie should write a monthly report for the Parish News magazine.
312.5	Solar Farm/Battery Unit Proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Berden Hall Farm. Protect the Pelhams is waiting to hear if the High Court will grant permission to launch the legal challenge.• Low Carbon has launched its own statutory review to challenge their refused permission to build Pelham Spring Solar Farm.• Land Between Crabbs Lane and National Grid, Stocking Pelham. Duncan has drafted a joint parish council (Berden, Stocking and Furneux Pelhams) letter to Uttlesford District Council challenging the retrospective request for an Environmental Impact Screening opinion (the application was submitted 7th April 2022). Stocking Pelham Parish Council is happy to sign it, waiting to hear from Furneux Pelham. Berden Parish Council confirmed it is happy for it to be issued. (Letter was emailed to Uttlesford DC and East Herts DC 12.7.23).• No news re East End (on the opposite side of the Grid station).

312.6	Annual Parish meeting for Parish social groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that rather than holding a meeting (which in previous years has not been well attended) a more effective way of communicating the existence of clubs and activities in the village would be to issue an email to all residents with information and contact details. Diane is currently updating this list for the Welcome to Berden booklet.
312.7	Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no accounts from June as Diane was away. Payments to ratify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance Pete Hewitt re website Bronwen for Souper Friday Harry x 3 for grounds maintenance Cheques for HMRC, EALC subscription, Uttlesford District Council election costs and RoSPA playground inspection were counter signed by Kathleen Merino. Free banking for the Parish Council ends on the 1 September – Diane will find out the costs. Diane reported that the budget is in order but that the VAT return needs to be done. She was thanked for her work.
312.8	Planning and Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duncan reported no issues with planning application for a balcony at Park Cottage, Park House Farm. Planning application for a cart lodge at 1 Brickhouse End Cottage has been approved.
312.9	Playground <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RoSPA inspection report was received on 23 June 2023 and showed nothing urgent or for immediate attention. Harry has cut back the weeds coming through safety matting and trimmed vegetation in the tunnel. Harry asked for clarification on cutting the hedge on the path next to the playground and was advised only to cut where branches overhang the path. For hedges along the road he should follow the line of the previous contractor. Ray Gooding will email a link to an interactive map to Harry which shows who is responsible for the various parts of footpaths.
312.10	Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nick was away on holiday but it appears that the verges have been cut. Ray Gooding gave an update of the Highways Panel: There is no District Council representation but schemes approved last year are now moving forwards. More salt will not be ordered as it was found that the village still has a good supply.
312.11	Footpaths and Grounds maintenance Discussed 312.2

312.12	Defibrillators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both machines are in good order
312.13	Berden Village Fete 15 July 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pete and Debbie have received and filed the Fete meeting minutes for the month and plans are all in hand. Open Gardens 23 June 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diane volunteered to be the Parish Council representative on the Open Gardens committee in 2024.
312.14	Uttlesford Community Project Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathleen had an encouraging meeting with Sue Hayden from Uttlesford on 10 July who recommended that the Parish Council apply for a grant towards new storage facilities. As the deadline for submissions is 17.7.23 there was insufficient time to get quotes for the exterior work to the Village Hall. Suggested storage solutions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A double door shed 10ft x 20ft for £1,299 (plus the base) plus a planning application fee of £181 Eve storage above current storage area to the rear of the hall £1,904 Anything over £1,000 needs to be match funded. Kathleen will submit the form by 17.7 and Diane is available to help with figures. Kathleen was thanked. (Post meeting note: the application was sent off on 13 July)
312.15	Welcome to Berden booklet discussed 312.6
312.16	Cllr Loughlin Janice reported that on 18 July they will have a full Council and it will be back to business as usual. She will be receiving a New Homes bonus of £2,000 to be split between the four parishes in Stort Valley.
312.17	Cllr Gooding Ray has been elected to Uttlesford District Council and is also on the Local Plan Working Group. He is chairing two scrutiny committees including one on adult safeguarding issues. He has asked the parishes he works with to be on the look out for adults who are resisting offers of help (often Baby Boomers). Next meeting 11 September 2023

