

## BERDEN PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting** held on **Monday 11 September 2023** at 8.00pm. Present: Kathleen Merino, Harry Wadsworth, Duncan Murdoch, Diane Holt, Debbie Thomson, Nick Lawler

<b>313.0</b>	<b>Apologies:</b> Pete Hewitt (holiday)
<b>313.1</b>	<b>Declarations of interest:</b> None
<b>313.2</b>	<b>Public Participation Session with respect to items on this Agenda.</b> n/a
<b>313.3</b>	<b>Approve minutes of Berden Parish Council from 10 July 2023</b> Approved and signed.
<b>313.4</b>	<b>The Clerk's Report</b> It was agreed that this does not need to be on the Agenda going forward
<b>313.5</b>	<b>Solar Farm/Battery Unit Proposals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Berden Hall Farm. The most recent news from Protect the Pelhams is that the High Court has given leave to hear the Statutory Review, the main point in their favour being that the inspector did not respect the heritage of the area.</li><li>• Low Carbon. No further news on Low Carbon's application for its own statutory review to challenge their refused permission to build Pelham Spring Solar Farm.</li><li>• Pelham Nature Reserve. We have made our comments (unsupported by E Herts) and this can now come off the Agenda.</li><li>• Battery Unit status Crabbs Green. Although in E Herts the only road to it and a footpath are in Uttlesford and Berden PC objected to using this road as a transport route and to running cable along the path. The decision has been deferred while other construction routes are explored. The second battery unit application at East End is still undetermined.</li></ul>
<b>313.6</b>	<b>Finance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diane reviewed the financial files emailed 9 September : Receipts and Payment summary for Q2, Bank Reconciliation and Payments for September 23</li><li>• Payments for approval: £411.17 VAT reimbursement for VHMC £46.55 VAT reimbursement for Social Club Souper Friday £1,904.40 for Village Hall loft ladder  These payments were approved and VHMC cheque countersigned by Duncan. The VH loft ladder and new storage facility are only 50% funded by the Uttlesford Community Project Grant. Diane and Kathleen to meet to discuss remaining funding.</li><li>• Diane reported that the Parish Council's NatWest Business Account will not receive monthly bank charges, rather a charge per item of 35p, with cash and cheques 70p per item. She proposed that for budgeted items under a certain amount she will make an automated payment otherwise will seek email approval from fellow councillors to make an automated payment. She will bring a suggested protocol to the next meeting.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was confirmed that the Parish Council has an interest-bearing deposit account. Diane was thanked for her work.</li> </ul>
<b>313.7</b>	<b>Planning and Enforcement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was not thought necessary to make any further responses regarding the Stansted Noise Action consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>313.8</b>	<b>Legal review of Polling Scheme/Annual Canvas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This review will be running from 1 October. It was agreed that the Village Hall should remain as the polling station for the village and Debbie will reply as such when asked.</li> </ul>
<b>313.9</b>	<b>Playground</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The wall damaged by a developer at the edge of the playground has now been fixed and Nick has removed the plastic fence. It was agreed that this could be kept in the fete barn. Nick was thanked for dealing with this issue.</li> <li>Harry has cut the hedge for the playground and will do so once more this year. He does not strim around the spinney every time.</li> </ul>
<b>313.10</b>	<b>Highways</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nick reported his frustration at the lack of response from Essex County Council regarding potholes in and around the village. Duncan recommended he email the Essex Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance, Councillor Lee Scott, detailing how our concerns and requests are being ignored.</li> <li>Nick suggested that the 30mph speed sign at the edge of the village should be moved further west giving time to slow down before entering the village. He will make a request to Uttlesford local transport panel.</li> <li>Kathleen asked if something could be done to deter parking on the verges which are in danger of being eroded, particularly over the winter, and would it be possible to install small concrete posts. It was thought as the verges are Essex Highways land it would not be possible to install posts but Debbie will send out a Mail to residents requesting that where possible they and their delivery vans do not park on the verges.</li> </ul>
<b>313.11</b>	<b>Footpaths and Grounds maintenance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harry reported that once the sickle mower had been hired he had been able to clear the footpaths easily. He expressed frustration at the lack of clarity on the path map and the assumption by villagers that he should be cutting the permissive paths (which are not part of the Essex County Council contract).</li> <li>It was decided that he should produce two maps: Map A. Paths covered by Harry's contract with ECC Map B. The permissive paths that he will cut informally.</li> <li>On this basis it was agreed that Harry should cut the paths again next year and should cut them earlier (start of June) He was thanked for his work this year.</li> <li>ECC Purchase order</li> </ul>

	<p>Harry to let Debbie have his invoice which can then be submitted to ECC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tree Warden. Although not in an official capacity Harry is happy to be the contact for tree clearing issues and will decide whether this can be done by volunteers in the village or needs to be reported to Essex CC.</li> </ul>
<b>313.12</b>	<p><b>Defibrillators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both machines reported to be in good order during August</li> </ul>
<b>313.13</b>	<p><b>Uttlesford Community Project Grant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kathleen reported that we have been awarded £2,000 to improve our storage facilities at the Village Hall which we must match-fund.</li> <li>A new ladder was installed last week which accesses roof storage space in the Village Hall</li> <li>She asked for approval to buy the storage shed which will be situated in the field next to the Village Hall. This was agreed.</li> <li>Kathleen asked if she could appoint Harry and John Walker as Project Managers for the assembly of the shed. This was agreed and that volunteers should be sought to help with the work. Kathleen was thanked for her work on this project.</li> <li>Kathleen will apply for the EALC funding for food support and winter warmth essentials. Last year £768 was received.</li> </ul>
<b>313.14</b>	<p><b>Welcome to Berden</b></p> <p>Eight booklets have been delivered so far and have been well received. Please let Diane or Kathleen know of new arrivals in the village.</p>
<b>313.17</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Acceptance of Office for co-opted Councillors</b> Kathleen and Harry signed their Acceptance of Office forms.</p> <p>Diane suggested a drive to recruit new Councillors as there will be two vacancies when Pete steps down at the end of the year. It was agreed that this should be announced at the post-fete drinks evening.</p>
<b>313.18</b>	<p><b>Meeting Dates 2024</b></p> <p>Debbie suggested that the number of PC meetings per year be reduced. It was agreed that eight per year could be reinstated and Diane will check back to see which months they were held on.</p> <p><b>Next meeting 9 October 2023</b></p>

[illegible]