

BERDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on **Monday 9 September 2024** at 8.00pm

Present: Duncan Murdoch, Harry Wadsworth, Diane Holt, Kathleen Merino, Janice Loughlin, Debbie Thomson

Public: John Walker, Amanda Coomber, Kate Shirley, John Groves, Rob Talks.

322.0	Apologies: Antonia Bolcas (unwell), Kerry Calder who has stepped down as Councillor, Cllr Ray Gooding
322.1	Declarations of interest: None
322.2	Approve minutes of Berden Parish Council meeting from Monday 8 July 2024: Proposed by Kathleen, signed by Duncan.
322.4	VE Day 8 May 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none">It was felt that the Beacon should be lit on 8 May, possibly a BBQ on Saturday 10 May. More research is needed on a flagpole. Debbie will circulate the official event document for discussion at next meeting.
322.5	Solar/Battery Units <p>Duncan reported as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Berden Hall: Permission has been granted by the Secretary of State for the development to go ahead. This is due to the Government's focus on renewable energy.Pelham Springs: Considering the decision on Berden Hall, a formal application is expected soon.Crabbs Green: Uttlesford DC has given approval on the access route. The rest of the decision is with East Herts.Greens Farm: With East Herts.East End BESS: Submission is on the way for large battery unit.
322.6	Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">The only outstanding appeal is the development in Bonnetting Lane. Inspector is likely to issue in October.Local Plan. The consultation period has been extended to 14 October. The best way to comment is online. The Parish Council commented on the previous draft regarding screening of Battery Units.Neighbourhood Plan: The Parish Council's consideration of creating a Neighbourhood plan is not worthwhile in view of the new Government's policy. Put on hold for now.
322.3	Berden Fete <p>Amanda Coomber, Kate Shirley, John Walker, John Groves and Rob Talks joined the meeting to discuss the future of the village Fete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Amanda reported that the committee did not organise a fete in 2024 but set up the I Love Berden JustGiving page which was well received. The funds raised by this have been divided between the Playground, Village Hall, Church and Berden charities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate suggested that a Village Community Fund be set up which could raise smaller amounts of money for individual items such as pond cleaning equipment. Currently there is £500 set aside for this. • John Groves reported that as a committee of four they are unable to organise the fete on their own and asked if it is time to consider other ways of raising money. • A discussion on attracting new volunteers followed and although a Parish magazine/Mailchimp campaign is not usually successful it was thought worth a final try. Diane suggested a formal announcement in the October edition with an end of October deadline. • John Groves suggested that Village groups work together and build on the success of recent Social Club events which many new villagers have attended, e.g. sell raffle tickets at a food evening or increase prices. • As the Social Club is not profit-making it was thought that this could potentially alienate users. • It was decided that an announcement should be made at the half-time break of the next Social Club Quiz Night concerning the future of the Berden Fete and that this should include an appeal for volunteers to come onto the Fete Committee if we wish it to go ahead for 2025. <p>Amanda, Kate, John, John and Rob leave at 8.55pm.</p>
322.7	<p>Finance</p> <p>Diane emailed the finance files to Councillors on 6.9.24. She highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of the £1,500 donation from the I Love Berden Fund for the Playground picnic table. • Pete has been reimbursed for the website. • The VAT for the new storage shed is still outstanding. • £800 has been budgeted as donations to the Village Hall and the Church. £400 to each was agreed. • As the Parish Council has contributed less than other groups to the new storage shed it was agreed that Harry could spend £100 on paint. • HMRC has been contacted re query over the Clerk's salary. <p>Just Giving Funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan thanked Kathleen for her picnic table proposal and approval was given to make the order.
322.8	<p>Highways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerry has agreed to continue with the Community Speedwatch group although she has stepped down as Councillor. • Remaining Councillors can fill in as necessary on the Traffic and Speeding Steering Group.
322.9	<p>Footpaths and grounds maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harry has cut the hedges once around the Village Hall and Simon's Field and twice around the playground. • Footpaths had one cut in mid-June. A discussion followed on how it might be possible to manage a second cut at least on the most popular routes. Duncan suggested involving the community, but the scythe would need to be hired for a second time. Debbie to check the agreement with Essex County Council.

322.10	Grants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathleen reported that she is not currently making any applications as available grants are not relevant to Berden. There was some discussion around the Community Safety Development fund and whether CCTV on the back of the Village Hall and in the Playground would be a good idea in view of recently reported anti-social behaviour at both. Kathleen has forwarded the information to David Williams. The Woodland Trust is offering free tree packs to parish councils in Essex. Harry will discuss this with John Burton and consider if there is any suitable land in the village.
322.11	Berden Emergency Plan Carry forward to next meeting.
322.12	Neighbourhood Watch Carry forward to next meeting.
322.13	Playground <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RoSPA inspection. The full report highlighted the picnic tables which will now be replaced with the funding from I Love Berden. Bob Mason has stepped down from making his weekly checks on the playground. Debbie to check with RoSPA to see if this is still a requirement.
322.14	Defibrillators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In good working order in August checks.
322.15	9 and 13 Gawlers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Janice reported that number 13 is a long-term issue. A skip has been delivered for rubbish clearance. She is unaware of problems at number 9.
322.16	Cllr Loughlin did not have anything to report after summer break. She was not at the most recent Planning meeting. Next meeting 21 October 2024.

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