

BERDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on **Monday 7 April 2025** at 8.00pm

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

Public: John Walker

327.0	Apologies: None
327.1	Declarations of interest: None
327.2	Approve minutes of Berden Parish Council meeting from Monday 24 February 2025: Proposed: Kathleen, Seconded: Harry. Signed by Duncan.
327.3	Berden Fete Diane was thanked for being the Parish Council representative on the fete committee. She will be attending the next Fete Committee meeting.
327.4	VE Day 2025 John Walker ran through the programme of events for 8 and 10 May. There will be one further advertisement in the May parish magazine.
327.5	Solar/Battery units <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Berden Hall Farm (solar) - Nothing further re discharge of planning conditions, however a young hedge has been planted along the boundary between the solar panel and 'meadow' areas.• Pelham Springs (solar) – Nothing new to report.• Crabbs Green 3/22/0806 (BESS) – Planning application has been running for over two years.• Greens Farm 3/21/0969 (BESS) – A new traffic management plan has been submitted which still overlooks concerns. Berden Parish Council has commented.• Hixham Hall 3/24/1953 (BESS) – The application is being considered by East Herts planning committee on 16th April with a recommendation for grant of permission. The outcome is to be reviewed.• Stocking Farm TBC (BESS) – This is in East Herts. No planning application yet, just a pre-consultation notice.

327.6	<p>Neighbourhood Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the lack of response from Manuden regarding a joint plan with Berden we can assume that this will not go ahead. Duncan will raise it at the Parish Meeting on 2 May. • The hearing for the Uttlesford Local Plan proposed draft will start on 10 June. There is nothing specific on solar development.
327.7	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Potash Barn – planning permission has been granted. • The Crump – application for small extension. The Parish Council has no objections.
327.8	<p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diane reported that the year-end accounts have been prepared and she will bring the audit forms to the next meeting for signing. • The fixed assets register has been changed to include the new parish clerk laptop and the new picnic tables. A new line has been added to keep track of Repair Café expenses. • HMRC has issued a P60 for Debbie. • Diane thanked Janice for the Ward Members’ initiative grant which paid for the new parish clerk laptop. • Diane noted that the grant had been left off the payment log and this will be amended. <p>Duncan thanked Diane for her work preparing the accounts.</p> <p>Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debbie queried the amount of damage cover in the Parish Council insurance which is due for renewal on 1 June 2025. Debbie to arrange a time with Diane to review the numbers.
327.9	<p>Footpaths and grounds maintenance</p> <p>Footpath cutting tender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One application has been received for the path cutting contract for 2025/26. It was agreed that this should be accepted – it allows for two cuts. However it was thought best to wait and see the best time for the first cut due to the very dry weather in March/April. <p>Essex Forest tree initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Harry applied for 180 trees (to be supplied as bare rooted whips) there was no response to his request and by March it was too late for them to be planted anyway. It was agreed that this was disappointing. Janice suggested asking Ray to follow up on this initiative to see how it was managed.

	<p>Litter pick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that the litter pick in March was a success and was noted that a lot of the waste material was from cars, potentially the result of pothole damage. Also used nitrous oxide cylinders. <p>Duncan queried who had dealt with the rotten tree overhanging the path between the Pumping Station and John Burton's field. He thanked Harry who confirmed that he, along with John Oglesby and his son, had cut it back.</p>
327.10	<p>Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathleen has been sent a grant opportunity from Wickes, offering building supplies but with no specification on how much or by when. Harry said that paint for the Village Hall and wood preservative would be very useful. He will let Kathleen know colours and quantities. Harry mentioned that he had been successfully treating objects around the village i.e. the old picnic tables, fences and the small shed at the Village Hall with wood preservative. Duncan said that in due course there may be grant opportunities for community infrastructure from UDC once they process their fees for planning applications.
327.11	<p>Repair Café</p> <p>Kathleen reported on progress so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Village Hall is booked for 7 June and 13 September. Insurance has been purchased as has membership of the International Repair Organisation (which has supplied a 40 page manual). Weston has created a booking form on berden.org.uk but will speak to Pete about creating its own tab on the website. Weston will also upload our details on to the Int'l Repair Organisation's website. An ad will be in the May parish magazine. Still to do: Borrow 2 x sumup machines from the Fete committee on Repair days and prepare H & S and Risk Assessment documents. Hayden (electrician) has offered to lend a PAT tester.
327.12	<p>Playground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been informed that the annual inspection is booked in for May or June. Weston has been providing fortnightly playground inspection reports. They have highlighted a bin enclosure which is not fixed to the wall/ground. This was not considered to be a problem but Weston will contact Pete Hewitt for advice. Harry reported that the picnic tables are now ready for use and he is very pleased with the quality. Two new bases have been built with paving slabs (provided by Andrew Nelson). One base had to be extended. Harry thanked John Walker and Sue and Dave Hennell for their help with the work.

327.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The old picnic table is now in Simon's Field (now there are two there) and has been treated with wood preservative.
327.14	<p>Berden Emergency Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathleen has updated the plan and queried whether it should be in the public domain or be kept confidential. It was agreed that all Councillors and the Parish Clerk should have it on their computers and also hold a hard copy. It was not considered worthwhile to have a redacted copy on the website. Debbie will include this in the next parish magazine report. Debbie to request outstanding phone numbers of local parish clerks for inclusion in the Emergency Plan. <p>Defibrillators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported to be in good order in March.
327.15	<p>Annual Parish Meeting 2 May 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invitations have gone out to Village organisations. Debbie to put poster on parish notice boards inviting people to attend.
327.16	<p>Parish Clerk laptops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Walker queried what should be done with old Parish Council laptops which are no longer fit for purpose (the last two). Weston agreed to erase the hard drives for both and Debbie will take them to Saffron Walden Recycling Centre.
327.17	<p>Cllr Loughlin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Janice was sad to report that the Ward Members Initiative grant has been discontinued. Full Council meets at the end of April after which we will understand more about the implications of devolution for Essex. <p>AOB</p> <p>Harry reported some damage to the goal in Simon's Field which he will fix with some cable ties.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 9.35pm</p> <p>Next meeting Monday 19 May 2025</p>