

MINUTES OF THE BERE REGIS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9th JANUARY 2014 AT THE DRAX HALL, NORTH STREET, BERE REGIS, COMMENCING 7PM.

Present: Cllrs R Pitcher C Maunder S Munnings A Duncanson
 L Alderman B House T Maunder L Fairhurst
 M Howard County & District Cllr P Wharf

Chair: Cllr I Ventham

Clerk: Mrs A Crocker

In attendance: 19 members of the public, PC Jon Stuart and PCSO Luke Taylor

The Chairman welcomed Mr Gary Thomas from the Post Office and invited him to speak on the current situation with our local post office and what is happening with post offices in general. Mr Thomas reported that Central Government has decided they want to invest in the modernisation of the Post Office so, if the retail outlet containing the post office counter is open, then the post office counter will also be open. The staff will be permitted more flexibility. £1.34billion has been committed to improving the whole of the network. Someone will now only be able to leave the system if there is someone else willing to take over the post. There is a commitment to maintain 12,000 post offices across the country. In Bere Regis there are a number of applicants interested in taking over the facility, so the future looks promising.

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council has become involved as we are concerned that the facility is maintained and we have tried to drive up the local use of the post office, as well as all other local businesses. The Parish Council has registered an interest but only as a last resort if all other interests fail.

Cllr Duncanson asked if the removal of the screens would compromise the staff safety. Mr Thomas said this would not be the case as the type of till now used only allows a certain amount of money to be contained and the balance is held in a safe. The number of attacks on offices with no screen has been proven to be less than those with a screen. Once the screen is removed, additional security features come into play.

Consultation – the Post Office will engage with the interested parties who will have the opportunity to submit a business plan and then attend interviews. If the business is to be moved to another site, there may be issues regarding the revised location, such as disabled access. There will be 6 to 10 weeks of consultation to allow people to feed in their thoughts regarding opening times, location, etc. and this would then be fed back at a public meeting.

13.141 Public Participation

13.141.1 Part night street lighting - Nik Taylor addressed the meeting (a copy of his letter is available on request). He expressed concern over the switching off of the lights between mid-night and 5.30am, particularly the lack of illumination at junctions and for the safety of those residents who work late, arriving home after mid-night. He suggested several options. The debate had occurred via social media but this had been in order to gain local opinion. Jon Parker also expressed a road safety concern regarding lack of lighting at junctions. Jackie Macintosh spoke in favour of turning the lights off saying this is a rural community and turning the lights off affects a very small number of the community. People will adapt. Martin Debenham felt that the issue of driving from a lit area to an unlit area is irrelevant as we do this all the time as this is a rural area. Alison Debenham agreed with the issue regarding living a rural community and suggested balloting the individual roads to see if they wanted lighting. The Chairman reminded people that the major routes are still lit – these are West Street, Rye Hill and the area around the Cross. Tony Bates reiterated Jackie's comments regarding this being a rural community. Lyn Symmons said that, living where she does in the village, there has never been any lighting so she always carries a torch. People can adapt to the change if they wished to do so. The Chairman highlighted the apparent lack of knowledge that this was going to

happen. It was advertised in the Parish Magazine and there was an enormous amount about it in the local press. Cllr Wharf informed the meeting that the net revenue for DCC to provide all services in the county has been reduced by £100million. There had been a trial of the part night street lighting conducted in 2008 in 3 areas of Dorset and, in 2010, a Cabinet decision was made that this would be rolled out across the county. The Purbecks were the last area to have the lights turned off. There is the Dorset For You publication that goes to every household in the County and this advertised the proposal in great depth. The Police & Crime Commissioner instigated a review which came back with the fact that there is no evidence that the lack of lights has led to an increase in crime. There have been just 3 petitions in the last 3 years for the lights to be turned back on and all have been rejected. It would be necessary for the Emergency Services to make a formal request for the lights to be turned back on. If a parish council was thinking of taking on responsibility for street lights, it should be noted that the annual maintenance of each street lamp is £130 pa and we have 150 lights in the village. The parish council would then also have the responsibility of replacing any damaged light, at a cost in the region of £1,000, and any damage has to be dealt with within 2 days.

Mr Taylor pointed out that there are people who rely on the lights outside bedroom windows, especially the elderly. The turning off of the lights came as a shock, mostly because people were unaware that it was going to happen and thought there had been a power cut.

PC Jon Stuart said that the issue came up quite publicly last year but stating that there is no proof that crime increases when the lights go off. Since the last meeting, there have been 2 incidents – 1 damage to fencing and 1 breaking into a vehicle – neither of which could be directly attributed to the lights being turned off.

13.141.2 North Street – Alex Eddy expressed concern regarding traffic in North Street and felt the recent count was put in during the quietest time and in the wrong place. She asked if the Parish Council could look at the fact that the Sports Club has been closing later and there have been incidents of people leaving the club quite drunk and very noisy. Such incidents seem to be increasing in number. The Chairman suggested PC Jon Stuart pay a visit to the Club and the Parish Council will also speak to the organisers. Regarding the traffic count - we will carry out a count annually at the same time as the Rye Hill count in May each year. Cllr Fairhurst pointed out that we had originally asked for the survey to take place in August but, despite repeated requests, it was eventually put in during October.

If noise on the streets and fighting has increased recently, PC Jon suggested calling 101 and reporting it immediately.

13.141.3 Back Street – Moira Fripp thanked the council for getting the tree cleared from Back Street and commented that the fence on Souls Moor has now been mended.

13.141.4 Bells Appeal CD – Linda Lamont reported that the CD for the bells appeal will be ready at the end of the month and asked if the Parish Council would like to have their logo put on it and if we would like to be mentioned on the cover. She went on to report that, due to a number of unfortunate errors, the article regarding the launch in the Purbeck Gazette is giving the incorrect date. The CD launch will be in the Lower Drax Hall on Sunday 2nd February from 2pm to 5pm. The Chairman felt that the role of the PCC and Parish Council may get muddled if our logo is included. This was agreed by all councillors.

13.141.5 Gravel Extraction on Bere Heath - Richard Smith gave a brief report on the history of proposed gravel extraction on Bere Heath. His property adjoins the area ear marked for the extraction. Planning for the mineral extraction is in the hands of DCC. A public enquiry was held in 1998 and the inspector asked for the Philliols Farm site to be removed from the proposed list of sites. (A full copy of Mr Smith's report is available on request). The consultation process is underway and all comments need to be in by 13th February. Cllr Wharf reported that a decision will be arrived at by September 2014 and will then go before the independent inspector. He urged everyone to take the time to look at the documents and comment.

13.141.6 Beamister Court - Ian Small, a resident of Beamister Court, requested the Parish Council's assistance in solving the on-going problem of people parking vehicles across, or partially across, the entrance to the courtyard making exiting difficult and often dangerous. Rather than having yellow lines, he asked if it would be possible to have the white "H" lines drawn across the entrance. Cllr Wharf reported that, to try and get yellow lines would take a considerable amount of time and would be a costly exercise. However, getting the white lines is quite a simple process. The Parish Council will look into getting this done.

ACTION: CLERK

13.142 To receive apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

13.143 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2013

A copy of the minutes had been given to all members prior to the start of the meeting. Cllr Alderman proposed them to be a true and accurate representation of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Fairhurst and agreed unanimously. The minutes were signed by the Chairman in the presence of the meeting.

13.144 Matters arising from those minutes, not covered by this agenda

13.144.1 Dog mess – A note had been put in the Parish Magazine but no-one had come forward with any suggestions as to how to deal with this on-going problem.

13.144.2 Church notice board – Mr Bill Steggles has kindly offered to make a notice board for the church free of charge.

13.144.3 New school site – The Chairman reported that he has been in touch with Dr May's people but has yet to receive a response regarding the extra acre needed. The MSP meeting is on Tuesday 14th and Cllr Wharf stated that we do need a response before then if possible. It should be noted that the error in not purchasing the additional land is that of DCC and not the Parish Council. The Parish Council is merely acting as a go-between in order to facilitate a possible transaction.

13.144.4 Cutting of fencing – Not only has the Tilhill deer fencing been cut recently, but the fence surrounding the SNCI section of Souls Moor was also cut. These are just acts of mindless vandalism. The Tilhill fence has been repaired but it does make it very difficult to try and negotiate for the extra piece of land. PC Stuart reported that there is not a great deal that can be done to find who did it and if anyone has any gaming cameras on the land then the Police would be happy to look at anything that comes up. Tilhill may be putting cameras on their land in the near future.

13.144.5 Christmas Trees – Cllr C Maunder reported that he has raised a list of all those who had trees in 2013 and will put something in the Parish Magazine this coming month suggesting a donation for next Christmas.

ACTION: CLLR C MAUNDER

13.144.6 CarShare Scheme – Cllr Ventham put a note on Facebook after the last meeting to see if anyone would be interested in getting involved but no-one responded. There is a car share scheme run by DCC, so if anyone is interested they can join that one and we will not worry about a local one.

13.145 To receive declarations of interest in accordance with S94 of the LGA 1972 and confirm any requests for dispensations

Cllr House declared an interest in the gravel extraction item as she has land in the vicinity of one of the proposed sites. No other interests were declared and no requests for dispensations had been received.

13.145 To receive the County & District Councillor's Report

13.146.1 County Council Report

Superfast Broadband – Bere Regis has been moved up from phase 6 to phase 3 so we could have the facility by the end of the year.

The budget for County is likely to go up by 1.95%.

The works order for the SID for Rye hill has gone to the supplier for the 20mph outside the school. It is hoped that it will be in place quite soon although no date has been given.

Bovington – Cllr Wharf met with the camp commander who raised a couple of issues. Someone has pointed out that, under the Highway Code, tracked vehicles must not go more than 20mph on a tarmacked road. He has asked if the parish would support the existing agreement allowing tracked vehicles to exceed this limit outside the restricted zones. It was agreed that, as a parish, we have no objections to the vehicles travelling faster than 20mph in the de-restricted area and the Clerk will organise an appropriate letter.

ACTION: CLERK

WWI Commemorations – Cllr Wharf had also asked the camp commander if they would be interested in being involved with our events. Bovington will be holding their own commemorations, mostly regarding the introduction of the tank in 1916.

North Street commercial site – Cllrs Ventham and C Maunder, together with Cllr Wharf met with Peter Scarlet to discuss the possibility of DCC looking to use the North Street as a possible hub for future activities.

13.146.2 District Council Report

1.95% rise in Council Tax which is the same as last year.

Bere Regis Neighbourhood Plan grant will be coming up on the PDC agenda next Tuesday (14th). Cllrs Ventham, Wharf, Munnings and the Clerk will be meeting with PDC on Monday 13th as they have said they do not believe the Plan in its present form is in conformity with the Local Plan.

Donkey Lane – There was a small model aircraft factory on one side of the lane which has fallen into disuse and is now an eyesore. The District Council have served notice on the landowner who they cannot find. One option is to compulsory purchase the plot and, if they do, PDC will come back to the Parish Council to ask what we would like to see happen to the site.

13.147 Key Topics

13.147.1 Neighbourhood Plan Update

The draft document has gone out to everyone who helped with the original drafting and a number of other people who were not involved but have an interest in the Plan. We have received several sensible suggestions that will be broadly adopted. PDC have highlighted a problem with non-compliance with the Core Strategy. Confirmation of the £5,000 grant will come up at the District Council meeting on Tuesday. Cllr Fairhurst will try to attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

13.147.2 Part Night Street Lighting

The Chairman asked if members thought we have sufficient grounds to recommend an exception to the DCC policy. Cllr Pitcher said he felt that residents are free to raise a petition if they wish,

regardless of what the Parish Council think. Cllr Wharf reported that he had talked to DCC and was told it is not possible to stagger the lights, nor is it possible to make an exception for one street. If there is a petition, with valid reasons, the Parish Council would be able to consider it at a future date. Cllr T Maunder felt that, provided the junctions are lit, he was happy with the current situation. The Chairman drew members' attention to the FAQs on the Dorsetforyou web site which answered several of the points raised by Mr Taylor. Members felt that there is not an issue with personal security and we must go along with the decision to reduce the lighting. There are no particular grounds for making an exception at this point although, should residents raise a petition, the Parish Council will consider the content and review its decision.

13.147.3 Gravel Extraction in Bere Heath

Cllr Pitcher asked if there was any information regarding the amount of traffic movements from the sites. Cllr House reported that she intended attending the meeting on the 13th January. At the moment, we have very little information and need to get more. Cllrs C and T Maunders will also attend the presentation on Monday. As the Parish Council does not meet again until the 13th February, the Clerk will ask for a one day extension in order to be able to respond with more knowledge to hand and this will be included in the February agenda.

ACTION: CLERK

13.148 Finance

13.148.1 To approve monthly expenditure

The following payments had been requested:

Anthony King	Lengthsman – December 2013	1562	1144.07
Tradewind Graphics	Replacement sign at Play Park	1563	19.50
CXL		1564	
Mrs A Crocker	January 2014 wages & expenses	1565	775.43
HMRC	January PAYE & NIC	1566	106.00
JACS	Grit bin – Tower Hill	1567	171.60
BR Scout Group	Grant re Remembrance Sunday	1568	130.00

The total amount requested from the Precept is £2,347.50. The payments were proposed by Cllr Munnings, seconded by Cllr Howard and agreed unanimously. The cheques were signed by two councillors in the presence of the meeting.

13.148.2 To confirm reconciliation of accounts

A copy had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. There were no comments made or queries raised.

13.148.3 To review the position against budget to date

A copy had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. There were no comments made or queries raised.

Although discussed at the December meeting, the Precept of £41,500.00 had not been formally adopted by the Parish Council. Cllr Tim Maunder proposed the Precept is accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Munnings and agreed unanimously on the understanding that the £5,000 grant is received from PDC.

Public Loans Board – The Clerk reported that a cheque had been raised and sent to the PWLB in settlement of the balance due. However, it had been returned as the PWLB are unable to accept payments other than by electronic transfer and the Parish Council is not able to pay in this manner.

As we only have three more payments to go, any savings made by the early settlement would be lost in the bank charge for carrying out the transfer. It was agreed that we will continue to pay the final three payments and maintain the status quo.

Transfer of Elder Road land – Whilst reviewing the transfer of the land from PDC to the Parish Council, the solicitors had highlighted the possibility of the Parish Council becoming liable for chancel repair. This stems from medieval times where land, originally owned by the Church, retains an obligation to repair the Chancel of a Parish Church. The Church is believed to be currently investigating which properties are subject to this liability and, once this has been established, they are registering the liability at the Land Registry. We have been advised to take an insurance policy against this at a cost of £10. It was agreed that the Parish Council would go ahead and take out the policy.

13.149 Planning & Housing

Cllr Wharf took no part in any discussions relating to planning applications.

13.149.1 Planning Applications:

6/2013/0696 – EE Ltd, retention of 25m high telecommunications mast

The Planning Working Party had discussed the application via e-mail and recommended no objections.

13.149.2 Tree Work Applications:

No new tree work applications had been received.

Cllr C Maunder proposed the recommendations of the PWP are accepted and this was seconded by Cllr T Maunder and agreed unanimously.

ACTION: CLERK

13.150 Village Environment

13.150.1 Business Group Update

Cllr Duncanson spoke to John Scott who is going to be moved to Wareham hospital. The group will now get everyone back together and begin working again.

13.150.2 Post Office Update

Nothing further to add from what has already been said.

13.150.3 Defects

Thanks are extended to Jon Parker for making the tree on the crossroads safe.

- Shitterton Bridge – Cllr Howard felt that this was still not secure. DCC Rights of Way have carried out some work on the bridge and it was agreed that, with the stream at its present level, no further action would be taken and the Parish Council would take another look at this in the spring.

13.150.4 Souls Moor

P & J Fencing, the company who put the fence up, have offered to carry out the repairs.

Clr Pitcher will be meeting with the person who owns the sheep in the next 2 weeks and she will decide if she wants to take up the grazing rights. It is important that grazing animals are on the site for this summer in order to maintain the SNCI land in its original form.

13.151 Police, Traffic, Public Transport and Roads

PC Stuart reported that villages nearer to Poole are experiencing a spate of burglaries. He asked everyone to make sure that sheds, homes and vehicles are all locked and no valuables are left on show. In response to questions, it was reported that no further progress has been made on the cattle thefts and there have been no further thefts of livestock.

13.151.1 Bere Regis NeighbourCar Scheme

A meeting was held tonight for volunteer car drivers and, disappointingly, only 3 turned up. Cllrs Alderman and House attended the surgery during the week and they were invited them to a Patient Participation meeting on the 15th. A request has also been made for a donation towards the NeighbourCar scheme but no response has been received regarding this. Another meeting will be held for the clients and the launch will be held on the 1st March with the help of Popp.

ACTION: CLLRS ALDERMAN/HOUSE

13.151.2 Community Speedwatch Update

PC Jephcott will be back on duty on the 13th January and will then sort out training for volunteers.

13.151.3 Roads and Transport – Roads in the parish are in a pretty poor state and are starting to break up in areas eg opposite the play park. Cllr Wharf suggested reporting defects as quickly as possible. If there is a genuine danger, defects should be reported via the PEM system. The yellow and white lining across the parish is also in a very poor state.

ACTION: CLERK

20:39 Cllr Wharf left the meeting.

13.152 Children & Youth

13.152.1 Play area & general update

Clr Pitcher reported that there will be a skate park consultation on the 23rd January at the Drax Hall, commencing 7.30pm. The aim of the evening is to encourage new people to join the committee. This will be advertised via Facebook.

The Chairman suggested that a complete overview plan be drawn up to cover all the green spaces that are coming together around the Bere Stream area. To do this, an over-arching sub-group will have to be created. Cllrs Pitcher and Ventham said they would both be happy to take control of this group. An article will be included in the Parish Magazine to invite other people to join in. Such a group would gain a much better chance to achieve more grant monies.

ACTION: CLLR VENTHAM

13.152.2 Banter Group update

Clr Duncanson reported that everything was going well but the bank account still needs to be sorted out.

13.153 Community Liaison

Nothing to report.

Cllr Ventham informed members that an offer has been received from the Drax Arms to say they are proposing to hold a dinner once a month in aid of the various groups in the village. The last one held raised about £200.

The new recycling scheme is due to commence in March. A reminder will be included in the parish magazine.

13.154 Correspondence Received and meetings attended

A list of all correspondence received since the last meeting had been issued to all members. There were no further items to add and no comments were made. No meetings had been attended.

13.155 Communications

Items to be included in the Parish Magazine:

- Dr Mays fencing and the cutting thereof
- Post Office
- New recycling bins
- Street lighting
- Gravel extraction
- Community Car Scheme
- Open Space project

The Chairman will be away from the 21st January to 24th February and Cllr Fairhurst will chair the February meeting.

13.156 Items for the February meeting

- Gravel extraction at Bere Heath
- Neighbourhood Plan meeting with PDC

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.52 pm

Signed:

Dated: