

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL (BPC) HELD
REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL 2020 AT 8.00 PM USING ZOOM**

Present: Jackie Emery (JE), Nicky Gould (NG), Malcolm Kenward (MK), Sue Taylor (ST), Lloyd Thompson (LT), Simon Greenwood (SG), Jon Millbank (JM), Henry Le Fleming (HLF), Charles Metcalfe (CM) [Chair] and Alison Stevenson (AS) [arrived late]

In attendance Rosemary Robertson (RR) and Jemma McCarthy (JsM) Clerk to the Council.

0066. Public Participation

Nick Beecroft spoke to represent agenda item 8 – planning permission for Trent House. Commented that it was a small house with a green roof and electric car charging. Noted there is a need in the village for smaller dwellings. Represented that they have submitted amended drawings to address the Council’s previous comments – the new drawings also show the distance from the bedroom door to the front door is 8.27m.

0067. Declarations of personal or pecuniary interest

Cllrs JE, MK, ST, LT, CM, HLF, JM declared a personal interest in Item 15 Energy as members Frack Free Balcombe Residents’ Association. Cllr SG declared a pecuniary interested in Item 15 Energy.

0068. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 March 2020

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 March were agreed as a true record.

0069. Matters currently being pursued, report from the Clerk

- Planning approvals:

DM/20/0634	Hollow How Stockcroft Road	Hazel(T1) - Fell)	No Objection
DM/20/0537	Breaklands London Road	Conservatory to side elevation	Grant

- Balcombe Cares:
- Haywards Heath Golf Course Development – Over email agreement as per the emergency powers in place, it was agreed in April to add our name to the 5 Parish letter and to send a response on behalf of Balcombe Parish Council to the relevant planning officer. This was submitted before 10th April but the Clerk has not heard anything since that date.
- Clerk’s Laptop – in the March meeting, the Council approved expenditure on a new Laptop. Working with MK, the Clerk identified a suitable replacement and noted the total cost would be around £850 (£600 for the laptop and £250 for Microsoft office).

0070. Urgent Matters

Noted that all activities in Bramble Hall have been put on hold given the CV19 crisis. Agreed to enquire if a rent rebate/free can be awarded from the Landlords.

0071. Review of emergency measures as detailed in the scheme of delegation

Unanimous resolution to continue using the emergency measures and another review will be conducted in the May meeting.

0072. Planning – applications considered

NUMBER	Site/ ADDRESS	Proposal
DM/20/1195	19 Oldlands Avenue	Three Limes to front of 18 and 19 Oldlands Avenue to re-pollard
BPC Response: No objection		
DM/20/0916	House In The Wood Redbridge Lane	Demolition of existing boiler room, construction of new single storey rear extension, new windows in existing and new rear elevation wall.
BPC Response: No objection		

DM/20/0816	Trent House, London Rd	New single story house within existing garden
<p>BPC Response: Balcombe Parish Council notes that this property falls within the Conservation Area. The Council acknowledge and appreciate the clarification in the drawings that were submitted after their last comments (April 2020).</p> <p><i>This application prompted much discussion during amongst Balcombe Parish Council, but the final decision with a majority of 5 to 4 was that the Council objects (does not support) this proposed planning application. The majority of the council (5 votes) felt the design was a compromise and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Village.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, Balcombe Parish Council objects to this application.</i></p>		

DM/20/1138	5 Watermead	Oak (T1) Reduce lower limb by 3-4m. Group of smaller trees (G2) with trunk diameter less than 3 inches to be removed.
<p>BPC Response: The Council would like to flag the original planning conditions relating to the development of the Watermead properties at Dean Land Shaw, Jobs, Balcombe (planning ref DM/15/5038). Condition 11 states "Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation."</p> <p><i>Regarding the Oak tree, the Council notes that the reduction of the Oak tree limb does not constitute the removal of an entire tree and as such Balcombe Parish Council has no objection to this work being carried out.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding the groups of smaller trees, Balcombe Parish Council noted on the photograph submitted that there was an intention to replace this with another option, and as such Balcombe Parish Council has no objections to this work being carried out.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding the Holly bush, Balcombe Parish Council noted this seems to be a healthy plant and would not support this being wholly removed when it could be cut back instead.</i></p> <p><i>The Council would also ask that consideration is given to any nesting birds before any tree works are carried out.</i></p>		

0073. Financial: March Cash Book Receipts & Payments

March Cash Book Receipts & Payments were circulated and noted. March represents the year end and a variance to budget was expected and noted. Agreed for the Finance Committee to meet separately to perform a yearend review and reforecast the 20/21 Budget.

Finance – general – it was agreed that a Grants policy would be drawn up to summarise the process and protocol under which Balcombe Parish Council will review and approve grants. *[JM to action this]*

0074. Covid 19 - Update

Balcombe Parish Council has been liaising with groups throughout the village to coordinate an integrated response, Balcombe Cares;

- We have over 100 volunteers helping around the village.
- Patient Prescription Pick up – continues to be a much desired service and is running well.
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0075. MSDC Local List Review

Resolved to respond with the following comments:

- **Renewable sources of energy** – Balcombe Parish council noted the obligation to 'use renewable sources of energy' (DP39 Sustainable Design & Construction) is not on this list. The Council think it should be included, especially as it is already in the District Plan.
Experience from the plans regarding the Rydon development in Balcombe have shown there has been no attempt to incorporate any renewable energy in many developments and we think this is something that should more strongly encouraged/required.
Perhaps this also needs an additional emphasis through highlighting to developers that this is not currently being followed and yet ought to be as is included in the District Plan.
- **Disability Access** – it has been noted in our Parish, that developers seem to disregard the disability access requirements and therefore we would appreciate if these could be more strongly represented in the local list.
- **Community Consultation** – The Balcombe Parish Councillors raised concerns over the observation of community consultation. We noted the planned Public Meeting for the proposed development of Haywards Heath golf club was cancelled (due to Covid19) and the deadline for comments was not extended. Balcombe Parish Council felt these actions were not in the spirit of community consultation as this meant a portion of society would have been unable to have their views heard (those self-isolating and without access to internet).

0076. Street lighting – Unmetered Supply Renewal

Quote received from the Utilities broker was reviewed and agreed that additional information is required. Actions agreed were:

- Benchmark quote against government guidelines
- Enquire with other local parishes who they use for their supply and obtain comparison quotes
- Understand the impact on fixed tariff if consumption reduces
[HIF to action this]

0077. Review of Workflow software

Noted Zoom is working well. Resolved to do a test with Teams to see if more user-friendly and appropriate than the Zoho workflow solutions. *[JM & MK to action this]*

0078. Reports from Groups

Neighbourhood plan –

- Community led housing – BPC attended a meeting with the contact from the Community led housing and are awaiting more information regarding the purchase price and potential costs of the scheme.

Youth/recreation/well-being –

- Well-being: Noted that Balcombe Stores is doing a terrific job ensuring residents are well stocked with groceries. Noted that a foodbank collection has been organised by a village resident.

Energy –

- Streetlighting update covered earlier in meeting. No update on Oil.

Traffic –

- Significant drop in number of cars in the road. Noted there was a bicycle accident on the corner of Mill Lane and the private road.

Access & Rural – Increase in fly tipping noted but instances continue to be reported to MSDC

Business & Commercial – noted there are a variety of grants / reliefs being offered by the government to small businesses (rate and council tax relief).

0079. Football club refund

BPC to refund football club for the time they have been unable to use the pavilion and pitch. MSDC have agreed to refund to the Council the pitch element which the Council paid to them as part of the Rural Management Agreement.

0080. Approve end of Probation period for Jemma McCarthy - Clerk

Unanimous resolution to approve end of probation period.

0081. Insurance renewal – under fixed price contract

Notification of renewal received. Noted BPC is still within the 3 year fixed price contract, so this was approved.

0082. Update on Victoria Road/ Operation Watershed

Resolved to re-engage with Operation Watershed with the details of the land ownership as identified from the Land Registry reports.

0083. To provide an update re: postponement of Annual Parish Meeting (20 May 2020)

Clerk reported that NALC has provided guidance to enable postponement of Parish Meetings.

0084. Update on the Victory Hall use of Grant (as deferred in March meeting)

No update

0085. Improvement of Outdoor Gym equipment at the Rec (as deferred in March meeting)

The gym equipment at the Rec is owned and maintained by MSDC. Resolved to enquire with MSDC to identify if any improvement could be carried out and if S106 monies are available to do so.

0086. To consider requests funding for school (as deferred in March meeting)

Clarified that no request has been received to date, however Clerk added this as an agenda item to prompt discussion and agreements on a grants policy. Refer to minute 0073.

0087. Correspondence

To/From MSDC

- M1 Press release – Garden waste collections suspended
- M2 Notification of Southern Housing Rent Increase
- M3 Grants for Small Business
- M4 Notification of eligibility for Small Business Grant (Bramble Hall)

To/From WSCC

- W1 West Sussex Record Office
- W2 Road Closure – Copyhold Lane
- W3 Road Closure – London Road
- W4 West Sussex Library – Online
- W5 WSCC Plea to Drivers

Other

- O1 Parish in Bloom 2019 Report
- O2 Urban Tree Challenge

0088. Exchange of Information

- The council recognised and thanked Rosemary Robertson for her service over the last 7 years as Parish Clerk and wished her well in her retirement.
- Current Chairman, Charles Metcalfe announced that he would not be standing for Chair again, as he was hoping to move to Portugal during the next 12 months.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 22.13 pm.

**THE NEXT REGULAR PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY
27 May 2020 AT 8.00 PM HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM**

Signed..... **Date: 27 May 2020**