

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 4th December 2024

Present: Cllrs, Alison Stevenson (AS), Manouchehr Nahvi (MN), Nicky Gould (NG), Jo Blundell (JB), Nick Major (NM), Lloyd Thompsett (LT), Paul Williams (PW) and Ian Black (IB).

932. Apologies for absence

Helen Caudrey (HC), Massi Smith (MN), and Nick Beecroft (NB)

933. Declarations of personal or pecuniary interests in any item listed on the agenda

None declared

934. Public Participation

1 member of the public present to speak in objection of the proposed planning application: Stumble Cottage DM/24/2770. The resident had consulted with a planning agent to assist with the objection. With permission a summary was provided to all members of the Parish council via the clerk; and the comments were noted.

The Council then agreed to bring the planning application up the agenda for discussion.

932. Planning - to consider the following applications

Number	Site/ Address	Proposal	Assigned
DM/24/2770	Stumble Ridge, Oldlands Avenue	Removal of existing outbuilding and holiday let building. Erection of detached dwelling with associated landscaping and access.	Nicky
Balcombe Parish Council objects to the planning application and the principle of a back garden building. They commented that the proposed property's garden would be outside of the built up area, and raised concerns regarding its proximity to ancient woodland. BPC commented that the property could easily be converted in to a larger property at a later time due to the proposed layout and inclusion of additional specific purpose rooms. The building of the new house would mean a loss of the Air B&B that contributed to the local economy. Concerns were also raised over emergency access if required and they queried the access via a shared track.			
DM/24/2191	Brantridge Park, Brantridge Park Drive	Change of use of the swimming pool to part private / part commercial to allow for use by swim clubs and community groups.	Lloyd
Balcombe Parish Council do not have any objections to the proposed change of use.			
DM/24/2404 Corrected No. DM/24/2222	Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street	Proposed erection of a detached garage, workshop & store/office over for the use of Worth Glamping Ltd (Amended description 15/11/2024).	Ian
Balcombe Parish Council's previous comment/s still stand			
DM/24/2404	The Croft, Stockcroft Road	T1 – Ash – Reduce height by 2-3 meters. Reduce lateral branch over highway by 2-3 meters. Reduce lateral	Paul

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		branch overhanging neighbouring driveway by 2-3 meters.	
Balcombe Parish Council do not have any objections			

933. Presentation from ‘Action in Rural Sussex’ (AiRS) – presented by rural housing enabler Louise Halpern and acting CEO Tom Warder.

Unfortunately due to sickness both Louise and Tom were unable to attend. It is hoped that this can be rescheduled in the New Year.

934. Chairman’s announcements

None

935. To approve the minutes of the meetings held on: 6th November 2024

The minutes were agreed and signed by the chairman.

936. Matters currently being pursued, report from the Clerk

- Clerk informed councillors that Gemma Wallis (new assistant highways assistant for Mid Sussex) would be taking over all pending Community Highway schemes; which came previously under the remit of Christine Ellison who now has a new role. Gemma has agreed to update BPC as soon as she has received further information.
- Sadly it appears that shortly after refurbishment and reinstatement at the end of August the fingerpost on the Paddockhurst Lane/West Hill junction (far end of Mill Lane) disappeared. After investigation the sign has been found and the clerk will make arrangements for it to be recovered to determine the extent of damage. WSCC have raised a white lining job as a conclusion to the lack of road markings and signage at the junction in absence of the fingerpost. Its was stated however that this would be low priority in terms of the works.
- Flying Tipping on Redbridge Lane was reported to MSDC.

937. Planning - updates

Number	Site/ Address	Proposal	Comments
DM/24/2282	Wellwood, Stockcroft Road	Three Lime Trees along Oldlands Road. T2 And T3 cut back apical growth to previous pollard point. T1- Remove to ground level.	No objection. Decision Date: 12 th November 2024
DM/24/2510	Oldland, Oldlands Avenue	Variation of condition 1 of planning application DM/22/2730 - to amend the approved plans to allow for design changes. Increase the rear/side extension and part garage conversion rather than two storey garage conversion.	Application has been withdrawn.

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DM/24/2291	Boundary House, 1 Boundary Road	Proposed single storey extension.	Granted Permission on 12th November 2024
DM/24/2349	Troytown Cottage, Haywards Heath Road	Ash Trees X3 - (T1,T2 AND T3)- cut back by approx. 1-2 Meters and remove overhanging branches over car port.	No Objection. Decision Date: 20 th November 2024
DM/24/2450	34 Casteye Cottage, Haywards Heath Road	Trees in a Conservation Area. Sycamores group of 5 (T1) - Remove. Oak Tree (T1) - Remove.	No Objection. Decision Date: 13 th November 2024. Comment from tree officer: The oak is diseased, and the basal cavity is not good, particularly with the presence of root decay fungi. This tree would be better removed for safety.
DM/24/2412	Neville House, London Road	Tree Surgery Proposal: 1x Pine Crown raise lower growth to a height of 4 meters. Reduce 1x overweighted limb encroaching on neighbour garden to eliminate stress on the branch and to avoid breakage. Reduce the left side of the crown by 2m, consisting of four main branches to re-balance the crown and improve aesthetics.	No Objection. Decision date: 20 th November 2024
DM/24/2487	5 The Nurseries	Retrospective application for a bespoke shed built in rear garden.	Permission Granted 2 nd December 2024
DM/24/2603	Balcombe Stables, Redbridge Lane	Certificate of lawfulness to confirm on the public record that development has commenced relating to planning permission DM/20/2026	Decision Date: 3 rd December 2024

938. Planning - To consider Planning applications received after publication of the Agenda
DM/24/2404 The Croft – see above

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939. Financial - To review and approve November's Cash Book Receipts & Payments

November's cashbook receipts and payments were agreed.

940. To debate the following motion: "The Parish Council Opposes the closure of the GP Surgery in the village".

Unanimous decision by all councillors present to oppose the closure of the GP Surgery.

941. Update on Surgery Closure from working group.

Cllr AS provided a summary of the involvement to date of the Surgery working group as well as the Ouse Valley surgery's input and the role the Integrated Care Board (ICB) have played.

942. Balcombe Parish Council to sign off letter response to the ICB.

The letter in response is now in its final stages and the working group are aiming to send the final version on Monday.

943. To comment on the proposed Traffic Regulation order: West Sussex County Council proposes to make a permanent Traffic Regulation Order that will introduce a 40 MPH speed limit on High Beeches Lane/High Street, from its junction with London Road (B2114) at Handcross, north-eastwards to its junction with the B2036.

Balcombe Parish Council Response: BPC fundamentally support any measure to reduce speed. We are pleased that his proposal has come forward as in the past, the police were not in favour of 40mph as they had a policy of not restricting speed where it was likely to become a limit broken or where average speeds were already low. The logic being that the limit becomes a target and people think it is safe to go faster than they would do without heeding the road conditions. Forward visibility has also been improved and fatal accidents reduced by keeping the high hedges cut back. Our concerns are the signage and change in speed limit when you get to the junction with the B2036 and changing from 40 to 50mph, and the lanes leading off the B2110.

BPC are aware of the TRO (WSCC-526227927) submitted to reduce the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph from the Cowdray Arms to the north of the village and would hope that TRO will come into being concurrently; thus harmonising the speeds on both roads. Likewise Redbridge Road and Crawley Lane are also 'unrestricted' zones. The transition from 40mph to unrestricted speed along narrower, twisty roads has the potential to cause drivers to believe it is safe to go faster than the road conditions would dictate. Please consider how this can be managed.

944. Receive an update from - Recreation, play, youth, halls & schools/ Neighbourhood Plan/ Planning & New Development/ Traffic/ Public Transport/ Energy/ Admin and Assurance, Health.

Recreation, play, youth, halls & schools – No updates

Neighbourhood Plan – No updates

Planning & New Development – Cllr LT stated that the discharge of conditions for the Shanly Homes development had been updated on the MSDC portal with regards to the village car park and lighting bollards etc. BPC are awaiting further responses to questions put to them. Confirmation has been received from Shanly Homes' Land Director that the groundworker will be principal contractor until their project manager starts, which will be in early December.

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When the project manager starts a notice board will be installed on the hoarding that provides contact details for certain operations. Contact with the school will also be made to carry out a safety talk and to offer a visit for school children. Contact details are to be provided, for Shanly Homes so that members of the village can contact if needed and that a door knocking exercise is undertaken.

Cllr IB confirmed that Balcombe Estate's position had changed, and the Late Cllr Simon Greenwood's Estates finalised, so a meeting was suggested between the Estate and the Parish Council. Cllr IB volunteered to assist in organising the meeting.

Traffic – The Haywards Heath Road has now reopened and the work to the section of road by Copyhold Lane has been completed. South East Water were called to a burst water main close to the entrance of the fracking site on the London Road. This was almost 2 weeks ago and traffic lights still remain.

Public Transport – Trains - Cllr MN stated that Thameslink's franchise will not be nationalised and contract is due to end in April 2025. Uncertainty at this point if Thameslink will continue, however at the moment the additional station car park can not be progressed. It may however be beneficial to meet with Balcombe Estate as they are the land owners of remaining land which has been proposed for development.

Energy – Street Light Electricity provider 'SSE' have now taken payment of all backdated fees for the new Inmetered electricity contract, which commenced in August 2024.

BPC have received confirmation from Frack Free Balcombe Residents Association that they have now successfully reached their target for fundraising enabling them to attend the scheduled court hearing in January 2025.

Admin and Assurance – No updates

Health – See items above re: Surgery closure.

945. How to respond to the prospective loss of the Handcross Community Bus Service

It was suggested that a meeting be organised with all interested parties in attendance to discuss. Slaugham PC raised the communication and therefore the meeting suggestion will be put to them.

946. Correspondence

947. Private and Confidential

To consider the temporary exclusion of the public and press due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

948. To consider the items in the confidential report.

The Clerk left the room and the Council members considered the items in the confidential report. Cllrs will write to the Clerk with the decisions made.

949. Exchange of Information

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE
Wednesday 8th January 2025 – 8pm - Bramble Hall