

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 8th January 2024

	Present: Cllrs, Alison Stevenson (AS), Helen Caudrey (HC), Massi Smith (MN), Nick Beecroft (NB), Manouchehr Nahvi (MN), Nicky Gould (NG), Jo Blundell (JB), Nick Major (NM), Paul Williams (PW) and Ian Black (IB).			
951.	Apologies for absence: Lloyd Thompsett (LT), and Jenny Edwards – Mid Sussex District Councillor			
952.	Declarations of personal or pecuniary interests in any item listed on the agenda JB & MS – Personal interests in planning application - item 8 – Land Adjacent to Balcombe House			
953.	Public Participation 1 member of the public present to speak about the parking situation on the lower part of road of Newlands. The member of the public stated that there seem to be frequent commuters parking in the resident spaces. The resident asked the question about whether it was possible to have the road space changed to permit parking. Cllr NG responded to the member of the public's question and stated that the yellow lined section was placed to discourage non-resident parking but if further changes to the road were to be made this would need to be through a Traffic Regulation Order. Clerk offered to confirm ownership of the lower marked parking spaces and additional signage was suggested to discourage commuter parking.			
954.	Chairman's announcements None			
955.	To approve the minutes of the meetings held on: 4th December 2024 The minutes were agreed and signed by the chairman.			
956.	Matters currently being pursued, report from the Clerk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A message has been left with SMART Gardens to ascertain availability to help the Parish Council with refilling of grit bins. The Bus Shelter that will be erected outside the Rectory/Half Moon Inn is now in the paint shop stage, and we hope to have this installed soon. 			
957.	Planning Updates			
	Number	Site/ Address	Proposal	Comments
	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 branch overhanging neighbouring driveway by 2-3 meters.	Permission granted 24 th December 2024
	DM/24/2404	Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street	Proposed erection of a detached garage, workshop & store/office	Permission granted 17 th December 2024

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 8th January 2024

		over for the use of Worth Glamping Ltd (Amended description 15/11/2024).	
DM/24/2814	Land at Bowders Farm, Haywards Heath Road	Cellnex Connectivity Solutions Ltd	Application withdrawn
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

958.	Planning - to consider the following applications		
	Number	Site/ Address	Assigned
	DM/24/3011	Land Adjacent to Balcombe House, London Road	Nick Beecroft

Balcombe Parish Council's objection highlights concern about the proposed 'ornamental' gates and their potential impact on the character and accessibility of the area. Their key points include:

1. Private Estate Feel: The gates are seen as replicating a private estate however, the development is not a private estate, and the public should not be given the impression that it is. To give the impression of exclusivity conflicts with the principles of the Neighbourhood Plan. Private streets are not appropriate in this village setting and could create an undesirable distinction between the public and private areas.

The gates to Balcombe House to which this proposal is compared is some distance for the entrance and the two would not be visible together.

2. Public Access: The council emphasizes that access to the new development, particularly to the Village Car Park, should remain open to the public. The gates may hinder this, restricting free movement and possibly reducing the accessibility of the car park that is intended to serve the community. A requirement of the Design Guide for Balcombe adopted with the Neighbourhood Plan requires all new developments to have a pedestrian route through them to avoid them becoming purely private domain. For this reason, a small cut through path is provided at the western end of the close allowing casual walkers to walk through the development and keep the area as free access to the general public. The gates would conflict from this. Furthermore, a right of way for public access through the site should be made in order to implement this guidance set out in the NP.

3. Street scene: While acknowledging the gates' aesthetic appeal in appropriate context, the Parish Council suggests that their presence in this instance would undermine the effectiveness or intended use of the Village Car Park, potentially detracting from the community-focused design of the development. Other roads, closes and cul-de-sacs in the village are not gated and it would be out of character with the rest of the village if this one

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 8th January 2024

was. Most closes are of similar sizes, Foxwells, Bramble Mead, Combers, Troymede.... None are gated.

4. Hedgerow: The hedgerow should be reinstated along the visibility spays at this junction in order to accord with the policy for the site of retention of hedgerow along the road boundary.

In summary, the objection suggests that the ornamental gates could negatively impact both the public access and the overall design objectives of the development and thus should be reconsidered.

DM/24/2912	Equestrian Yard, London Road	Proposed conversion of stables and timber barn to one residential dwelling and change of use of land to residential curtilage.	Nicky
Post Meeting Update: The response was deferred until February meeting, following the receipt of updated plans and information from the applicant.			
DM/24/2869	Oldland, Oldlands Avenue	Proposed rear/side single storey extension	N/A
BPC commented on this previously – no change just application resubmitted by applicant in line with MSDC planning instruction.			

960.	<p>Planning - To consider Planning applications received after publication of the agenda</p> <p>Planning applications had been received since the publication of the agenda for:</p> <p>DM/24/3124 – Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street - Demolition of existing porch, construction of new porch and two storey rear extension, together with associated internal and external alterations.</p> <p>DM/24/3073 – Land West of Yewtree Farm, London Road – Lawful Development Certificate. Proposed formation of hardstanding for use in association with existing agricultural building.</p> <p>It was agreed to defer comments until February's meeting to allow for residents to make comment/representation. Extensions for comments to be received will be requested.</p>
961.	<p>Financial - To review and approve December's Cash Book Receipts & Payments</p> <p>December's cashbook receipts and payments were approved.</p>
962.	<p>To agree precept amount for Financial Year 2025-26.</p> <p>It was resolved to increase the precept in line with approximately a 3% rise in inflation. The precept will be confirmed at £79,508 for financial year 2025-2026. The Parish Councillors voted 7 in favour and 3 voted against the increase; (which included Cllr MS voting against).</p>
963.	<p>Agree financial budget 2025-26 (or draft).</p> <p>The Cllrs looked at the budget presented to them by the Clerk but although agreeing the precept amount, they requested this be deferred to February's meeting.</p>
964.	<p>To note the Interim Internal Audit Report 2024-25 comments including audit findings on page 12.</p> <p>The audit findings on page 12 were presented and read out to the Cllrs and noted. Clerk to facilitate actions in preparation for completion internal audit for financial year 2024-2025.</p>

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 8th January 2024

965.	<p>To consider grant application from St Catherines Hospice for £500.</p> <p>The grant was approved by all Parish Council members present as several villagers have benefitted from their services.</p>
966.	<p>To approve Discretion Policy (pensions).</p> <p>The discretion policy was approved and Clerk to provide a copy to Hampshire Pensions for their record.</p>
967.	<p>Update on Surgery Closure from working group</p> <p>NHS Sussex have confirmed to the Parish Council that the decision on the Surgery Closure has been pushed back 8 weeks to the middle of February. NHS Sussex have provided the following statement: <i>NHS Sussex has confirmed that it will be considering the feedback that has been shared about the proposed closure of Balcombe Surgery.</i> <i>It is recognised that feedback has been shared through the GP practice and through our community feedback, and all of this will be given due consideration.</i> <i>NHS Sussex will be fully considering all the feedback and the plans and expect to discuss this in mid-February.'</i></p>
968.	<p>Receive an update from working groups:</p> <p>Recreation, play, youth, halls & schools – No updates</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan – no updates</p> <p>Planning & New Development- Shanly Homes have confirmed that Senior Site Manager 'John Christensen' has now been appointed at the development. From Monday 13th January Shanly Homes become principal contractor. Their site team are on site now and will be undertaking a letter drop to all neighbours to introduce themselves. They are due to erect hoarding shortly and once this is up; they will be able to install the information board with contact details.</p> <p>Traffic- A meeting to be scheduled between WSCC and BPC to discuss Safer Routes to Schools.</p> <p>Public Transport-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk has sent an email to Slaugham Parish Council's clerk regarding the Handcross bus and is awaiting a response regarding a suggested meeting with all parties concerned. • Cllr MN stated that Govia Thameslink are likely to get an extension on their contract after the current one expires on 1st April. MN will try to obtain a meeting with them to see if they would like the Parish Council to pursue additional station parking. • At the December meeting Cllr IB offered to set up a meeting with Balcombe Estate. Cllr IB to obtain a response from the Estate and propose a meeting to take place with BPC. <p>Energy- The Street light contractors have confirmed that the lantern outside the telephone exchange has now been supplied with electricity by UKPN and is working. Streetlights relaced the lantern in July 2024 with a new LED lantern after UKPN's contractors removed the old one when a new pole was placed. Column 57 in the twitten between Troymede and Combers has received a new bulb and is operational once more, after it is suspected to have been vandalised.</p> <p>Admin and Assurance- No updates</p> <p>Health- As above 'update on Surgery Closure from working group'.</p>
969.	<p>To note and make further representation to the responses received from developer Shanly Homes in relation to the proposed Village Car Park (Land Adjacent to Balcombe House development)</p>

MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD IN
BRAMBLE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 8th January 2024

	Cllr NB has received a further response from Shanly Homes’ Senior Planning Manager with regards to answers to some of the outstanding questions. An updated plan of the Village car park has also been received. Cllr NB discussed progress with the Cllrs but confirmed some questions remain unanswered and has volunteered to respond.
967.	Correspondence NALC sector standards survey request – Cllrs to complete via link shared by the Clerk.
969.	Exchange of Information

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE
Wednesday 5th February 2025 – 8pm - Bramble Hall

Signed Chairman:.....

Date: