

ECCHINSWELL, SYDMONTON AND BISHOPS GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ordinary meeting held at Ecchinswell Village Hall on

Wednesday 17th June 2024, commencing at 19:30 hours

Present: Cllrs Stamp (Chair), Dain, Debenham, Parkes and Hardy-Giles.

In attendance: Sarah Jones (Clerk), 1 member of the public.

Item		Action
1	Apologies: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Sadler, Borough Cllr Izett and County Cllr Thacker.	
2	Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Minutes of previous meeting and actions arising To receive and confirm the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 12th June 2024, and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 25 th June 2024, and matters arising. All Cllrs agree them as a true record, and they were signed by Cllr Stamp.	
4	Public participation One member of the public was present. He had attended a previous meeting to observe and subsequently sent an overview of himself and experience with a view to joining the council. Cllr Dain proposed he be co-opted onto the council, Cllr Parkes seconded, and he was invited to join the council at the table.	
5	Borough Councillor's Report There was no report as Borough Cllr Izett was not present.	
6	County Councillor's Report. There was no report as County Cllr Thacker was not present.	
7	Planning <p>a) New applications: none A resident had reported that a planning application previously discussed by the parish council was on the DCC list for a visit on 10th July. ESBG PC had not been advised of this and the clerk is in the process of contacting BDBC Planning to find out why the parish council were not advised accordingly – DCC lists are sent weekly, and this item was not on it.</p> <p>b) Decisions: none</p>	SJ
8	Matters for discussion <p>a) <u>Website update and new phone progress</u> The phone app to give the parish council phone a separate number has been agreed and the process to set this up is moving forward. The website pages have been agreed and this project can move forward. A resident has kindly sent numerous photos of the parish which can be used.</p> <p>b) <u>SID purchase progress</u> The clerk has contacted various local clerks to see where they have purchased their SIDs and if they are happy with them, and the service they received. Once this information is collated a decision on where to purchase can be agreed. Cllrs agree the SID needs to be solar powered.</p> <p>c) <u>Allotments and tool purchase update</u> The new strimmer has been purchased and works very well. It is currently in Cllr Debenham's garage and a permanent safe place to store it is being sought. Cllrs Stamp and Debenham will try and seek a viable solution and report back at the September meeting.</p> <p>d) <u>Sustainability and Environment working party</u> Cllr Sadler is away at present so she and Cllr Dain will work on this and report back at the September meeting.</p> <p>e) <u>Pond update</u></p>	SJ MS/PD KS/MD

	<p>Advice has been sought as to whether weevils are still needed as there is also a large amount of duckweed in the pond. The advice has been to proceed with the weevil purchase as the azolla is still present. ESBG PC remains on the waiting list for weevils.</p> <p>f) <u>BGCA and EVH updates</u></p> <p>Cllr Dain reported that unfortunately the pre-school due to start in September have had to pull out because they cannot get the staff they need. Other tenants are being sought. The treatment room has been going well but has met a few difficulties due to suppliers, but it is hoped this will be resolved soon.</p> <p>The Youth Club is running very well with numerous local volunteers and young people attending. There are paid posts for the Youth Club being offered which it is hoped will generate some interest.</p> <p>Cllr Debenham reported that the EVH committee are having regular meetings every 2 months at present.</p> <p>There are a number of groups with keys to the hall which can cause difficulties with the alarm.</p> <p>The solar panel project has been forced to stop due to (1) there being a policy issue and (2) a planning application needs to be approved before the companies will provide quotations. It was agreed the Chair will write to Cllr John Izett and ask if the parish council can help by using the BGCA application as a guide as they have solar panels. Cllr Stamp will do this.</p>																									
9	<p>Finance</p> <p>(a) Electronic Payments made in July:</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>S Jones</td> <td>Clerk's salary (June)</td> <td>£898.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D McClelland</td> <td>Litterwarden – (June)</td> <td>£241.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R Wherry</td> <td>Litterwarden - (June)</td> <td>£183.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC</td> <td>PAYE – RW, DM, SJ</td> <td>£107.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D McClelland</td> <td>Expenses</td> <td>£20.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Premier Grounds</td> <td>Village maintenance</td> <td>£483.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Debenham</td> <td>Expenses allotment strimmer</td> <td>£218.98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business Stream</td> <td>Allotment water</td> <td>£138.80</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: right;">Total £2,291.28</p> <p>The clerk advised that the payment to Cllr Debenham has not been paid as yet but will be done asap.</p> <p>Also, an invoice has been received from BGCA for the hire of the hall for 3 months, Cllrs agreed the clerk can pay this immediately.</p> <p>(b) The actual/against budget until July was circulated and agreed.</p> <p>(c) Bank signatories are being resolved, with 2 ex-Cllrs being approached as they need to sign to be removed. This is nearly sorted out so will not remain on the agenda.</p>	S Jones	Clerk's salary (June)	£898.30	D McClelland	Litterwarden – (June)	£241.00	R Wherry	Litterwarden - (June)	£183.00	HMRC	PAYE – RW, DM, SJ	£107.60	D McClelland	Expenses	£20.00	Premier Grounds	Village maintenance	£483.60	Cllr Debenham	Expenses allotment strimmer	£218.98	Business Stream	Allotment water	£138.80	MS
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10	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>28.06.24 – West Berks Council; Designation of a New Neighbourhood Plan Area – Thatcham Parish; noted by ESBG PC</p> <p>07.07.24 – Resident, objection to large Pet sign – the resident will be contacted and advised unfortunately this is WBC not BDBC and therefore they and Greenham Parish Council will need to be contacted.</p>	SJ																								
11	<p>Highways and Rights of Way</p> <p>The manhole covers between Featherbed Lane and Rooksfield have been stolen but work is taking place to resolve this.</p> <p>2 footpath bridges have been repaired.</p>																									

	<p>The lengthsman has raised some of the drain covers but the rest need to be resolved. The footpath in Bishops Green on the lengthsman work order has not been cut back and needs to be addressed.</p> <p>The speed sign in Bishops Green has been previously reported as has been down for nearly a year. This will again be reported to HCC.</p> <p>The 3-way sign near the bridge in Ecchinswell needs to be sorted out as it is nearly illegible. This will be reported.</p> <p>A new bin has been installed at the request of BGCA however it has been bolted into a movable cement slab which has already been moved. This slab needs to be cemented in and HCC will be contacted.</p>	SJ SJ SJ SJ
12	<p>New Business</p> <p>a) <u>BDO Conflict of Interest declaration</u> The external audit papers have been submitted. The conflict of interest declaration was signed by the Chair and clerk and will be submitted to BDO.</p> <p>b) <u>Cllrs areas of responsibility</u> The form was reviewed, and Cllrs looked into the areas they wished to work on. The form will be updated and circulated to all.</p> <p>c) <u>2nd Quarter Safety Review and tree works update</u> The 2nd quarter safety review was circulated and raised no issues. Cllr Dain reported she had scribed for the tree surgeon so he could carry on his tree audit. The overall report said there was nothing dangerous and ESBG PC now have a good baseline assessment of the trees on their land. Some work needs to be carried out, such as removal of ivy from the trunks. Volunteers can help with some of these works and are being sought so a working party can be set up. It was recommended the tree surgeon returns in the winter to check the trees for fungus; this was agreed by Cllrs.</p> <p>d) <u>Pothole audit for parish</u> Cllrs will proceed with this over the summer; maps need to be provided and the clerk will do this. The end aim is to give HCC an overview of all potholes in the parish, whether previously reported or not.</p> <p>e) <u>Journalist missing person story</u> The clerk advised she had been approached by a journalist who was writing the story of a missing person from Sydmonton. An inaccurate story had been written and the clerk advised it would be published. Cllr Stamp advised that all further communications from this person, or similar contact, should immediately be referred to him. HALC had also been contacted in this instance and their help and advice invaluable.</p>	SJ SJ SJ
13	<p>Communications – newsletter (Cllr Dain) and other media output It was agreed the draft minutes do not need to be published this month. Items for the magazine were agreed.</p>	
14	<p>Review of calendar items Calendar items for August and September were noted.</p>	
15	<p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11th September 2024 at 7.30pm at Bishops Green Village Hall. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.48pm.</p>	

ACTIONS:

The clerk is in the process of contacting BDBC Planning to find out why the parish council were not advised accordingly – DCC lists are sent weekly, and this item was not on it

It was suggested HALC should be approached in case they can provide any help with the SID purchase; the clerk will contact them.

Cllrs Stamp and Debenham will try and seek a viable solution for the strimmer storage and report back at the September meeting.

Cllr Sadler is away at present so she and Cllr Dain will work on this and report back at the September meeting

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The resident will be contacted and advised unfortunately this is WBC not BDBC and therefore they and Greenham Parish Council will need to be contacted.

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The speed sign in Bishops Green has been previously reported as has been down for nearly a year. This will again be reported to HCC.

The 3 way sign near the bridge needs to be sorted out as it is nearly illegible. This will be reported.

This slab needs to be cemented in and HCC will be contacted.

The conflict of interest declaration was signed by the Chair and clerk and will be submitted to BDO

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