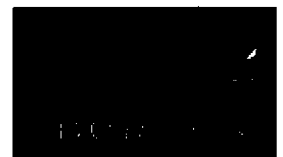


BORDEN PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF BORDEN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 25th MAY 2023

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The chair reminded attendees that this is the Annual meeting of the Parish which he would be presiding over and that everyone else in attendance (except for the Clerk) were here as residents. As the Annual Parish Meeting is not a Parish Council meeting it is not conducted in the same way or governed by the same rules as a Parish Council meeting, and residents are permitted to make statements on relevant matters discussed during the meeting, however, the Chair asked that if they had anything additional to raise that this was done at the end of the agenda items, and advised that any resolutions passed do not bind the Parish Council.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

In attendance; Cllr Bolas, Butlin, Hepburn, Jemmett, Cole, Sims & Evans.

3 parishioners in attendance.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Sims gave his report as outgoing Chair.

I would like to begin by thanking the members of our Parish Council for the time and commitment they have provided in supporting me during this past year as chairman. Their time, for no remuneration, is critical to maintaining our business for the present and planning for the future. Special mention must be made to my Vice Chair John Fassenfelt who stepped up as chair during my unexpected period of medical absence. Thanks also to Cllr Jeremy Bolas who has performed the role of mentor during my first term of office.

I would especially like to commend our new clerk Teresa Millum who has received a baptism of fire during her first year in office and has responded with true diligence and commitment in the role.

Our year began with the final throws of the pandemic and still witnessing the effects that Covid has by continued re-emergence with some people. Whilst results do not appear to be as severe as the original strain the continued threat does still cause concern and occasional disruption which we will continue to monitor and deal with accordingly.

The parish building assets of the village hall and sports pavilion continue to be maintained. The work at the village hall steered by Cllr John Hepburn and his excellent committee ensure that the building is fit for the various purposes enjoyed by parishioners. The pavilion committee perform likewise as explained in the separate Sports Association annual report.

A great deal of our annual expenditure is spent on the Playstool children's park, Centenary gardens and overall grounds maintenance. These open spaces including the woodlands, nature reserve and children's play area are extremely well used and an asset to public wellbeing. The Playstool toilet is an additional benefit well used by visitors and families particularly those with young children. The existing convenience has become tired through constant use, and such is the advantage of this facility the council are seeking avenues of financial support to install a modern purpose-built replacement.

The Queens Platinum Jubilee and the King Charles III Coronation celebrations both held at the Playstool with the lighting of our newly installed beacon were capably steered by Cllr Brian Jemmett and his small group. These proceedings coupled with Borden's most successful fete executed by the tireless fete committee headed up by Bev Ward was a tremendous blessing to public moral particularly following the restrictive pandemic.

The fete committee also provided excellent entertainment for the Parish Councils Christmas tree lights when they were switched on in the presence of an attending record crowd. The social boost that this small band of fete committee volunteers provides cannot be underestimated and it is my privilege as a member of the Parish Council to ensure their continued support.

To further mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee the council planted an oak tree at the Playstool complimenting the previous coronation oaks in situ. This was achieved with sponsorship from local business which was a welcomed financial benefit. A coronation oak tree recognising King Charles III reign is being arranged.

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The Parish Council continues to observe the Wisles Lane development through the monitoring group set up to achieve this aim. This committee meets monthly and consists of five Borden Parish Councillors, representatives from Swale Borough Council, DHA Planning and Barratt David Wilson Homes. There have been numerous successes achieved by this well-intentioned gathering, too many for this report, so I commend the reader to the monitoring groups monthly reports on the Parish Council website.

Whilst on the subject of planning the Parish Council has continued to view, discuss and comment, where appropriate, on every planning application notified within the parish. Parishioner's individual opinions are welcomed and always taken into account when decisions are made as to relevant points that need to be taken to Swales Planning Committee.

Our Highways Improvements Plan, which is a long-term project, continues forward. Cllr John Fassenfelt leads admirably on highway issues, and he persists in ensuring that the maintenance of our signs, road markings, hedges, junctions and pavements are all to the approved standards. The problems caused by housing developments, the potential closure of the Key Street A249 slip and the Maidstone Road/Oad Street link as well as rat running are not lost on John and his team as they continue to monitor all aspects of concern.

The Friends of Borden Nature Reserve oversee this parish asset and I am very appreciative of their time and efforts. The newly provided nature reserve report written by Sue Trueman is a welcomed explanation of this natural and well used benefit to our area. Cllr Nicola Butlin plays an excellent part in ensuring the Parish Council is well versed in the maintenance of this peaceful retreat.

It was with admiration and pride that I was able to present Cllr Eileen Harrison with a well-deserved community award from the Kent Association of Local Councils. Eileen's commitment to numerous Borden groups along with the many years served as a parish councillor is testament to her achievement in winning this accolade.

Finally, I would like to assure parishioners that we are in a healthy financial state to meet our current commitments. Whilst this monetary statement covers our obligations, future projects will need to be carefully considered during this current scarce monetary situation. The council as custodians of parish finances will continue to be prudent in our expenditures.

The Chair thanked Cllr Sims for his contribution as Chair over the past year.

4. COUNCILLORS MEETING ATTENDANCE RECORD

The Clerk gave an overall update on Councillor meeting attendance.

5. ANNUAL REPORTS – SWALE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS; KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Reports not received.

The Chair would like to write to the Borough & County Councillors regarding attending this meeting and if unable to attend to send apologies.

Cllr Butlin suggested that a monthly report is also required prior to the monthly Parish Council meetings.

6. FINANCE REPORT – RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Clerk gave an update on the Parish Council finances by going through the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR) 2022/2023.

7. BORDEN PARISH HALL REPORT

Cllr Hepburn gave the update from the Parish Hall Committee.

The Hall occupancy has now increased even more than last year, and as a result income is at a reasonably high level to help cover the large increases in utility bills.

The planned Phase 1 of the toilet refurbishment has been completed with the upgrade to the ladies' toilets incorporating water saving and energy saving devices. It is hoped that Phase 2 of the refurbishment, gents and disabled toilets, can be achieved within the next year.

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A carbon monoxide/CO2 detector has been added in the kitchen. This device is linked into the alarm system and will alert members of the committee to any problems via their mobile phones thus making sure that the hall is safe even if not occupied at the time.

8. REPORT BY BORDEN SPORTS ASSOCIATION REPORT

Cllr Sims gave the update from the Sports Association.

Borden Sports Association continues to host both village football and cricket teams whom play at the Playstool sports field through their respective seasons.

Thanks must go to the sports committee consisting of Roger Pudner, Kevin Smith, David Roche and Knocker Williams who commit their free time to the running of this group. A special recognition is extended to Roger and Kevin who work tirelessly each week on the pavilion infrastructure and sports field ensuring the playing pitches are at the high standard required for their respective matches. Without the commitment of these gentlemen a sports programme at Borden would not be possible.

The men's football team which play on Saturdays had an exceptional year winning the Kent County League Premier Division title, the highest position the club has held in the entire history of Borden Village Football Club. Whilst credit goes to the entire squad a special mention must be made of the two managers. Conner Twomey and Matt Rowe's stalwart dedication and managerial direction has driven the team to the successful place achieved. The premier title is testament to their commitment and hard work.

Full details of the coming season adult matches, once scheduled will be found on the website:- <https://www.bordenvillagefc.co.uk/>

The football under eights team play in the Medway District Youth League. This is a non-competitive Sunday morning league side with fixtures being played on the newly formed smaller lower Playstool pitch. Appreciation must go to Sam Stone whose tireless commitment encouraging sport at this young age is to be applauded. The team move up to under nines next season with home games still being played on Sunday mornings.

The Sunday league cricket side had an excellent season with numerous wins and points gained. They finished runners up in the Kent Village League Division 3 and look forward to a competitive season this year.

The Saturday cricket side continue to play occasional friendly matches due to the lack of numbers available and are always looking for new players to bolster the side.

It is hoped that should players be forthcoming then a team will be developed to enter into one of the local Saturday Kent leagues.

The cricket statistics & club information particularly for new interested players can be viewed at www.borden.play-cricket.com

Anyone interested in playing regular cricket is asked to contact the cricket section via the details on the website.

I would like to thank the monthly 'Knit and Natter' group whom use the pavilion for their regular meetings. Wendy Walters-Wills of that gathering does an excellent job of giving the pavilion a deep clean each time which is a service much appreciated.

The Parish Council is to be thanked for installing new showers in the changing rooms as the existing ones were from the original 1980's build and were in desperate need of an upgrade. The opportunity was also taken to install a cost saving kitchen water heating system for the benefit of the numerous users taking advantage of this asset.

As the pavilion is now used for meetings by several local groups it was obvious that the lack of a heating system had an adverse effect on the welfare of attendees. The Parish Council thankfully subsidised a new air condition heating system which was installed to rectify this shortfall.

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To ensure new heating costs will be reduced and with a view to reducing our carbon footprint a successful grant application was obtained from Councillors Baldock and Hampshire for loft installation which was installed by the committee.

The committee continue to be fully committed to maintain this excellent parish sports facility and with the continued grateful assistance of the Parish Council the future appears positive.

9. REPORT BY KALC REPRESENTATIVE

Report not received.

10. HERITAGE REPORT

Cllr Hepburn gave an update from the Heritage Group.

The group funds are at a satisfactory level after a very successful quiz evening. Thanks go to Eileen and David Harrison and Val, Trevor, Dan Skinner and family for organising the event.

The Heritage morning drop in at the Parish Hall every second Thursday in the month has proved to be very popular. A programme of talks, visits and events has attracted good audiences with different speakers coming along giving talks and presentations.

Borden Heritage Group, with the help of a donation from Nicholas Hampshire, provided a wooden seat which has been fitted in the bus shelter in The Street. A commemorative plaque is being organised.

The Heritage Committee is in need of more members to expand our range of activities and projects. The Heritage Group took part in a volunteer day at The Forge on the 8th May 2023 to possibly encourage people to join the group and help.

Thanks go to the committee for their support and hard work during the year.

11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON BORDEN SPEEDWATCH

The Chair gave an update on what the Parish Council were hoping to achieve from the Speedwatch programme.

Chestnuts Street, Danaway and near Harmans Corner is in place, and the Speedwatch organiser is trying to get more areas included.

The unofficial 'slow down for Borden' signs that have been put up on Borden Lane and Wrens Road were mentioned and KCC highways have been made aware so that they can remove them.

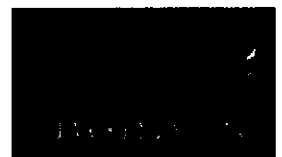
The parking of vehicles that have been causing an obstruction on both Borden Lane and Bannister Hill was discussed and Cllr Sims advised that to be an offence a vehicle needs to be seen by Police when driving on to a pathway to park, however, once parked there is the offence of obstruction, which would be a Police matter to deal with.

There was also a general conversation around all the diversions in the area.

12. PARISHIONERS COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

- A house window has been damaged by a stone on Wises Lane from a lorry believed to be from the Wises Lane development, and the resident wanted advice on where to go with this.
The consensus was to contact BDW directly about this matter - the Clerk will send the email address.
- A question was raised asking if there had been a change of land usage for the horse paddock on Wises Lane to allow, quad bikes, child's playground, breakers yard and a drugs emporium.
After a discussion it was suggested that the resident try to contact the owner of the field regarding the issues, and Swale Borough Council's website has a page to report a noise or nuisance in Swale area – the Clerk will email the link to the resident.
It was also suggested that the resident keep a diary of dates, times etc. and any know drug dealing is reported directly to the Police.

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- A resident in attendance is part of a global outreach charity called RRT. They do things from food boxes to Ukraine to assisting Newington Parish Council with litter pick and hot breakfast, and wanted the Parish Council to let them know if there were any little jobs around the parish like litter picking, hedges etc. that they could support with. The resident also wanted to thank the Parish Council for doing a good job and particularly wanted to thank Cllr Fassenfelt for dealing with a pothole when he was in office, that he had reported and had now been fixed by KCC.

As the new Chair, Cllr Bolas asked for consideration on what the Parish Council were doing well, and things that could be improved upon.

The Chair also asked those in attendance for some informal thoughts on the proposed Solar farm on Vigo Lane and shared his knowledge of biodiversity and an explanation of what happened to the soil, its structure and organic matter content over time following recent government policy and incentives.

Some of the general informal thoughts shared were;

- Not in favour as blot on the landscape.
- Would prefer it stay as farmland.
- At least cannot build houses if solar farm.
- Although don't like them to look at the solar farm would help biodiversity, including skylark habitat.
- After a certain number of years if removed can use the land again when land regenerated.
- Covenant to say after so many years goes back to farmland and not brownfield land.

Meeting Closed at 20:29

Signed by:

JERRY BOLAS

Name: [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Position: *Chairman*