

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the bi-monthly meeting held on 8th August 2011 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall - Chairman
Councillor Mr J. Carrick - Vice-Chairman
Councillor Mrs. D. Owen
Councillor Mr D. Gunter
Councillor Mrs G. Warden-Heggie
Councillor Mr C. Lathan

Also present were County Councillor Terry Glastonbury, District Councillor Mrs Mairilyn Smart, PCSO Nick Jones and Mrs Barbara Britton.

234. Apologies and welcome

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked if, due to the welcome presence of PCSO Nick Jones, an extra item could be added to the agenda to allow him to give a report. This was agreed by all present. Apologies had been received from Councillor Mr S. Dartnell.

235. Public Forum

Nothing was raised by members of the public.

236. Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr Terry Glastonbury gave a presentation of the bus review which has taken place. He told the meeting that there are approximately 200 bus services throughout the county, and the review had been carried out to save £2million. The review had included road shows and information evenings, to which there had been a wide response, including a good response from English Bicknor Parish. The County Council will reduce the subsidies on some routes, while some local routes will be taken over by community transport. The time-table for Bus Service no. 35 through English Bicknor is to remain as at present, with the links to be restored on through to Monmouth. Following a query from Cllr Lathan concerning bus service 709 from Symonds Yat Rock to Coleford, it was confirmed from the bus review document that this service will stay the same at present, but this service is subsidised and revised proposals will be drawn up on or before March 2012. Cllr Glastonbury has also been involved in the on-going correspondence concerning the problems with HGVs using Symonds Yat Rock hill.

237. Report of the District Councillor

On 4th July 2011 the council's offices and telephone contact centre opening hours changed to 9am - 4.45pm Monday to Thursday and 9am - 4.30pm on Fridays. This will save £80,000 a year whilst having a minimal impact on the community, as 96%

of people contact the council between those hours. New electoral arrangements for Gloucestershire County Council will mean a reduction of one Division in the Forest of Dean. An objection has been made to the suggestion that Steam Mills should be included with English Bicknor as this does not reflect the natural community, and Staunton will come under the Coleford Division. The Core Strategy was endorsed for submission to the Secretary of State. It will be the subject of review, although the general and overall principles are unlikely to change. The Cinderford Area Action Plan consists of a mainly man-made natural environment with the potential to provide mixed-use development anchored by an educational facility, while keeping the majority of the site undeveloped to preserve the landscape. In 2009 the four town councils were told that CCTV funding would be reduced and cut in 2011. Whilst Newent Town Council have found a way to fund CCTV themselves, this is not true of Coleford Town Council and it is expected that the switch off will be at the end of December 2011.

238. Report of the Police Representative

PCSO Nick Jones told the meeting that there had been no reported crimes in the Parish over the previous two months. The new police sergeant based in Coleford had agreed that speed cables could be put on the road in the Parish to monitor the speed of every vehicle going over them. The readings taken would show whether or no there was a speeding problem in the Parish. This proposal was supported by all Councillors at the meeting, at which point PCSO Jones asked for advice on where would be suitable locations to place these speed cables. Three locations suggested were on the bend near the church; on the main road going through English Bicknor, and in the 40mph speed limit area at Hillersland, possibly before the Parish notice board and old telephone kiosk. PCSO Jones does not know how long these cables would be down for, but he will report back to his sergeant of the suggested locations.

239. Minutes of the last bi-monthly meeting

District Cllr Mairilyn Smart pointed out an error in minute no.226, in that she was formerly the Chairman of the Council, not the Leader of the Council. Subject to this alteration, the minutes were agreed as correct and signed by the chairman.

240. Matters arising from the minutes of the last bi-monthly meeting

222. Flagpole at Symonds Yat Rock The clerk has received two quotes for the re-painting of the flagpole. These quotes are for £454.00 and £540.00, which is more than the amount set aside for maintenance of the flagpole. Cllr Owen has received a verbal quote of £350.00 from Mr J. Dunkley; she will ask him to put this in writing. There were concerns that any contractor working on the flagpole should have public liability insurance. The clerk has been given the contact details of Mr T. Johnson, whom she will contact for a quote. Some discussion took place as to whether the pole should be removed from the site for repainting, in view of the weight and height of the pole. It was suggested that once a contractor is appointed, the Parish Council should liaise with the Forestry Commission and RSPB as to when the work should be undertaken, in view of the number of tourists and bird watchers at this location.

202.191 Gateway at Symonds Yat Rock The damaged bollard has still not been repaired and HGVs continue to attempt to use the hill. The response from Highways

dated 26th July is that in order to repair the bollard the road will have to be closed, which takes time to organise and is certainly not ideal during the main holiday period. Although the bollards were put in place to protect the wall, the wall has been damaged. With regard to Lorry Watch, this function was carried out by Trading Standards, but due to resource issues they are no longer able to continue to carry out this duty. Brian Watkins has raised this issue with Gloucestershire Police and they have agreed to issue a letter to the companies of any offending vehicles. Details of any vehicle contravening the weight restrictions should be forwarded to Mr Watkins, who will then pass on those details to Gloucestershire Police. Mr Watkins has received a copy of the report re obscured signs prepared by Cllr Dartnell, to which he will reply in due course. By e-mail dated 5th August Mr Watkins provided information of two satnav companies who took their information from the Ordnance Survey. He is not sure when the new signs at the Yat Rock were erected as he believes they were erected by lorry watch. The proposed scheme for a 'gateway' was explained to the new Councillors, following which Cllr Gunter pointed out that nowhere are there any signs stating that the road is of a restricted width. Signs show a weight restriction, but do not warn of a width restriction. The clerk was asked to contact Mr B. Watkins at Highways to point out the lack of such signs, and to ask whether he has considered the suggestion of the Parish Council of a lorry drawn on the road with a X through the lorry. She will also contact Tidenham Parish Council, who have also had problems with HGVs using unsuitable routes in their Parish, to ask if this problem has been resolved and what, if any, action has been taken.

192.177 Bus services in the Parish A letter has been sent to Alan Barrett, Urban Transport Manager, and to Philip Williams, Passenger Transport and Parking Manager, Gloucestershire Council, voicing the concerns of Parishioners who rely on public transport. A comprehensive Bus Network Review was received on 5th August by the clerk, detailing what changes have been made to bus routes throughout the county and when these will come into effect.

167.152 Hedge on road between Symonds Yat Rock and Holly Barn Brian Watkins, Highways, confirmed on 28th July that he has sent a further letter to the owner of Holly Barn requesting that the hedge be cut. The Forestry Commission have confirmed to him that none of the overgrown section of the hedge is in their ownership. The upper part of this hedge has not been cut for many years, but Cllr Gunter was able to confirm that a contractor has been asked by the landowner to cut the hedge.

170. Footpath at Limekilns The work at the Limekilns has not been carried out to date.

184. Coldwell Walks The PROW Officer was contacted to confirm that the sign in the photograph attached to his e-mail was one of the signs which needs removing. As no further correspondence has been received from the PROW Officer, the clerk contacted Gloucestershire Highways, who will arrange for the signs to be inspected. Mr Watkins, Highways, agreed that if the signs are no longer needed and could be misleading to the public, then they should be removed, but it is not clear at the moment whose responsibility it is to remove them.

185.5 Milestones Cllr Drinkall has completed a lengthy and comprehensive survey of Milestones in the Parish, which will be returned to the AONB, with a copy retained for Parish records.

197.2 Markers on Junction Hill Following further correspondence with Highways, new marker posts, and more than were originally in place, were installed on Junction Hill at the end of July.

208.2 Parish Activities List This has been updated by Cllr Drinkall and will be included on the Parish website.

229. Footpaths in the Parish The Clerk wrote to Mr Jones to ask if in future the footpath at REB19/1 could be maintained across his field. As no reply has been received from Mr Jones, the clerk will contact the PROW Officer.

232.1 School car parking Cllr Drinkall explained to the new councillors the problems of car parking on the bend at the beginning and end of the school day. She also gave a brief history of the Glebe land at the school. The clerk had typed a resume from Parish Council minutes of matters concerning this piece of land over the last 7 years, which she will e-mail to councillors. It was agreed that an Archaeological Survey is needed to find out whether or no the car park could be extended. Cllr Carrick will contact the County Archaeologist.

232.3 Overgrown vegetation at Lucy Court The clerk has written to the management committee at Lucy Court to ask if the vegetation could please be cut back. This has been done in recent weeks.

232.4 New councillor The necessary forms were passed to Mr Lathan, who duly completed them and the relevant forms forwarded to the District Council, thereby confirming that Mr Lathan has joined the Parish Council.

232.5 Planters at Church Hill The clerk has sent a card thanking Mrs Jane Bright for the work she has carried out in caring for the planters on Church Hill for the past 7 years. Mrs Bright has replied, thanking the Parish Council for their card and good wishes. Cllr Owen has approached Mr Steven Sproat, who has confirmed that he is willing to take over this duty, but he has asked for advice on what to put in the planters. Cllr Owen will liaise with Mr Sproat re obtaining suitable plants.

241. Woodland Trust free tree packs

The Woodland Trust are offering free tree packs to organisations to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The trees can be planted on private land if there is a public benefit. Trees were planted at the bottom of the playing fields in English Bicknor for the Golden Jubilee, but many have not survived. It was agreed that this would be a good place to plant new trees. Cllr Drinkall asked if there was anywhere suitable in Hillersland, or perhaps landowners would be happy to plant trees near footpaths. It was agreed to first apply for trees for the playing fields, and in the meantime to contact local landowners to ask if they would be interested in receiving free trees to plant.

242. Barn at Sterts Farm

Cllr Drinkall explained that she has been approached by several parishioners who were concerned at the very large barn at Sterts Farm, which is very obtrusive in the landscape. They had asked if this barn could be screened by trees. It was pointed out that if the original planning permission did not mention screening, then the District Council cannot now ask for this to be undertaken. After much discussion, it was agreed that this was not a matter in which the Parish Council should be involved

and the parishioners should approach the owners of the barn themselves to ask if screening could be placed around it.

243. Planning Matters

(580) Tree Preservation Order on land to the south-west of Bicknor House, English Bicknor.

The Order was confirmed on 18th July 2011, with modifications, so that only two of the three Ash trees are now covered by the Order. The third Ash tree has since been felled.

The Direction under Article 4(1), restricting permitted development rights, has now been given permanent status following a resolution on 14th June 2011.

(582) P1093/11/FUL Eastbach Court, Eastbach, English Bicknor
Erection of a chicken house and demolition of existing workshop (Revised Scheme)

This application was considered at a Planning Meeting held on 12th July 2011, when councillors had no objection to the application.

244. Accounts for payment

Miss W. Lawrence - clerk's wages and expenses - £300.81
HM Revenue and Customs - PAYE on clerk's wages - £71.21
Moore Stephens - external audit - £60.00

Proposed by

Seconded by and agreed by all those present.

245. Footpaths in the Parish

Cllr Owen reported an overgrown footpath along the valley at the bottom of Church Hill. The path across the stream edge between the bridge and the boardwalk is not passable. The clerk was asked to contact the landowner to ask if he could clear this overgrowth.

On footpath REB32/1 the public footpath sign has been destroyed by the hedge cutter near Millway Cottage on Ross Road.

246. Correspondence received since last meeting

1. Correspondence has been received from Gloucestershire Highways asking for information concerning the Parish Snow Warden, the location of grit bins etc. The clerk will contact Mr Graham Bowen to ask whether he is prepared to continue as snow warden and will complete the form to return to Highways.

2. Information has been received about Beacons which are to be lit across the United Kingdom on 4th June 2012 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. There are to be both bonfire beacons and Church Tower beacons, which could be used as a focus for community celebrations. After some discussion the Parish Council agreed that they do not feel that they could organise such an event, but the information will be passed on to both the church and the school.

3. Two Councillors have been invited to the AONB Study Tour, which is to be held on 30th September 2011. Cllr Drinkall was the only councillor who expressed an interest in attending this event.

4. A Temporary Traffic Order has been received from Gloucestershire County Council giving details of a road closure in English Bicknor from 5th - 7th September for the road to be resurfaced. The road affected will be the Ross Road from Hillersland Lane to Dove Cottage, a total distance of about two miles. The clerk will include this information in the press release in the parish magazine.

247. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council

1. Cllr Warden-Heggie has been contacted by parishioners who are concerned about dog fouling, having witnessed themselves a dog fouling the pavement and no attempt to clear the mess by the dog owner. Cllr Warden-Heggie will send details to the clerk, who will ask PCSO Nick Jones to talk to the dog owner concerned.

2. Cllr Owen has been contacted by a parishioner concerned at cars parking on the land at Godwins Lane which is owned by the Parish Council. The parishioner has indicated that he is prepared to lay plastic netting on the land to make it more suitable for car parking, if the Parish Council are in agreement. Cllr Owen will ask for costs etc, but will confirm that the Parish Council are interested as parking is a problem at this location.

3. Cllr Drinkall reported that the water inspection cover is sinking into the pavement outside Orchard Close. This cover has been blue marked for a long time. The clerk will contact Severn Trent Water.

4. Letters are missing from the Ross Road sign by Millway Cottage. Some letters were found on the ground, but one 'S' is still missing. The clerk will contact the person at the District Council responsible for road signs.

248. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 10th October 2011 at 7pm, at English Bicknor Village Hall.