

ENGLISH BICKNOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the bi-monthly meeting held on 14th February 2011 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Councillor Mrs P. Drinkall - Chairman
Councillor Mr J. Carrick - Vice-Chairman
Councillor Mr S. Dartnell
Councillor Mr P. Scott
Councillor Mrs D. Owen
Councillor Mrs S. Holden

Also present was Mrs B. Britton

188. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies were received from County Councillor Mr T. Glastonbury, District Councillor Mrs M. Smart and from PCSO N. Jones

189. Public Forum

No matters were raised by members of the public.

190. Minutes of the last bi-monthly meeting

Item 179 should read 'Matters arising' not 'minutes arising'; Subject to this alteration, the minutes were agreed and signed by the chair. For clarification, it was agreed that item 171.2 from the October meeting should read 'bordering Murrells Road' instead of 'in Smithy Close'. The minutes book will be brought to the next meeting so that this change can be made.

191. Report of the County Councillor

Cllr Glastonbury forwarded a brief report via e-mail, which was read by Cllr Drinkall. A date is still awaited for the gateway at Symonds Yat Rock to be installed. The safety audit has been approved, this includes the addition of three extra street lights at Yat Rock. Confirmation is awaited from the police that they will hold a key and will unlock the gates if needed, for example if a lorry gets up the hill from the Herefordshire side. The gateway will be wide enough to let emergency vehicles through. The cost of the project is £10,000, which Highways hope to fund from their budget. Cllr Glastonbury confirmed that he has been in touch with the County Council concerning bus service no 35, but they are unaware of the future of this service. Mrs Britton asked where the proposed street lights at the Yat Rock were to be placed and whether they are necessary? It was pointed out that any vehicle approaching from the Herefordshire direction which was too wide to pass through the new gateway would have been too wide for the narrow gap near the old Chapel and would get stuck here. For this reason, it seems unnecessary for the police to have a key to unlock the gate, but it is hoped that there has been liaison with Herefordshire County Council with regard

to them installing a similar gateway on their side of the hill, as until this happens there will continue to be disruption caused by wide vehicles approaching from Herefordshire getting stuck as the road narrows. The new bollards installed at this location have been hit by vehicles on a number of occasions. Mrs Britton reported that overgrown hedges at the bottom of Symonds Yat Pitch were causing problems for motorists. Cllr Scott suggested that perhaps the Parish Council should send a polite letter to the landowners requesting that they trim their hedges as on this narrow road the overhanging hedges impinge on visibility.

192. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2010

177 BUS SERVICE The clerk contacted Philip Williams, Passenger Transport and Parking Manager at the County Council, who replied that the views of the Parish Council will be noted as part of the consultation process. A further area of concern is the possibility that after 1st April 2011 bus passes will not be valid until after 9.30am. This is an area of real concern in many rural areas and a further report is awaited which is looking at this issue. However, cuts from Government means that the County Council has to provide £600,000 of its own funds just to cover the cost of the basic service. Cllr Drinkall has been approached by a number of parishioners who are very concerned at the possibility of bus service no 35 being withdrawn. The Clerk was asked to contact Philip Williams to ask for contact details of the relevant person in Herefordshire so that she can contact them direct regarding this issue.

The clerk will also contact Stagecoach to ask if they have any details of the future of both service no 35 and of service 709, a mini-bus service which runs from Symonds Yat Rock through Hillersland to Coleford twice each week. These are both well used bus routes which provide a vital service to the local community.

178 LIBRARY CLOSURES The consultation on the future of public libraries is continuing.

167.152 HEDGE ON ROAD BETWEEN SYMONDS YAT ROCK AND HOLLY BARN A further e-mail was received from Highways on 4th February confirming that they have again contacted the Forestry Commission to ask if this hedge could be trimmed. It was noted that hedges belonging to another landowner also need trimming and the clerk will again provide details to Highways.

160.1 TREE OUTSIDE 7 SMITHY CLOSE Councillor Carrick confirmed that the tree right outside No 7 has had its crown raised, while the Willow tree has been trimmed so that the branches no longer dangle over the path.

160.6 HEDGE AT THE GLEBE On top of the £450 grant received from the AONB for the hedge to be laid, there will be a further £200 to pay from Glebeland Funds. The work will be completed within a few days.

160.11 ROAD SIGN NEAR DRYSLADE FARM The letters missing from this roadsign were found by Cllr Dartnell on the ground under the sign. He has now stuck these back on. The Clerk will contact the District Council to inform them that this work has been done. The finger post has been cleaned, although it was confirmed by Cllr Dartnell that the wording is on one side of the sign only.

170. FOOTPATH AT LIME KILNS Timber has been felled and placed on the approach path to the Lime Kilns. Cllr Scott suggested that several of the Councillors could tidy this up themselves. Cllr Drinkall was concerned that the timber probably

belongs to someone, so it was agreed that enquiries would be made of the nearby landowner. Cllr Scott clarified that the Lime Kilns money held by the Parish Council can now be used for anything, and should probably now be placed with the other Contingency money. Concern was expressed concerning the footpath on the Heritage Trail at the bottom of the steep slope near the Lime Kilns. Part of this path is very muddy due to the overflow from a water supply pipe. Cllr Drinkall will approach the landowner in the first instance to ask if he can do anything.

171.1 PARISH ELECTION 2011 The clerk has received a considerable amount of paperwork concerning Parish elections, which are to be held on Thursday 5th May. The Chair outlined the election timetable as received from the District Council. It was confirmed that Cllr Scott, Cllr Mrs Holden and Cllr Mrs Stott will all be standing down. It was agreed to advertise in the Parish magazine that new councillors are needed to stand on the Parish Council, and to inform those who attend the Parish Assembly at the end of March.

171.2 DOGS ON THE PLAYING FIELDS AND LAND BORDERING MURRELLS ROAD

Following the refusal of his planning application, the resident concerned wrote to Councillor Marilyn Smart to express his disappointment and to ask her to visit the site. He has also written to several other bodies, including the European Courts of Civil and Human Rights. Cllr Smart replied that as the application had been determined, there was nothing she could do.

172.3 ENGLISH BICKNOR SIGN ON APPROACH FROM LYDBROOK Cllr Drinkall proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Dartnell for cleaning off the red paint from this sign and for the work he has carried out on other signposts in the Parish.

172.4 PARISH ASSEMBLY Sue Middleton from the AONB has agreed to be guest speaker at the Parish Assembly. The Agenda for the day was agreed. The date has been advertised in the Parish magazine, and will also appear in the next issue.

180 SPEED CHECK SIGNS PCSO Nick Jones reported that these were to be installed early in 2011 and once in place would remain for 28 days. A letter from the local Inspector confirmed that the police will no longer be represented at Parish Council meetings. Cllr Dartnell has suggested to PCSO Jones that he submit a report to the Parish magazine.

183. PRECEPT 2011/12 The precept request was for £4,400 after further consultation with the Electoral Services Manager.

184. COLDWELL WALKS No reply has been received from the PROW Officer. The Clerk has contacted him again recently concerning these signs.

185.1 LOWERING OF KERB Highways response to this is that there is a car park just inside the entrance to the school which parents should be encouraged to use. Given the proximity of the junction and the restricted visibility should parking be permitted, it was not felt that it would be acceptable to formalise parking in this area.

185.2 GODWIN'S LANE GREEN TRIANGLE Highways reply is that any parking area will need to be kerbed, which may limit the number of vehicles that can park in this area. An area of grasscrete may be the best option in terms of appearance. Given the current restrictions on funding it is doubted whether this would be given any priority by Highways, consequently this would be a longer term aspiration as opposed to a scheme which could be actioned within the next 12 months or so. The clerk will write to Highways to ask if it would be possible for the Parish Council to place white rocks

around the perimeter of this area of land to prevent people parking on the grassed area, which is owned by the Parish Council.

185.4 SALT BINS A resident at the Yat Rock found it impossible to get the salt bins refilled during the severe weather in December, whereas in English Bicknor the bins were refilled on request. The clerk will ring Highways at Cannop to ask for these bins to be refilled. Mrs Britton asked if we could thank Highways for keeping the road gritted during the icy conditions; the clerk will also write to the Parish Snow Warden, Mr Graham Bowen to thank him for keeping the roads clear during the severe weather.

185.5 MILESTONES Cllr Drinkall will check where Milestones are in the Parish so that their location can be forwarded to the AONB.

185.6 HOOFF CAMPAIGN The Clerk has received a number of e-mails and circulars concerning the HOOFF campaign, including details of the public consultation which continues until 21st April 2011.

187 DATES OF MEETINGS 2011 The dates for meetings in 2011 have all been confirmed, including the Parish Assembly on 28th March. The dates were all published in the most recent edition of the Parish magazine.

193. Planning Matters

The following planning decisions have been received:

(575) P2033/10/FUL 1 Alms Cottages, Ross Road, English Bicknor
Replacement of existing garage and porch. (Demolition of existing)
Full permission granted on 13th December 2010

(576) P2182/10/COU 11 Redhouse Lane, English Bicknor
Change of use of land to residential curtilage and erection of picket fence
Refused on 12th January 2011

The following planning applications were considered:

(577) P0063/11/TCA The Old Rectory, Ross Road, English Bicknor
Works to trees at The Old Rectory

The Parish Council has no objection to this application.

(578) P0161/11/TCA Cowmeadow Farm, Ross Road, English Bicknor
Fell 1 Thorn and 2 Ash

The Parish Council do not accept that these trees form a danger. No doubt the Authority will consult with adjoining landowners, but the Parish Council do not feel that these trees are too close to the new houses and anyone buying these houses may welcome having mature trees along their boundary.

(579) P0149/11/FUL 1 Murrells Road, English Bicknor
Alterations and erection of a first floor extension

The Parish Council supports this application.

194. Accounts for payment

Miss Wendy Lawrence - clerk's wages and expenses - £367.38

Proposed by Cllr Dartnell, seconded by Cllr Carrick. All voted in favour.

195. Footpaths in the Parish

Cllr Dartnell reported that there is a sign saying that Footpath No 21 (Wysis Way) from Bicknor Street is closed, with an alternative route given. The clerk was asked to contact the PROW officer to ask what work is being carried out.

Footpaths 22/1 and 23/1 present problems with very high stiles - Cllr Scott will speak to the relevant landowners.

Once again the footpath has not been reinstated on footpath 19/1 through the field of rape. The clerk will contact the PROW officer to ask if there is any further action which can be taken, as this problem arises every year.

A finger post has been broken on path no 29/1 off the main road just before Sterts Farm. This has almost certainly been broken by the hedge cutter.

196. Correspondence received since last meeting

1. A circular has been received from the Royal British Legion asking if we could hold a Poppy Party for their appeal.

2. An invitation has been received for two councillors to attend the Wye Valley AONB Conference on 24th February, which is free of charge. Cllr Drinkall outlined the programme for the day, which includes Sue Middleton as one of the speakers. Cllr Drinkall will attend.

197. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council

1. Cllr Scott reported that in recent weeks Highways have begun to fill in some of the potholes in Tump Lane.

2. A car recently went over on Junction Hill on the approach from Lydbrook. This resulted in many of the markers which indicate the edge of the road being knocked over. Highways are to be contacted to ask if these could be replaced.

3. It was reported that potholes in the roads are being filled, but mainly those at the sides of roads, while those in the middle have not been filled and have become deep ruts. Highways will be contacted to ask if these are to be filled in due course.

4. Cllr Scott reported that three refridgerators have been dumped in woodland between the junction at the bottom of Junction Hill towards Lower Tump Farm and where the Forestry Commission path goes into the wood towards Burdon Oak. Cllr Scott has reported this to Environmental Health.

198. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be the Parish Assembly on Monday 28th March, while the next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 4th April.

