



BEKESBOURNE-WITH-PATRIXBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th December 2024 at 7:30pm
Bekesbourne Village Hall.

Minutes to be formally agreed at the next meeting.

1. Those Present

Parish Cllr David Sladden (Chairman),
Parish Cllr Mark Rhodes (Vice Chair),

Parish Cllr A. Nicholson
Parish Cllr Christine Ash

Mrs N. Purcell (Clerk/Finance Officer to the council)

There was 0 members of the public present.

2. Apologies for Absence

Parish Cllr Mary Evans; Parish Cllr Joanne Watt; Parish Cllr Caroline Tuffey; Parish Cllr Christine Ash.

3. Declarations of councillor interests relevant to this agenda

Cllrs M.Rhodes declared an interest in item 13 as an allotment tenant.

4. To confirm minutes of the previous meeting (*held on 9th September 2024*)

To be confirmed at the January meeting.

5. To report any matters arising (*from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda*)

None

The meeting is suspended for up to 15 minutes to allow discussion with members of the electorate of the parish of Bekesbourne with Patricxbourne present at the meeting.

6. Public representation (*notified to the clerk in advance of the meeting, agenda items only*)

None

Parish Council meeting resumes

7. External Reports

7.1 County Councillor Reports

Report received from Cllr Sole and circulated as part of the agenda pack.

7.2 City Councillor Reports

Report received from Cllr Castle and circulated as part of the agenda pack.

Parish Council meeting resumes

8. Any s101 Delegated Authority items to be noted by council.-

Planning Application No: CA/24/01930

Proposal: Erection of an agricultural storage building.

Location: Land Between Springfield Cottages and Rosewood, Bekesbourne Lane, West Of Bekesbourne Hill, Bekesbourne, Kent,

Outcome: 2 out of 8 councillors responded, one with no objections, one objecting to this application. Therefore, no comments were submitted as a minimum of three councillors are required to respond to s101 delegated authority.

9. Any updates from representatives from external groups (*if any*)

9.1 Recreation Ground Management Committee

No update this month, meeting again soon.

9.2 Village Hall Management Committee

No update this month.

9.3 The River Group

The latest report received is slightly contradictory. One party suggests be wary of flooding, another states no flooding predicted. Groundwater level is low at the moment, the river is still gently flowing in places.

9.4 KALC

No updates.

9.5 A257 Traffic Management Group

No updates.

As per the previous email Circulated the Parish is looking for a new representative for this group.

St Mary's Patrixbourne: have received a private donation for the extension works, so along with some additional fundraising the church should now be able to undergo it's extension project.

10. Highways Matters

10.1 Any updates

The Clerk has chased again the reinstatement of the roundels on Station road. Hopefully there will be a response to present at the meeting.

Permission has been granted by the landowner for the 'junction ahead' signs on the approach to Aerodrome Road. These should now be installed imminently.

10.2 20mph at Patrixbourne

Public engagement material is ready to be circulated. There are associated costs for council to consider:

- Option 1- to increase the clerks printing subscription for the one month to up to 700 pages at a cost of £25.49 +VAT and councillors help distribute.

- Option 2: to increase the clerks printing subscription for the one month to up to 1500 pages at a cost of £49.49 +VAT and councillors help distribute.
- Option 3: a distribution company has quoted to print and deliver both for £360+VAT

Resolved: it was proposed by M. Rhodes and seconded by A. Nicholson to proceed with option 3: for a distribution company has quoted to print and deliver both for £360+VAT.

Outcome: All in favour, motion carried.

10.3 Any New Matters to Raise

- Station Road Sign at the mini roundabout is damaged.
- Many 30mph signs are still missing around the village.
- Significant damage has occurred to Old Palace Road following another closure of School Lane.
- Clerk to continue logging missing signage and to continue to chase KCC highways officer for an update regarding the reinstatement of the roundels on Station Road.

11. Finance Matters

11.1 To note October- December payment schedule & approve any new payments.

October-December Payment Schedule

Payments Made in October - December as per financial regulations.

Date	Type	Payment	Amount
16 th September 24	DD	Hugofox	£23.99
30 th September 24	SO	Clerk September Salary	As per salary Sheet
15 th October 24	DD	Hugofox	£23.99
30 th October 24	SO	Clerk October Salary	As per salary Sheet
15 th November 24	DD	Hugofox	£23.99
2 nd December 24	SO	Clerk Nov Salary	As per Salary Sheet

Payments Due for Approval:

Recipient	Detail	Amount
N. Purcell	HP Ink reimbursement December	£9.99
N. Purcell	Phone bill (October-December)	£15.00

Resolved: it was proposed by C. Ash and seconded by M. Rhodes to approve the October-December Payment schedule and all new payments.

Outcome: All in favour, motion carried.

11.2 To Approve the Q1 Accounts

The Q1 Accounts run from July- Sept. Clerk salary have been paid as per the salary slips each month, which our Internal Auditor checks each year as part of the council's internal audit.

All receipts and payments for each month balanced with the bank statements, a copy of the accounts was circulated to councillors as part of the agenda pack.

Resolved: It was proposed M. Rhodes and seconded by A. Nicholson that council approve the Q2 Accounts.

Outcome: all in favour, motion carried.

11.3 S106 Funding

A reminder of the s106 funding and what it can be used on was circulated as part of the agenda pack. Council noted the clerk's recommendations within the report. Next steps would be to involve the community by creating a questionnaire for distribution and liaise with the RGMC.

On Monday, 9th December, Cllr Sladden and the Clerk met with the Chair of the Recreation Ground Management Committee (RGMC) to discuss the aspirations and goals of the committee regarding the recreation ground and pavilion. Initial discussions mentioned potential uses for the S106 funds including:

- Installation of a new fire door for the sports pavilion.
- Roofing and guttering repairs to address their current poor condition.
- Addition of benches around the recreation ground.
- Installation of spectator seating to support community sports.
- Improving entrance access and installing protective matting for parking areas to minimize grass damage.

The Chair of the RGMC will present this information to their committee for further discussion and will aim to provide feedback at the Parish Council's January meeting.

To engage the community in decision-making, Cllr C.Sladden has prepared a draft survey. The survey aims to gather input from residents on how the funds should be spent.

Council agreed to distribute this survey as part of the costs discussed in agenda item 10.1.

Plaque Replacement at the Playground

While the council considers the addition of new equipment using S106 funds, it may also wish to allocate additional funds to replace the missing plaque that originally identified the playground as the Albert Wilson Playground. The plaque, which has been absent for many years, was a tribute to Mr. Wilson, and a relative of his has expressed a strong desire to see it reinstated. Unfortunately, the original plaque's whereabouts remain unknown.

Council have agreed to obtain quotes for the replacement of the plaque Honouring Mr Albert Wilson. It would be ideal if this could time with the installation of the new equipment when this is obtained.

11.4 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Completion:

Forvis Mazars LLP have concluded the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24. I am delighted to inform you that Bekesbourne with Patricxbourne Parish Council have completed another successful audit.

The external auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24 states:

Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 required that the 2023 period of public rights covered 30 working days and commenced no later than 1 July 2023. This requirement was not met last year but the Council has answered yes to the assertion on public rights in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement, which covers the previous year's public rights period. The Council needs to put in place arrangements to ensure that it can always meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no to assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement where this has not been achieved.

The Council has not fully implemented recommendations made in the 2022/23 external audit report. The Council answered yes to the relevant assertion in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement (assertion 7), claiming it has taken appropriate action in respect of audit reports. In future, the Council should ensure that appropriate action in response to audit recommendations is taken within a reasonable time.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

In undertaking the review of the 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return it came to our attention that in 2024 the Council has not met the requirements of the 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations to provide electors with a period of 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July, to inspect the accounts. The Council should ensure that in 2024/25 they comply with the Regulations and respond 'No' to the relevant assertion in its Annual Governance Statement as the assertion is retrospective and refers to compliance during the relevant financial year rather than in respect of it.

Finance Officer explanation for council to note unfortunately, last year the council were one day short for their exercise of public rights period, and this year- one day too many. This unfortunately means in writing it states 'we did not meet the requirements.

Within the conclusion letter to the Clerk and Finance Officer the following which was not part of the 2024 AGAR, but was added as an advisory for this current year 2024/25 AGAR:

Email management

There have been amendments to the requirements of the Practitioner's Guide in relation to email management and the use of '.gov.uk' domains. The March 2024 version of the Practitioner's Guide, points 5.210 and 5.211, state that:

- *All Parish, Town and Community Councils are eligible to use, and are advised to use, a .gov.uk domain for their websites and email communications. Your community, suppliers and partners will now reasonably expect a local council to have a .gov.uk domain name.*
- *To assist with compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), it is advised that clerks provide official .gov.uk email accounts to their councillors, which must only be used for official council business.*

While the Practitioner's Guide 2024 does not mandate the use of '.gov.uk' email addresses, we would expect the Council and its councillors to have a generic email address to use for official Council correspondence. If the Council and councillors are not using generic email address by 31 March 2025, then this could result in either a qualification or other matter on the 2024/2025 AGAR.

Council noted their thanks to the Clerk for a successful audit.

Agenda Item 11.5 Draft Budget 2025/26

The draft budget was prepared by the Responsible Finance Officer or Councillors discuss the drafted budget as circulated via email (and available on the website.)

Councillors has no amendments to make.

Resolved: It was proposed by C. Ash and M.Rhodes to adopt the budget for 2025/26 as discussed.

Outcome: all in favour, motion carried.

Resolved: It was proposed by M.Rhodes and seconded by A.Nicholson to request the precept figure of £23,388, which is a 1.14% increase.

Outcome: All in favour, motion carried.

This equates to the following increase per band:

Actual Amount to be billed 2025/26

Year	Total Precept	Council Tax Base	Annual @ Band A	Annual @ Band B	Annual @ Band C	Annual @ Band D	Annual @ Band E	Annual @ Band F	Annual @ Band G	Annual @ Band H
2025/26	£23,388	368.03	£42.37	£49.43	£56.49	£63.55	£77.67	£91.79	£105.92	£127.10
			Monthly @ Band A	Monthly @ Band B	Monthly @ Band C	Monthly @ Band D	Monthly @ Band E	Monthly @ Band F	Monthly @ Band G	Monthly @ Band H
			£3.53	£4.12	£4.71	£5.30	£6.47	£7.65	£8.83	£10.59

Actual Amount of Increase 2024/25

Year	Total Precept Increase	Council Tax Base	Annual @ Band A	Annual @ Band B	Annual @ Band C	Annual @ Band D	Annual @ Band E	Annual @ Band F	Annual @ Band G	Annual @ Band H
2025/26	£264	368.03	£0.48	£0.56	£0.64	£0.72	£0.88	£1.03	£1.19	£1.43
			Monthly @ Band A	Monthly @ Band B	Monthly @ Band C	Monthly @ Band D	Monthly @ Band E	Monthly @ Band F	Monthly @ Band G	Monthly @ Band H
			£0.04	£0.05	£0.05	£0.06	£0.07	£0.09	£0.10	£0.12

12. Planning

12.1 To Receive Updates on previous consultee responses

None

12.2 To Discuss any new applications

None

13. Allotments

13.1 Any Updates

Inspections completed (as per the agenda pack). The following recommendations were made:

- Follow up with the tenant of Plot 10 to confirm their intention to vacate and proceed with reallocation if the plot remains unclaimed.
- Finalise arrangements for the reallocation of half of Plot 4 to the interested former tenant.
- Continue monitoring the trend toward half-plot requests and consider incorporating this preference into future allotment planning

13.2 Any New Matters

None

14. Aspinall Close- Garages

Flipping, and general issues regarding the Garages at Aspinall/Cramner Close has been reported to Southern Housing. Awaiting a response.

15. Councillor Vacancy

To be addressed at future meetings.

16. Next Meeting Date

Monday 13th January 2025.

Meeting closed 20:20

It was agreed that these minutes are a TRUE and ACCURATE record:

Signed.....(Chairperson)

Date.....