



BOROUGH GREEN PARISH COUNCIL



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Established 1934

www.boroughgreen.gov.uk

Minutes of the BOROUGH GREEN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held in Borough Green Village Hall on **Monday 13th May 2024** starting at **1930**. The meeting was not recorded.

Present: Cllrs Taylor (Chairman), Cllrs Butterfill, Rawsthorne, Ramsden, Millener, Shaw, Thrush, Cllr Palmer (TMBC), & the Clerk. There were twelve members of the public.

001. Apologies for Absence Cllr Rayner (KCC) Cllr Reading

002. Declarations of Interest None

003. Minutes of the meeting 15th May 2023 inc Annual Parish - approved as a true record on 5th June 2023

004. Chairman's Annual Report 2023/4 *Appendix 2 below*

005 Clerk's Financial Report 2023/4 *Appendix 3 below*

Clerk reported another healthy year end surplus of **£36,839.27** which was earmarked for Capital Projects in the coming year. He also reported the completion of the Internal Audit of the Parish Council's Accounts, and noted again a clean bill of health across the board. Chairman thanked the Clerk for his hard work and success with Grant Applications.

006 Chairman read out a report from Howard Passingham, Chair of Borough Green Junior Football Club, highlighting another successful year particularly encouraging girls to get involved in football.

Report *Appendix 1 below*

007 Submissions by Borough Councillor Wendy Palmer.

Cllr Palmer spoke about last year's successful election results, which by a happy accident of numbers had resulted in her being appointed Chair of Area 2 Planning Committee, and Cllr Taylor being appointed Cabinet Member for Planning, which will give our Local Parishes a significant advantage as the new Local Plan develops. She told us how TMBC had been particularly careful with finances, and although things were tight we were not at the same risks of swingeing cuts and bankruptcy as many other Councils. The Waste Service contract was coming up for renewal, and Cllr Palmer noted that TMBC now owned the new vehicles. There was some discussion about the abysmal failures at the start of the Urbaser contract, but that things had stabilised, and whilst there will always be mistakes, on balance we had a good service, particularly with regard to our excellent recycling rates. Chair thanked Cllr Palmer for her report, but also for her unstinting support during the year that had really bound the Parishes together. He then threw the meeting open to the Public

Members of the Public

Pavements First to speak were two residents of Sevenoaks Rd, who reported that Mrs Pat Moorcroft has had a severe fall on the Sevenoaks Rd pavement because of the slipperiness caused by build up of road dirt. They reported that Pat was recovering well and would be home shortly. Pat served as a BGPC Cllr from 2011 - 2017, volunteers at the Charity shop, and has run the Thursday Coffee mornings in the Library for many years. We wish her a speedy recovery. Cllr Millener has been working closely with KCC, TMBC and H+H Celcon to resolve the situation, and perhaps get the poor surface relaid soon.

Scouts Several members of the Public voiced their concerns about the Scouts eviction from their home of 40 years by Reynold's Retreat. The PC have been in detailed discussions with the Scouts and await their decision at their meeting Wednesday. We can reassure residents that we are all working together and this very important facility for young people will survive intact.

3rd June 2024

Surgery Parking The subject of overflow parking by the surgery was raised by several residents. Chairman reassured residents that the surfacing would be a porous material that was repairing a long buried existing hard surface, rather than "tarmacking the Greenbelt". One of our justifications for buying the Harrison Rd land was the likelihood of surgery expansion, and we wanted to ensure the land was available. By sheer fluke the windfall gift of that section of road means we can provide the parking without losing any of that little jewel of wild amenity space. Some residents were concerned about the traffic clash on Harrison Rd because of all the commuter parking. Chairman pointed out that Woodlands Residents could have resolved that several years ago when they rejected the offer of an estate wide Resident's Parking Scheme.

Village Hall Two members of the Village Hall Committee and passed on their committee's concern's about the Parish Council. The Chairman, Clerk and Cllr Butterfill were quite adamant that the Committee were not getting the true story, that the Parish Council has been historically deeply involved in the Hall, and are glad new blood has been recruited and had tried to extend that helping hand but had been roundly rebuffed, and an attempt made to evict us from our Parish Office. We were absolutely sincere in our wishes to return to the previous good relationship but until the VH Committee settled in that it would be wise for us to step back. In the final analysis, the long term future of the Hall as a Community Asset was more important than any temporary personality clashes between individuals.
Appendix 4

Reynold's Retreat There was considerable public unhappiness about the behaviour of Reynolds, not just evicting the Scouts, but trying to build houses next to the beautiful and protected Avenue of Limes on the man drive, one of the jewel's of Borough Green. Chairman assured residents that whilst we could not pre-judge any future planning application, we would engage robustly to ensure the survival of the Limes and their setting.

Black Horse PH. There was strong public disquiet about the recent addition of a large Fish Bar trailer, gas store and gazebo style seating area in the carpark, coupled with loud music. Chairman advised that he knew there had been multiple complaints, and investigations were underway by Food Hygiene, Planning, Licensing and Planning Enforcement. Everybody understands how difficult is for pubs to survive these days, but a pub needs to operate without impact on residential neighbours.

Narcotics Anonymous. For the past 6 months "Big Nick" has run a self help group for those with drug and alcohol problems, and thanked the Parish Council for the use of Potters Mede as a venue.

There being no further business, Chairman thanked everyone for an excellent, free ranging and good hearted discussion, and closed the meeting at 2015

Appendix 1 BOROUGH GREEN JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN HOWARD PASSINGHAM

Borough Green JFC, with the support of the Parish Council, has built and grown again this last season.

We now have around 350 local kids and young people playing for the club, in 25 teams, learning not just football related skills and having regular exercise, they are also given some of the life lessons sport can give. All our managers and coaches are DBS checked and are working hard developing under the club and FA umbrella.

The girls section of the club is now a full season old. We currently have 3 teams, ranging from 7 year olds up to 12 year olds and would like to build on this. We are looking for more players and all levels are welcome, so if you know any young ladies looking to try football and make friends, please get in touch.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many local businesses, that sponsor the teams, enabling the club to keep fees to a minimum and provide excellent equipment and facilities.



3rd June 2024

BOROUGH GREEN PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MAY 2024

It has been an interesting year, a very interesting year, but the trials we have been through together have brought us all closer, and I thank all my Councillors for their support during the year. Christian and Ian left and will be sorely missed, but we welcome our newcomers Lisa and Guy and wish them well.

I want to pass on special thanks to Tim & Scott, we have been a team for longer than I can remember - to Sue for her support as my Vice Chair, and her skills at organising events like The Coronation Celebration, 4x4 Santa, and next month's D-Day 80 events. And to Mark for his commitment, but also his navigation skills in the murky world of the internet and Social Media.

My gratitude to my Clerk Bernie, without whose unfailing support and knowledge I could not have managed. I can happily leave the money side to him - his knowledge of accounting and his uncanny ability to obtain grant funding have allowed us to give real support to our residents. And we just had notification that the Internal Auditor has given Bernie's 2023/24 Accounts a 100% clean bill of health, again.

Bernie has also welded Rob and Barry into an effective team, and the three of them together in their spare time have generated thousands of pounds for multiple charities, at home and abroad, but crucially for Ukraine and Gaza.

The Community Ethos has led to us clashing with the Village Hall Management, and we are stepping back from our former close involvement. A Community Asset like the Hall should be managed to benefit our residents, and the Parish Council will continue grant aid to the Hall if and when required. The survival of the Hall is more important than individual personalities, and it has survived worse than this in the past.

The Parish Council's main ethos is our Community, first and last, We have done that by increasing our ownership of wild amenity land around the village, converting our streetlighting to LED saving thousands in annual power costs, the solar projects at Potters Mede and the Bowls Club, and the Alliance Shopper Bus Scheme. Some of our land off Harrison Rd will soon be used as overflow parking for our Medical Practice which has grown dramatically and is pushed for space.

The Borough Green Junior Football Club continues to grow and has taken on a far greater responsibility for pitch maintenance as a Partner with the Parish Council.

Bernie has managed significant growth in bookings at Potters Mede over the past year, but we never lose sight of our duty to the whole community, and we now support a range of events from the youngest to the oldest, Nursery to Sitting Exercise, and providing a venue for groups that help the more vulnerable through these difficult times.

You will all have heard that Reynold's Retreat at Basted House have evicted the Borough Green Scout Group from their home for the past 40 years. We are in talks with the Leaders, and by the time you read this , If the Scouts agree, they may soon have a fine new home.

The spectre of TMBC's Local Plan and BGGC still threaten our local Countryside, but with Wendy and I now both at the top table we can wield significant influence over the process.

Finally, and most importantly, my thanks for the people of Borough Green for their trust in me for the last 20 odd years as a Parish Councillor, and 13 years as Chairman - it has been a labour of love.

Mike Taylor
Chairman Borough Green PC May 2024



3rd June 2024

Appendix 3 FINANCIAL SUMMARY Y/E 31 March 2024 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 13 May 2024

Main Points

1. **Income & Expenditure Account** Y/E 31/03/2024 - £36,839.27 surplus
(surplus 2023 £22,936.00)
Income all sources - £311,141.56
Expenditure (all costs) £274,302.29
2. **Precept** for the FY25(3.4%) increase on previous year £247,476
3. **Bank Balances** (total cash reserves) as at 31/03/2024 - £141,430.40
4. **Fixed Assets** (valued at cost) £968,013.21
5. **Loans** BGPC has no loans, The only finance liability is the van lease.
6. **Capital Projects FY24**
 - CCTV at Potters Mede
 - CCTV at Recreation Ground
 - Completion of Perimeter Path at Recreation Ground

7. Capital Projects FY25

- Storage Container Potters Mede
- Improvements to the Public Toilets VH Carpark
- Improvements to fencing children's play area
- Installation Solar Power Potters Mede.

Bernie Galopin

Bernie Galopin
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Borough Green Parish Council

Village Hall Management Committee

Chairman was passed the below notes to be appended to the Minutes which was agreed.

BGPC accept no responsibility for the comments about our minutes, and note that a Minute is a true record of what was said, and cannot be altered because someone disagrees with what was said.

(I apologise for the formatting, but this was a piece of paper that had to be scanned, and please note the extract of BGPC's draft minutes have been selectively chosen and edited)

Cllr Butterfill asked Mr [REDACTED] several questions about their stewardship and management of the VH. Mr [REDACTED] responded with the following assurance to the PC. That BGVHMC -

- * have been in contact with the CC over our concerns and have been told by them that they are managing the affairs of the VH properly.
- * are working with the CC to ensure their management and procedures are correct.
- * are getting ongoing support from the CC.

Based on this information from K Nolan on behalf of the BGVHMC BGPC decided not to write to the CC. (see BGPC minutes)



3rd June 2024

Reference the undated draft minutes of the **8th April 2024** meeting where the PC referred to and made unsupported statements and opinions on VH MC regarding alleged:

- Safeguarding and transparency issues
- Irregularities in the appointment of trustees
- That not empowered to administer public funds

On behalf of the committee I would now like it minuted that:

- The Committee requested the draft minutes be amended to provide a true reflection and not unsupported information or opinions – which was refused by the Parish council!

And as a Committee we Hereby reiterate that:

- The committee has been working extremely closely with the charity commission throughout
- We can clarify that the charity commission confirms there are no known or substantiated irregularities or concerns in the way the committee are managing the hall.
- The committee continue to have the full support of the charity commission and have been congratulated on the recent good work being carried out by the committee to correctly manage the hall going forward.

Minutes extract:

(ii) BGVHMC Complaint - noted - passed to Monitoring Officer. After a Part 2 discussion it was decided that until the complaint had been dealt with, and

with the safeguarding and transparency issues, BGPC would not be sending representatives to the BGVHMC meetings until resolved.

Cllr Butterfill was appointed as a Point of Contact in the interim, and BGPC will also consider a Formal Complaint to the Charity Commission

in the light of irregularities in appointment of Trustees, noting that without properly elected

Trustees the **BGVHMC were not currently empowered to administer public funds.**

BGPC reiterated its long standing and ongoing ethic of support for the Hall including grant and rental finance.

Update April 2024:

Below the VHMC provide summary of some recent work by the newly formed Village Hall Committee since January 2024:

1. The VHMC have reviewed our financial position making several savings and efficiencies and along with our promotion of the facilities through our new website we have already managed to increase our annual income by £4,353.05
2. The VHMC have undertaken a programme of much needed and neglected maintenance by replacing and upgrading several Health and Safety issues, such as mending and improving the outside lights, gutters cleaned to prevent water from flowing down the outside of the building.
3. The VHMC have created numerous procedures and policies that were either non-existent or hopelessly out of date. These include updated Terms and Conditions, new Complaint Procedure, Equality and Safeguarding policies, Key Holders Policy, Privacy and Data Protection with more, including Service Agreements and Health & Safety in progress.
4. After installing a new website, the VHMC have introduced a new online booking system improving efficiencies and ensuring a log/email of all calls while also introducing an online Terms of Hire form that incorporates a signed agreement to the Terms and Conditions.
5. The VHMC have introduced Wi-Fi to the building which has been positively received by hirers. This will enable us to introduce wireless systems for the benefit of Hirers and achieve greater control over security and the heating system in future.
6. The VHMC are undertaking a full review of projects and maintenance, including rewiring of the hall, replacing downstairs windows, a review of car park issues, the introduction of CCTV with more in progress.
7. The VHMC are keen to work with all the community and have also reached out to local school and Scouts to hopefully involve more younger groups in the activities and management at the hall.