

MINUTES OF BEAN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held on Monday 8th April 2024 at 7 pm

at the Bean Village Hall, Bean

Councillors present: Cllr. K Turner-Burgin (Chair)
Cllr. K Clarke
Cllr. D Hammock
Cllr. Mrs A Munday
Cllr. J Turner-Burgin
Cllr. Mrs SA Weeks
Cllr. Mrs TD Williams (arrived 7.15pm)

There were no members of the public present.

1) Apologies

No apologies were received

2) Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 11th April 2023

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 11th April 2023 were confirmed as a true record and duly signed.

3) Accounting and Governance Statements

The Accounting and Governance Statements of Bean Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2023 together with the Income and Expenditure account was presented.

It was noted that these accounts had been examined and approved by the Council's internal auditor and that the Annual Return was reviewed by the Parish Council's external auditor under the Audit Commission Act 1998 and a Certificate awarded.

4) Matters Arising from the Financial Statement

There were no questions

Cllr Williams joined the meeting

5) Chairman's Report

It goes without saying that Parish Councils are an essential part of the structure of local democracy and have a vital role in acting on behalf of the communities they represent.

Parish Councils (PC) are statutory consultees in the planning process and must be informed of all planning applications, and any amendments to those applications, within the parish. The PC can only comment on these planning applications in the same way as any other member of the public, however, any comments made by the PC must be agreed during a properly convened parish council meeting and reflect that of the local community, as well as other proposals that may affect the local parish and community.

This PC works closely with other tiers of local government to ensure that the views of parishioners are heard, and to help devolve information from other government tiers into the local community.

This PC also reports to the relevant authorities any issues, problems or repairs that arise within the parish or those that affect the parish and local community to effect resolution where possible.

Bean Parish Council holds responsibilities for the maintenance and management of the following: -

Bean recreation ground situated on the High Street; the council is responsible for ensuring that the play equipment along with the exercise equipment is fit for purpose and maintained to a high standard. This also includes the safety flooring under the play and climbing equipment as well as the grass area in the rest of the recreation ground. Maintenance of this includes the daily inspection and clearing of litter by the caretaker, to regular cutting of the grass with occasional filling in of fox diggings, something I now appear to be an expert in! This council would like to extend its thanks and gratitude to those who both open and close the recreation ground and also keep it maintained and litter free, which some days is no small task.

Beacon Woods - this council has again secured a further lease with Tarmac for Beacon Woods and this time for twenty years. This is an exciting time for The Friends of Beacon Woods, and the Parish Council. The Parish Council, with the support of our Borough representative, seek further funding to support Friends of Beacon Woods to improve drainage, soakaways and footpaths, as well as tree care. A safety inspection of the trees has been undertaken to identify where any remedial work may be needed which will be carried out during April; this is to improve year-round accessibility and safety and provide longevity to the area as a place of natural beauty and interest. This does not belie the interests of the local wildlife which is well preserved and monitored. The council is also responsible for the Trim Trail within the wood and its maintenance. During this municipal year Beacon Woods was visited by the NWKCP to inspect both the lake and the seasonal ponds to ascertain their suitability to support Natural England's Great Crested Newt Pond Creation Scheme, a report has been submitted to Natural England for consideration.

Within Beacon Woods, traps have been set to monitor for Asian hornets and new signage placed advising users that during inclement weather conditions that trees could fall unpredictably, and that paths may have uneven surfaces and advises that they should refrain from entering.

There has also been a new notice board installed at the car park for display of maps and items of interest. Southfleet Road borders the eastern flank of Beacon Woods and an additional 35 wooden bollards have been installed along the verge on Bean Hill to discourage parking on the grass verge. This council extends a huge thank you to all those who volunteer as Friends of Beacon Woods for all the tireless work they do to maintain such a place of outstanding beauty.

Alongside the woods is the banking opposite the Sans Minimart on Southfleet Road. This extends from the northeast corner adjacent to the village hall, south along Southfleet Road to the boundary with Bean Hill Cottages. This area has been recently maintained by a parishioner, for which this council is most grateful.

The Parish Council hold responsibility for the defibrillator and notice board situated outside Sans shop. This notice board has also been recently replaced with a new one where Parish and Council information can be displayed, as well as other items of interest that may affect the local community.

Bean Allotments are the responsibility of Bean Parish Council, but they are managed by Bean Allotment Association. This is an arrangement with good strong bonds with the council, but this council believe they are better served by being self-governed and will continue to support this. Recently this council supported the Allotment Association in electing a new committee and assisted in the removal of some 32 tyres from the site.

This council is most joyous that a new committee has formed and is keen to assist where needed and offers thanks to all those who have given their time to be a committee member.

Bean Village Hall falls within the governance of Bean Parish Council through the Village Hall Committee. The hall has regular users such as the pre-school in the daytime as well as some evening usage, and the hall also sees many weekends and term time usage for various activities. Recent works through the summer and, more recently, has seen the re-rendering of the external side walls, the internal redecoration with replacements internal doors, and locks and a new paint scheme. Along

with this there were tree works, removal of overhanging branches and removal of vegetation within the rear garden.

The council support the use of the village hall by the Community Warden for the Bean Together project, providing a meeting space for the local community for tea and chats, with additional organised activities including talks from local writers to events involving the local police. These meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month. The council has also supported the pilot scheme from KCC for debt advice; this will operate during the Bean Together meetings. Recently we saw the installation of Wi-Fi in the village hall, bringing us hurtling forward to the 21st century.

It is without doubt that this hall could not work or function effectively in the way it does was it not for those who care for it, this ranges from the council to users and most of all the caretakers who provide exemplary service and this council extends a huge gratitude and thanks to those involved.

In the last Municipal year this council welcomed Cllr Turner following the May elections.

During May the new 20mph speed limit came into force throughout Bean.

Following the Kings Coronation I attended, along with Cllr Turner, the Bean Primary School celebration of achievement day, where I presented Coronation mugs to the children and staff alike during morning assembly. I returned later that day, along with Cllr Turner and Cllr Weeks, to help with the judging of the cake competition. In the summer I also assisted with the opening of the school fair for the school.

The summer social event at Arrow Riding school was attended by representation from this council and the Bluewater Forum and was reported to have been an excellent day.

In July this council received a presentation from Ebbsfleet Development Corporation on the progress of the development.

On the 29th October this council placed large poppies on lamp posts along Southfleet Road, High Street and Bean Lane, despite the rain. Many road users demonstrated their support with the honking of horns and thumbs up gesture. Following this was the Remembrance service at the Bean Memorial stone on the 12th November supported by the Revd Simeon Nevell.

In December Santa came to Bean. This was a resounding success with families from all over the parish attending. Thanks go to DBC for providing this and the Fire Service Museum. The council also wishes to extend thanks to Kyle and the staff at the Black Horse public house.

In February representatives from National Highways meet with members of the Bean Residents' Association and this council along with invested local community members. This was to discuss safety concerns and design issues of the new road layout of the new road system.

There have been recent changes to the Parish website, and email addresses, which is now a.gov.uk address, a positive change for this council. The council landline number also ceased to exist in favour of a mobile number making it easier for the clerk to respond during working hours when out of the office.

This council accepted the application of Tracey Williams to be a co-opted member of this council and in January voted to co-opt the now Cllr T Williams.

It only now remains for me to thank again all those who I have previously mentioned and this council for the great work undertaken and given in their own time. This council could not undertake this work without your dedication, compassion and love of your community.

Keith Turner-Burgin
Chair of Bean Parish Council

6) **Questions on the Chair's Report**

There were no questions.

7) **Vote of thanks**

The Chair was thanked for his detailed report.

Cllr. Hammock, seconded by Cllr. Weeks proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Turner-Burgin for his report and the motion was carried unanimously.

8) **Comments or questions to the Parish Council from members of the public**

There were no questions.

9) **Community Reports**

Bean Residents' Association

This report covers the 12 months April 2023 to March 2024.

1. Our new Chairman, Russell Joyce, was elected at the 4th September 2023 AGM.

This Report is by Hon Secretary, Linda Collins assisted by Ashley Johnson.

In 2023/24 we held 9 Meetings in the Village Hall; [No meetings Bank 1st May 23 and 1st Jan 24. Meeting 4th March cancelled as Officers unavailable]. There were 214 items of outgoing Correspondence compared with 310 last year. [Exchanges on A2 Works reduced following the £112m scheme opening to traffic on 30 June 2022].

The top recipients were KCC (19%), Meeting invitees (19%), EDC (14%), Bean Parish Council (10%), DBC (9%) and National Highways (6%).

Meetings and Correspondence included: -

2. A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet Junction Operation Complaints: -
 - a) National Highways attended a site walkover to look at problems on 15-Feb-24. The NH Minutes contained no acknowledgement of hazards. Action with NH.
 - b) Our comments used in Post Opening Project Evaluation a year after opening.
 - c) NCR1 flooding on Watling St not resolved. Bats prevented overnight works.
 - d) Promises to improve business frontages on Watling St, not met by NH or EDC.
3. DBC asked to get Vision Homes to repair unsafe Site Hoarding in Beacon Drive. Minimal repairs undertaken so far.
4. Monthly Litter Picking Volunteers, co-ordinated by Jim Conway, collected 97 full bags in 12 months. A request, via Cllr Dave Hammock, for a DBC Grant towards the £109 insurance cost hasn't found funding at the moment.
5. Revised C1 bus service introduced without consultation with Villagers on times. KCC say it was only intended for off-peak use, not for school or work access.
6. Attended 11-May-23 Local Plan Examination – Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Accommodation. DBC/PI say need can be met by enlarging existing.
7. Ebbsfleet Garden City; Questions put to every EDC Board Meeting. Still no on-site GP for 4,000 homes completed so far (about 9,600 residents) [Mar-2024].
8. Bean Triangle; Clinical Waste site application refused by EDC on KCC advice.
9. The Ship, Green St Green; approved contrary Officer recommendation. Bus C1 route change to serve The Ship was factor. Traffic hazards on skew junction not addressed. Darenth Parish Council minded to stop use of their link road.
10. Lower Thames Crossing; noted challenge to traffic figures and 2-year delay.
11. Bean 20mph zone; KCC say it is self-enforcing. Any speed checks proposed?
12. Unresolved since Aug-2021 is compliance with planning condition for visibility splay at Royal

Oak Mews.

This is only a selection of our activity on behalf of Residents and Businesses.
We thank the Committee, Residents and Parish Council for their assistance.

Linda Collins, Honorary Secretary, Bean Residents Association

Bean Allotment Association

The last year has been turbulent for the committee which as you will be aware all resigned at the AGM. However, we did eventually appoint officers & Committee members which include Councillor Munday. This is now a strong and active committee.

Currently we have 27 plot holders and one person on the waiting list. The committee considers that the bottom half of row one of the allotments is no longer viable for cultivation due to the overhanging trees and their roots. However, the top half being plots 1a, 1B & 1C are still occupied.

The only other tree giving concern is the Scheduled oak tree over hanging plot 16 which covers the plot in acorns each year. I believe the Clerk is looking into this. We will have plot 15, which has not been worked for over a year, coming vacant once the tenant hands back his key at the end of September.

Most plots are being worked ready for spring planting. There is an independent inspection scheduled for 13 April and to assist the inspector we have purchased metal plant labels which have the plot numbers on them and placed these on one corner of each plot.

Jim Conway
Chairman.

Friends of Beacon Woods

It has been a dreadful winter, not due to our normal weather patterns but the non-stop rainy season which has had a real effect on the woods, reducing the woodland tracks to impassable mud holes. The metalled pathways have fared not much better but with a bit of dexterity you were able to walk around them with decent boots.

Reminds me of that song by Flanders and Swann.

Amazingly we have and are getting visitors some of who pay most don't. One of our regular dog walkers has been very helpful in posting fliers on cars parked explaining our financial situation and that a £1 is a small contribution to make compared with others. Saying that our bank balance is healthy and one day we might be able to hire a contractor to replace some of our paths.

Sadly, the Friends of Beacon Wood group is no longer. It may have been since Covid, anyway we have no friends and the jobs outstanding are even more so.

I and Diane would like to step back from our temporary position of Chair and secretary and with our advancing years we might be falling rather than stepping I have discovered that I am no longer a young man and with no young men assisting I am unable to keep up.

On a positive note, the woodlands are beautiful today with the Wood anemones bluebells and the common spotted Orchids all out together and our visitors all appear to be happy (no complaints about anything)

Let's hope we have a good summer.

10) Any other business

None

There being no further business the Chairman declared the Parish Meeting closed at 7.25 pm

Chairman

Date