

# ENGLISHCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

(Serving Barrow, Englishcombe, Haycombe, Ingelsbath, Kilkenny, Nailwell & Padleigh)

Meeting of the council held on Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> of  
March at 7:30pm in the Old Schoolhouse, Englishcombe

## MINUTES

Present: Councillors Robert Law (Chairman RL); Brian Huggett (BH); Will Pow (WP); Annie Watson (AW); Anne Corlett (AC); Nick Spicer (NS); Councillor Matt McCabe (MM)

Abi Budd (AB) Accountant, and 4 parishioners

### Action points in yellow

1	<b>Apologies for absence:</b> None
2	<b>Declarations of interest and dispensations:</b> None
3.0	<b>Approval of minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023:</b> Approved and signed
3.1	<b>Matters Arising:</b> None
4.1	<b>Parishioners' matters:</b> None
4.2	<b>Correspondence:</b> None
4.3	<b>Recruitment to Englishcombe Parish Council:</b> Lucie Scurlock was co-opted onto the Parish Council
4.4	<b>Management of parish accounts:</b> It was agreed by all councillors that Abi Budd would manage the parish accounts in conjunction with RL (as temporary Parish Clerk)– Abi's hourly rate of £25 per hour was agreed.
4.5	<b>Sharing out of councillors' duties:</b> RL ran through a list of duties circulated by email. No objections. <b>Recruitment of Clerk:</b> RL is to draft a new advert, then circulate for approval. Councillors were asked to contribute to the job description - existing one will be circulated to all. Advertisement to be placed through BANES, other parish councils and places – possibly school class whatsapp groups, as people may be looking for part time work to fit in around school hours. <b>Action: RL</b>
5	<b>PLANNING</b> Results, correspondence and consideration
5.1	B&NES Planning meeting (Zoom) on 17th March (details circulated) - <b>postponed.</b>
5.2	<b>Ref: Wandsdyke Cottage 23/00321/FUL</b> The Parish Council having examined the drawings submitted, passed unanimously the proposals, and welcomed the completion of the extension to the main house.
5.3	<b>Ref: Rose Cottage 23/00363/CLPU</b> The Parish Council raised no objection to the proposed installation of the solar panel on the grounds that it would not be visible from Rectory Farm Lane, although the dwelling is within the Englishcombe Conservation Area (which would prohibit such interventions). The reasons discussed by the council for their decision was a recent precedent at Freshford School, supported by the BPT, where the placing of panels would not be visually detrimental to adjacent buildings. EPC were of strong opinion that solar panels should only be positioned where they did not impinge upon views of the roofscape from any aspect within the CA. In the Englishcombe CA, this would preclude most

5.4 5.5 5.6	<p>roofs. It was decided that in order to forestall arguments over who was allowed to install panels, our forthcoming <b>appraisal of the Conservation Area</b> and our <b>Neighbourhood Plan</b> would incorporate advice on solar panels and other matters that might cause concern. <b>Action: RL &amp; NS</b></p> <p><b>23/00005/FUL: 7 Inox Grove:</b> EPC discussed at meeting on 9th January.</p> <p>Application determined and passed by Bathnes planning dept.</p> <p>Progress report on <b>21/05076/D6A : Sulis Down:</b> Nothing more to say – everything has already been said as far as the application effects Englishcombe parish.</p> <p><b>The Furlong</b> – future of house: <b>RL</b> has contacted the Duchy of Cornwall Estate who have indicated that the present house will be demolished, due to its state, and a new house built in its place.</p>
6.0 6.1 6.2	<p><b>FINANCIAL REPORT</b></p> <p>Issue over internet &amp; telephone banking with the departure of Jack Roach with the need to renew Business Mandate. <b>RL and AB to open new Mandate with HSBC.</b></p> <p>RL, A.W and W.P signed the HSBC mandate to close Millstream &amp; Wheelwright’s account (which has been combined with the main Englishcombe bank account).</p> <p><b>Parish Precept: £10,000</b> has been granted to the council for year 2023/24</p> <p>Current Englishcombe Parish A/c as at 1st March 2023:     <b>£9681.17</b></p> <p>Millstream Wheelwright’s a/c (now combined) balance:     <b>£3017.24</b></p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)                                     <b>£3193.00</b></p> <p><b>Parish meeting arranged for 27th March 2023 to sign off finances and budget.</b></p> <p>Auditors fees of £288 approved along with £476.90 for sweeper fees (2 x months) and £6.75 expenses for Jack Roach</p> <p>Sweeper fees to be £257 per month from April 1st ‘23 (5% increase in line with Bathnes guidelines) <b>Information to be conveyed to AR Lye by RL</b></p> <p><b>Parish Noticeboard:</b> Approval was passed of up to £250 for repair and materials. Proposed by RL and agreed by all.</p>

7.0

## HIGHWAY, RIGHTS OF WAY AND ALLIED MATTERS

7.1

### Rural Transport Update:

MM summarised the local bus situation. Official position is that if the village and parish (Nailwell & Inglesbatch) is covered by DRT, service will be withdrawn. He has been trying to establish where the boundary of the zone is - not clear if we're covered. BANES is extending some contracts from April to late May. Unclear if 768 is included. MM knew last summer we were walking into a funding crisis. Dan Morris (WECA Mayor) said he wanted 10% more from all LAs last summer for the supported services, but council can't raise that kind of money. BANES are not allowed to negotiate with the bus companies who are facing inflationary pressures of 40%. BANES along with South Glos and possibly Bristol had allocated more money, but told just after Christmas they needed to find 200% more. £700k to £1m planned increase, but WECA stipulated £3m. LAs can't increase the budget by more than 5%. Much of the allocated money is to be spent on a £2 fare project. Central Government has given WECA £50m to improve the bus service, but this excludes spending on existing services. Bus companies know the mayor has this sum, which is the problem. A proposal for 4 new bus routes in the zone to work alongside DRT collapsed, due to a dispute between Labour/Lib Dems/Conservatives. MM has asked for everyone to sit down together and make DRT work. In **Wales, Powys** county has indicated that DRT works well with the proviso that passengers understand interaction with 'touch points' with the regular bus service. Bottom line is that when DRT is introduced, local services are lost right across the WECA region.

AW asks what people are supposed to do as they're being left stranded.

MM couldn't obtain an answer about people getting DRT to places like Mount Road or to the Odd Down P&R. MM subsequently discovered that Englishcombe is within the DRT zone. WP reiterates that we need to know the precise extent of the zone's boundary. MM said that WECA has agreed to these boundaries but will enter into individual negotiations / contracts with bus companies to find out if they meet our parish requirements. MM is not getting answers. The DRT App has not been demonstrated and lacks a telephone number. **RL is to attend meetings on 8th (Bath Avon Forum) & 15th (Zoom) where transport issues are to be discussed with WECA.** AW explained that she can't attend but will be provided with contact details.. NL commented that we are stuck between a position that's known, but an unknown future. What is a realistic course of action at present, and are taxis part of the solution? MM – in Powys, taxi drivers are required to work to bus rates whilst under contract, and this could be the case here where taxi drivers take on home pickups. Request for transport to a virtual bus stop might be realisable for a 1.5hr 'window' and with a notice period of 40 minutes LS – what type of transport will be sent? Will a bus be cost-effective? MM –The launch of this service is on 3 April.

**Parishioners questions on local rural transport:** – What happened to the £2 fare?

MM – This doesn't cover everyone or on every route, as people discovered. In the first Lib Dem magazine, they said they would help the rural bus services - what's happened to that? MM – crisis of funding. We've upped the funding, but Bathnes is not allowed to negotiate directly with bus companies, the preserve of WECA.

LS – what about the money from the clean air zone?

MM – government gets 90% of the revenue.

AW – why no bus routes cut in central Bath? MM – they are. Losing 2. Costs of some routes are prohibitive. The cost of £200k for one supported service is prohibitive. Englishcombe currently gets 2 trips out and back to central Bath during

	<p>the day, but Southdown and Twerton get a bus every 20 mins. MM – private bus services only want to cover profitable routes that make 15 to 17% profit. A new service should mean you can order a DRT bus at any time of day (Chew Valley initially thought this was a good idea as they have no services at present, but anxious that this state of affairs will continue).</p> <p>DRT should run you to a local route. Where will the DRT in Englishcombe take you? What about people who can't drive or do not possess a car?</p> <p>MM – should be able to ring at any time and ask for a route within 40 mins.</p> <p>BH – If you travel to a certain spot eg. Mount Rd, how do you get back? Will the company operating in the zone be allowed to drive out of it to collect people it dropped? No answer at present.</p> <p>RL – We will then see how the new system works from 3 April and when the 768 bus is withdrawn in mid-June. Problems arise with rural bus routes when the bus doesn't turn up, especially in the winter. Model has to prove that it works satisfactorily. Other organisations elsewhere in the UK have looked into these problems a long time ago and solved them. <b>Community buses</b> – <b>Wellow</b> has one. It goes into Bath and returns twice a day.. It allows about 1.5 hours to 2 hours in Bath. MM – the community pays for it. Nothing to do with Bathnes..</p> <p><b>West Sussex</b> has a similar service. Doesn't tread on the toes of the local services. LS – who funds it? NS – any idea what is the operating cost? Can we find out? Do you operate a volunteer rota or do you fund a car or a bus?</p> <p><b>Answer: “The Harting Minibus is operated by Harting Minibus Community Interest Co. Everybody is a volunteer, we have no paid staff. As a result costs are minimised, and with the help of funding from West Sussex County Council, together with various fund raising activities, fares are kept to a minimum” (e.g. return fares S.Harting to Petersfield 5 miles £4 / to Chichester £6 12miles)</b></p> <p>Nick –what about a community taxi deployed during school hours?</p> <p>Do parishes ever share buses? <b>RL will research with AW where there are community buses that are working and report by the end of May.and will contact other parishes and see what they think.</b></p> <p>AW The Petition has raised 800 signatures What will happen to de-icing roads if the bus goes? <b>MM Will try to find out the answer.</b></p> <p>AW – if DRT links with P&amp;R do you have to pay 2 fares?  <b>MM – in theory, transferable, but will investigate.</b></p> <p>RL recaps: between 4th and end of April <b>parish council will see how DRT is working, in Englishcombe and adjacent parishes .</b></p>
8	<p><b>Update to Parish Charter</b>  BH not in attendance for last part of meeting.</p>
9.0	<p><b>CIL expenditure report:</b></p>
9.1	<p>Parish notice board and paving beneath discussed and estimates will be obtained.</p>
9.2	<p>Signpost on 10 acres lane to be refurbished.</p>
9.3	<p>A new sign post on village entrance to replace the existing and damaged one was raised by RL as something to explore. <b>Action RL</b></p>

10	<b>Millstream / Orchard / Wheelwright's report:</b>
10.1	Minutes from the AGM on 31st January to be issued to councillors and posted up on the website <b>(Action AC)</b> and notice board <b>(Action RL)</b> , when reinstated.
10.2	Agreed <b>noticeboard for Millstream</b> has not yet materialised but quotations for a design <b>(RL)</b> to be obtained.
11.	<b>Coronation plans</b> to be discussed at 27th March meeting.
12	<b>Parish website progress:</b> The website is up and running and the Chairman encouraged the writing of articles / photographs etc by parishioners etc to be posted up.
13	<b>Reports: B&amp;NES Councillors &amp; Chairman</b> Rural bus networks to be an ongoing and significant topic
14	<b>Dates: Next EPC Meeting will take place on: Monday 27th March 2023 at 7.30pm in the Old Schoolhouse.</b>