

BLEAN PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 10th February 2025.

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Those Present: Cllr. P. Hutt (Chairman); Cllr. H. Samuelson (Vice-Chairman); Cllr. A. Jeffers; Cllr. J. Russell; Cllr. G. King and Clerk Mrs D. Horswell.

Also present: Ward Cllr. D. Smith; Ward Cllr. S. Jupe; County Cllr. R. Thomas and one member of the public.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr. M. Akers; Cllr. M Hayden; Ward Cllr. A. Ricketts.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Changes to DPI's & Declarations of Interest in matters to be discussed:

No DPI changes.

Cllr.King declared an interest in any matters relating to the village hall.

3. To Approve: Minutes of the last Meeting: of 9th December 2024.

The Minutes were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. King, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Samuelson and **APPROVED** by all **Members present. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

4. Finance:

4.1 Invoice Payments (Banking Report circulated to Cllrs. prior to the meeting).

DD	Lili Waste Services	Waste Collection January	£120.91 (Vat £20.15)
Bacs	Mr K Waddington	Handyman Wages December	£198.27
Bacs	Mrs D Horswell	Clerk Salary December	£1,133.73*
Bacs	HMRC	PAYE & NIC December	£379.35
DD	XLN	Telephone & Broadband January	£108.36 (Vat £18.06)
DD	HugoFox	Monthly Website Charge	£11.99
	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Service Charge	£6.00

Total Paid Out: £1,958.61

Bank Statement as at 31st December 2024 - Current Account £38,040.88

(This does not include all the outgoing transactions in this banking report).

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***Note: Clerks Salary increase from £13.97 to £14.60 per hour SCP 13 as per NALC Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024/2025 includes backpay from 1st April 2024.**

DD	Lili Waste Services	Waste Collection February	£120.91 (Vat £20.15)
Bacs	Mr K Waddington	Handyman Wages January	£244.07
Bacs	Mrs D Horswell	Clerk Salary January	£891.93
Bacs	HMRC	PAYE & NIC January	£288.42
DD	XLN	Telephone & Broadband February	£108.36 (Vat £18.06)
DD	HugoFox	Monthly Website Charge	£11.99
Bacs	BVHMC	Hall Hire February	£24.00
Bacs	Zurich Municipal	Annual Insurance Premium	£1,023.64
Bacs	BVHMC	Annual Parish Office Utility Bill	£488.61
Bacs	Wicksteed Leisure	Annual Play Equipment Inspection	£180. (Vat £30.00)
Bacs	Commercial Services	Grounds Maintenance	£72.32 (Vat £12.05)
	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Service Charge	£6.00

Total Paid Out: £3,460.25

Received In:

UK Power Networks – Wayleave payment – Yearly Rental	£69.51
BVHMC Waste Collection Nov & Dec 2024	£104.36

Bank Statement as at 31st January 2025 - Current Account £36,223.74*

(This does not include all the outgoing transactions in this banking report).

* Includes remainder of S106 money of £2,350.68 to be spent on play equipment maintenance.

PROPOSED by Cllr. Jeffers, SECONDED by Cllr. Hutt and all Cllrs. present APPROVED the bank payments.

4.2 To Ratify: BPC Donation to Save the Blean Project:

It was agreed to donate £500.00 to the Save The Blean project on request of a declaration, in writing, from STB on what the money will be spent on and what procedures are in place for any money left over.

Proposed by Cllr. Samuelson, Seconded by Cllr. Hutt and agreed by all Councillors present.

4.3 To Note: Re-Declaration to The Pensions Regulator (3 Yearly) – Noted.

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4.4 To Note: Internal Audit booked for 2nd May - Noted

4.5 To Note: Annual Insurance Premium Renewal – reported on the Bank Report.

5. Planning: (Planning Report for Discussion circulated to Cllrs. Prior to the meeting)

Planning Applications:

24/02024 - Reserved matters application for approval of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the development of up to 85 residential dwellings (including 30% affordable housing, structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space, surface water attenuation, vehicular access from Blean Common and associated ancillary works pursuant to outline planning permission CA//15/02523/OUT. Land At Blean Common.

Blean Parish Council comments - Firstly, No. 120A Blean Common, a bungalow at the rear of 120, is not shown on the layout plans, so it is difficult to assess what impact the proposed development will have on this property which is very close to the site boundary.

Secondly, 85 dwellings on this site with this layout is very tight. There are lots of examples of tandem parking, which Kent Highways will tell you does not always work well and can lead to residents parking their cars elsewhere to avoid having to move one car to get another one out of a space. Parking dominates the layout in the north west corner where there is a sea of car spaces along the street- 14 spaces in total in a row. However, there appears to be a shortfall in car parking spaces for the occupants of Nos. 76 to 85.

In terms of the movement strategy plan, there are no cycle priority routes provided through this development and the whole development is provided with shared surfaces. This means that pedestrians and cars, delivery vehicles, cyclists, scooters etc. all share the same space - is this safe for a development off this size? The Parish Council note that Ruth Goudie, CCC Transport Planner, in her email dated 20/11/24 advises that some of the commitments from the travel plan for the outline permission are not shown on the masterplan for this Reserved Matters Application. In particular, where is the confirmation by the developer to surface CB18 to Chapel Lane and convert it to a cycle track, so that cyclists can use it to gain access to local shops and the Crab and Winkle cycle route?

The plans that accompanied the outline permission also showed that the public footpath CB18 would continue to run along the back of the properties fronting onto Blean Common, however, the route shown on the proposals now is different and would take one through the development.

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The location of all of the affordable housing is in one part of the development, i.e. the north west corner of the site. This is not good practice, it should be pepper potted throughout the development - that is one sign of a good development.

In terms of details, the plot Nos. 71 and 75,76 -79 are too close to existing development and will overlook and result in loss of privacy to the occupants of Nos. 2 and 4 Honey Hill and the Royal Oak pub. The house on Plot No 1 is too close to the proposed retained landscaping area as the construction of the dwelling will impact on the root protection areas and the canopies of the trees and hedges that currently exist. There needs to be a clear commitment by the developer not just to retain the two landscaped areas either side of the main access but to state that any trees/ hedges dead or dying will be replaced and that these areas are maintained after the development is complete.

The location of the Public Open Space / dog off lead /walking area is tucked away in the far north west corner of the site and having limited natural surveillance is unlikely to be well used. It should be more centrally located so that more residents would be encouraged to use the facility.

The Fencing Plan needs to be clearer in terms of the land adjacent to Plot Nos. 1 and 12 where there are vacant parcels of land - who would be responsible for them? Plus, the landscaped strip adjacent to Plot 6 is pointless as vehicles, particularly large ones, will cut the corner and cars will end up parking on this area. It will be an eyesore.

The lighting plan lacks detail. The plan shows that the only lighting for the development is a number of 1m high bollard lights. Are bollard lights sufficient /appropriate to safely illuminate the development for residents and visitors? The location of some of them means that there are likely to be some dark areas. It seems odd that there are no street lighting columns.

Lastly, a minor point, but In the Design and Access Statements (DAS), the Parish Council is not sure what the significance of the photos on page 13 of Hillside Park, Linton in one document and page 6 of Ticehurst in the other DAS is?

24/02024 – Amended: Reserved matters application for approval of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the development of up to 85 residential dwellings (including 30% affordable housing, structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space, surface water attenuation, vehicular access from Blean Common and associated ancillary works pursuant to outline planning permission CA/24/00234/VAR - planning permission CA/24/00234/VAR., , , Location: **Land At Blean Common, Blean, CT2 9JJ.**

Blean Parish Council comments - The majority of the Parish Council's concerns/objections still stand. It is good that No 120A Blean Common is shown on the proposed site plan and that the Public Right of Way(PROW) is to be located in its current location . However, the Parish Council is

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concerned that the PROW will not be safe for users, especially at night, as the proposed houses on plots 13 to 18 will have their backs to it and 1.8m high close boarded fencing will run the length of the PROW ,not inviting for users! The proposed layout of this part of the development should be redesigned to properly incorporate the PROW within it.

The Parish Council is not convinced that shared surface arrangement for a development of this size of 85 dwellings and the traffic generated by it will be safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

As stated previously, affordable housing all in one location is not good practice and should be pepper potted through the development so that it is integrated more within the overall development.

In terms of relationship with adjoining properties, Plots 71 and 75 are still too close to existing development leading to problems of overlooking and loss of privacy. Plot 71 has two bedroom windows and a living room window within its rear elevation less than 12m from the rear elevation of the first floor windows of the Royal Oak pub's living accommodation, whereas Plot 76-79 have habitable windows within its south west elevation directly facing the rear habitable windows of Nos 1 and 2 Honey Hill, approximately 12m away. Normally in such situations one would look to achieve a distance of 21m between habitable windows of the neighbouring dwellings to avoid issues of overlooking and loss of privacy from occurring. For plot 75 this first floor flat with its two bedroom windows and living room window facing south west will be sited approximately 3m from the boundary of No1 Honey Hill's rear garden and the Royal Oak pub, this is unneighbourly leading to direct overlooking of No 1 rear garden, whereas the potential future occupants of plot 75 will be affected by the potential noise and general disturbance from the users of the pub garden ,especially in the summer months when the rear windows of the flat are likely to be open when it is hot. The layout for this part of the proposed development needs to be redesigned to overcome these concerns, the proposed dwellings need to be located further from the existing properties. The Parish Council is still unclear what commitment the developer is providing to retain and manage the landscaped areas either side of the access - the reply that a management company will be set up to manage the area is somewhat vague, especially as such companies have been known to go bust - what happens then? The same comment applies to the land adjacent to plots Nos 1 and 12 on the fencing plan, what guarantee is there that the management company will maintain the land and that instead the land becomes overgrown and unkept, an eyesore.

The previous comments regarding land adjoining plot 6 and vehicles running over it have not been addressed.

If KCC Highways and CCC Urban Design Officer are happy that the proposed bollard lighting will be safe for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles then the Parish Council would raise no further comment on this aspect.

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Finally, given the above concerns/ comments the Parish Council is not convinced that, despite what the agent says, the proposed development will be a high quality development or visually attractive, it is cramped and poorly laid out.

24/02283 - Erection and operation of a solar farm with battery energy storage and associated infrastructure on a land at Britton Court Farm, Tyler Hill, CT2 9NG - **Formerly Part Of Britton Court Farm, Land East And West Of Hackington Road, Tyler Hill.**

Blean Parish Council has no objections to this application.

24/02284 - Prior approval for change of use from offices to 2 dwellings - **26 Tyler Hill Road.**

Blean Parish Council has no objections to this application.

25/00122 - Two-storey side extension and first floor rear extension, solar panels to side elevation following demolition of garage and side extension – **33 Blean Hill – Comments by 28th February.**

24/02219 - Two-storey detached dwelling - **8 Blean Common - Comments by 28th February.**

25/00185 - Variation of condition 2 (drawings) of planning permission CA/24/00565/FUL for the single-storey extension to West elevation of Church outbuilding together with enlargement of existing windows; to allow a change of colour of the cladding, windows and doors - **The Church Of Saint Cosmus Saint Damian Tyler Hill Road – Comments by 7th March.**

Decisions by CCC:

24/01967 - Single-storey side extension - Holmcrest Farm , Denstroude Lane – **GRANTED**

24/01558 - Erection of conservatory to rear elevation and rear dormer, following demolition of existing conservatory - 1 Trueman Close - **GRANTED**

Appeals

Appeal Ref: APP/J2210/W/23/3332825

24 School Lane

Retrospective application for single-storey detached agricultural storage. Awaiting Decision.

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Application Ref: CA/23/00521

Appeal Ref: 3335774

Butlers Court Farm Blean Common

6 detached dwellings consisting of 3 no. one and a half storey, 2 no. two and a half storey and 1 no. 2 storey dwelling together with formation of access and associated hardstanding following demolition of existing industrial buildings.

Awaiting Decision.

Noted: An email has been received from the applicant of 3 Westfield regarding the Parish Council's comments to 24/01651 - Porch to side elevation.

6. Reports from County Cllr. and Ward Cllrs:

6.1 Ward Cllr. Jupe report:

Cllr. Jupe said she had enjoyed working with Speedwatch at Rough Common and would be interested in being involved with Blean Speedwatch as well. Arrange with Cllr. Akers on his return. There was discussion regarding the Broad Oak Reservoir and Cllr. Hutt said he had been invited to a meeting with Southern Water.

6.2 County Cllr. Thomas report:

Cllr. Thomas explained how the process works regarding South East Water.

He reported that Kevin Gore is the new District Manager for KCC.

He spoke of the Devolution White Paper which had been issued in December 2024 and how the Council leaders in Kent had signed up to it but, disappointingly, Kent was not on the list so elections will take place on 1st May 2025.

KCC budget meeting is on Thursday 13th February.

7. Reports and Updates:

7.1 Village Hall Report: - Cllr. King

The hall continues to be well supported with a number of new regular hirers and also birthdays and baby shower meetings.

The recent storms have damaged some of the ridge tiles and lifted others, so this is likely to be an expensive repair job.

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7.2 N.H.W:

All relevant reports are circulated to Cllrs. weekly.

7.3 Footpath Report: Cllr. Samuelson.

Nothing to report.

7.4 Highways Report: Cllr Jeffers.

Nothing to report.

7.5 Speedwatch Report: Cllr. Akers and Cllr. Russell.

Nothing to report.

7.6 Clerks Report.

Nothing further to report that is not already on the agenda.

8. Matters raised by the Public:

The matter of road repairs was raised to which County Cllr. Thomas replied that KCC has submitted evidence on road repairs and emergency repairs. At the present time the utility companies have the right to close roads with just two hours' notice. This is something KCC are lobbying the Government to change as it has become a huge issue.

9. Matters to be discussed: (Any relevant papers circulated to Cllrs. prior to the meeting).

9.1 To Discuss: Annual Inspection report of the play equipment on the recreation ground:

It was agreed that none of the findings on the report are of high risk and the repairs have been identified that need to be carried out in the coming months. BPC has \$106 money of 2,350.68 to go towards the cost of the repairs.

9.2 Update: \$106 money – Play Equipment maintenance – as above.

9.3 Update: Donation of Bench by a resident for the Nature Reserve (Keirs Meadow) – waiting until the better weather to continue with this project as the Nature Reserve is so muddy at the moment.

9.4 Update: Donation towards new seat at The Winding Pond – still waiting for reply from KSCP.

10. Councillors' Reports:

10.1 Cllr. King reported that the bridge at Amery Court Farm has been replaced and a metal stile has been put in at the far end.

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He also reported that the panel in the bus shelter at Tyler Hill Road/Blean Common junction has still not been replaced after being smashed three years ago. Clerk to chase up.

10.2 Cllr. Hutt reported that he is meeting with Southern Water next week and there are further meetings for the Broad Oak Stakeholder Advisory Group on Wednesday 19th February and Wednesday 19th March in Broad Oak village hall.

11. Any Other Business for discussion at the next Parish Council meeting on 10th March 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.09.

Dates of forthcoming Parish Council meetings in the coming year unless for any reason they have to be changed.

10th March

14th April – Annual Parish Assembly

12th May – Annual Parish Council meeting

9th June

14th July

8th September

13th October

10th November

8th December.

These Minutes remain as draft minutes until approved by the Parish Council at the next meeting.

Date _____

Signature _____