



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 2nd APRIL 2024, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

Present: Councillors J. Buttery (Chair) presided, E Akenhead, A Stout, C. Churchill, V. Heath, A. Wells, J. Reynolds, C. Brooks (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr Sarah Hamilton (KCC), 7 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Anderson who is on holiday and Cllr Dewdney who had other commitments.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 4th March were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3. To record declarations of interest in any item on the Agenda

Cllr Reynolds declared a pecuniary interest (OSI) in planning application 24/00489/FULL Moatlands Manor and did not participate in nor vote on this matter, as she lives in a neighbouring property.

4. To adjourn to allow public participation. At the Chairman's discretion, 15 minutes will be set aside for questions from members of the public each one of whom may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes in total relating to items on the Agenda or about issues of local concern. Members of the public are not permitted to participate in the meeting after this agenda item, without prior invitation from the Chairman.

A resident commented on concerns regarding the access area in the vicinity of the development at 24/00726/NMAMD below.

A resident spoke to outline concerns, which had been circulated to the Council, regarding the position and orientation of the play equipment proposed at the development by the Village Hall.

5. Borough and County Councillor

None.

6. Chairman's Announcements

- The Chair and Clerk have a meeting with the new owner of the Wheelwrights Inn on 30th April which will be used to discuss the right of access for pedestrians.
- The Chair and Clerk have a meeting with the President and CEO of KALC on 3rd April to discuss the Monitoring Officer process and support for Councillors.
- The Council noted that the Appeal for the Matfield House proposals has been dismissed mainly related to having a pedestrian crossing on Chestnut Lane and its proposed setting close to Grade 1 Matfield House and other Grade 2 buildings in and its surrounding open area plus AONB status.
- Cllr Wells is working on the Council's Carbon Audit and will provide information for the next Council to consider (by which time she will no longer be on the PC).
- Thursday June 6th D-Day Beacon-lighting event. Clive Forward has been asked to provide wood for the beacon and Howard Downes will fill it. The Council agreed to ask John Barsley to light the Beacon and to ask Chris Woodley to read the Tribute in conjunction with other residents of all ages and to invite Georgie Warner, as a Deputy Lieutenant of Kent to contribute. Cllr Reynolds would take this forward with Mr Woodley.

7. Traffic

1. Confirmation of Blind Lane name change

The Council noted confirmation from TWBC that the change of name for part of Brenchley Road to Blind Lane has been completed. Included in the changes will be the adjusting the road signage both ends of Blind Lane and a request has been made for the change of name to be included on the one.network site.

2. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – progress

The HIP had been submitted to KCC and information on progress had been obtained which suggested that a crossing and streetlights in the vicinity of Standings Cross was not supported by evidence of frequent use and accident statistics. KCC had however agreed to undertake the pedestrian survey count to obtain the most accurate data as well as an ATC to assess levels of speeding. The Council agreed to continue to press for this as well as for signage and a review of the location of bus stops.

3. Police meetings

CC attended My Community Voice 5th March with Police and the IAG Unity in the Community Tuesday 19th March. The message is that anything we wish to report should be via PCSO Simon Fuller.

The new Speedwatch equipment is now in use and working well.

8. Planning

1. Planning Applications

22/00757/FULL OS Plot 6860 West Side Of, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent
Erection of 15 no. residential dwellings, including affordable housing provision, additional car parking for Matfield Village Hall, the provision of open and children's play space, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs), new vehicular access and associated works.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The Parish Council maintains its objection to this application, because of the effect it will have on the landscape approach to Matfield and because of concerns about highway safety and pedestrian safety that have not, in our view, been adequately addressed.

The Parish Council supports the points made in the letter of 6 March from the Trustees of the Village Hall and notes that the development presumably cannot go ahead if agreement is not reached with the Trustees for the proposed pedestrian path through their land to the Maidstone Road.

However, if TWBC is minded to approve the application, the proposed playground and parking area designs are acceptable to the Parish Council, subject to some refinement which could be conditioned for later submission of details:

- a) the playground equipment should preferably have the brightly coloured elements shown on the diagrams (hand grips, ropes, top of tower) coloured green, rather than red, yellow and blue, in order to blend better with the adjacent Conservation Area. We understand from the playground designers that this would be possible.**
- b) the playground equipment position/orientation should be changed where possible to minimise loss of privacy to neighbours.**
- c) The Parish Council would also wish to have litter bins installed. These need to be designed to blend with the Conservation Area and be of the closed type, to prevent scattering of litter by foxes.**

The Parish Council would be content for the design and materials of the playground fencing and gate to be conditioned for later submission as suggested by KCC Highways, but again it is important that these should detract as little as possible from the Conservation Area.

24/00164/SUB Land Adjacent To Thorn Barn Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent TN12 7JH
Submission of Details in relation to Conditions 3 - (External Materials), 7 - (External Lighting), 8 - (Sewage Disposal), 12 - (Boundary Treatments), 13 - (Storage and Screening of Refuse), 14 - (Vehicle Parking/Turning Space), 16 - (Surfacing of Driveway and Parking Areas), 17 - (EV Charging),

18 - (Construction/Demolition Environmental Management Plan), 19 - (Tree Protection Details) and 20 - (Cycle Parking Provisions) of 23/01314/FULL RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE Further to our previous comments, which remain valid, and noting the revised CEMP, the Parish Council repeats the concerns expressed previously and makes the following additional comments: Regarding delivery times by HGVs, the Parish Council's Speed Indicator Devices show that the crossroads in Matfield is at its busiest 7-9:30 am and 4-7pm, and that a recent Automated Traffic Count showed that Brenchley Road is used by an average of 16,000 vehicles per week. While it is recognised that the hours of working were decided in the original application for this site, HGV deliveries should if possible be scheduled between 9:30am and 4pm, so as to avoid the busiest times at this hazardous crossroads. The Parish Council remains doubtful whether there will be sufficient turning space for 12m rigid HGVs within the site, and echoes the concern of the adjacent neighbours as to whether the entrance will be wide enough for these to turn in and out of the site safely. The Parish Council notes the newly submitted Appendix D delivery routing maps for construction vehicles. The routes shown in strong blue are acceptable but it needs to be made clear that, in the map showing the route from the A21 and the south, the route using Kings Toll Road shown in the lighter blue is completely unacceptable, as this very narrow rural lane is unsuitable for construction traffic. The Parish Council also draws attention to the fact that the B2160 between Paddock Wood and Matfield is to be closed to all traffic for the duration of the Schools' Summer holidays this year to enable works by South East Water, so the route for vehicles coming from the north during that period must be via the B2017, the A228 and the A21.
24/00489/FULL Moatlands Manor, Watermans Lane, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 6ND One-and-a-half storey ancillary domestic outbuilding (retrospective) RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The garage building with two offices, a meeting room with kitchen and toilet facilities on the first floor is some distance away from the main house. Contrary to the statement made in the Planning statement (Section 5.5.2) that the garage is modest in nature, the building is quite large and generates light pollution into the surrounding landscape, contrary to policy LE8 of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). It is also very visible from the public right of way and does not enhance or conserve the setting of the AONB, contrary to NDP policy LE2. The Parish Council notes that a similar sized building, described as a machinery shed and workshop, adjacent to this one and also built without planning permission, is the subject of application 24/00577/LDCEX. It is difficult to understand why this "domestic ancillary" building for a manor house that no longer has a large estate to go with it, should be required to provide two offices, a meeting room, a kitchen and toilet facilities on an upper floor, especially as the upper floor of the adjacent machinery shed and workshop could provide those facilities if they are really needed. A garage, if required, should be smaller and single storey. The Parish Council is very concerned about the way the historic Moatlands Manor site is becoming incrementally and surreptitiously overdeveloped, to the detriment of the countryside. The new development of 3 terraced houses was granted permission only on the basis that it was to replace existing buildings with extant permission for conversion to 3 dwellings (under Replacement Dwelling Policy framework). Since building these 3 terraced dwellings, Irvine Property Solutions have secured permission to keep the original buildings that were to be replaced and have simultaneously built this new large building without permission.
24/00538/LBC Little Portobello, Windmill Hill, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NP Listed Building Consent - Removal of damp lath and plaster from north eastern chimney stack, erection of stud partition, rebuilding of chimney stacks in south east and west corner RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE Subject to compliance with the requests of the Conservation Officer.

24/00618/FULL Little Dunks Farm, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HX Conversion of outbuilding into 3 bed dwellinghouse with associated works RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL While noting the pre-app advice quoted by the applicant, this building is in an unsustainable position in AONB countryside, well away from settlements, so reliant on private cars. The Parish Council is concerned at the incremental suburbanisation and development of Little Dunks Farm. This does not enhance the High Weald National Landscape or meet the requirements of NDP policy LE1. If approved, request conditions requiring details of Sustainable drainage system together with the septic tank's location and where it discharges to, to comply with NDP D8 Surface water management.
24/00652/FULL Viewlands, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JP Rear box dormer incorporating hip to gable roof extension and carport to side RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council notes that this application appears to be identical or almost identical to refused application 22/03463/FULL. BMPC presumes that the same considerations still apply and that this application should therefore also be refused. If, however, TWBC is now minded to approve this application, the Parish Council requests a condition requiring electrically operated blackout blinds to be fitted to the rooflights, in order to comply with Policy LE8 Dark skies of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan.
24/00660/FULL Knowle Lodge, Knowle Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7DW Variation of Condition 2 of 22/01073/FULL - Amendments to approved plans to change roof pitch and fenestration (retrospective) RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE Since 22/01073 was approved, the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been made, and has become part of the Development Plan. The Parish Council generally deplores buildings that fail to be built to the approved plans. In this case, while the increase in roof height and pitch may perhaps be marginal enough to be just about acceptable if it were the only change, and the altered fenestration on the East elevation is acceptable, the roof lanterns are unacceptable. This is because, being larger than the skylights in the approved plans and spilling much more light, they conflict with policy LE8 Dark skies of the NDP. Moreover they appear as carbuncles on the roof and are not in keeping with local design. This is the last house on Knowle Road before the AONB boundary, and hence important in the setting of the AONB, and the addition of the roof lanterns above the roof line does not enhance and conserve the setting of the AONB. They therefore also conflict with policies D2 Local architectural style and LE2 Development affecting the AONB and its setting.
24/00662/FULL The Milking Pail, Little Dunks Farm, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley, TN12 7HX Erection of one-bedroom single storey attached annexe RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
24/00699/FULL 27 Oakfield Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LB Single-storey rear extension and front porch RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL While the proposed extension and front porch appear acceptable in terms of amenity and landscape, the addition of a further bedroom may worsen the parking problems in Oakfield Road and conflict with Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy AM3. Oakfield Road is identified as an area of parking stress in paragraph 6.137 of the NDP. Number 27 has no off-road parking and there is no space to provide a parking space in number 27's garden.
24/00726/NMAMD Land Adjacent To Thorn Barn Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent TN12 7JH Non-Material Amendment in relation to 23/01314/FULL - Amendments to Plot 2 & 3 parking RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The Proposed site plan showing the proposed alteration to the parking spaces for Plots 2 and 3 shows

- 1) a tandem arrangement for 2 & 3, which is not a layout recommended by KCC
- 2) the new parking spaces intruding into/removing part of the important hedge along the Maidstone Road, which will be seriously detrimental to the AONB landscape
- 3) positions for EV points for these parking spaces that appear completely unworkable
- 4) an apparent loss of cycle and bin storage

These changes should not be considered non-material.

The Parish Council also notes that the plan A-SP-001 Rev C2 External Works Layout submitted with this “non-material amendment” does not show the driveway into the development from Brenchley Road being widened as per the requirements of KCC Highways and as shown on the originally approved plan/drawing number 23-022/001 Rev C. It is important that the accessway on the completed drive is widened to allow two vehicles to pass entering and exiting onto Brenchley Road.

24/00729/HEDGE Pralls Nursery, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent
Hedgerow Removal Notification: Removal of 135m of hedgerow

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

However the Parish Council request a condition that the new hedgerow, which should consist of native species in order to conserve and enhance the AONB landscape and biodiversity, is planted on the field side of the wire fence, to ensure that the public footpath’s width will not be narrowed when the hedge matures. Public Right of Way WT268 is an important footpath, providing an off-road link between Matfield and Paddock Wood.

2. 24/00667AGRIC Great Coldharbour Farm – to confirm comments submitted

Due to the TWBC determination date this application has been reviewed under delegated authority to the Planning Committee, with all Cllrs included in the draft response. Councillors noted the response submitted.

3. Invitation to Planning Committee for Application ref: 23/02980/FULL at Land West Of Gate House Farm, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley Tonbridge – for information

Cllr Buttery had attended the meeting on behalf of the Parish Council on 27.3.24. This application has since been granted and the Council expressed disappointment at this outcome.

4. Call-in Procedure – to note

The TWBC Audit and Governance Committee has supported the officer’s recommendation that changes to the constitution are made as follows:

12.1.12 The request for the “call-in” must be received in writing addressed to the Head of Planning Services within five weeks (35 days) of the date that the application is originally made valid, unless it pertains to an Outline application that has been amended to be a Full application in which case it will be 35 days from the date when the change was first made and advertised.

The Council received this information with satisfaction given the recent challenge to the Call-In process.

5. Clarendon Development Play Area – to consider to proceed

Following the meeting between the architects of the play area, Playspaces, and Cllrs Anderson and Akenhead the full plan proposed was considered. This was discussed in some detail together with the recently received comments from the resident who requested a change in orientation of the equipment.

Cllr Buttery advised that The Council could therefore now move to a formal decision on whether to proceed with the exchange of land, parking spaces and the play area proposals, if TWBC decides to grant

planning permission for the application; this would not alter the fact that the PC have submitted a recommendation to refuse on the Planning application.

RESOLVED to permit Clarendon Homes to proceed with the proposed change of use of the Council's land behind Matfield Toilets for parking spaces to allow for the proposals for a play area to be progressed in the event that Planning Application number 22/00757/FULL is approved.

6. Delegation of Planning Responses – to re-confirm

The Council noted that the next meeting of the PC is not until 13th May (Annual Meeting) and that therefore any planning applications that could not be extended would be delegated to the Planning Committee.

9. Projects:

1. Brenchley Recreation Ground refurbishment – update on progress

The Council noted that the fence, main entrance and small gate and the bark elements have been completed. The installation date for the new equipment is w/c 8 April. The post-installation inspection has been booked for the end of April and the bin collection will commence from 1st May.

2. Post Office – to consider outcome of Public Meeting

Cllr Buttery outlined that there were many members of the public present at the APA, including Andy King. No approaches were made at the meeting nor received afterwards to suggest an investor is interested in the space. The Council discussed the merits of continuing to seek investors and acknowledged that the landlord, Jeremy Richardson has agreed to extend the lease for Chris and Andy King until October 2025.

The Council agreed that a short announcement should be made to outline the result of the extensive community consultation, thereby confirming that there is insufficient support to enable the Council to purchase the premises.

RESOLVED to release the restrictive covenant as listed at entry numbered 3 on the Proprietorship Register for title number K719532 The Old Palace, High Street, Brenchley, Tonbridge, TN12 7NL

3. Pond

The fish (30 Tench, 100 Roach/Rudd and 30 Perch) are being added imminently and the new signage put up.

10. Finance Committee – to approve minutes

Minutes of the meeting of 19th March 2024 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair of the Committee Cllr Wells. No recommendations were made.

11. Clerk's Report

1. Freedom of Information Request to KCC re Wheelwrights

The Council reviewed the items received following the FOI request noting that KCC had not complied with the required timeframe for this process.

RESOLVED to appeal the exemption of the legal advice KCC received to relinquish Highways Rights over the parking area at the Wheelwrights and to forward the documents to the Open Spaces Society for their comment.

2. Vandalism at Cinderhill

The Clerk outlined that about 30 broken stakes and sleeves had been vandalised at the area of new tree planting at Cinderhill as well as a number of trees destroyed. Motorbikes have also been riding around the area, the Police have been informed of both incidents for recording purposes given there are no witnesses to the activities. A meeting has been requested with Terry Hughes, the TWBC Officer responsible for Community Safety, to discuss these and wider anti-social behaviour matters.

Action Clerk

3. Request for Grant from TW Counselling Centre

The Council discussed a request for a grant, noting that there is currently £1500 left in the 2023-24 grant budget with £3500 in the 2024-25 budget.

The Council did not approve a donation as it was unclear how this organisation directed supported residents who were able to access the services of the Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre which the PC supports. The Clerk was asked to publicise the remaining funding available and the Grants and Donations Policy to encourage parish-based groups to apply for.

Action Clerk

4. Request for Grant from West Kent Mediation

In common with the above position, the Council did not approve a donation.

12. RFO's Report

1. Accounts payable

3015	HMRC	Tax and NI March 2024	649.81
3016	C. Brooks	March mileage	16.20
3017	Besure	Annual Fire Alarm Maintenance Matfield Pavilion April 24-Mar 25	312.00
3018	Business Stream	Allotments Water to Mar 24	331.96
3019	Horticultural Society	Grant for Marquee	1,000.00
3020	James Beach	Annual mowing at Allotments	375.00
3021	KCC	Education Payments passed on from RPA	3,000.00
3022	Wasteway	Clearance Fly Tipping Cinderhill	151.50
3023	Capel GroundCare	Repairs to Brenchley Rec Playground equipment	4,986.73
3024	James Playfoot	Replacement gate, pillars and Fencing Brenchley Rec	2,641.62
3025	Unipar	Speedwatch equipment	2,382.00
3026	Capel Groundcare	Fence Repair Brenchley Rec	305.23
3027	Barry Chapman	Replacement 2 post Matfield Green	95.00
3037	David Izzard	Garden Maintenance JV Garden March	25.00
3043	Knockout Print	Signage for Matfield Pond	144.00

Payments by Credit Card March expenditure

3028	Newton Flags	New D Day Flags	69.60
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits for Information

3029	SO C. Brooks	Salary March 2024	2,021.15
3030	SO Panetta Horn	Salary March 2024	648.20
3031	DD Smart Pension	March Pension Payment	788.05
3032	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity March (£150 from 1st April)	155.00
3033	DD Microshade	April data and application service	194.02
3034	DD Business Stream	Mar 24 Pavilion water and waste	43.00
3036	DD Smart Pension	March Pension admin fee	26.40
3038	SO Churchill	March Toilet Cleaning services	744.36
3039	SO Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium March	112.80
3040	SO Capel Groundcare	SIDs battery change, data download and movement between pole, Monthly premium of annual contract	164.67
3041	First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service	172.80
3042	Everflow	Toilets Water and Waste 22/4 -21/5	473.24

The RFO having provided invoices for scrutiny the accounts were approved and would be authorised by Cllr Wells and Cllr Stout.

13. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Churchill had the Weald PCN PPG Monday 11th March (Primary Care Network) NHS and the WKPGC Tuesday 12th March (West Kent Patient Participation Group Chairs) NHS.

14. To be advised of urgent business

None.

15. Date of next meeting: Annual Meeting of the Council Monday 13th May 2024, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion