



BRECHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRECHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER 2024, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: 5 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Thompson who was unwell.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 1st July, and Closed Session of the same date, 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 Churchill declared a pecuniary OSI (Other Significant Interest) in planning application 24/01723/FULL and left the room when the matter was being discussed and voted upon.

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.

Four residents commented on their concerns about the increase in volume and speed of vehicles through Mile Oak which is unsighted for cars and highlighted the risk of the bridleway joining the road along a stretch of approximately 300m. Cllr Churchill, and the Parish Council, were thanked for their endeavours to address this with KCC who had been asked to retake a traffic count in a more appropriate location in the hamlet.

5. Borough and County Councillor

None present. The Chair relayed an update from Cllr Mobbs advising that the new housing targets for TWBC have been announced, with a 58% increase in the Borough.

6. Chairman's Announcements

- Vandalism at Cinderhill will be reported to the police
- The VE Day event in May 2025 is being planned, the Clerk is checking whether the piper is needed and if so will book him. Cllr Buttery will seek the input of Brenchley Choral Society for the hymn singing
- Cllrs were asked to forward drafts of any articles in Roundabout to the Clerk to check
- The Asset of Community Value (ACV) designation of the Post Office is being removed
- The Pond clear-up date is 10am on Sunday 3rd November

7. Traffic

1. Highways Improvement Plan – to receive updated version

Following meeting of 3rd July with Emma Tilbury an updated HIP was produced, this will be for review again with KCC in November. Cllr Churchill had agreed with HAMS that, in light of issues regarding Standings Cross accident earlier in the year, the 267 and 268 school bus will stop further back along Maidstone Road, near to the Homebush Green entrance, and an application has been made for an extra Speed Indicator Device pole in that location.

It was noted that KCC have so far failed actually to deliver any of the promised improvements.

2. Mile Oak – to consider concerns raised

Cllr Churchill advised that the previous ATC recording that was done by KCC was "north of the junction of Mile Oak Road and Knowle Lane". The speed tests need to be done again where the speeding is taking place – i.e. in the centre of Mile Oak hamlet itself - and this has been requested.

3. Blind Lane - update

Cllr Churchill has made contact made with KCC as it appears the change of name does not mean that HGVs are not diverted as they are still calling it Crook Road.

4. Local Transport Plan - update

The Council discussed the lack of comment on HGV movements on rural lanes in the Plan and the impact that the summer roadwork diversions had demonstrated. It was agreed that Cllr Churchill would draft the Council's response to be considered by the Council at the next meeting for submission on the deadline of 8th October.

Action Cllr Churchill

8. Planning

1. Planning Applications

24/01928/FULL Burford Place, High Street, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NQ	Erection of rear conservatory RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council objects to this application. At the time the original planning permission was granted, great weight was given to the position of the building within the village and the conservation area, and its reduced scale compared with the designs that consulted upon at pre-app. Since the original planning permission some extensions have been permitted but, unlike those, this proposal would noticeably enlarge the house's bulk and damage its symmetry when viewed from the High Street. The building would become more dominant in relation to the nearby listed buildings and the Conservation area's green spaces. The fully glazed conservatory would impinge on dark skies in the centre of the settlement (NDP policies LE8 Dark Skies, LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB). It would conflict with Objective DS1 and action h of the adopted High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-29.
24/01952 and LBC 01953 FULL Old Tong Farm, Tong Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7HT	Replacement of outbuilding, installation of ground-mounted solar PV panels, demolition of existing stables RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE The Parish Council agrees with this application, on the condition that use of the resulting accommodation is ancillary to the main residence.
24/01903/FULL Windmill House, Hastings Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7HF	Retention of existing Windmill Cottage dwelling for ancillary use for the main residence RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council objects to this application. The original TWBC planning approval was conditioned to the demolition of Windmill Cottage because

	this was “in accordance with the principle of the proposal”, i.e. that there would only be the replacement dwelling on the site on completion. The Parish Council does not consider that the applicant has adequately demonstrated why this principle, which was fundamental to the initial planning permission because it justified the construction of a new house further away from the road and on agricultural land, whose effect on the AONB would otherwise have been unacceptable, has changed.
24/01723/FULL Bramleys, Beech Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7HG	Demolition of dwelling & outbuilding, erection of replacement dwelling & annex RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE However, the council would recommend that the use of the proposed annex accommodation is conditional to it being ancillary use to the main residence on the site.
24/01993/FULL Far Far Away Beech Lane Matfield Tonbridge Kent	Alterations to fenestration including new windows & doors, replace timber cladding, link extension to annexe, rear extension, addition of lean-to storage outbuilding & alterations to fenestration & cladding of outbuilding RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council objects to this application as presented. This is on the basis of the impact on Dark Skies of the glazed roof to the proposed new hallway and double height fenestration to the stairwell in the main residence (NDP Policy LE8 Dark skies) and concerns over whether this could comply with NDP Policies D1 High Weald AONB [National Landscape] and design standards, and LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB. It would conflict with Objective DS1 and action h of the adopted High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-29. If the application was amended to address these concerns the Parish Council would be minded to recommend approval.

2. Confirmation of Planning Recommendations submitted

Under delegated responsibility during July and August, the Council submitted recommendations on the following applications, which are published on the Borough Council’s planning portal:

24/01577/FULL	Highlands, Chantlers Hill, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 6LU
24/01598/FULL	Curtis Cottage, Tong Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HT
24/01339/FULL	Becketts Grove Farm, Sophurst Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LH
24/01595/FULL	Little Dunks Farm Oast, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HX
24/01596/FULL	Little Dunks Farm Oast, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HX
24/01670/FULL	Site Adjacent T, 2 Walnut Tree Cottages, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7PW
24/01649/FULL	Windmill House, Hastings Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HF
24/01661/FULL	The Pack House, Crittenden Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7EN
24/01705/LBC	Kings Toll Farm, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HA
24/01680/SUB	Gate House Farm Fairmans Lane Brenchley Tonbridge Kent

24/01764/FULL	Hopbine Inn, Petteridge Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NE
24/01738/FULL	Pembrol, Cryals Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HH
24/01803/LBC	5 Whitethorn Cottages, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7PR
24/01811/FULL	Far Far Away, Beech Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HG
24/01865/LBC	Old Broad Oak, Windmill Hill, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NP
24/01864/FULL	Old Broad Oak, Windmill Hill, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NP

The Council expressed a vote of thanks to Cllr Dewdney and Cllr Akenhead for their hard work on planning issues over the summer break.

3. Correspondence from James Chapman re Matfield Village Hall development – to consider

The Council discussed the correspondence from James Chapman, confirming the various land exchanges proposed to achieve the various elements of the planning application.

The Clerk was asked to respond to clarify issues related to the right of way over Area B and C and the reason for 999-year leases being proposed instead of freehold titles, with a concern regarding what that might mean in terms of any ground rents or maintenance charges. A query was also raised related to the apparent removal of parking spaces running along the roadside path, thus diminishing the value of extra spaces gained on the triangle and adding pressure on a parking stress area, would be passed to Clarendon and the Village Hall Committee.

Action Clerk

4. Local Plan Hearings - update

Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Dewdney had attended the TWBC local plan examination hearings and the Council noted that a new Strategic Transport Assessment Modelling Appraisal had been added. The PC submitted initial comments to the new STA, however, because of the late addition of this important highways/traffic document, the Inspector has ordered a consultation on the evidence and proposals therein. This will be held over a 6-week period, with an additional hearing afterwards proposed by the Examiner for September following which the Examiner will make his report and recommend Main Modifications, about which there will be a further 6-week consultation. The Council noted that the parish NDP will have to be updated once the TWBC local plan is agreed. There is currently funding up to £4k in the budget for consultancy.

RESOLVED to allocate expenditure up to £2000 on obtaining specialist advice from a Planning Consultant regarding the TWBC Local Plan Strategic Transport Assessment.

5. Meeting with Carlos Hone - update

Cllr Akenhead provided an update on the outcomes of the meeting held on 23rd July with Carlos Hone, Head of Planning at TWBC and Lucinda Roach, attended by herself, Cllr Dewdney and the Clerk. Lucinda Roach responded on some of our complaints and have agreed to take more of our comments into account.

9. Rights of Way – application at the Wheelwrights Inn

The Chair confirmed that a Definitive Map Moderation Order (DMMO) application has been submitted for the area in front of the Wheelwrights, the Schedule 8 notice sent to owner and the Schedule 9 notice to Kent County Council. A further submission, with historical information to underpin the user evidence, has been sent to the Officer who had had a site meeting with the owner, Mr Cramp. Further to this, Mr Cramp has made an approach to the Council regarding the sale of a strip of land by Maidstone Road to the Parish Council as it was suggested that this may be turned into a footpath, and therefore the PROW, if granted, would not affect his development plans. It has

been ascertained that the DMMO application cannot be withdrawn, even if a diversion is agreed with the landowner.

The Council discussed Mr Cramp's proposal and the Clerk was asked to respond to reject his offer.

Action Clerk

10. Projects

1. Brenchley Recreation Ground – to consider quotes for additional installations

Cllr Anderson outlined proposals, with quotes, for a “mud kitchen” and outdoor Table tennis tables. The costs of this would be obtained from the s.106 remaining from the Fernham development and would be in the region of £6,000 in total including installation. The Council decided not to proceed with the mud kitchen.

RESOLVED to purchase two Cornilleau outdoor table tennis tables, one each for Brenchley Recreation Ground and Porters Wood Playing Field, with boxes and equipment.

2. Jack Verrall Gardens Refurbishment – to consider project

Cllr Dewdney and Cllr Anderson had met with the Horticultural Society regarding their proposals for a refurbishment of the gardens and the Council reviewed the planting plan. A quote for the main work was reviewed and the Clerk would obtain further quotes for the tree work and for groundwork for comparison purposes. The application for funding of £5k (not match-funded) from BizGive is due to be decided in November and it was noted that this amount, as well as funding from the Fernham s.106 and Council Reserves was available. The Clerk would ensure that DDA access requirements were researched where required.

RESOLVED to proceed with the refurbishment of the Jack Verrall Memorial Gardens to an expenditure limit of £10k

3. Pavilion Storage Shed – review of planned project

The informal consultation documents were circulated in July and, whilst there were many supportive responses the Open Spaces Society objected and therefore the likelihood of the project being approved by the Secretary of State is significantly reduced. The Council therefore agreed not to proceed with the proposed storage shed but to find a much smaller alternative which did not require a concrete base but was still lockable and weatherproof. The funds for this would be drawn from the Pavilion budget or reserves as necessary depending on the quotes received.

RESOLVED to clear the vegetation from behind Matfield Pavilion and purchase a small plastic storage box

4. Cooksfield - update

Cllr Dewdney outlined the negative response he had received following enquiries as to the viability of working with a Social Housing provider, English Rural, to site one or two properties on the land and the Council therefore discussed the options for disposal. It was agreed that the Chair, in the absence of Cllr Dewdney on holiday, would again seek information from TWBC as to the likelihood of the Parish Council securing planning permission for a private self-build to maximise the sale value and that the proceeds would be earmarked for a specific purpose that benefits the parish.

RESOLVED to appoint an Agent to sell the Parish Council's land at Cooksfield.

11. Finance Committee

1. Minutes of the meeting of 14th August – to approve

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by Cllr Dewdney.

2. Financial Regulations – to consider revision for adoption

Following a meeting of the Finance Committee on 14th August, the new NALC model Financial Regulations have been amended to suit BMPC activities and were provided for consideration. It was noted that Appendix 1 item 5 requires amendment to remove the cross-reference to Standing Orders in the absence of any such standing order, if the Auditor agrees. Item 1.7 would be finalised with reference to the NALC model and item 5.2 would be removed if the Council's Auditors agreed it was not a requirement.

RESOLVED to adopt the Financial Regulations subject to confirmation of requirements from the Council's Auditor and amendments as noted above.

3. Notice of completion of 2023-24 External Audit - for information

The Council noted that the External audit report (Conclusion of the 2023-24 Audit) has been published on the website and on Noticeboards.

4. Budget setting - update

The Chair detailed that an initial budget-setting exercise was held on 28th August and a draft budget will be considered at the October meeting followed by a review by the Finance Committee with a final budget considered at the November/December meeting. Initial indications, based on the level of reserves anticipated at the end of 2024-5, were that a precept increase would be very modest. The October PC meeting will be required to select the Insurance provider as the renewal date is 1st November.

12. Cinderhill

1. Pony Grazing for September – to consider

The Council discussed the update, provided by Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP), on the events with the pony grazing in July, that vandalism of the fencing had resulted in the horses getting loose. The alternative of sheep or cattle had other concerns and the Council agreed that no further grazing would be possible this year. Discussions would be held with KHWP to try to agree suitable grazing arrangements of 2025.

2. Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP) proposal for 2025-26 – to consider

The Council discussed the proposals for the work for the 2025-26 season at Cinderhill and noted that as KHWP are specialists in this field no comparison quotes had been obtained.

RESOLVED to accept the proposals from Kent High Weald Partnership for Cinderhill management for 2025-26 in the sum of £9545 including a contingency for grazing of £1000

3. Key Woodland Species Report - for information

The Council noted the outcome of the survey conducted by KHWP in the Spring.

13. Christmas

Consideration of spending and events. Budget is £1000 (including the insurance for the carols) An idea concerning adding a tree with lights on the island in the pond was discussed and agreed to be inappropriate.

14. Staff Appraisals

The Council reviewed the Personnel Committee reports as follows:

1. Responsible Financial Officer

2. Clerk

RESOLVED to accept the recommendations of the Personnel Committee

15. Clerk's report

Following the appeal for volunteers only two people responded and therefore the Council would not proceed with the purchase of a marquee.

The Clerk outlined activities and works completed in July and August:

- Annual RoSPA Playground inspections have been completed in August, reports awaited
- Bench on Matfield Green and Brenchley Recreation Ground were in progress
- Bin at Viewpoint – installation imminent by the PC but will be emptied by TWBC
- Boulders on Green in place and grant approved
- Allotment inspections completed in July and August, all useable plots are tenanted
- Body cameras have been purchased for use by Speedwatch
- Change of name and address on all PC titles is in progress – ID process completed by Clerk
- Repairs to plumbing at toilets – in progress
- “Chatty Bench” signs being installed

The above will be listed in the Autumn Newsletter.

16. RFO's Report

1. Accounts authorised in August – for information

3126	David Izzard	June JVG maintenance	£25.00
3127	HMRC	Tax and NI July 2024	£596.54
3128	C. Brooks	July mileage £ 64.80 Salary Balance £53.27	£118.07
3129	Atman	Pat Testing electric equipment at Pavilion	£54.00
3130	Brenchley/Mat Archives	2024 Grant for Archives	£1,000.00
3131	Waste Way	Bin emptying Porters Wood and Brenchley Rec March 2024 - Late invoice submission	£66.00
3132	JP Miles	Unload and positions boulders Matfield Green	£120.00
3133	Glasdon	New bin for Viewpoint	£480.30
3134	Capel Groundcare	New Bench platform Matfield Green	£595.16

Payments by Credit Card

3135	Lloyds Multicard	Monthly fees June 2024	£3.00
	Amazon	2 body cameras for speedwatch team	£159.98
	Eventbright	Finance Conference for RFO	£84.00
	Screwfix	Padlock for Brenchley Rec gates	£16.99
	Buss Murton	ID verification to enable titles to be updated	£210.00
	Post Office	Submission of PROW	£5.99
	Screwfix	Spare Padlock and Cable ties	£20.33

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3136	SO C. Brooks	Salary July 2024	£1,979.75
3137	SO Panetta Horn	Salary July 2024	£648.20
3138	DD Smart Pension	July 2024 Pension Payment	£788.05
3139	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity June 2024	£216.00
3140	SO Microshade	July data and application service Invoice	£194.02
3141	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets July	£29.27
3142	DD Smart Pension	July Pension admin fee	£26.40
3143	SO Churchill Group	July Toilet Cleaning services (credit £190.90 on account)	£817.31
3144	SO Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspections June 2024	£112.80
3145	SO Capel Groundcare	SIDs battery change, data download, movement between pole, June 2024	£164.87
3146	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/8 -21/9	£248.10
3147	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service July	£172.80

Invoices having been circulated to all Councillors for scrutiny the accounts were authorised by Cllr Buttery (Chair) and Cllr Dewdney (Vice-Chair)

2. Accounts payable – September 2024 for August invoices

3148	HMRC	Tax and NI Aug 2024	£596.54
3149	C. Brooks	Aug mileage £35.10 Salary Balance £53.27	
		Expenses - ID Photos £12.99	£118.07
3150	Twyman	Pavilion Cleaning 30/6, 4/7, 18/7 & 1/8	£60.00
3151	Waste Way	Bin emptying Porters Wood/Brenchley Rec Jun 24	£153.60
3152	Waste Way	Bin emptying Porters Wood/Brenchley Rec July 24	
		Removal Pallets from Matfield Green	£177.60
3153	KCC	Installation of notice board at Cinderhill	£312.89
3154	Elizabeth Akenhead	Reimbursement of Course Fee - Advanced Planning	£60.00
3155	Parish Online	Annual Subscription for Mapping service	£180.00
3170	SLCC	Clerks annual membership October 24-Sept 25	£298.00

Payments by Credit Card July expenditure

3156	Fast Lanyards	Lanyards for Council	£96.06
	Lloyds Multicard	Monthly fees July 2024	£3.00

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3157	SO C. Brooks	Salary August 2024	£1,979.75
3158	SO Panetta Horn	Salary August 2024	£648.20
3159	DD Smart Pension	August 2024 Pension Payment	£788.05
3160	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity July 2024	£216.00
3161	SO Microshade	Software support	£194.02
3162	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets July	£28.86
3163	DD Smart Pension	August Pension admin fee	£26.40
3164	SO Churchill Group	August Toilet Cleaning services	£817.31
3165	SO Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspections July 2024	£112.80
3166	SO Capel Groundcare	SIDs battery change, data download and move between pole – July 2024	£164.87
3167	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/9 -21/10 Credit £686.49	£245.27
3168	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service August 24	£172.80
3169	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets July 2024	£30.47

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

17. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Churchill had attended meetings about the Bockingfold solar farm, via Zoom.

18. To be advised of urgent business

None.

19. Date of next meeting: Monday 7th October, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion

20. Co-option of a new Member of the Parish Council – to consider applications

The Casual Vacancy notice for this vacancy expired on 13th August with no request for an election, with an advertisement published, deadline 27th August.

No members of the public being present the Chair invited Wendy Chown to detail her skills, experience and interest in joining the Council. She subsequently left the meeting and, per the Council's Co-Option Procedure the Council considered her application.

Cllr Dewdney proposed the Co-Option of Wendy Chown and this was seconded by Cllr Churchill. The Council unanimously voted to appoint Wendy Chown to the Council.

The newly appointed Councillor would sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the next opportunity and an induction session would be arranged.