

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7PM ON MONDAY 3rd APRIL 2023 AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Steve McMillan (TWBC), Vikki Heath, Mark Philbrow

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Groves and Cllr Wells who were on holiday, and Cllr Anderson for personal reasons.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 6th March 2023 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the C hair.

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

None.

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.

Mark Philbrow, spoke to outline his long standing concerns related to the disruptive business practices at Bassetts Farm, where he is an immediate neighbour.

5. Borough and County Councillor

Cllr McMillan confirmed that TWBC has been clearing the verges on the A21 of litter.

6. Chair's Announcements

- Cllrs Corner – given the lack of interest from residents, and to avoid clashing with the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, the session would be postponed for April. A session would be held at Grays on 13th May, with Cllr Dewdney, Akenhead and Buttery present.
- Toilets update – The Transfers have been signed awaiting completion and the outstanding reimbursement of running costs is being finalised with TWBC.

7. Coronation Event – update

The Chair confirmed that the poster, leaflet and banner are being printed, with the information in Roundabout and on Facebook and the website. Costs spent or committed so far total £1211.43. A First Aid tent would be arranged.

Action Clerk

8. Planning

1. Planning Applications

23/00274/FULL Cherry Trees, The Green, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LA	Erection of detached garden studio RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
23/00514/FULL 1 Margaret Villas, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JR	Loft conversion with hip-to-gable roof change to incorporate rear dormer and windows, installation of 2 No. rooflights to front elevation RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL This development does not meet the requirements of Brenchley and Matfield NDP policy AM3 Parking, which requires 2.5 parking spaces for a house of 4 or more bedrooms. As paragraph 6.137 and figure 31 of the NDP state, this house is in a Parking Stress Area where on-street parking disrupts traffic flow. In 2014 the estate agent's/hairdresser's shop (the ground floor extension) was allowed to become residential, providing the 4th bedroom for this house without any additional parking, though a condition was imposed permitting its use only for purposes ancillary to the residential use of 1 Margaret Villas, with car parking being one of the reasons given. The installation of the two new rooflights would also fail to comply with NDP policy LE8 Dark Skies unless they are fitted with blackout blinds or shutters.
21/03187/FULL Bassetts Farm, Hastings Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HE	Application to regularise the use of Bassetts Farm for the reception of round timber, timber offcuts and green waste. The processing of the waste timber to include chipping and drying utilising a biomass boiler. Storage of woodchip. Erection of buildings and enclosures to facilitate this. Use of Bassetts Farm as the base for a woodland contracting business. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council requests that this application be dealt with under category Y of paragraph 4.8d of the Tunbridge Wells Agreement 2020. The Parish Council's previous comments on this application remain valid. The Parish Council notes that several changes to the layout are proposed in the recently submitted documents, including a new access route across the field, a new 2.5 metre high acoustic fence "if practicable", moving the containers and fan coil unit, with enclosure of the fan "if reasonably practicable to do so", an extended roof canopy to accommodate the Flowdrya, a 6 metre high boiler flue and a revised drainage proposal, yet no new block plan or elevations have been provided. The various changes are buried in Appendices to separate consultants' reports, making it difficult to see the overall effect of the proposed changes to the layout. Nor are there clear overall plans and elevations including these changes that could be referred to in a decision to grant permission. These changes also appear to be sufficiently major to require a revised visual impact assessment. They appear unlikely to improve the proposal visually, or to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of this area of the AONB. In Appeal Ref: APP/M2270/A/14/2214551 concerning Plum Orchard, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7AD, the Inspector ruled (paragraph 30) "I accept that, apart from the access way, views of the site from the public highway are limited and that the site is visible in glimpses only. However, the visual impact of a development is not the same as its effect on the character and

	appearance of the landscape. The adverse appearance of the access way and the high and urban style fencing is, in my opinion, sufficiently intrusive to result in harm by way of visual impact. The whole development of the site disturbs the continuity of the landscape and results in significant harm to the character and appearance of the AONB". Similar considerations apply in this case. There is frequent congestion on the A21 at the two roundabouts, Kippings Cross and Blue Boys, between which this site lies, and the Parish Council is concerned that this operation contributes to this. As National Highways and the Borough Council have been made aware, the congestion has seriously detrimental effects on other roads in the parish, where rat running traffic is damaging the character of historic rural lanes that are an important feature of the AONB. The revised drainage strategy does not appear to take account of the proposed new route for the driveway. The Parish Council is also concerned that the strategy states that the excess runoff from the site would eventually reach the adjacent Maidstone Road with highway gullies. This section of the Maidstone Road B2160 has been prone to flooding for many years and it is essential that no additional strain is placed on the existing highway gullies. Since the application was first considered by the Parish Council the Neighbourhood Plan has been made. The proposal does not appear to be supported by Policy BE2 New Employment since it does not comply with paragraph b of the policy which requires developments to be of a scale and design which enables them to be accommodated without harm to the rural environment or the amenities of any nearby residential properties, or help to bring suitable vacant rural buildings back into use. Nor, for similar reasons, does it appear to be supported by Policy BE4, Agricultural diversification, Policy D3 Agricultural and rural buildings or Policy LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB. It is noted that no noise information is available for the Flowdrya. Without such information it is not possible to assess what difference the machine would make to noise pollution from the site. The Parish Council notes that the revised noise impact assessment makes some recommendations "if practicable". Unless the measures are practicable the proposed improvements in noise pollution would not materialise. The application form states that hours of opening are not relevant to this proposal, but the recently submitted documents suggest that conditions restricting operating hours for certain aspects of the operation could be acceptable to the applicant. If, despite the Parish Council's objections, planning permission were to be granted for this largely retrospective development, conditions restricting hours of operation for all noise-producing activities on the site to normal working hours would be essential to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents. However, given the history of retrospective applications and the enforcement history, it must be questionable whether such planning conditions would be complied with or easily enforceable.
--	--

1. Minutes of the meeting of 15th March 2023

These were agreed as an accurate record by three Councillors on the Committee and would be signed by the Chair of the Finance Committee, Cllr Wells, when available.

2. Accruals list

A list of accruals will be agreed by Cllr Buttery, Cllr Wells and the RFO.

3. Clerk's Salary

The Chair outlined that in consideration of the recent successful completion of her ILCA to CiLCA examinations and as provided for at the latest appraisal, the following matters were discussed, with effect from 1st April 2023.

RESOLVED to adjust the employment contract for the Clerk, by way of variation letter, to remove all references to the working from home office allowance

RESOLVED to increase the SCP pay scale point on the NALC table so as to include the former office allowance within the base salary

RESOLVED to adjust the SCP pay scale point to 35

Action, Cllr Buttery, RFO

10. Environment and Sustainability Group meeting – update from meeting

The Council noted the matters being discussed by the Working Party and it was agreed that Cllr Wells had provided an excellent article on Dark Skies in Roundabout. Cllr Akenhead would be following this up with an article on Light Spillage.

Cllr Akenhead

11. Traffic

1. Speedwatch

Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Tunstall had attended a Speedwatch Conference and, together with Cllr Churchill, a Meeting with Police Commissioner Matthew Scott, and a number of other Speedwatch agents. The Council discussed dissatisfaction with the level of support provided to volunteer Speedwatch groups in terms of the administration letters sent out to drivers. The SpeedWatch Co-Ordinator had resigned and it was now untenable, due to low numbers of volunteers, to carry on with Speedwatch, the group would therefore be disbanded.

It was agreed that Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Churchill would draft and circulate a letter to the PCC, Kent County Council's Joint Transportation Board, the Chief Constable of Kent and Greg Clark MP to express the frustration at the failure to allocate sufficient police resources to support the Speedwatch group. The letter would be sent on behalf of the Council by the Clerk.

Action Cllr Akenhead, Cllr Churchill, Clerk

2. Kippings Cross Roundabout

The Council discussed a long awaited response from Carlos Hone, Head of Planning at TWBC and Minutes from meeting of 23rd January with TWBC/KCC and National Highways, regarding the proposals for changes around Kippings Cross.

Cllr Churchill would draft a letter to Mr Hone to address the suggestion that the matter had not be sufficiently raised via the Highways Improvement Plan, as this was not the case and should be corrected.

12. Parish Council Logo – to consider re-branding logos

The Council considered a number of new logos for the Parish Council and agreed on a particular design. This would be rolled out generally when the artwork was finalised.

Action Cllr Wells, Clerk

13. Matfield Pond – Enforcement Action

The Council discussed an enforcement letter received from the Environment Agency requiring the Council to remove all the fish in the pond as a matter of urgency. In anticipation of this the specialist contractor had provided a quote in the total sum of £1450 to include some work to vegetation and trees and the removal of the fish. The work would be carried out on 13th and 14th April and Cllr Groves would supervise this with the EA on site to provide documentation. The EA letter would be posted on social media to ensure residents were aware of the necessity of the action being taken.

Action Cllr Groves, Clerk

14. Matfield Green – update re permission to plant hedge

A revised Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement was agreed and the Clerk would obtain Mr Meredith's signature.

Action Clerk

15. Post Office – consideration of correspondence received

Cllr Buttery outlined, and the Parish Council discussed, an offer from the landlord of the Post Office building in Brenchley for the Parish Council to buy a 999 year lease on the retail space, this would likely be available from Spring 2024. The matter was discussed in detail and, in advance of the Council considering spending funds on obtaining legal advice, it was agreed that Cllr Buttery and the Clerk would meet with Mr Richardson, the Landlord, to explore the detail further. The matter would be brought back for the Council to discuss further.

Action Cllr Buttery, Clerk

16. Cinderhill 2022-23 Report – for information

The Council noted the annual report on work undertaken by KHWP. Cllr Akenhead advised that some flytip was being removed this week.

Cllr Akenhead outlined a meeting held with KHWP and three representatives from the Kent Tree Strategy team who advised that the football field appears to be ideal for their grant application to pay for a number of whips, which are in batches of 25 of one species. Cllr Akenhead would progress the detail and the Clerk would submit the funding application in due course.

Action Cllr Akenhead, Clerk

17. Clerk's and RFO's Report

1. Gov.uk email addresses and website

The Clerk outlined some of the concerns raised by Councillors about IT support and that recent experience of trying to change over to the .gov.uk email addresses had shown that staff and Councillors needed greater IT support generally. A quote for the Councillor email addresses to all be hosted via Microshade, who currently host staff mailboxes was discussed, with the benefits outlined:

- All PC emails are backed up and recoverable
- There are efficient and updated SPAM and Virus filters
- Support for mailbox issues is provided by Microshade
- The Council and staff could all have MS exchange mailboxes with high level of functionality such as sharing of contacts and calendars.

RESOLVED that all Parish Councillor email addresses will be hosted by Microshade

2. Meeting dates for 2023-24

The Clerk had circulated the meeting dates for the coming year and the Chair reminded all Councillors to endeavour to be available for each monthly meeting.

3. Accounts payable

2593	HMRC	Tax and NI March 2023	£624.20
2594	C. Brooks	Salary Balance and Mileage	£149.20
2595	Panetta Horn	Salary Balance March 2023	£4.28
2596	CVD	Phone Line rental / Broadband March 2023 And Feb Call Charges	£108.34
2597	Weald Tree Services	Pollarding limes at Matfield Pond	£480.00
2598	N&W CAB	Donation	£250.00
2599	Besure	Fire Alarm Maintenance – Annual	£292.80
2600	Besure	Replacement Batteries Fire Alarm	£84.00
2601	David Izzard	Feb/March Maintenance – JV	£50.00
2602	Weald Tree Services	Prune Apple Trees and Allotment Hedges	£780.00
2603	Business Stream	Pond water 29/11 -29/1 standing charge	£8.39
2604	MSB Magic	Close up Magic Deposit Coronation event	£50.00
2605	Rialtas	Training for I&E	£114.00
2606	Twyman	March cleaning Pavilion (2 and 16/3)	£30.00
2607	Kazzamataz	Children’s Entertainer for Coronation	£180.00
2630	Treeworks	Tree Picus Survey on Oaks at Porters Wood	£750.00
2631	Knockout Print	Printing of Coronation leaflets	£95.00

Payments by Credit Card

2608	Multicard Fees	Monthly Fees	£3.00
2609	TSO Host	Annual Website hosting	£57.46
2610	Trophy Store	Coronation Pins	£147.50
2611	Party Packs	Union Jack Crowns for coronation	£27.95
2612	Currys	Paper	£27.95
2613	Net World Sports	Aerosol paint for coronation	£10.98
2614	KALC	Annual Planning Conference Cllr Dewdney	£72.00
2615	KALC	Climate Change Conference A Wells	£48.00
2616	RBLI	Coronation Flag	£35.46

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

2617	SO C. Brooks	Salary March 2023	£1843.99
2618	SO Panetta Horn	Salary March 2023	£528.92
2619	DD Smart Pension	March 2023	£647.15
2620	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity February (£150 from 1st April)	£212.00
2621	DD Microshade	April data and application service	£132.68
2622	DD Business Stream	Mar 23 Pavilion water and waste	£43.00
2623	DD Tower	Phone Equipment Leasing March/April 2023 36 month agreement ending December 2024	£30.02
2624	DD Smart Pension	March 2023 Pension admin fee	£18.00

2625	DD Npower	Streetlight electricity Feb 2023	£49.04
2626	SO Churchill	March Toilet Cleaning services	£677.32
2627	SO Capel Grndcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium March 2023	£54.00
2628	SO Capel Grndcare	SIDs battery change, data download and movement March 23	£158.50
2629	WKPS	Annual membership fee	£35.00

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

18. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Akenhead and Cllr Dewdney attended the KALC Planning Conference.

Cllr Buttery attended the KALC Parish Chairmen's meeting and the TWBC Parish Chairmen's meetings, at which it was outlined that there would be further consultation on the Local Plan.

19. To be advised of urgent business as may be previously notified

20. Date of next meeting:

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 7pm, Tuesday 2nd May, 2023