



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 3RD JULY 2023, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr S. McMillan (TWBC), Vikki Heath (non-Voting Member), 14 members of the public.

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 5th June 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 Tunstall declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Planning Applications at Poulhurst and did not participate nor vote on the matter.

Cllr Akenhead declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Planning Applications at 1-3 The Avenue and Cinderhill Farm and did not participate nor vote on these matters.

Cllr Churchill declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 9.3 as she lives on this road, the Council noted that her responsibility for traffic matters on the Council meant that she would therefore contribute on this matter.

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 letter was handed to the Council from a local residents' group and several members of the public spoke on issues related to Porters Wood and adjacent private land. The Chair outlined the purpose of the public participation section of a Parish Council meeting and the Clerk confirmed that the Council would provide a written response to the letter.

5. Borough and County Councillor

No matters raised.

6. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair advised that appeals for volunteers to assist in making arrangements for a larger event to commemorate the D-Day 80 event in June 2024 had not resulted in anyone stepping forwards. An option to have a small area of Matfield Fête dedicated to D-Day was considered positively and the Clerk would contact the Fête Committee to ascertain the date of the 2024 event.

Action Clerk

Anti-social behaviour on the parking area at The Green had been raised and, CCTV quotes for the Pavilion and other areas will be considered in September.

7. Planning

1. Planning Applications

23/01314/FULL Land Adjacent To Thorn Barn, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JH	Erection 5 no. dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council recognises that this has become an infill site within the limits to built development set by the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and that it probably complies with NDP Policies H1, H2, H3, H4 and D2. However, there is disappointingly little evidence of compliance with Policy D4, Accessibility and flexibility or with D6, Climate change, environmental sustainability and resilience, apart from the provision of EV points. The large central windows on the first floor of Plots 1, 4 and 5 and the skylights on plots 1, 2 and 3 would not comply with Policy LE8 Dark skies unless equipped with suitable blackout. The Parish Council notes and supports the comments from KCC Highways concerning refuse collection and it should be unacceptable for the refuse containers for as many as five dwellings to be left at the kerbside on collection days, given the danger of obstruction to the busy Brenchley Road. The Parish Council also notes KCC Highways' statement that to achieve the required visibility splays, maintenance to the hedges on either side would be required such that there are no obstructions over 0.9m above footway level. This will not be possible, because the planning permission 20/03830/FULL, granted to the adjoining landowners, for the fence to the west requires two trees to be planted and maintained very close to the site entrance, and a hedge between the fence and the ditch to be planted and maintained at a height of between 2 and 4 metres (drawing 0372/20/A Rev2A, proposed boundary treatment, referred to in the Decision Notice). The roadside hedge to the east belongs to the Parish Council, whose allotments it borders, and the Council has no plans to alter the existing height of the hedge. While noting that KCC Highways have said that the proposed parking arrangements meet the minimum expected under Kent Design Guide Interim Guidance Note 3, they do not meet the requirements of NDP Policy AM3 Parking, which requires 13 spaces for this proposed configuration of houses and bedrooms. (The policy, which being in a "made" plan, now forms part of the Development Plan, echoes the requirement of Policy TP3 of TWBC's Submission draft Local Plan, to which KCC Highways have raised no objection.) The site entrance is close to an area of parking stress identified in the NDP and therefore it is particularly important that the NDP policy be complied with here. There is no pavement between the site entrance and the crossing point near the crossroads, so residents would either have to cross the road to the pavement on the other side of the road without the benefit of a proper crossing point or else walk in the busy carriageway to the crossing point. In
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	this respect the proposed development may not comply with NDP Policy AM1 Sustainable and active travel. The Parish Council notes the comments of Southern Water concerning surface water drainage. The proposal completely fails to comply with the requirements of NDP Policy D8, Surface water management. It should be noted that in this immediate locality, as has been found with recent adjacent developments, the underlying geology means that soakaways (as proposed by Southern Water) are ineffective and consequently swales or drainage ponds need to be provided. The Brenchley Road has also been subject to frequent flooding in this area, most recently in the Winter of 2022-23.
23/01402/FULL Hurstview, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JP	Erection of rear garden room RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
23/01440/SUB Poulhurst Farm Furnace Lane Brenchley, Kent	Submission of Details in relation to Condition 8 - (External Lighting) of 21/03278/FULL Poulhurst Farm Furnace Lane Brenchley RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE While the downlighters over the porches are necessary and acceptable, it appears from the application form and from the drawings that many of the lights proposed on the four sides of the buildings and on the garages would be up and down lighters. This conflicts with Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) policy LE8 Dark Skies and the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance referred to in Paragraph 6.120. The Parish Council also considers the proposed number of lights excessive, for this rural site in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Parish Council also recommends that any exterior light bulbs should be warm white, as this is least damaging for wildlife.
23/01443 FULL Poulhurst Farm, Furnace Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7BX	Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 21/03278/FULL - Alternative design proposed for approved detached garage to Barn B, Change of location of visitors parking space RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
23/01507/FULL Lodge Farm Oast, Bramble Reed Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7ET	Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey extension RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE However, to comply with Policy LE8 Dark Skies of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Parish Council requests that some means such as shutters or blackout blinds be provided to prevent light spillage during hours of darkness into the dark skies of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from the rooflights in the garden room.
23/01542/FULL Cinderhill Wood Caravan Park, Five Wents, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent	Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 20/02649/FULL - Permission for the siting of amenity pods on plots 7 and 8 and the requisite concrete footings RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

23/01565/LBC and 23/01423/FULL 1-3 The Avenue, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JT	Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 22/00204/LBC - Amendments to stud wall locations bathroom/shower layouts. Relocation of oil tank RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
23/01572/FULL Cinderhill Farm, Five Wents, Matfield	Proposed roof extension RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE However, to comply with Policy LE8 Dark Skies of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Parish Council requests that some means such as shutters or blackout blinds be provided to prevent light spillage during hours of darkness into the dark skies of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from the rooflights.

2. Confirmation of Planning response submitted re Appeal 22/01142/FULL

The Council noted the response submitted, as delegated to the Planning Committee, as follows:

PINS REF NO: APP/M2270/W/22/3311569

TWBC APPEAL NO: 22/01142/FULL

Erection of agricultural/commercial building to be utilised for ice cream manufacturing in connection with soft fruit and soft fruit farm diversification

Land South Of Marle Place Road Brenchley Tonbridge

Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council maintains its objection to this application, for many of the reasons given in its previous comments.

Since the application was decided by the Borough Council, the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been made Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Plan (tunbridgewells.gov.uk) . Policy BE2 New Employment is relevant. In order to be supported by this policy, development proposals are required to comply with all elements of the policy, but this development would fail to comply with element b, in that it cannot be accommodated without harm to the rural environment or the amenities of neighbouring properties, and does not help to bring suitable vacant properties back into use. In this connection it should be noted that permission was recently granted to Millwood Designer Homes under planning application 22/02640/FULL for re- development of the Tong Farm brownfield site on the opposite side of Marle Place Road, to provide 4 dwellings (Class C3), 1 self-build home (Class C3), and 1 live/work unit (Class C3). The amenities of the residents of these new designer homes would be harmed by the introduction of this industrial building with its associated traffic into the rural environment.

In view of the arson and vandalism that occurred at Tong Farm opposite (the Parish Council understands that fires were lit in 3 locations, and much of the subsequent demolition occurred without adequate precautions to deal with asbestos), substantial security measures will be required, with metal security fencing and floodlighting sure to follow, causing damage to the rural landscape and environment in this area of the AONB.

NDP Policy BE4 Agricultural diversification is also relevant, but for similar reasons to those given above and in the Parish Council's previous comments, the proposal fails to meet elements a and c of the policy.

No information has been provided to indicate that the proposed building would comply with NDP Policy BE6, Energy efficiency in non-residential buildings and D6 Climate change, environmental sustainability and resilience. It is shocking that although the building would have a large south-facing roof and will presumably require a considerable amount of electricity to power its freezers and processes, no solar panels are proposed. No water recycling measures appear to be proposed, such as grey water for the toilets, nor does the building appear to be designed to prevent overheating in Summer. The proposal is not supported by NDP Policy LE6 Biodiversity or LE7 Trees and hedges, because it appears that no additional biodiversity measures or tree and hedge planting are proposed, and contrary to NDP Policy LE8 no assessment has been provided of how the development will affect the dark skies of the parish. No evidence has been produced that the development will comply with NDP Policy D8, Surface water

management, which requires developments to demonstrate how runoff from the site can be reduced from its pre-development level. Owing to the local geology, soakaways are not always effective in this parish and it is important that new development does not exacerbate the flooding problems that sometimes occur downhill from this site (NDP fig 22)

As regards the travel plan, it should be noted that none of the public footpaths adjoins the site and they are unsurfaced, hilly and unlit, unsuitable for travelling to or from work in the 21st century. While national cycle route 18 passes directly outside the site, this cycle route is widely accepted, including by Sustrans, as being unfit for purpose in this parish, given that it is entirely on-road, on narrow, winding, unlit lanes that are used as rat runs to avoid congestion on the A21, and that have no cycle lanes or lighting.

Paragraph 3.3.7 of the travel plan is incorrect: the 296 bus, which in any case only operated on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays and with very restricted times, has now been withdrawn because Kent County Council withdrew its subsidy.

As regards the 297 bus, it is unrealistic to expect that employees or visitors will walk approximately 2 km along narrow, winding, unlit roads that are used as rat runs in order to access a bus service that only operates every 2 hours, nor will they walk or cycle to the stations, given the distances and the roads. By contrast, in the present location of the business, the B2160 has wider verges, there are 2 buses per hour in each direction that stop outside the nearby Hop Farm, and the railway stations at Paddock Wood and Beltring Halt are considerably closer than Paddock Wood and High Brooms stations are to this deeply rural site.

The Parish Council notes that although the applicant states that construction of the new agricultural building that would lie in front of this development has commenced, the only development on the site so far appears to be an area of road planings or type 1 that has been spread (on which a stack of apple boxes has been placed).

It should be noted that the proposed development that is the subject of this appeal will involve a removal of hedgerow and a widening of the access that will make the factory building and the planned agricultural building in front of it (20/03726/AGRIC) more prominent in the landscape.

If, despite the objections, the Secretary of State decides to permit the development, the Parish Council recommends that, as with the permitted development at Tong Farm opposite, conditions should be applied controlling surfacing, surface water disposal, foul sewage disposal, parking spaces, external lighting, landscaping, biodiversity, renewable energy, electric vehicle charging points and removing permitted development rights should be attached. There should also be a condition that if the use to manufacture Taywell ice cream ceases, the building should be demolished and the land returned to agricultural use. The appellant has indicated that such a condition would be acceptable.

3. Delegation of Planning Responses in July and August

The Council agreed that the Planning Committee will respond to applications with a deadline of 4th August and others received in August will be extended to the 4th September meeting.

4. TWBC local Plan – to discuss PC response

Cllr Akenhead outlined that according to the TWBC Forward Plan an updated Economic Development Strategy will go to the Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board on 12th July and to the Cabinet on 27th July before going to public consultation probably in October.

The Cabinet Agenda on 10 July includes recommendations that the NDPs for Paddock Wood, Pembury and Cranbrook and Sissinghurst proceed to referendum and Horsmonden's NDP was successful at referendum and will be "made" at the Full Council meeting on 5th July.

8. TWBC Ward Naming – update

The Council received a copy of a letter sent by William Benson, TWBC CEO, to the Boundary Commission. Cllr Buttery advised that at the KALC Area Committee meeting recently all Chairs appeared supportive of

the request for the name change to Rural Tunbridge Wells and he would draft a letter to be circulated to obtain this support from each Parish in writing.

Action Cllr Buttery

9. Traffic

1. A21 Safety Meeting 14th June – update

Cllr Churchill outlined some issues that had been discussed including that National Highways have worked on A21 speed limits, are undertaking a review of road signage and accident hotspots, considering the flooding that occurs on A21 under Cornford Bridge, and looking into signage for the Rat Runs that affect our villages (Kings Toll/ Romford Road / Cuckoo Lane), with the Kippings Cross roundabout due a maintenance renewal including repainting of KEEP CLEAR road markings.

The officer from National Highways will try and bring this work forward as they are already resurfacing further along A21 and have noted the roundabout signage and road is in a poor state.

2. Speeding – Police Update

Cllr Churchill had contacted our PCSO Simon Fuller about some instances of speeding and a police-led session was held on 21st June near the School.

3. Re-naming of part of Brenchley Road

The Council reviewed correspondence received from residents on this matter. Cllr Churchill advised that TWBC have contacted Post Office to gain assurance that this will not mean a change of postcode for the 12 properties affected, though all appear to be in favour of the move.

4. KCC Meeting update

Cllr Churchill outlined the outcomes of a meeting held on 28th June with Nigel Rowe and Paul Leary of KCC mainly regarding Pixot Hill and Brenchley Road. KCC will look into the anti-skid (high-friction) surfaces as many of the areas had degraded over time or were missing. All verges on Crook Road have been cleared however further work would be undertaking regarding conflicting signage at the Pixot Hill crossroads.

10. Post Office

1. Valuation and report from Bracketts

The Council had received the valuation report from Bracketts regarding the potential rental income and market value of the 999 lease that has been offered.

Cllr Dewdney will liaise with the RFO and other Cllrs to compile a report on possible uses for the premises for the September meeting of the Council.

Action Cllr Dewdney

2. Funding application

The Expression of Interest regarding funding from the Community Ownership Fund has been approved. Projects can now be 80% funded with 20% match funding and s.106 can be used as the match funding. The Council briefly discussed whether the landlord had obtained reports on asbestos and the EPC rating of the property (though it being listed this may not be an issue) and agreed to continue to explore and seek a tenant.

11. Projects Update

1. Porters Wood Play Area – update

Cllr Anderson advised that the installation of the play equipment is scheduled for w/c 14 August, with one change being necessary to the springer which was replaced with an alternative model. Grass seeding will take place later in the autumn.

2. Matfield Pond – to agree works

Cllr Groves presented the quote that had been received from the specialist contractor JS Fisheries for the removal of the fish, as required by the enforcement action taken by the Environment Agency. The relevant approval from the EA regarding the transportation and disposal of the fish has been obtained.

The Council noted that the budget for this work was £2500 but that given the enforcement notice expenditure over this amount was warranted to comply with the requirements of the EA. The costed elements of the first phase of this work were discussed on the understanding that until the process is in progress it was not possible to confirm the final cost. The Council agreed expenditure up to the amount of £3,925 ex-VAT with the anticipated date of 21st-26th August. Cllr Groves would supervise the work and he did not participate in the voting on this matter.

It was agreed that information would be given on social media nearer the time.

RESOLVED to progress the removal of the fish in Matfield Pond with JS Fisheries to a maximum cost of £3925

The EA require the pond to be left empty for a period of two weeks minimum and the Council discussed proposals for the second Phase of the work including repairing the leak, installation of land drains from the Green, and various tree and vegetation work. A quote for this had been received from JS Fisheries and a further one is being sought for comparison. The Council agreed to review the specific works to be undertaken at its meeting of 4th September.

12. Allotments – to discuss tenancy compliance

Cllr Tunstall outlined concerns from inspections that there are many sheds and other items not within the boundaries of plots. Some of these are historical from previous tenants and some are the result of new tenants not complying with the tenancy rule 5(f) which states clearly that all items must be on plots. This can create problems with access, mowing and hedge trimming as well as create ill feeling about plot fees.

There was discussion on the practicalities on enforcing all tenants to move sheds and the option to measure and charge the space taken by such items not on plots was considered to be unworkable.

Cllr Anderson commented that space on an unused plot 4 might be used as a communal shed area and a quote was being obtained to flatten this area.

It was agreed that all incoming tenants must have sheds, water butts and compost heaps on plots and would be required to move any existing items onto their plot within a reasonable timeframe.

It was agreed that existing tenants would be required to move compost heaps onto plots within the current season and that no additional items may be placed outside of plots.

The above information would be communicated to all tenants.

Action Clerk

The Council noted the hosepipe ban imposed by SE Water, all tenants had been informed and a notice put up at the allotment site.

13. Viewpoint – to discuss damage

The Council discussed the damage that had been done to both picnic tables at the Viewpoint which have been quite severely damaged (one table actually burnt right through) by people having portable barbecues on them. It was noted that no budget was in place for this unanticipated repair.

RESOLVED to replace the tops of the picnic tables at the Viewpoint and to erect signage prohibiting BBQs and Campfires

Action Clerk

14. Cinderhill – update

Cllr Akenhead provide an update on various matters including the request made to TWBC for the reimbursement of the Bailiff fee for the removal of the horse, the soay sheep on the heathland (in August), the plans for turning the football field back into woodland, installation of posts, tree planting working parties and bat walks in August.

15. Clerk's and RFO's Report

The Clerk confirmed staff holiday dates over the summer.

1. Accounts payable

Payments Processed during June (previously approved)

2720	PlayQuest	Deposit for Play Equipment at Porters Wood	£4797.60
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Payments for Authorisation

2716	HMRC	Tax and NI June 2023	£600.89
2717	C. Brooks	Salary Balance June 2023	
		June Mileage	£151.70
2718	Panetta Horn	Salary Balance June 2023	£67.01
2721	Specialist & Equine Bailiffs	Service Notices for horse on Cinderhill Land	£594.00
2722	Waste Way	Waste Collection Brenchley Rec April and May	£86.40
2723	Bracketts	Market Appraisal for Post Office at Old Palace Brenchley	£960.00
2724	JS Fisheries	Tree Work at Village Pond	£600.00
2725	Zurich	Additional Premium for Toilets at Brenchley and Matfield	£86.54
2726	JR Cooper	Clearance at Porters Wood as per quote	£1600.00
		Extra Day's work	£800.00
2727	Brenchley Memorial Hall	Hall hire for Coronation and APM	£145.00
2728	Katalin Twyman	Cleaning Pavilion 25/5 to 18/6	
		Including deep clean of changing rooms	£90.00

Payments made by Credit Card

2729	Multicard Fees	Monthly Fees	£3.00
2719	Corker	Play bark for Brenchley Rec Playground	£300.00
2730	KALC	Intro to planning – Andrew Dewdney	£19.20
2731	Amazon	Bird Boxes for Porters Wood	£16.49

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

2732	SO C. Brooks	Salary June 2023	£1843.99
2733	SO Panetta Horn	Salary June 2023	£528.92
2734	DD Smart Pension	June 2023	£751.13
2735	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity June	£150.00
2736	SO Microshade	June data and application service	£194.02
2737	DD Business Stream	June Pavilion water and waste	£43.00
2738	DD Tower	Phone Equipment Leasing June/July 2023	
		36 month agreement ending December 2024	£30.02
2739	DD CVD	Phone Line rental / Broadband to 27/5/2023	
		Includes £5+ VAT for unwanted services. Credit note issued and will be applied to next invoice	£99.91
2740	DD Smart Pension	June 2023 Pension admin fee	£18.00
2741	DD Npower	Streetlight electricity May 2023	£68.18
2742	SO Churchill	June Toilet Cleaning services	£744.36
2743	SO Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium July 2023	£54.00
2744	SO Capel Groundcare	SIDs battery change, data download and movement between pole, Monthly premium of annual contract July 23	£158.50

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

The Council agreed that given there is no meeting in August the accounts payable list would be circulated via email, with invoices and that on receipt of majority approval these would be authorised by Cllr Wells and Cllr Dewdney

16. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Buttery had attended the KALC Area Committee meeting and TWBC Parish Chairs meeting.

Cllr Dewdney had attended the Cllr Convention

Cllr Groves had attended the MVH AGM

Cllr Churchill had attended the TWBC Public Transport Forum and the Independent Advisory Group meeting for Kent Police.

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

None

18. Date of next meeting:

Note: a meeting can be called at any time though no meeting is anticipated in August.

Full Meeting of the Council, Monday 4th September 2023, 7.00pm, Matfield Pavilion