



BRENCLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 3rd FEBRUARY 2025, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Tom Mobbs (TWBC), Cllr David Knight (TWBC), Cllr Sarah Hamilton – part (KCC), 8 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Buttery who was on holiday. In his absence the Vice-Chair, Cllr Dewdney, chaired the meeting.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 13th January 2025 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the chair of the meeting.

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

Cllr Reynolds declared a perception of bias interest in item 7.1, being on the Board of Governors of the school, but as the lead Cllr on the matter contributed to the discussion.

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.

The applicant spoke in favour of planning application 24/03162.

Representatives of Matfield Village Hall spoke to raise concerns about the lack of engagement from the developer and changes to the previously discussed proposals.

The applicants spoke in favour of planning application 25/00074.

5. Borough and County Councillor

Cllr Knight outlined issues related to the plans for devolution in the County and Borough and advised that TWBC currently has a 3.9 year housing supply with target no longer being advisory but mandatory.

The Local Plan will come to TWBC to finalise in the spring this year and there will be a call for sites in December after the new Local Plan has been adopted.

6. Chairman's Announcements

- Pre-app for Cooksfield has been submitted
- St Lukes have offered to contribute to the events on 8th May (VE Day and Beacon dedication)

- Annual Parish Assembly speakers – Mike Martin MP has agreed to attend, Cllrs were asked to suggest two more speakers

7. Traffic

1. School Crossing – to note progress

Cllr Reynolds outlined progress looking into options for road safety measures outside the school that KCC may be more likely to approve, with a design being produced for the community to consider. It was noted that it is important for parents of children at the school to contribute to the discussions to ensure that the type of crossing and location that is proposed is one that is realistic and will be used. Other stakeholders, including the Tenax Trust, would also be included as the plans develop to ensure the whole community agrees with the proposals, which are at a scoping stage only.

Cllr Reynolds will continue to liaise on this, predominantly in her role as a Governor of the School, and will update the Parish Council on this to ensure that the work the PC has been undertaking for some time, via the Highways Improvement Plan, is brought together. It was also noted that a proposal for a crossing in Matfield should be progressed in due course, with the benefit of experience from Brenchley.

Action Cllr Reynolds

2. Speed Limit Changes around Pixot Hill – to note consultation with residents

The Council noted the letter, questionnaire and map which had been delivered to approximately 100 properties in roads adjacent to Pixot Hill and along Crook Road. The responses would be discussed with KCC.

3. Pavement Parking – to discuss

Cllr Churchill outlined concerns which had been raised about pavement parking on the road down to the toilets/doctor in Brenchley. Police advise this is not a police matter though the DfT continue to gather evidence on pavement parking and are expected to draw their conclusions later this year. Given that the verge and railings belong to the PC the Clerk was asked to install a “No Parking” notice on this railing.

Action Clerk

4. Reflective Clothing for children on buses – to discuss

Cllr Churchill detailed continuing problems with school children wearing dark clothes, not looking and running out from behind buses. The Clerk was asked to write to secondary schools requesting a review of their uniform code.

Action Clerk

8. Planning

1. Planning Applications

24/03104/FULL and 24/03105/LBC Marle Place Manor, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7HS
Removal of Lychgate roof & timbers, reduction in height of brick pillars & insertion of reclaimed solid stone shallow pier capstones

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

THE Parish Council does not object to the proposed removal of the lychgate roof. However, careful examination of the drawings of the proposed elevations indicates that the gateway would also be widened by approximately 1.5metres, with the measurement between the pillars increasing from 2270mm to 3810mm. This would require the demolition of some of the listed walls on either side of it and the complete rebuilding of the pillars. Indeed, as the walls curve from the road in towards the lychgate it is likely that considerably more than 1.5 metres of the existing walls, and more pillars, would need to be demolished and rebuilt. This is not mentioned in the heritage statement, which says “The Victorian wall and pillars which abut the ‘gate’ area are of significantly more historical interest and the removal of the 30-40 year old structure on top will further enhance their significance”. Consequently the Conservation Officer may perhaps not have noticed the proposed widening and the effect it would have.

The Parish Council does not consider that the extent of demolition and rebuilding of the wall and pillars that is proposed would conserve or enhance this listed historic asset in the High Weald National Landscape. Therefore the proposal conflicts with Policy LE3 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

24/03134/FULL Land East Of Mouse Trap Farm, Churn Lane, Horsmonden, Kent, TN12 8HW
Change of use of the land for the stationing of two mobile homes for Gypsy / Traveller Occupation, two touring caravans and associated hard and soft landscaping.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

Part of the proposed access route would run through Brenchley and Matfield parish and along the disused Hop Pickers Railway line. This is a safeguarded railway route under Policy AL/STR 3 of the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016, which safeguards the route for use as a green infrastructure corridor providing a walking/cycleway trail.

Policy TP5 of the emerging Local Plan states

“The Local Planning Authority will also safeguard the Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst former railway line, as defined on the Policies Map, by refusing proposals that would compromise its use as a green infrastructure corridor. Proposals for development located adjacent to the safeguarded line may be required to contribute toward enhancing the route and/or provide new connections or access points”.

The increased vehicular use for this development would put its potential use as a safe walking and cycling route at risk. It would therefore conflict with these policies, and also with policies AM1 Sustainable and active travel and AM2 The delivery of safe and convenient facilities for pedestrians and cyclists of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan.

However, if TWBC is minded to approve this application, this should be conditional on the applicant replacing the safeguarded route over land that he owns by dedicating a route alongside it as a non-motorised public right of way.

24/03162/FULL 1 Knowle Hill Cottages, Knowle Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7DL

Single storey extension alterations to the existing garden studio and alterations to internal access route

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

Prior to the original 2005 extension, the dwelling had a volume of 413m³, and by the time permission was granted for the studio the total volume had increased by approximately 300m³ (or 72%). The delegated report for the garden studio stated “Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal is over the guidelines in policy H11,...the proposal would project no further forward than the pergola or any further back than the existing shed. Additionally the proposed development would be single storey and would appear well-proportioned to the original dwelling. Whilst it would be visible from the street scene it is the same height and width as the existing outbuilding and would therefore not detract from the character and rural setting of the main dwelling. The proposed addition would not over-dominate the site and would fit well within the context of the development site”. No volumetric specifications are given for the proposed building, but it is significantly larger than the existing studio, which was 96m³ , so the extension would likely take the cumulative increase to well over 100%, given the extension’s 56m² footprint. This cannot be considered modest.

The existing studio is situated parallel to the main dwelling, as are various outhouses to the other cottages in the terrace. The proposed development, in contrast to the previously permitted development, would break this line. The extension would be highly visible from the road, and would be just 7m away from the road whereas the existing building is over 20m from the road. Unlike the existing building, it would dominate the site. While the planning statement states that there would be new tree/shrub planting, the application does not contain any detailed plans or proposals and given the differences in levels it would be many years before any such planting would grow large enough to screen the new building.

Although the site lies outside the boundary of the High Weald National Landscape (formerly AONB) it is within the High Weald National Character Area. Therefore Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Policy LE2 Development affecting the AONB and its setting applies to it, and hence it should comply with High Weald AONB design and technical lighting guidance. The proposed building with its

cantilevered structure, its materials, its siting, mass and the density it would create, would not comply with NDP Policy D2 Local architectural style. The extensive glazing would conflict with NDP Policy LE8 Dark skies as well as with the AONB guidance.

24/03216/LBC 5 Whitethorn Cottages, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7PR

Removing damp / contaminated sections of wall plaster and internal linings from internal walls in ground floor dining room.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

While recognising that the damp needs to be addressed, the Parish Council agrees with the comments of the Conservation Officer in questioning whether the proposed works would be appropriate or effective and suggesting alternative measures.

24/03270/FULL Curtis Cottage, Tong Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7HT

Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 24/01598/FULL - (Relocation of extension to be moved by 300mm from existing neighbouring extension).

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

25/00008/FULL Bakers Hill Cottage, Tong Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7AN

Two storey rear extension, timber garage, oil tank & bin enclosure

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL

The Parish Council has no objection to the proposed extension.

However, as no front elevations have been provided, the effect of the proposal to replace the front door with a window is difficult to assess. The proposal to render or clad the brick front of the house would mean that the house would no longer match the adjoining cottage, unless that cottage is also to be rendered or clad, and the decorative areas above the front windows and door would be lost. The application therefore arguably fails to comply with Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) policies D2 Local architectural style, and LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB. While the proposed external insulation would comply with NDP Policy D6 Climate change, environmental sustainability and resilience, the reliance on an oil tank would not. The Parish Council would also have wished to know what the proposals are for the brick wall, hedge and steps at the front of the property if the front door is allowed to be blocked up.

If TWBC is minded to approve the application the Parish Council requests conditions concerning the materials, the treatment of the front hedge, wall and steps, and any exterior lighting.

25/00040/TCA Walters Farmhouse High Street, Brenchley, Kent TN12 7NU

Trees in a Conservation Area Notification: PORTUGUESE LAUREL (T1) - Remove; HAWTHORN HEDGING (H1) - Remove; PORTUGUESE LAUREL (T2) - Remove; CHERRY PLUM (T3) - Remove; HOLLY (T4) - Remove; ASH (T5) - Remove; ELDER (T6) - Remove; SYCAMORE (T7) - Remove; SYCAMORE (T8) - Remove; PORTUGUESE LAUREL (T9) - Remove; PORTUGUESE LAUREL (T10) - Remove; PORTUGUESE LAUREL (T11) - Remove; SYCAMORE (T12) - Remove lowest branch 4.0 metres back.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

However, to comply with Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy LE7 Trees and hedges, the Parish Council requests a condition to replace the hedging and trees within a specified time period, or for an appropriate landscaping scheme incorporating replacement trees and hedge to be provided and implemented within a specified period.

25/00074/FULL 1 Burrs Hill Cottages, Horsmonden Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7AT

Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 22/01203/FULL - (Minor internal layout changes, dormer window modified, rear extension redesigned & minor changes to window layout & rear single storey extension)

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

25/00123/SUB Gate House Farm Fairmans Lane Brenchley Tonbridge Kent
Submission of Details in relation to Condition 5 - (External Lighting Plan); Condition 6 - (Hard & Soft Landscaping Details) of 20/02274/FULL.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

External lighting plan

16 external lights are proposed, including 6 up/down lighters (on the South elevation) and only 3 sensor lights. One of the links provided to show the proposed design of lights does not work.

The Bat Mitigation Strategy approved under 21/00216/SUB required the installation of bat tubes and stated: "No external lighting will be installed in close proximity to any of the bat tubes. If a small amount of lighting is required in other areas for safety, any lights should be on motion-sensors and short (c. 1 minute) timers to limit the duration of lit periods. Light spill will be kept to a minimum."

One of the proposed up/down lighters on the South elevation appears to be directly below a bat tube. On the East elevation one of the sensor lights is proposed to be sited below two bat tubes.

The proposed lighting clearly conflicts with the approved Bat Mitigation Strategy and with NDP Policy LE6 Biodiversity. The proposed number of lights is excessive and contrary to NDP Policies LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB and LE 8 Dark skies, as well as conflicting with Objectives DS1 and DS2 of the High Weald Management Plan and with the High Weald National Landscape Planning Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies in the High Weald. This states "External light fittings should be minimised on dwellings in rural areas both to maintain dark skies and avoid suburbanisation of the night-time landscape character... Domestic fittings should be chosen that have zero upward light and reduce glare".

Landscaping

The Proposed Landscape Plan shows a rainwater harvesting tank (for irrigation only) outside the garden fence. This would be sited in the new area of species-rich grassland required by the Eco Mitigation and Biodiversity Report, approved under 21/00216/SUB, that enabled the discharge of condition 4 of the original planning permission. It is not clear whether the tank would be above-ground or below-ground.

While rainwater harvesting is supported by NDP policy D6 climate change, environmental sustainability and resilience, if the tank would be above-ground the Parish Council recommends that it should be required to be sited inside the garden fence, instead of outside it as proposed, in order to avoid further extension of built form and domestic paraphernalia into the countryside. Under condition 3 of the permission granted for 20/02274/FULL the domestic curtilage was to be defined in the interests of protecting the character and amenities of the locality. It was then defined under the approved 24/01680/SUB and should not now be breached.

25/00126/FULL Ruswood, Petteridge Lane Matfield, Kent
Demolition of existing garage & construction of new double garage

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

While the new garage would be larger than the one it replaces, it also replaces a shed that has already been demolished but whose base still remains. It will provide more off-road space for car parking.

With its pitched roof it appears to be a more suitable design for the High Weald National Landscape than the garage it replaces. Therefore it complies with Neighbourhood Development Plan policies D1, D2, LE1 and AM3.

2. Planning Appeal – to delegate response on 24/02253/PNQCLA

The Council noted the deadline for responding to the above is 25th February.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to respond to Planning Appeal 24/02253/PNQCLA to the Planning Committee

3. Development at Matfield Village Hall – to note correspondence and agree response

The Council noted the telephone notes and correspondence with between the PC and James Chapman (Clarendon) and with Matfield Village Hall. Cllr Dewdney confirmed that in the absence of

the detail of the s.106 proposal, as well as no response on some other issues raised with Clarendon, that there was nothing before the Council for a resolution at the meeting.

It was confirmed that should this information be provided in the coming days the Council would consider whether to call an Extra-Ordinary meeting in order for this to be discussed in public and a resolution passed.

4. Wheelwright Arms – to note engagement with developer

The Clerk outlined a conversation with Graham Cramp, the owner of the Wheelwright Arms, together with Cllr Buttery on 28th January, via videocall. A confirmation email had been sent to Mr Cramp outlining some of the matters discussed. The Council noted the comments on the planning portal from Mr Cramp and instructed the Clerk to submit a response stating that the Council had not resolved to buy the portion of land suggested.

Action Clerk

9. Scout Hut Lease – to review draft

The Council reviewed the initial draft Lease, which had been compiled by Buss Murton for the Council following requirements outlined by the Clerk and Cllr Buttery. A small amendment will be made for clarity on the Plan showing where the path runs. Cllr Akenhead had noted significant comments which would be reviewed following receipt of the lease back from the Scouts. This would then be finalised for agreement at the March PC meeting in time for signing by 24th March.

Action Clerk

10. Parish Council stand at Matfield Fete – to consider proposals

Cllr Thompson made some suggestions to engage more residents with the PC stand at the Fete such as a suggestion box, some photos of PC activities and a volunteer sign-up list, more thought would be put into these nearer the time.

Action Cllr Thompson

11. Weekly playground inspections – to consider quote

Cllr Anderson had agreed to undertake the weekly playground inspections at Brenchley Rec and at Porters. However, given the significant commitment this entails and also mindful of the need for continuity in this process, a quote has been obtained for Pete Bamford to undertake this as well as the formal (written) monthly report.

The budget for these areas has already been set for 2025-26 and the extra commitment of £720 for each cost centre in the first year of the three year contract was outlined in the RFO report, however there had been a significant saving in the insurance premium and therefore the extra cost would be minimal.

RESOLVED to contract Pete Bamford of Capel GroundCare to undertake weekly playground inspections from 1st March 2025 to 31st March 2028

12. Clerk's report

- Road Closures are now listed on the newsfeed of the website as well as on Facebook
- The old domain .co.uk has now ceased.
- The £4600 grant from BizGive has now been received for the JVMG project.
- Co-Option Casual Vacancy ends 3rd February, it can then be advertised
- The beacon group has been set up with 4 Matfield residents committing to help, they will also do the Christmas lights along the Limes
- New light fittings installed at Matfield Toilet and replaced all bulbs with LED kits
- Replacement post at Viewpoint completed
- TWBC have been asked to clear Straw etc at Cinderhill
- Toddler Sessions starting at Cinderhill on Thursday 27th Feb 9.30-11.30am for a 3 month trial

1. Table Tennis Tables – to note purchase

Further to previously made resolution to purchase two table tennis tables, an alternative, cheaper, purchase was identified and required swift conclusion. Cllr Anderson had circulated all Cllrs with the information and the Clerk had provided guidance. A majority decision to purchase the tables for £700 plus transport costs, was obtained by email and a payment made via BACs on 21st January 2025. The cost of this (including the installation costs and transport) will be drawdown from the Fernham s.106 leaving around £33k left.

2. Donation request – Horticultural Society

The Council considered a request for a donation towards the cost of the marquee for the Horticultural Show at the Fete in July and it was noted that the available budget for 2025-26 is £3500. The Council instructed the Clerk to express to the Horticultural Society that this donation was in anticipation of them seeking other funding to make their activities self-funded.

RESOLVED to donate £1000 to the Horticultural Society for a marquee at the Fete

3. Pond report – to note

These reports are due monthly, with quarterly invoicing to follow.

13. RFO's Report

1. Accounts Payable

3304	HMRC	Tax and NI Jan 2024	£638.93
3305	C. Brooks	Dec mileage £46.80 Salary Balance	£61.24
3306	KHWP	Cinderhill Management Fee 2024-2025	£8,582.50
3307	Waste Way	Dec 24 bin collections at Port Wd and Brenchley Rec	£134.40
3308	Sarah Castro-Edwards	January Salary plus December training hours	£1,031.80
3309	Capel Groundcare	Table tennis tables collection	£360.60
3310	TWBC	Election fees May 2024	£21.07
3311	Brenchley PTFA	Donation £500 shed	£500.00
3312	GMT Property Maintenance	Matfield Toilets light maintenance	£270.00
3313	Southborough Town Council	New Councillor Training Cllr Reynolds	£40.00
3314	Commercial Services	Mowing Jul-Sept 2024	£3,355.26
3315	Westcotec	SIDs battery	£109.80
3316	The Fence Guru	Viewpoint post	£60.00
3317	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspections December 2024	£112.80
3318	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract December	£164.87
3325	Microshade	Software support December	£109.10

Payments by Credit Card December expenditure

3319	B&Q	Toilet Brushes	£54.96
	Just Helping Tree Collection	Charity donation for removal of 2 Christmas Trees	£40.00
	Lloyds Multicard	Monthly fees December 2024	£3.00

Interim Payments made

3320	Table Tennis tables	Porters Wood / Brenchley Rec	£700.00
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3321	SO C. Brooks	Salary January 2025	£1,979.75
3322	DD Smart Pension	January 2025 Pension Payment (RFO not pensionable for 1 month)	£906.30
3323	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity December 2024	£216.00
3324	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets December 2024	£33.73
3326	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets December 2024	£33.54

3327	DD Smart Pension	December Pension admin fee	£26.40
3328	SO Churchill Group	December Toilet Cleaning services Credit bal	
		£912.76 - reduced SO to take account of credit bal	£95.45
3329	SSE	Streetlight electricity December 24	£75.63
3331	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service January 25	£172.80

The RFO having circulated invoices for scrutiny the accounts were approved for payment and would be authorised by Cllr Anderson and Cllr Stout.

14. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllrs Reynolds, Churchill and Akenhead attended the Crest Nicolson Event Crest Nicholson event re. housing development to the north west of Paddock Wood (between B2160 and A228) and it was agreed that a short response to the questionnaire, outlining the Council's response to the planning application would be forwarded by the Clerk.

15. To be advised of urgent business

The Council noted the urgent request from Horsmonden Parish Council that a Cllr speak at the Planning Committee meeting of 5th March regarding the Bassetts Farm application, to reiterate concerns about construction traffic. Cllr Churchill would attend on behalf of BMPC.

16. Date of next meeting: Monday 3rd March 2025, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion