

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2022, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Steve McMillan (TWBC), 2 members of the public

1. Minute's Silence to mark the death of HM The Queen

The Council, and others in attendance, observed a minute's silence.

2. To accept apologies for absence

None.

3. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 5th September were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

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

Cllr Churchill declared a pecuniary interest in Planning application – 22/02696/FULL Kingsmead Farm, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HA, and left the room when the matter was discussed.

Cllr Churchill declared a perception of bias interest in the matter related to the parking at Brenchley Memorial Hall.

Cllr Akenhead declared a perception of bias interest in Planning application 22/02553/FULL5 Cinder Hill Wood, Five Wents, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7ED and did not participate in the discussion.

Cllr Akenhead declared a perception of bias interest in the matter related to the parking at Brenchley Memorial Hall and did not participate in the discussion.

5. To adjourn to allow public participation.

Charlotte Anderson advised that she is a new resident keen to contribute to the community and was therefore interested in the matters being discussed by the Council.

Mark Philbrow advised his interest in the matter related to the Bockingfold Solar Farm.

6. Borough and County Councillor

Cllr McMillan advised that Fernham Homes are still discussing a further donation to the PC, with the donation for the SID being progressed.

7. Chair's Announcements

- Cllr Buttery confirmed that he had received the resignation of Cllr Miconnet for personal reasons. The Casual Vacancy Notice for Cllr Spencer's role had ended and, with Cllr Miconnet's resignation the Council acknowledged that three vacancies were now available.

The Clerk had received interest from several parties and the advertisement for the vacancies would be published without delay, with a view to Co-options on 7th November.

The Council briefly reviewed the responsibilities and Committee Memberships that were vacant and Cllr Buttery particularly noted that the Planning Committee was now inquorate with only two elected members. Cllr Wells agreed to assist on the Committee on a temporary basis.

Cllr Tunstall would take over responsibility for the Allotments.

In anticipation of new Members joining the Council it was agreed that roles would be discussed further.

- Cllr Buttery outlined that there is a CAB Energy Event 12th October at the Pavilion. An approach had been received from Alex Cunningham, on behalf of St Lukes Church, regarding the “Warm Space Initiative” during winter months, with the Pavilion being suggested as a venue. The Council agreed that it would like to help in an appropriate way and the Clerk would progress this.

8. Co-Option Procedure – to consider amendments

The Council discussed a revised Co-Option Procedure. The Clerk commented that it was not generally considered appropriate for Co-Options to be held in a Closed Session but that elements could be included in the process to protect the privacy of candidates.

RESOLVED to adopt the amended Co-Option Procedure

9. Planning

1. Planning Applications

Application	Detail
22/02435/FULL Oast Meadow, Horsmonden Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent	Part retrospective - Demolition of existing 2 storey detached dwelling, attached garage, attached barn, stables and outbuildings; Construction of a two storey dwelling with attached single storey pool room and detached garage (minor changes to scheme approved under 20/03852/FULL) RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL The Parish Council recommended refusal on the previous application as it involved a 73% increase in volume. Now this application will add a further 3% increase. The Parish Council is pleased to see that the development “will showcase some of the most environmentally friendly technologies currently available”. There will be an underground water storage tank, a heat pump and battery storage. The application form says surface water drainage will be by SUD. There is however no drawing showing these. While the site is in flood zone 1, it is close to flood zone 3, so the details of surface water treatment are important. While the application documents include an “ecological mitigation and enhancement scheme”, it appears questionable whether the measures proposed will really constitute enhancement rather than merely mitigation. In order to safeguard the AONB landscape, if TWBC are minded to approve this application, the Parish Council request that the conditions attached to the previous approval removing permitted development rights and restricting use of the garage to be ancillary to the house are repeated. The Parish Council also requests that conditions should be added concerning external lighting, surface water drainage, energy and water saving measures, landscaping (including tree preservation) and biodiversity net gain.
22/02530 Upper Barn, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7AL	Conversion of existing barn to a residential dwelling with associated landscaping to form parking areas and curtilage RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL The Parish Council has consistently opposed the conversion of this building to housing since it was built, having never considered that it was really designed or necessary for agricultural use.

	However, the PC notes the change in Government policy on conversion of rural buildings, which is leading to the proliferation of housing in the AONB countryside in unsustainable positions such as this, away from local services, where the car is the only viable means of transport. The PC notes the proximity of a number of mature trees to the south and west of the building that will cast shade on the proposed dwelling. If TWBC is minded to approve the application the PC requests a condition that these trees, together with the roadside trees, be protected as these are important in the landscape.
22/02553/FULL5 Cinder Hill Wood, Five Wents, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7ED	Erection of two storey rear extension RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
22/02252/FULL The Heys, The Green, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LA	Proposed single storey extension and change of roof configuration to rear of property RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND; APPROVE
22/02633/FULL Far Far Away, Beech Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7HG	Relocation of an independent residential mobile home 2.9 metres north of its current location RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council remains concerned about the amount of development that has taken place in this area in the AONB a long way outside the LBD. The Parish Council is disappointed to note that TWBC approved a SUB application which removed two trees, some hedgerow and some of the ecological planting that had been listed in the delegated report as positive aspects of application 21/02865/FULL for the conversion of the neighbouring workshop. The Parish Council is concerned about the effect the proposed relocation of this mobile home will have on the amenity of neighbouring properties. The Parish Council is also concerned that trees will still cast shadow over the mobile home and therefore could still be in danger. Moreover the proposed driveway appears to be going to run over the trunk of the largest tree. If, however, TWBC is minded to approve this application, the Parish Council requests conditions concerning exterior lighting, tree preservation (especially of the tree shown covered by the proposed driveway), removing permitted development rights and requiring a landscape plan showing biodiversity net gain.
22/02690/FULL Dinas , Maidstone Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JG	Erection of outbuilding to include part workshop, utility room and guest accommodation ancillary to the main house RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL The Parish Council questions whether there will be enough parking space for what will now become a 5 bedroom property. While recognising that this site lies within a residential garden inside the proposed new LBD for Matfield under the Submission Local Plan, the Parish Council is concerned that the proposed outbuilding will effectively take up the whole width of the bottom of the garden. If TWBC is minded to approve the application, the Parish Council requests conditions concerning exterior lighting, surface water drainage (in this area where soakaways can be problematical) and that the accommodation remain ancillary to the main house. Also

	a construction management plan, given the proximity of neighbouring properties and the importance of keeping traffic flowing on the Maidstone Road.
22/02696/FULL Kingsmead Farm, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HA	Erection of ground and upper floors extension, Conversion of garage into double storey, Replace outside stables with detached timber-framed garage/store RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council questions whether the increase in volume will comply with LP Policy H11 or Policy H11 of the Submission draft LP. The Council is also concerned that the proposed new garage would have a larger footprint than the stables it would replace. The Parish Council is concerned about the extent of glazing in the proposed design, which will affect the dark skies of the AONB. However, if TWBC is minded to grant permission, the Parish Council requests that the curtilage of the farmhouse is more clearly defined on a plan that can be referred to in the granting of permission. In order to protect the AONB, the Parish Council would also request conditions concerning exterior lighting, a landscape & biodiversity plan, removing permitted development rights and requiring the garage to remain ancillary to the house.
22/02655/FULL 2 Southfield Cottages, Tibbs Court Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7ND	Amendments to planning application 22/00701/FULL including: Reduced area of openings, Introduced side window to match existing rather than sliding doors, Reduced area and volume of front main entrance, Amended footprint of side office to accommodate fire and building regulations, Retention of slate roof side office. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE The Parish Council is pleased to see the smaller amount of glazing than in the previous scheme. In order to protect the tree under which the proposed outbuilding would now be stationed, the Council recommend that TWBC should ensure that the concrete pad foundations and the protection of the tree are referred to in the decision letter.
22/02668/SUB 2 Peartree Cottages Maidstone Road Matfield Tonbridge Kent TN12 7JH	Submission of Details in Relation to Conditions 3 (Weatherboarding and Brick sample), 4 (Build Quality), 5 (Code of Construction Practice), 6 (Landscaping Details), 7 (Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme), and 8 (Sewage Details). With application 21/02393/FULL. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE Parish Council is concerned that the Construction & Traffic Management Scheme will cause traffic chaos on the Maidstone Road owing to the proposed positioning of the site fencing on the site boundary, given the clear insufficiency of on-site parking for contractors' vehicles (in addition to those for the existing 2 Peartree Cottages, materials, machinery and turning space). The neighbouring public house already has difficulty accommodating the parking for all its clients. There is every likelihood that, during construction, traffic will be held up by parked cars past the crossroads and also as far as the bus stop where secondary school pupils take the bus to school. The area around the crossroads is already an area of parking stress (Neighbourhood Plan referendum version page 73 and Figure 31). The PC notes the proposal that deliveries should be made kerbside. The fence should be set further back to allow for this and for at least some contractors' vehicles to be parked on the verge outside the fence. A clear plan should be provided showing the extent of road closure that will be

	needed to allow for contractor vehicle parking and delivery vehicles. The Parish Council also objects to the proposed planting of a low hedge on the highway land which could otherwise be useful highway verge for walking on (highway rights cannot be removed through lack of use or by planting over the highway). The Parish Council considers that the number of exterior lights proposed is excessive and suburbanising in this village where exterior lighting of driveways is not normal and not in keeping with the village's dark skies.
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2. Bockingfold Solar Farm – to consider response

Cllr Akenhead outlined concerns that had been raised about the route for HGVs during the construction of the proposed solar Farm in Horsmonden and this was discussed at length, although it is not in the parish.

It was agreed that, should the project go ahead the Council would consider requesting a developer contribution to mitigate the impact on the Parish.

RESOLVED to recommend REFUSAL of Planning application 22/02773/FULL, Land At Bockingfold Farm Maidstone Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent

The PC is pleased to see that proposed route 3 is no longer being contemplated and would strongly object to any proposal to reinstate it. It is a matter of serious concern that KCC appears initially to have failed to mention to the applicants the advisory limits on HGV traffic on some of the roads within our parish, most notably Blind Lane (Brenchley Road), Windmill Hill and Watermans Lane.

However, the Parish Council strongly objects to the proposal that the residents of Matfield should bear the brunt of the construction traffic, given that the access route will take the heaviest vehicles, which will be considerably lighter on the proposed return journey through Horsmonden.

The Maidstone Road in Matfield from The Green to the crossroads by the Poet is an area of parking stress (see referendum draft Neighbourhood Plan figure 31) where parked cars mean that traffic is reduced to single file and there is very frequent congestion, especially during the rush hours. Poor visibility at the crossroads for traffic approaching from Chestnut Lane is another factor that leads to frequent incidents at this crossroads. Gedges Hill on the B2160 has a Z bend, where the road is narrow and HGVs can have real difficulty passing each other. The bends on this steep hill can be particularly hazardous in icy weather.

The Parish Council questions why the B2160 should be considered a more suitable access route than the A228 (coming from either North or South) and Badsell Road. These are wider roads that avoid villages and the Parish Council strongly recommends that they should be the route used for access.

It should be noted that construction of the solar farm could take place at the same time as the Maidstone Road in Matfield has to be partially closed to allow the construction of the new house under planning permission 21/02393/FULL (22/02668/SUB which refers to it is currently under consideration by TWBC). A further planning application, 22/02690/FULL, a little further along Maidstone Road, that could also lead to a need for a partial road closure during the construction period, is also currently under consideration by TWBC. If, despite the Parish Council's objection, the route through Matfield is eventually the one approved for access to the proposed solar farm, the Parish Council seeks information on how this possible traffic conflict would be managed, and seeks firm guarantees that construction of the new house will not cause HGV traffic connected with the solar farm to be diverted past Brenchley and Matfield Primary School or along roads within the parish that carry advisory signs that they are unsuitable for HGVs

3. Regulation 16 of the Paddock Wood NDP – to consider response

The Council discussed a response drafted by Cllr Akenhead.

RESOLVED for the Clerk to submit the Council's response to the Paddock Wood NDP Consultation as drafted

4. Neighbourhood Development Plan - to agree expenditure

Cllr Akenhead outlined the arrangements for the NDP referendum and the Council discussed the expenditure required for the administration thereof. The Information Statement would be revised and published after finalisation with TWBC.

RESOLVED to spend £400 for printing and to publish the Information Statement.

10. Draft Budget 2023-24 – to consider

Cllr Wells advised that the Finance Committee and RFO have completed an initial working draft of a budget and this was discussed briefly. Revisions will be made at a further Finance Committee meeting and a further draft would be brought to the PC after this with additional quotes having been received by that time.

11. Electoral Boundary Consultation – to approve further response

The Council discussed concerns about the new ward boundaries in the Borough, as published by The Local Government Boundary Commission, which will be effective from May 2024.

Cllr Buttery outlined the draft of a submission on this matter and also a similar text being submitted by joint parishes.

It was agreed that Cllr Buttery would amend the format and circulate the text of the Council's submission prior to submission by the deadline of 10th October

RESOLVED that the Clerk would confirm the addition of the Parish Council to the joint letter to Borough Councillors on new ward boundaries

RESOLVED that the Clerk would submit the Parish Council's submission to Borough Councillors on new ward boundaries

12. Notice of Completion of Audit for the year ended 31.3.22 – for information

The Chair confirmed that the audit of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 has been completed and the accounts have been published within the statutory deadline. There are no matters raised by the External Auditor.

13. Matfield Pond – update

Cllr Stout confirmed that the removal of the fish is planned for 13th October, with a review of next steps to be discussed after this.

The Clerk was asked to ensure that the contractor (Andrew Chadwick of the Angling Trust) is aware that no protected species may be disturbed during the work and for confirmation of where the fish would be dispersed.

14. Toilet Management – to agree transfer of titles to the PC

Following a lengthy delay in the provision of transfer documentation for the two toilet blocks from TWBC the Council discussed its agreement to progress the matter in anticipation of the paperwork being received. The Clerk had obtained guidance from Cooper Burnett who would be able to act on the matter and would seek a quote for this work.

It was agreed that given receipt of a rebuild valuation from TWBC the quote obtained for valuation for insurance purposes would be held in abeyance. It was agreed however that should the valuation not be sufficient for our insurers the Clerk would instruct the valuation of the blocks at a fee of £720 (inc VAT). The Chair advised that TWBC have confirmed the consideration to be paid is £1 for each unit.

TWBC had requested a “Business Case” to include in their decision making process and a draft of this was discussed.

RESOLVED to confirm the PCs intention to complete the transfer of title for the Toilet blocks in Brenchley and Matfield subject to no more than a notional payment to TWBC as consideration for the transfers, and to maintain, clean and insure these premises for the foreseeable future

RESOLVED to incur necessary legal costs for advice in connection with the transfer of Toilet blocks in Brenchley and Matfield, including insurance valuations if required

RESOLVED to forward a business case to TWBC demonstrating the basis for the Parish Council obtaining the title to the toilet blocks in Brenchley and Matfield

15. Christmas

The Council discussed the pros and cons of having Christmas lights in the current economic climate.

RESOLVED that the Christmas lights would be turned on with timers set to 4pm to midnight.

It was noted that the External electric socket at Hammonds, used to run the lights in The Avenue, is being installed at the Council’s expense shortly and that Hammonds would not be claiming reimbursement for electricity.

The Clerk advised that Carol sheets were being reprinted as many had perished. There are approximately 16 pages and sponsorship would be sought to contribute to the cost although the Council’s budget for Christmas was unspent so far. The Clerk had agreed to provide the typed copy to the printer.

RESOLVED to delegate to the Clerk the purchase of 300 Carol Sheets, within spending and budget limits.

16. Bank Savings Accounts – to confirm

Cllr Wells advised that a one-year deposit account has been set up and £50k transferred – this forms the approximate sum that the PC keeps in reserve. On receipt of the precept there remain several months where the Council’s current account exceeds £85k, and the Council discussed a further quick access account.

RESOLVED to open second 30 day access account with Charity bank and transfer £35k.

17. Clerk’s and RFO’s Report

1. RoSPA Inspection report for Playground - for information

The Council received the RoSPA inspection report and the Clerk confirmed that the monthly inspections and work done by Capel GroundCare had resulted in fewer actions required from the annual inspection.

2. Correspondence with the School regarding car park at Recreation Ground

Cllr Buttery outlined exchanges of correspondence between the Trustees of Brenchley Memorial Hall, the Headmistress of the School and the Parish Council. The Council discussed the reasons for the donation to BMH and it was agreed that this was intended to contribute to the upkeep of the parking at BMH which would allow for parents to drop off and pick up children. It was agreed that no further actions would be taken on the matter.

RESOLVED to continue to donate £1500 annually to BMH Charity in order to alleviate parking difficulties in the area caused by parents dropping and collecting children from the School

3. S.106 drawdown – to agree application

The Clerk outlined that at the budget-setting meeting the Finance Committee considered the use of s.106 funding currently being held by TWBC, of £1542, which had previously been agreed to go towards play equipment at Porters Wood. Given the departure of Cllr Spencer who had been working on the project, the

Finance Committee had suggested that the funds, which expire in 2023, be used against work recently completed at Brenchley Playground (this totals £771) and the remaining amount be allocated to further playground repairs and bark.

RESOLVED that the sum of £1542 currently held by TWBC be allocated to repairs at Brenchley Playground and that the Clerk submit an application for release of these funds

4. Accounts payable

2381	HMRC	Tax and NI September 2022	£665.50
2382	C. Brooks	Salary Balance September £60.56 and September Mileage £57.60	£118.16
2383	Scrapco	Skip for Pond Clear Up	£276.00
2385	K. Twyman	Cleaning of Pavilion (18/8 and 1/9)	£60.00
2384	KCC	Purchase Mini Speed Indicator Device	£5065.81
2388	Weed Control	Treatment Knotweed Matfield Green	£300.00
2386	Wasteway	August Bin emptying Brenchley Rec	£76.80
2387	Business Stream 3124350	Pond water May to July 2022	£540.87
2389	Business Stream 3126796	Allotment Water 20/6 -19/9	£243.74
2391	Garden Barber (James Beech)	Remove Ivy from Gatepost at allotments	£25.00
2390	CVD	Phone Line rental / Broadband September	£61.49
2392	Garden Barber (James Beech)	Strim overgrown plots at Allotments	£200.00
2393	Panetta Horn	£11.40 Stamps Overtime £85.47	£96.87
2394	Weald Trees (Andrew Downes)	Clearance of growth from speed sign Mat Green	£25.00
2395	Playsafety	RoSPA Annual play inspection Recreation Grnd	£113.40
2396	Zurich	Annual Insurance Premium	£3,024.69
2409	Handier Handyman Liam Davis	Installation of Bench Mat Green	£65.00
2410	Westcotec	Installation of Blue Tooth on SID	£400.80
2411	PFK Littlejohn	Annual External Audit	£480.00

Credit Card Payments made

2412	Lloyds Bank Fees	Monthly Fee August	£3.00
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits

2397	SO C. Brooks	Salary September 2022	£1843.99
2398	SO Panetta Horn	Salary September 2022	£528.92
2399	DD Smart Pension	September 2022 Pension Payment	£336.99
2400	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity 9/8-9/9 2022	£88.36
2401	DD Microshade	September data and application service	£124.30
2402	DD Business Stream	September 22 Pavilion water and waste	£7.00
2403	DD Tower	Phone Equipment Leasing September 2022 36 month agreement ending December 2024	£30.02
2404	DD Smart Pension	September 2022 Pension admin fee	£18.00
2405	DD Npower	Streetlight electricity September 2022	£62.14
2406	SO Churchill	September Toilet Cleaning services	£677.32
2407	SO Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection July – Dec 22 Monthly	£54.00
2408	DD Grenke	Quarterly photocopier rental	£122.40

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

18. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Wells advised that there had been two meetings of the Environment and Sustainability Group to set objectives and some initiatives were being progressed. Information is being gathered with a view to setting up a tab on the website and other means of communicating ideas are being considered.

Cllrs Wells, Churchill and Akenhead attend the TWBC Biodiversity Net Gain training event run by TWBC.

Cllr Churchill had attended the KCC Joint Transportation Board meeting earlier in the evening

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

None.

20. Date of next meeting:

Provisional Full Council Meeting 7pm, Tuesday 18th October

Full Parish Council Meeting 7pm, Monday 7th November