



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 5th FEBRUARY 2024, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Sarah Hamilton (KCC), 45 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 8th January 2024 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 Reynolds declared, in relation to item 7 on the Agenda, that she is a Governor of the School.

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.

Thomas Mobbs, a resident of Matfield, advised that he will be standing for election as one of the three Ward Councillors for the new larger Rural Tunbridge Wells Ward on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC).

Ruth Hoy spoke concerning the recent serious accident near the Standings Cross junction raising concerns about road safety in general but specifically in relation to children alighting from buses. She had provided some proposals to be considered for inclusion in the Highways Improvement Plan.

Many other residents gave some anecdotal evidence concerning speeds and driver behaviour generally along Maidstone Road with many making various suggestions including street lighting, crossings and traffic calming measures.

Extensive discussion was held with residents including the historical efforts made by the PC on these matters, notably in relation to the Fernham Development and with reference to the Local Plan consultation, and Cllr Buttery outlined the process for obtaining such measures to be delivered by Kent County Council (KCC).

5. Borough and County Councillor

Cllr Hamilton commented that there is a "Near Misses" register held by TWBC and she would contact them to get the data on the area surrounding the recent accident.

6. Chairman's Announcements

- Cllr Buttery acknowledged Mr Mobb's intention to stand as a TWBC Councillor and that it that would provide local representation.
- The Annual Parish Meeting (APA) is on 8th March 7pm at Brenchley Memorial Hall (BMH)
- It was agreed that acronyms will be listed in full in minutes to aid residents' understanding.

7. Traffic

1. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – to consider revision

The Council discussed the points raised by numerous residents in the public participation section, and in particular the position of the recently raised concerns surrounding the accident on Maidstone Road as a priority on the HIP. KCC had advised that immediate action would be taken to obtain traffic movement data in the vicinity. It also suggested that given the severity of the incident the matter would be considered outside of its position on the HIP.

Cllr Buttery commented that the two priority items on the HIP, namely the crossroads at the top of Pixot Hill and the road outside the school, had been active for some time, with both having had actions taken by KCC and some still ongoing, it would therefore be remiss of the Council not to continue to pursue these to their conclusion.

The current HIP is still in draft form and would be reviewed again in November this year, therefore the Council agreed that a targeted and coherent proposal should be compiled, with the benefit of a meeting with KCC having been undertaken, so that the matter could be added to the HIP as a fully formed proposal. This would enable residents to engage in support more effectively.

The HIP would be discussed further at the next meeting of the PC and the priority order reconsidered at that point, depending on the outcome of discussions with KCC in the meantime.

2. Speedwatch

Cllr Churchill advised that the Police Speedwatch in mid-January had only shown a very small number of vehicles speeding, out of 255 vehicles that went through the check, two vehicles were pulled in, both drivers of the vehicles were local to the village.

An order has been placed for the new Speedwatch equipment (this is well within budget) and those recently expressing an interest in this issue due to the accident are being asked to consider joining Speedwatch.

8. Meeting with Greg Clark MP regarding the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – update

Cllr Buttery briefly commented on the short online meeting attended by himself, Cllr Akenhead, Cllr Churchill and the Clerk with Greg Clark MP at which he agreed to raise concerns about the non-delivery of HIP actions with KCC Cabinet Member for Highways, Neil Baker, the following day.

9. Planning

1. Planning Applications

23/03351/FULL 2 Chantlers Hill, Paddock Wood, Kent, TN12 6LX

2-storey side extension, 2 front dormers & a rear dormer, with associated external alterations to fenestration

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVE

However, in order to protect the setting of the AONB (NDP Policy LE2) and to ensure that the full width of the adjacent public footpath will remain unobstructed, the Parish Council requests conditions requiring submission of details of the hard and soft landscaping referred to in the application, including plans of the proposed garage.

23/03485/FULL Little Summerford Barn, The Green, Matfield,
Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JU

Installation of bi-folding doors and changes to fenestration.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVE

Although the application form states that no changes are proposed to the access and parking, these appear at present to be shared with the converted barn and the new access and parking area (presently a very small grassed paddock) would be off a separate track, where new, solid double gates appear to have been fairly recently installed in the close boarded fencing.

The Parish Council is concerned that with the proposed change to the access and parking, this Granny Annexe could become a separate dwelling in the High Weald National Landscape outside the Limits to Built Development. The PC therefore recommends a condition restricting occupation to use in connection with Summerford Barn. In order to conserve the HWNL a condition restricting permitted development rights should also be imposed.

23/03493/FULL Grove Cottage Farm, Maidstone Road, Matfield,
Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LF

Conversion of detached garage to annex dwelling

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVE

However, as this building is within the High Weald National Landscape and outside the Limits to Built Development the Parish Council requests conditions removing permitted development rights and preventing the building's use as a separate dwelling.

24/00052/FULL Invictas, Geddes Hill, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7DU

Demolition of garage and erection of dwelling, changes to ground levels, hard and soft landscaping

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND REFUSE

1. This application should be decided in accordance with the NPPF of 19 December 2023, under which, since it is understood that TWBC can demonstrate a four year housing land supply and as the emerging Local Plan is currently under Examination, the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" should not apply.
2. While permission has been granted for the conversion of the garage to residential, its use as a dwelling has not commenced and therefore arguably it does not enjoy a lawful residential use which has not been abandoned.
3. The site is within the High Weald National Landscape and outside the Limits to Built Development, where new housing development does not comply with NDP Policy H2.
4. While the conversion of the garage to a two bedroom dwelling would have helped to address the shortage of small houses in the parish, the addition of a 4 bedroom market house would marginally worsen the current imbalance in the housing mix.
5. The sustainability of the proposal is questionable given the earth moving that would be necessary to sink the house into the ground, and given the lack of information about any features to comply with NDP Policy D6, Climate change, environmental sustainability and resilience.
6. There is no information to show that the development will comply with NDP Policy D8 Surface water management. The sinking of the ground levels and the proposed additional hard landscaping will presumably increase the amount of surface water that will need to be disposed of, and soakaways can be ineffective in Matfield. It is noted that the method of foul water disposal is unknown.
7. The site is important to the landscape on the approach to Matfield, and although the application form states that the proposal includes hard and soft landscaping, very little information has been supplied concerning this. In the previous approved application the curved brick wall (that can be seen from the road) was to be retained but this would be demolished as part of this application. To comply with the HWANB housing design guide and NDP paragraph 6.117, any new boundary fence facing the Maidstone Road and Coppers Lane should be concealed behind a native hedgerow.

8. The proposed new dwelling would not comply with NDP Policy LE8 Dark skies in that it would have four skylights, compared with none on the garage and three on the approved conversion. If, however, TWBC is minded to approve the application, the Parish Council requests conditions similar to those for 23/01931, but with the following additional conditions: • A hard and soft landscaping plan, to include a native hedge outside any fencing on the boundaries facing the roads, to be submitted and approved prior to construction • A detailed surface water disposal plan (including any water from a biological treatment plant for foul water, if this is the method of disposal chosen) to be submitted and approved prior to construction • Details of foul water disposal • Information on the disposal of excavated soil to be submitted and approved prior to construction • Information on the method chosen to minimise the effect of light spillage from skylights to be submitted prior to construction • A construction environmental management plan
24/00054/FULL Egypt Oast, Cryals Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7HR Erection of porch, conservatory, replacement car port, vehicular access and boundary treatment RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND NEUTRAL However, the parish Council requests conditions restricting permitted development, restricting occupation of the accommodation above the garage to use ancillary to the Oast, and concerning exterior lighting.
24/00108/FULL 26 Chestnut Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JL Demolition of garage & single storey annexe, erection of replacement 2-storey extension to side & rear with associated alterations to external materials, fenestration and landscaping RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVE However, the Parish Council notes that it appears one tree will be lost to make way for the extension and therefore a new tree should be planted to replace it.
24/00140/FULL Hill House, Crook Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7BS Single storey rear extension and garage conversion RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVE However, the house lies on the boundary of the High Weald National Landscape and hence is very much in its setting. To comply with NDP policies LE2 Development affecting the AONB and its setting and LE 8 Dark skies, a condition should be imposed requiring information to be supplied and approved prior to construction on the measures that will be taken to prevent light spillage at night from the rooflights.
24/00078/HYBRID Bassetts Farm Goudhurst Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8AS Hybrid application: Full application for the erection of 120 No. dwellings (Use Class C3), including affordable housing, landscaping, public open space, allotments, ecological enhancements, SUDs and access. Outline application (with all matters reserved) for 0.25 hectares of land for a new Medical Centre (Use Class E(e)) with associated access, parking and landscaping. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND REFUSE Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council (BMPC) objects to this development because it is likely to add substantially to the vehicular traffic coming through Brenchley and Matfield parish, both during construction and once the houses are built. Several of the assumptions in the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan are questionable. While BMPC notes the proposed upgrade of footpath WT 341 to enable off-road cycle access from the development to the school, a major travel shift to cycling for other journeys is very unlikely owing to the nature of local roads and the volume and speed of traffic on them. It is now widely acknowledged that the section of National Cycle Route 18 running through Brenchley, Matfield and the southern part of Horsmonden (some distance from the proposed development), which is

entirely on-road without any segregation, is unfit for any but the bravest and most experienced cyclists.

A modal shift to public transport is also extremely unlikely to occur, irrespective of whether the new residents are provided with local public transport timetables as proposed in the Travel Plan. There are no buses to Paddock Wood other than the school bus. The remaining buses for the public, to Tunbridge Wells and Tenterden, only go every 1½ to 2 hours and there are no buses after 8pm. This service is clearly not frequent enough to promote modal shift from the private car for the vast majority of journeys.

The Parish Council does not consider that trip generation “calculated based on survey sites outside of London, in England, Scotland and Wales, in ‘Suburban Area’ locations, omitting surveys within a population area greater than 250,000” is appropriate for this rural village which according to the 2011 census had a total population of less than 2,500. Nor is the assumed modal share of 14% travelling by train appropriate, since any rail travel will require travel by car because there are neither any buses nor any off-road or segregated cycle routes to Paddock Wood or Marden stations, both of which are nearly 6km away along winding, unlit, lanes where in many cases the speed limit is 60mph and the volume of traffic is high.

Most of the vehicular traffic from this development will be going either to the A21 northbound towards Tunbridge Wells, London and the M25, or to Paddock Wood and its railway station. Traffic going to the A21 northbound will generally go through Brenchley and Matfield to avoid the congestion on the undualled section of the A21. Most of the traffic going to Paddock Wood will also run through our parish.

There are existing traffic problems in the village centres of Brenchley and Matfield, where parked cars reduce the roads to single track, with long tailbacks during peak hours. The volume of traffic makes it difficult to find a safe moment to cross the road and there are no controlled road crossing facilities for pedestrians. The traffic from this development will exacerbate these problems.

There are also existing problems at Kippings Cross, where traffic has difficulty entering the roundabout from the B2160 because of the volume of traffic on the A21’s southbound lanes. The additional traffic from this development will worsen these problems.

The congestion at peak times on the A21’s southbound lanes also already causes very serious problems, with traffic diverting onto totally unsuitable rural lanes in Brenchley and Matfield parish, and this development will add to that rat running traffic.

The historic rural lanes in our parish are an important feature of the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) which the AONB Management Plan aims to conserve. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has a new statutory duty not just to have regard to, but actually to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the HWNL. The additional traffic on these lanes will erode and damage them.

The Parish Council would like to see evidence that the site allocated for the new Medical Centre will be sufficiently large. Although it is accepted that the precise number and layout of the associated vehicle and cycle parking spaces will be determined at the Reserved Matters stage, an outline application should at least provide a plan that demonstrates that a sufficiently large building together with sufficient parking can be accommodated. TWBC and the NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group have indicated that the new health centre would also be designed to serve Matfield and Brenchley. The infrequency of bus services and the unsuitability for cyclists of the Brenchley to Horsmonden road mean that all patients from Matfield and Brenchley would need to drive to it, whereas those in Brenchley village can walk to the Brenchley surgery at present. If, despite the above-mentioned concerns, TWBC proposes to approve the application, BMPC recommends that this should be subject to conditions requiring

- A Construction Management Plan that will ensure that construction HGV traffic will not be routed through Brenchley and Matfield
- A financial contribution to road safety measures / road crossing facilities in Brenchley and Matfield
- A contribution to increased bus services
- A contribution to assist in the creation of non-motorised user route on or close to the disused Hop Pickers’ railway line, to enable off-road cycle access to Paddock Wood
- A sufficient number of parking spaces to be provided for the new health centre, if it is to serve Brenchley and Matfield as well as Horsmonden.

24/00164/SUB Land Adjacent To Thorn Barn Maidstone Road Matfield. Submission of Details in relation to Conditions 3 - (External Materials), 7 - (External Lighting), 8 - (Sewage Disposal), 12 - (Boundary Treatments), 13 - (Storage and Screening of Refuse), 14 - (Vehicle Parking/Turning Space), 16 - (Surfacing of Driveway and Parking Areas), 17 - (EV Charging), 18 - (Construction/Demolition Environmental Management Plan), 19 - (Tree Protection Details) and 20 - (Cycle Parking Provisions) of 23/01314/FULL

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND REFUSE

However BMPC would recommend approval if the following points are complied with.

Drawing A-SP-001 Rev P2 External Works Layout appears to show a 1.8m high fence running along the site's boundary with Maidstone Road, in the position currently occupied by the existing tall, mature hedge which was said to be going to help screen the new houses and which is an important feature of the landscape approach to the village (whereas other trees are shown in this plan, the hedge is not shown). As well as the chestnut paling on the outside of the hedge, there is an existing close boarded fence inside the hedge, and this may be what is intended, but BMPC requests that if it is to be approved this plan should be revised to show the hedge with the fence inside it and no closer to it than the existing close-boarded fence.

The condition concerning external lighting is fulfilled by a statement in a covering letter stating that no external lighting is to be erected/installed. BMPC requests that any grant of permission should refer to this letter as well as the plans.

The proposed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) requires some improvement:

- the wording on the route for construction vehicles is weak (being only a recommendation) and it does not state what measures will be taken to ensure compliance.
- BMPC requests that any security and operational lighting required during construction should be required to comply as far as possible with NDP LE8 Dark Skies.
- there is no information as to how any possible flooding onto the Brenchley or Maidstone Roads would be prevented during construction. Given the flooding that occurred over the Brenchley Road to neighbouring houses during construction of the adjacent Fernham Homes development, this is a major concern. To comply with NDP Policy D8 Surface water management and paragraph 6.74, a plan demonstrating how flooding will be prevented during construction should be included in the CEMP.

2. Public Consultation on TWBC Response to the Inspector's Initial Findings Letter on the Examination of the New Local Plan.

The Council noted the response submitted by Councillor Churchill regarding number 6 bus service PS-041. It is not clear as to whether Matfield will continue to have this bus service under the new proposals of the Local Plan and a response from KCC had advised that "there are no definitive plans by Arriva to revise commercial service 6". TWBC had also commented that their intention is "to support and improve bus services rather than leave parts of the borough less well served than currently, and this includes Brenchley and Matfield".

It was agreed that Cllr Akenhead would circulate a draft response for the Council to agree, for submission before the deadline of 26th February

Action Cllr Akenhead

10. Projects

1. Post Office - update

The Council noted the statement issued on behalf of Council and the Kings.

Cllr Buttery advised that the landlord was happy to wait until after the APA (Public Meeting) to hear the latest plan of action and a process for the public meeting will be published well in advance

It was agreed that the attention of the community should be drawn as soon as possible to the need for interested investors/managers for a shop space to step forwards. A draft of an announcement had been circulated and a final version would be agreed for publication as soon as possible.

Action Cllr Butter, Cllr Dewdney, Clerk

2. Brenchley Recreation Ground refurbishment – to consider quotes

Cllr Anderson presented proposals for the refurbishment and additional equipment at Brenchley Recreation Ground. The Council considered all the elements of the project and noted that there had been three quotes obtained for the phase 2 work installing new equipment, with two quotes for the groundwork and one company declining to quote.

Some consideration was given to positioning of certain items and it was agreed that a second bin would be needed given the increase in picnic tables being provided. It was noted that the quotations agreed were prone to small amendment in the event of delay in commencement of the project. The total cost of the project (phase 1 and 2) is £27,104.21 + £5,420.84 VAT and this would be drawn down from the Fernham s.106 funds. The Clerk would obtain assurance regarding planning permission in advance of the project commencing.

RESOLVED to appoint Capel Ground Care to complete groundwork at Brenchley Recreation Ground in the sum of £4155.61 plus VAT

RESOLVED to appoint James Playfoot Fencing to complete fencing work at Brenchley Recreation Ground in the sum of £2229.95 plus VAT

RESOLVED to appoint Playdale to provide and install new play equipment at Brenchley Recreation Ground in the sum of £20,718.65 plus VAT

Action Cllr Anderson, Clerk

3. Pond - update

The Council noted the report provided by Richard Groves and the Clerk confirmed that information is waited from JS Fisheries concerning the species, size and number of fish being introduced so that she could submit the application. The Clerk would ensure that the tap was removed without delay.

Action Clerk

11. Public Rights of Way: Funding for replacement gates - update

Cllr Reynolds provided an update on the availability of KCC funding for replacing stiles with gates, these are very limited in number but are also available at a large discount of £35 (usually £200-£300).

This is just for gates where there are livestock or another legitimate reason to have any form of barrier across the path. KCC otherwise would favour complete open access (no stile or gate). As some Landowners may be put off by installation costs - potentially £200-£300 if they get a contractor in, the Council agreed that an explanation of the funding available be publicised and for landowners to contact the PC if they are interested. The Council noted the Power to spend on provision of gates under the Highways Act 1980, SS43-50. It was agreed that Cllr Reynolds would draft and circulate a note.

Action Cllr Reynolds

12. Clerk's and RFO's Report

The Clerk provided some updates for the Council:

- Website clubs and societies being updated
- Allotments – several plots being given up, to be advertised.
- Cinderhill padlock replaced after vandalism costing £342

- Change of name for part of Brenchley Road to Blind Lane is about to be put up as a public notice by TWBC.
- New Union Flag up at Pavilion
- Cisterns for the urinals have been completed (they only flush when used so water savings should be immediate and considerable)
- The top fence at JVMG has been replaced after storm damage
- Quote is being sought for the replacement Lime by the pond

1. Election and PC meeting timetable

The Clerk outlined the schedule is as follows:

Annual Parish Assembly and public Meeting: Friday 8th March 7pm

Finance Committee meeting: **Tuesday 19th March** 10am

Election nomination period Monday **11th March to Friday 5th April**

The election is determined by 4pm **Monday 8th April**

April PC Meeting – **Tuesday 2nd April** (Bank holiday Monday), last meeting of the current Council

Polling day – **Thursday 2nd May** – the first meeting of the new PC must be within 14 days of the election

Year End Internal Audit – **Thursday 18th April**

Annual (and first) Meeting of the Parish Council – **Monday 13th May** – inc. election of the Chairman, Policies, Committee membership and signature of the AGAR

June Council Meeting – **Monday 3rd June** – note: a co-option without casual vacancy notice may be within 35 working days of the election so this would be the final date for that otherwise it would have to go to a casual vacancy.

2. Movement from Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) account – to approve

The Council briefly reviewed the cashflow forecast to the end of April provided by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) From RFO. It was agreed that unless the projects on the Pavilion and Brenchley Recreation Ground necessitated payment in advance of receipt of the s.106, there would be no requirement to transfer funds from the CCLA account to the current Unity Account. This would be kept strictly under review by the RFO.

3. Accounts payable

2963	HMRC	Tax and NI January 2024	£659.81
2964	C. Brooks	Clerk's Salary Balance January 2024	£12.60
2965	P. Horn	RFO salary Balance January 2024	£37.40
2966	Passmores	Pro-forma for planning drawings for storage shed	£96.00
2967	Twyman	7 & 21 Dec and 14 & 18 Jan Pavilion Cleaning	£60.00
2968	JP Miles	Replacement lock for Cinderhill Gate	£410.52
2969	Knockout Print	Printing of APA meeting posters	£96.00
2970	Tec Works	January phone Line Rental and BB	£172.80
2971	Castle Water	£306.05 Final Water payment for Brenchley Toilets	
		£42.18 credit for Matfield – See explanation below	£263.87
2972	Business Stream	Waste water Toilets	
		Brenchley Toilets – Final Bill £572.84	
		Comprising bills £389.84 19/12 and £183 20/1	£572.84
2973	Business Stream	Waste water Toilets	
		Matfield Toilets – Final Bill £141.05	
		Comprising bills £412.68 19/12 (less credit of £295.99) and £24.36 20/1	£141.05
2974	Capel GrndCare	Jack Verrall Fencing repair and tree removal.	

	To be paid by Credit on Account	£985.18
2986 MID Electrical	Light Sensors for both toilets	£380.00

Payments by Credit Card January expenditure

2975 Multicard Fees	Credit Card Monthly Fees	£3.00
Open Spaces	Membership fee to Open Spaces	£45.00
Flags and Flagpoles	Replacement flag for Matfield Pavilion	£126.66

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

2976 SO C. Brooks	Clerk's Salary January 2024 Mileage	£2021.15
2977 DD Smart Pension	January 2024 Pension Contribution	£791.21
2978 Panetta Horn	RFO Salary January 2024	£648.20
2979 DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity January 2024	£239.00
2980 DD Smart Pension	January 2024 Pension admin fee	£26.40
2981 SO Churchill	January Toilet Cleaning services	£744.36
2982 DD Npower	Streetlight electricity December 2023	£79.84
2983 SO Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium December 2023 Brenchley Rec and Porters Wood	£112.80
2984 SO Capel Groundcare	SIDs battery change, data download and movement between pole, Monthly January 24	£164.87
2985 Everflow	2 months Water and waste Brenchley and Matfield Toilets 21/1-22/3/24	£946.09
DD Everflow	2 months Water and waste Brenchley and Matfield Toilets	£variable
DD Tec Works	Monthly phone and Broadband	£172.80

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

13. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

None.

14. To be advised of urgent business

Cllr Buttery advised that correspondence had been received from the Scouts which suggested that there were negotiations ongoing with the proposed new nursery provision at the Scout Hut. It was noted that the lease prohibits this without the Council's permission and that therefore the Scouts have been asked to halt negotiations. Cllr Buttery and the Clerk would make further enquiries on the matter and it would be discussed by the Full Council in due course.

Action Cllr Buttery, Clerk

15. Date of next meeting: Monday 4th March 2024, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion