



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 7th OCTOBER 2024, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Tom Mobbs (TWBC) Cllr Lynne Darrah, Sarah Hamilton (KCC), 2 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 2nd September 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 Thompson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 17. Given the matter relates to her area of responsibility she contributed to the discussion to provide information but did not vote on the matter.

Cllr Reynolds declared a perception of bias interest in item 8 on the Agenda due to personal connections to the Scouts.

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 resident spoke in favour of the shed behind the Scout Hut.

A resident spoke in favour of further Christmas lights and a tree in Matfield.

5. Borough and County Councillor

Cllr Mobbs advised that a residents' survey is being planned and that a draft of the topics will be circulated to the Council for reference.

Cllr Darrah advised that the consultation on the NPPF ended on 24th September and that TWBC have responded.

6. Chairman's Announcements

- The Council expressed their sadness at the recent death of John Barsley, details of the memorial service were outlined.
- The Council agreed that a meeting with Mike Martin MP would be arranged for Thursday 7th November with those Councillors who are available attending. The purpose of the meeting being to outline the important issues in the parish to the new MP.

- The Council noted that Cllr Anderson had provided a radio interview on BBC Radio Kent regarding the Chatty Benches which had been well received.
- Cllr Buttery advised that Graham Bignell of Brenchley Choral had agreed to provide a small choir for the VE Day event in May 2025.
- The Matfield pond cleanup is Sunday 3rd November at 9.30am and the Limes are being pollarded on 1st November.
- Remembrance Sunday 10th November, Cllr Buttery will attend at Brenchley, Cllr Chown will attend at Matfield War Memorials.

7. Committees and Responsibilities

The Council agreed that Cllr Chown would join the Planning Committee, and would therefore attend the next available training session.

8. Scout Hut

1. Request for storage facility – to consider

The Council considered a request from the Scouts for permission to erect a metal shed, on a slab base, behind the Scout Hut to aid in their storage capacity. Council noted that there are permitted development rights for this as the structure does not exceed 200 cubic metres and that the shed and its contents would be covered on the Scouts' insurance policy.

RESOLVED to grant permission for the Scouts to erect a shed on a slab base behind the Scout Hut.

2. Lease – to consider revision

The Council noted that this lease expires in March 2025, having been extended by 21 years from the original lease. It was agreed that a new lease would be offered (rather than another extension to the previous one) and that a draft version would be circulated for comment prior to being discussed with the Scouts. Part of the terms would include the water fountain being provided for general use by the public.

Action Clerk, Cllr Buttery

9. Traffic - Local Transport Plan 5 – to agree consultation response

The Council approved a response drafted by Cllr Churchill and this would be submitted by the Clerk.

10. Planning

1. Planning Applications

24/01852/FULL 5 & 6 Spout Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7AP	Rear outbuildings to be replaced with new single storey extensions to both cottages number 5 & 6. New Dormer windows to be introduced to front of both cottages. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
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24/02186/FULL Bombazine Cottage, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7PE	Side and porch extension and changes to fenestration. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape outside the Limits to Built Development in a relatively dark part of the parish, adjacent to a public bridleway which is hedged and adjoins woodland including a large oak tree overhanging the bridleway. These habitats are important for biodiversity. Objective DS1 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029, which was recently adopted by TWBC, is To preserve the dark skies of the High Weald AONB by minimising light pollution, obtrusive external lighting and internal light spill from domestic, commercial and public premises in both existing and new developments within the High Weald, and from highways lighting. Objective DS2 is: To protect wildlife and habitats from light pollution across the High Weald. Action h, to achieve those objectives, states that public bodies should: Resist large areas of glazing in new building designs, especially wrap-around glazing and floor-to-ceiling windows, to minimise light spill, especially in rural areas with intrinsically dark skies. The proposed building and link include large areas of wrap-around glazing and floor to ceiling windows. This is therefore contrary to Policy LE1 of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (BMNDP), which states that developments within the High Weald AONB should make a positive contribution towards achieving the relevant objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. The proposed large windows and skylights also conflict with BMNDP Policy LE8 Dark skies which states that new development should be designed to minimise the effect of light spillage, including from skylights and large windows. However, if the plans were amended to reduce the fenestration substantially, the Parish Council would not object to the development.
24/02253/PNQCLA Top Barn Farm, Gedges Hill, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7EA	Prior notification for change of use of a building and land within curtilage from an agricultural use to Class C3 (1 dwelling-house) and associated building operations RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE As the building has not been used for agriculture but instead has been used for a vehicle repair business since before 1996 (indeed TWBC has evidence of this in the certificate of lawful development it granted on 16 May 1996) and as it has, to the parish council's knowledge, continued to be used as such, the question of whether the application requires prior approval as to its impacts is irrelevant: the building clearly does not qualify for conversion to residential use under Class Q, whether before or after the changes to the GDPO introduced on 21 May 2024. There has recently been a board outside the entrance to the site indicating that the business is looking to hire staff, and the Parish Council understands from recent conversations that the present occupant still fully intends to continue the MOT garage business.
24/02291/NMAMD 1 Burrs Hill Cottages, Horsmonden Road	Non-Material Amendment in relation to 22/01203/FULL - Amendments to fenestration on all elevations, increase to ground floor footprint

Brenchley, TN12 7AT	REFUSED BY TWBC IN ADVANCE OF MEETING
24/02408/TPO Broad Oak House, Windmill Hill, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7NP	TREES: 2 No Sycamore (T1 & T2) - 30% reduction, removing 4-5m of growth. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
24/02286/SUB Little Cowden Farm, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Kent	Submission of Details in relation to Condition 3 - (External Materials); Condition 4 - (Contamination); Condition 7 - (Construction Management Plan) of 21/03395/FULL. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council considers that the Construction Management Plan is inadequate in certain respects. Merely stating that the access will be via Fairmans Lane does not provide sufficient information about the routeing of construction vehicles. The Construction Management Plan (CEMP) should state how the vehicles will reach Fairmans Lane and in particular whether the vehicles will be approaching Fairmans Lane via the Brenchley Road and Brenchley High Street, passing Brenchley and Matfield Primary School. If this is the case, then for the safety of the children and in order to avoid worsening congestion, there should be a commitment, in addition to the other commitments in the proposed CEMP, that the vehicles will not pass the school between 8am and 9am, or between 3pm and 3.45pm. The CEMP proposes earlier starts on weekday and Saturday mornings than under the working hours required under Condition 7 of the planning permission, and moreover requires an additional period of 30 minutes either side of the proposed official working hours to start up and close down the working activities. This should be unacceptable on amenity grounds. There is no information about site lighting (including any necessary security lighting) during construction. This information is required to discharge Condition 7. It is noted that work is intended to take place during daylight hours, but if it is proposed that there will be no site lighting, the CEMP should state this clearly. The words "consideration will be given to" and "should" are insufficiently firm. No information is given as to how the proposed liaison with the community will take place during the construction period. The Parish Council requests a commitment to provide it with contact details (both email and telephone number(s)) of the construction site manager both during and outside working hours. The Parish Council would also welcome being kept informed by email to clerk@brenchleyandmatfield-pc.gov.uk.

2. TWBC draft Local Plan and related Strategic Transport Plans – consultation response

Cllr Buttery advised that he had had an initial exchange with the consultant working with Capel on their response to the traffic related matters and would seek to obtain the draft of their submission. Cllrs would draft a more comprehensive response, including matters other than traffic, and this would be circulated for agreement by email with the deadline for submission being 23rd October.

Action Cllr Buttery, Cllr Akenhead

11. Projects

1. Jack Verrall Gardens Refurbishment – update

Council noted that the application for a grant from BizGive for this project had been approved in the sum of £4600. A second quote for the tree work had been obtained and this is being progressed with the Horticultural Society.

2. Table Tennis Tables – update

Cllr Anderson advised that the tables had not yet been ordered as the company are assessing whether there is adequate access at Porters Wood, via a site visit. Considering the weather, the Clerk would assess whether it would be better to install these in the Spring.

3. Youth Project – to discuss

The Council considered information received from Cllr Birch (TWBC) regarding youth provision in the Ward. Cllr Reynolds would respond and engage with Cllr Birch on the possibilities available for a joint youth worker.

Action Cllr Reynolds

12. Draft Budget 2025-26 – to consider

The initial draft budget was briefly considered. The Finance Committee will refine this at the meeting of 23rd October and a “final” version will be made available to the Council in December – by this time the tax base should be known.

13. Insurance renewal – to consider quotes

The Council’s insurance policy, which has been on a 3-year contract with Zurich, has been reviewed and three quotes were considered. Cllr Buttery confirmed that the requirements for occupied premises were standard clauses and that Cllr Anderson would undertake a weekly visual inspection of the playgrounds to comply with this requirement. The cheapest quote was from Clear Councils, underwritten by Aviva in the sum of £2243.94 for each year of the three-year contract.

RESOLVED to appoint Clear Councils as the Council’s Insurers from 1st November 2024 to 31st October 2027

14. Cinderhill Fly-Grazing, Fly-Tipping and Vandalism – to discuss

The Council discussed repeated issues with the horse fly-grazing on the Councils land at Cinderhill and noted that TWBC had not taken this matter up, despite many requests. Cllr Buttery requested that Cllr Mobbs, and other ward Cllrs, take this matter up with officers as a matter of urgency. The Council also noted that the Traveller Reserve Fund terms did not allow for the costs of an Equine Bailiff to remove fly-grazing horses belonging to Travellers to be paid for by TWBC. Cllr Mobbs would also be asked to pursue an amendment to the terms of the Fund to allow this.

Action Clerk/Cllr Mobbs

The Council discussed the vandalism of the Noticeboard, this has been reported to the police, a list of incidents at Cinderhill is being noted as these are increasing in frequency. The Clerk would obtain a quote for the removal of the vandalised noticeboard by the barrier so that consideration could be given to an insurance claim. The Clerk would also organise the removal of fly-tipping and rubbish in the area before the barrier which is on the PC’s land.

Action Clerk

15. Christmas – to consider further decorations in Matfield

The Council discussed a request from a resident regarding a further lit Christmas tree in the area of the pond at Matfield. This was suggested to be in the silt bank in the corner of the pond with the lights trailing from the existing lights on the limes.

Concerns were raised about the location and Cllr Buttery would discuss this further with the resident, no decision was therefore made.

16. Tarpaulin for Cricket Roller – to consider request for donation

Following the Council's decision not to proceed with a storage facility behind Matfield Pavilion, the Council discussed a request for a donation towards the purchase of a heavier tarpaulin for the cricket roller. The funds available in the donations budget had been confirmed.

RESOLVED to donate £150 to Matfield Green Cricket Club towards the purchase of a tarpaulin.

17. Allotment trees – to consider work by developer

Oli Corker has approached the Clerk to discuss the trees that are on the boundary of the allotment site and Bass Orchard and the Council reviewed the planning permission diagram. The Clerk would advise Mr Corker that negotiation on the precise position of the fence would be agreed with them on production of clear proposals and that no more than 30% of the tree heights could be reduced. The Clerk was asked to secure a written proposal regarding the position of the fence, the reduction of the trees and the work offered in recompense.

Action Clerk

18. Clerk's report

The Clerk outlined some works completed in the last month:

- Roadside hedge at allotments has been cut and ditch cleared
- Extra bin has now been installed at Viewpoint
- New bench installed at the Recreation Ground
- Knotweed treatment completed at Matfield Pond
- Flail cutting of the boundary behind the parking area on the Green will be done in October (within available budget and under the Clerk's spending limit)
- 2 bags of bark have been added to the play area at the Recreation Ground

1. Website Accessibility – to consider statement

The Council considered a report from the Clerk on the new regulations for website accessibility.

RESOLVED to adopt the Accessibility Statement as amended

2. PHS Urinal Sensor Contract

The Clerk and Chair outlined repeated problems with obtaining service from PHS for the repair of the urinal sensor at Brenchley toilets. An alternative product was suggested with a quote provided that would be purchased and that a local plumber could fit and maintain. The Clerk had already noted to PHS that the contract (the first year of a three-year contract ends in December) was at risk due to their failures to provide a working system

RESOLVED to cancel the contract with PHS and purchase two urinal sensors.

3. Donation Request – to consider

A donation request from BEAMS was considered, with information on the donations budget having been provided. The Council considered this donation to be a one-off as it was not sufficiently clear how the service benefitted parish residents specifically.

RESOLVED to donate £100 to BEAMS charity

19. RFO's Report

1. Accounts payable

3172	HMRC	Tax and NI Sept 2024	£571.95
3173	C. Brooks	Aug mileage £ 30.60 Salary Balance £11.08	£41.68
3174	Twyman	Pavilion Cleaning 15/8 29/8 14/9 28/9	£60.00

3175	Waste Way	Oct. bin collections at Porters Wood/Brenchley Rec	153.60
3176	Grovehurst Plumbing	Checking plumbing at Brenchley toilets	£60.00
3177	James Beach	Strim and cover overgrown plots at allotments	£173.24
3178	Capel Groundcare		£1,105.75
		Install concrete pad at viewing point	£319.99
		Cut roadside hedge at allotments	£561.60
		Replace Bench at Brenchley Rec	£224.16
3180	David Izzard		£75.00
		July and August Gardening JV	£50.00
		September Gardening JV	£25.00
3181	Complete Weed Control	Treatment of Japanese Knotweed Matfield Green	£300.00
3182	Scrapco	Skip for Pond Clear up	£330.00
3183	Fence Guru	Installation 6 wooden post Matfield Green	£285.00
3184	Be Sure	Call out and replacement of Battery for Fire Alarm at Pavilion	£219.60
3185	Knockout Print	Signage for Chatty Bench	£42.00
3186	Mazars	External Auditor Fees for 23-24 accounts	£504.00
3187	Play Inspections	Annual playground inspections, Porters Wood and Brenchley Rec	£300.00
3188	Panetta Horn	September Pay increase	£11.34

Payments by Credit Card August expenditure

3190	KALC	Finance Conference – Cllr Buttery	£84.00
	KALC	Finance Conference – P. Horn	£84.00
	KALC	PROW Course – CLLR Churchill	£84.00
	Tesco	Pavilion cleaning and supplies	£23.79
	Tesco	Office Stationery	£18.26
	Corker	Play Bark at Rec	£330.00
	Post Office	Postage of Land Registry Documents	£9.75
	Lloyds Multicard	Monthly fees August 2024	£3.00

Interim Payments made

3171	Wealden Benches	Two Benches for Matfield Green and Rec	1,130.00
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3191	SO C. Brooks	Salary September 2024	£1,979.75
3192	SO Panetta Horn	Salary September 2024	£648.20
3193	DD Smart Pension	September 2024 Pension Payment	£935.71
3194	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity August 2024	£216.00
3296	SO Microshade	Software support Sept £207.82 - credit note £12	£195.82
3198	DD Smart Pension	September Pension admin fee	£26.40
3199	SO Churchill Group	September Toilet Cleaning services	£817.31
3200	SO Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspections August 2024	£112.80
3201	SO Capel Groundcare	SIDs battery change, data download and movement between pole, Monthly premium for August	£164.87
3202	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/10 -21/11 Credit £416.11	£250.38
3203	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service September	£172.80

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

20. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Akenhead had attended a meeting regarding the Bockingfold Solar Farm.
Cllr Churchill had attended the autumn KCC Highways Seminar

Cllr Buttery and the RFO had attending the KALC Finance Conference

21. To be advised of urgent business

22. Date of next meeting: Monday 4th November 2024, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion