



BRENCHELEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
Tel: 01892 723586 www.brenchleyandmatfield-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCHELEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 7th APRIL 2025, AT 7PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

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

In attendance: Cllr Tom Mobbs (TWBC), Cllr Sarah Hamilton – part (KCC), 4 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Anderson who was on holiday and Cllr Dafter due to a personal matter.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 3rd March 2025 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

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

None.

4. To adjourn to allow public participation.

None.

5. Borough and County Councillor

Cllr Mobbs outlined the approval of the Bassets Farm application for 120 dwellings in Horsmonden and that the addition of Brenchley and Matfield Primary School in the School Road Safety Club is in progress with KCC.

He also advised that the view is that West Kent councils are seeking, as part of the devolution plans, for there to be three rather than four Unitary Authorities.

6. Chairman's Announcements

- APA – programme in place 30th May, posters will be put up at the beginning of May
- The Policy and Management Committee meeting will be on Monday 14th April
- Next meeting (annual Meeting of the PC) is the Tuesday 6th May as Monday is Bank Holiday
- Cllr Akenhead spoke on behalf of TWBC at the TWBC Committee meeting with regard to Bassetts Farm
- Cllr Akenhead is progressing notification to TWBC and KCC regarding planning enforcement at the Fernham Site related to the planting by the pavement.
- The 20mph advisory signs for the school wig wags have now been ordered. Once ordered the contractors have 90 days to deliver the work

7. Youth Provision – Cllr Astra Birch

Cllr Birch had been unable to attend the meeting and a revised date would be sought by Cllr Reynolds.

8. Planning

1. Planning Applications

25/00303/FULL 1 Burrs Hill Oast, Horsmonden Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AT

Erection of a front porch & boot room

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

25/00390/FULL 3 Chestnut Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JJ

Erection of a garden studio, and demolition of garage

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

25/00408/LBC Holmbush, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7PP

Listed Building Consent - Internal alterations to relocate previously approved bathroom & dressing room under 22/00949/LBC

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

subject to any comments the Conservation Officer may have on the repositioning of the bathroom

25/00463/FULL 5 Bass Orchards, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7BZ

Erection of rear outbuilding & (relocated) bin & cycle structure.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

25/00593/FULL 1 Church Close, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AA

Two-storey side extension & addition / alteration of windows.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

with an informational that automatic blinds be fitted to the 5 proposed roof-lights, given the proximity to the Grade I listed Church and the fact that the house is situated in Brenchley Conservation Area and the High Weald National Landscape, to comply with Policy LE8 of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan, Objective DS1 of the High Weald Management Plan and the High Weald National Landscape Dark Skies Planning Technical Advice Note.

25/00616/FULL 4 Bramble Reed, Bramble Reed Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7EX

Demolition of existing garage & outbuildings, Construction of new porch, two storey side extension & single storey rear extension

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL

The Parish Council is concerned about the size of the proposed volume increase of this cottage in the High Weald National Landscape. It is also concerned about the amount of fenestration/roof-lights to the rear elevation, which conflicts with Policy LE8 of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan, Objective DS1 of the High Weald Management Plan and the High Weald National Landscape Dark Skies Planning Technical Advice Note.

If the plans were modified to address these aspects the Parish Council would recommend approval.

25/00702/FULL The Spinney, Hatmill Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AE

Proposed replacement dwelling

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL

the Parish Council is concerned about the amount of glazing backing on to Ancient Woodland and the impact this would have on wildlife and the dark skies of the High Weald National Landscape. This would conflict with Policy LE8 Dark skies of the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Development Plan, Objective DS1 of the High Weald Management Plan and the High Weald National Landscape Dark Skies Planning Technical Advice Note. If the application is approved, it should be accompanied by an informative recommending blackout blinds on the fenestration facing the ancient woodland.

2. Local Plan Modification Consultation – to consider response

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council submitted its emerging Local Plan for Examination in November 2021, since when an independent Planning Inspector has been examining the Plan on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Stage 1 and 2 Hearing Sessions took place in 2022, and Stage 3 Hearing Sessions were held in June and July 2024, followed by a Public Consultation in September – October on a suite of new evidence base documents. A final Hearing Session was held in November 2024.

The Council is now consulting on proposed 'Main Modifications' to the Local Plan, these being needed to make the Plan 'Sound' and allowing the Council to proceed to adopt the new Local Plan in due course. The proposed 'Main Modifications' are accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment and other supporting consultation documents.

It was agreed that Cllr Akenhead and the Clerk would liaise to submit the Council's response by the deadline of 30th April.

9. Application for Right of Way in front of the Wheelwrights Arms – to confirm appeal submission

The appeal was submitted on 19th March, the Planning Inspectorate have acknowledged receipt and the target for an appeal decision is 30 weeks.

10. Finance Committee

1. Minutes of the meeting of 26th March 2025

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chairman of the Committee. The recommendations of the committee were considered by the Full Council:

RESOLVED to implement a deposit scheme for new Allotment tenants totalling 1 year's tenancy fee with discretion applied for individual circumstances.

RESOLVED to amend the Financial Regulations regarding 5.4, 5.7, 5.11 as per NALC guidelines.

2. Finance Committee Terms of Reference – to review

The Finance Committee had reviewed this and offer no suggested amendments.

RESOLVED to re-adopt the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee unamended.

11. Matfield Fête – to consider purchases for Parish Council Stand

Cllr Thompson had provided options for items to be given away on the Council's stand, and it was agreed that these would be aimed towards traffic and safety items such as reflective strips and lights.

The Council has some display boards and a sum of £500 for these items which would be progressed by Cllr Thompson and the Clerk.

Action Cllr Thompson

12. RFO end of probation – confirmation of permanent employment

The Finance Committee considered the end of probation objectives, as completed by the Clerk, and the Council agreed unanimously to confirm the appointment. In addition it was agreed that the salary scale would be uplifted to pt 21 with effect from 1st April 2025.

13. Scout Hut Lease - to review amendments

A response has been received from the Scouts, this has been sent to our Solicitor to advise the PC on any requested changes. The council considered the matter in detail and agreed that the requirement for the water fountain would be removed and the lease would be for seven years, following the

advice of our solicitor. It was also agreed that the permitted use text would remain as drafted and that the Clerk and Cllr Buttery would liaise with the Scouts to assure them that the new lease would remain the framework and that communications would continue to be positive.

It was noted that there would be an increase in costs for legal advice to an upper limit of £2,107.50.

Action Cllr Buttery, Clerk

14. Projects

1. Posts around Matfield Green - update

The Council considered the options for wood and recycled plastic and their approximate costs. After lengthy discussions it was agreed, by a majority vote, that only recycled plastic posts would be quoted for installation. There would be widespread publicity to ensure that residents were aware that the Council had fully considered the options and the benefits of the longer lasting plastic posts would be publicised.

The Clerk would circulate the specification to the three contractors.

2. Jack Verrall - update

Cllr Dewdney outlined that the paving and steps have been repointed and bench bases are being put in on 12th April, with two Farleigh Memorial Benches with plaques replacing the current ones, having been ordered. There was some consideration of whether a water supply should be established and the cost of this would be investigated by the RFO.

Action RFO

3. Sale of Cooksfield – update

Cllr Dewdney advised that a quote for conveyancing work had been received at £1590 plus disbursements and VAT and that the minimum anticipated fees for the Lambert and Foster fees is £2500. It was agreed that it should be marketed with an uplift element.

15. Memorial Bench on Matfield Green – to consider application

The Council considered the application and agreed to the installation of a further memorial bench with the donating family absorbing the total cost thereof.

16. Overflow drain from Matfield Pond – quote to reinstate

Mr Niblett addressed the Council and expressed that they would not be able to agree the work to be done on a replacement drain system, due to the disruption this would cause to their garden. Whilst wishing to reach a conclusion to this matter given the work that had been undertaken already, the Council accepted this for now but recognised that this work may still be needed in future if flooding continues or worsens in Mr Niblett's garden, which he accepted.

17. Clerk's report

- KFRS and SECAMB both confirmed the code for the barrier at Cinderhill has been recorded.
- Repair of Brenchley War Memorial being done now they have the stone
- Allotment Training Session (NT and Clerk) – recommendations to follow regarding an Allotment Association for tenants.
- Y/E Rialtas accounts shutdown is booked for 9th April with the internal audit on 21st May
- Tree Survey being carried out on 24th April
- Quote received for the repair of entrance to Porters Wood – further quote being sought – this will be drawn down from s.106
- Emergency drain work has been instructed at Brenchley Toilets, this will be within budget and will remedy the issues longer term, it has a 10 year guarantee.

A verbal request to install a boundary fence and gate with access to Porters Wood from number 4 was discussed. It was agreed that this would be allowed but on a permissive basis only.

18. Risk Assessment for VE Day beacon lighting – to note

The Council reviewed the risk assessment for the event on 8th May on Matfield Green.

19. RFO's Report

Cllr Dewdney reviewed and signed the Bank Reconciliations.

1. Accounts payable

3363	HMRC	Tax and NI Mar 2025	£601.15
3364	C. Brooks	Mar mileage £70.20 Salary Balance £61.24	£131.44
3365	Waste Way	February bin collections at Porters Wood and Brenchley Rec	£76.80
3366	Wasteway	Flytipping Clearance Cinderhill	£408.00
3367	Churchill	Feb Adjusted payment (530.96 -95.45balance now zero)	£435.51
3368	Matfield Vill. Hall	Booking Fee Annual Parish Assembly	£75.00
3369	James Beach	The Garden Barber - Allotment Mowing Apr 25-Nov 25	£375.00
3370	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection Monthly premium March 2025	£288.00
3371	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract March 2025	£182.22
3372	Capel Groundcare	Grounds Maintenance: Allotment Hedge (Autumn 2025)	£53.53
3373	KALC	Allotment Training Clerk, Cllr Thompson (£168 less £84 credit)	£84.00
3374	Microshade	Software support March 25	£209.29
3375	Buss Murton Law	Scout HQ Lease amendments	£1,731.00
3376	Brenchley Mem Hall	Donation for Projector	£500.00
3377	Brenchley PTFA	Donation £200: shed	£200.00
3378	N Pullen	Cleaning of Pavilion 8/3, 18/3 March	£60.00
3379	GardenProud	JVMG Concrete Slabs & Aggregates	£242.58
3380	Joe Clark	JVMG Step repairs	£638.15
3381	Rexasus Drain Dtivs	Toilets Investigation - Brenchley	£174.00
3382	S Thorpe	Litter Picking equipment	£20.19
3399	KALC	Subscription Fee 2025/26	£1,560.22
3400	Wasteway	March bin collections at Porters Wood and Brenchley Rec	£76.80
3401	Rexasus Drain Dtivs	Emergency Drain clearing, Brenchley Toilets	£1,542.00
3402	Be Sure	Pavilion Fire Risk Assessment (every 5 years)	£450.00

Payments by Credit Card February expenditure

3383	Currys	Printer Paper	£31.96
	Land Registry	Search re Matfield Pond	£7.00
	Lloyds Multicard	Monthly fees February 2025	£3.00

Interim Payments made

3384	BMH	Annual Grant 2024-25 (Car Park)	£1,500.00
3385	Wealden Benches	2 Benches for JVMG	£1,110.00

Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3386	SO C. Brooks	Salary March 2025	£1,979.75
3387	SO S Castro-Edwards	Salary March 2025	£664.72
3388	DD Smart Pension	March 2025 Pension Payment	£962.29
3389	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity February 2025	£216.00
3390	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets February 2025	£32.28
3391	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets February 2025	£35.85
3392	DD Smart Pension	February Pension admin fee	£26.40
3393	SO Churchill Group	February Toilet Cleaning services	£817.31
3394	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity February 25	£68.32
3395	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/04-21/05	£117.04
3396	DD First ComTecWks	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service February 2025	£408.36

3397	Unity Bank	Bank Fees	£0.30
3398	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge Mar 25	£11.85

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

20. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

Cllr Churchill attend the TWBC community housing and parking meeting, the PPG at Horsmonden Medical Centre and a meeting relating to Bockingfold Solar Farm
Cllr Buttery attend the TWBC and the KALC Parish Chairs meetings

21. To be advised of urgent business

22. Date of next meeting: Annual Meeting Tuesday 6th May 2025, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion