



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

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

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

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Dewdney who was on holiday.

2. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of 3rd February 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 Churchill declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 25/00151 and left the room when it was discussed

Cllr Akenhead declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 25/00078 and did not vote on the matter

Cllr Thompson declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 25/00282 and did not participate in nor vote on the matter

Cllr Reynolds declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 25/00078 and did not participate in nor vote on the matter

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 candidate in the forthcoming County Council elections spoke to introduce himself to the Council and assembled members of the public.

The applicant on planning application 25/00151 spoke in favour of the application

A resident spoke expressing a wish to install a memorial bench on Matfield Green

A member of the School community, spoke in favour of planning application 25/00078

A resident spoke regarding the pond overflow drain issues

5. Borough and County Councillor

Cllr Mobbs provided information relating to the devolution plans, unparished areas and which assets might be passed to the proposed new unitary authorities.

6. Chairman's Announcements

- APA speakers – Cllr Churchill confirmed that Brenchley Archive would be happy to provide a short talk and the Clerk will chase the Historical Society and Horticultural Society for a response so that the programme could be finalised.
- Finance Committee Meeting on 26th March
- Cllr Churchill will speak at the Communities Housing and Environment Cabinet Advisory Board on 4th March regarding the TWBC Parking strategy

7. Traffic

1. School Crossing – to note progress

Cllr Reynolds outlined latest progress and the Council discussed this at length.

Currently there is a draft design that is in place, produced by volunteers, that may meet the criteria for KCC to reconsider their decision to not allow a crossing in the desired location outside the school. Tenax have been involved and so the next step, which is imminent, is to consult the neighbouring properties and parents and if community support is ascertained a road safety audit, which will incur a cost, would be commissioned by the working party on the design.

Cllr Akenhead commented that on our HIP we have agreement that we would get the flashing lights amended to be on a digital control and the advisory 20mph while lights are flashing and the PC would probably need to contribute funds to that. Cllr Churchill reiterated that efforts for a crossing in Matfield should follow.

It was agreed that whilst the PC has no current role in this matter, the School community group, with input from some Councillors who are also connected to the School, would continue to explore the matter and report back to the Council in due course.

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

Cllr Churchill noted that the Pre-consultation engagement survey of both areas around Pixot Hill and Crook Road resulted in 94 responses being sent in which were overwhelmingly supportive. These are being sent to KCC who will progress to a consultation exercise.

8. Planning

1. Planning Applications

24/01649/FULL Windmill House, Hastings Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7HF

Change of use of land for equestrian purposes. Retention of the existing sand-school facility, two ancillary stable buildings and 3 containers for storage and maintenance equipment. Access routes and hardstanding areas, planting of trees and hedgerows (retrospective)

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

BMPC notes the new documents submitted and maintains its objection to this retrospective application. It now appears that the equestrian development on this site is not for a small private stables associated with the dwelling but is a commercial equestrian enterprise with 15 horses and a substantial amount of building and hard standing. When permission for 20/03572 was granted, the applicant advised that the larger size of the car port/storage/workshop building was to avoid the need for any further buildings on the site, yet planning permission is now sought retrospectively for a large barn next to the garage block and the positioning of 3 containers, together with the stable building near the sand school. The Supporting Statement states that the surfacing of new tracks on the site “consists of permeable materials and no hard surfacing”. Yet the landscaping plan shows many of the roads on the site to be “tarmac”. None of this enhances and conserves the High Weald National Landscape and the proposed new planting will not adequately compensate for the damage done to this important, part-medieval landscape. The proposal conflicts with policies LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB and LE3 Historic landscapes and heritage assets.

The Supporting Statement states that the surface of the sand school is permeable so that any rainwater will filter through this surface. BMPC questions whether such a system will cope with run-off from the sand school in heavy rains and considers it more likely that it will lead to flooding and poaching of the fields nearby. BMPC notes the details requested by National Highways and observes that improving the site access to the required standard is likely to cause further damage to this part of the High Weald National Landscape.

The proposal fails to meet the requirements of Neighbourhood Plan policy BE4 Agricultural diversification.

24/03038/LBC The Wheelwright Arms, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JX

Listed Building Consent - Conversion of existing public house to 3 No. self contained residential units, including studio ancillary to plot 3. Internal alterations. Addition of porch, rooflights. Amendments to external fenestration, roof tiles. Removal of chimney stack. Internal amendments. (Works partly commenced)

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

This approval is only on the basis of the parking layout shown in the amended proposed site plan 815.09 rev B. If or when any variation or amendment of this parking layout is applied for, this should be dealt with either as a new application or as if it was a new application and BMPC wishes to reserve its right to call in the application under Category X of paragraph 4.8d of the Tunbridge Wells Agreement.

24/03112/FULL The Wheelwright Arms, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JX

Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 19/02753/FULL - Addition of porch, rooflights. Amendments to external fenestration, roof tiles. Removal of chimney stack. Internal alterations.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

This approval is only on the basis of the parking layout shown in the amended proposed site plan 815.09 rev B. If or when any variation or amendment of this parking layout is applied for, this should be dealt with either as a new application or as if it was a new application and BMPC wishes to reserve its right to call in the application under Category X of paragraph 4.8d of the Tunbridge Wells Agreement.

24/03256/FULL Little Barn, Little Dunks Farm, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7HX

New detached garage & garden store.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE**25/00004/FULL Land South Of, Crittenden Road, Matfield, Kent**

Widening of existing access crossover (retrospective)

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

While deploring the retrospective nature of this application to remove part of the bank of a sunken historic routeway in the High Weald National Landscape, in conflict with the High Weald Management Plan.

25/00078/FULL Brenchley & Matfield C Of E Primary School, Brenchley Road, Brenchley, TN12 7NY

Retrospective - Demolition of swimming pool & courtyard refurbishment to provide multi-use area including erection of log cabin & raised stage

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE**25/00102/FULL The Milking Pail, Little Dunks Farm, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7HX**

(Retrospective) Hardstanding for parking space; new stove flue and satellite dish; oil storage container; paving of new patio area & addition of bin store.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

While deploring the retrospective nature of this application.

25/00151/FULL Wintercott Barn, Goshen Farm, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Kent

Variation of Condition 5 of Planning Permission 19/00866/FULL - to allow a mixed use for agricultural purposes and for storage/parking of domestic vehicles along with associated office/domestic storage

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

Noting that the justification for the construction of this barn less than 10 years ago was for an agricultural use which it appears may never have been its actual use and that enforcement action is underway.

This application appears to be to permit the non-agricultural use, enlarge the barn's footprint and volume and alter its design to a more domestic appearance with large plate glass doors and a

more complicated roof. None of these proposed design changes is mentioned in the description on the application form but they are clear from the plans submitted. The proposal will conflict with the Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies H2 Location of housing development, D3 Agricultural and rural buildings, BE1 Retention or redevelopment of agricultural and rural buildings, LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB, and LE8 Dark skies. BMPC notes that this proposed design was previously submitted under refused application 24/02967/PNQCLA to convert the barn into two dwellinghouses.

25/00197/FULL Crittenden Cottages, Crittenden Road, Matfield, Kent

Removal of Condition 1 (Agricultural Occupancy Condition) of Planning Permission SW/6/49/17.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE

The evidence does not seem to have been provided that the property was marketed for a sufficient time with a price reflecting its agricultural occupancy and poor state of insulation. The Parish Council therefore contends that Policy BE1 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not support it.

BMPC does not agree that there is no market for agricultural worker accommodation in the parish, noting that application 23/01101/FULL at Cuckoo Wood Farm, for the provision of a mobile home for the farm's co-owner, was granted because the closest affordable accommodation the applicant could find was a minimum of 30 minutes away (Battle) or 40 minutes away (Uckfield).

25/00238/FULL Walters Farmhouse, High Street, Brenchley, TN12 7NU

Two storey side extension & glazed link

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

Subject to the advice of the Conservation Officer.

The Parish Council is pleased to see the proposed renovation and modernisation of this listed building and although the extension will be large in relation to the house it is designed to appear subservient to it.

BMPC also notes that the High Weald Design Guide recommends against parking being located in front of houses. However, this appears difficult to avoid, given the constraints of the site. The road at that point is unsuitable for on-street parking, due to the bend, the number of speeding vehicles and the number of recent crashes in the vicinity. BMPC therefore accepts the proposed parking in front of the house but requests a condition requiring a landscaping scheme to include some low-level planting behind the proposed picket fence, to shield and soften the parking area without interfering with visibility for the access.

25/00239/LBC Walters Farmhouse, High Street, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7NU

Listed Building Consent - Replacement tiles & repairs to ground floor brickwork; removal of two internal walls & replacement of another; replacement of windows & doors; installation of central heating.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

Subject to the advice of the Conservation Officer.

25/00244/FULL Newfield Cottage, Crittenden Road, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7EQ

Erection of a replacement single storey detached car barn/studio.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

BMPC requests a condition requiring this new building to be used solely as ancillary to the main dwelling.

25/00282/FULL Four Wents, Brenchley Road, Matfield, TN12 7PT

Change front door, garage conversion with new roof & 2-storey side extension

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

Subject to the removal of the proposed fence between the parking areas of Four Wents and Sunnyside. The proposed fence as shown would narrow the access and manoeuvring space for the adjacent house, leading to an increased likelihood of accidents as cars try to manoeuvre in and

out.

BMPC is also concerned about whether the parking will be adequate for what will become a 6-bedroom house on this hazardous section of the Brenchley Road close to the parking stress area on Maidstone Road. Speed limits are regularly exceeded here and parked cars on the road are quite frequently hit. BMPC therefore requests a condition requiring a parking and turning plan to be provided showing that there will be adequate parking and turning space to meet the requirements of Policy AM3 Parking of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

25/00291/FULL The Cottage, Tibbs Court Lane, Matfield, TN12 7NB

Demolition of garage, construction of annexe including new paving

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

On condition that the parking arrangements to serve the proposed teaching area are clarified and will meet the requirements of Policy AM3 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

In order to conserve the High Weald National Landscape and the curtilage of the listed building, and to comply with Policies LE1, LE3, LE7 and LE8 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, conditions are also requested to ensure the annexe will remain ancillary to the main dwelling, to remove permitted development rights, to replace the trees scheduled for removal and to control exterior lighting.

25/00355/FULL Kingswood, Pearsons Green Road, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7DB

Variation of Condition 2 of 20/03263/FULL – Changes to fenestration & alterations to roof form

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE

However, BMPC notes with disapproval that there is no redline comparison of the plans with the original application 20/03263/FULL that was approved at appeal and that unhelpfully the plans are to different scales and elevations are named differently from the previously approved plans.

Moreover, although BMPC has previously written to SJM Planning following planning applications concerning other sites, drawing its attention to the Neighbourhood Development Plan, in this case SJM Planning has yet again failed to consider the NDP in its Planning Statement.

Concern was expressed at the apparently increasing number of retrospective applications in the parish

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

The Council noted the response submitted having been delegated to the Planning Committee.

3. Response to Crest Nicholson consultation on development at Paddock Wood/Capel – to note

The Council noted the response submitted by the Clerk.

4. Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation – to consider responding

The draft Strategy consultation closes on 12 March which could have quite an important influence on land use in the parish, and BMPC would need to take note of it when managing our open spaces. Cllr Buttery would review the Strategy and the Clerk would submit a suitable response if deemed necessary.

Action Cllr Buttery

9. Application for Right of Way in front of the Wheelwrights Arms – to discuss decision

The Council noted the County Council's decision not to amend the Definitive Map with the right of way applied for and considered the guidance received from the Open Spaces Society as to the merits of the arguments put forward against the application. An appeal must be lodged within 28 days of the decision letter.

RESOLVED to submit an appeal to the decision relating to the application for a Definitive Map Modification Order for the Right of Way in front of the Wheelwright Arms in Matfield.

10. Scout Hut Lease – to consider extension

The Scouts are still in the process of considering the draft new Lease as there has been a change in their Trustee Board, it is unlikely therefore to be completed when the current lease runs out on 24th March.

RESOLVED to extend the Lease on the Land at the Scout Hut for a period of 3 months, ending 24th June 2025

11. Posts around Matfield Green – to consider project to replace

The Council considered a project outlined by Cllr Stout to replace the posts around Matfield Green and surrounding verges. Various options were discussed and it was noted that this project should comply with the criteria to draw down funds from the £30k remaining in s.106 funds, the Council has also a budget allocated in 2025-26.

It was felt that boulders would not be suitable for large areas but possibly on the triangle by the Pavilion, costs to be obtained. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Stout would work to obtain sufficient comparison quotes for recycled plastic posts and also for wooden ones with metal sleeves. All posts would be installed with Postcrete. It was also suggested that the chain be coloured dark green. Prices would be divided to cover three sections totalling the whole project.

Action Cllr Stout

12. Parish Council stand at Brenchley Fete – to discuss

The Council agreed that it would consider having a stand at the Brenchley School Fete next year, or alternating with the Matfield Fete.

13. Diversion of PROW WT288 – to consider response

The Council discussed the matter and the Clerk was asked to respond briefly, noting the deviation from the historic route, the extra length and request that the new route be a minimum of 3m wide.

Action Clerk

14. Cooksfield – to note Pre-application Planning Advice

The Council noted the pre-application planning advice from TWBC, which demonstrates that it is not sustainable for siting a building. The Council having exhausted its attempts to use the land for the purpose stated in the bequest from Mr Cook, for Social Housing, it was decided that the land should be disposed of. The Council agreed that sales particulars should specifically state that an uplift/overage clause would be required to ensure that any future planning permission gained in this respect would be to the Council's benefit. Guidance on whether a covenant to prevent "built development of any sort" should be established would be sought. The Clerk/RFO would ensure the correct procedures are followed with regard to the Disposal of Land and updates would be provided to the Council during the process.

RESOLVED to instruct a Land Agent to sell the land at Cooksfield

15. Cinderhill – to discuss vandalism and fly-tipping

The Council discussed the vandalism and fly-tipping at Cinderhill and expressed frustration that efforts to enhance and protect the area were fruitless. It was agreed that the Clerk would ensure that the emergency services have the code to open the barrier but that no further signage would be erected at Cinderhill.

Action Clerk

16. Clerk's report

- Blackcurrants have been prohibited at allotments due to some infected plants being identified.
- The Spring 2025 Newsletter has been published on Facebook and the Website

- Continuing engagement with Corkers about kerb opposite Bass Orchard, will be repaired
- No Parking sign has been added to the railings by the verge at Brenchley toilets
- JVMG update- the tree work has received approval but will be completed later on in the project (due to nesting season), the grant funders are aware and have extended the deadline to October 2025, the work can still continue for a gardening blitz in the Spring
- Investigation in process for remedying the very muddy entrance to Porters Wood which is also causing issues on the footpath.
- The Sessions at Cinderhill have been a success and the Council agreed that extra sessions would be permitted on Fridays
- The quarterly pond report had been received

1. Overflow drain from Matfield Pond – quote to reinstate

The Clerk outlined the outcome of an onsite meeting with drainage specialists and their subsequent quote for works to repair/reinstate the full overflow pipe system from the pond. The resident of Masters, who contributed to the discussions, expressed the importance of this matter reaching a conclusion given the extensive damage to his garden from water flowing via a pit which is blocked.

The Council considered the three options for routing the overflow pipe, the existing one and two others, and the Clerk was asked to obtain a further quote for one of these, as a comparison. It had been ascertained that only one other quote would be sufficient to comply with the Council's Financial Regulations, given that there is a cost for CCTV inspections and these are specialist works.

It was noted that TWBC have already advised that they will not allow drawdown of the Fernham s.106 for this project and therefore the Council's budget for the Pond would be required to cover the cost of any agreed project. It was agreed that formal easements (as opposed to the legal easement acquired by prescription that currently exists) should be created for the long term protection of the pipes and for the residents affected.

Action Clerk

17. RFO's Report

1. Accounts payable

3333	HMRC	Tax and NI Feb 2025	£601.15
3334	C. Brooks	Jan mileage £59.40, Salary Balance £61.24	£120.64
3335	Waste Way	January bin collections Porters Wd & Brenchley Rec	£19.20
3336	Maisie Cramp	Refund of John Downer fee	£15.00
3337	TWBC	Election fees May 2024 - printing and postage	£499.75
3338	Silva Woodland Mngt	Matfield Green Tree Surgery and Allotment Hedges	£1,080.00
3339	Mulberry Local Authority	Audit and Agar Training - RFO	£36.00
3340	Landscape Services	October 2024 Mowing per contract	£900.37
3342	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspections Feb 2025	£112.80
3343	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract February 2025	£164.83
3344	Knock Out Printing	No Parking Sign	£84.00
3345	KALC	Allotment Training: Clerk, Cllr Thompson	£168.00
3346	Microshade	Software support February 2025	£209.29
3360	Capel Groundcare	Removal of posts at Cinderhill	£237.60

Payments by Credit Card January expenditure

3347	Newton	Flags for VE day	£56.40
	Open Spaces	Membership fee 2025	£45.00
	Lloyds Multicard	Monthly fees January 2025	£3.00

Interim Payments made

3348	Precise Drainage	Emergency drain clear at Masters (pond overflow)	£330.84
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3349	SO C. Brooks	Salary February 2025	£1,979.75
3350	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary February 2025	£664.72
3351	DD Smart Pension	February 2025 Pension Payment	£1,049.19
3352	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity January 2025	£216.00
3353	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets January 2025	£36.06
3354	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets January 2025	£35.85
3355	DD Smart Pension	January Pension admin fee	£26.40
3356	SO Churchill Group	January Toilet Cleaning services Credit bal £912.76 reduced SO to take account of credit balance	£95.45
3357	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity January 25	£75.63
3359	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service February	£197.73

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

18. Meetings attended and reports by Councillors

None.

19. To be advised of urgent business

None.

20. Date of next meeting: Monday 7 April 2025, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion**21. Co-Option of new Members of the Parish Council – to consider application**

No members of the public being present the Chair invited Ray Dafter to detail his skills, experience and interest in joining the Council. There being only one candidate for one vacancy the Council unanimously voted to appoint Ray Dafter to the Council. Cllr Dafter would sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and complete an induction at the earliest opportunity.