



3/24

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 19 March 2024 at 7.30pm at Ightham Village Hall

Present: Cllr Willingham (Chair), Cllr Holden (Vice Chair), Cllr Clark, Cllr Emmett, Cllr Fielder, Cllr Hall, Cllr Mitchem, The Parish Clerk, County Cllr Rayner, Borough Cllr Betts and 22 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr Burgham, Cllr Hogarth

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – Cllr Emmett declared an interest in planning application 24/00300/PA.

3. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR – Cllr Rayner reported that KCC are now responsible for funding children that have suffered harm, placing an additional financial burden on KCC, not previously budgeted for. KCC are pushing the Home Office to help to place asylum seeking children outside of Kent. KCC are spending millions on buying additional children’s facilities and although reimbursement has been promised by the Government, it is taking time and Council Tax will take a hit. *Community Services and Libraries* - there are no current budget impacts on libraries, however, from 2025 the situation is unclear and consideration may be given to Community Libraries to relieve KCC of the financial burden.

There will be a new entry and exit system to the EU from October 2024 after the EU brings in new arrangements for non-EU members. It is estimated that additional checks of documentation will take around 15-20 minutes per person which will impact freight and is likely to cause delays on M20. M26 has been used in the past to help with backlogs and this may be used again.

Cllr Rayner is aware of the planning application at Old Lane and can address the highways aspects. Cllr Rayner said that Cllr Betts would be limited to what he could say regarding the application as taking a view in advance of the Area 2 Planning Committee meeting would jeopardise his ability to vote as he would have to declare an interest.

4. REPORTS FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR – Cllr Betts noted that the Parish Council has strongly objected to the planning application at Old Lane and said there were 142 objections this evening. The Parish Council fought hard against the last application with a Judicial Review of TMBC’s decision. It was noted that Old Lane is not suitable for taking vehicles and the access onto A25 is poor.

5. PUBLIC - A member of public spoke on behalf of residents to outline the many reasons for objecting to the planning application for additional caravans at Old Lane:

- There are already issues with flooding and increasing the hard standing at the site will exacerbate flood risk
- The width of Old Lane is not suitable for large vehicles
- The applicant has not lived at the site for 5 years and the current conditions stipulate permission for this one named family and their dependents, therefore the site should be returned to its original state.
- Another family has been living on the site and Enforcement have failed to investigate this.
- The application is for 8 caravans which represents a 500% increase in bulk
- Every aspect of the application is outrageous from a planning perspective.

A question was raised about the process and timing:

Cllr Betts said that the application would either be refused or if the Planning Officer was minded to accept the application, then it would go forward to Area 2 Planning Committee where it would be debated in full and a decision made.

Cllr Betts couldn’t comment on the detail as he cannot fall into the trap of pre-determination. He noted that the concern is around development in metropolitan greenbelt (MGB); any development in MGB is

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deemed as inappropriate unless there are very special circumstances. The site is also within the setting of AONB/National Landscape and this is relevant. There are issues around highways that have been raised. Cllr Betts would like to represent the community at the Area 2 Planning Committee if it gets to that stage.

Residents reported that they had paid for a London Planning Consultant to lodge an objection and would continue to engage them.

Cllr Rayner said that he was former Chair of Area 2 Planning and thought it would be unlikely that the Council would grant permission as it was against policy and if they did grant consent, the Secretary of State is likely to call it in.

Cllr Willingham recommended that parishioners should send their objections to TMBC, basing them on planning considerations.

Cllr Rayner spoke about Highways matters:

KCC is a statutory consultee, it is a matter for the Officers who are open to be lobbied. Cllr Rayner recommended the Parish Council appoint a Highways Consultant to do a Highways Report focussing on the narrowness, poor surface quality, drainage and the junction with A25 for turning in and out of Old Lane. In terms of timing, Cllr Rayner said that a qualified view would be taken at anytime up to Area 2 Committee. However, if the Officer refuses the application, it is important that any highways objections are included in the Officer report because if there is an appeal you can't subsequently include matters not previously included. The Clerk asked Cllr Rayner if he had any recommendations and Cllr Rayner suggested Les Henry Associates.

Cllr Mitchem asked Cllr Betts for an update on Traveller allocation. Cllr Betts said that there were 2 pitches available in West Malling. Cllr Emmet said that 41 additional pitches are required up to 2040. Cllr Betts said that Regulation 18B of the Local Plan is due late summer and when sites are chosen for development, Traveller sites will be identified and a Consultant has been employed by TMBC to help with this. Once sites have been identified, this will afford more protection from further applications.

A member of public asked whether we should contact our MP? Cllr Betts recommended that our MP is contacted as there is currently a strong weighting towards these applications which is beyond the control of the Local Authority and this may need to be reviewed by central Government. Cllr Rayner also recommended getting in touch with the MP, given the upcoming election, and if the application goes to Appeal he may be able to write to the Planning Inspector. There are good grounds for defending the application: The site is within MGB and the setting of AONB. Recently, the Secretary of State has upped the standard required for development in these areas and this is worth drawing attention to.

It was noted that if the application is refused, it would likely be appealed.

Cllr Holden asked about timing?

Cllr Betts said there are still issues with the new Agile system. The deadline for comments is 20th March, and then the Officer will compile her report. Cllr Rayner doubted that it would come before Area 2 before September because of the delays at TMBC. This is an advantage as Reg 18B may be in place by then.

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A member of public asked why the vote at Area 2 for the last Woodford application was taken in private? Cllr Betts said that this was due to concerns about costs. If there is a risk of costs being incurred by the Council, they will risk assess and this can be done in private.

Cllr Willingham gave thanks to members of public for attending. Members of the public, bar 2 left the meeting, along with Cllr Rayner.

Cllr Betts continued with his report – The MOTO application came to Area 2 on 21st February. It is a large strategic application with significant interest. Cllr Betts couldn't vote as he had an interest but was able to speak. The issues with the development were that it is within MGB and the setting of AONB so required very special circumstances. MOTO cited a need for a lorry park. Les Henry Associates submitted a Highways Assessment and identified that the baseline traffic assessment was carried out during Covid. MOTO also failed to monitor the roundabouts on A20. The application was refused but it is expected that MOTO will lodge an appeal. TMBC had consulted with Highways England who raised no objections. Wrotham Parish Council and neighbouring Parishes submitted a Highways Report which can go to the Inspector if there is an appeal.

There are plans to regenerate Tonbridge Town Centre near to Sainsburys and the Angel Centre. It will be a large-scale redevelopment with 350-450 affordable and carbon neutral housing plus leisure facilities. It has already been debated at Finance Committee and will come to Cabinet on 2nd April. At the next stage, views of residents will be taken. Cllr Emmett asked how it would be funded and Cllr Betts said that it would be self-funding. The Leisure Centre will be relocated.

An application for a grant from Sports England for £400k has been submitted and if successful will help to decarbonise Larkfield Leisure Centre and Tonbridge swimming pool. The move towards renewable energy will help to reduce carbon and will protect the Council from market volatilities in energy costs.

Council Tax has been put up by 3%, there is a funding gap of £1.72million. Many Councils have been served with s114 notices and TMBC is one of the only Councils in Kent that is debt free.

TMBC is at Phase 2 of installing electric charging points; there will be an additional 60 charging points in the Borough and the first of the rapid chargers, of which there will be 4-5, will be installed in Kings Hill on 25th March.

There are grants available for solar panels and electric chargers. Cllr Betts aid that he would pass on details of the company that quoted for EV and solar panels.

Cllr Willingham said that someone had been to the village hall to look at installing EV chargers from KCC, Cllr Betts said that he would chase this up with Cllr Rayner

The Clerk asked whether Cllr Betts could chase up the Estates Surveyor at TMBC as we are waiting to let UKPN whether they have permission to install a new substation; TMBC currently lease the land from us although this is due to expire in June 2025. Cllr Betts asked whether there would be a wayleave recommended looking at the market rate and recommended consultants that specialise in this area.

Cllr Betts left the meeting.

6. MINUTES - The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 February 2024 were approved with 3 changes, clarification of points. The Clerk will amend and pass to Cllr Willingham to sign.

7. MATTERS ARISING

Highways & PROW Matters – A227 will be closed between Ismays and Highcross Road for resurfacing - no date has been given. Potholes at the top of Mote Road and Styants Bottom. Cllr Mitchem asked whether the drainage issue could be looked at outside Gibbons Place whilst the road was closed to resurface A227. Update HIP – The Clerk has reported 2 recent accidents on A25 and to reconsider replacement of the VAR; the Clerk was informed that it can take 6 months from reporting an accident to form crash data. The PSA requested school/slow signage in the vicinity of the

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recreation ground following an accident however, KCC informed us that there is already school signage. KCC have said that we cannot fund a thermoplastic sign on Oldbury Lane as it would be a KCC Asset and they have no facility to accept payments from a third party. As there is no engineering solution to slowing traffic on Oldbury Lane, the only option left is for the school to adopt the Active Travel Scheme. KCC are looking into improved signage and markings on The Street and Fen Pond Road with their Design and Planning Team. Cllr Mitchem reported that she had written to Cllr Rayner about pursuing the 20mph speed limit on The Street and is awaiting a response.

It was suggested that we also write to Cllr Rayner about funding a thermoplastic sign at Oldbury - agreed.

The Clerk will chase up the ATC's on The Street.

Community Speedwatch – Feedback from sessions - The Ightham Speedwatch Group has done several sessions at the various locations in the village. Speeds of 10% plus 2, ie 35mph have been recorded at all locations and varied between 3% and 14.8% of passing traffic. We now have 10 volunteers and Cllr Clark passed details another volunteer this evening.

Declassification of Old Lane – Cllr Emmett reported that he had spoken to someone at KCC regarding declassification and they had indicated that it was a possibility and that we should add it to our Highways Improvement Plan – this was agreed and the request should be for the whole length of the Lane. Declassification wouldn't affect access.

Flooding Oldbury – Cllr Fielder reported that Kent Highways are going to test drainage in his field next week by digging a trench and measuring how long it took for water to flow down to the road.

Allotments – Land to Rear Common Road - The Clerk asked for suggestions for a contractor to clear the waste. Cllr Fielder recommended RWE and passed on details. The Clerk reported that a request had come from a resident on Common Road to repair a broken fence on the boundary with the allotment. Cllr Emmett said he had the material to fix it.

Recreation Ground – Wicksteed - we have had a quote to repair the equipment and remove the graffiti for £1,078.63, this was agreed. The fence repairs are due in April. Removal of covid notices x 2 – Cllr Fielder has done this. We have received a quote for a tree inspection and the Clerk was asked to get another quote.

Tennis Club – ITC reported that someone had nailed taxi notices to the trees in the recreation ground, Cllr Mitchem agreed to call them to remove them. We have had a request to put a soakaway into the ground between the Tennis Club and Scout Pavilion, this was agreed if they liaise with the Scouts about the location. They have also requested plant to access the club to replace the patio and put some sleepers onto the bank to stop soil going onto the court - Agreed.

Village Hall - Update - **Solar Panels** – Nothing to report. Damage to railings – Cllr Willingham is liaising with Laddingfords. **EV charging points** – Nothing to report.

Meeting with Platt Memorial Hall Chair – Cllrs Holden, Mitchem and Hogarth went to meet with the Chair on Saturday to look at the hall. The hall cost was part funded from the sale of the old site. They got grants from KCC, a loan from TMBC over 10 years via the precept and loans from residents. They also had a Lottery Heritage Grant to remove the Memorial and held various fund raising events. Turnover has increased to £40k since the hall was finished and there is an electronic booking system. They recommended their architect and project consultant. The total cost was over £1million. They had to go through a process to establish ownership of the land for the road and carpark which has now been adopted by KCC. The next stage for us is to do a feasibility study, to be discussed at the next meeting.

Substation lease & renewal car park lease to TMBC – UKPN have asked for legal fees to be capped at £1,000, The Clerk will take this up with Warners. Renewal of the Car park lease to be discussed next month.

Flooding – Busty & drainage mapping – Cllr Holden reported that software has been upgraded and someone is coming next week to install it so that he can input the data. We have 237 surface water drains in the Parish.

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Noticeboards – Delivery and installation – the Clerk reported that the noticeboard are being delivered on Thursday. Cllr Willingham will ask James Hayward to install them at the same locations as the old ones.

8. FINANCE & POLICY

8.1 The following accounts were submitted for payment: Proposed by Cllr Emmett and seconded by Cllr Hall. Cllr Hogarth to authorise payments on Unity:

Clerks Salary & Expenses	£891.55
HMRC – Clerks Tax	£30.00
Gel Creative - (Standing Order)	£50.00
EDF – Electricity Pavilion (Direct Debit)	£215.15
Zen Internet - Business Full Fibre 2 Price rise*(Direct Debit)	£54.61
Anthony Edwards – Work at Parish and Churchyard	£1,016.99
JH Estate & Garden December & January	£180.00
Ightham Open Gardens – Dandelion Time Donation	£600.00
Wicksteed Leisure	£1,078.63

8.2 Income

Interest Nat West	£235.41
Allotment Rent	£400.00
Allotment Rent	£50.00
Ightham Annexe Rent	£2,580.00
Ightham Football Club Rent	£100.00
Ightham Tennis Club Rent	£150.00
Ightham Scouts Rent	£340.00
Skips Rent	£605.00

8.3 Alternative bank - the Clerk reported that she had contacted unbiased.co.uk for a recommendation as a lot of high street banks including Nationwide won't take on Parishes.

8.4 Review of Policy Documents – Policy documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. No comments. The Asset Register was updated and this was approved.

9 PLANNING

9.1 LOCAL PLAN – Reg 18 Call for Sites – See above

9.2 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

24/00204/PA - Woodford, Old Lane, Ightham, Sevenoaks, Tn15 9ah. Change of Use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 5 gypsy/traveller households, including the stationing of 8 caravans for residential purposes of which no more than 5 shall be static caravans/mobile homes, together with extension of existing hardstanding."Objection" (*Please see full submission on TMBC website*). It was agreed that we would instruct a Highways Consultant to do a Highways Assessment as this seems essential. It was proposed that we should pay 50% towards the lawyers fees for drafting the legal objection. Total Fees are £1,750 plus VAT. Proposer Cllr Fielder, seconded by Cllr Hall)

24/00176/PA - 3, Nutfields, Ightham, Sevenoaks, TN15 9EA. 1 x Oak - agent's ref: T1 - Crown reduce from 14m high to approx. 12m -Crown reduction of approx. 2m to previous prune points, remove suckers and sever Ivy. 1 x Oak ref: T2 (standing in communal land to rear) Reduce whole crown by approximately 2-3m (tree currently approx. 15m, new height 12-13m) 1 x Pine ref: T3 (standing in communal land to rear) Reduce long extended low branch on south side by approximately 2m and remove the low limb on Westside. 1 x Pine ref: T4 in (standing in communal land to rear) Remove the first two lowest limbs from the ground up. All standing in Woodland W1 of Tree Preservation Order. "Objection as the work doesn't seem necessary".

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24/00300/PA - 9, Common Road, Ightham, Sevenoaks, TN15 9DY. Single storey front and rear extensions. "No objection"

24/00264/PA Land East of Heronshaw, Oldbury Lane, Ightham, Sevenoaks. Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for demolition of existing structure and erection of a single dwelling with associated hardstanding, parking and landscaping via existing access from Oldbury Lane. "No objection"

24/00351/PA - Leathercote House, Fen Pond Road, Ightham, Sevenoaks, TN15 9JD. Conversion and extension of garage to form a detached granny annexe for ancillary use to the main dwelling. "Objection on grounds of overdevelopment"

24/00316/PA - Redwell Croft, Redwell Lane, Ightham, Sevenoaks, TN15 9EE. Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension."No objection"

24/00309/PA - West House, Stone Street Road, Ivy Hatch, Sevenoaks, TN15 0PQ. Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension. A member of public raised objections to this. Cllr Holden said that we can't object to a lawful development certificate unless we cite a reason that it unlawful. It was recommended that the resident contacted the Planning Officer.

9.3 PLANNING APPLICATIONS APPROVED

24/00318/AGRN - Agricultural barn. Farmland South and West of Stone Street, Bitchet Green Road, Stone Street, Kent. Prior approval not required. *(Noted as resident brought this to our attention due to adverse impact on enjoyment of footpaths. The resident asked whether anything can be done to stop the conversion of barns? This application has already been passed and is closed for comments and is in Sevenoaks so there is nothing that we can do as a Parish Council).*

9.4 PLANNING APPLICATIONS REFUSED

23/02084/TPOC - Sycamores, Bates Hill, Ightham, Sevenoaks, Sevenoaks, TN15 9BG. 7 x Lime (applicants ref. G8) - Reduce height by 40%. Standing in Group G5 of Tree Preservation Order.

23/02043/FL - Farley Cottage, Copt Hall Road, Ightham, Sevenoaks, TN15 9DT. New dormer extension to front and new entrance canopy, including relocation of main entrance, change of pitched roof to flat roof at front of house, alterations to the external appearance including photovoltaic panels, new timber cladding and alterations to fenestration.

9.5 PLANNING APPEALS

23/00176/PA – Glenwood, Spring Lane, Ightham, TN15 9DR

10. CORRESPONDENCE – (* circulated in advance)

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership - Potential restoration of Pond in Ruffits Wood*

KALC Training Bulletin – 8th March

TMBC - News highlights for Tonbridge and Malling*

My Community Voice - Tackling Violence Against Woman and Girls

News from TMBC: Funding for community groups

TMBC - Local Green Space – Information*

AOB – Cllr Emmett reported that the someone had been digging under the tree roots at woodland in Nutfields, we will report this to the Residents Association.

The meeting closed at 22.26

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