

**MINUTES OF A PLANNING MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30PM AT MATFIELD PAVILION**

Present: Councillors L. Butler (Chair) presided, J. Buttery, E. Akenhead, C. Churchill, A. Stout, G. Warner, J. Spencer, A. Wells, C. Brooks (Clerk)

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Miconnet who had work commitments.

2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 1st November were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

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

Cllr Stout declared a potential perception of bias interest on the Planning Application at Little Cowden Farm, and did not participate or vote on this application.

4. To adjourn to allow public participation

None.

5. Planning Applications

<p>21/03395 Little Cowden Farm, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AD</p>	<p>Demolition of concrete barn, alterations and change of use of 5 disused agricultural buildings to 5 no. 4-bed dwellings and new vehicular access</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE</p> <p>The PC would like to class this application as “Y” under the TW Agreement December 2020</p> <p>(i) Unlike Fairman’s Lane in Brenchley, Chantlers Hill is not located in any landscape designation and not within High Weald AONB. It is now just outside LBD but it is within the vicinity of the secondary school (400m by foot) and opposite the new development at Mascalls Court Farm and the new primary school. It will now become on the edge of the redefined LBD boundary of Paddock Wood town.</p> <p>(ii) The 2019 application for Brick Kiln Piggeries highlighted the lack of 5 year housing supply for TWBC. Since this time the figure has risen from 4.69 years to 4.83 with many windfall sites being built in the parish since 2019.</p> <p>1. This site lies outside of Limits to Built Development. Core Strategy 2010 states that building outside the LBD should not generally be allowed.</p> <p>2. This site lies within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Beauty. NPPF (paragraph 172) states “Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which should have the highest status of protection”.</p> <p>3. This site is not in a sustainable location. There are no pavements for safe walking or cycling to the village centre. Fairman’s Lane is narrow and rural with a dangerous double bend at Little Echoes. In the Transport Statement the footpath statement is misleading and the bus schedule on page 8 is inaccurate. Route 296 only operates on Mondays and Thursdays; Route 297 does not provide buses every 15 minutes during weekday peak</p>
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times. The site is poorly related to basic services and public transport so residents would be totally reliant on cars as the mode of transport. The number of traffic movements for the proposed 5 houses cannot be compared with the current agricultural site.

4. Little Cowden Farm is a complex site which has recently been sold in October 2019 – the site was advertised as “A range of Agricultural buildings and yard in land extending to 6.56 acres”. It is noted that land with sheds to the North of the site is being retained by the applicant. It is noted that the land was rejected as unsustainable in TWBC’s Call for Sites 2016 and was refused B1 use at appeal in 1997.
5. The site is situated on the edge of a Flood Zone 2, together with Zone 3A and 3B in “Constraints”. It is noted that pig shed nos 1,2 and 3 have a drainage pond on the S elevation. The PC is concerned curtilage fencing appears to run through the centre of the site is the only house pond and no 2 in the middle with a bridge /ramp across the pond to the garden.
6. The PC is concerned about the 4.8m wide driveway with wider bell mouth opening onto this rural lane. The land stands much higher than the road and this new entrance cannot be compared to the Plum Orchard’s farm entrance staggered opposite. There be severe cutting through the bank, a steep gradient onto the road, and the driveway surface if loose would wash into Fairman’s Lane. Fairman’s Lane is a sunken Wealden road defined by mature trees with banks either side and this proposed access would be significantly harmful to the character of this rural AONB lane.
7. The planning statement quotes TWBC’s 5 Year Housing Supply as being 4.83 years in April 2020. On page 16 the document states that this figure is a “snapshot in time”. There have been several applications in the pipeline and granted in Brenchley and Matfield since April ‘20, both on designated and windfall sites.
8. In the Brenchley & Matfield Housing Needs Survey carried out in October 2020, 11% of respondents needed a 1 bedroomed home, 53% needed 2 bedroomed homes, 25% needed three bedroomed homes and 11% needed a 4 bedroomed home. The recent survey echoes the results of the Parish Plan Survey in 2017, where 69% of respondents preferred 1-3 bedroomed homes.
9. The pre-app comments together with the comments in this application are noted from KCC Highways Planning Officer Margaret Parker. It is noted the traffic survey by Streetwise Services Ltd was taken from 14th -20th February 2020 - this was Brenchley and Matfield School’s Half-Term holiday and the night-time temperature for 17th-20th February was below freezing. Fairman’s Lane is not always gritted in minus temperatures.
10. The preliminary ecology report highlights a number of wildlife and habitat issues that require closer study and testing which has been difficult during Covid 19. Mitigation measures will be required to protect all mature

	<p>native hedgerows and trees on the site.</p> <p>11. There is no mention of light spillage and pollution from this new development. This site and area of AONB currently enjoys dark skies. The PC would like to preserve intrinsically dark skies as per Policy H10 TWBC Local Plan 2006.</p>
21/03468/LBC Crittenden House, Crittenden Road, Matfield TN12 7EN	<p>Listed Building Consent: Removal of Condition 2 of 06/02846/LBC – installation of mezzanine (works already carried out)</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE</p>
21/03187 Bassetts Farm, Hastings Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HE	<p>Application to regularise the use of Bassetts Farm Yard as the base for a contracting business, storage and processing of timber via a biomass boiler; Erection of buildings and enclosures.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE</p> <p>The PC is concerned with the growth and scale of this refused biomass business and notes the 6 current enforcements on this AONB land. The PC requests that TWBC acts robustly with this application.</p> <p>Due to history the PC feels possible imposed planning conditions by TWBC will be insufficient and ineffective. The PC does not feel qualified to assess air quality but the concerns of TWBC Environmental Health Protection are noted.</p> <p>If TWBC is minded to approve this application, the PC feels there should be strict limitations imposed on this site with no further expansion permitted.</p>
21/03610 Hatherleigh, The Green, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JU	<p>Proposed single storey rear extensions to house and single storey side extension to cottage. External and internal alterations to house and cottage. Associated hard and soft landscaping.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL</p> <p>The PC notes and appreciates the comments made by the Conservation Officer. The PC would like to see a condition on light spillage from the skylights being added to this Listed building within Matfield's Conservation Area.</p>
21/03623/LBC Forge Cottage, The Green, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JX	<p>Listed Building Consent: Facilitate kitchen and day room to become kitchen/dining area, by removing wall and reducing stud wall. Removal of kitchen door and replace with extended kitchen window and brick infill below.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE</p> <p>the PC notes the Design, Access and Heritage Statement provided by the Applicant but notes there are no comments from the Conservation Officer. The PC notes by the provided photographs that the internal brick wall appears to support a major beam which the Conservation Officer will comment on.</p>

6. Cinderhill – to consider request for foraging

The Council discussed a request for commercial foraging on the land it leases at Cinderhill.

It was agreed that, due to constraints on the terms of the lease, which is for recreational use only, the Parish Council cannot grant this request. Moreover, the site has been designated by TWBC as a Candidate Local Nature Reserve and considerations about preserving biodiversity and protecting habitats must take priority. The Clerk was asked to respond to the applicant.

7. Matfield Pond

Cllr Stout outlined a meeting with Andrew Chadwick of the Angling Trust at which the possible ways to remedy concerns about the pond were discussed:

- No Floating Pennywort was identified
- There are weeds present (mainly bogbean) that are invasive which need removing.
- The Council had already investigated silt removal from the pond using machinery which was expensive and instead Andrew Chadwick suggested two applications of Siltex. One soon and another in the spring. This is basically chalk and will help to break down the silt and improve water quality meaning mechanical work should not be necessary.
- It was confirmed that a licence would not be required for this part of the project.
- Removal of the larger fish would achieve a balance of smaller fish that would be unlikely to suffer in times of drought. A quote for this would be sought separately including the necessary licence required.

The Council discussed the cost of the quote received of £630 for an application of Siltex and one day of bogbean removal at £500 and noted that the amount previously precepted and earmarked for this project was £10,000. A further application of Siltex, at the same cost, would be considered in the early Spring.

RESOLVED to undertake work to remove weeds and de-silt Matfield Pond

8. EV charging points

The Council discussed the terms of the Licence agreement drafted by Kent County Council for the installation of EV charging points at Matfield Green for five years. Cllr Wells advised that following meetings on site the contractors, Connected Kerb, advised that the position of the points would be preferable on the last two parking spaces of the parking area at the back of the Green, rather than adjacent to Matfield Pavilion. This would allow for two 11kw chargers, the necessary box at the rear of the spaces would be painted dark green. It was noted that the common land requirement for access at all times was not affected by this as the spaces are already parking spaces open for the general public.

The Council agreed to this change of position. The Council required that there be no branding or logos on the equipment and this would be advised to KCC prior to signing.

RESOLVED that the Clerk may sign the licence agreement for the installation of EV Charging points on Matfield Green

Although the parking bays at the Market Heath car park are the property of KCC, it would be necessary to move a 50cm section of fencing to house the connectors on Parish Council land. It was agreed that Cllr Wells would advise Connected Kerb that any movement of the Parish Council fencing to allow space for parking bays would be stated as temporary on a Memorandum of Understanding and it would not constitute any transfer of land belonging to the Parish Council. Cllr Wells would also relay the queries of the Scout Association regarding the electricity supply.

9. Standings Cross Junction – to consider safety concerns

The Council discussed correspondence from David Goodridge raising concerns about safety around the Standings Cross junction so as to ensure pedestrians could access Brenchley Road via Maidstone Road on the Thorn Barn side by the extension of the footway and addition of a culvert across the ditch.

Correspondence from David Goodridge attached. PC to consider writing to KCC, TWBC and Fernham with a suggested plan for the junction.

It was agreed that the Chair would write to KCC and TWBC to raise this issue and that this would be advised to Fernham Homes.

10. To be advised of urgent Business as may be previously notified

Cllr Buttery advised that a residents' group had requested that the Council take over the organisation, and insurance, for the carols event.

The Council discussed this and felt that this would not be possible given the short amount of time, this event never before having been under the Parish Council's remit. The Council would consider if it could provide a donation to cover the insurance costs.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would erect a 10ft Christmas Tree in the Jack Verrall Gardens however and that the group could put lights in this tree.

11. Date of next meeting

Full Council Meeting 7.30pm, Monday 6th December 2021

12. Closed Session - to approve a motion to exclude the public from this agenda item as containing information of commercial sensitivity regarding unregistered land in the Parish

No members of the public were present, the Council moved to Closed Session for the purposes of discussion.