

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30PM
ON MONDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2021, VIA ZOOM**

Present: Councillors G. Stevenson (Chair) presided, L. Butler (Vice Chair), A. de Guingand, K. Sparkhall, G. Warner, C. Brooks (Clerk), P. Horn (RFO)

In attendance: Cllr S. Hamilton (KCC), Cllr A. McDermott (TWBC), A. Wells (Non-Voting Member), E. Izzard (Non-Voting Member), J. Buttery (Non-Voting Member), 8 members of the public

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 4th January 2021 were approved as an accurate record and would be duly signed by the Chair at the next opportunity.

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

None.

4. To adjourn to allow public participation

Residents raised the following issues:

- A request that the Council ensures that concerns about the amount of traffic generated by housing developments in Paddock Wood and Horsmonden are addressed with TWBC.
- Concerns over speeding in the Burrs Hill area with a request that this is considered as part of the Parish Highways Improvement Plan
- A request that the 60mph limit through Mile Oak is reduced, via inclusion in the HIP, as a bridleway crosses this area and there are also many walkers
- A representative of the Parochial Church Council spoke to commend the application for a donation towards the repair of All Saints Church Clock
- The results of the Traffic Surveys in the Blind Lane area and some of the assumptions made by KCC were commented on at length

5. Borough and County Councillors – to receive information

KCC – Cllr Sarah Hamilton

Cllr Hamilton agreed once again to obtain clarity on the precise chain of events that resulted in the approval of “Unsuitable for HGVs” signs at Chantlers Hill, and in particular why the Parish Council was not consulted.

Cllr Hamilton advised that she would attend any meeting of the Road Safety Initiative in order to discuss additions to the Parish HIP.

TWBC – Cllr Alan McDermott

Cllr McDermott outlined that a new vaccine centre is opening by the Angel Centre in Tonbridge next week.

The Draft Local Plan is to be discussed by the Full Council on Wednesday 3rd February and it is anticipated that it will then progress to the next stage. He advised that the major developments at Paddock Wood and Capel would be served by major road infrastructure improvements, in particular a spur road on the A228 so that traffic is directed towards the A21 further north. These highways improvements would be put in place before the development is commenced.

6. Traffic – update on Traffic Count data received

Cllr Stevenson outlined some of the data that had been received from the Automated Traffic Count surveys that the PC had commissioned at Blind Lane and in Petteridge.

RESOLVED to request that Kent County Council instigate a 30mph limit in Petteridge Village.

RESOLVED to request that Kent County Council erect “Unsuitable for HGV signs” at both ends of Blind Lane and Windmill Hill.

The Council discussed the proposed extension to the speed limit on Maidstone Road, as a result of the Fernham Homes Development

RESOLVED to respond to the Traffic Regulation Order notification requesting that the 30mph limit on Maidstone Road begins northwards beyond Coppers Lane approximately between Invictas and Nursery View properties.

7. Covid Vaccination Centres - update

The Clerk outlined that information from Greg Clark MP had been publicised and would be updated regularly

Cllr Stevenson had been informed by William Benson at TWBC that neither Brenchley Memorial Hall nor Matfield Village Hall were currently being considered as vaccination centres.

8. Allotments – update on project outcomes

The RFO outlined that the water supplier, Castle Water, had still not provided a bill with confirmed meter reading information and only a statement without a breakdown had been provided, this was preventing the water charges being invoiced to tenants.

The Clerk further outlined that the Allotment rules do state that the Council would levy water charges and Cllr Sparkhall confirmed that this would continue to be the case where the allotment income was significantly less than the costs.

RESOLVED that no payment would be made to Castle Water until a bill including a confirmed reading had been provided.

RESOLVED that fees invoices and Allotment Rules for 2021/22 would be circulated to tenants with an additional invoice, based on the size of plots, issued on receipt of a confirmed water bill.

9. Parish Council Election Promotion

The Council discussed the content of the election promotion leaflet on the assumption that the elections will take place in May.

The matter would be discussed at the following meeting by which time it was hoped that confirmation of the elections would have been received so that the dates of various events listed on the leaflet could be confirmed.

The Clerk had obtained a price for printing 1200 copies of the leaflets and it would be decided whether these were hand delivered or posted nearer the time.

It was agreed that the design and the content (apart from dates) of the proposed publicity leaflet was approved for use, as soon as certainty of the election is confirmed.

10. Council Business, Activity and Financial Protection

The Clerk outlined at length some concerns as to the ability of the Council to perform its duties as related to financial obligations both in the event an election proceeds on 6th May, and if it is delayed again. The Clerk having obtained the approval of the Council's Internal Auditor and Insurers, recommendations were made to the Council to ensure that steps were taken to address these risks.

10.1 Financial Protection

The current process for authorising our bank payments requires the Clerk or RFO to input payments and two Councillors to authorise them. The current permission levels on the bank mandate mean that the RFO and Clerk may only input payments but not authorise them. With a number of various scenarios possible at the time of an election, including that less than two Councillors currently on the mandate are in place, the RFO confirmed that the process of adding new Councillors to the Bank Mandate would take a minimum of 30 days.

The Clerk outlined the following safeguards that would be in place:

- RFO will input all payments to Unity, providing invoices for scrutiny as currently

- Two Cllrs will authorise all payments as currently, the Clerk will authorise payments only if there is no alternative
- There will therefore still be 3 unique people in the process

RESOLVED that Proper Officers (the Clerk and the RFO) to be added as signatories to the bank account, in addition to administrator status (to input payments only)

RESOLVED to delegation authority for Proper Officers to authorise payments from the bank account in exceptional circumstances

RESOLVED that payment of staff salaries (basic salary not including expenses or mileage which are not prone to tax/NI) to be made by Standing Order

RESOLVED that the Clerk and RFO be authorised to countersign the addition of new signatories to the bank account after 6th May 2021 until sufficient elected Councillors are in place

11. Policy and Management Committee

11.1 Approval of the Draft Minutes of the meeting of 20th January 2021

The minutes, with one amendment, were approved as an accurate record and would be signed by Cllr De Guingand at the next opportunity.

11.2 Recommendations:

RESOLVED that the Full Council adopts the Social Media Policy

RESOLVED that the Full Council re-adopts the Health and Safety Policy to include Covid-related Appendices.

12. Matfield Pond – to review considerations for the future

The Council briefly discussed the outcomes of discussions on the pond, as listed in the minutes of the Policy and Management Committee.

RESOLVED to earmark the £10k budget amount for 2021-22 towards a long term project on the pond.

13. Planning and Development

13.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr Butler advised that the revised draft of NDP went to the external health review consultant this week and this will serve to provide independent advice on whether the draft conforms to national planning policies. Cllr Sparkhall advised that further revisions will be made on receipt of the consultant's report at which point, possibly in April, the draft will be presented to the Parish Council.

Cllr Stevenson confirmed that a letter concerning the designated Open Green Spaces in the Draft Local Plan had been submitted to the Borough Council, as the listing for the parish was incorrect in several respects.

13.2 Reply from TWBC Re Rydon railings

It was agreed that no further action would be taken regarding the railings at the Rydon development.

13.3 Planning Applications

20/03572 Windmill House, Hastings Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HF	Demolition of existing detached family dwelling and greenhouse; construction of new single family dwelling and separate garage; external landscaping and changes to fencing.
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	RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
20/03786 Cork Wood Cottage , Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, TN12 7AL	Single-storey extensions, partial removal of the existing roof and forming new roof with rooms RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
20/03887 Longbrooks Oast, Knowle Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7DJ	Single storey side extension RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
20/03830 Thorn House , Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, TN12 7JH	The erection of a 2 metre high fence within the curtilage of a listed building RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE This fence has changed from 1.6m to 2m. If this application is approved, the PC would like the Conservation Officer's recommendations as conditions.
20/03342 Herrings Mill House , Bramble Reed Lane, Matfield, Tonbridge, TN12 7ET	Outdoor inground swimming pool RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE but the PC would like to see a planting programme to screen the swimming pool.
20/03422 Lake House, Knowle Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7BQ	Installation of solar PV array made up of 44 panels RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL
20/03563 Little Cowden Farm, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AD	Alterations and change of use of 5 disused agricultural buildings to 5 no. 4-bed dwellings and new vehicular access RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE Comments submitted available on request from the Clerk
20/01829 Chestnut Cottage , Palmer's Green Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, TN12 7BH	Erection of single detached garage and store. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
21/00008 The Crescent, Brenchley Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NZ	Proposed pitched roof to replace existing flat roof to rear, internal and external alterations, replacement of uvpc windows to bay windows to front elevation, relocation of oil tank and enclosure and boiler, removal of shed and proposed side fence and gate RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
20/03852 Oast Meadow, Horsmonden Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AT	Demolition of existing 2 storey detached dwelling, attached garage, attached barn, stables and outbuildings; construction of replacement 2 storey dwelling and garage RESOLVED that a query would be posed to the Planning Officer and that due to time constraints the Council's response would be agreed, via email, and submitted by the Clerk.

14. Clerk' Report

14.1 Correspondence

The Council discussed a request from Richard Beale, on behalf of the PCC, requesting a donation to repair the clock on All Saints.

The Clerk provided the Council with clarification on the Power to Spend public funds on items of this nature in that is up to the Council to decide if they believe the clock is for the benefit of the whole community and not just the Church, if this is the case then they will be able to fund the clock, under the Parish Councils Act 1956, s.2 Public Clocks.

In terms of donations, the Clerk outlined that the donations budget is already spent for the current financial year, any expenditure would therefore be unbudgeted and out of reserves. Next year's donation budget is £2500 with £1000 planned for the Horticultural Society (for their Fete marquee) and £1000 for Brenchley Archive.

It was agreed that Mr Beale would provide further detail on the level of shortfall for the funding of the project and that the Council would review its budget commitments at the next meeting.

15. RFO's Report

15.1 Accounts payable

1833 C. Brooks	Part Salary January 2021	£798.67
1834 HMRC	Tax and NI January 2021	£602.40
1835 P. Horn	Salary January 2021	£499.62
1836 A. Downes Weald Tree Services	Removal of fallen tree and chopping logs at Allotments	£500.00
1838 British Telecom	Phone and BB Nov 20 to Mar 21	£351.00
1839 Panetta Horn	Reimbursement Stamps	£9.12

Standing Orders and Direct Debits

1840 SO C Brooks	Part Salary January 2021	£1000.00
1841 SO Capel Ground Care	Mowing Contract Jan 2019-Dec 2021	£796.00
1842 DD Smart Pension	Pension January 2021	£317.59
1843 DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity	£77.00
1844 DD Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£4.00
1845 DD Castle Water	Pond Water	£4.00
1846 DD Eon	Streetlight Electricity Oct / Dec 2020	£173.47
1847 SO Microshade	Monthly data and application service	£124.30

The RFO having provided invoices for scrutiny these accounts were approved and would be authorised by Cllr Stevenson and Cllr Warner.

16. Meetings attended, and reports by Councillors

Cllr Stevenson had attended the KALC Parish Chairmen's meeting.

Cllr Butler had attended a meeting with TWBC Housing Manager of as part of the NDP to discuss access to affordable homes for local residents and in particular the 18 available on the Fernham Homes development.

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

18. Date of next meeting

Full Council Meeting, via Zoom, 7.30pm, Monday 1st March 2021