

MINUTES OF A REMOTE MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.30pm via Zoom

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

In attendance: Cllr S. Hamilton (KCC), Cllr A. McDermott (TWBC), R. Mitchell (Non-Voting Member), A. Wells (Non-Voting Member), E. Izzard (Non-Voting Member), J. Buttery (Non-Voting Member), 4 members of the public

1. Election of a Chairman of the Parish Council and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Following the resignation of Cllr Sparkhall as Chairman, the Clerk asked Cllr Butler to preside and she requested nominations for Chair.

Cllr Sparkhall nominated Cllr Warner and was seconded by Cllr Stevenson. There were no further nominations and Cllr Warner was therefore elected as Chair of the Parish Council. Cllr Butler invited Cllr Warner to take the Chair. A Declaration of Acceptance of Office shall be signed at the next opportunity.

2. Election of a Vice Chairman of the Parish Council and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Warner requested nominations for Vice-Chair.

Cllr Warner nominated Cllr Stevenson and was seconded by Cllr Sparkhall. There were no further nominations and Cllr Stevenson was therefore elected. A Declaration of Acceptance of Office shall be signed at the next opportunity

3. To accept apologies for absence

Cllr de Guingand was prevented from joining due to technical issues but would join later in the Agenda.

4. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the Full Council meeting of 5th October 2020 were approved as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman (Cllr Sparkhall) at the next opportunity.

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

Cllr de Guingand declared an interest in item 17.6 planning application appeal for the Wheelwright Arms.

Cllr Warner declared an interest in item 17.3 Dr Goodridge's report on non-motorised routes as the proposals traverse her land.

Cllr Stevenson declared an interest in item 17.6 planning application 20/02809, his property adjoins the application property.

6. To adjourn to allow public participation

Jane Buckley Sander spoke on the proposal under item 17.3 seeking support for the NDP SG proposal to create a better cycling and footpath link between Brenchley and Matfield villages.

Nick Overy spoke to raise an objection to the designation of Pixot Hill in the Local Green Spaces designation under item 17.2.

Fred Farley spoke to underline his interest in acquiring the land at Cooksfield under item 13.

7. Borough and County Councillors – to receive information

Cllr MCDermott commented on the low level of incidents of Covid in the Borough but underlined that restrictions were being put in place per the Government's lockdown measures and in consultation with KCC.

He agreed to forward information regarding the adoption of the Tunbridge Wells Agreement, being discussed by TWBC.

8. NVM project updates

Verbal reports were provided by the Non-Voting Members as follows:

Rory Mitchell advised that at the moment the water level in the pond is good. He has had the report from Hawkhurst Fish Farm and quotes and estimates are coming in and there has been feedback from the experts regarding trees and drains etc. He will provide his report for the December meeting of the PC.

Ellie Izzard advised that she has drafted a full tenancy agreement that incorporates the current rules with additions from the National Allotment Association templates. Ellie has used the Council's mapping software of the site to get approximate sizes of plots in rods to inform a new charging system.

Amanda Wells has been looking at the effectiveness of PC communications and engagement with community to identify priority issues. She is also looking at website content and what is driving information as well as perceptions of the work of the PC, particularly on social media. She will continue to work with the Clerk to formulate some proposals.

9. Finance Committee – to receive recommendations

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 13th October 2020 were approved as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman of the Committee (Cllr de Guingand) at the next opportunity.

RESOLVED that no change is made to Allotment fees for the year commencing 1st April 2021

RESOLVED that Pavilion Licence holder fees should be set at £220 for MGCC and £220 for the Guides (one pack) but that a decision on invoicing should be delayed until March 2021.

RESOLVED that booking fees for Matfield Pavilion remain unchanged at the rate of £10 per hour for 2021/22.

RESOLVED that the discretionary free-use of Matfield Pavilion remains in place for Matfield Women's Institute, the Love Matfield Society, the Tunbridge Wells Area Committee of KALC, and Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre.

RESOLVED that the Council adopts the Finance and Governance Risk Register as amended.

RESOLVED that the S.106 Policy be re-advertised for applications for available funding of £3211 on Youth and Adult Recreation.

RESOLVED that the opening of a savings account be postponed until the new Council is in place.

10. Budget and Precept for 2021-22 – to consider draft proposals

A draft budget and precept calculation, compiled by the Finance Committee, was briefly discussed. To allow for costs relating to the project on the pond to be included it was agreed that Councillors would forward comments to Cllr de Guingand and that the Council would review the full budget at the December meeting.

11. Policy and Management Committee

Minutes of the meeting of 4th December 2019 were approved, to allow publication. The Clerk confirmed that the Committee cannot be disbanded as it has NVMs appointed to it, though its remit is undertaken by the Full Council in terms of reporting and decision making.

12. Christmas

The Clerk advised that all areas, including Brenchley High Street, Matfield Green and Pavilion and Petheridge, have been assessed for lights and that these were in place or being ordered.

13. Cooksfield

A letter from the owners of the adjacent property, offering to purchase the land at Cooksfield, was discussed together with other options for the disposal of the land. Councillors unanimously agreed that the PC should ensure that the spirit of the bequest should be borne in mind and that best value should be obtained.

It was agreed that Cllr Stevenson would revert to Bloomfields/Lambert and Foster to obtain an alternative view from a more experienced surveyor regarding the potential for planning permission to be obtained and thereby maximise the value of the land if sold.

It was agreed that Mr and Mrs Farley would be kept informed of progress.

14. Website – to consider change of Webmaster

The Clerk outlined that Ian McEwen has advised he will want to step down from the role of webmaster, though not immediately and that the Council will need to identify a replacement webmaster and administrator for the website, which might require funding. The Clerk updates the PC pages but the rest of the site is for the community and needs to be managed and updated as well as provide expertise for IT queries on WordPress.

The Council unanimously wished to thank Ian McEwen for his many years of service on the website and express gratitude for delaying his departure until a replacement may be found.

Given the project on communications that is being undertaken it was agreed that the Clerk would work with Amanda Wells (NVM) to consider ways that the website might be managed in the future, both for the community and for the requirements of the Parish Council, which currently funds the hosting.

15. TPO

A request from a resident for the PC to apply for a Tree Preservation Order on the two yew trees at No 1 Parsonage Farm Cottage, Brenchley Road was discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk would seek a TPO on these trees.

16. Traffic – Joint Transportation Board meeting outcomes

Cllr Stevenson had attended the JTB meeting, between TWBC and KCC, on 19th October and had raised a query about HGVs in Blind Lane. This had not been responded to and Cllr Hamilton agreed to chase a reply.

Issues raised in a letter by some residents of Windmill Hill was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Stevenson would engage further with the residents to ensure their requests had the support of other residents before considering adding these to the HIP.

Cllr Warner asked about the blue “Not suitable for HGVs” signs at the top of Watermans Lane and Chantlers Hill – the PC was not notified about these going up and the effect was that traffic is increased in Blind Lane and Windmill Hill. Cllr Hamilton was not aware and will find out how this came about.

17. Planning and Development

17.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan update

Cllr Butler advised that further grant funding for specific expenditure was anticipated and Cllr Sparkhall commented that this would reduce the call on reserves allocated to the NDP in the budget.

17.2 Local Green Spaces

Cllr Butler outlined the areas of Local Green Spaces proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan that landowners have objected to. These were discussed and the Council agreed the following position:

All Saints Churchyard would be retained in the NDP list
Castle Hill Cricket Club would be removed
Pixot Hill would be removed
Rydon Woodland Site would be retained

17.3 Non-motorised route between Brenchley and Matfield

Cllr Stevenson assumed the Chair for this item.

The proposal, submitted by Dr Goodridge, was discussed including a map showing the possible route and PWOWs affected.

It was agreed that Cllr Butler would obtain title plans for all the affected properties to inform the detail to be discussed further by the NDP Steering Group.

RESOLVED to support the principle to incorporate a Non-motorised route between Matfield and Brenchley with TWBC pedestrian and cycling routes in the Local Plan particularly to allow children

and young people to move safely between the villages and to the local primary and secondary schools.

17.4 Results of the Housing Needs Survey

Cllr Butler advised that the NDP SG is still working on analysing the data, with only 21% response rate, most were either downsizers or people who wanted affordable homes.

17.5 Response to the Planning White Paper

The Council's response to the Planning White Paper had been submitted. Cllr Warner led expressions of gratitude to Cllr Butler for her work on this extensive document.

17.6 Planning Applications

<p>20/02557 Lordships Stables, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HS</p>	<p>Change of use of the land for the stationing of two mobile homes as a single plot for one Gypsy/Traveller family (in connection with existing plot on site) with associated hard and soft landscaping; Creation of new access onto Marle Place Road</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This site lies outside LBD and within AONB 2. Retrospective application 20/01504/FULL was granted in January '20 noting Condition (3) <p><i>“No more than one static caravan, as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968 shall be stationed on the site at any time and shall only be stationed in the position shown on the approved plans. Reason – In the interests of visual amenity and to prevent overdevelopment of the site.”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The PC notes letter from Margaret Parker of KCC noting in withdrawn application 19/02056, concerns were raised about the visibility splays of the proposed new access into Marle Place Road, together with the need for speed checks to be submitted as part of the application. 4. The PC notes comments made by CPRE dated 20th October 2020. 5. On 14th September '20 the PC was advised by TWBC that there would be three new pitches at Cinderhill Wood. One has been accounted for, but there will be two vacant for use in the future.
<p>19/02753 (APPEAL) The Wheelwright Arms, The Green, Matfield</p>	<p>Conversion of existing public house to 3 No. self-contained residential units, including studio ancillary to plot 3.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE Full text of comments submitted available from the Clerk on request.</p>
<p>20/02814 Pelagic Aquatic Ltd, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HA</p>	<p>Demolish small concrete external toilet and small decking; proposed new coffee and small snack facility; additional toilets; change of use of small area of agricultural land to provide additional parking for 8 vehicles; external landscaping on parking area.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE</p>

<p>20/02710 Meadow Croft, Furnace Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7BX</p>	<p>Clearance of the existing dwelling, removal of the two lawful mobile homes, demolition of the disused two storey barn and associated dog kennels and erection of a new 4-bed dwelling with linked garage and home office.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE</p>
<p>20/01863 Marle Place, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HS</p>	<p>Erection of a permanent stable block comprising of four stables, a tack room and a hay store fixed to a concrete base. Creation of an outdoor sand school, 40 metres by 20 metres.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE</p> <p>The Parish Council has been in contact with the planning officer for this application on 25th October '20. The plans and details are insufficient for the stables and menage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PC questions if the drawn plans are to scale. 2. Where will the access come in from Marle Place, will the track be wide enough to take an emergency vehicle. 3. How will the stables relate to the menage – how much hardstanding/concrete will there be around the stable yard and towards the sand school 4. The PC would like to see a proper block plan of levels and how the menage will sit within the AONB site. 5. Intended parking of equestrian vehicles. 6. How the retractable lights will function, light spillage range. 7. A statement of evening usage, private or liveries. 8. Intended planting programme.
<p>20/02730 Halfway Cottage, Horsmonden Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, TN12 7AX</p>	<p>Demolition of the conservatory and rear extension; Erection of a single storey extension; Construct stud walls at ground floor level and sub-divide the first floor bathroom to create a shower room; Increase the depth of the raised patio</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE</p>
<p>20/02809 Hatherleigh, The Green, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JU</p>	<p>Proposed single storey link extension connecting house with cottage; External and internal alterations to house and cottage; Associated underpinning; hard and soft landscaping.</p> <p>GS declared interest – neighbours</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: NEUTRAL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PC is surprised there has not been Pre-application advice sought and taken of this important Grade II Listed house situated within the Conservation Area and in AONB. 2. The PC is surprised that to date there are no comments from the Conservation Officer, and feels he/she should be fully involved with this application. 3. The PC questions the Design and Access Statement deeming the fabric of the internal alterations to be of “low historical value or significance”

18. Clerk's Report

18.1 Minor works update

- Pond Cleanup – given the imminent new Covid restrictions the Council agreed that the work would be completed by a contractor.
- Bases on Matfield Green have been completed, benches are being installed this week.
- The noticeboard in Brenchley has been repaired and stained, it will last a couple more years.
- A new covered litterbin is being placed in the car park at the Recreation Ground (by TWBC).
- Base and replacement bench have been ordered to replace the one near the adventure trail at the playground
- The Sassoon Tree on the Green has been checked – it is still alive and Andy Downes will check in the spring to tidy the top branches and encourage growth.
- Mowing Contract – the annual mowing contract has completed and Capel GroundCare has included the area by the litter bin outside St Lukes. 2021 is the final year of the 3 year contract. Quotes for the contract for mowing Matfield Green are being sought (this is an annual contract).
- Village Entry Signs at Matfield have been partly cleaned by KCC – I will continue to request this for all the signs around the village to be cleaned.
- A Legionella Risk Assessment for the Pavilion is being arranged – required for buildings used by 5 or more people.
- Matfield Pavilion is to be closed from Wednesday 4th November to comply with Covid restrictions, the RFO and Clerk will work from home.

19. RFO's Report

19.1 Payroll Error

A significant error in the payroll was reported to the Finance Committee (minutes attached). Calculations were agreed by the Council's internal auditor and Cllr Sparkhall.

19.2 Accounts payable for October invoices

1754 C. Brooks	Part Salary October 2020	£4690.11
1755 HMRC	Tax and NI October 2020	602.40
1756 P. Horn	Salary October 2020	499.62
1757 Garden Barber	Turfing Allotment plot 15	120.00
1758 I. Soady	Renovation of Brenchley Notice Board	240.00
1759 Bloomfields	Valuation of Cooksfield	480.00
1760 Commercial Services	Mowing Matfield Green Apr/May/June	701.10
1761 I. McEwen	Reimbursement of TSO hosting fee	34.99
1762 Weald Tree Services	Pollarding Pond Limes	380.00
1763 JP Miles	Hedge Cutting and Flail Mowing	408.00
1764 HFF Construction	Pond Survey	420.00
1765 TWBC	Lease for Cinderhill Wood Oct 20-Oct 21	50.00
1766 Brenchley Ready Call	Donation	750.00

1767 Business Stream	Waste water Pavilion 11/3/90 -10/9/20	37.84
1768 BT	Quarterly Bill Phone and BB – Pavilion Oct – Dec 2020	344.52
1769 Streetlights	Part 2/2 of Maintenance Contract	263.75
1770 FLR James Roxburgh	3 Bases for Benches on Matfield Green	750.00
1771 FLR James Roxburgh	Contract for Weekly refuse collection Brenchley Rec. 1.10.20 -30.9.21	320.00
1772 KCC	Traffic Surveys (ATC) for Brenchley Road, Windmill Hill etc	747.50
Credit Card Payments made		
1773 Cyan	Bench for Brenchley Playground	£407.49
1774 B&Q	Pavilion Supplies	£79.00
Standing Orders and Direct Debits		
1775 SO C Brooks	Part Salary October 2020	£1000.00
1776 SO Capel Ground Care	Mowing Contract Jan 2019-Dec 2021	£796.00
1777 DD Smart Pension	Pension October 2020	£317.59
1778 DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity	£77.00
1779 DD Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£4.00
1780 DD Castle Water	Pond Water	£4.00
1781 DD Castle Water	Allotment water	£6.00
1782 SO Microshade	Monthly data and application service	£124.30

The RFO having provided invoices for scrutiny these accounts were approved and would be authorised on Unity by Cllr Butler and Cllr Sparkhall.

20. Meetings attended, and reports by Councillors

Cllr Stevenson had attended the JTB on 19th October by remote session (see item 16 above).

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

None

22. Date of next meeting

Full Council Meeting, via Zoom, 7.30pm, Monday 7th December 2020