

MINUTES A MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30PM ON MONDAY 4TH JANUARY 2021, VIA ZOOM

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

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), 6 members of the public

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

Following the resignation of Cllr Mrs Warner as Chair, the Clerk asked Cllr Sparkhall to preside and he requested nominations for Chair.

Cllr Butler nominated Cllr Stevenson and was seconded by Cllr Warner. There were no further nominations and Cllr Stevenson was therefore elected as Chair of the Parish Council. Cllr Sparkhall invited Cllr Stevenson 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 Stevenson requested nominations for Vice-Chair.

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

3. To accept apologies for absence

None.

4. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 7th December 2020 were approved as an accurate record and would be duly signed by the Chair at the next opportunity.

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

None.

6. To adjourn to allow public participation

A resident raised the issue of broken down cars in the car park opposite the school, many not being in parking spaces. The Clerk advised that the car park belongs to KCC and it was agreed that she would contact KCC to establish if parking enforcement could be considered.

7. Borough and County Councillors – to receive information

Cllr McDermott (TWBC) advised that on 31st December 2020 the revised Draft Local Plan was put forward on the TWBC website, it will go forwards to planning cabinet and on 3rd February it will go before the full Council. After this it will go out for consultation however none of the letters previously written in will be forwarded to the inspector so everyone will need to write again. There has been a reduction in the number of houses required to be built in the Borough however there still remains no 5-year housing supply.

It was agreed that Steve Baughen, Head of Planning at TWBC, will be asked to attend the PC meeting of March 1st to talk about the Local Plan.

Cllr Hamilton (KCC) commented on the highways issues in discussion regarding the Island Site and advised that the PC/NDP SG should discuss these in the first instance with the planning officers at TWBC but that she would engage with the NDP SG on these where necessary.

Both Cllr Warner and Cllr Stevenson again sought specific clarification of the circumstances behind the erection of "Not suitable for HGVs" at Chantlers Hill, to include details of the SPD works budget, in response to which Cllr Hamilton agreed to provide clear information on this matter as the signs were erected after the instigation of Highways Improvement Plans and it was therefore of concern to the Council that this was not advised at the time.

8. Cooksfield

Cllr Stevenson outlined that the issue of the tree survey of the land had previously been resolved for progress and the Clerk had circulated one estimate. It was felt that this estimate was competitive and that the Clerk would therefore instruct this work.

In advance of receipt of this the Council discussed whether this document, and that pertaining to the Pre-Application planning meeting already resolved, be exempt items and not available as public documents. The suggestion is that it be covered by:

Schedule 12a of the LGA 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Clerk had circulated guidance from the ICO and advised that the “wider public interest test” be fully considered before the Council exempts any items.

RESOLVED that the Survey of Cooksfield and the information relating to Pre-Application Planning for the site be considered as items of exempt information under Schedule 12a of the LGA 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006

The Council discussed which Members would represent the Council in Pre-Application discussions with TWBC.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to Cllr Stevenson and Cllr Butler to represent the Council in pre-application discussions with TWBC regarding proposals for land at Cooksfield.

9. Summerford Lane roadway – to discuss responsibility for repairs

Information regarding the Council's liability to assume responsibility for repairs to the roadway spanning the fork in the road, together with information from KCC, email from a resident of Summerford Lane and advice from the Council's insurers was discussed.

A quote for repairs had been obtained and a further quote has been requested from Brenchley Drives.

RESOLVED that the six properties in Summerford Lane would be asked to contribute in equal parts, with the Parish Council, for the repair to potholes at the entrance to the Lane adjacent to the Pavilion and parking area, and that on receipt of agreements from all property owners, the PC would coordinate the works and recover costs proportionately

10. Allotments – review of actions

The Council reviewed resolutions previously made concerning allotment fees, the RFO having advised that there is an anticipated water bill in the region of £1100. A confirmed reading will be taken by the new water supplier (Business Stream) on 12th January and Castle Water will then issue a final bill.

RESOLVED that the Council would bear half of the back-dated water cost given that the reading spans two years. The other half of the cost would be charged to allotment holders divided equally on a proportional basis calculated according to the size of plots. Invoices would then be sent to tenants, as provided for in the allotment rules.

It was agreed that future water costs, which would not necessarily be known until towards the end of the next year's allotment annual agreement, would be charged on account in advance on a similar proportional basis, together with the new allotment fees due under the new agreements, based on anticipated cost following receipt of the confirmed water bill this January annually.

11. Traffic – update

Cllr Stevenson outlined that he and Cllr Warner had attended a meeting between a Resident and PCSO Nick Brown of the Police regarding an incident on Brenchley Road where a speeding driver had killed a dog. The current PCSO is undertaking SpeedAce training and the police are aware that there is an issue in the area, although he is also being transferred to other duties for 3 months.

Cllr Hamilton asked to be kept informed of this issue and would contribute from the perspective of KCC where possible.

It was agreed that Cllrs Stevenson, Warner and Hamilton would meet with PC Nick Atkinson and the new temporary PCSO Thomas Costin at a suitable time given current Covid restrictions, to discuss the matter further.

12. Facebook - to consider draft PC homepage

A draft mock-up of a Facebook Page dedicated to the Parish Council was discussed in detail and it was agreed that the B&M oast house logo would be used as the profile picture. Ian McEwen will add a link to this from the website and it was anticipated that there would be reciprocal links to the village Facebook pages.

Amanda Wells outlined a number of administrative issues including policing for inappropriate content which will be undertaken by moderators/administrators, these are the Clerk, the RFO and Mrs Wells who was thanked for her work.

The Clerk would familiarise herself with the administration of the page with a view to going live on Monday 11th January.

It was agreed that a short Social Media policy would be considered by the Policy and Management Committee on 20th January.

13. Parish Council Elections – to consider promotion

The Clerk advised that the Notice of Election is due to be published on 19 March 2021, so if the elections were to be postponed again it would be before that date, TWBC have been asked to let the Clerk know as soon as they have confirmation.

A draft Leaflet for parish-wide delivery, which had been produced by the Clerk, was discussed, and a reduction to 2 pages only was agreed. A finalised version would be provided for final sign-off at the meeting of the PC of 1st February.

An election promotion event would be held, via Zoom, where interested candidates could pose questions to the Clerk and Chair, this would be some time in March as the closing date for nominations is early April. The Clerk will work with Cllr Butler to arrange this event.

The leaflet would be distributed in Mid February when it is anticipated the election would have been confirmed.

It was agreed that there would not be an Annual Parish Meeting this year.

14. Budget and Precept for 2021-22 – to confirm

The Clerk advised that the 2021-22 budget has been published on the website and on social media and the confirmation letter had been received from TWBC.

Following confirmation of the Tax Base for 2021-22 by TWBC (the number of band D equivalent dwellings in the area) the Council confirmed the Precept for 2020-21 will be £125,000, the Band D equivalent will be £87.84 (£74.06 in 2019-20) and the approved Budget of £138,243.

Cllr Stevenson will be drafting a page for Roundabout, which will include an explanation of the exceptional increase.

15. Interim Internal Audit – to receive

The Council received the interim Audit Report. A meeting of the Finance Committee will review this in due course.

16. Tunbridge Wells Agreement – to consider ratification

The final document, as agreed by TWBC Full Council on 16 December 2020, was discussed.

RESOLVED to ratify the Tunbridge Wells Agreement approved by TWBC in December 2020.

17. Planning and Development

17.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr Sparkhall emphasised that the NDP Steering Group will consider the implications of the revised Draft Local Plan and would be tightening up some wording to be clear on policies.

17.2 Rydon Development – Railings

Cllr Stevenson reiterated concerns regarding the railings opposite the Rydon Development and other landscaping issues.

RESOLVED to request that the developer paint the railings opposite the Standing Close development green and that they attend to returning the verge opposite the site entrance.

17.3 Planning Applications

20/01725 Paygate Cottage Horsmonden Road Brenchley	<p>APPEAL: Removal of Garage; erection of three detached dwellings and construction of an outdoor swimming pool</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE and to apply for the property to be listed.</p> <p>Comments available on application to the Clerk.</p>
20/03341 Hawks Mount , Crittenden Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, TN12 7EQ	<p>Erection of replacement single storey pitched roof building to form Gym and Art Studio</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE due to lack of information for this application. Design and Access Statement required about usage of gym/studio, car parking. Details of fenestration in rural location etc.</p>
20/03486 Brattles Barn, Tong Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HT	<p>Change of use from agricultural use to residential use and creation of a new access.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE there is already an application of creation of agricultural access outstanding 19/03537 for farm usage. The proposed access is in addition to an adequate existing driveway. This application for a new driveway is virtually retrospective, it opens road frontage, removes vegetation resulting in the new barn being more visible outside LBD and in AONB.</p>
20/03353 2 Chapel Row, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7LD	<p>New dwelling with detached garage in back garden; front driveway with dropped kerb</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE taking into consideration and agreeing with the Conservation Officer, Debbie Maltby's comments.</p>
20/03408 Summerford Farmhouse, The Green, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JU	<p>Erection of single storey double garage and store.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE</p>
20/02649 Cinder Hill Wood Gypsy Caravan Site, Five Wents, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent	<p>Provision of two additional hardstandings for mobile homes plus amendments to existing layout to create a third additional plot within existing site curtilage, c/w provision of mains services to new plots and extension of existing service road to accommodate tenants and emergency</p>

	<p>vehicles on existing hardstanding/previously developed land within the boundaries of an existing lawful permanent Gypsy & Traveller Site</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE The PC would like to see TWBC take improved ownership of this site in the future.</p>
20/03613 Strawberry Cottage, High Street, Brenchley, Tonbridge, TN12 7NU	<p>Demolition of existing garage & link to side; demolition of glazed lobby & conservatory to rear; proposed single storey side extension with an additional bedroom in the roof space over, including new dormers to front and rear; associated alterations and external works; erection of front porch; provision of oil tank; replacement of existing ground floor windows</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE</p>

18. RFO's Report

18.1 Business Rates – Matfield Pavilion

The RFO had advised that the Pavilion had never been assessed for rates and therefore was not officially recognised on the post code searches. The registration process has been completed and it has been assessed for rates. These have been waived due to the type of use and the PC have not incurred any additional costs. The Pavilion does now however fall eligible of government payments if they arise again.

18.2 Accounts payable

1814 C. Brooks	Part Salary December 2020	£827.27
1815 HMRC	Tax and NI December 2020	£602.60
1816 P. Horn	Salary December 2020	£499.62
1817 Commercial Services	Matfield Green Oct/Nov	£127.46
1818 Peter King	Mole catching	£140.00
1819 John Helm	Replacement water heater Pavilion	£288.80
1830 KALC	RFO conference	£60.00
1831 David Buckett	Interim Audit	£352.00
1832 WKPS	Annual membership	£25.00

Credit Card Payments made

1820 Viking	Signage for Christmas lights	£59.52
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits

1821 SO C Brooks	Part Salary December 2020	£1000.00
1822 SO Capel Ground Care	Mowing Contract Jan 2019-Dec 2021	£796.00
1823 DD Smart Pension	Pension December 2020	£317.59
1824 DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity	£77.00
1825 DD Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£4.00
1826 DD Castle Water	Pond Water	£4.00
1827 DD Castle Water	Allotment water	£6.00
1828 SO Microshade	Monthly data and application service	£124.30
1829 DD Grenke	Photocopier lease	£106.80

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

19. Meetings attended, and reports by Councillors

Cllr Warner had attended the TWBC Parish Chairmen's meeting on 8th December which discussed issues such as the effect of Covid on retail business.

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

Cllr Stevenson outlined that there had been some serious vandalism issues in the Castle Hill area and these were under investigation by the Police

21. Date of next meeting

Policy and Management Committee, via Zoom, 7.30pm, Wednesday 20th January 2021

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