

MINUTES OF A REMOTE MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30pm

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

In attendance: Cllr. A. McDermott (TWBC), Cllr S. Hamilton (KCC), six members of the public

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

Following the resignation of Cllr de Guingand as Chairman, the Clerk invited Cllr Butler to preside and, after thanking Cllr de Guingand for his tenure as Chairman, she requested nominations for Chairman of the Parish Council.

Cllr de Guingand nominated Cllr Sparkhall as Chairman and Cllr Warner seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations.

Cllr Sparkhall was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Clerk advised that a Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be signed by Cllr Sparkhall at the next opportunity.

Cllr Sparkhall assumed the Chair.

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

Cllr Sparkhall invited nominations for Vice Chair.

Cllr de Guingand nominated Cllr Warner as Vice Chair and Councillor Butler seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations.

Cllr Warner was unanimously elected as Vice Chair of the Parish Council.

The Clerk advised that a Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be signed by Cllr Warner at the next opportunity.

3. To accept apologies for absence

None.

4. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the Planning Meeting of 18th August were approved as a true record by those present and would be signed by the Chair (Cllr de Guingand) at the next opportunity.

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

Cllr Warner advised that she had been approached by the owner of Gate House Farm regarding the planning application to be discussed, though was not lobbied on the matter.

6. To adjourn to allow public participation

A resident would speak on traffic issues later in the Agenda.

7. Appointment of Non-Voting Members and Welcome

The Chairman advised that there had been four applications for Non-Voting Members and these had been welcomed as showing skills and engagement.

The Council appointed the applicants as follows

Amanda Wells – Policy and Management Committee

Jonathan Buttery – Finance Committee (the Clerk outlined that under s.102 of the LGA this appointment could not be as a Member of the Committee but that Mr Buttery would be asked to contribute to the work of the Committee as an adviser).

Cllr Stevenson asked Mr Buttery to clarify his connection to the Brenchley 21 group who had previously been involved in the proposals for a new school. Mr Buttery advised that he has attended some meetings but he has no financial involvement at all and would declare the interest if relevant during Parish Council Meetings.

Rory Mitchell - Policy and Management Committee

Ellie Izzard– Policy and Management Committee

Cllr Sparkhall welcomed all the above to the meeting and advised that information on the remit of their role would be forwarded in due course. It was confirmed that they would be bound by the Council's Code of Conduct which would be circulated to them by the Clerk.

8. Borough and County Councillors – to receive information

TWBC – Cllr McDermott advised that TWBC have reopened health clubs and some other sports facilities in TW and that there would be a full Council meeting on 23rd September.

9. Matfield Green - Memorial Benches

Cllr Stevenson had provided an audit of benches and proposals for standard memorial benches on Matfield Green, following requests from 2 residents and Matfield WI. The Clerk had obtained quotes regarding concrete bases from two local contractors.

RESOLVED that, on receipt of relevant planning permission, FLR Construction would install three concrete bases for benches on Matfield Green.

It was further agreed that the cost of standard wooden benches, together with the cost of installation, would be passed to the donating family or organisation and the text of any plaques and their final location would be agreed with the Clerk, using the locations agreed by the Council as a basis.

The Parish Council would retain ownership of all benches and be responsible for repairs and maintenance and a limit of ten memorial benches would be set, although this would be reviewed on receipt of requests in future. Any benches that required removal would not be replaced without a full review.

10. Traffic – Road Safety Initiative and Highways Improvement Plan Update

Cllr Stevenson outlined that the Council had submitted the HIP nearly a year ago. Automated Traffic Controls (ATCs) have been requested for 7 day traffic surveys at Pixot Hill and Petteridge Lane in order to obtain data.

Concerns raised about the junction at Coppers Lane/Brenchley Road would be discussed at the next meeting of the Road Safety Initiative in the next couple of months.

Christine Churchill outlined her continued concerns about Pixot Hill and Blind Lane, particularly with reference to HGVs. It was clarified that the first step was to carry out the traffic surveys.

Cllr Hamilton (KCC) commented that enforcement of traffic prohibitions was difficult but that she would continue to work with the PC, residents, the RSI and TWBC in order to address these concerns.

Cllr Stevenson would take this forward.

11. RoSPA Report – Brenchley Playground inspection

The RoSPA report was considered and, as Health and Safety Officer, Cllr Butler had provided a list of items for attention, and a quote for these had been provided by Capel GroundCare.

It was agreed that the bench would not be repaired as it was not cost effective.

RESOLVED that Capel Ground Care be instructed to carry out repairs at Brenchley Playground

12. Cooksfield – Land at Sophurst Lane

Cllr Stevenson provided a report on the background to the bequest to the Council of land at Sophurst together with a quote from Bloomfields (part of Lambert and Foster) to establish the prospect of getting planning permission for the development of the land.

RESOLVED that Bloomfields be asked to undertake a market appraisal and valuation of land at Sophurst Lane.

13. Staff Appraisals

13.1 Clerk's Appraisal including salary recommendation

Cllr de Guingand outlined some of the issues raised in the Clerk's appraisal and the recommendation from the Employment Panel was discussed. The Clerk's appraisal is annual in August.

RESOLVED that the Clerk's salary be increased to point 27 of the NJC Scale from 1st September 2020.

13.2 RFO's end of probation appraisal

Cllr de Guingand briefly outlined details from the end of probation report, including progress on probation objectives and the recommendation from the Employment Panel. Further objectives were provided by the Clerk and an appraisal would be carried out in six months' time.

RESOVLED that Panetta Horn be confirmed in the appointment of Responsible Financial Officer.

14. Brenchley Ready Call funding request

A request for further funding to support the work of Brenchley and Matfield Ready Call was discussed.

The Council agreed that the Clerk would seek a report from Brenchley Ready Call on the use of the previous donation of £1500 and clarity on the need for further funding. It was noted that there could be other calls on available funds if any increase in the incidence of Covid led to renewed restrictions.

15. KALC TWBC Area Committee - Draft Statement of Community Involvement and TW Agreement

The Chairman briefly outlined that the Tunbridge Wells Agreement is a commitment by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and its officers to respect the role of the Parishes and Town Councils in the government of Borough Council. Amendments to Section 4 concerning Planning, as drafted by the KALC area Committee, would be discussed at a Planning Meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 22nd September.

16. Planning and Development

16.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr Sparkhall advised that the Steering Group have revised the site specific policies and there was a need to consider the changes and how there can be engagement with developers in advance of applications. This would be further discussed at the Planning meeting of 22nd September.

16.2 Planning Applications

20/01863 Marle Place, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HS	Erection of a permanent stable block comprising of four stables, a tack room and a hay store fixed to a concrete base. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE The Parish Council has made several requests to TWBC for clarity and accuracy of the plans for this application.
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	<p>There is no mention of a menage in the application, but it is mentioned in the accompanying statement. This application is taking place in the grounds of a Grade II Listed house, situated in an historic garden, within AONB. It is felt this application requires detailed, clear plans for both the stable block and the sand-school.</p>
<p>20/02274 Gate House Farm, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7AD</p>	<p>Conversion of two redundant farm buildings and the demolition of a third to provide for a link between the two buildings proposed for conversion, to form one detached residential dwelling and associated curtilage.</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed development is located outside LBD. The refused application 12/00897 stated “this proposed development is in an isolated position poorly related to the existing settlement pattern. It is therefore unsustainable and contrary to policy LBD1 of Tunbridge Wells Local Plan 2006 and Core Policy 4 and Core Policy 14 of the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy 2010”. 2. The wooden sheds for proposed development are situated within AONB, an area of open sloping farmland, south of the Brenchley Road. The land is designated EN23 (Important Landscape Approach) Tunbridge Wells Local Plan 2006. The land falls away to wooded banks of the Lesser Teise stream flowing from Pond Shaw Lake to Furnace Pond in Horsmonden. 3. The proposed residential dwelling would have an adverse impact on special landscape views from the High Weald Landscape Trail PROW WC301, and is contrary to Core Policy 4 of the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy 2010. In the draft Neighbourhood Plan the view towards the historic village centre from PROW WC301 is proposed as a Protected View. 4. This area of AONB currently enjoys dark skies especially towards the ancient woodland to the south east of this site. This proposed 3 bedroomed dwelling house is to have 8 full-length opening glass doors on the south elevation, some together with adjoining full-length windows. The PC is concerned about the amount of light spillage and pollution from the fenestration on south, east and north elevations. The application form under section 7 states there will be only internal lighting but the Design and Access statement refers to sensor lights. The PC would like to preserve intrinsically dark skies as per Policy H10 TWBC Local Plan 2006. 5. The PC is concerned this development will not conserve and enhance the AONB. Domestic paraphernalia such as parked cars, garden furniture, washing lines, barbeque, post box and dustbins will urbanize the area. The ecology report states there will be landscaping and garden on the reduced curtilage, but the PC questions if further outbuildings/ garden sheds will be required on the site at a later stage to store implements. 6. The application indicates the parking provision to be unchanged, with parking for only two vehicles. There is no turning area and no additional parking for visitors or service vehicles. Vehicle requirements associated

	<p>with the new residence do not appear to have been addressed. The curtilage of a property should include sufficient land to meet the requirements of a household and, with this proposed dwelling, it appears inevitable that there will be an incursion into the surrounding field.</p> <p>7. The PC questions this site's sustainability. It is adjacent to the High Weald Landscape Trail, but there is no pavement into the village centre from Gate House Farm. The PC questions if cars would be required for day to day living in this isolated position.</p> <p>8. The PC questions the ecology report from Corylus. The statement refers to "fragmented areas of ancient woodland within a 3km radius of the site" This AONB site is surrounded by a variety of named woodland recorded on the TWBC Ancient Woodland Inventory 2007 – Pond Shaw Wood, Brenchley Wood, Porters Wood, Tibbs Court Wood, Birchett Wood. The Corylus document refers to Brookland Wood and Foal Hurst Wood which are both further away and out of the parish.</p> <p>9. NPPF 2019 sets out planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. There is evidence of bats and nesting birds in these redundant farm buildings, and it is suggested that "compensation" should be provided in the new building and the planting on this proposed site. The PC questions whether the planting of a perimeter native hedge around the small curtilage and three small flower beds as per the planning statement would provide the necessary net gain in biodiversity. The PC feels this proposal is likely to have an adverse impact on ecology and biodiversity and therefore questions if this will conserve and enhance the AONB. This would be contrary to the NPPF 2019.</p> <p>10. The PC is concerned about the significant vehicle movements along the PROW WC301 to service this proposed new rural dwelling. It is noted that dwellings within the farmstead of Gate House are on mains drains for sewage and waste, this new dwelling would be serviced by a Package Treatment Plant and accessed by an appropriate vehicle. It would be contrary to Policy EN1 of the TWBC Local Plan 2006.</p> <p>11. The current buildings are disused and have not been in use for many years (at least past 10 years). The conversion to a residential home would significantly increase traffic movements along the PROW track and through Gate House Farm complex.</p>
<p>20/02343 Windmill House, Hastings Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HF</p>	<p>Enlargement of frontage entrance to highway (Retrospective)</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE The Parish Council would like to invite Highways England to comment on this retrospective access onto the A21 trunk road.</p>
<p>20/02345 Puxted Orchard, Brenchley Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent,</p>	<p>Siting and storage of the seasonal workers mobile home (allowed by 19/00979) when unoccupied and its use year round to provide a farm workers mess (toilet,</p>

	<p>washing and kitchen facilities)</p> <p>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: REFUSE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This 1.7 hectare, 4.2 acre field is situated outside LBD and within AONB. 2. The applicant was granted GPDO in July 2019 for a mobile home “for the use of accommodation during a particular season of a person or persons employed in farming operations” This was for March-April and August–November. The request for the mobile home to remain 8 months of the year by the applicant had been refused in July 2019 by the TWBC rural planning consultant – Mr Richard Lloyd-Hughes. 3. Apart from the onset and duration of Covid 19, the PC questions the comments and change of views dated 3rd September of the rural consultant of TWBC. There is currently no livestock on site, and the harvest of the apple trees will remain low in quantity for the next few years. 4. The PC notes comments from CPRE dated 9th September 2020. 5. The PC feels that the applicant had considered and accepted costs of removing the mobile home for 6 months of the year with granted application 19/00979/LAWPRO. 6. The PC questions the viability of setting up washing facilities within the newly erected 18m x 12m barn. The PC questions if the proposed cider production business will need running water for washing/sterilizing purposes. 7. Although precedent is not a planning consideration, the PC feels that in AONB, situated on a small parcel of land, the granting of this application will make some conditions of GFDO difficult to enforce throughout the parish in the future. <p>If TWBC does grant this application, the PC requests there are conditions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The mobile home is used for night accommodation by an employed farm worker(s) March-April and August-November, and at no other times of the year b) There is a time limit whereby if there are no sheep and/or pigs on site during the breeding season March-April in the future, then the mobile home is removed.
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17. Clerk’s Report

17.1 Allotment trees

The Clerk outlined that the budget for trees had not been spent and that the trees at the allotments required attention.

RESOLVED to approve a quote from Weald Tree Services to prune apple trees in the centre of the allotments at £380 (inc VAT).

17.2 Matfield Pond

The Clerk provided an overview of the events surrounding the pond, where recent prolonged hot weather had evaporated it to almost dry. It had been ascertained that 24 hours of water from the tap would cost approximately £52 and that the level of the water would rise by approximately 1cm. The PC had made arrangements to remove the fish from the pond but a resident had meanwhile arranged that

the Fire Brigade be called to fill up the pond with water from the hydrant. Subsequently the Environment Agency had contacted the Clerk and advised that, whilst initial approval had been given, it was in fact not deemed a responsible use of water and that the EA would not sanction the Fire Brigade to fill up Matfield pond again in future. A project to consider all options for the long term management of the pond is being prepared.

17.3 Correspondence: Amanda Wells

The Council discussed, with the contribution of Amanda Wells who had been appointed as a Non-Voting Member, the broad issues surrounding an agenda and mechanisms for community engagement generally. It was agreed that ideas should be further developed and then be discussed at a meeting of the Policy and Management Committee.

18. RFO's Report

Accounts paid for July with supporting invoices (there had been no Full Council meeting in August) had been circulated and authorised by Cllr Stevenson and Cllr Warner:

1685 C. Brooks	Part Salary June 2020	£ 644.46
1686 HMRC	Tax and NI June 2020	£557.12
1687 P. Horn	Salary June 2020	£486.24
1688 Rialtas	Annual Support	£206.40
1689 Capital	Sanitary bin service June 20 to April 21	£119.50
1690 B D Chapman	The Fence Guru Replace fence posts on Green 1	£245.00
1691 Microshade	Monthly application service and support.(£107.52) Conversion of mailboxes to Mircoshade exchange (£45.58)	£153.40
1692 FLR	Installation of Bus Shelter	£1000.00
1693 Littlethorpe	Bus Shelter (insurance claim previously settled)	£6784.50
1694 Capel Groundcare	Playground repairs	£54.00
1695 L. Butler	Reimbursement Covid Sanitary products from Bookers	£82.24
1696 Eon	Apr/Jun Streetlighting electricity	£171.59
1697 Countryside Charity	Annual membership	£36.00
1698 BT	Broadband and mobile bill	£344.52
1699 Corker	Play bark for playground	£572.40
1700 L. Butler	Reimbursement Instant Print Posters and flyers for housing needs survey	£170.80
1701 Capel Groundcare	Risk Assessment for playground and weed spray	£138.00
1702 B D Chapman	The Fence Guru Replacement Posts on Green 2	£235.00
Credit Card Payment		
1703 B&Q	Bins for Pavilion – re Covid	£80.01
Standing Orders and Direct Debits		

1677 SO C Brooks	Part Salary June 2020	£1000.00
1678 SO Capel Ground Care	Mowing Contract Jan 2019-Dec 2021	£796.00
1679 DD Smart Pension	Pension June 2020	£176.85
1680 DD EDF Energy	Electricity June 2020	£77.00
1681 DD Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£4.00
1682 DD Castle Water	Pond Water	£4.00
1683 DD Castle Water	Allotment water	£6.00

18.1 Accounts payable for August invoices

1711 C. Brooks	Part Salary August 2020	£ 667.86
1712 HMRC	Tax and NI August 2020	£557.12
1713 P. Horn	Salary August 2020	£486.24
1714 Microshade	Monthly application service (moving to direct debit)	£124.30
1715 D. Izzard	JV Maint July and Aug	£50
1716 Playsafety	Annual Inspection of Playground equipment	£111.60
1723 Came & Co	Annual Insurance 1.10.2020 to 31.10.2021 /(13 months)	£2919.90
1724 P Horn	Reimbursement for Photocopy Paper £13.99 + VAT	£16.79
Credit Card Payments		
1717 ALCC	Membership Subscription	£40.00
1718 Royal Mail	Postage for Housing plan	£1.50
1719 Royal Mail	Postage for Housing plan	£2.00
1720 Hand dryers UK	Anti bac Gel for Pavilion and Playground	£42.49
1721 Parish Online	Annual Subscription – Mapping software	£180.00
1722 SLCC	Annual Subscription	£202.00
1725 Amazon	2 Toilet Roll holders for Pavilion	£24.98
Standing Orders and Direct Debits		
1704 SO C Brooks	Part Salary August 2020	£1000.00
1705 SO Capel Ground Care	Mowing Contract Jan 2019-Dec 2021	£796.00
1706 DD Smart Pension	Pension August 2020	£176.85
1707 DD EDF Energy	Electricity August 2020	£77.00
1708 DD Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£4.00

1709 DD Castle Water	Pond Water	£4.00
1710 DD Castle Water	Allotment water	£6.00

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

18.2 Insurance renewal documents had been circulated to the Council in advance and values checked. In consideration of the timeframes to allow the Finance Committee to review next year's negotiation of a new 3-year agreement, the sum payable for this year was increased by one month to give a renewal date of 31st October 2021.

19. Meetings attended, and reports by Councillors

Cllr Sparkhall had attended a meeting of the KALC Area Committee via Zoom to discuss various issues including Planning.

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

21. Date of next meeting

7.30pm Planning Meeting Tuesday 22nd September (Zoom)
7.30pm Full Council Meeting Monday 5th October 2020 (Zoom)
10.00am Finance Meeting Wednesday 13th October (Matfield Pavilion)