

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF BRENCHLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 8th MAY 2017 IN MATFIELD PAVILION AT 7.30pm**

Present

Councillors C. Woodley (Chairman) presided, R. Wickham (Vice Chairman), J. Grant, A. de Guingand, Mrs. G. Warner, Mrs. L. Butler, Mrs. N. Marriott, Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk).

In Attendance

Mr. Martin Powell (Consultant to the Council), Borough Cllr. A McDermott, Mr. Brian Stanley (Brenchley Charities), Mr. Kevin Sparkhall, Mrs. Moira Tunstall (Candidates for Co-option).

1. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chairman stood down and the chair was taken temporarily by Cllr. Mrs. Marriott. Cllr. Wickham nominated Cllr. Woodley for Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr. Grant; Cllr. Woodley was duly re-elected as Chairman. Mrs Marriott stood down and Cllr. Woodley resumed the Chair.

Cllr. Mrs. Butler nominated Cllr. Wickham as Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Grant. Following a vote Cllr. Wickham was re-elected to the post.

2. Acceptance of Office

Cllrs. C. Woodley and R. Wickham duly signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed by the Clerk.

3. To accept apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr. D. Batty.

4. To approve Minutes of the last meeting

Approve minutes of the Planning meeting of 18th April 2017.

Resolved: To accept the minutes as an accurate record, duly signed by Cllr. C. Woodley.

5. Announcements from the Chairman

Cllr. Woodley welcomed the new Clerk, Chantal Brooks, to the position. Cllr. Woodley also welcomed the previous postholder, Martin Powell, who is acting as a Consultant to the Council.

6. Appointment of Clerk

Probation objectives had been previously circulated, and were adopted by the Council.

7. To record declaration of Interests on any item on the Agenda

Members are reminded that if any have a *prejudicial* interest in an agenda item, this should be declared at the start of the meeting.

Personal interests could be declared at this point or, alternatively, could be declared at the time a specific item is being discussed if that member wishes to speak on the item in which s/he has a personal interest. In case of doubt about such an interest Councillors have been advised to contact the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

No declarations were received.

8. To adjourn to allow public participation

Lady Elizabeth Akenhead requested an update on progress regarding the Viewpoint and the gates to the Jack Verrall Memorial Garden. These are reported below under Agenda item 12 Brenchley Task Force.

9. Co-option of a new Councillor

Cllr. C. Woodley welcomed Kevin Sparkhall and Moira Tunstall who each spoke briefly, outlining the objectives that would be their priorities, should they be elected as Parish Councillor. Members of the public then left the meeting and short discussion was held followed by a vote. By a show of hands, Kevin Sparkhall was duly elected to join Brenchley Parish Council.

Cllr. C. Woodley thanked Mrs Tunstall for her interest in the Council and invited Cllr. K. Sparkhall to join the meeting. Cllr. Sparkhall duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk.

10. Brenchley Charities a report

Brian Stanley gave a short report on the standing of Brenchley Charities, comprising the John Downer Charity and the War Memorial Charity. The Charities have a balance of approximately £800 in funds with about £300 being used each Christmas. The small number of people (approximately eleven) who receive the boxes are very grateful. However, the current level of donations is very low, which means that the funds are depleting. Martin Powell commented that new bank accounts would be needed to carry on the activity, as well as new Trustees and an administrator. Cllrs. Grant and Mrs. Warner were keen to continue the charities' work and consider options to support this through the precept.

Resolved: Brian Stanley to write a short article in Roundabout to request any volunteers to contact the Clerk. Item to be further discussed at the July Meeting.

11. Allocation of responsibilities and Committee membership

The following roles were agreed:

1. Finance Committee

- i. C. Woodley
- ii. R. Wickham
- iii. A. de Guingand
- iv. D. Batty
- v. Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk)

2. Planning Committee

- i. Mrs. N. Marriott
- ii. Mrs. G. Warner
- iii. Two other, in rotation

3. Kent Association of Local Councils

- i. C. Woodley
- ii. R. Wickham

4. Management Group

- i. C. Woodley
- ii. R. Wickham
- iii. A. de Guingand
- iv. Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk)

5. Policy Group

- i. C. Woodley
 - ii. J. Grant
 - iii. Mrs. L. Butler
 - iv. Mrs. N. Marriott
 - v. Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk)
6. Pavilion Management Committee: A. de Guingand / Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk)
 7. Brenchley Task-Force: R. Wickham / D. Batty
 8. Matfield Task-Force: R. Wickham / Mrs. N. Marriott
 9. Parish Plan: Mrs. L. Butler / D. Batty / Kevin Sparkhall
 10. Great War Centenary Commemoration: C. Woodley / J. Grant
 11. Brenchley Memorial Hall: J. Grant
 12. Matfield Village Hall: Mrs. N. Marriott
 13. Kent Police: Mrs. G. Warner
 14. Kent Highways: J. Grant
 15. Teise Catchment Improvement Group: A. de Guingand
 16. Public Rights of Way and Countryside: Mrs. L. Butler / J. Grant
 17. Cinderhill Memorial Woodland: A. de Guingand
 18. Tree Warden: R. Wickham
 19. Webmaster: Mr. I. McEwen (Resident)

12. Reports and recommendations from Committees and other groups

12.1 Policy Group

The Chairman reported that the Group had met on 26th May, and had proposed a number of recommendations for the Council's consideration.

1. **Resolved:** that the Council makes an application to the Borough Council, to change the name of the authority to Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council.
2. **Resolved:** that the Council approves the preparation of an action plan identifying the key steps to be taken, and the cost implications, associated with a Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is further resolved that Cllrs. Batty and Mrs. Butler be authorized to act on the Council's behalf to provide the plan, with the assistance and support of volunteers from within the Parish.
3. **Resolved:** that the next phase of the Parish Plan should focus on the following:
 - i. the recruitment of more volunteers, to help address specific issues arising from the Survey; and
 - ii. the Council taking the lead in pursuing a number of initiatives that fall within its remit as a public body.
4. **Resolved:** further consideration be given to the principles which will form the basis of the Council's policy position, regarding the planning and development issues facing the Parish. The Policy would be finalized at the Council Meeting on 23rd May.
5. **Resolved: approval** for development of a "strategic statement" for the Council, setting out priorities for the next four years. This would:
 - i. accommodate the key elements of the Parish Plan Survey, which fall within its role as a public body;
 - ii. act as catalyst for improving the way the council operates, and the way it makes and implements decisions; and
 - iii. foster more effective engagement with residents and businesses.

12.2 Brenchley Task Force

Update on Jack Verrall Memorial Garden

Planning permission is being sought by the Clerk, as the site is within a conservation area. Cllrs. Batty and Wickham would consider ways to promote the use of the Gardens.

Viewpoint Indicator

The meeting noted, and welcomed, the announcement that through the efforts of Mr. Simon Marston, £1,000 had been pledged by residents, towards the cost of repairing and reinstating the Indicator. The Clerk will liaise with Mr. Marston to obtain the pledged money, so that an approach can be made to Livingstone Foundry to take the work forward. A sum has already been approved in the Council's budget.

Porters Wood

- a. To maintain the boundary of the Council's land next to that of the end property, a fence is to be erected. The Clerk will contact C. Forward to obtain a quote for the Council to consider.
- b. The Clerk has drafted a letter to Mr. Kidd stating that the patio chairs must be removed immediately. The removal of the logs is to be completed by 1st August.

Telephone box at Petteridge

Confirmation has been received that it is now the property of the Council. It will be looked after by the Community Group in Petteridge, via Claire Stewart. The Clerk will obtain quotes for painting, weatherproofing and replacing glass for the Council's approval.

12.3 Matfield Task Force

Report from resident regarding a tree on the Drying Ground

Mr. Simon Galwey believes that this tree is dying. Cllr. Wickham to report to the Council after his inspection. If it is necessary to remove it, planning consent would be required, as it has a TPO, and is located in a conservation area.

Matfield Pond Weeds

Cllr. Wickham is taking this forward. He reported that the contractor, Mr. Simon Catchpole, is contacting the Environment Agency. When a date is agreed for the work to start, the Clerk will advertise this to ensure Health and Safety is considered.

Matfield Pavilion

Mr. Ian McEwen has advised Cllr. Woodley that Sport England have accepted the last monitoring report, and that they will not require any more. This means that all the conditions relating to the funding provided by Sports England have been satisfied – two years early.

Resolved: to record the Council's appreciation of the efforts made to satisfy the conditions, particularly the contribution made by Matfield Green Cricket Club, and the submission of the reports.

SurveyGizmo

Mr. McEwen had also indicated that the subscription to the above, for use with the Parish Plan Survey, was no longer required. The information held in the database could in future be accessed, by renewing the subscription.

Resolved: to cancel the SurveyGizmo account.

Train Services

Cllr. Grant commented on a campaign encouraging residents to respond to the consultation on the rail franchise, which it is thought could lead to a reduction in train services between Tonbridge and Ashford. He noted that there had been a good response to a petition against any such reduction in services.

Resolved: to thank those that responded to the petition regarding the proposed reduction of train services.

13. Tunbridge Wells Local Plan

Cllr. Marriott reported on the meeting concerning the above, and advised that both the Issue and Options document, and the Role and Function survey of settlements, are open for consultation. Cllr. McDermott advised that the Council's response must be submitted within six weeks of the publication date of 2 May.

There was a brief discussion of some of the key issues associated with the Issues and Options document, including the merits of the five options for guiding development in the borough, the potential impact on those options on rural areas, and the methodology for the ranking of settlements. Of particular interest is the government-imposed housing allocation of around 13,000, to be constructed between 2013 and 2033. Concern was expressed that there might not be enough land to achieve that number, given that 70% of the borough is within the AONB, and that there are constraints within the Green Belt.

Resolved: that at its meeting on 23rd May, the Council will consider its response to the consultations, and make recommendations for its submission to TWBC.

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

To consider any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent, for the reasons to be stated, in accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Planning application 17/01130

The Chairman considered that the following item was an urgent matter, as a response to TWBC must be made by 12th May.

Large 5-bedroom, 3-bathroom house on Land Adjacent to Parsonage Farm Cottages

Several applications have been previously refused. Issues of concern include excessive fenestration, problems with the visibility from the layby, positioning of the gates, size of property on the plot, light pollution, glare from the windows, positioning on the main road.

Recommendation is to Refuse:

1. The site in question is outside the Limits to Built Development of Brenchley village and within the AONB.
2. The site is undeveloped agricultural land in a prominent position on the main Brenchley Road without an existing separate access. It is the last remaining open field on the approach to the village from the west. The D and A Statement for the application makes much of the recently granted appeal for a new dwelling at Honey Meads, but this application can be distinguished as that site was effectively a brownfield site, where disused outbuildings and garages were demolished and replaced by the dwelling. Further there was an existing access serving that property and the new dwelling was small and hidden from the road, being cut into the slope away from the road. The Appeal decision made the point that "there is agreement

between the parties that the proposal would not give rise to any material harm to the local environment or to the wider AONB". The same cannot be said of the subject

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proposal. The proposed dwelling is a very substantial building, prominently situated on a slope facing the road, with excessive fenestration on the south, road facing elevation, giving rise to light pollution and glare. It does not conserve or enhance the AONB.

3. The site is adjacent to a pair of Grade 2 listed cottages and opposite further listed buildings and the proposal does nothing to preserve or enhance the setting of these listed buildings and is totally out of sympathy with those buildings and the area around it.
4. The recently completed Landscape Character Assessment for the Borough has stated that precisely this type of linear development should be avoided between Matfield and Brenchley and that great value should be attached to the dark skies in this area so that incremental development of this kind is inappropriate.
5. The proposed access has poor sight lines that are impinged upon by parked cars in the adjoining lay-by serving Parsonage Cottages. The provision of just two permanent car parking spaces with space for one guest car is inadequate for a property of the proposed size, which might result in overspill parking on the road, at a point almost opposite the entrance to Market Heath Close and where there are already acknowledged parking problems from the near-by Brenchley and Matfield School.
6. As previously stated, this is a very large building for the size of plot and the size of garden available would not appear to be sustainable for a house of the proposed size.

15. Accounts for payment

15.1	M Powell	Salary and Expenses	1159	TFR	£1568.59
15.2	HMRC	Tax and NI	1160	TFR	£287.63
15.3	Shred-it	Disposal of papers	1161	TFR	£182.11
15.4	C Forward	Posts around Green	1162	CHQ	£588.00
15.5	TMS	Photocopy paper	1163	TFR	£22.50
15.6	Wendy Cane	JV Garden Maintenance	1164	TFR	£210.00
15.7	Ms C Brooks	Laptop and Office 365	1165	TFR	£591.95

The Clerk reported expenditure totalling £361.00 plus VAT, in relation to the migration of the Clerk's mailbox and future requirements for the Council's domain name. The expenditure to be met from the contingency budget.

Resolved: Cllrs. Woodley and Mrs. Marriott to authorise these payments.

16. Date of next meeting – Planning meeting

Tuesday 23rd May 7.30 in Matfield Pavilion.