

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF EAST MALLING AND LARKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT CHURCH
FARM ON WEDNESDAY, 7TH DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30P.M.**

PRESENT: Cllrs. D. Thornewell (Chairman), Mrs. M. Moore (Vice-Chairman)(from 7.50p.m.), T. Bishop, Mrs. L. Cook, R. Haffenden, S. Millson, Mrs. A. Oakley, R. Roud, Mrs. J. Sharpe and Mrs. M. Tatton
Cllr. Mrs. Trudy Dean

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs. Sharon Honess, P. Leale, J. Luque, R. Mitchell and Mrs. C. Woodger

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF MINUTES AND APPENDICES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes and Appendices of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 2nd November 2022 be **APPROVED AND SIGNED** by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising.

REPORT BY POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

The above Report, prepared by PCSO Suzi Leng, was **CIRCULATED AND NOTED**.

Cllr. Roud commented that there was also criminal damage to East Malling Institute where a window was smashed and a car broken into in Elm Crescent and a handbag stolen.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

(i) **Ratification of Planning Comments Submitted Since 2ND November 2022**

Planning Comments submitted to the Borough Council since 2nd November 2022 had been **CIRCULATED AND NOTED**, this action was **RATIFIED**.

(ii) **List of Decision Notices Received since 2ND November 2022**

The List of Decision Notices issued by the Borough Council since 2nd November 2022 had been **CIRCULATED AND NOTED**.

(iii) **Draft Local Plan** – Update

The Chairman reported that the London Green Belt Council had sent through a copy of a letter from Michael Gove MP outlining amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

They have discussed this issue and are pleased to see the following:-

- Greater protection for the Green Belt with changes to the NPPF
- Emphasis on brownfield first in order to protect greenfield development
- The abolition of top-down housing figures acknowledging that they are “unrealistic”
- Greater involvement of local communities in planning and especially local plans

- More control of the Inspectorate stopping developers obtaining permission through appeals against local opposition and in forcing local authorities to sacrifice Green Belt in Local Plans
- Strengthening neighbourhood plans
- Stopping land banking by introducing financial penalties for not building out when they have planning permission

They will be keeping a close eye on the Levelling Up Bill in order that these important changes are enshrined in law.

The Chairman reported that there is going to be a further report back to a Borough Council meeting in March 2023. He has also been promised that he will be notified of the procedure for the Borough Council dealing with the sites it owns in the Urban Capacity Statement. Matt Broughton has stated he stood by his statement to the public meetings that he did not intend that either of the two car parks in West Malling or the Borough open spaces in Leybourne should be built upon. He added though the decision would be for Members.

The Chairman further reported the Planning Inspector has paused the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Inquiry as he was concerned about the Capel proposal being within the Green Belt and that the plan maybe “unsound”.

Cllr. Trudy Dean reported that West Malling Parish Council were suggesting there should be a further stage of the current Regulation 18 procedure to deal with the new sites put forward by developers and to refine the Local Plan before Regulation 19 is started.

Cllr. Millson expressed concern that the Leader of the Opposition opposed the changes being suggested by Michael Gove MP.

The Chairman reported that West Malling Parish Council are suggesting that we should work with them as before in seeking to extend the Green Belt eastwards and they were also seeking involve the Broadwater Action Group and Protect West Malling. Members **AGREED** we would support a joint petition to extend the Green Belt.

(iv) **Any Other Planning Matters**

Cllr. Mrs. Tatton reported on a meeting in respect of the proposal by Clarion to demolish the garage blocks on the west of the Winterfield Estate. It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Mrs. Tatton ask Clarion for a presentation of the plans to the Parish Council.

RATIFICATION OF PAYMENTS SINCE 2nd NOVEMBER 2022

Th List of Accounts paid out of Meeting since the meeting on 2nd November had been **CIRCULATED AND NOTED** and the action taken was **RATIFIED**.

REPORTS ON STANDING COMMITTEES HELD DURING NOVEMBER 2022

(i) **Finance and General Purposes – 21st November 2022**

Cllr. Mrs. Moore presented these Minutes which she felt were self-explanatory and it was **AGREED** they be **ADOPTED** as a true record of the Meeting.

The Chairman commented that we have received the tax base figure from the Borough Council so it will now be possible to calculate the Parish Precept for 2023/2024 but we are going to query the formula used in respect of the number of Band D properties the figure is based on.

EAST MALLING WAR MEMORIAL RENOVATION

The Clerk reported that an updated quotation had been received from Burslem's totalling £8,966 plus VAT had been received for the renovation of the Memorial. It was **AGREED** that the quotation be **ACCEPTED** and a meeting be arranged with the Chairman and Burslem's to discuss the extent of the inscriptions that need re-inscribing.

Cllr. Millson reported that a resident had difficulty at the recent Remembrance Day ceremony gaining access to the Village Green with a wheelchair and wondered if a dropped kerb could be provided.

PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Chairman drew attention to the copy maps that had been circulated and commented that Larkfield should be included in the Maidstone and Malling area not Chatham and Aylesford.

The Chairman explained the maps and made comment that Tonbridge will now extend as far as Stansted and New Ash Green.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman's Report had been **CIRCULATED** as follows:-

East Malling 20mph Scheme.

With the Council papers are the maps the proposal for a 20mph scheme together with an explanatory email from Trudy. It will be funded from her members allocation. Trudy asks if we are happy for this scheme to go out for public consultation.

I ask that members agree to this happening please.

Parliamentary Boundaries

This was discussed at the recent borough meeting where members aired their objections to various aspects of these proposals as they affect Tonbridge and Malling. The maps with the council papers show the new Maidstone-Malling constituency; the revised Tonbridge one; and the changed Chatham Aylesford seat which still includes Larkfield but has been expanded to take in more of the Medway Towns to compensate for the loss of the Ditton and Aylesford South wards.

The proposals do not affect the borough boundaries or the recently approved new warding scheme for the Borough that will apply from next Mays election.

The Boundary Commission has been informed that we still think Larkfield should be in the Maidstone-Malling seat. Please ratify this action.

East Malling Village Green

Our solicitors report that the Land Registry have now agreed to grant title to us in respect of the village green and the formal documentation is awaited though delays in dealing with such claims continue.

Chaucer Way Verge by Tesco.

Following our further complaints the narrow grass verge has been tarmacked over and does look better than the churned up muddy area.

Four Acres Village Green.

The items on this green have now been removed by the Housing Association. They have indicated to Michelle Tatton they did not realise it was a registered village green.

Changes to Voting in Person at Elections.

The Government's changes to voting procedures at all future elections have now become law though some of the details still are unclear but the Electoral Commission indicate they hope guidance will be possible by 9th January.

Basically everyone voting in person will have to produce photographic evidence of identity such as a driving licence or passport. Those who do have the prescribed documents will have to obtain a Voter Authority Certificate from the Borough Council elections office.

The Electoral Commission is to run a campaign to make people aware of these changes but my view is that it increases the view electors should consider voting by post as one only has to give a date of birth and national insurance number.

There is a form on the Commissions website that can be printed off or a form can be requested from the borough by emailing voting@tmhc.gov.uk or phone 01732 876022.

Kent Association of Parish Councils AGM.

I attended this meeting on 19th November where Roger Gough Leader of KCC spoke and Matthew Scott the Kent Crime Commissioner. A memorable phrase from Cllr Gough was that he felt the Government's announcement that they can increase their council tax by 5per cent is that it means "The wolf is no longer in the kitchen but is still outside the kitchen door". He said that a long term solution is needed to local government financing especially the care of the elderly and children. Amongst other things Matthew Scott spoke of a website and leaflet they are preparing to set out victim of crimes rights from the event through to any court prosecution.

A number of resolutions were passed and I have handed out a sheet recording these including one from Teston.

In respect of the 20mph proposals for East Malling, Cllr. Mrs. Dean asked for confirmation that the Parish Council agree with what is shown on the maps circulated. It will include signs and markings on the road stating 20mph.

After discussion it was **AGREED** that Kent County Council be asked to go out for Public Consultation on the proposals but it should be pointed out that Godden Drive is a private road.

The Chairman reported that he has received communication from East Malling Research Station regarding a Public Right of Way across East Malling Village Green and he is meeting with them tomorrow to discuss the matter.

REPORT BY BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr. Mrs. Dean's reported as follows:-

1. Government legislation is requiring everyone to have photo ID in order to vote at any election. Most people will use a passport or driving licence. However, there have been many criticisms that the restricted number of qualifying ID cards will favour older people and disadvantage younger and poorer people. Whilst Voter Authentication Certificates will be issued by the Borough Council on request, this will be a single sheet of A4 paper. For older people, a senior's Bus Pass can be applied for online and anyone can request a Postal Vote by ringing TMBC at 01732 876022 or emailing your request of voting@tmbc.gov.uk. Postal Vote ballot papers come direct to your home for every election over several years.
2. The Government is offering KCC up to £10 million to prepare a programme over three years to create Family Hubs across the County. These hubs are likely to be centred on existing Children's and Youth Centres. They are to provide a comprehensive source of digital advice and face to face services for all children from pregnancy and birth 8 and in some cases to 25. Professional staff will be allocated in these centres.
3. KCC has received a second highly critical report on its provision for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. OFSTED inspected the service in 2019 and set out 9 areas of improvement KCC needed to make to meet Government standards. They re-inspected in October 2022 and reported that KCC had not made sufficient progress on any of the recommended actions. The department for Education will now decide whether to monitor KCC progress or intervene directly in the administration of the necessary changes. KCC has accepted the findings of the report, apologised to parents and children with SEND conditions and committed the Council to meeting all the targets and setting a budget to enable that to happen. Kent has higher numbers of Children with Special Needs and Disabilities who have an Education and Health Care Plan than many other Councils and a higher proportion of them are educated in Special Schools rather than with extra support in mainstream schools.
4. KCC is being invited to bid for further funding for pedestrian and cycle routes in Kent. Each local Council is being asked to suggest their three highest priority paths. TMBC have apparently submitted only two, one of which is likely to be implemented. It concerns reinstating the towpath between Aylesford and Alington Lock. However, KCC confirmed that money given under the scheme could not be used to reinstate the river bank which supports the towpath and which had collapsed into the River Medway. The cycle path would not therefore be able to be completed. I have suggested replacing it with an alternative scheme but there appears to be too little time to prepare an alternative proposal.
5. KCC has confirmed the withdrawal of 38 subsidised bus routes including the 70 and 58 which affect our area. These routes will end in February. I attended a cross party grouping of Parish Councils in Borough Green last week which was attended by Norman Kemp of Nu Venture who have taken on some of the axed routes. Councillors discussed the possibility of restoring some parts of these routes by commissioning joint funded routes, commissioning community bus routes with an alternative provider or lobbying KCC to use some of their Bus Improvement Grant to fund the most used parts of the lost services.
6. West Malling Library is being prepared for opening and in the meantime staff are working at Larkfield and Tonbridge.
7. Operation Brock will be in place from 12th December in preparation for the holiday season.

8. The three West Malling Churches are planning to hose a “Warm Welcome Space” every Monday morning at the Baptist Church from 10 till 12 am for people struggling to heat their homes. The first session will be on Monday 12th December. This complements the Larkfield Churches who have similarly set up a warm room at the Sycamore Tree Centre, New Hythe Lane, opposite Morrisons every Monday and Wednesday from 9.30am to 9.00p.m. every Thursday from 9.30a.m.to 3.30p.m. In the East Malling Centre, Chapman Way every Friday morning the café will open its doors between 10.00am and 2.00p.m. with free hot drinks, soup, board games, free Wifi and friendly company. So, its Monday at West Malling and Larkfield, Wednesday at Larkfield, Thursday at Larkfield and Friday at East Malling.
9. Disruption at another Waste to Energy Plant has meant KCC Waste and Energy Incinerator at Allington will be open overnight to take additional vehicles in order to clear the daytime for vehicles from the new area.
10. Nick Stapleton has resigned as Borough Councillor for West Malling and Leybourne. As we are within six months of full Borough Council elections, there will be no By-Election.
11. Public Consultation on the new Parliamentary Constituencies closes today.
12. South Eastern Water lifted the hosepipe ban in Kent on 30th November, it’s been raining a lot since then too!
13. There is a new rail timetable for South Eastern starting on 11th December 2022.

West Malling Parish Council will be contributing £3,000 towards the Birling Road Inquiry, an additional £1,000, they have been given permission for 6 caravans for a temporary period of five years.

Lunsford School are having the portacabins removed on the 13th and 14th December, whilst the school is still open, these will be removed by cranes. This decision was made by KCC and the Governors are totally aghast at this proposal particularly for safety reasons with children present.

Concern has been expressed by the Managing Director of Pineapple regarding the traffic held up on Leybourne Way and feels he traffic lights need to be phased differently.

Cllr. Mrs. Oakley mentioned about the boy racers congregating at the bottom of New Hythe Lane and residents are still complaining. KCC intend installing speed camera signs hopefully as a deterrent.

Cllr. Mrs. Oakley has asked that the Warm Spaces being provided should be added to the Borough Council’s website and they are starting to do this.

There are 95 people in temporary accommodation in Tonbridge and Malling.

Tonbridge Town Centre – the Borough Council have identified areas that could be developed being Beales/Angel Centre and they want this included in the Local Plan.

Cllr. Bishop reported that he attended the Finance Committee meeting and £700,000 is being given to the Leisure Trust the energy costs to enable the Leisure Centre, etc to remain open.

Cllr. Roud attended the General Purposes Committee where elections were discussed.

Cllr. Roud reported that the Licensing Committee are increasing the licence for street trading and there is a consultation on animal licensing, i.e. breeding, etc.

Cllr. Mrs. Tatton reported that she has asked for an update on the Broadwater development but has received nothing further as yet.

Cllrs. Roud, Mrs. Woodger and Trudy Dean attended a ceremony at the East Malling Research Station with the Lieutenant attending.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr. Millson reported that the Apple Tree Room in the grounds of St. James Church could start construction of the building in February 2023.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Members of the Public present.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 11th January 2023

CLOSURE

The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 9.25p.m.

Chairman
11th January 2023