

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF EAST MALLING AND LARKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER 2020 AT CHURCH FARM HALL AT 7.30P.M.**

PRESENT: Cllrs. D. Thornewell (Chairman), Mrs. M. Moore (Vice-Chairman), T. Bishop, Mrs. L. Cook, R. Haffenden, P. Leale, Mrs. J. Manser, R. Mitchell, R. Moore and Mrs. M. Tatton

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs. Mrs. L. Hogben, J. Luque, S. Millson, Mrs. A. Oakley, R. Roud, Mrs. J. Sharpe and Mrs. C. Woodger
Cllr. Mrs. Trudy Dean

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF MINUTES AND APPENDICES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes and Appendices of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 2nd September 2020 be **APPROVED AND SIGNED** by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

(i) **Ratification of Planning Comments Submitted**

The planning comments that had been submitted to the Borough Council since the last meeting had been circulated, the action taken was **RATIFIED**.

(ii) **List of Decision Notices Received since 2nd September 2020**

Members attention was drawn to the List of Decision Notices issued by the Borough Council, attached to the Agenda.

(iii) **Aylesford Newsprint**

The Chairman reported that we have submitted comments on the footpaths, stream and the amenity value of these. There is a traffic update. It is likely that this application will not be reported to Area 3 Planning until the New Year.

(iv) **Forty Acres/Green Belt**

It is likely that the Public Inquiry will be taking place virtually but the Inspector is going to try in November to make sure it works so therefore there will be test sessions.

In respect of the Green Belt, developers are arguing about this policy, as it should have been dealt with first in the hearings.

The Crowd Justice funds so far stand at £9,030 plus donations from members of the public totalling £1,020.

RATIFICATION OF PAYMENTS MADE SINCE LAST MEETING INCLUDING DIRECT DEBITS - attached

The List of Payments made during the period when meetings have not been held had been **CIRCULATED** with the Agenda with also a list of Direct Debits, the action taken was **RATIFIED**.

WHIMBREL GREEN AND MARLOWE ROAD TREES

The Chairman reported that Martin and Daniel have cut back trees away from the path at Whimbrel Green and a quotation of £1,026 has been received for work to the trees at Marlowe Road.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman's Report had been circulated, as follows:-

Introduction

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who came to the last meeting and we continue to keep an eye on the ever-changing rules and guidance about how the parish operates. In respect of meetings the latest guidance still recognizes specifically that parish councils may meet on a socially distanced basis with hand gel etc. And we do not I am afraid now provide coffee! Val continues to work from home, with visits to the parish office as necessary, and Syretta is now working from the office mornings on Mondays to Thursdays. She has made good progress collecting in the allotment rents and I will report on that next.

Allotments

About 70 per cent of holders have now paid their rents and the payments are still coming in. Some have paid by bank transfer but the majority have paid by cheque or cash. We are reletting plots where people have given up. Syretta tells me that several allotment holders have said the allotments have been a godsend as somewhere they can go in the uncertain period.

Remembrance Sunday

While in the office today the East Malling Vicar telephoned and this year given the restriction of numbers able to attend church services there will just be a short service around the War Memorial with the laying of wreaths. We are getting the usual wreath to lay on behalf of the parish council. There will be no singing! There will be a service at Holy Trinity but the details have yet to be worked out.

Planning Applications

My thanks again to the members of the Planning Committee for responding to the applications as they have come in and we have been able to respond within the 21 days the borough allows. We have though asked for extra time in respect of Aylesford Newsprint site though comments have been sent to KCC about the public footpaths with a copy to Borough and also concerning the old Mill site and stream with an extract of Mike Fullers book on the mills of the East Malling stream.

I attended the meeting with Ditton and Aylesford. All were agreed that in principle the current application should be supported and Bellingham Way should be opened to Station Road with an

HGV ban on that end. Aylesford however wanted to put restrictions on users so it was not a through road which is not possible anyway for a public road as proposed. They agreed to consider further and we await developments.

As far as I can see the only major applications the borough has not yet determined by issuing decision notices are the Old Coal Yard, on the corner of Leybourne Way, and the last one on the Winterfield depot site. The first is held up by producing legal agreements as to the pavement (KCC) and a contribution to recreational provision.

Forty Acres Planning Position

As reported the second application is now on the borough website and people have been sending in comments. The flyer mentioned at the last meeting was produced and delivered to large parts of East Malling, the area of Larkfield near the site; and that in Leybourne too with the agreement of Leybourne Parish Council. It is understood that the Borough Council propose to leave the application in abeyance pending the outcome of the December appeal as Wates declined to withdraw it.

As to the December Appeal the borough council have instructed outside planners to put the case for the refusal of the application given its officers were conflicted given the strong advice they gave it should be approved. We also understand they propose to call a Landscape witness which is a good idea I think. Our own legal team have been preparing including Counsel and our planning witness.

Examination in Public of the Draft Local Plan

We have also been preparing for these hearings in October and November with the two parish councils with Leybourne support “appearing” at the November ones. These are virtual hearings but the public can watch via U Tube and I obtained details from the Inspectorate which have been circulated to members. Only those chosen can speak on the issues as each arises. In our case on the Green Belt extension. Members will continue to be informed of developments.

Crowd Funding

As I write this has now reached £8,908. In addition we have received donations direct from people in both parishes totalling £1,020.

Highway Issues

In respect of highway maintenance issues such as damaged signs, potholes etc we report these when drawn to our attention via the portal to the KCC highways dept.

South East Water

In connection with the proposed extraction of water from the site they acquired from the administrators of Aylesford Newsprint I am aware from a resident they wish to do a bore hole in Well Street on private land. They have recently approached us for a similar borehole in the corner of the Larkfield Playing Fields near the M20 and New Hythe Lane. I met their two consultant reps with Anita Oakley and they promise to send Val a draft deed and plan. It would be there for about two years and they wish to do the work probably in November. In principle this seems to be ok but I will report further when the drafts are received. We did raise with them the generality of their proposals and they confirmed they had bought the site of the old mill pond (Millhall Mill as it once was) and the land by the stream between it and the railway. They indicated they may be willing to set up a

site meeting to explain their proposals and we await to hear on this too. It is of course in Ditton and they would need to be involved.

The Chairman added that MR105 at Four Acres has now been re-surfaced by KCC to the last entrance into Four Acres.

Public Toilets, Martin Square – The Borough Council are still hoping to transfer the public toilets from 1st April 2021. They have asked who we are using to act on the legal matters and this has now been passed to a Senior Solicitor at Invicta Law. It was **AGREED** that we would like to know about the refurbishment of the toilets prior to transfer, this should include looking at the trees.

The Chairman reminded Members of the Litter Pick on Saturday 17th October 2020 meeting at Church Farm at 10.30a.m., unfortunately there will be no refreshments

REPORT BY BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr. Mrs. Tatton reported on the North Downs Railway – Kent Downs Line – they were talking about Community Engagement – work has been carried out at Snodland and New Hythe stations. The next meeting of the Medway Valley Line is on 15th October and she is hoping to attend this to see how it works.

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Mrs. Tatton be appointed as the Parish Council representative to attend these Meetings.

Cllr. Mrs. Tatton and Cllr. Roud have completed the Traffic Issues report for East Malling which covers matters of parking, pollution, etc which to be presented to KCC Highways. It was **AGREED** that subject to this being possible the report be circulated to all neighbouring Parish Councils. At present maintenance issues are reported to either the Borough Council or KCC depending on who is responsible.

Cllr. Bishop reported that he is pleased that it is being reviewed as to whether the Leisure Trust take over the Country Park. Martin Guyton is endeavouring to keep the Leisure Centre running during the pandemic.

Cllr. Bishop reported that the Borough Council have had a loss of £4 million income in 2020/2021, in 21/22 it is likely to be £2 million and 22/23 - £1 million.

In 19/20 the Borough Council were top for collecting Council Tax in Kent.

Waste levels up by the following :- Black bins – 34%; Glass and Cans – 53%; Paper and Card – 68% and food waste – 24%.

Bulky Waste collection is still being reviewed.

Cllr. Bishop added that if you live in a flat the black bags can be placed in any bin as they have no other system in place at present. A trial is to be carried out in Tonbridge in January 2021.

Cllr. Mitchell commented that the crisp bags being collected for the Kent Air Ambulance, a box for collection is available in the Parish Council Office, now have to be folded and placed in a larger crisp bag if available.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 4th November 2020

CLOSURE – The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 8.30p.m.