

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF EAST MALLING AND LARKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019 AT CHURCH FARM AT 8.00P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. D. Thornewell (Chairman), Mrs. M. Moore (Vice-Chairman), T. Bishop,  
Mrs. L. Cook, P. Leale, Mrs. J. Manser, S. Millson, R. Mitchell, R. Moore, Mrs.  
A. Oakley, R. Roud, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Mrs. M. Tatton and Mrs. C. Woodger  
Daniel Markham                      Resident of East Malling

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**      Cllrs. Mrs. L. Hogben and J. Luque  
   PCSO Suzi Leng  
   Mandy Harris                      Community Warden

**APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF MINUTES AND APPENDIX OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup>  
NOVEMBER 2019**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes and Appendix of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 be **APPROVED AND SIGNED** by the Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman mentioned that the Calendar of Meetings has been circulated to Members and asked that the Parish Walk in October be changed to the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020 as he is away for the date on the Calendar.

**REPORT BY POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER**

PCSO Suzi Leng had provided reports for both East Malling and Larkfield which had been circulated to Members present. (Appendixed to these Minutes).

**REPORT BY COMMUNITY WARDEN**

Mandy Harris not being present, there was no report.

**ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND CHEQUES FOR SIGNATURE**

The List of Accounts for Payment had been **CIRCULATED** and was **APPROVED** and it was **AGREED** the relevant cheques be **SIGNED**. (Appendixed to these Minutes).

**REPORTS ON MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES HELD DURING NOVEMBER**

(i)      **Planning and Development**

**6<sup>TH</sup> November**

Cllr. Thornewell presented these Minutes which he felt were self-explanatory but mentioned the planning application in respect of The Rising Sun PH. More information has been requested.

**20<sup>th</sup> November**

Cllr. Thornewell presented these Minutes and commented that a further meeting has now taken place with representatives from Wates, prospective developers of Forty Acres.

The Liberty Appeals commenced on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019 and he and other Councillors have attended.

Cllr. Mitchell reported that he has met with a KCC Landscape Officer and they will be felling the tree behind his property which is on the back on the A20.

It was **AGREED** that both sets of Minutes be **ADOPTED** as true records of the Meetings.

(ii) **Amenities**, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Cllr. Bishop presented these Minutes and commented that we are awaiting quotations for the work to the East Malling War Memorial.

It was **AGREED** these Minutes be **ADOPTED** as a true record of the Meeting.

(iii) **Allotments and Open Spaces**, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Cllr. Roud presented these Minutes and commented that he had met with Liz Stedman regarding the positioning of a bench at the Rocks Close green in memory of her parents. It was **AGREED** that the residents who bound the green be consulted in particular to establish where the Orchids are. Also, it was felt that rather than a plaque, it would be better if the Memorial bench be carved.

Cllr. Thornewell reported that we have heard that the application to KCC to register Whimbrel Green as a Village Green has been approved and the Parish Council have been commended on our various applications to register land throughout the Parish as Village Greens, all successful.

The Clerk was asked to contact the Medway Valley Partnership to find out about the report they were to provide in respect of Cottenham Orchard.

Cllr. Roud suggested that members look at Macey's Meadow in West Malling as he feels that Cottenham Orchard could in the future be similar.

It was **AGREED** these Minutes be **ADOPTED** as a true record of the Meeting.

(iv) **Finance and General Purposes**, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Cllr. Mrs. Moore presented these Minutes which she felt were self-explanatory.

Cllr. Mrs. Moore mentioned that the Interim Internal Audit had taken place for 2019/2020 and more the Council need to form an Investment Strategy, this is now necessary if Council's hold than £100,000 at any one time.

Cllr. Mrs. Moore attended the KALC Annual General Meeting at Ditton Community Centre.

It was **AGREED** these Minutes be **ADOPTED** as a true record of the Meeting.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman's Report was **CIRCULATED**, as follows:-

I have been a bit tied up with the General election!

### **Footpath MR116.**

I have however now walked this path from Broadwater Road across to Lavenders Road and I am pleased to say since the Bellway Inquiry KCC have cut the overgrown section between the By-Pass and Lavenders Road. I have sent an email thanking Sam Honey.

### **Ramblers Walk.**

I am doing a walk for the local Ramblers on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February starting at 10.30am from East Malling High Street car park via Well street to Manor Park and back. About 4 miles finishing about 12.30pm back at the start. All welcome.

### **Quarry Wood "Pod" for retail and café restaurant.**

Planning permission has been agreed for the Crown Estate Commissioners to build a pod over the surface water "pond" plus another 142 car parking spaces at Quarry Wood subject to a number of conditions. The application includes constructing a roundabout at this junction as we have previously seen as part of KCCs plans to ease the flow of traffic at the junctions along the A20 between the Maidstone Boundary and the A228. The application was reported to the Area 3 Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> November and the full report can be seen there. The only objector was Aylesford Parish Council and 10 private individuals had written in plus Ditton parish council all mostly on highway grounds (extra traffic on A20). Maidstone BC promised comments but I was told none had been received.

We did ask about the bus layby used by the Service 58 and which is shown moved to the east of the existing Hal Road junction and were assured this would be taken into account. The new bus layby on the plans seemed sufficient. This was a matter raised at the last meeting here about service 58. The next meeting on this subject is here on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January at 9.30am to review progress.

### **White Post Field, Aylesford.**

Permission has also been granted for up to 840 dwellings on this site which is included as one of the housing sites in the submitted draft Local Plan. Again the full report can be read online. The application includes a site for a primary school as requested by KCC and provision for a surgery. The applicants can either provide it on site or by upgrading others depending on what the "NHS" decides. These and other matters will be covered by a legal agreement. There were strong objections by Aylesford Parish Council on highway grounds but the application with its link road from Hermitage lane across to Poppy Fields roundabout was supported by KCC.

The legal agreements have to be completed by 12th May 2020 and if not the application has to be reported back so I think an actual decision notice will not yet be issued.

I am very aware of the controversy surrounding this application and the concern of Tracey Crouch. She had objected but was unable to attend the meeting having sent apologies via the Council Leader. I think at the root of her objections is what many of us see as the unsatisfactory way the

Governments Planning rules operate especially where there is no up-to-date Local Plan as here in this borough. I feel once we are into the New Year we should pursue this with the two MPs who represent this parish.

Aylesford Parish Council who sent a Councillor to object was again much on highway grounds and that is undermined as an approach by the support of the KCC who are the highway experts for responding to planning applications and indeed the Local Plan. The Borough has no highway officers and relies on them.

I would of course prefer none of these green field sites were used for housing and this site used to be within the strategic gap between Maidstone and Medway Gap. It however was “abolished” as a concept by the Government in 2012. And the idea of local “green wedges” before that also by Government in writing the rules for local plans.

I am sorry to go about this but here again not only was the site one the borough itself put forward for the new Local Plan but it has no special protection like Green Belt or Flood plain and of course the borough lacks a 5 year housing land supply so the Governments rule is that planning permission should be granted.

#### **Parkside.**

This too was granted subject to Legal agreements and many conditions with only two people coming along to make representations. In this case we will receive the decision notices and it can be reported to Planning and Development. At the meeting there was discussion about lowering the speed limit to 30mph in New Road; flooding issues; the protection of the trees; and the condition was altered to prevent any further openings in the wall. We need to follow up these issues in the New Year.

#### **Litter bin on Tesco Path.**

I gather the litter bin on the path between Brooklands Road and Tesco has now been dealt with. It seems it had been left since the new refuse arrangements came into being and it had given rise to a number of complaints.

As this is the last full council meeting I wish you all a happy Christmas.

Cllr. Bishop said that apparently the application for Whitepost Field has been called into the Secretary of State due to the controversial nature of the application.

The Chairman said he had written to Tracey Crouch MP expressing his concern at the Government’s position in respect of Planning which he feels needs review and once the General Election is over a multi-party meeting be held with the two MPs elected, possibly in Whitehall. The Chairman added that he fears it would be difficult to oppose this application at a Public Inquiry as you would need various experts to fight the case, particularly traffic experts, which would be extremely expensive.

The Chairman commented on the Parkside site that has been approved by the Borough Council but we will need to follow up issues in the New Year in respect of lowering the speed limit in New Road to 30mph; flooding issues; the protection of the trees and the condition to prevent any further openings in the wall.

Liberty Appeals – the Public Inquiry opened on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December and is expected to last until either the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> December. In respect of the Amber Lane Appeal, the developers legal representatives said that according to Natural England in a document dated 21<sup>st</sup> November that Warren Wood is not Ancient Woodland and does not appear as such on the Tithe Map of 1839. David questioned this and the following day it became apparent that it is Ancient Woodland and they were looking at the wrong Parcel No. on the Tithe Map. It became difficult as Natural England’s designation of Ancient Woodland is described as “provisional”. The Woodland Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust and Surrey Wildlife Trust all objected to the application.

Forty Acres – the Chairman reported that at the recent Meeting with Wates, discussions have been taking place with Mark Hayton – Larkfield Community Church – that the proposed community building on the above site be for their use as the Parish Council have said that we do not wish for another village hall type building.

Wates will be going back to KCC regarding the link road within the proposed development.

The Chairman said he felt the Planning Inspectors at the Public Inquiries are not interested in individuals comments and objections. they want the opinion of experts in certain fields.

#### **REPORT BY BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

Cllr. Mrs. Oakley reported that she attended the Communities and Housing Advisory Board, Martin Guyton gave a presentation in respect of the Leisure Trust. The catering for the Leisure Centres has now been taken over by the Leisure Trust. The refurbishment at Larkfield Leisure Centre is moving on.

In respect of the outsourcing of Leybourne Lakes Country Park – the tender process to start in Spring/Summer 2020.

Temporary Accommodation – in 2018/2019 there were 36 households in temporary accommodation and in 2019/2020 there are 54. The number of rough sleepers in 2018 is estimated at 12.

Cllr. Bishop said that at the recent Joint Transportation Board Meeting where the results of the Public Consultation on the A20 improvements were noted. There will now not be a shared cycle/footway on the A20.

Cllr. Mrs. Oakley said that Highways England have now re-connected the drainage into the M20 which has alleviated the flooding problem in Lunsford Lane.

Cllr. Roud reported he attended the recent Licensing and Appeals Committee Meeting and the Taxi Licence has been increased by £5 to £200 for 2020/2021. The fee for the knowledge will increase by £20 – from £40 to £60.

Considerable discussion took place regarding the review of the licence for The Farmhouse in West Malling, following problems with drugs and violence. The Licence for Aylesford Club is also under review.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Daniel Markham commented that Wates have an planning application in Tenterden very similar to that proposed for Forty Acres and they are working in partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**      Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020

**CLOSURE**

The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 9.20p.m.

Chairman  
8<sup>th</sup> January 2020