

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF EAST MALLING AND LARKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 3RD MARCH 2021 AT LARKFIELD VILLAGE HALL**

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs. Mrs. A. Oakley, Mrs. M. Tatton and Mrs. C. Woodger

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF MINUTES AND APPENDICES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 6TH JANUARY 2021

After the addition of Cllr. Haffenden being present at the Meeting it was **AGREED** that the Minutes and Appendices of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th January 2021 be **APPROVED AND SIGNED** by the Chairman.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE – Cllr. Mrs. Lyn Cook

As Cllr. Mrs. Cook will be working away from April to October she was granted Leave of Absence for six months from April.

MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reported that a letter had been sent to Tom Tugenhadt and Tracey Crouch regarding the Local Plan and they have taken this up with the Minister concerned. We are still awaiting a response from the Planning Inspectorate as to the outcome of the Local Plan.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

(i) **Ratification of Planning Comments Submitted Since 6th January 2021**

The list of Planning comments submitted to the Borough Council had been circulated, this action was **RATIFIED**.

(ii) **List of Decision Notices Received since 6TH January 2021**

The list of Decision Notices issued by the Borough Council had been circulated along with the additional list circulated at this Meeting were **NOTED**.

The Chairman commented that the Clerk had received telephone calls from the neighbour in respect of the application approved at 8 Laburnum Drive regarding boundary issues and he has been advised to seek legal advice.

(iii) **Draft Local Plan Update**

a The Chairman commented that there is nothing further to report on this matter but there is a summary on the Agenda for the Planning and Transportation Committee.

(iv) **Forty Acres Public Inquiry Update**

The Chairman reported that nothing further had been heard in respect of the Appeal Decision.

RATIFICATION OF PAYMENTS SINCE LAST MEETING INCLUDING DIRECT DEBITS

The List of Accounts paid out of Meeting and Direct Debits had been **CIRCULATED**, this action was **RATIFIED**.

The Chairman reported that all the payments have been made to date to Richard Buxton Solicitors in respect of the Forty Acres Appeal and the Local Plan. We still have approximately £1,200 donated by local residents which may be required towards future legal fees in respect of the Local Plan.

The bank balance as at 28th February 2021 was £180,963.12.

TREES – EAST MALLING VILLAGE GREEN

The Chairman reported that Savills had contacted about trees from our Village Green overhanging the bungalow at the entrance to the Research Station. He said he had met with Qualitree with a view to obtaining a quotation for the necessary work to the trees, they have been told that the Village Green is in a Conservation Area so Borough Council consent will be required for any work carried out.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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

Roadmap out of Lockdown.

With the Prime Minister announcing possible dates for the way out of the current lockdown there has been a flurry of enquiries. The fair has asked about using East Malling Playing Fields. We have had some village hall potential bookings and we know the halls will be used for the KCC and Crime Commissioner elections in May. There will also be the return of football. At the moment although some people are taking the dates as a firm decision by the Government we are stressing they are only the earliest date restrictions will be eased and we can only make provisional bookings or arrangements. The issue of the Annual Parish Meeting also remains unresolved and we are aware KALC is pressing for a Government decision.

Local Plan.

Since my February Report the borough has responded at length to the Planning Inspectors and the Minister has been asked to intervene with the support of the two MPs with the support of several parish councils including ourselves.

Responses are now awaited to both. While this uncertainty remains I think in planning terms little weight can be given to the draft Local Plan and the issue of the borough not having a 5 year land supply for housing will be the big issue for pending planning applications.

Parkside, East Malling.

A detailed application has been received by the borough and subject to checking should appear for comment shortly.

SE Water Site off Bellingham Way.

Work has proceeded at pace clearing the site they have purchased. No planning application yet. I have asked Borough to check what is being done does not need planning consent. They do have powers as statutory undertakers which exempts them from some planning rules.

Village Hall Electrical Work.

We await to hear from the contractor for a start date for the work at both East Malling and Larkfield main halls. It will be recalled the work at Church Farm was done last year.

Verge at Chaucer Way.

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This continues to look a real mess and I am getting many complaints about it.

East Malling Village Sign

The sign recently fell down and it seems the post had rotted through. It has been there a long time. The sign has been recovered to Church Farm and it is possible while it is down the East Malling Conservation Group may be able to follow up their previous offer to renovate it. Val is also making enquiries of the sign firm that advertises in the parish magazine. We think the firm that originally did this sign no longer is in business.

Trees on East Malling Village Green.

Following complaints by Savills on behalf of the East Malling Research about trees overhanging the bungalow property at the entrance to the research I am meeting our contractors on site on Wednesday morning with a view to getting a quote. The trees are within the Conservation Area so consent will be needed but they do that as part of their service.

This also reminds me we need to follow up with our already instructed solicitors the registering of the ownership of the green with the Land Registry. They need to prepare and for me to swear in front of other solicitor's Statutory Declaration. Hopefully this can be done in the coming weeks.

East Malling Allotments.

Following meeting some allotment holders they have cut back the trees that were overshadowing their plots and made the footpath through from the car park clearer. But they did make the point as has a local resident that the strip of land between this and the railway provides a green buffer that needs managing. I therefore request that council agrees we approach Medway Valley Partnership for advice.

East Malling Flooding.

Roger Roud and I have investigated the issue of the eastern part of the stream which runs from Church Walk via Court Lodge through Churchfields houses and down inside the wall. It is clear there is a pipe there but it needs clearing although there is a flow. We were able to observe via a manhole in one of the residents garden and were grateful for her help. This is all being followed up as there needs to be a permanent solution to the flooding now gone that has been occurring in Church Walk and New Road.

Lunsford lane Flooding.

- There were further incidents of flooding at the northern end of Lunsford Lane due to the stream overflowing and also affecting the footpath round the lake. It has cleared now but this is another location where more investigation is needed.

Country Park Café and Centre.

The date for handover to the Leisure Trust has been put off from 1st April to 1st July but sketch plans of the proposed café were reported at borough in public for the first time as per the circular note the clerk sent round. She has kindly printed off copies and they will be available at the meeting.

Castle Lake.

This site is mainly in Leybourne with the footpath running through from by Lunsford Allotments to Castle Way opposite Leybourne Church. There have been littering issues raised with us and the site is overlooked by our residents in Willow Road. I now have a copy of the Management Agreement attached to a planning permission but this seems never to have been enforced. A small part of the lake is in this parish but it forms a "green wedge" between us and Leybourne. I understand that Leybourne Parish are now talking direct to Whitbread's, Will report further any news when to hand.

Parliamentary Boundaries Review.

I gather this is now reappearing and that the fresh proposals are likely to appear for comment in "the Summer".

Sad News.

- It is sad to report that Les Hart who often drew local issues to the Clerks attention and mine has died. He lived on the Brooklands estate and was one of those people it was good to have around to be alerted to problems.

Cllr. Roud commented on the East Malling sign and mentioned that the shackles are rusted and it may need stainless steel ones. He said there is Forge Engineering in Wrotham who maybe able to help.

The Chairman commented that Martin Guyton had been in touch from the Leisure Trust and mentioned the money we pay at present to the Borough Council each year. A meeting is to be arranged with Martin Guyton to discuss the proposals.

In respect of the SE Water site, KCC Archaeological Officer has been provided with a copy of Michael Fuller's information on the Mill Pond.

The Chairman reported that the boundary stone has been removed between Broadwater and New Barns.

Pictures have been sent to Planning Enforcement regarding being carried out at Well Street Stables.

REPORT BY BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr. Bishop reported that a survey has been carried out at the Borough Council of the 253 employees asking opinions on working from home, 208 completed the survey and the majority think it has generally worked well with working at home, only 20 felt they needed to actually work at Kings Hill with maybe some days at home and some days in the office. This is to be reviewed at the end of June.

There was no report from Cllr. Trudy Dean.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr. Luque expressed his concern at the amount of litter in around the Parish, particularly in Bellingham Way. He feels that the trucks parking there overnight are the main cause of the problem. Mention was made regarding the speed limit in Bellingham Way, as when the litter picks take place they are not permitted to work on roads with a 40mph limit. Clarification should be sought from Mark Simmons at KCC.

Rubbish has also been dumped on the footpath by Lunsford Allotments, this will be reported.

Cllr. Millson reported that the Royal Society of St. George have donated £300 to charities this week being £150 to the East Malling Centre and £150 to the RSPCA at Leybourne.

Cllr. Millson also said that on St. David's Day the flag was raised at Holy Trinity Church.

Cllr. Mitchell mentioned that the Larkfield Village Sign needs attention, the post is in need of re-staining and the brick plinth needs some re-pointing. The Clerk will get the Handyman to take a look to see if is able to carry out the work.

Cllr. Bishop asked the status of the two vehicles parked inside the gates at Church Farm belonging to the neighbouring property. He feels that consideration should be given to charging for parking. The Chairman and Clerk will look into this.

Cllr. Mrs. Moore reported that the hedge has been removed on the footpath that runs by her house in Mill Street.

Cllr. Roud mentioned the flooding in Church Walk, KCC jetted it but it came back. East Malling Research Station will be looking into any blockages on the houses in New Road. The Chairman reported that he had visited the resident at No.24 to discuss the matter.

The Chairman mentioned the planning application regarding a large illuminated sign at the proposed Lidl on the London Road which is causing concern as it will shine across the A20 to the properties in The Ferns. Cllr. Roud has asked that this application be called into Area 3.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 7th April 2021

CLOSURE

The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 8.55p.m.