

REPORT TO AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL 14th May 2024

By the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors for

Aylesford North and North Downs Ward

Councillors Dave Davis, Alex McDermott and Roger Dalton

Aylesford South and Ditton Ward

Councillors Rob Cannon, Steve Hammond and Colin Williams

Walderslade Ward

Councillor Des Keers

ALL WARDS ITEMS

ANNUAL COUNCIL AND NEW MAYOR

1. TMBC's Annual Council meeting is on Tuesday 14 May and, subject to the approval of members, it is expected our Council colleague, Steve Hammond will be elected as Mayor of Tonbridge & Malling for the next 12 months. Chairing full council meetings, when we have such a finely balanced council, will be a challenge but his lengthy experience as veteran relations and brand manager at RBLI, will hold him in good stead with the varied civic duties he will undertake. We wish him all the best.

CAR PARKS

2. TMBC is a top performing council when it comes to managing its finances and, although it goes unnoticed by most residents, it is a massive advantage to them in low TMBC Council Tax and high-grade services.

3. However, for about 2 years, we at TMBC, have seen a gap developing in the TMBC revenue budget where central government grants have been reduced and our Council Tax capped at 3% when average annual inflation has been more than 10%.

4. Sadly the only viable solution, short of cutting already stretched services, has meant that we have had to start charging for the use of our car parks.

5. Car parking charges are a revenue stream that is tightly controlled by law and can only be spent on items laid down in law. However there is sufficient flexibility in that, to pay for many of the revenue items to plug the impending gap.

6. This revenue shortfall has led to a review of the charging for car parks across the Borough. Generally, each car park had a unique set of issues such as legal covenants, supermarket partners or a preponderance of user types.

7. Your two local TMBC car parks affected are considered below.

Aylesford Bridge Car Parks

8. This policy badly affects our residents and Aylesford, where TMBC will be charging for the two Bailey Bridge Car Parks.
9. We were able to get some reductions in the costs for residents:
 - a. A reduction from an initial proposal of £290 to £120 for an annual season ticket for a specific car.
 - b. Exclusive use some parking spaces for season ticket holding residents.
 - c. An hour's free parking, which will handle the school drop off,
 - d. No charges to be implemented until the car park is extended to take some more cars. The latter concession means there will probably be no charges for about a year.
10. Cllr R Dalton did not support these charges from the outset and was one of the 5 members from across the Borough that added his name to call the Cabinet decision into OS committee.

Martins Square

11. Though not in your parish, this car park is used extensively by our residents for access to the shops and surgery.
12. Here the principal concern was the passing trade using the shops and shop staff parking.
13. The final decision was that car parking charges are to be introduced but with one hour's free parking to deal with the bulk of the passing trade and with season tickets available at £120 per annum for shop staff.

AGILE

14. There has been no change since our last report.

AYLESFORD NORTH & NORTH DOWNS ISSUES

ASB SURVEY IN BLUE BELL HILL

15. There have been no reports of further ASB activity and so officially this case is now dormant. However it will be reopened if there are more reports of ASB.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS IN PROGRESS

Nursery Rochester Road Aylesford

16. The planning application TM/23/01072/FL. Proposed change of use of land, on Rochester Road, Aylesford, from a nursey (plants) to mixed equestrian and a holiday park comprising 7 mobile homes, 4 serviced camper van places and a recreational area. This application has been appealed and is now with the Planning Inspectorate. All other enforcement action must wait for the outcome of that appeal.

Land Rear of Mackenders Lane Eccles Aylesford Kent

17. There is a farm building that has been built in the last few months but that now is understood to be complete. It is a building for farm use such as storing farm machinery in. This building is permitted development.

18. There is also a caravan on site that is been occupied during the period of construction of the permanent building above. There has been a legal query on this use and there will be another officer visit in the week starting 13th May.

Land On Former Scout Camp Warren Road

19. There was an officer visit to this site in the week beginning 22nd April and the buildings under construction there have been added to the enforcement notice.

Land North Of Lower Warren Road And East Of Warren Road

20. A planning inspector visited this site on 30th April and hopefully that appeal of the enforcement notice will be decided soon by the Inspectorate.

AYLESFORD SOUTH AND DITTON

21. There are no specific Aylesford South and Ditton items to report this time.

WALDESLADE WARD

22. There are no specific Aylesford South and Ditton items to report this time.