

# **Aylesford Parish Council**

## **Environmental Services Committee**

### **Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held via Zoom link on 23 March 2021**

**Present:** Councillor Ludlow (Chairman) and Councillors Balcombe, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Rillie, Shelley, Smith, Sullivan, Walker, Winnett and Wright.

**In Attendance:** Neil Harris (Clerk), Melanie Randall (Assistant Clerk and Finance Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillors Hammond, Ms Oyewusi and Ms Papagno.

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#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Hammond (Unwell), Ms Oyewusi (Personal Commitment) and Ms Papagno (Personal Commitment) were received, and the reason for absence agreed.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests.

#### **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2021**

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

#### **4. Aylesford Village Square**

The Clerk reported that the trees had been planted and following some vandalism to the trees KCC put tree guards in. The paving is due to take place in April.

#### **5. Speed of Traffic in Bull Lane**

A local resident contacted the Council for its views on the issue of speeding in Bull Lane. The resident had also contacted KCC and was informed that all decisions are based on an

evidence-based priority approach. KCC suggested several options to the resident such as Speed Watch – which the Parish Council has the equipment for and will happily loan out to residents if there are enough volunteers to run it and the residents have completed the necessary training. KCC also referred to the Highway Improvement Plan, which the Council is not currently part of.

## **6. Parking at the Upper Bell Slip Road**

The Clerk reported that the matter of the lorries parking on the A229 at the bottom of the slip road potentially blocking the emergency access down this redundant slip road and the actions of the parked drivers has been taken up by Borough Councillor Kennedy with the KCC Cabinet Member and the enforcement team at TMBC. It appears that KCC and TMBC are saying that the other Council are responsible. Councillor Kennedy has now ensured that the TMBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review Enforcement at TMBC this year. There has been no further update from Councillor Kennedy.

## **7. Highway Improvement Plan**

The Clerk reported on the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) which is a way for Parish Councils to create a plan for highway improvements in their parish and report them to KCC. The Parish Council previously agreed that it did not wish to enter into a HIP, however it has reviewed the situation as a result of the KCC persistently telling residents to contact their Parish Council and request the issue be added to their HIP as it appears that the only way KCC will accept reports of highways issues is if the Parish Council has a HIP. Therefore, it was **Agreed** that the Parish Council enquire to be part of a Highway Improvement Plan.

## **8. 155 Bus Service**

The Clerk reported that he had asked KCC for the current position with regard to the new 155 Bus Service and the situation is that due to the pandemic there is now a need to revisit the original proposal as user numbers are low due to Covid-19. To implement the new bus service now would not be financially viable. It was **Agreed** the Assistant Clerk will continue to request updates.

## **9. Skate Park for Aylesford**

A local resident has asked whether the Council has any plans for a skate park at either Forstal Road Recreation Ground or Ferryfields. There is no capacity in the Forstal Road Recreation Ground for a skate park due to the proposed new 3G Football Pitch. However, the suggestion for Ferryfields will be added to the Clerks report on the S106 funding from the Gladman's scheme at Hermitage Lane. The report will be presented to members at the next Policy & Resources Committee on 6 April 2021.

## **10. Forstal Road Recreation Ground Play Area**

A new specification for the play area resurfacing has been drawn up and has been sent to all of the original contractors to give them an opportunity to re-quote. The deadline by which the quotes are required is 30 March 2021. The Assistant Clerk will discuss with the Chairman all the quotes once received and report back to the Environmental Services Committee.

## **11. The Aylesford Big Lunch**

A request for this social event in Old Bridge Gardens has been received, the proposed dates are the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021 after the easing of the current lockdown restrictions. The Council was supportive of this event and **Agreed** to grant permission based on what the Government guidance is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> July. The organiser must have their own insurance policy that covers Covid-19 and a full Risk Assessment must be carried out by the organiser prior to the event, copies of both documents must be supplied to the Parish Council. The Council reserves the right to withdraw its permission at short notice particularly if the Government Guidance changes. There is also a request for financial support that will go to the Policy & Resources Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

## **12. Funfair, Eccles Recreation Ground**

A Funfair have requested to use Eccles Recreation Ground for a three-day event during the 2021 season after the easing of the current lockdown restrictions, however they have not given any specific dates. They would arrive on a Monday and vacate the following Monday. The hours of operation would be Friday 5-9pm, Saturday 1-9pm and Sunday 12-5pm. There were some concerns around the security aspect of the site as the gates would be open for the duration of the week, they will be asked to position a vehicle in front of the gates at such an angle that would not allow an unauthorised encampment to gain entry. A member of staff will be onsite to lock up when they vacate, which will be at a pre-agreed time.

It was **Agreed** to grant permission for the Funfair to use Eccles Recreation Ground

## **13. Request for Memorial Bench in Aylesford Cemetery**

The Council has received a request from a resident to install a bench in Aylesford Cemetery in memory of her friend who has recently been laid to rest in the Cemetery. It was **Agreed** to grant permission subject to there being no cost to the Parish Council, a concrete base will be put in and fully funded by the resident and only a wooden bench will be permitted. The resident will also have to agree to maintain the bench to an acceptable standard and the Parish Council will reserve the right to remove the bench if it falls into disrepair and the named contact cannot be reached. The Assistant Clerk will arrange to meet the resident in the Cemetery to show them the location.

## **14. Any Other Business/Correspondence**

The Assistant Clerk reported that a request had been received from a resident via Councillor Ludlow to put a container on the Eccles Recreation Ground next to the Aylesford Football

Club's container. The resident is involved in collecting items such as food and clothing/bedding for local organisations like the Maidstone Day Centre. The resident has found themselves with storage issues for the items being donated as their reputation is becoming more known. Individuals are now approaching them for assistance with weekly food parcels. The use of the container would be for the storage of the above items. There is also a request for financial support but no amount has been specified. The Council would also need to know the size of the container. The Council felt that there was not enough information for it to be able to make a decision and it was **Agreed** the Assistant Clerk will make further enquiries and report back to this Committee when the details have been obtained.

### **Entrance to Podkin Meadow**

Councillor Smith reported that the entrance to Podkin Meadow from Mill Lane/Warren Road is very muddy. He asked if we could get some type 1 or similar to put down. The Assistant Clerk will ask the Maintenance Supervisor to look next time he is in Podkin Meadow and report back with ideas on what could be done.

### **16. Duration of Meeting**

7.30pm to 8.30pm