

Aylesford Parish Council

Environmental Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held in the Capel Morris Centre on 21 June 2022

Present: Councillor Ludlow (Chairman) and Councillors, Balcombe, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Eves, Fuller, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Ms Oyewusi, Rillie, Shelley, Smith, Sharp, Sullivan, Walker, Williams and Winnett.

In Attendance: Melanie Randall (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillor Hammond.

1. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

a) Election of Chairman

Councillor Balcombe Proposed Councillor Ludlow for Chairman of the Environmental Services Committee and Councillor Ms Oyewusi seconded the proposal.

b) Election of Vice Chairman

Councillor Fuller Proposed Councillor Mrs Gadd for Vice Chairman of the Environmental Services Committee and Councillor Ms Dorrington seconded the proposal.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillor Hammond were received, and the reason for absence agreed.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests, other than Councillor Fuller disclosed an interest in item 16 as he is a Trustee on the Aylesford Village Community Centre. He took no part in the discussion or decision.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 April 2022

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 April 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

5. Small Works Programme

The Clerk reported that no more painting work had been carried out since the last meeting of this committee due to the contractor's priority being the Parish Councils grass cutting.

Ongoing

6. Parking at the Upper Bell Slip Road

As this issue is covered within the Highway Improvement Plan under agenda item 6, it was **Agreed** to report on this item there.

To Note

7. Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)

The Clerk reported that there was no update to the HIP as a document.

Blue Bell Hill Slip Road – the signage is still due to be installed during the summer high speed road closure in August of this year.

Ongoing

Tunbury Avenue, Walderslade – near School – the Clerk reported that a site meeting has been organised by Councillor Des Keers with herself, the Chairman of the Council and representatives from Kent Police and KCC. The Chairman of the Council extended the invitation to Councillor's Shelley and Winnett, which was accepted. The meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 29th June 2022.

Ongoing

The Clerk also reported that Claire Venner the Schemes and Projects Manager for KCC Highways may not be able to attend the above meeting due to KCC currently having a restructure meaning she may be in a different post. She added that going forward there will be a team of engineers covering all districts, rather than one dedicated officer per district with a dedicated team for Community Engagement. She stated that this means workloads will be more fairly distributed between staff and can be picked up by anyone when others are on leave or sick.

7, a. Request received from a member of the public to put a dropped kerb in at Eccles to the Highway Improvement Plan.

The Clerk reported that she had received correspondence from Councillor Kennedy and Claire Venner at KCC Highways advising that the installation of a dropped kerb should be directed to the Parish Council to see if it would agree to add the scheme to its Highway Improvement Plan. The resident has said that those who find it difficult to walk cannot cross Mackenders Lane because there isn't a dropped kerb. After discussion it was **Agreed** not to add this scheme to the Parish Councils Highway Improvement Plan as surely there is a legal obligation on KCC to install sufficient dropped kerbs for the less able-bodied persons of the community to be able to cross the road safely.

A discussion arose as a result of this request about the point of the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) and what (if any) benefits it brings. The Council feels that the HIP is just going to end up as a very long list of schemes which the Parish Council can do nothing about as funding and implementation of Highways issues remain the responsibility of the KCC Highways Authority. The Council fails to see why KCC insist on telling the public to report these issues and possible schemes to the Parish Council and ask for them to add it to the HIP as it is wrongly implying to the public that this is something the Parish can help with/implement/fund, when it cannot. The HIP is just a list

As a result of the discussions, it was **Agreed** that the dropped kerb request **not** be added to the Highway Improvement Plan. It was further **Agreed** the Clerk will contact KCC to enquire why they tell people to contact the Parish Council and request it be added to the Highway Improvement Plan. It would be much simpler if they just add it to their own future potential projects list when they receive the enquiry which will then stop the confusion and wrong assumptions the public make. **Ongoing**

8. Bus Services

7.1 155 Bus Service –

Councillor Gledhill reported that he had received an email update from Nu-Venture who would like to add a school-time service to bus route 29 from the start of September. Discussions are in progress. **Ongoing**

9. Gap between Ferryfield and Rugby Club

The Clerk reported that due to excessive workload in the Parish Office she had not had time to obtain prices, therefore no further action had been taken on this item. **Ongoing**

10. Arch Lights on the Old Bridge Aylesford – Review

The Clerk reported that the contractor had not had chance to carry out the investigative and repair works to the lights on the old bridge due to the high tides not coinciding with their schedule. The contractor is on annual leave now and the Clerk is due to have a discussion with him on his return at the end of the month. **Ongoing**

11. Tarmac repairs to pot holes in the Parish Council car park

The Clerk reported that there are some pot holes that need repairing. They are not deemed bad enough to damage vehicles, however they are a potential trip hazard for pedestrians. The quote obtained is for £1,290.72. It was **Agreed** the Clerk be authorised to proceed. **Closed**

12. Safety Surfacing Repairs to Tunbury Play Area

The Clerk reported that repairs are needed to the play area safety surfacing in Tunbury Recreation Ground Play Area. The quote obtained is for £3,900, however there is some \$106 money available from the Taddington Wood development that TMBC are holding for the Parish Council which is for use in Tunbury Recreation Ground. The amount available for the play area is approx. £1,822 therefore the Parish Council will be able to use this towards the overall cost. It was **Agreed** to proceed with the repairs. **Closed**

13. Climate Change

Councillor Shelley requested that the Parish Council have a Climate Change Policy and that this item be a standing agenda item on this committee's agenda. After discussion it was **Agreed** to have a Climate Change Policy subject to it not producing extra work for the Parish Office staff. Councillor Shelley confirmed it would not and that he would develop the policy. It was further **Agreed** that this item does not need to be a standing agenda item, however should there be something that needs the Council to make a decision Councillor Shelley will discuss it with the Clerk who will decide if it should be added as an agenda item. Any updates of information will be given under Any Other Correspondence. **Closed**

14. Improvements to Ferryfield Car Parking Area, Aylesford

The Clerk reported that herself, the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Supervisor recently met with Gallagher's to discuss the possibility of tarmacking the Ferryfield car parking area. The Chairman explained that Gallagher's have very generously offered to do this work at absolutely no cost to the Parish Council for the benefit of the community. After the initial meeting Gallagher's team are in the process of preparing a plan for the Parish Council's approval. There will be a need to make the car parking area a little bit bigger in order to fit as many parking spaces in as possible, which would be marked out with white lines. Members expressed the Council's gratitude to Gallagher's for this extremely kind and generous offer. The Chairman sought members approval for himself, the Vice Chairman and the Clerk to agree the final proposed layout presented by Gallagher's, which was unanimously **Agreed**. **Closed**

15. Request to use Old Bridge Gardens

The Clerk reported that a resident had made a request to use Old Bridge Gardens on the evening of Thursday 30 June 2022 to display a boat in respect of a charity mission to row for 60 days across the Atlantic to raise money for those living with Dementia. The boat would enter at approx. 4.30pm via the entrance next to Bluebell Estates and be placed behind the Hengist wall and leave around 8pm via the same point. It was **Agreed** to grant permission subject to the usual rules around the unlocking/locking of the bollard and should there be any damage caused to the Council's ground or property then this would be the responsibility of the organiser to rectify to the Council's complete satisfaction. **Closed**

16. Request from Aylesford Community Centre (AVCC) for the height barrier to remain open at weekends.

The Clerk reported that she had received an email from the Secretary of the AVCC to request the Council allow the height barrier to remain open at weekends for the following reasons

1. Emergency access due to a recent incident in which an ambulance was called for someone in Yoakley Land. The AVCC could not open the height barrier for the ambulance as the caretaker has the key, she was called by an AVCC trustee and was on site within five minutes however they did not need to get the ambulance into the car park. The AVCC are of the opinion that it seems they are the responsible party to unlock the height barrier in an emergency even if they are not on site, and that it should be the responsibility of the Parish Council to unlock it if there is an emergency as it installed the height barrier.
2. To allow the AVCC deliveries to gain entry. (It is assumed that by 'deliveries' the AVCC are referring to bouncy castles and catering vehicles for their hirers).

The following information was given to members

1. The Clerk informed the Council that the height barrier was put in to stop unauthorised encampments from gaining entry and that it is unlocked by the Supervisor weekdays at 7am when he arrives and locked again at 3.30pm when he leaves. It remains shut all weekend as this is when an unauthorised encampment is more likely to occur. She confirmed that she had given a second height barrier key to the AVCC caretaker to keep in their office as requested by the caretaker herself, within 48 hours of the incident, which means the AVCC trustees have access to a key at all times. The Council feels that it shouldn't be about who's land/building the emergency is in/on but more whoever is on site or can get there the quickest should attend to unlock it (the Clerk also stated that the Aylesford Football Club have a key for the height barrier, main gate and side barrier to the back car park).

The Clerk stated that while she understands the concerns raised by the AVCC around emergency access if the height barrier is closed, the Parish Council had the same concerns before erecting it, so obtained some advice. Enquiries were made to the ambulance and fire services as to how the emergency services would access the site if there was a height restriction in place. The answer at the time was if there was an emergency and the ambulance could not get close enough to the patient and no-one was on site to unlock the gate/bollard/height barrier or could not get there quick enough, they would either stretcher the patient to the waiting ambulance, call for the fire brigade to attend to cut the height barrier off or call the air ambulance. Of course, if the patient could walk to the ambulance, then this would also happen. If it was the fire brigade that was needed, they would simply cut the obstacle off. At no point would any of those services or indeed the Parish Council put a patient's life at risk as they have their own processes in place to work together to ensure access can be obtained, as they frequently have to negotiate gates bollards and locks. A Councillor raised the point that even if the height barrier was open, they would still not have been able to get over to Yoakley Land due to the side barrier by the Parish Councils garages and the second barrier and bollard that goes straight onto the recreation ground being locked.

2. The Clerk explained to members the process with regards to letting high top vehicles in during the times the height barrier is kept closed. If the AVCC have a high-top vehicle then it is their responsibility to open the height barrier for it to enter and close it immediately afterwards. It has to be opened again once they have unloaded to let them out. When it is time for them to return to collect their equipment, the same process applies. Members discussed this process and agreed they are fully supportive of the current way of working as while they appreciate it could at times be inconvenient it is much less inconvenient than if there were to be an unauthorised encampment on the recreation ground which would severely impact not only the AVCC but also the Football Club, Pre-School and the Parish Council not to mention users of the recreation ground.

It was **Unanimously Agreed** that the current process must be adhered to, the height barrier is to remain closed from 3.30pm on Fridays until 7am Monday.

Closed

17. Request from Walderslade Baptist Church to lock the Tunbury Hall Car Park every evening.

The Clerk reported that she had received a request from the Walderslade Baptist Church for the Council to lock the gate to the Tunbury car park every evening due to anti-social behaviour with youths parking round the back of the church drug taking. The Baptist Church offered to help with the locking of the gate, however there could be insurance implications. The Tunbury Hall Committee previously agreed they would like it to remain in the open position and Councillor Shelley (who is the Treasurer for the Hall) confirmed this is still the case. After discussion it was **Unanimously Agreed** that the request to lock the gate at night be refused as there do not seem to be any major issues in the Tunbury Hall car park but on the church premises. The Council asked the Clerk to suggest to the Walderslade Baptist Church that perhaps they put a gate in on their own land to stop youths accessing their car parking area when they are not on site.

Closed

18. Request from TMBC for the Parish Councils views on them allowing a mobile food van in the Bailey Bridge Car Park, Aylesford.

The Clerk explained that she had been approached by TMBC who are seeking the views of the Parish Council on them allowing a mobile food van to be placed in the Bailey Bridge Car Park during the proposed times of Monday to Saturday 6.30am to 6.30pm and Sundays 10am to 4pm. the van would serve Pie 'n; Mash, Toasties, Jacket Potatoes, Breakfasts and Sandwiches. They have also requested if there was a possibility to keep the food van on-site. Concerns were raised over noise, rubbish, car parking issues due to the lack of parking in the village, cooking smells and the effect this could have on the existing eateries in the village whom may suffer a decrease in clientele. Members feel that as parking is already at a premium, especially when football is on at the weekends, to take away parking spaces for a food van and knowingly adding to the parking situation is ludicrous. TMBC should politely be reminded of the food van that was previously in the Bailey Bridge Car Park and was positioned where the gate is that goes to the over flow car park, in that all the above-mentioned problems residents suffered with. It was **Unanimously Agreed** that it is a terrible

idea and TMBC should reject it at the earliest opportunity as it will inevitably cause issues for residents which will not be of a positive nature. **Closed**

19. Any Other Correspondence

The Clerk informed members that the Pre-School are having a little sports day on the morning of 5 July 2022.

Councillor Walker informed the committee that he had attended the Annual Meeting of the Aylesford Football Club and they asked him to thank the Council for their support of the proposed 3G Pitch.

20. Duration of Meeting

7.36pm to 8.38pm