

Aylesford Parish Council

Environmental Services Committee

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held via Zoom link on 22 September 2020

Present: Councillor Ludlow (Chairman) and Councillors Beadle, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Ms Oyewusi, Ms Papagno, Rillie, Shelley, Smith, Sullivan, Walker, Williams and Winnett.

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

Apologies: Councillors Balcombe, Ms Dorrington and Wright

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Balcombe (holiday) Ms Dorrington (personal commitment) and Wright (unwell) 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 28 July 2020

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. General Highway Matters

There were no general highways matters reported to the meeting.

5. Eccles Highway Matters – Parking on Bend in Bull Lane and Southern Water HGV Traffic

Councillor Ludlow raised the issue of cars parking on the bend in Bull Lane that had been raised with him by local residents and Southern Water traffic along the same road.

Discussions ensued and it was indicated that this had been a matter of concern for some time

but that there was no obvious solution. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact TMBC to see whether there was anything that they could suggest that could improve the situation. In terms of the Southern Water HGV traffic residents should be encouraged to contact Southern Water and numbers were available with the Council and within the community itself.

6. Blue Bell Hill Highway Matters – Blue Bell Hill Junction Improvement

The Clerk reported that KCC were currently undertaking consultation on junction improvements on Blue Bell Hill including both the Lord lees and Running Horse roundabout complexes. They were asking for comments on 3 options for each and were currently holding a virtual consultation with comments being sought by 19 October. Those Members that had visited the consultation indicated that it was difficult to see the detail regarding the proposal and it was **Agreed** that the Clerk should endeavour to obtain better copies and forward these to Councillors and that consideration of these proposals and the determination of the Council view on these proposals be undertaken at a council committee meeting being held before 19 October.

7. Aylesford Highway Matters – Aylesford Village Square

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting the Committee were informed of the negative reply from TMBC regarding whether they would be willing to promote a scheme with Historic England. The Committee agreed that the Clerk should pursue with KCC the remedial works required at this site including the removal of the tree causing the damage. The Clerk has taken this up with KCC who are progressing the matter including the removal and replacement of the aforementioned tree.

8. Aylesford Village Forstal Road Entrance

The Clerk reported that the Council previously agreed to ask KCC to tidy up the site and look to remove the 2 conifers and look at a replacement such as a bed of crocuses. The conifers have now been removed and that he is still pursuing the bed of crocuses with KCC.

9. Walderslade Highway Matters

There were no Walderslade highways matters reported to the meeting.

10. Public Footpaths – Diversion of Public Footpath MR438A at Podkin Meadow

The Clerk reported that the Committee had previously agreed to allow the diversion of Public Footpath MR438A onto Podkin Meadow to run closely following the tree line just within the meadow. In response to the consultation on this proposal a number of objections were received principally concerning the line of the path and the condition of the surface in view of the fact that Podkin Meadow can get very muddy. There was a recent site meeting which Councillor Smith attended and these issues were aired and the Council was asked to give their views on these issues. The views of the site meeting generally expressed support for retaining a line running generally along the tree line and if the applicant was willing to place

and maintain a type I surface for the path that this could help maintain a reasonable walking condition for the path. As the County Council are responsible for the surface of the path the responsibility for maintaining the condition of the path will fall on them and the applicant. There will be no comeback on the Council. It was **Agreed** that KCC PROW be informed that the Council were happy with the outcome of the site meeting as outlined above.

11. Public Footpaths - MR462 in the Eccles Recreation Ground

The Clerk reported that the Council had recently become aware of some concerns regarding the condition of path which forms part of MR462 and which goes through Eccles Recreation Ground. The Clerk has discussed the issue with KCC Public Rights of Way team and they have accepted responsibility for the path as it forms part of MR462 and they will take on the works needed to be done to the path. It was **Agreed** to note the position

12. Street Lighting

There were no street lighting matters reported to the meeting.

13. Car Parks - Aylesford Car Parks

The Clerk is continuing to monitor the position.

14. Bus Services – 155 Bus Service

The Clerk reported that he has taken the matter up with KCC of the new bus service and was awaiting a reply.

15. Kent Downs Line Community Rail Partnership (KDLCRP)

The Clerk reported that the KDLCRP had written to the Council with their Annual Report and inviting the Council to become more involved in the organisation. In support of that they have invited representatives of the Council join in a Zoom meeting on an Introduction to and Opportunities along the Kent Downs Railway Line. It was **Agreed** that Councillor Shelley would represent the Council at the above Zoom meeting.

16. Traffic Speed and the new Sandpit Entrance on Rochester Road Aylesford

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting that the Council had received a reply from KCC regarding this matter which indicated that as there had been no recorded personal injury crashes at this site in the last 3 years they would not plan to undertake any improvement works at this location. The response also indicated that the Council could place this scheme in the Parish Highway Improvement Plan. The Council has previously decided not to have such a Plan as these schemes were the responsibility of the KCC and that it would promote individual schemes with them as these schemes come forward.

The Committee expressed their disappointment at the response from KCC regarding this new entrance in Rochester Road and the speed of traffic highlighting that it would be impossible

to have 3 years of data as the junction had only just been completed. It was felt that KCC needed to act now before a fatal accident happened at this site. Councillor Rillie highlighted a specific incident where a car had because of the wider road speeded up to overtake 4 cyclists before entering into the narrower road of the village with the reduced speed limit and that could very easily have been a major accident. In accordance with the decision of the committee the Clerk took this matter up with KCC raising the concerns highlighted above but has yet not received a reply.

17. Mill Hall Speed Signs

The Clerk reported that a local resident of Mill Hall had written to the Council concerned about the speed of traffic in Mill Hall. The resident asked that the Council take up with KCC the provision of speed signs or speed markings on the road as a means of slowing the speed of traffic. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk write to KCC asking for the provision of speed signs or speed markings in Mill Hall.

18. The Avenue – Request for Double Yellow Lines

The Clerk reported that a local resident had written in indicating that yellow lines were being put in Firs Close and asked if the Parish Council would support double yellow lines going in at the bend in The Avenue by the parade of shops and also at the bend travelling towards The Oaks. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should ask TMBC to consider the possible inclusion of these double yellow lines as part of their annual review.

19. Blue Bell Hill Village Planters

The Clerk reported that the Council had received a request from local residents asking whether they could plant the Parish Council's planters with bee friendly flowers and also putting plants such as daffodils and crocuses in the verge around the Village signs. It was **Agreed** to agree to the request from the local residents relating to planting of flowers in the planters and around the village signs.

20. All Sites – Drinks and Food Service at Council Recreation Grounds and Land

The Clerk reported that back in November 2018 the Council adopted a policy that no drinks or food service would be allowed at the Ferryfield other than on one off occasions linked with events in the park. The Chairman of the Council has now asked the committee whether it would consider extending this policy to all Council Recreation Grounds and land. It was **Agreed** to extend the of no drinks or food service to all Council Recreation Grounds and land.

21. All Sites – Play Area Inspection Report

The Clerk reported that the Council had now received its quarterly report from the qualified Play Area Inspector who highlighted the following issues:-

a) A number of minor repairs that can be dealt with in house though the parts will come to £650, £553 of which is for 1 item a scramble net assembly for the multi play area at the Hollow.

b) At Tunbury Recreation Ground the Happy Hedgehog Spring Mobile is split and in need of repair. This work cannot be done in house and it is recommended that this work is done sooner rather than later. It is a Wicksteed piece of equipment and they can repair it at a cost of £838.

c) At the Forstal Road Recreation Ground the surfacing for all of the equipment pieces requires some work done or replacing and some require the work to be done in the next few months. It is therefore suggested that quotes are obtained for replacing the surfacing at this site including surfacing the whole area.

It was **Agreed** that all these issues be rectified on the basis set out by the Clerk and as detailed above.

22. The Hollow

There were no matters relating to the Hollow reported to the meeting.

23. Ferryfield

There were no matters relating to the Ferryfield reported to the meeting.

24. Forstal Road Recreation Ground – Soakaway and Drainage serving the Site

The Clerk reported that the works would commence on 28 September and would take 7 working days.

25. Allotment Tenancies

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk relating to allotment tenancies including a draft tenancy agreement which if agreed would be issued to all existing and future allotment holders. It was **Agreed** that the draft Allotment Tenancy Agreement as set out in the report of the Clerk be approved and be issued to all existing and future allotment tenants.

26. Eccles Recreation Ground

There were no matters relating to the Eccles Recreation Ground reported to the meeting.

27. Tunbury Recreation Ground, Changing Rooms and Car Park - Play Area Coronavirus Signs

There were no matters relating to the Tunbury Recreation Ground, Changing Rooms and Car Park reported to the meeting.

28. Blue Bell Hill Recreation Ground

There were no matters relating to the Blue Bell Hill Recreation Ground reported to the meeting.

29. Blue Bell Hill Pond Site

There were no matters relating to the Blue Bell Hill Pond Site reported to the meeting.

30. Cemetery

There were no matters relating to the Cemetery reported to the meeting.

31. Churchyard

There were no matters relating to the Churchyard reported to the meeting.

32. Old Bridge Gardens

There were no matters relating to the Old Bridge Gardens reported to the meeting.

33. Mill Hall (Beside Rose Cottage/Old Bridge)

There were no matters relating to Mill Hall reported to the meeting.

34. Aylesford Old Pit (Yoakley Land)

There were no matters relating to Aylesford Old Pit (Yoakley Land) reported to the meeting

35. Walderslade Open Spaces

There were no matters relating to Walderslade Open Spaces reported to the meeting.

36. St Mark's Square, Belgrave Street car park, new car park – Concerns regarding Break ins of vehicles in the Car Parks

The Clerk reported that he had taken up the matter with the Police/TMBC Community Safety team to see what could be done to reduce incidents in these car parks including discussing whether CCTV reduced incidents such as break ins and vandalism to any great extent. They had agreed to get the Crime Prevention PCSO to look into it. He had visited the site on a

number of occasions and had asked the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to look into it as well and the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator was currently constructing a plan that would take this forward.

37. Podkin Meadow

There were no matters relating to Podkin Meadow reported to the meeting.

38. Christmas Lights

The Clerk reported that he had received the quotation from Gala Lights for the installation and removal of the current decorative products for Eccles, Aylesford Village and Walderslade. The cost was £4250 which was within the budget of £5000. It was **Agreed** to accept the quotation from Gala Lights.

39. Eccles Christmas Lights Switch On

The Clerk reported that the Council had been approached to ask whether the Council would be allowing a Christmas Lights switch on this year in Eccles. It was **Agreed** that in view of the current position relating to the Covid 19 pandemic and Government restrictions on people assembling that it would not be appropriate to hold the event this year.

Whilst considering this item discussion also ensued on the NHS bunting around the Clock Memorial and how that would impact on the installation of the Christmas Tree. It was **Agreed** that the NHS bunting could remain but that, if necessary, it be rearranged to be able to accommodate the Christmas Tree safely.

40. Remembrance Sunday

During discussions on the installation of the Christmas Tree discussion also ensued on the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday. It was noted that the Council had no involvement in this event and that it was organised by the Church. However, the Council felt that residents ought to have the opportunity to be able to mark their act of remembrance. Therefore, it was **Agreed** that the gate for the monument should not be locked on Remembrance Sunday to enable individuals and small groups to undertake their own act of remembrance.

41. Duration of Meeting

7.30pm to 8.49pm