

Aylesford Parish Council

Environmental Services Committee

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held via Zoom link on 24 November 2020

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

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

Apologies: Councillors Hammond and Sullivan.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Hammond (unwell) and Sullivan (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 27 October 2020

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 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

There were no Eccles highways matters reported to the meeting.

6. Blue Bell Hill Highway Matters - Blue Bell Hill Slip Road Lights and Parking at the Upper Bell Slip Road

Councillors Smith and Shelley indicated that the Blue Bell Hill slip road lights were still off. It was also stated that lorries were parking on the A229 at the bottom of the slip road potentially blocking the emergency access down this redundant slip road. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk would pursue these matters with KCC.

7. Aylesford Highway Matters – Aylesford Village Square

The Clerk reported that the work to be done in the Village Square would be done in 4 stages and that stage 1 the felling of the trees would be done on 9 December and that stage 2 the grinding of the stumps and the removal of the block paving would take place on 11 December. The remainder of the work to be done in stages 3 and 4 currently have no scheduled date for this work but must be completed before 31 March..

8. Public Footpaths – Public Footpath from Mount Pleasant to Rochester Road

The Clerk reported that the Council was being consulted by KCC Public Rights of Way on an application they had received for a public footpath on a route running from Mount Pleasant to Rochester Road via Trinity Court on the basis of at least 20 years use. KCC Public Rights of Way are asking the Council for its view and whether it has any evidence that supports or negates the application. It was **Agreed** that the Council would make no comment on this application

9. Street Lighting - Street Light in Forstal Road

The Clerk reported that the Council had become aware of a significantly damaged street light in Forstal Road with it being pushed out of shape and leaning over. The light would need to be repaired with a new lamppost being installed together with a possible new light fitting. The cost of the repair including a new light fitting was £1175. However, there would be a charge from UK Power Networks which was £3021 making a total cost of £4196. The Committee expressed concern at the costs from UK Power Networks but were aware that there was nothing that they could do and it was **Agreed** that the street light be repaired at a cost as detailed above. It was further **Agreed** that the Council should pursue an insurance claim for the repair work.

10. Car Parks - Aylesford Car Parks

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting the Committee noted that the Council was aware that it had never received a reply to its objection to the proposals to introduce charges at the car parks and in particular its offer to TMBC to lease the car parks off them and for the Parish Council to operate them. It was agreed that the Clerk should follow up on the offer to operate the car parks with TMBC. The Clerk stated that he had written to TMBC but no reply had been received as yet but he would continue to pursue a response.

11. Bus Services – 155 Bus Service

The Clerk reported that he has taken the matter up with KCC who had indicated that they were working with Arriva regarding the new service. He also indicated that the funding from Trenport was tied up in a legal agreement and would be used whatever happens but hopefully on the new bus service.

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

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting it was reported 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.

Councillor Rillie expressed some further concerns regarding the condition of the speed humps in the vicinity of this junction and also that the speed limit should be reduced from 40mph to 30mph. It was agreed that the Clerk should continue following up on this matter with KCC including the new issues raised by Councillor Rillie. KCC have responded that there is nothing that they can do as this is not a safety critical site with no patterns of crashes that relate to speeding. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk discuss the matter further with Councillor Rillie and then take the matter up with County Councillor Homewood to see if he could get KCC to take action including possibly using his grant money for this purpose.

13. Phase 12 of the Parking Action Plan

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting the Clerk reported that the Council was being consulted on Phase 12 of the TMBC Parking Action Plan which has only one site in Aylesford Parish namely at Hurst Hill, Walderslade where there have been issues of obstructive parking. TMBC are seeking the Council's views on the proposal. It was agreed that the Council was not in a position to comment on this proposal until it was aware of the reasoning behind the original decision by TMBC to include this in the action plan. TMBC had responded indicating that they had received reports of obstructive parking from local residents and there was also concern about emergency vehicle access. The committee considered the response from TMBC and the concerns raised by a local resident at the last meeting and it was **Agreed** that the Council would object to the proposal as the better option

to putting yellow lines down and restricting parking was to widen the road, where necessary, to allow emergency vehicle access.

14. All Sites – Play Area Inspection Report

The Clerk reported that it had previously been agreed to seek quotes for resurfacing the Forstal Road Recreation Ground Play Area and quotes were being sought from 3 companies. However, it seems that the prices within these quotes were likely to be quite high and therefore the Clerk was seeking additional quotes from other companies and was looking at a number of different options. It is intended that these quotes would be reported back to Committee in due course.

The Clerk also reported about damage to 2 items of fitness equipment. The first was the recently repaired arm of the Skier at the Tunbury Recreation Ground had been vandalised and the new arm had been broken off. This was the third occurrence of damage to this piece of apparatus and Members had previously agreed that if there were reoccurring incidents of vandalism to these machines they would not be repaired. The second item of damage was to the footplate at the Body Twist at Eccles which had broken off but this appeared to be wear and tear rather than vandalism.. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should obtain quotes for repair to both pieces of apparatus and also obtain quotes for a new machine, that is less liable to vandalism, to replace the Skier at the Tunbury Recreation Ground.

15. The Hollow

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

16. Ferryfield

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

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

There were no matters relating to the Forstal Road Recreation Ground reported to the meeting

18. Allotments

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

19. Eccles Recreation Ground

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

20. 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.

21. Blue Bell Hill Recreation Ground

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

22. Blue Bell Hill Pond Site

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

23. Cemetery

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

24. Churchyard

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

25. Old Bridge Gardens

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

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

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

27. Aylesford Old Pit (Yoakley Land)

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

28. Walderslade Open Spaces

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

29. 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 received a further update from the Crime Prevention PCSO who had indicated that there had been no recent incidents at the car park but that he and the local PCSO were keeping an eye on it.

30. Podkin Meadow

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

31. Christmas Lights

The Clerk reported that due to the current Covid rules Christmas lights would be switched on as they are fitted and it was expected that the work would take place on 25–27 November. It is also expected that the Eccles Christmas Tree and lights would be put up during this period.

32. Request to Locate a Chip Van in Belgrave Street Car Park next to Allotments

The Clerk reported that the Good Cod mobile fish and chips who operate in the Medway area had made a request to locate and sell their products in the Belgrave Street Car Park next to the Allotments. They currently operate in Burham, Cuxton, Istead Rise, Wouldham (alternate Saturdays) and newly started Bluebell Village.

They indicated that they had been approached by Borough Councillor Andrew Kennedy on behalf of the residents of Eccles to include Eccles in their route on alternate Saturday nights. They were requesting to locate in the top of the above car park next to the hedge bordering St Marks Green providing there was a space left vacant on a Saturday night. They would not cause any obstruction to other people using the car park.

In September, the Committee agreed a policy that there would be a no drinks or food service on all Council Recreation Grounds and Land. Therefore, in accordance, with that policy this application should be refused. Additionally, with this being a public car park there could be no guarantee that there would be a space available for the van and there was no means of reserving spaces in a public car park. Access to this site was down a single track and the extra access required could lead to issues of congestion.

It was **Agreed** that the application from the Good Cod mobile fish and chip van be refused as it was not in accord with the Council's policy of no drinks and food service on all Council Recreation Grounds and Land together with the fact that there could be no guarantee of a space within the car park as there was no means of reserving a space in a public car park.

33. Request to park in the Area of Land within the Ferryfield accessed via the Little Preston Gate

The Clerk reported that the Hospital Trust were looking to move a number of staff off the Maidstone Hospital site and were looking to relocate them locally. They had identified a site, Shannon House, which borders the above area of land. While the building itself fits the operating requirements of the Trust there was a shortage of parking on site and few alternative options nearby. The Trust had indicated that the move was being driven by the reduction in staff desk space due to hospital 2m distancing rules and the need for more clinical space within the hospital. The staff being relocated were non-clinical non-patient facing staff who would still require access to a desk for some or all of their working time.

The move was being described as temporary though there was no time set on this but the Trust would not expect any agreement with the Council to be anything but time limited and not for an indefinite period. They have not indicated the number of cars that they were seeking space for as the number of vehicles was not set and also discussions were still ongoing with Gallagher's re the number of spaces that they would be able to supply.

The Trust were asking the Council to consider in principle whether they would be able to utilise this land for additional parking with any conditions that the Council would wish to apply. Any necessary improvements and costs for security etc. would be solely borne by the NHS Trust.

It was **Agreed** that the request to park in the area of land within the Ferryfield via the Little Preston Gate from the Hospital Trust be deferred to allow the Clerk to obtain further information and to report back to the Policy and Resources Committee on 1 December.

34. Parish Office Water Supply

The Clerk reported that the Council has had long and difficult discussions with the Community Centre about the water supply. This was recently resolved though there have been further difficult discussions re recent bills. However, with the recently agreed change re the allotments supply and in particular the cutting of the existing pipes there was an opportunity to explore a potential access pipe to the Office which would separate our supply from that of the Community Centre. This would be to use this access point and to run a pipe to the office around the back of the building. South East Water had indicated that the cost of this work would be £3225. This would separate the 2 supplies and eliminate the difficult discussions on water that have recently taken place. It was **Agreed** that a new water supply pipe, as set out above, be installed at a cost of £3225.

35. Future Agendas

It was **Agreed** that future agendas should include only items on which there was a report or update and not a series of general headings.

35. Duration of Meeting

7.30pm to 8.49pm