

Aylesford Parish Council

Environmental Services Committee

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held via Zoom link on 27 October 2020

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

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

Apologies: Councillors Base, Ms Dorrington, Ms Papagno, Smith and Williams

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Base (TMBC meeting), Ms Dorrington (personal commitment), Ms Papagno (personal commitment), Smith (personal commitment) and Williams (TMBC meeting) 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 22 September 2020

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 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

Councillor Sullivan indicated that the Blue Bell Hill slip road lights were off again. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk would bring this to KCC's attention.

7. Aylesford Highway Matters – Aylesford Village Square

The Clerk reported that following further discussions with KCC it had become clear that the second tree was also causing damage to the pavement. Therefore, they intended to replace both trees. KCC also intended to replace the existing concrete blocks with brick paving similar to that on the other side of the road. It was intended that this work will be done in this financial year. KCC have also indicated that they will complete the remaining brick paving of the Square over the next few years.

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 – Claimed Bridleways running around the perimeter and across both diagonals of the land known as The Peafield at Barming, Aylesford and Ditton

The Clerk reported that the Council was being consulted by KCC Public Rights of Way on an application they have received for claimed Bridleways at the Peafield. The Peafield is the site right at the southern end of the Parish at its boundary with Barming Parish which Members visited as part of the tour of sites and is currently the subject of a significant planning application to both Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's. The claimed Bridleways are as set out on the attached plan on the Agenda. KCC PROW are seeking the Council's views on this application including any evidence the Council might have to support these views. It was **Agreed** that the Council would support this application for claimed bridleways as detailed in the plan received from KCC PROW as both Council members and the Clerk were aware of this area being used by the public during this period of 20 years.

11. Street Lighting

There were no street lighting matters reported to the meeting.

12. Car Parks - Aylesford Car Parks

The Committee discussed the current situation whereby TMBC were putting penalty charge notices on vehicles that were parking longer than the maximum period of 23 hours. This was causing significant annoyance to local residents who park in the car parks. The Council was aware that this matter was being taken up by the local Borough Councillors and MP. 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.

13. 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. The revised legal agreement had been finalised so there was a requirement for Trenport to fund the service. However, the question was whether the funding available cover the agreed solution due to reduced bus usage and revenue losses. The Clerk indicated that he would continue to follow this up with KCC including what happens to the funding from Trenport if the new service is not implemented.

14. Kent Downs Line Community Rail Partnership (KDLCRP)

The Committee considered the notes of a recent meeting of the KDLCRP attended by Councillor Shelley which were attached to the Agenda. During discussions on this item the committee considered the Merlin project and it was **Agreed** that the Council would support this initiative.

15. 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 and this was still the case.

Councillor Rillie expressed some 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

16. Mill Hall Speed Signs

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting he had 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. KCC have replied that for them to take any action in this matter it would have to be part of a Parish Highway Improvement Plan. The Committee did not want to consider entering into a Parish Highway Improvement Plan with KCC at this stage but was happy that the Chairman of the Council discuss with Ditton and East Malling and Larkfield Parish Councils their attitude to these Plans and whether they were considering having one.

17. The Avenue – Request for Double Yellow Lines

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting he had 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. TMBC have replied that this request had been placed on the waiting list for parking restrictions under the phased approach of the Parking Action Plan but it was possible that this site would not be looked at for 2-3 years.

18. Phase 12 of the Parking Action Plan

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. A copy of the plan highlighting the proposal was attached to the Agenda. TMBC are seeking the Council's views on the proposal. Councillor Shelley also read out comments from a resident of Hurst Hill who was opposed to the introduction of these restrictions. During discussions of this proposal it was felt that TMBC would not be introducing these changes without the issue having been raised with them possibly by local residents. 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.

19. All Sites – Play Area Inspection Report

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting it was agreed to seek quotes for resurfacing the whole of the Forstal Road Recreation Ground Play Area and quotes were currently being

sought from 3 companies which should be reported to the next meeting of the Committee. Currently there is a water pipe that serves the Allotments that runs under this play area and has always caused a problem if there has been leaks in the vicinity or within the play area. With a new play surface being laid it was possible that such a leak could lead to the need to bring up part of the new surface and any subsequent cost of repair. Therefore, the Council has consulted with South East Water to find the best solution. They suggested 2 possible solutions one to move the pipe so that it goes around the outside of the play area, a quite significant diversion which would cost £3125. The second option was to take a new pipe off the main that runs along the Forstal Road and run it directly into the allotments site. This would require some traffic restriction along Forstal Road whilst the work is undertaken. It is expected that this work would only take 1 day. This option would cost £2892.19. It was **Agreed** that the option of running a new pipe off the main be approved at a cost of £2892.19.

20. The Hollow

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

21. Ferryfield

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

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

The Clerk reported that the work finished on Friday 23 October. However, the contractor has recommended that the site works including the tarmac are allowed to settle and the car park would now re-open on 31 October.

23. Allotments

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

24. Eccles Recreation Ground

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

25. 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.

26. Blue Bell Hill Recreation Ground

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

27. Blue Bell Hill Pond Site

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

28. Cemetery

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

29. Churchyard

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

30. Old Bridge Gardens

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

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

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

32. Aylesford Old Pit (Yoakley Land)

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

33. Walderslade Open Spaces

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

34. 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 no further update from the Crime Prevention PCSO or the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator who were looking into this. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk pursue this matter with the Crime Prevention PCSO and the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator .

35. Podkin Meadow

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

36. Christmas Lights

There were no matters relating to Christmas lights reported to the meeting

37. Remembrance Sunday

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting the committee considered what would happen in respect of the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday at Eccles. The committee agreed that the gate to the Monument at Eccles should not be locked on Remembrance Sunday to enable individuals and small groups to undertake their own act of remembrance. Subsequent to that decision the Church in Eccles (who have previously held the service at the Monument) have made the following request:-

“the Church in Eccles is seeking permission to hold an adapted form of its annual act of remembrance at the war memorial on Sunday 8 November, we propose:

- The act of remembrance would begin at 10.45 and last for no more than half an hour.
- Unlike other years, attendees would not be invited to go into the church afterwards.
- Only the speakers (and perhaps the person operating the PA system) would stand inside the railings, observing social distancing. There would be no sharing of microphones.
- Members of the public would be permitted to 'spectate' (in the language of the Government guidance), standing outside the railings and maintaining 2m between household 'bubbles.' We have two stewards, who would be wearing high-vis, to ensure that people maintain social distancing and do not gather in groups of more than six. We would use a PA system to ensure that no-one feels the need to 'gather' closer to the speakers.
- There would be no singing or interaction between different households.
- We would inform the local police prior to the event.”

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.

38. Duration of Meeting

7.30pm to 8.32pm