

The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council held on 21st October 2024.
Held at the Tudor Park Hotel, at 7:30pm.

*Councillors present: Dunlop
Duncan
Shelley
Skinner
Smith
Stark
Waters
Wise*

Also: Sherrie Babington, Parish Clerk, MBC Cllrs Naghi and Thompson and Members of the Public.

The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Skinner.

1. Apologies.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

Apologies were received from MBC Cllr Jones and KCC Cllr Prendergast.

2. Parish Councillor Vacancy.

To consider any applications for Co-option.

No applications to consider.

3. Declaration of Interest.

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

No interests were declared.

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

No dispensations were considered.

4. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to all members.

It was proposed by Cllr Stark to accept these as a true record, subject to an agreed amendment, these were seconded by Cllr Dunlop and agreed by all present.

The Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes.

To consider any matters arising.

There were no matters arising.

6. Public Participation.

To discuss any questions received by members of the public.

7. Clerks Report.

To receive the Clerks Report.

Parish Seminar on 20th November 2024
Lecture Theatre, Sessions House, Maidstone ME14 1XQ

I am pleased to invite you to the Highways and Transportation in-person Parish Seminar which will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2024 from 10am – 2pm (9.30am start for signing in).

This is the first in-person Parish Seminar which has been held since the Pandemic and we are looking forward to connecting and networking with Parish Members in person. The seminar is being held in the Lecture Theatre in Sessions House. Unfortunately, the Lecture Theatre can only accommodate a maximum of 140 delegates, due to its fixed seating. Therefore, please be aware that registrations for this event will be on a first come, first served basis, until the maximum capacity has been reached. Please be mindful that on the day only delegates which have secured a formal registration will be able to gain access to the seminar.

8. Financial Matters:

a. Financial Statement.

To receive and approve the financial statement and payments.

The financial statement was circulated to all members for consideration. This was proposed by Cllr Shelley, seconded by Cllr Stark, and agreed by all present.

9. Planning Matters:

a. Planning Application Received

No applications to consider.

b. MBC Planning Decisions

23/502955/FULL

Land At Longton Wood Coldblow Lane Thurnham Kent ME14 3LR

Change of use of land for use as a wedding and events venue with camping area between May and September (inclusive), including erection of a single storey toilet and shower block (retrospective) and associated parking.

Application Refused

The Council hereby REFUSES Planning Permission for the above for the following Reason(s):

(1) The submitted application resulting in permanent loss (tarmac car park, toilet, shower, plantroom, and store building) and deterioration (increased use of access track and footpaths, vehicle headlights, use of the marquee, internal and external lighting, noise, amplified music additional event infrastructure, recreational activity and concentrated activity by large groups) of irreplaceable habitats in this designated ancient woodland fails to demonstrate any 'wholly exceptional reasons' to justify this development or any suitable or adequate compensation strategy. The application is contrary to policies LPRSS1, LPRSP9, LPRSP14(A), LPRQD2 LPRQD4 of the Local Plan Review (2024), the National Planning Policy Framework (2023 including paragraphs 180 and 186), and Natural England's Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland. There are no factors present that would outweigh the significant identified harm.

(2) The submitted application results in unacceptable harm to the intrinsic character and appearance of this nationally important area of countryside. This harm including the detrimental impact from the tarmac car park, toilet, shower, plantroom, and store building, vehicles and their headlights, the marquee, internal and external lighting, noise, amplified music, additional event infrastructure, recreational activity and concentrated activity by large groups. The application fails to 'further the purposes' of the designated Kent Downs National Landscapes to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. (Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023). The application is contrary to policies LPRSS1, LPRSP9, LPRSP14(A), LPRQD2 and LPRQD4 of the Maidstone Local Plan Review (2024) and advice in the NPPF (2023). The application is contrary to the Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2021-2026 which requires development to protect, conserve and enhance the special characteristics and qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the Kent Downs National Landscape, including its tranquillity and dark night skies.

24/501899/FULL

Longton Manor Stockbury Valley Stockbury Kent ME9 7QN

Change of use of land for stationing of 15(no) static caravan pitches, to be occupied by Gypsies and Traveller families, with associated hard surfacing/parking (Resubmission of 23/505276/FULL) (Retrospective).

Application Refused

The Council hereby REFUSES Planning Permission for the above for the following Reason(s):

(1) The submission, by virtue of its scale, layout and location, and the removal of Ancient Woodland within the site, would harmfully consolidate sporadic and urbanising development in the area, resulting in a development that would not positively recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside hereabouts. This failure to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape would be contrary to policies LPRSP9, LPRSP15, LPRHOU8, and LPRQD4 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review (2021-2038); the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (2013); the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan; and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

(2) Within the application site there has been the direct loss of ancient woodland, an irreplaceable habitat. There are not any wholly exceptional reasons for this loss, and the submission is not accompanied by a suitable compensation strategy to adequately mitigate against this loss of Ancient Woodland. On this basis, the submission is contrary to policies LPRSP14(A) and LPRSP15 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review (2021-2038); the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023); and Natural England's and Forestry Commission's Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland.

(3) The submission does not provide an appropriate 15m buffer zone around the whole development, separating the development from the Ancient Woodland (including what has been removed); and the submission has failed to demonstrate that the development would not result in the further loss or deterioration of Ancient Woodland, an irreplaceable habitat, contrary to policies LPRSP14(A) and LPRSP15 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review (2021-2038); the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). and Natural England's and Forestry Commission's Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland.

(4) The submission has failed to provide sufficient information regarding how the development, through integrated design, would improve biodiversity in and around development, and how it would secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. On this basis, the submission is contrary to policies LPRSP14(A), LPRSP15, LPRHOU8 and LPRQD1 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review (2021-2038); and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

(5) The submission has failed to demonstrate the acceptability of the proposed development in relation to highway safety. This would be contrary to policies LPRSP15 and LPRHOU8 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review (2021-2038); and paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

c. Other Planning Matters.

No other matters to consider.

Cllr. Stark provided an update on a potential planning application for a piece of land located between Caring Lane and Firs Lane, with a proposal to build houses. This matter was discussed, and it was agreed that no action could be taken at this stage until the Parish Council is formally consulted regarding the application.

10. Highway & PROW Matters.

a. To consider general highway and PROW matters.

To consider the PC view on the PROW Diversion KH99, KH89, KH98 at Stockbury and Thurnham.

Cllr Smith provided a report on a site meeting attended by members of Thurnham and Stockbury Parish Councils, and KCC regarding the proposed diversions of these PROW.

He spoke regarding the proposed diversions and raised concerns about reduced benefits for walkers and residents, as the new route would run much closer to the A249. He also highlighted the cost of the diversion, estimated at £10,000-£12,000, and stated his belief that KCC should not fund to this project as it would not be beneficial to walkers.

He therefore proposed that the PROW remain as they are. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Wise and agreed by all present. It was further resolved that the Parish Council would request that the PROWs be maintained to the standards set by KCC.

Action: Clerk to respond to KCC.

PROW KH 123 - A resident reported that a gatepost on this PROW had fallen. Although this issue was previously reported to Kent County Council, no action had been taken. It was agreed that the Clerk would follow up by reporting this again to KCC.

Action: Clerk to progress.

It was reported that vegetation was obscuring the 30mph signs on both sides of the road as vehicles enter Roundwell.

Action: Clerk to report to KCC.

b. HIP (Highways Improvement Plan).

To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

The Highways Improvement Plan was circulated, and Cllr Smith provided an overview. He spoke regarding the issue of parking at the junction of Hockers Lane and Ware Street and reported that KCC had agreed to install double yellow lines for the first 10 meters to try to alleviate the parking problems.

He explained that if the Parish Council wished to extend the yellow lines further, a public consultation would be required. He therefore proposed that the Parish Council proceed with the initial 10-meter stretch, with an anticipated cost of approximately £4,000. He also suggested seeking a contribution from Detling Parish Council. This proposal was made by Cllr Shelly, seconded by Cllr Dunlop, and agreed by all present.

Cllr Smith discussed the Quiet Lanes signage for Thurnham Lane, Water Lane and Pilgrims Way. He informed members that a Highways Officer would be visiting the site with planners to further assess the situation.

11. Future Agenda Items.

To consider any future items.

12. Date next Meeting

Monday 18th November 2024

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed to the press and public at 7.45pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....