

The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council held on 20th January 2025.
Held at the Tudor Park Hotel, at 7:30pm.

Councillors present: *Duncan*
 Dunlop
 Skinner
 Smith
 Stark
 Wise

Also: Sherrie Babington, Parish Clerk, MBC Cllr Naghi, 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 and reasons for absence were received from Cllrs Shelley (work) and Waters (work), these were accepted.

Apologies were also received from MBC Cllrs Jones and Thompson 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, these were seconded by Cllr Wise and agreed by all present.

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

5. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising.

6. Public Participation.

To discuss any questions received by members of the public.

A resident attended the meeting to raise concerns regarding Public Right of Way KH186. She informed the PC that she had recently met with a Public Rights of Way Officer at Kent County Council (KCC) to discuss the matter. The route in question formed part of a network of bridleways crossing the ancient woodland of Longton Wood, an area now used for airsoft war games that was approved on appeal. She stated that the footpath had become littered with plastic waste.

Cllr Smith stated that members of the Parish Council had recently attended a site visit to discuss an application for its diversion. Both Thurnham and Stockbury Parish Council objected to the proposal, and this was then refused by KCC.

The resident asked that the Parish Council to apply pressure on KCC to take action to reinstate the footpath. Cllr Smith advised her to send the PC an email outlining the issues, so that the Parish Council could raise the matter with KCC and County Councillor Prendergast.

A number of residents attended the meeting to give their views on the planning application for Cobham Manor Riding School.

A resident voiced concerns that approving the development would set a bad precedent in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, raising issues such as the unsustainability of local roads, potential risks to the aquifer, and concerns raised by the Environment Agency regarding drainage and soakaways.

Whilst some residents acknowledged that housing on the site was not necessarily unwelcome, they expressed concerns about the style of the proposed homes, which they felt were out of keeping with the surrounding area. Concerns were also raised regarding water run-off on Water Lane which was already prone to flooding.

They noted that the existing stables were in poor condition and that a well-planned residential development could be an improvement. However, there were concerns over a possible commercial element in the application, as the proposal included retaining the livery and office facilities.

Cllr Smith raised concerns about creeping development in the AONB, stating that any development must be in the right location.

Borough Councillor Val Springett noted the concerns about drainage and the environmental impact. She clarified that while the developer had attended a pre-application meeting, this did not imply automatic approval. She felt that while the site could benefit from redevelopment, the current proposal was too dense, the height of the buildings was an issue, and the location was unsustainable. A revised proposal with fewer, lower homes designed to fit better with the local character could be more acceptable.

Following discussion, the Parish Council agreed to object to the application on the grounds mentioned during discussions, that it represented overdevelopment in an unsustainable location and that the mixed residential and commercial use was inappropriate. It was also agreed that the submitted traffic assessment was inaccurate. However, the Council indicated that a smaller-scale residential-only development, more sympathetic to the local area, could be considered more acceptable.

7. Clerks Report.

To receive the Clerks Report.

Members noted an email from Bearsted Parish Council offering to transfer a notice board which is no longer in their parish over to the Parish Council. Members confirmed that this was not in Thurnham and fell within Boxley. The Clerk was asked to respond to the email.

Action: Clerk to respond to Bearsted PC.

8. External Reports:

a. To receive the MBC Ward Councillor's Report.

Ward Councillors Thompson and Jones gave their apologies to the meeting.

Ward Councillor Naghi gave his report to the meeting.

b. To receive the KCC Councillor's Report.

Apologies were received from KCC Cllr Prendergast.

c. To receive the Police Report.

No police attended the meeting and no report was submitted.

d. To receive Parish Councillors Reports.

Cllr Stark reported on the Keng George V memorial Hall.

9. St Marys Church.

To receive a report on St Marys Church.

Cllr Smith updated members on St Marys Church.

10. Financial Matters:

a. Financial Statement.

To receive and approve the financial statement and payments.

The financial statement was circulated to all members and was proposed by Cllr Stark, seconded by Cllr Wise, and agreed by all present.

b. 2025/2026 Budget and Precept.

To consider the 2025/2026 Draft Budget.

The draft budget the circulated to all members for their consideration this was discussed, it was agreed that there would be no increase to the precept this year. It was therefore proposed by Cllr

Smith to set the 2025/26 precept at £26,810, this was seconded by Cllr Duncan and agreed by the present.

Action: Clerk to complete precept demand form and submit to Maidstone Borough Council.

11. Planning Matters:

a. Planning Application Received

24/505137/FULL - Cobham Manor Riding Centre Water Lane Thurnham
Demolition of existing livery yard and construction of 7(no) dwellings with associated car barns/garages, private stables, car barn for Cobham Manor Hall, landscaping, access and associated works.

Action: Objections

24/505132/TPOA - Land Adjacent to Clayswood Thurnham Lane Thurnham
TPO application to carry out works to various trees as defined in the Woodland Management Plan.

No objections.

24/505134/FULL - 33 Barty Way Thurnham Kent ME14 4GB
Erection of a single storey rear extension and partial garage conversion (retrospective). Insertion of a new side window to staircase on first floor.

No objections.

24/505261/FULL - Thornham Friars Pilgrims Way Thurnham Kent ME14 3LN
Internal and external alterations comprising of: Installation of cast iron railings to the perimeter wall; new perimeter wall with electrically operated sliding gates; conversion of a stable block into ancillary annexe accommodation; conversion of garden shed into a workshop, outdoor bar and log store; erection of a pavilion; retrospective permission for a greenhouse; erection of a detached car barn; reinstatement of driveway with rebuilt brick piers and new gate access; new parking area; replacement timber windows to rear elevation with timber painted, leaded windows; dormer window repair to north elevation of main house, installation of secondary glazing throughout the remainder of the property; installation of extractor fans to all bathrooms and en-suites, (revised scheme to 23/501478/FULL).

No objections.

24/505310/FULL - 6 Barty Way Thurnham Kent ME14 4GB
Conversion of existing loft into habitable space with the installation of 5no. roof lights.

No objections.

b. MBC Planning Decisions

24/504278/FULL

2 Caring Lane Bearsted Kent ME14 4NJ

Erection of two storey rear extension. Loft conversion to habitable space with rear dormer and raised gables with roof lights to front. Pitched roof to existing garage.

Application Refused

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

(1) The proposed two-storey rear extension constitutes poor design and would be a disproportionately large and overwhelming addition which would result in a building of excessively bulky, unattractive, incongruous and blocky appearance; added to which, the two additional front roof lights (over and above the three previously approved) would appear cramped and give a cluttered appearance to the front elevation. This would be harmful to the character, appearance and form of the host dwelling, which in turn would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the rural street-scene of which it forms a part. To grant planning permission would therefore be contrary to Policies LPRSP9, LPRSP15, LPRQD4 and LPRHOU11 of the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan Review 2021-2038, the adopted design guidance set out in the Council's Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2009) in particular paragraphs 5.15, 5.25 and 5.26, and the national planning policy set out in the NPPF (December 2024).

24/504247/SUB

Gorse Tor Detling Hill Detling Maidstone Kent ME14 3JG

Submission of details pursuant to conditions 6 (biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan), 8 (hard and soft landscaping), 10 (decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources of energy), and 18 (biodiversity enhancement), subject to application 24/501730/FULL.

Application Permitted

24/503212/FULL

Friningham Farm Friningham Detling Kent ME14 3JD

Retrospective application for the change of use of agricultural buildings to Use Class B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage or distribution) and F1 (learning and non-residential institutions) along with the addition of an area of hardstanding.

Application Refused

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

(1) The planning application has failed to demonstrate the acceptability of the development in relation to highway safety, including sufficient up to date supporting information, contrary to the aims of policies LPRTRA2, LPRQD5 and LPRSP15 of the Maidstone Local Plan Review (2024); and paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

c. Other Planning Matters.

The Tree Preservation Order No.5013/2024/TPO

Location: Glenrowan House Roundwell Bearsted Kent ME14 4HL

The Maidstone Borough Council in exercise of the powers conferred on them by section 198 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 make the following Order

Citation

1. This Order may be cited as Maidstone Borough Council Tree Preservation Order No. 5013/2024/TPO Glenrowan House Roundwell Bearsted Kent ME14 4HL

Interpretation

2. (1) In Maidstone Borough Council

(2) In this Order any reference to a numbered section is a reference to the section so numbered in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any reference to a numbered regulation is a reference to the regulation so numbered in the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012.

Effect

3. (1) Subject to article 4, this Order takes effect provisionally on the date on which it is made.

(2) Without prejudice to subsection (7) of section 198 (power to make tree preservation orders) or subsection (1) of section 200 (tree preservation orders: Forestry Commissioners) and, subject to the exceptions in regulation 14, no person shall

(a) cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage, or wilfully destroy; or

(b) cause or permit the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or wilful destruction of, any tree specified in the Schedule to this Order except with the written consent of the authority in accordance with regulations 16 and 17, or of the Secretary of State in accordance with regulation 23, and, where such consent is given subject to conditions, in accordance with those conditions.

Application to trees to be planted pursuant to a condition

4. In relation to any tree identified in the first column of the Schedule by letter C being a tree to be planted pursuant to a condition imposed under paragraph (a) of section 197 (Planning permission to include appropriate provision for preservation and planting of trees), This Order takes effect as from the time when the tree is planted.

12. Parish Council Annual Report.

Annual Report for 2025, currently work in progress.

Action: Clerk to progress.

13. Highway & PROW Matters.

a. To consider general highway and PROW matters.

Cllr Smith reported on highway matters.

Cllr Stark reported that the foliage near Roundwell had been cut back and spoke regarding the roadworks opposite Notcutts which is causing delays to traffic. It was clarified that this was emergency gas works and not planned.

b. HIP (Highways Improvement Plan).

To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

It was agreed that this would be updated.

14. Future Agenda Items.

To consider any future items.

15. Date next Meeting

The date of the next meeting - Monday 10th February 2025.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed to the press and public at 8.45pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....