

The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council held on 15th April 2024.
Held at the Tudor Park Hotel, at 7:30pm.

Councillors present: *Duncan*
 Dunlop
 Horne
 Skinner
 Smith
 Stark
 Wise

Also: Sherrie Babington, Parish Clerk, Members of the Public.

The meeting was chaired by Parish 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 and accepted from Cllr Shelley, MBC Cllr Thompson, and KCC Cllr Prendergast.

The Chairman spoke regarding the Parish Council elections, he stated that this was John Hornes last meeting as he did not stand for re-election. He thanked Cllr Horne for his work and dedication to the Thurnham and stated that the Parish Council was very grateful for this.

Cllr Smith spoke regarding his time working with Cllr Horne on the Parish Council.

Cllr Horne thanked the Chairman and spoke regarding his role as a councillor, his past work, and the future of Thurnham Parish Council.

2. 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.

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

No interests were declared, and no dispensation requests were received.

3. 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, this was seconded by Cllr Horne and agreed by all present.

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

4. Matters arising from the Minutes.

The Chairman read out the response from the Bearsted Woodland Trust addressing the concerns of the PC regarding the Woodland Trust car park and the poor condition of the verges. This was noted by members.

Cllr Smith reported that there may be funds available to extend the cycle and pathway along the Ashford Road and the Joint Transport Group of Parish Councils were looking at this as an option, this would assist with traffic calming and verge protection. He stated that the group was working with KCC regarding this.

5. Public Comments and Observations.

No matters were raised.

6. Clerk's Report.

The Clerk's report was noted by members.

The Clerk reported on the elections and the outcome for Thurnham. She stated that the vacancies would be advertised after the 2nd of May and any applicants could then be considered for cooption by the new Parish Council.

7. External Reports.

a. MBC Ward Councillors Report.

MBC Councillor Stephen Thompson gave his apologies to the meeting.

Cllr Duncan spoke regarding the issues with the bin collections in Maidstone due to the new contract. She stated that she had emailed the Borough Council regarding this, however he had not responded.

This was discussed by members and Cllr Smith confirmed that he had also emailed MBC Cllr Thompson regarding this matter.

b. KCC Councillors Report.

KCC Councillor Shelina Prendergast gave her apologies to the meeting.

c. Police Report.

No report was received.

d. Liaison with external parties

Cllr Stark reported on the progress of the King George V Memorial Hall. He stated that bookings continued to flow, and the hall was in a good financial position.

8. Joint Parish Group/Local Plan.

Cllr Horne reported on the Local Plan and the work of the Coordinating Group.

He stated that he had drafted a letter to the Planning Inspector regarding the Local Plan procedure for the Parish Council to consider.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Horne for his work and stated that he would look at this.

9. Saint Mary's Church.

Cllr Smith gave a report on St Mary's Church.

He spoke about their finances and stated that the accounts were now up to date.

10. Financial Matters.

a. Financial Statement.

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.

The following additional cheques were approved - £71.94 Domain renewal and £686.93 KALC.

b. 2023/2024 Accounts and AGAR.

The Clerk stated that the accounts would be presented to the Parish Council following the internal audit.

11. Planning Matters:

a. Planning applications to consider.

No applications to consider.

b. MBC Planning Decisions

23/505276/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. (part 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 SP17, DM1, DM15 and DM30 of Maidstone Local Plan (2017); policies LPRSP9, LPRSP15, LPRHOU8, and LPRQD4 of the emerging Local Plan (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 considered to be 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 DM1 and DM3 of the Maidstone Local Plan (2017); policies LPRSP14(A) and LPRSP15 of the emerging Local Plan (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 development, separating any development from the ancient woodland; 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 DM1 and DM3 of the Maidstone Local Plan (2017); policies LPRSP14(A) and LPRSP15 of the emerging Local Plan (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 any details regarding how the development, through integrated design, would improve biodiversity in and around development; and there is no evidence to suggest that the development would secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. On this basis, the submission is contrary to policies DM1 and DM3 of the Maidstone Local Plan (2017); policies LPRSP14(A), LPRSP15 and LPRHOU8 of the emerging Local Plan (2021-2038); and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

(5) The submission has failed to demonstrate the acceptability of the development in relation to highway safety. This would be contrary to the aims of policy DM1 of the Maidstone Local Plan (2017); policies LPRSP15 and LPRHOU8 of the emerging Local Plan (2021-2038); and paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

c. Other Planning Matters.

Adoption of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review and associated Policies Map were adopted by the Council at its meeting on 20th March 2024. The Local Plan Review provides a comprehensive planning framework for the borough for the period 2021 to 2038.

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review replaces the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), however, some of the adopted Local Plan 2017 policies are still relevant and have been retained. With the adoption of the Local Plan Review, the Development Plan for the Borough now comprises.

- Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2021-2038 (2024)
- Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 as amended by Early Partial Review (2020)
- Kent Mineral Sites Plan (2020)
- North Loose Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 (2016)

- Loose Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (2019)
- Marden Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031 (2020)
- Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 (2020)
- Lenham Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031 (2021)
- Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031 (2021)
- Otham Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035 (2021)

Planning legislation requires that decisions on planning applications should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are other, relevant planning reasons that mean an alternative decision should be made.

You can view the adopted Local Plan Review, Policies Map, Adoption Statement, Final Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) and Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement on the Council's website here; <https://localplan.maidstone.gov.uk/home/local-plan-review>.

12. Highway & PROW Matters.

a. To consider general highway and PROW matters.

Proposed diversion of Public Bridleways KH99, KH89 and KH98 at Stockbury and Thurnham

Highways Act 1980 – Section 119

Kent County Council

Proposed diversion of Public Bridleways KH99, KH89 and KH98 at Stockbury and Thurnham

The County Council is considering a proposal to divert part of Public Bridleways KH99, KH89 and KH98.

The existing lengths of bridleways are shown on the accompanying plan by solid black lines.

The proposed alternative routes are shown by dashed lines with vertical lines in the gaps between points A-C, E-F and G-H. All new routes are proposed to have a width of 3.0 metres.

A plan showing how the network would look should the routes be diverted is also attached, as well as an extract from the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way (Working Copy).

Bridleways KH99 and KH89 are proposed to be diverted to provide an improved circular route for equestrians and other users.

Bridleway KH98 is proposed to be diverted to allow for the access road to be gated for security reasons whilst still allowing public equestrian and pedestrian access.

I recommend that you visit the site to view the proposed routes (where possible) and consider the benefits to the landowner and the public, and the affect it may have on enjoyment and convenience.

Members discussed this proposed diversion and raised concerns as it was not for the benefit of the public, and there was no justification to change the route of the footpath. They therefore agreed to object to this proposed diversion.

Action: Clerk to submit objections to proposed diversion.

b. HIP (Highways Improvement Plan).

To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

Cllr Smith stated that KCC were undertaking a speed review of the A20 from Harrietsham to Bearsted and the Joint Traffic Group was due to arrange a meeting to discuss the results of this review.

He stated that he was also due to attend a meeting with Hollingbourne and Boxley PCs to discuss speed on country lanes.

13. Future Agenda Items.

No matters were raised.

14. Annual Meeting of the Parish.

It was agreed that the Annual Meeting of the Parish would take place prior to the next Parish Council meeting on 10th May at 7:30 pm.

15. Date of next Meeting.

20th May 2024.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed to the press and public at 8.30pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....