

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE KIG JOINT PARISHES GROUP
Held on 28th July 2009 at 7.30pm.

The meeting was chaired by Peter Waite

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Jacques, Lenham and Kingswood & Broomfield Parish Councils.

2. Report Rule 6 partner liaison meetings

Peter Waite reported on the recent meeting of Rule 6 Parties that he had attended on behalf of the JPG.

He stated that KCC was appointing a coordinating barrister to coordinate the evidence.

He stated that the Statements of Common Ground needed to be submitted by all parties by 1st September 2009, however this mainly affected the Appellant, MBC and Highways, and it was unlikely that the JPG would need to become involved in this issue.

He informed members that the police had withdrawn as Rule 6 status as they were now a witness in support of MBC.

He stated that the Proofs of Evidence needed to be ready by 1st September 2009; however the next key date would be the rebuttals.

Peter Waite stated that it was essential that bodies such as JPG and StopKIG would not get involved in technical issues. He stated that the JPG's role was to present the arguments from the community perspective; he spoke regarding the level of the JPG arguments.

He reported on the JPG letter of objection to the short consultation for the revised documents and he confirmed that the letter had been sent by Luther Pendragon. However he stated that no response had been received to date.

3. Report Luther Pendragon Actions

Peter Waite informed members of the JPG that Luther Pendragon had undertaken a visit of the site and a meeting had been arranged at Westminster with Hugh Robertson MP.

He confirmed that all misunderstandings and doubts with Hugh Robertson had now been established.

He reported that the Luther Pendragon letter was now with PINS and awaiting a reply. The Inspector had been asked to clarify points regarding the infrastructure document and it was still unknown how this would pan out.

Gavin McLaggan spoke further regarding this matter. He stated that the concern was that the applicant could withdraw and resubmitted under the new rules.

Peter Waite stated that as a result of the document Luther Pendragon had prepared a press release for the JPG.

Peter Waite stated that they had also set up a facebook presence for the JPG Chairman.

A representative from Bearsted Parish Council spoke regarding the work and the advice that they had received.

Patrick Walton from Bearsted Parish Council spoke in favour of the letter sent by Luther Pendragon; he stated that it was a very clever letter.

He stated that the JPG was using Luther Pendragon to try to draw out the argument and he referred to the JPG letter as an interesting and legal letter which may prompt an interesting response.

John Horne supported the views of Patrick Walton.

Bearsted Parish Council spoke regarding the article in the Downs Mail under the Bearsted page.

Bearsted representatives once again spoke regarding their advice and the work undertaken by Luther Pendragon and the lobbying of ministers.

Geoff Licence stated that since Luther Pendragon had been appointed they had changed their position regarding lobbying.

Peter Waite confirmed that lobbying was not being undertaken at present, he spoke regarding the next stage of work by Luther Pendragon.

Peter Waite circulated the headings for the draft proofs of evidence to all present.

4. Report Hugh Robertson Meetings

Peter Waite reported on the meeting with Hugh Robertson and he stated that a meeting with Jonathan Shaw had been discussed and the need to undertake this via other parishes. He stated that Hugh Robertson would not be involved in this and it needed to be a low key meeting to try to persuade Jonathan Shaw to support the opposition.

Pat Sandford stated that he had already made contact with the parishes of Aylesford, Ditton and Larkfield and they were willing to host a meeting to seek his views on KIG. It was agreed that the greatest impact would be just before the Inquiry and it was suggested that a meeting was arranged for mid September 2009.

Representatives from Bearsted Parish Council questioned the relevance of this meeting and the involvement of Aylesford, Larkfield and Ditton Parish Councils.

Members present spoke of the impact of the development on these Parish Councils. They debated the lorry figures and the affects on the area.

The business plan submitted by AXA was discussed by all present.

Gavin McLaggan spoke regarding the forward rail from the site and the ability of the railway to take freight from the site due the gauge figures. He stated that exports were the only element that made any commercial sense.

He stated that MBC were arguing this side of the case as they would be cross examined on the technical issues which would be crucial evidence to the inquiry.

A discussion took place as to the positives and negatives of the JPG joining together with StopKIG and CPRE.

Gavin McLaggan stated that the Public Inquiry was for the benefit of the public.

Peter Waite stated that there were now no conflicts in strategy with the views of Luther Pendragon and Hugh Robertson.

Larry Mulheirn spoke regarding the first views of SEEDA and SEERA and he stated that they were poor in the way they presented their case.

5. Agree actions for JPG/Luther Pendragon.

Peter Waite referred to the draft proofs of evidence; he stated that Luther Pendragon was to write these for the JPG as it would be a starting point for the JPG. He stated that these could then be changed by the group as necessary.

He confirmed that the JPG had Peter Cooper to refer to as a planning consultant if necessary.

It was agreed that the JPG should consult with Peter Cooper on the proofs of evidence when they had been drafted.

Peter Waite stated that the main task of the JPG was to work on an opening and closing statement.

This was discussed and it was agreed that the closing statement was vital as the Inspector would base his decisions on this statement.

Paul Young of Bearsted Parish Council stated that Luther Pendragon would know the importance of a closing statement; he stated that he had reservations regarding the appointment of Luther Pendragon.

Patrick Walton stated that it was his view that the criticism of the appointment of Luther Pendragon was because of the use of the word lobbying, he stated that he disagreed with Paul Young; he confirmed that these were his views and not that of Bearsted Parish Council.

A discussion took place regarding the process of the Inquiry. It was agreed that it was essential for a representative of the JPG to attend the Inquiry each day and that a rota should be put in place to cover this.

Gavin McLaggan spoke regarding the contract with Luther Pendragon was until the end of August, he stated that no further decisions had been made by the JPG as to further input from Luther Pendragon.

Peter Waite informed members that a training workshop had been arranged for 22nd August 2009, and he asked the Clerk to email all JPG representatives to inform them of the arrangements for this day.

Paul Young asked if he could address members regarding his views on the appointment of Luther Pendragon. This was allowed by the Chairman.

Paul Young informed members that he was speaking to the meeting as an individual not as a member of Bearsted Parish Council.

He informed members of his concerns at the appointment of Luther Pendragon and recommended that the JPG appoint a Planning Consultant and remove Luther Pendragon from their appointment.

Paul Young then left the meeting.

Peter Waite spoke regarding the point of view put forward by Paul Young. He stated that the limiting factor was financial and how much the parishes could afford.

Peter Waite reiterated that the planning issues would be put forward by MBC; he stated that the JPG should not present itself as professionals.

A discussion took place with regards to the drafting of the proofs of evidence and it was agreed that these should be written by Luther Pendragon as a starting point for the JPG.

Patrick Walton spoke of the timing issues; he stated that once the proofs of evidence were drafted by the JPG then the future issues such as funding should be debated.

The document circulated by Peter Waite with headings of the proof of evidence were discussed by members.

Geoff Licence referred to this list and stated as a first draft he agreed to this.

David Burton spoke further regarding this and level of evidence to be put forward.

The meeting spoke further regarding the need to address the matters of further funding and it was proposed by Gavin McLaggan that a meeting be arranged for the end of August in order to discuss the future finances for Luther Pendragon.

This was agreed by all present.

6. Date of Next Meeting.

To be arranged.

Peter Waite declared the meeting closed at 9.15pm.