

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 18th January 2021 via Skype

Present	Peter Turley (Chair)	Geoffrey Fletcher
	Peter Hawkins	Gavin Murphy
	Stewart Ross	Kenton Stewart
	Melanie Wells	

In attendance: Borough Councillor Paul Bartlett, 3 members of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

To receive and approve apologies for absence. There were no apologies for absence.	
To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. There were no declarations of interest to note.	
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020 Minutes of the Meeting of the Mersham with Sevington Parish Council on 16 th November 2020 were approved as a true record and were signed as such. Cllr Murphy proposed approval and Cllr Fletcher seconded this.	
To discuss matters arising from previous minutes that are not covered by the agenda. Cllr Fletcher asked whether there was any progress with the sale of the speed sign – one Parish Council is no longer interested but Speedwatch themselves are interested so the Clerk will follow this up. A new speed sign would require us choosing 3 locations for the sign to be situated in the Village, Cllr Turley suggested one at A20, one near the Sports Club and one near Quarry View. This would provide us with 3 potential gateways to the village. To be discussed at February meeting. The Caretaker has not as yet cleared drains but he has been working on the hedge and on the JPF. The Millennium Green benches could do with refurbishing/replacing, The Caretaker would install these for us and a review will be undertaken on the benches and street furniture – PT to discuss this with Paul Rodway. The bus shelter on the A20 is in a bad state, the wood is rotten and some glass has broken. This will be investigated as a potential Caretaker task. KCC Footpath stiles have been repaired but they are wobbly and may need further work. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask KCC to write to land owner to advise them of their liability A20 resurfacing is to be scheduled for the Spring – The Clerk had had a response and had circulated the response. The streetlight in Bower Road has been repaired.	TB TB PT TB
Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item. The member of the public had nothing additional to raise.	
To receive report from Borough Councillor Detailed report attached below Cllr Fletcher asked about lighting on the IBF being angled downwards to comply with the dark skies policy.	

<p>Cllr Bartlett explained that once the site is fully open these issues should be addressed as the worst of the lighting is due to construction specific lights.</p> <p>The plan construction however is expected to continue until June, constructing the facilities for DeFRA opening in July. Cllr Bartlett to ask Daniel Friel as to when construction lighting will be removed. Is it necessary that the lights are angled to Mersham, could they be reversed directionally? Sevington residents have the same issue and we hope that they have done this as amenably as possible.</p> <p>Following the HGV congestion last week, a meeting over the weekend agreed that all lorries waiting for Waterbrook would be buffered in Sevington to prevent too much traffic was turning up at Waterbrook. The COVID 19 testing at Sevington has found that DfT need to encourage drivers to have a test prior to entering Kent.</p> <p>Sevington IBF should be opened in February. The Waterbrook facility is due to close and revert to a lorry park.</p> <p>Cllr Murphy noted that a comment had been made by Cllr Bartlett that local contractors have been used where possible. Is there going to be any forthcoming information as far as this perspective is concerned for the positive impact on Ashford and the residents? Is it worth touching on information that might highlight the positive benefit that this has created? Cllr Bartlett explained that he feels this is much more positive as a site than it might have been.</p> <p>The application from Amazon is now being discussed at Planning Committee on the Waterbrook site.</p>	<p>PB</p>
<p>To discuss Mersham Manor and the Tithe Barn development</p> <p>Mike Simmonds, the agent for the owner of the site attended the meeting.</p> <p>All of the Council are aware of the issues on the site. Cllrs Bartlett and Turley had a meeting with the new appointed Planning Officer for the site on Dec 2nd 2020.</p> <p>Mr Simmonds had circulated 4 documents to the Parish Councillors, these showed the land owned by the site, the village confines plan and an idea for plans for the property.</p> <p>Mr Simmonds made the following points:</p> <p>Discussions regarding the site have been ongoing for circa 15 years.</p> <p>It was originally owned by the company previous to Eurostar, it was then sold. The barn was a grain store originally and it had suffered from poor repairs until the current owners purchased it. Proposals, some 10 years ago to progress a conversion to residential use finally proved unsuccessful when Historic England changed its policy relating to such grade 2 star buildings.</p> <p>A number of investigations have taken place and the building is aged at 14-15 Century building.</p> <p>When the Stables building was renovated the owner was required to remove the tin barn to the south of the Tithe barn. This has since had the unintended impact of exposing the barn to the full brunt of south westerly weather.</p> <p>Further deterioration resulted and the tithe barn was assessed as structurally unsound. As a result the roof tiles were removed and the blue tarpaulin erected.</p> <p>The owner has been looking for the lowest impact use for the building, this would be domestic storage and garaging and might be agreed with Historical England and Ashford Borough Council.</p> <p>The present set of the proposals covers using the barn as a garage and store and a package for building 3 properties to provide enabling funding for this plus a sperate application for 3 further housing units. (6 housing units in total)</p> <p>The barn repairs have been assessed at £375,000. In addition to these repair cost provision must also be made to cover the future maintenance of the barn e.g. an endowment for the future.</p> <p>The whole of the Manor complex lies within the Village confine and it is only the Eurostar meadow that is</p>	

<p>outside of the village confines. The options presented to the Borough Council have as yet been unacceptable, they consider the number of properties being too many and over-development of the site.</p> <p>There is as yet no meeting of the minds and all of our plans have been rejected/pending rejection .We have been asked to withdraw the application but instead we wish to have the reasons for refusal so that we can see whether we can satisfy the criteria required.</p> <p>There are other options we would like to pursue, one is to convert the barn into a house with minimal internal alterations. There would also be a dwelling unit, being a farmhouse or even in a rectory style in the courtyard. This might be the method that should meet the least resistance and should allow the entire place to be future proofed and should respect the setting of the buildings. Everything in the area is listed because of their being in the cartilage.</p> <p>Another option is to consider the Eurostar Meadow which could accommodate additional properties to fund the repair and maintenance endowment to future proof the barn.</p> <p>So there are 3 options available – the barn being a garage with additional buildings on site, additional buildings on Eurostar Meadow or the conversion of the barn into a property with only 1 additional property on the land.</p> <p>The applicant is as frustrated as the rest of the village.</p> <p>The Borough Council planning officer and Cllrs Turley and Bartlett met in December. A new Officer has been appointed and we are trying to help facilitate a solution to be progressed. Cllr Bartlett and Turley will meet with ABC again in February.</p> <p>It is understood that ABC need to reject the current applications to allow due process to be followed. Councillor Bartlett with contact ABC planning to progress this</p> <p>Cllr Murphy stated that in this situation there should be an escalation process and should not be allowed to just be stuck in the system. As villagers we are unimpressed with the stalemate situation.</p> <p>The Chairman asked the Parish Councillors to consider the second proposal (conversion of Tithe barn to residential dwelling) so that we have a clear “village opinion”. Cllr Turley would like to be able to represent this to ABC planning after the February meeting.</p> <p>To be discussed at the February meeting as an agenda item.</p>	<p>PT/PB</p> <p>PB</p> <p>All</p>
<p>To discuss Local HGV and traffic issues (to include issues on Kingsford Street)</p> <p>Cllr Turley explained that liaison had taken place between, Damian Green, Cllr Turley, Cllr Bartlett, Clair Bell and Toby Howe. Cllr Turley is to respond to Toby after this meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett – this week’s problem is queuing traffic on the A2070, there is a plan for holding lorries in Operation Brock once Waterbrook closes and when SIBF opens as an HMRC site and a Covid 19 site. Op. Brock will switch off the Green Lane to allow that lorries can be held to stop SIBF getting to capacity. It will get full very quickly if Covid testing stays as it is.</p> <p>Cllr Fletcher asked why Waterbrook is being closed if SIBF is not going to be complete and big enough to cope with the lorry numbers. Cllr Bartlett felt Waterbrook could be extended but at present, Waterbrook site is due to close at end of February. The situation that arose last week will be terminal to any businesses on Waterbrook. The curveball that was not known was that Covid 19 tests were going to be required. 40% of lorries were turning up at SIBF for tests when they have passed 40 other Covid testing sites further north across the UK. Covid tests for France are a new requirement, there may be a requirement for the drivers to have to be tested before they enter Kent. A charge for COVID testing in SIBF has been discussed to dissuade drivers from waiting until they arrive in Kent. This is an administration issue.</p> <p>Now that lorries are not allowed to park on local roads, is there somewhere to report the lorries parked illegally on the side roads? Lorries can be reported at Ashford.gov.uk/Brexit.</p> <p>Cllr Turley expressed a lack of confidence that reporting in the evening would be reacted to in a timely manner. Cllr Bartlett explained that we must use the system. It was being implemented e.g. Recently 43</p>	

lorries were clamped, 19 of these were outside of previous allowed clamping areas.	
<p>To receive an update regarding the creation of a green buffer Zone in High Field</p> <p>Peter asked Linda Arthur to provide an update. Vincent of Wildlife Trust, Paul and Linda met on site in December. The upshot was proposal for consulting work which was circulated earlier today. It would appear this is in too much depth at this stage but an interim report has been requested. Cllr Turley said that an ABC sub-committee has been formed and an Officer has been provided to this project.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett will share the proposal with the Officer.</p> <p>It was debated and agreed that the Parish Council needs to step up and drive this forward working with the Village Alliance and ABC if we are to get what we want rather than be given what others decide.</p> <p>Cllr Ross – feels that the Preliminary Ecological Assessment should be undertaken. ABC should be pushed to undertake this. SIBF developers have always claimed to have undertaken Ecological studies and these should be shared with ABC. This step should be proceeded to enable this initial phase to be undertaken.</p> <p>The PC needs to consider focussing on this and, perhaps create a sub-committee to break the work down. Cllr Turley requested for volunteers for the sub-committee. Cllr Bartlett and Linda Arthur both agreed that they would be on the committee. Cllr Fletcher and Cllr Murphy agreed to consider this. Linda suggested meeting with Vincent again and once a sub-committee is formed this would be required.</p> <p>This is to be revisited at the February Meeting.</p>	PB
<p>To receive an update regarding the position of the broadband project for Mersham</p> <p>There have been a number of recent communications regarding the schemes.</p> <p>Cllr Wells created an article and this is on the PC website, local social media and on Noticeboards.</p> <p>Cllr Stewart has chased other providers and there appears to be a lack of interest in these. Rural builds are very expensive to install.</p> <p>It is hoped that there will be an update shortly from OpenReach to progress the required projects</p> <p>In total the village will have to have 2 projects initiated by the PC and 1 project that is running by an individual.</p> <p>Once quotes are in, we will be able to progress OpenReach setting up a websites and residents getting engaged.</p> <p>A sub-committee meeting will be organised as soon as possible. It is hoped that both of these projects will be pledged by end of March.</p>	
<p>To discuss issues regarding the JPF and home-made swings</p> <p>There were 2 temporary swings erected at the JPF, Paul removed them but these swings are home-made and our insurance does not cover this matter.</p> <p>A communication was suggested and this will be circulated via social media and websites to try and explain as to why this should not be undertaken.</p> <p>The Village Caretaker will pay particular attention to any home-made swings that are erected and ensure that they are removed at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>GM to propose something for circulation.</p>	GM
<p>Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters.</p> <p>A list of Planning Applications was circulated as Appendix A with the agenda, those requiring a response were:</p>	

20/01583/AS	Bell House Cottage, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham TN25 6NU	Proposed single storey rear extension	
The Parish Council had no comments.			
20/01613/AS & 20/01614/AS	Mersham Le Hatch, Hythe Road, Mersham, Ashford, TN25 6NH	Works of conversion for the refurbishment of presently unused Pavilions to provide residential accommodation to include internal alterations to layouts & staircases	
No objections raised.			
20/001633/AS	1 The Orchids, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6PQ	Lawful development certificate - proposed - construction of single storey flat roofed outbuilding/summerhouse.	
The Parish Council raises the question as to whether a kitchenette and a shower could be justified in a summerhouse. The Parish Council feels this level of development is inconsistent with what is required of a summerhouse. The application raises concerns that this could be used as a self-contained dwelling.			
20/01630/AS	Chequer Tree Farm, Chequer Tree Farm Road, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 7HL	Erection of agricultural workers dwelling (resubmission of 18/01527/AS)	PT
No objections raised.			
20/1757/AS	Mersham Sports Ground Stone Green, Flood Street, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 7DE	Proposal for the construction of new sports clubhouse	PT
The Parish Council supports this application.			
20/01775/AS & 20/01776/AS	Bower House, Bower Road, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6NW	Installation of new staircase from ground to first floor and new staircase from first floor to converted attic space. Lining underside of attic roof. Installation of partitions. Installation of 2No. rooflights on south east elevation, installation of 3No. rooflights and 1No. replacement rooflight on north east elevation.	
No objections raised.			
20/01779/AS	1 The Orchids, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6PQ	Single storey rear extension and insertion of Juliet balcony at rear first floor level.	
No objections raised.			
17/01699/CON/AS	Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham, Ashford, TN25 6NU	Discharge conditions 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12	Mersham Street, Me
No objections raised			
Financial matters:			
a. To note/authorise the following:			
i. To note the Parish Council's Financial position <i>The Parish Council bank balance as at 31/12/2020 of £20045.95. There is 1 cheque outstanding.</i>			
ii. To authorise any payments			
Cheque No:	Payee	Amount	

502059	Ian King – January salary	£ 118.31
502060	JPF - parts to repair roundabout	£ 11.32
502061	HMRC	£ 76.80
502062	Training Course for Clerk	£ 58.57
502063	T Block – January salary	£ 321.96

A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.

Any Other Business (for information purposes only):

A Notice-board has been requested by the Church Warden. Cllrs are happy to support this (and the Parish Church Committee) as it is a well used amenity. There was a discussion surrounding this request, the disappointing engagements with the Church Commission to date and the amount paid to the Church at present. The amount provided to The Villager was queried. Cllrs Stewart proposed that the PC should agree to fund the requested notice board, Cllr Fletcher supported this suggestion. The Parish Council is in favour of funding the Notice Board but PCC must gain permission. Formal approval for release of this funding to be sought during next meeting (Feb 2021)

TB

It was noted that the Parish Council Notice board could do with tidying/cleaning.

A member of public had reported to a Councillor that the path from the shop to the Millennium Green is still being blocked by vehicles, this is stopping mobility scooters being able to access the path. It was questioned as to whether some markings/paint could be allowed.

The permission for access to the land was discussed. There are problems on site as it is partly owned by KCC, privately owned by a villager while the path is owned by a second villager. The Parish Council have previously tried to improve this site by working with the owners. However this work was undermined when trees sentimental to the owner were removed by an unknown 3rd party and the owner requested that we stop our work.

The decision to be made, are we going to get involved?

The Parish Council has no jurisdiction over the access route and has no powers to alter the access to the green. The Parish Council discussed previous failed attempts at rectifying the situation and recognises this is outside of our remit. The Parish Council empathises with the individual that has had problems with access. No further action proposed.

The Sevington with Finberry Parish Council asked whether the seat on the Stakeholders Committee could be given over to Sevington with Finberry Parish Council. Unanimously agreed.

The K6 telephone kiosk, is in a poor state, the kiosk is a grade II listed kiosk. It is BTs obligation to maintain at present.

Cllr Ross commented that the electricity cables that are buried in Blind Lane has cables exposed, the portable loo is also on site and, therefore, needs reporting. Cllr Stewart explained that the buried joint is there, Cllr Stewart has one by his property.

Cllr Stewart asked if there are any rumours on the public house. There are a number of rumours about different ownerships and plans. Currently there are no conversions of commercial property in to residential property without planning application is required. The Government are looking to change the rules as of 1st October in order to convert businesses to residential properties in order to stop the pub changing to residential. Cllr Bartlett is requesting this to be altered to an exception for listed properties.

Cllr Hawkins has reported the storm drain blockages.

Cllr Bartlett noted the power situation at the SIBF – Network Power is planning on switching on the power on 25th January, this might be linked to the holes in the ground in Blind Lane.

Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council. Monday 15th February 2021 Monday 15th March 2021 Monday 19th April 2021 Monday 17th May 2021	All
The meeting closed at 10.00pm	

COUNCIL UPDATE FEBRUARY 2021

HGV PARKING IN ASHFORD

KCC introduced a prohibition of waiting 24/7 on all borough roads for HGVs 5 tonnes from 4 January 2021. The previous rules allow clamping of lorries parked in authorised places on just five locations in the borough (A20 Ashford to Charing, Ellingham, Wootton Road, Orbital and Ashford Business Park).

The new rule will avoid displacement of lorries from these places to other roads in the Borough if there is a repeat of the delays at Dover experienced at Christmas which causes lorry drives to wait for passage to the continent. It also applied to the 6 other districts in east Kent.

The Kent Access Permit is designed to avoid Brexit delays at the short straight crossing points, Dover and EuroTunnel. In essence it requires hauliers to submit electronic paperwork at the .gov website ahead of starting their journey. It will give them a “red”, “amber” and “green” alert. Red means do not travel to the port the paperwork is incorrect and should be resubmitted, if they do travel they will receive a £300 fine. Amber means the haulier has been selected for a HMRC compliance check at Waterbrook Inland Border Facility (IBF) until end February at which point Sevington IBF will open for HMRC checks. Green means passage to the crossing is permitted.

In addition to these trade related checks, lorry drives need a negative test COVID-19 within 72 hours of transit. There are 34 out of Kent testing centres and 70% of lorries arrive in Kent with a completed test. On 8 January 2021 there were 55 HGV COVID turnbacks at Dover and 44 tourist COVID turnbacks. There were 34 HGV COVID turnbacks at EuroTunnel 6 tourist COVID turnbacks. As at late afternoon on 8 January, there were 7 lorries at Sevington and 96 at Waterbrook.

There have been some issues with HGV’s travelling through Mersham en route to Sevington. Improved signage has been implemented and incorrect postcode information removed from gov.uk website. KCC continue to monitor to ensure proper compliance with the route to Sevington.

COVID-19

Now that we are once again in a national lockdown and living under the same kind of restrictions we faced last March KCC will continue to focus on adapting their services to ensure that they look after those who are most vulnerable and in need. Kent Together can help people with:

- Making sure they have enough food and supplies

- Picking up prescriptions
- Making sure they have someone to talk to by phone, Skype or Facetime.

You can find out more at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/protect-kent-and-medway> or by calling 03000 41 92 92.

The army of volunteers and an amazing community effort was critical to the response during the last national lockdown.

Lockdown will also inevitably take its toll on businesses and livelihoods too. If you have a business please look on the ABC website at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/> where you can find all the latest advice you need to help you through this time and find out what support is available.

KCC are rolling out more venues where anyone, not just key workers, can have a rapid-result, symptom-free coronavirus test. These tests will identify people who may be unknowingly spreading the virus and are another way we are trying to keep people safe and continue the fight against COVID-19. Alongside this, KCC are also continuing to support residents with the local test and trace programme, to further help reduce infection rates. The big difference this time round is the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccination programme is already well underway across Kent and should give us all real optimism, no matter how difficult things may currently seem.

ASHFORD HOLIDAY KITCHEN



COMMUNITY HELP: FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

ASHFORD VINEYARD RENEW SOCIAL SUPERMARKET

Brunswick Rd, TN23 1EH

Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays
10.00 am - 12.00 pm

ashfordvineyard.org

Contact 01233 331919 or email.

WILLOW'S CHILDREN CENTRE CAFÉ, LIGHTBITES CAFÉ

Halstow Way, Brookfield Road,
Ashford, TN23 4EY

Monday - Friday
12.00 pm - 2.00 pm

Contact 07732 385091

BRIGHT CITY CHURCH

Centrepiece, Bank St. TN23 1BA

**Mondays, Wednesdays,
and Fridays**
10.00 am - 12.00 pm

brightcitychurchuk.com

Contact 01233334007 or email.

TENTERDEN SOCIAL HUB

Church Rd, Tenterden, TN30 6AT

Monday - Friday
10.00 am - 12.00 pm

mytenterden.co.uk

Contact 01580 762882 or email.

THE SALVATION ARMY, ASHFORD CORPS

115 Cudworth Rd, TN24 0BE

Fridays 10.00 am - 12.00 pm
Available at other times in emergency situations.

salvationarmy.org.uk

Contact 01233 643480 or email.



LILY'S SOCIAL KITCHEN CIC

Unit 3, Montpellier Business Park,
Dencora Way, TN23 4FG

**Order online for Ashford
deliveries on Thursdays to
arrange collections.**

lilyscommunity.com

KENT COMMUNITY PANTRY STANHOPE

Ray Allen Centre, Stanhope Rd,
TN23 5RN

Fridays 10.30 am - 12.30 pm

kentcommunitypantry.org

Contact 01233 500477 or email

THE WELL CAFÉ

Willesborough Baptist Church, Hythe Rd, TN24 0QR
Free take-away hot drinks, food boxes
and frozen meals.

Tuesdays & Thursdays 9.30 am - 12.00 pm

wbc-ashford.org.uk

Contact 01233 632739 or email
office@willesboroughbaptist.church

REPTON CONNECT COMMUNITY CENTRE PEOPLE'S PANTRY

Repton Avenue, TN23 3BX

Mondays - Friday

reptonct.uk

Order online from peoplespantry@reptonct.uk
and ring 01233 808023 for collection.

**SEE ASHFORD.GOV.UK:
FOOD & ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES
OR RING 01233 331111.**

BYBROOK ROAD

I asked KCC how best to resolve speeding issues and rat running on / through Bybrook Road and their solution is a 20mph scheme across the whole Bockhanger / Bybrook area bounded by A28, Canterbury Road / Faversham Road / Lower Vicarage Road. Specifically:

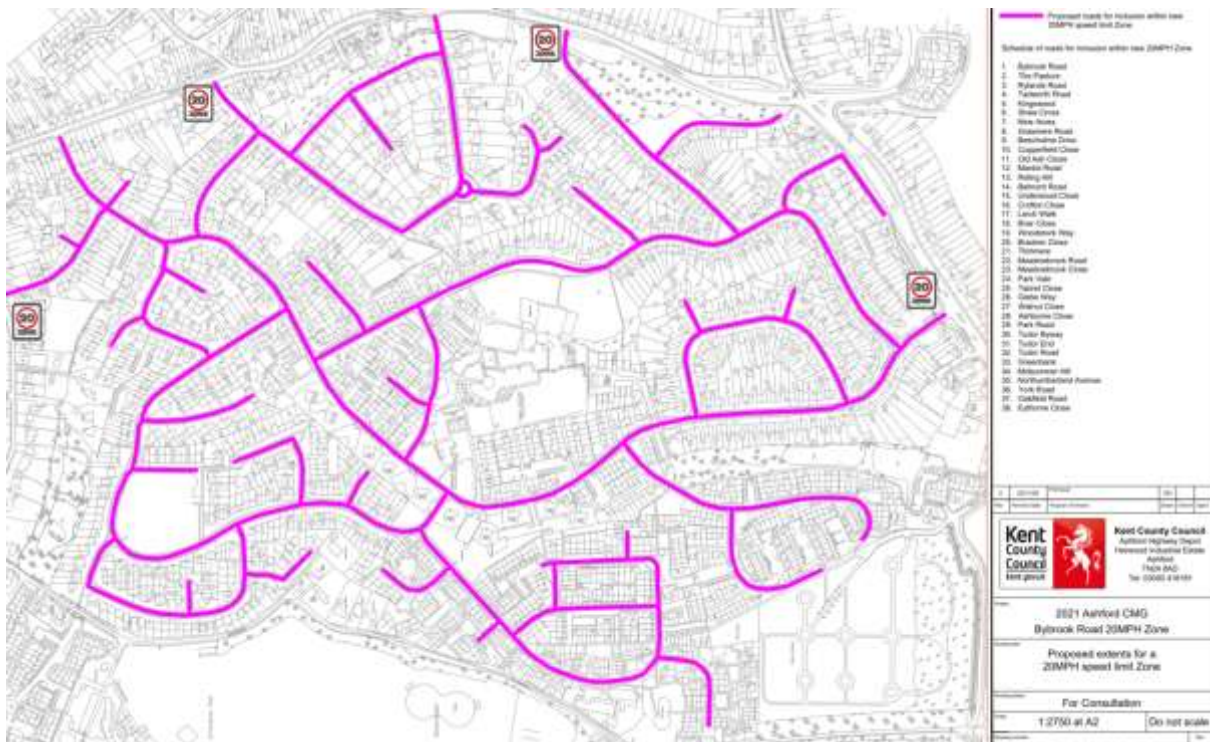
- 20mph zone for Bybrook Road / The Pasture and adjoining roads;
- 20mph roundels at the entry;
- an on road advisory cycle lane on the south western side of the road between Rylands Road and Old School Mews, and
- a raised table at the site of the existing zebra crossing on Bybrook Road (near Belmont Road).

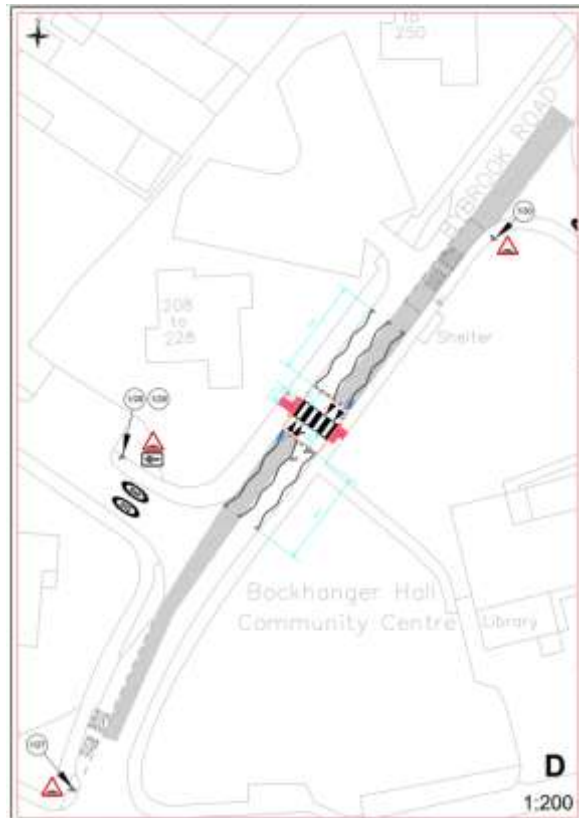
The extent of the proposed 20 zone is quite large as there are so many adjoining roads which, when considered, made sense to include within the zone. By covering this whole area, speed limit terminal signs / zone entry signs are kept to a minimum.

KCC carried out speed surveys to ensure these roads are suitable to be included in a 20 zone, which they are.

The raised table at the existing zebra crossing should help to keep speeds below 20mph at the point where there is relatively high footfall across the road, due to the proximity of the play park, shops and school.

The proposed cycle lane, while providing for cyclists also has the effect of narrowing the feel of the road, which in turn should encourage good compliance with a 20mph speed limit.





The next step is to get support for this scheme from Kennington Community Council.

Then, a Road Safety Audit (RSA) will need to be carried out. This has not yet been done in case the Community Council does not support the scheme or has some changes.

Once the Community Council confirms they would like to progress with this scheme and the RSA has been completed, it is necessary to engage with the local community to demonstrate support (to be carried out by Kennington CC).

Once KCC has proof of community support, a funding source will need to be identified, directly from the various Councils (Community Funding Grants etc) and from developers. This scheme has been costed at £31,625. This includes the cost of the physical works, traffic management (including temporary road closure), the Traffic Regulation Order for the 20mph speed limit and letter drops.

FINBERRY ACCESS

Here are the plans for the new entrance to Finberry:



Work is due to start on 1 March and will take 12 months to complete. Crest are obliged to start work on the secondary access to Finberry (to Rutledge Ave in Bridgefield) on the 401st completion. They are past this trigger point and I will now ask ABC planners to put pressure on Crest to get on with this work. I am hoping that a legal notice will not need to be issued as this would demonstrate a loss of trust, but it could come to that.

CAPTAINS WOOD

A 25 year Management Plan for the 11ha Captains Wood in Finberry was written in 2015. A condition of the planning permission (granted in 2015) was that a progress report should be submitted every 3 years to ABC. The key points in the Management Plan include:

- Captains Wood falls within South Willlesborough Dykes Local Wildlife Site
- There are 4 compartments to Captains Wood,
 - (i) areas of hornbeam coppice,
 - (ii) derelict mixed coppice with mature oak and ash,
 - (iii) dense regenerating scrub and young trees, and
 - (iv) small open glades under a mature canopy.
- Around 30 years ago the central and eastern compartments were partially felled; the central area was grazed until 20 years ago
- Proposed main access cycleway/footpath and a secondary north/south access (alongside existing PROW)

- Controlled public access for central outdoor classroom, public recreation and natural play features.

Captain Wood stakeholders are,

- Church Commissioners, owners,
- ABC, by virtue of Captains Wood's Local Wildlife Site Status,
- Kent Wildlife Trust, by virtue of Captains Wood's involvement in the local landscape,
- Mersham Parish Council (to be replaced with Sevington With Finberry Parish Council), for community involvement,
- HML (management company), responsible for management on behalf of the Church Commissioners, financed by the management charge, and
- Residents, through a Friends of Captains Wood Group.

It is now desirable to create a 5m wide wildlife corridor into Captain Wood from expanding the finger of woodland to the south. This will enable sensitive mammal species (dormice, hedgehogs etc) move into the Wood from land in Church Commissioners ownership between Finberry and Bridgefield. This will rectify the isolation of Captain Wood and will support biodiversity and the aim of ABC to extend the tree planting opportunities being carried out in Chilmington Green to other areas south of Ashford. The location of this 5m wide corridor could be on land to the south of the proposed Rutledge Ave / Swift Ave link road and should be created at the same time.

TEMPOARARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS ON A2070

The temporary diversion illustrated below were intended to be put in place by 1 January 2021. Low number of lorries using Waterbrook has not required them to be used by Highways England continues to monitor the situation.



These temporary traffic management plans were expected to be in place to the end of February 2021 for the duration of Waterbrook IBF being used in place of Sevington IBF by HMRC until 1 March 2021.

The scheme consists of traffic signal controls on the A2070 westbound from the Orbital Park roundabout and Waterbrook Avenue. The lights would help manage HGV movements in and out of

Waterbrook in the peak morning and afternoon periods. All traffic exiting Orbital Park would turn left onto the A2070 eastbound carriageway towards the M20 (even those motorists wishing to turn right at the roundabout to head westwards towards Finberry/Kingsnorth on the A2070).

Motorists wanting to head towards Finberry/Kingsnorth from Orbital would drive past the entrance to the Sevington Business Park before arriving at the A2070 Bad Munstereifel roundabout, where they 'loop' around the roundabout before returning westbound along the A2070 back to the Orbital Park roundabout, through the traffic lights and westwards towards Kingsnorth. Those living on Finberry from south Ashford would use the same 'loop' from Orbital and Kingsnorth because the Orbital Park roundabout is not available for U turns.

Emergency service vehicles travelling under a blue light would still be able to access the closed section of the Orbital Park roundabout.

ABC and KCC raised with the DfT and Highways England the need to monitor the working of any scheme, including making sure that those exiting Barrey Road, Church Road and Finberry are not unreasonably prejudiced by the altered traffic flows.

LAND EAST OF SEVINGTON IBF

A useful site visit was held on 18 December 2020 with Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT), Village Alliance, KCC and ABC. The purpose was to discuss the planting that may be suitable and develop costings so that progress can be made on the plans for the Parish Council and ABC to take over ownership and management of the site. This will be ABC's latest "Green Buffer Zone". Terms of Reference with KWT are hoped to be agreed by February 2021.

Sevington stakeholder Groups resumed 12 January with ongoing input on the boundary treatment along Church Road, footpath and highways matters. The following is a view back from the site towards Ashford.



FOOD VOUCHERS

Kent County Council issued more than 31,000 food vouchers to vulnerable families ahead of the December school holidays to help them feed their children over the festive period. The council set up a scheme last month to provide food vouchers to the families of children who are eligible to receive benefits-related Free School Meals. The intention was for vouchers to be issued before the end of the current school term in advance of the school break. The scheme is part of a wider range of measures to help the lowest income households with food and fuel costs over the winter.

PLANNING NUMBERS

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has scrapped the planning algorithm that would have dramatically increased housebuilding in Kent and Ashford. England's 20 biggest cities will instead take a larger share of new homes under revised plans. They will be required to provide up to 35% more housing than previously imposed, and will be encouraged to focus on family homes. It will mean ABC reverting to totals drawn up in 2019 of 888 dwellings per year. For any new Local Plan, Ashford's housing need figure would be framed around the need to meet 970 dwellings per year number, as a 'starting point'. Well done to all who wrote to Mr Jenrick, this is a good example where NUMBERS MATTER when writing.

SCHOOL PARKING

The PCSO is currently dealing with ongoing school parking issues at the Kennington CE Academy, Downs View infant school and the Towers school. There have been incidents where drivers have double parked preventing emergency vehicle access and drivers mounting the pavement and driving along them, this poses a serious risk to the children and parents that are walking on these pavements. Approximately 9 section 59 warnings have been issued to drivers that have mounted the pavement, which means if that are seen driving without due care and attention to other road users contrary to section 3 Road Traffic Act 1988 or driving elsewhere other than a road contrary to section 34 Road Traffic Act 1988 in the next twelve months their vehicle will be seized.

How would you feel if your vehicle had caused an obstruction, and a Fire Engine or ambulance couldn't get through and putting lives at risk and possibly your loved ones? This is happening across the whole of Ashford daily.





STRAY HORSES

There has been a spate of horses being reported loose on the highway and on the on the 23 December two horses were hit by a car in the Ashford area. Unfortunately, one of these horses had to be Put To Sleep. This is a prime example off the risk posed to the horses and motorists and why for the safety of all concerned horses will be seized by Kent Police if found straying on the highway.

Horse owners need to be aware that there are costs associated to the return of a horse. I would urge that all those who have horses ensure that they are securely kept and that the perimeter of fields and stables are regularly checked with any gates padlocked.

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