


COUNCIL UPDATE 4.2024

“20 IS PLENTY” in GODINTON ROAD

Following the 20mph zone in Bybrook, I am investigating a similar proposal in Godinton Road and the surrounding area. I distributed the following over the easter weekend.



Meds/April 2024

Dear Resident

Have your say – Godinton Road and surrounding streets speed review

Following concerns raised in connection with the speeding of vehicles, highways officers have been reviewing on the speed limit in Godinton Road and adjacent roads. The concerns arose from reports of cars travelling at excessive speeds. An area where a proposed 20mph limit is shown on the plan overleaf.

This is an informal consultation to canvass local opinions. If there is no clear consensus, or a strong view that the speed limit should not be changed then the proposal will be abandoned.

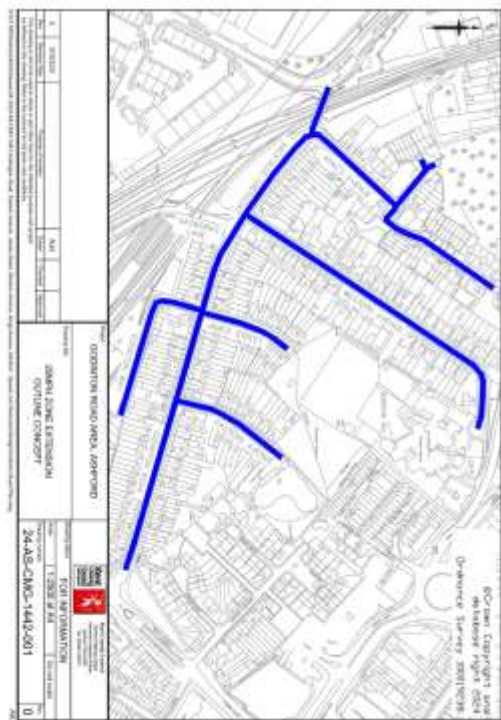
Please answer the questions below and email your response to paul.bartlett@kent.gov.uk by Tuesday 30th April 2024.

1. Do you feel there is a speeding issue in this area? Yes/No
2. Do you agree with the proposal to decrease the speed limit to 20mph? Yes/No
3. Do you have any other comments?

Please provide your name and address so I know you live in the area; your contact details will be deleted once the survey has been completed.

Thank you for completing this survey.

Paul Bartlett
Ashford Central KCC Councillor



Map showing the proposed 20mph zone in Godinton Road and surrounding streets. The map includes a scale bar, a north arrow, and a legend. The legend indicates that the blue lines represent the proposed 20mph zone. The map also shows the location of the survey area relative to the surrounding roads and buildings.

LORRY DAMAGE

I reported the “No HGV” sign that has been knocked down (presumably by a HGV! It’s in Church Road, Sevington (ref 797090). It was quickly put back up by KCC Highways.



Before



After

COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT

The group meet on 4th April. The key issues were as follows.

- The biggest issue is wellbeing of homeless with dogs. The RSPA is the lead on the animal welfare.
- PCC funding for 2024/25 has been confirmed and opportunities to access will be made available when priorities are assessed.
- Additional personal alarms and other safety equipment have been purchased.
- Two new PCSO have joined the police out of training school and a new town beat officer (22 years of experience) has also started.
- VAWG event at the Outlet was well received and much better attended than those held in village halls. A similar event is planned for the town centre (pencilled in for 2 August) and one in June at Tescos.
- The “Women Together” on 26th April at 11am-2pm at Singleton Village Hall was designed to promote women’s safety and will be assessed to see if they should be repeated. It included self-defence classes.
- The safer business day on 14th March is expected to be repeated either monthly or bi-monthly; it demonstrates to business what the police and council are doing to promote safety in the town.
- The Town Centre Business Forum was scheduled for 23rd April at County Square.
- The Indian Spring event was scheduled for 20th April at 5pm to 10pm in Civic Park.

INTEGRATED CARE PARTNERSHIP

The meeting took place on 4th April. The key issues arising included.

- The financial position in KCC indicates overspend in ASC for 2023/24 so to achieve financial stability for 24/25 savings are required. The CQC will review KCC ASC in about 6 months’ time.
- KCC’s “Best Start for Life” includes additional mental health support during pregnancy and first 2 years of life.
- A strategy will tackle the barriers to breastfeeding.
- KCC will prepare for traffic disruption in October when the new EES system starts. At the time of writing there is no proposal from Dover Port to suspend their “turn up and go” system which is a likely root cause of delays.
- Access to acute emergency services has improved following changes in the way the acute trusts are working with SECAM.
- 55,000 additional GP appointments were provided in 2023/24. A new primary care strategy is due to be adopted in May addressing the challenges GP practices are facing in recruiting qualified GPs.
- Access to elective surgery will be a focus for 2024/25. The recent acquisition by Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells Acute Trust of a private

hospital to increase capacity was commended for elsewhere in the county.

STONESTREET SOLAR

The Aldington and Mersham Support Group hosted a meeting in the Mountbatten Hall on 4th April. The purpose of the meeting was to outline reasons why further consultation is required. The application is for 462 acres of solar panels across Aldington and Mersham parishes. Further details are required on the following.

- No details were provided on the replacement of the panel during the 40-year life of the project and the disruption that this would cause.
- The development at the size proposed will produce more than the stated electricity, it is therefore oversized and needs to be reduced to meet the expected output.
- 31 lithium battery sites are proposed a fire management plan is required.
- 20% of the land used is the best and most versatile farmland.
- The development includes the Aldington Ridge line so a large part of the development was on a hill and will be seen from Sandyhurst Lane. The visual aspect therefore needs to be better considered.
- The risk of additional flooding needs to be assessed from compacted land, new impermeable surfaces and the fact that water is diverted by the panels towards channels. The proposed fencing may cause enhanced water flows in some areas when debit accumulates in the fencing.

FAMILY HUBS

The new service offering in Ashford are set out below.

Support & Service for Children & their Families	District	Venue Until 13 May	Venue After 13 May	Discontinued from April 2024		Continuing		Referral only services from April 2024	
				Title	Frequency	Title	Frequency	Title	Frequency
0-11	Ashford	Waterside CC	Waterside Family Hub	Baby movers	Weekly	SEND stay and play	Weekly	Bespoke group for identified juniors	Weekly
				Talking walk-in	Weekly	Baby play (pre-walkers)	Weekly	Story, songs and sign	Weekly
						Under 25's parents group	Weekly		
				Talking walk-in	Weekly	Baby play (pre-walkers)	Weekly		
		Messy play	Weekly						
		Virtual introducing solids	Weekly						
		*Bluebells CC	Closing – Moving to Little Explorers & Stanhope Library, where are these, not on FH list?	Baby movers	Weekly				
				Talking walk-in	Weekly				
				Baby play (pre-walkers)	Weekly				
				Outdoor and explore	Weekly				
		Sure Steps CC	Sure Steps Family Hub	Baby movers	Weekly	Baby play (pre-walkers)	Weekly	Story, songs and sign	Weekly
				Talking walk-in	Weekly				
		Little Explorers		Talking walk-in	Weekly	Baby play (pre-walkers)	Weekly		
				Messy play	Weekly				
		Gateway Library		Bookstart and sing – outreach	Weekly				
		Stanhope Parish rooms/hub				Stanhope toddler group	Weekly		
Support & Service for Children & their Families	District	Venue Until 13 May	Venue After 13 May	Discontinued from April 2024		Continuing		Referral only services for children at the greatest risk from April 2024	
				Title	Frequency	Title	Frequency	Title	Frequency
11 - 19	Ashford	Ashford Youth Hub	Ashford Family Hub	Love your hub	Weekly	Emotional wellbeing Compass	Weekly	Home educated youth group	Weekly
				Open Access	Twice a week	Access disability club	Weekly		
						Be you LGBTQ+	Weekly		
						Unseen to seen			
						Active bystander training			
						Resilience group			
				Contextual safeguarding response					

OVERFLOWING BINS

There were a number reported as Suez took over from Biffa

TheT



Bin at Mill Court



Bins near Newtown underpass



Suez acted quickly to empty them once reported.



As far as bin collection is concerned:

Suez area aware of the troubles, specific roads and lanes were mentioned.

- The ABC portal can't report missed areas.
- Suez own mapping system has been dropping roads or saying they have been completed when they haven't. The crews have reported this to Suez, who are making adjustments.
- New crews were put on in areas they have never worked before, so lack of local knowledge was a problem, missing side roads or not recognising that they needed to be done.
- A 26-ton lorry will not be able to get down some of our lanes and streets.
- Suez underestimated the amount of recycling.

With this knowledge, Suez will be making changes by:

- Putting on more trucks going forward, so they have plenty of capacity.
- Liaise with the Crews on the roads that they will need to watch out for, to not rely on technology, but learn the rounds.

- Rectify the glitches on the technology, so the crews will be able to identify exactly which roads they are meant to be working.
- From the 13th of May, smaller trucks will be deployed to the area to reach the narrower lanes.
- Communication with ABC will continue to be daily.

ESSELLA FOOTBRIDGE

The weeds have been removed and the steps cleaned up on the Ashford side, what a difference it makes. Hopefully the same will take place on the Willesborough side.



Ashford side



Willesborough Side

VICTORIA PARK

Aspire will be removing/reinstating the haul road and soil piles in May (assuming the persistent rain doesn't return), and Blakedown will be back to complete works around the entrances shortly afterwards (depending on UKPN scheduling). KSCP have planned work for June/July along the river near to the coppice woodland; this isn't part of the Victoria Park Project, but ABC will support them in getting comms out about any disruption closer to the time.

FINBERRY PLANNING MATTERS

I had an update meeting with planning officers on 8th April. The Church Commissioners (CCE) and Aldi have been looking at ways at progressing with a new developer experienced with mixed development with retail and residential mixed development on the land on the corner with Bullfinch and Avocet. Separately Taylor Wimpey is expected to upgrade the footpath from Bridgefield on the Finberry side of the railway to south Willesborough.

REPTON AVE

White lines have appeared....maybe just maybe the work will start soon...



CENTRAL ASHFORD COMMUNITY FORUM

The key issues were discussed at our meeting on 8th April.

- 20mph speed restriction in Godinton Road was supported.
- The planning application for the nightclub in North Street has been turned down by officers but the applicant has indicated he will appeal.
- No action on parishing until Willesborough Forum has a new chair.
- Access to planning portal is available for residents, in their area, they can now sign up to ABC planning subscription service. This will give them tailored emails straight to their inbox letting them know what's happening. They can choose to get notifications by ward or parish about; valid applications, applications under consultation, applications being decided by committee and decisions on applications. Subscribers will receive a weekly email with information according to their selection (and they can unsubscribe at any time). To find out more and sign-up visit <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/get-involved-in-planning>
- Ideas to tackle ASB were discussed including making the opportunities for young people more widely known. I have asked that CEOs are able to issue PSP Orders.
- I will ask highways officers to investigate how left-hand turns can be prevented onto Wellesley Road from the Lower High Street.
- There will be a public event with the possible development sites being showcased so the Forum can provide its input.

ASHFORD HEALTH ALLIANCE

The group met for the first time on 12th April. The meeting has been established to enable collaborative working across all partners in the district to bring about real improvements to the health and wellbeing of the people of Ashford. The aim of this meeting was to identify 3 or 4 clear priorities for collective action over the next 1 to 3 years. The ICP is asking district authorities to identify the local health issues.

The Health and Social Care Map identifies social determinates of health (e.g. unemployment at 3%, those aged 65 and living alone) and noted that stroke admissions are going up. Dementia diagnostic and Year 6 obesity rate are noted as critical.

We agreed that we should carry out an audit of community facilities (i.e. places) and activities for young people – young people need to know what is available from the KCC family hubs, ABC, parishes and third sector. Healthwatch will carry out a survey of young persons to understand the issues behind their issues including mental health and self-harming.

A new expanded facility is required for the One Your Shop when Park Mall is redeveloped. It needs to stay in the Town Centre and the Picturehouse was discussed as an option, but a High Street site was preferred. It is a success and needs to be bigger so it can provide more support.

The group agreed to us ethe upcoming survey of ABC housing stock to carry out a review of health issues and build relationships.

ROTHBROOK DRIVE / BOCKHANGER LANE

I have reported that the street name for Bockhanger Lane on Rothbrook Drive has been knocked down (ref 800854).



ASHWORTHS CHEMIST

The pedestrian barrier was damaged by a vehicle leaving metal protruding. I reported under ref 801324, it was repaired within 2 days by Kent Highways.



CONNINGBROOK LAKES

I met with Freedom Leisure on 17th April to discuss opportunities for “wild” swimming at Conningbrook Lakes. It was agreed that a water test would be carried out to assess the safety of swimming and if additional aeration would be required. The following step would be to agree an access point, parking, area for changing and amending the PSPO in the area. This would need to be incorporated into the master planning for the Lakes.

THE HIGHFIELD

I met with ABC officers on 18th April regarding their long-standing desire to acquire management the 44ha site next to the IBF. It is hoped that this strategy would reduce the risk of the IBF ever being extended. The point of the meeting was to point out the failings of the DfT in carrying out their obligations on planting, allowing excessive thistle growth and failure to replace dead trees. If ABC takes ownership (or management), ABC needs to ensure DfT carries out this remedial work or provides funds to ABC (or KCC, the former contractor to carry out this work) to do this. The thistle growth can only be prevented with blanket use of glyphosate weed killer and this is not without controversy, but I will promote that this is the optimal solution with my colleague councillors.

GODINTON ACADEMY: SCHOOL STREET

I attended a meeting with KCC officers, Academy staff and Peter Feacey to discuss whether a school street is suitable for Lockholt Close on 19th April. It would prevent parents from using Lockholt Close with motorised traffic restriction during school opening and closing hours. It involves barriers being put in place by the school with residents and emergency vehicles being able

to access during the restriction. The restriction would start before the 3.05pm collection time for reception class but may have to start at 2pm as some parents arrive very early. It would reduce the tension between parents and residents. It would be trialled for 6 months before being made permanent (with signs etc). Issues discussed included how the Busy Bees Nursery parents would be affected although it starts at different times, the main being 7.15am to 9.15am; they may not be onboard with the idea. An exemption could be considered if there is a valid reason for them having direct access. They will be contacted to ascertain their views.

Staff should adhere to the restricted period so there is not "one rule for one"; 25 support staff arrive before 8.45am and they could look at still using Lockholt Close so they can access the car park – a common sense approach is required.

Were this to be taken forward KCC will provide information on a new travel plan to include resources for car sharing, walking to school, parking enforcement and improved signage in Springfield Drive, Lockholt Drive and road markings on Louden Way ("Wig Wag" flashing signs are more effective than static signs). A dropped curve is required on Springfield Drive (subject to utilities – be investigated).

I have asked for the following road markings to be refreshed. The "Keep Clear" at the bottom of Lockholt Close by the school are all but faded away (also we should have yellow zig zags outside the school as is normal)



The "Slow" approaching Louden Court on Louden Way is faded.



And the hatched lines approaching the dropped kerb are badly faded.



ESSELLA ROAD

The following potholes have been reported.



Before



BYBROOK ROAD

Pothole work has been completed on Bybrook Road



MAKING CONNECTIONS EVENT


I attended a “Making Connections” event on 24th April at the Gateway Church in Ashford. The purpose was to provide a forum where third sector providers could showcase their offerings. A notable presentation was from East Kent Memorial Gardens Group who are providing training and workshops for student midwives for dealing with stillbirths. They have provided a pram for WHH to relocate stillbirths to the mortuary to replace the previous clinical process.

Crossroads provide support for unpaid carers including short breaks and are running a young carers group at Singleton. In partnership with McMillian’s, they are providing transport to hospital cancer appointments for those struggling to access their appointments where free NHS transport is not provided.

Ashford Mediation service was covered which is partly funded by ABC Housing and Kent Police / PCC. Up to 160 people can be affected when people are in dispute as people talk to people and issues escalate quickly.

PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Councillors had a presentation on the work of parking enforcement officers on 25th April. The key rules for Blue Badge holders are set out below.



**ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

CAR PARKS

Your blue badge will allow you up to 3 hours free parking in an Ashford Borough Council car park. You will need to display the time clock showing what time you arrived so that Civil Enforcement Officers can tell when your 3 hours are up. Not doing this can result in a Penalty Charge Notice being issued.

You don't have to use a disabled bay, you can benefit from the free parking in standard bays.

If you wish to park for more than 3 hours you must pay for the entire period not just the period beyond the three hours.

IMPORTANT

This information has been provided with the Ashford Borough Council area in mind. Other Boroughs may have different restrictions in place. Particularly with regard to car parks and on-street bays. Please check with the local Borough to find out what the local restrictions are.

MAKE SURE THE BADGE IS FACING THE RIGHT WAY UP SO THE HOLOGRAM CAN BE SEEN

Where can I use my blue badge in the borough

- **On Single and double yellow lines** for a maximum of 3 hours. No return within one hour (time clock must be displayed showing arrival time).
- **On Street disabled bays.** You can park for an unlimited period unless the signs indicate there is a time limit.
- **On street pay and display bays or limited waiting bays.** You can park without a time limit and without payment. Some of these bays have a yellow line at the back of the bay. The plate will indicate when the line is in force. During these times the maximum stay will be 3 hours (Display time clock)
- **Tannery Lane parking bay** – maximum stay 15 minutes or badge valid on double yellow lines.
- **Do not park** within 10 meters of a junction or opposite a junction. Or across vehicle entrances
- **Do not park** on the footpath or where you could cause an obstruction to other road users including pedestrians or impede the flow of traffic.
- **Do not park** if there is a loading restriction indicated by signs and yellow kerb blips or in loading bays/areas.
- **Do not park** on Bus Stops, Taxi Ranks, School/Emergency Service Keep Clear markings or controlled areas of pedestrian crossings.

The good news is that parking restrictions at the Faversham Road Layby and layby opposite the store in High Halden have been lifted!



NORWOOD GARDENS

I have reported fly tipping at Norwood Gardens (ref 20206376) which was cleared up quickly.



But I have asked for a general clear up in the area for litter.



CARLTON ROAD

I have reported a damaged pedestrian barrier on Carlton Road.



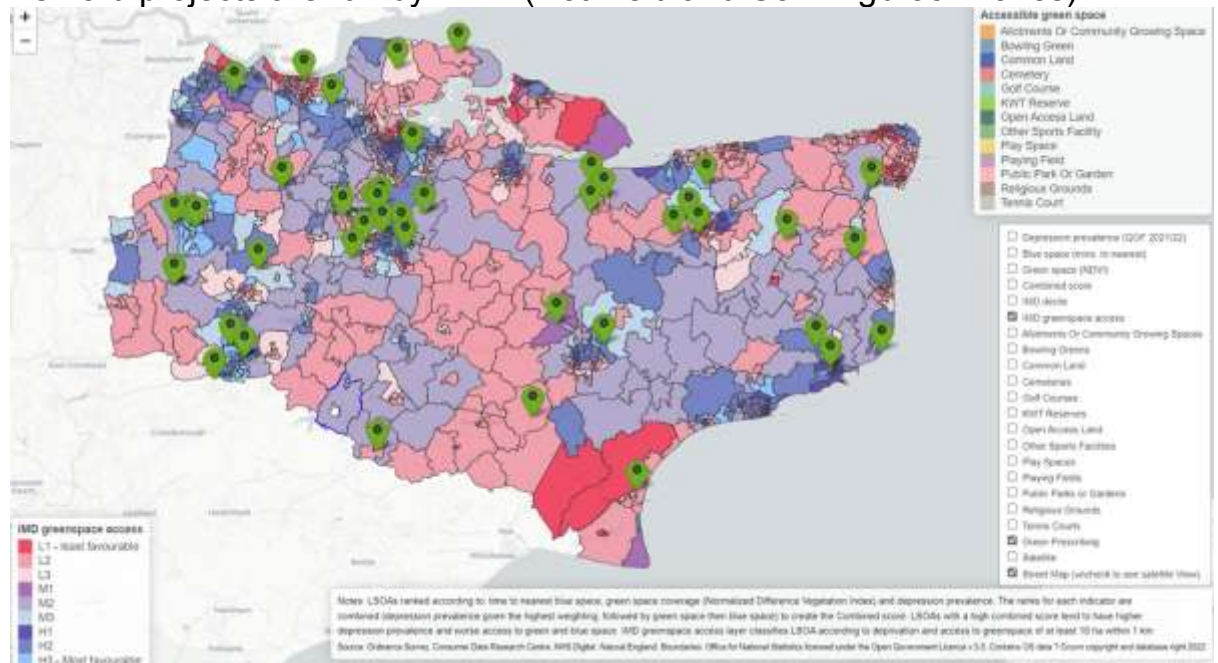
GREEN PRESCRIBING NETWORK

The KCC led network met on 30th April. Key issues included.

- Green social prescribing has been progressing. Since January 2024 a lot of good practice has been shared including with the ICP and KCC Public Health.
- Pilots included Lancs Wildlife, Dorset Social prescribing and Surrey Heartlands who have all shared information with KCC on their work. Within Kent, Ecology Island in NW Kent, Changing Minds Kent from Thanet and Positive Wellbeing Kent which utilises the Community

Wardens for those in social prescribing were promoted as examples of good practice.

- There are now 48 green or social prescribing projects in Kent (the green tags on the map below). We discussed mapping and problems with areas with low access to green spaces as shown on the map. Most Ashford projects are run by KWT (Hothfield and Conningbrook Lakes).



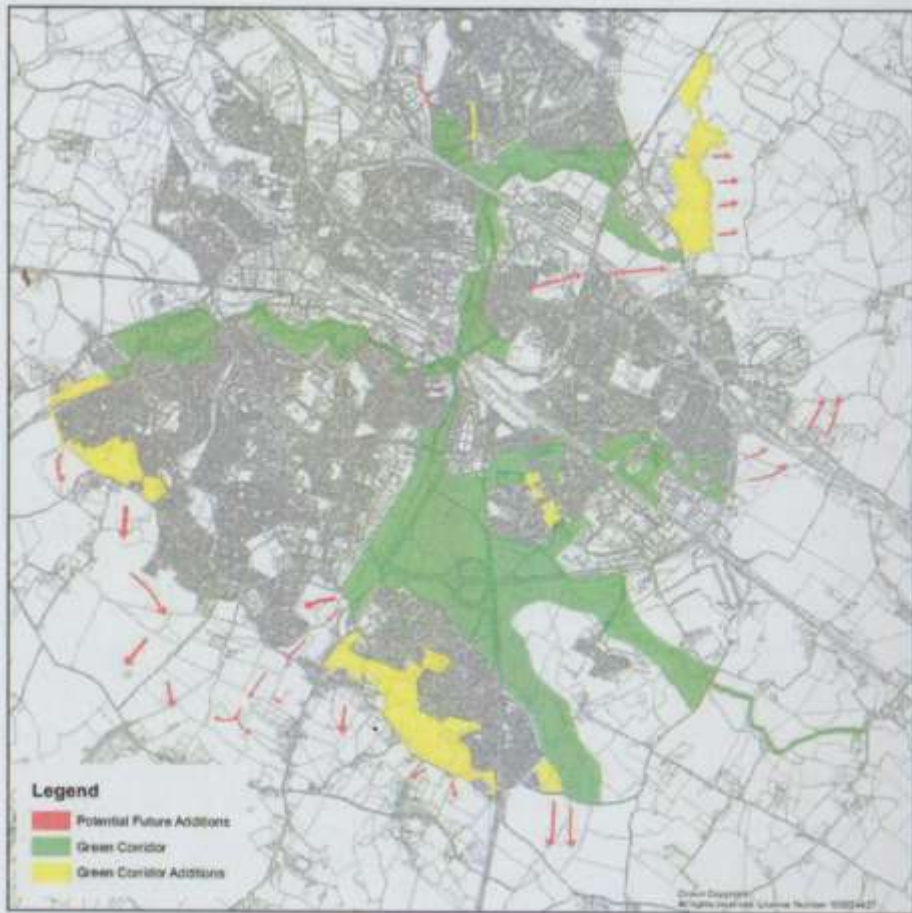
KINGSLAND GREEN

I attended the presentation on 30th April led by Quinn Estates for Kingsland Green north of the M20 from Willesborough into Kennington.



Although not included in the current local plan as current or addition to the Green Corridor, the site was identified as a possible extension.

Map 6 – Ashford Green Corridor



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