

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 15th March 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, 1 member of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

<p>To receive and approve apologies for absence.</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett noted an interest in the Inland Border Site due to the proximity of the site to his property. Cllr Hawkins declared a personal interest in the Noticeboard.</p>	
<p>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th February 2021</p> <p>Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 15th February 2021 were approved as a true record and were signed as such. Cllr Murphy proposed approval and Cllr Stewart seconded this.</p>	
<p>To discuss matters arising from previous minutes that are not covered by the agenda.</p> <p>The Church Noticeboard – the original location for the noticeboard has been refused so approval for an alternative location is being sought.</p> <p>The information on the notice regarding the JPF swings was circulated. A suggestion was raised by a member of the public that a zip wire could be sited on the Junior Playing Field.</p> <p>The bridge at Flood Street, the Parish Council has been chasing the design plans but as yet an IT failure has meant these could not be shared. Cllr Turley will continue to chase this.</p> <p>The Village Caretaker has been cracking on with the winter work, scraping lichen and moss from the benches and looking at purchasing a solution to prevent these, the Millennium green work and also work on the laurel at the Church yard have been undertaken.</p> <p>The IBF modifications have been consulted on. Cllr Turley submitted comments on this regarding traffic increase, errant HGVs and re-iterated the signage improvements should be on the main signage.</p>	PT
<p>Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item.</p> <p>The member of the public present asked about the permanent sign for Kingsford Street, it was questioned whether there is a written commitment regarding this. Cllr Turley suggested returning to Toby Howe about re-instating the turning circle and improvements to Kingsford Street. This communication would include the permanent sign at Kingsford Street. A list of outstanding issues is to be sent. A discussion was had regarding the situation that exists between errant HGVs and repairs.</p>	PT
<p>To receive report from Borough Councillor</p> <p>A detailed report had been circulated, a copy can be found on the website: http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett explained that the culvert work has started at Broadoak.</p>	

<p>The micro-surfacing for the A20 is due to be carried out in May.</p> <p>The Council Tax hardship fund will give a £50 discount to those applicants that are eligible.</p> <p>The operations from Waterbrook were transferred to Sevington IBF as of this last weekend so no HGVs are at Waterbrook. Manston will close next week. All Covid testing will take place in Sevington, 1755 tests were undertaken in Kent over the weekend of which 684 in Sevington, 0 of which were positive, 917 were taken in Manston, 3 of which were positive. Manston closure will mean a significant increase in the number of lorries going to Sevington. Most lorry drivers are tested outside of Kent. The DeFRA operations have been deferred to October from July. So the big numbers for using Sevington won't come until October. Trading Standards are moving to Sevington and Dover from the Dover port. This will mean lorries can be dealt with in one single place.</p> <p>One resident contacted Cllr Bartlett re: Highfield asking for a car park. It was explained that this was not possible but it highlighted that people from outside the area will expect to be able to access the site. The report from the DfT for the plans for Highfield is expected and ABC are under enormous pressure to use this land to off-set Stodmarsh. This could mean there are 3 different views as to what the preferred outcome is.</p> <p>Cllr Ross asked when the A2070 bollards be removed. The inside lane being blocked is causing congestion. The purpose of this is to be asked of Toby Howe, it was suggested that Cllr Turley ask that.</p> <p>Cllr Turley wanted an update from KWT – does Cllr Bartlett have an update? Vincent should have been able to access the site. Cllr Turley to ask Vincent for a status update.</p>	PT
<p>To discuss further progress regarding Mersham Manor and the Tithe Barn development</p> <p>All 3 applications have now been determined, one for 3 houses, one for another 3 houses and one for the Tithe Barn. The 2 applications to build houses were refused and the repairs to the barn were approved.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett and Turley had a meeting with ABC scheduled for 25th February.</p> <p>The discussions did not begin well as the applicant and ABC have not yet agreed to discuss the matter together and the “enforcement route” was the likely next step by ABC. It was suggested that a discussion between the Applicant and ABC planning and chaired by our ABC councillor, Paul Bartlett should be the next step. Meeting now set for 31st March and to be chaired by Cllr Bartlett.</p> <p>There was a discussion about whether owners have to maintain a listed building.</p>	PB
<p>To discuss the alternative suggested locations for the speed sign as they must be within the 30mph curtilage.</p> <p>It was suggested that the limit of the 30mph areas would be used, The Farriers, the road to Evegate and near Old Rectory Close</p> <p>Cllr Fletcher explained that the Officer who collected the sign said Kent Police are looking to produce something cheaper with a camera that will send a warning letter automatically. It was suggested that the Clerk follow this up with a discussion with him regarding KCC legal signage.</p>	TB
<p>To receive and update on the current situation of the Highways Improvement Plan</p> <p>The Clerk had contacted Kelly Garrett at Kent Highways regarding installing the dropped kerb.</p> <p>There has been no response from Kelly. The Clerk will continue to chase this.</p>	TB
<p>Sports Club AGM Feedback</p> <p>Cllr Turley had attended the AGM. A lot of groundwork has been undertaken, scarifying etc.</p> <p>Financially they are £20,000 richer in the development fund.</p> <p>The Sports Club is now a registered charity.</p> <p>Planning Applications have been applied for.</p> <p>The main financial parties have been involved in Zoom call. The Football Foundation has committed</p>	

<p>finances but the land and pavilion both have a shortfall.</p> <p>The Sports Club has a quote for the purchase of the land and upgrading the land. They are £100K short on this and looking for additional funding. They will progress this but the new build of the pavilion will wait for better times.</p> <p>The Sports Club continue working hard and have run into difficult times due to Covid.</p>		
<p>To receive an update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in High Field</p> <p>Cllr Turley will chase Vincent.</p> <p>An email had been received suggesting that the buffer zone could be used as allotments. This was discussed, theoretically an acre or 2 could be used as allotments – parking may be an issue. There would need to be a consultation to find out the desire for this. This is something that will be borne in mind.</p> <p>As progress is made a formal consultation of the “Parish” is desirable. Post covid restrictions this could take the form of a public session in the village hall with presentations from the Parish Council, KWT and others as appropriate.</p>		PT
<p>To receive an update regarding the position of the broadband project for Mersham</p> <p>OpenReach are awaiting approval from DCMS for approval of funding for the 2 projects.</p> <p>Cllr Wells has produced information for posting on the internet. Cllr Turley has produced a mail-drop. Cllr Stewart was asked to write up a lay-mans approach to the build. Need to contact the other Parish Councils involved. The sub-committee will meet in the second half of April.</p>		MW PT/KS TB
<p>Planning Application received for the Royal Oak</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett to call this in to the Committee if the Officer is minded to approve this application.</p> <p>A number of objections have been submitted to Ashford Borough Council and copied to the Parish Council.</p> <p>An objection comment has been circulated. The Parish Council feels that an objection should be submitted. It would seem having spoken to the previous tenants that the public house was viable. The planning guidelines talks about protecting the facilities locally and a demonstration has to be made that this is not viable.</p> <p>The current owner is a publican and is an associate of Shepherd Neame. The owner wants to convert the build but would consider opening the doors as a Free House. The viability has not been given an opportunity to prove the working of the Public House.</p> <p>The Parish Council letter was approved and will be submitted. The Dog House in Smeeth and the Blue Anchor also in Smeeth are both viable free houses.</p>		TB
<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> <p><u>The application for Copperfield was discussed.</u></p>		
21/00374/AS and 21/00375/AS	Royal Oak, The Street, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6NA	Change of use of, and extension to, former public house to provide two residential dwellings to include landscaping/fencing and associated access; erection of detached garage with accommodation above and removal of timber shed and tin garage.
<p>The Parish Council raised objections as above.</p>		

21/00391/AS	The Hay Loft, Laws Lane, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 7HG6PE	Construction of proposed storage building													
The Parish Council has no comment regarding this application.															
18/01016/CONB/AS	Land north of Fairlawn, Blind Lane, Mersham, Kent	Discharge of conditions: 6 & 18 and part discharge of condition 20 (part ii)													
The Parish Council has no comment regarding this application.															
21/00418/AS	Gill Farm, Gill Lane, Mersham, Kent	Prior Notification for a storage building used for agricultural vehicles and machinery.													
The Parish Council has no comment regarding this application.															
<p>Financial matters:</p> <p>a. To note/authorise the following:</p> <p>i. To note the Parish Council's Financial position <i>The Parish Council bank balance as at 28/02/2021 of £19195.60. There are 3 cheques outstanding.</i></p> <p>ii. To authorise any payments</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cheque No:</th> <th>Payee</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Ian King – March salary</td> <td>£ 118.31</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>HMRC</td> <td>£ 76.80</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>T Block – March salary</td> <td>£ 321.96</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>There is a discussion regarding the finances for The Villager. The cost per page is £10, with 4 pages per copy at 10 copies per annum, a donation of £400 was proposed by Councillor Stewart. All were in favour, this payment was approved.</p> <p>A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.</p>			Cheque No:	Payee	Amount		Ian King – March salary	£ 118.31		HMRC	£ 76.80		T Block – March salary	£ 321.96	TB
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<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Cllr Murphy explained that the metal railing at the end of the Millennium Green awkward for the disabled people. Cllr Murphy has looked at the barrier which exists for safety of children. The site is awkward because of the slope and it is a safety barrier for children as they walk to school. All agreed that the “awkwardness” of the railings is a key safety feature for children and is widely used by those attending the local school. There was shared concern that any modification which might reduce this safety would be unacceptable. External advice and approval would be critical before any modification could be considered. It would be likely that the Parish Council would need to fund any changes.</p> <p>We are currently trying to progress a dropped kerb near the bus stop on The Street as part of the Highways Improvement Plan. The path across the Millennium Green is a footpath and PROW will be asked for some advice.</p>			TB												
<p>Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.</p> <p>Monday 19th April 2021 Monday 17th May 2021</p>			All												
<p>The meeting closed at 8.50pm</p>															