



Minutes agreed at the meeting held on 12th January 2021 – to be signed at the first face to face meeting of the Council.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL ON 5TH JANUARY 2021 HELD VIRTUALLY AT 7.30PM

402/21 PRESENT:

Cllrs Adam, Boswell, Jones, Mannington (in the Chair), Newton, Robertson, Stevens, Tippen and Turner. The Clerk, County Councillor Eric Hotson, Borough Councillor David Burton, Community Warden Mira Martin and 15 members of the public were also in attendance.

403/21 APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Cllrs Barker and Brown. The Deputy Clerk also gave her apologies.

404/21 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th December 2020 were agreed as a true record and would be signed at the first face to face meeting of the Parish Council.

405/21 CLLR INFORMATION

Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Tippen and Mannington informed the meeting that they had attended a virtual meeting this afternoon in regard to item 409/21 (Reed Court Farm) to listen to residents' concerns but had not taken part in any discussion.

Changes to Cllrs Register of Interest

There were no changes to Cllrs Register of Interests

Granting of Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation on any item on this agenda

406/21 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

Representative of DHA Planning/Fridays and four members of the public wished to speak on item 409/21 (Reed Court Farm application).

The meeting was adjourned for the following item

407/21 PUBLIC FORUM

County Councillor Hotson wished to speak and the Chairman invited him to address the meeting.

Reported that from the 1st January 2021 he would no longer be representing Maidstone Rural South as a Conservative but as an Independent. He had not been asked to stand again as the Conservative representative but had not been given any reasons for this. He would, therefore, be standing in the May elections as an Independent Councillor.

The Member Grant submitted by Marden Parish Council last month for funding to extend the play trail equipment at Southons Field had been accepted and agreed.

The Kent and Medway CoVid-19 dataset had been updated and the report outlined that the last 7 days up to 31st December Maidstone's number was 1,369 – making it the 2nd highest in Kent behind Medway. Kent had a total of 11,645 (805 per 100,000)

The reply from Max Tant (KCC Drainage) was interesting but alarming and Cllr Hotson expects MPC to follow up this response with comments. He noted that MPC's comments on flooding were very similar to Staplehurst PC's.

Cllr Hotson reported that he was also in attendance at the meeting today regarding Reed Court Farm and was following Kent Highways response.

He would also be in attendance at the youth meeting next week between MPC and KCC.

7.45pm Cllr Jones joined the meeting

The meeting was reconvened to discuss items 408/21 onwards.

408/21 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk provided a verbal report to inform the meeting that there had been graffiti on the youth shelter over the New Year weekend, this had been reported to the PCSO and as criminal damage to 101. The caretaker was working on removing this and would report back to the Clerk if there were any issues.

409/21 PLANNING

Planning applications with Marden Parish

20/505540/FULL – 1 Rose Villas, Goudhurst Road

Erection of a two storey side extension together with a part single storey, part two storey rear extension

Cllrs raised no objection to this application.

20/505619/FULL – Sunnyside, Underlyn Lane

Proposed change of use of land to residential to allow the relocation of the existing vehicular access to improve visibility when leaving site. To include erection of boundary wall and gates

Cllrs raised no objection to the moving of the vehicular access but felt that the brick wall was not appropriate in the open countryside and being close to the highway. Cllrs would want to see soft landscaping to be more in keeping to the countryside. The red line on the plan does not cover the area where the gate opens to the site. Therefore, Cllrs suggest that the gate opens in the opposite direction in keeping within the red line.

20/505751/EIFUL – Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road

Erection of a new free-range egg farm consisting of 3no. hen houses with extensive outdoor ranges and fencing, formal vehicle access from Hunton Road and associated parking, landscaping, woodland and tree planting, drainage and other associated works

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow the applicant's representative and residents to comment

Comments can be found at Appendix A to these minutes.

The Chairman then reconvened for Cllrs to comment and make recommendation

Cllr Adam: Understands the need for egg production and the need for UK production/food supply. Has no problem with this or free range/barn chickens and as far as aware this is a well run and successful company. However, the question is whether the location is suitable for this development. Thanked the residents for their detailed and informative comments both tonight and prior to the meeting. Raised the following:

Highway Access: the hamlet of Chainhurst is not suitable for the extra large vehicles which will need to access the site, there is a section of road leading to the site which is up and over the brow of the hill and an S-bend – there is no footway or verge and is already difficult for walking and cycling on this section. The junctions of Green Lane, Pattenden Lane and Maidstone Road are also not designed for this large volume and size of vehicles.

PROW: Although it could be a nice walk along the riverside when dry it would be less than useless when right next to the river when flooding nor being in close proximity to the access roads and high fencing. It is not going to retain the existing character as at present. At one of the other Fridays sites (Tolehurst) PROWs are still in existence through the site, although not ideal, does not result in any diversions.

Flooding: Although the large hen houses are outside the flood zone other parts of the site are still well within the area. Any increase in surface water runoff would result in additional flooding of the River Beult.

Cllr Boswell: Thanked the residents for putting data together. Agree with Cllr Adam's comments regarding UK egg production. Concerned over the impact on the community of Chainhurst and River Beult.

Impact on biodiversity – does not fully meet Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy NE4 'Biodiversity & Habitats' "To protect Priority Habitats A Biodiversity Net Gain Philosophy should be implemented". Would the protected wildlife/breeding birds still be able to exist with the fencing and access roads which could have a detrimental effect to wildlife routes? Along with a significant number of Great Crested Newts in several ponds on the site, it contains Ancient Woodland and established hedgerows. Species include roe deers, bat, badger, terrestrial invertebrates and dormice studies as well as multiple bird species including various 'Red Listed' birds such as turtle doves, skylarks, yellowhammers and nightingales. The proposed 5m buffer for the woodland areas would be insufficient and the Ancient Woodland could effectively become an "island" amongst the managed ranges.

Cllr Newton: Visited Fridays site at Staplehurst a while ago and was impressed with the running/ management of the site. However, was not in close proximity to as many residents as this site would be in Chainhurst.

Replacing of fencing would impede the movement of wildlife (especially badgers).

Traffic: Flooding of Hunton Road

Environmental concerns: recent report in Guardian newspaper on chicken farms close to the River Wye has, over the past 10 years, polluted the river.

Cllr Robertson: Concerned on all aspects of this application and cannot see any good reasons to see this approved; including damage to river, flooding, traffic flow, wildlife and damage to community and countryside.

Cllr Jones: Feels it is an inappropriate development and would have a devastating effect on the community

Cllr Stevens: had issues with connection and was unavailable to comment

Cllr Tippen: Congratulated Chainhurst Group on the evidence that they have pulled together in a short time.

Inappropriate to redirect PROWs

Flood zone 3 – informed meeting that a further flood alert had been announced earlier in the evening for the River Beult.

Cllr Turner: Repeated appreciation of the time and effort that the residents had put into this. Contrary to Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policies NE1, NE2 and NE4

Although partly conforms to policy E1 employment this does need to be done in a sustainable way which this application does not show that it does

Concerned over the amenities to residents

Highways issues

Contamination issues

Cllr Mannington: Had read all the reports attached with the application along with the responses from residents. Feels that some of the details in the reports are not entirely correct.

The Chairman then asked for Cllrs recommendations:

Prior to this Cllr Adam wished the meeting to be mindful that, although MPC were looking to object, MBC could approve. Therefore, he asked the meeting if there was anything that should be conditioned or what Fridays could do to provide more for the residents, ie PROWs, not just diversions but additional PROWs and other outdoor recreation.

Cllrs proposed:

Respond to MBC with response (Object to application) and state that there are many substantial questions/issues raised by interested parties and MPC which would need to be answered. MPC to request the opportunity to comment/respond again once these questions and issues had been answered.

Cllrs wished to call this into MBC Planning Committee

Cllrs agreed to circulate via email, following the meeting, the response and questions to be raised. The Clerk was asked to clarify when the responses needed to be back with MBC.

20/505752/FULL – The Parsonage, Land of East Goudhurst Road

Erection of a new access gate within the existing boundary wall and creation of a driveway

Cllrs raised no objection in principle. However, Cllrs wished to see additional landscaping to mitigate the loss of the tree and to enhance/maintain the visual impact to the entrance to The Parsonage development.

9.07 pm Cllr Hotson and 8 members of the public left the meeting. Cllr Stevens was also absent for the remainder of the meeting due to connectivity issues.

20/505929/FULL – Spring Grove, Goudhurst Road

Creation of an outdoor in-ground swimming pool and erection of an outbuilding

Cllrs had viewed the application but felt that not enough detail had been provided. Before they made any recommendation, they wished MBC to provide details of landscaping/screening of the swimming pool area and details of drainage. They also raised questions on the definition of the black rectangle and red square on the Location Plan as no mention of these were on the key and further clarification was needed on the outbuilding and its facilities (ie what services were to be connected).

20/505952/FULL – Franks Barn, Blue House, Battle Lane

Change of use of existing barn into a holiday accommodation. Addition of a first floor with dormer

In principle, Cllrs had no objection to this application for holiday accommodation providing it is conditioned that it is ancillary to the main dwelling and used only for holiday lets.

However, they recommended refusal of this application as it does not comply with Marden Neighbourhood Plan (Policy BE4) due to the size and design of the rear dormer not enhancing nor being sympathetic to the original form of the building. It would also be visible from the PROW KM265.

20/505994/LAWPRO – Wanshurst Green Farm, Battle Lane

Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) for construction and refurbishment of existing derelict timber framed outbuilding into a new 1 bedroom holiday let

Noted

20/506109/AGRIC – Wandstead Farm, Stilebridge Lane

Prior Notification for a proposed agricultural livestock building. For it's prior approval to: -
Siting, design and external appearance
Cllrs noted the application and that it conforms with Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy BE5.

Planning applications outside Marden Parish

There have been no applications outside the parish relevant to Marden

MBC Planning Decisions:

20/504910/FULL – Golden Hill Nurseries, Goudhurst Road – withdrawn
20/504911/FULL – Golden Hill Nurseries, Goudhurst Road – withdrawn
20/504945/FULL – Far Acre Farm, Goudhurst Road – granted (CIL Liable)
20/504948/LDCEX – The Clock House, Marden Thorn – approved
20/505101/FULL – Stables, Springfield Oast, Goudhurst Road – granted (CIL Liable)

MBC Local Plan Update:

Response from MPC to Regulation 18b had been sent to MBC on 17th December 2020.
Details had been put up on MPC Website with a link on Facebook.

9.35pm – One member of the public left the meeting

Other Planning Issues to reportKCC Statement of Community Involvement

Closing Date – 15th January 2021

Cllrs agreed, due to the time of the meeting, that this item would be deferred to the next meeting on 12th January 2021.

KCC - Revised Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Closing Date – 29th January 2021

Cllrs agreed, due to the time of the meeting, that this item would be deferred to the next meeting on 12th January 2021.

410/21 UPDATE ON ANY MEETINGS/OTHER HELD / DUE TO BE HELD

16th December – Flood Warden meeting – Notes had been circulated to Cllrs

22nd December – Emergency Planning meeting – Cllr Turner reported on the informal meeting which he attended with Cllr Tippen, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to start the process of a Marden Emergency Plan. A previous plan had been drafted several years ago and the information from this had been transferred to the new Kent Resilience Forum template. Cllr Turner would circulate this to all Cllrs in the next few days. A further meeting would be held on 12th January and it is proposed that a piece would be put in the next newsletter asking members of the public to come on board to set up an Emergency Plan Steering Group.

11th January – KALC Volunteer training = Deputy Clerk to attend

12th January – Youth meeting with KCC Officers - Cllrs Boswell, Robertson and Tippen together with Clerk and Deputy Clerk attending

15th January – Communications Sub-Committee - Sub-Committee members and Deputy Clerk to attend

19th and/or 26th January – Budget/Precept meeting and EFCM

28th January – Getting in Front of the Camera training - Cllrs Boswell, Robertson and Tippen together with Deputy Clerk to attend

TBC – Allotment meeting – The Clerk would send out dates in the next few days

TBC – Assets of Community Value meeting – The Clerk would send out dates in the next few days

411/21 FINANCE**Invoices for Payment**Electronic Payments

Stanleys Garage – fuel - £63.35

Kent County Supplies – photocopier rental - £113.74

Kerry Underdown – office cleaning - £40.00

HMRC – December PAYE/NIC - £1,253.20

Employees – January salaries - £4,834.54

TOTAL: £6,304.83

Details had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. All invoices were agreed and Cllrs Mannington and Turner would authorise on Unity.

Other

Tax Base for 2021/22 – information circulated to Cllrs prior to meeting in readiness for the budget/precept meeting.

Finance Meeting date to discuss budget/precept for 2021/22 – Agreed to meet on 19th January 2021

Parish Services Scheme information received from MBC – This still needed to be ratified by MBC Full Council before the final figure was known to parishes.

Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting to be arranged to agree budget/precept – Agreed to meet on 26th January 2021

412/21 HIGHWAYS**Flood Wardens**

Meeting Held on 16th December. Although Cllr Adam had not been at the meeting had suggested to group consider a couple of factual amendments. Cllr Tippen reported that a further Flood Alert had been sent out earlier this evening in regard to the River Beult.

The Clerk had circulated information received from the Parish Council's insurers stating that Flood Wardens would be covered by MPC' insurance if they adhere to the roles of the Flood Warden as set out by Environment Agency, Kent County Council and the Kent Resilience Forum.

Flooding

Flooding 27th December 2020

Response from KCC/Southern Water

Cllrs agreed, due to the time of the meeting, that this item would be deferred to the next meeting on 12th January 2021.

9.49pm – 4 members of the public left the meeting

413/21 OTHER PARISH MATTERS:**For Decision**KALC Community Awards 2021

A recommendation had been put forward to Cllrs and this was agreed (this would remain confidential until the award had been received and presented to the recipient(s)). Cllr Tippen would complete the necessary form before sending to KALC.

Marden Parish Council E-Newsletter "Village Round Up"

Cllrs agreed, due to the time of the meeting, that this item would be deferred to the next meeting on 12th January 2021.

The Old Post Office Notice Board

Cllrs agreed, due to the time of the meeting, that this item would be deferred to the next meeting on 12th January 2021.

For Discussion / Information

There were no further items to discuss or for information

There were no confidential items to discuss.

414/21 ENFORCEMENT

No enforcement issues were raised

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.52pm

Signed

Date

Cllr Lesley Mannington

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The next meeting of the Full Council will be held on 12th January 2021

Appendix A

409/21 PLANNING

Planning applications with Marden Parish

The following outlines the comments raised by the applicant's representative and members of the public.

David Harvey, DHA/Fridays

Gave a background of the company and the need for local food supply. He also gave details of why DHA/Fridays feel that this application is suitable for the area; no significant impact on the road network and not in the flood plain.

Cllr Boswell asked what trees would be planted as no mention of whether they would be deciduous or not. DH responded to say that this is indicated on the Landscape Plan with a broad mix of trees but this would be more specific in the planning conditions.

Cllr Adam wished DH to explain the PROW KM144 proposal. DH responded to say that they were engaging with KCC on both the PROWs and continuing to discuss options. An application would need to be submitted to KCC regarding the diversions. Cllr Adam asked why this hadn't already been done alongside the planning application. The Landscape Masterplan gives a brief idea of where the diversions will be but a clearer plan will be submitted to KCC.

The Chairman then asked residents to speak:

Resident 1:

This was a hotly contested application in Chainhurst and was speaking on behalf of residents and "We Love Chainhurst" group.

There was a huge list of emotive reasons: right to roam, traffic, smell, wildlife, river and animal welfare and these needed to be put into a more succinct planning response. There would be a significant impact on the River Beult SSSI. The NPPF states that development would not normally be permitted unless it was to improve the area.

Flooding – there is no mention of road flooding in the report and part of the site is in Flood Zone 3.

PROWs – already raised by Cllr Adam and KM144, currently a historic footpath, would be completely different if diverted to where applicant is stating.

Transport – Kent Highways have sent in a holding response requesting further information. Although residents are saying yes to British Food this is not the right, or ideal, location for a chicken farm.

Resident 2:

Lived in Chainhurst since 1997 and although understands farms need to diversify to continue to survive. Produced the website "We Love Chainhurst" and have over 200 members from Chainhurst and surrounding villages. All do not want this scale of development in this area for the reasons outlined by Resident 1 and responses on MBC website.

The three hen houses would be detrimental to the landscape views across the countryside.

The development would devastate the wildlife in the area and it seems the applicant was not concerned about this.

Too close to residents and too close to SSSI.

Resident 3:

Resident for 23 years (think resident of Hunton parish)

Development on flood plain and in Flood Zone 3 – no one would consider building in that area.

Very sceptical about the figures in regard to the area needed for the good welfare of the chickens.

Three hen houses will totally devastate the landscape.

Increase in traffic

Odour from site/air pollution

River is already polluted without the run off from this development especially when area floods.

Resident 4:

Employment involved working with computer modelling for many years. Looked at the ADAS report on Nitrogen and Phosphorus Assessment which stated the areas around the hen houses will be productive grassland and has indicated that this would remove the majority of pollutants before any reach the River Beult. Looking at other Fridays sites the grassed areas around the hen houses were not productive grasslands having been pecked by the livestock. This has led to inaccurate reports.