

COUNCIL UPDATE 12.2021

WATERBROOK IBF

The site now looks deserted with HMRC lease ending on 31 October 2021. Work will now be carried open for the new lorry parking in the first week of December.



ST MARYS SEVINGTON

The requested new gate to the churchyard has been supplied and fitted. This was a requirement under the Stour Park s106 agreement signed between ABC and AXA/Friends Life which was inherited on purchase by the DfT.



QUEEN MOTHERS PARK

ABC have developed a new ecological management plan for the enhancement of bio-diversity by increasing the existing meadow areas at Queen Mothers Park. This has been achieved by altering cutting regimes, some areas now “cut and collect” and others left uncut. This is because by removing natural grass cuttings so they are not left to add back nutrients, encourages wildflower species to flourish which thrive on low nutrient quality.

The change still allows use by residents, with a large area of amenity maintained as “kick about area” and cut pathways throughout the meadow areas for dog walking. The next stage of the development of Queen Mothers Park, will be the installation of 40 specimen broad leafed mature trees across 2 planting seasons.



*Queen Mothers Park – Before
Meadow Extension*



*Queen Mothers Park – After
Meadow Extension*

HWRC

Booking online consultation received 10,705 comments to the survey (online, email & phone). Before a decision is made, a same day booking trial will be carried out in Folkestone & Maidstone. A review of operating hours may also help relieve some of the weekend pressure but the impact on nearby residents will be considered.

EAST STOUR COURT

CACF Trustees attended the opening of the Borough Council’s new assisted living development on 6th October in Mabledon Avenue. We were very impressed with the amount of thought and detail that had gone into the design and development of this facility, impressed at the spacious design of the apartments, and how much communal space there is. A lot of thought has gone into small details, photos of old Ashford and the Stour will help residents feel at home. It was good to meet the staff there too, especially the Independent Living Officers. Well done to all involved!



VICTORIA PARK

As part of the exciting Victoria Park project, a new Community Project Hub arrived on Tuesday 27 September. It is a converted shipping container and will be used to host activities, support events and share information on the project. It is situated between the fountain and the car park.

The hub is just part of a number of developments and improvements to the park, many of which will begin early next year and include a new children's play area, improvements to the river and a new community building with café. At the end of the project the hub will be relocated to the volunteer compound where it will be used for storage as well as being a place where volunteers can meet.

The project to revamp the park is progressing following a grant of more than £3m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund. This has been enhanced by funding from a mixture of section 106 contributions from local developments and direct funding from Ashford Borough Council.



I have reported the shoddy work on installation:



SAFER STREETS

Following a successful bid to the Home Office, Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, has been awarded almost £550,000 to make the streets of Ashford town centre safer, particularly for women and girls. The funding will provide personal safety equipment, such as drink testing kits and personal alarms, as well as creating safe havens and installing more CCTV. A digital app will be developed which will show safe routes between key locations such as the lower high street and train station. A proportion of funding will also go towards improving the visual appearance of our town centre for those who live, work and visit there: removing graffiti, litter and fly tipping and expanding programmes to keep shops and businesses safe.

Another initiative includes educational sessions within schools to better safeguard young people by improving their knowledge, skills, and awareness of violence and abuse. The funding is part of the Home Office Safer Streets initiative.

Charlton Athletic Community Action Trust include 1 to 1 mentoring intervention and crime reduction workshops to reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in serious youth violence and gang related crime.

Ashford Monitoring Centre continues to monitor hot spots for youths gathering, sharing intelligence with Ashford Police and observations of young people gathering in open spaces is shared with KCC's detach youth team to engage and disperse the groups. The Stour Centre undercroft continues to be raised as a hot spot with young people congregating and nuisance vehicles. ABC's CSU have requested this area to be added to regular patrols.

An important issue is to report streetlights to KCC as soon as possible. I have reported the two broken lights between Mill Court and the railway station.



THE PASTURE



This open space is in The Pasture, Kennington (opposite the junction with Rylands Road) and is owned by a private developer. Kennington Community Council has made an application to KCC to have the site registered as a Town Green to ensure it is kept as open space in perpetuity. To support the application, the Community Council needs more photographs of residents participating in “lawful sports and pastimes” on this land. This could include formal sports and organised events such as football, cricket, fetes and bonfires, together with informal activities such as walking the dog, strolling, birdwatching, kite flying or just sitting and idling. In particular, photos from about 1990 to 2010 are needed, to show that the land has been used for “lawful sports and pastimes” over an extended period. If you can help with photos taken on this land and can give an approximate year when they were taken, please contact the Clerk on clerk@kenningtoncc.gov.uk

BYBROOK ROAD “20 IS PLENTY”

Kennington Community Council are supportive of the speed reduction scheme and have asked:

- The repair of Bybrook Road is prioritised by the County Council and completed while the speed reduction scheme is implemented.
- A scheme to resolve traffic and parking congestion at Downs View School is brought forward at pace by the County Council.
- Improved cycling route is considered from the Cemetery Lane to Canterbury Road as part of ABC’s LCWIP.
- Enforcement is raised with Kent Police.

SEVINGTON IBF

I attended a briefing by the DfT on their plans for the land east of Highfield Lane on 15th October to be used to give a biodiversity gain. Full

archaeological investigations are required by KCC heritage before planting can begin so this will delay matters.

ERRANT LORRIES

ABC are still asking for details of errant lorries to be loaded at www.ashford.gov.uk/Brexit. They contact the company to try and get a reason on why this has happened, which could be because SatNav's have not been updated in the cabs.

All the major SatNav companies (and google map) have been informed by DfT about the authorised routes to the IBF and the fact that Highfield Lane is closed. This means the platforms themselves are up to date, but the operators do need to refresh their on-board systems.

A separate initiative is being carried out by Highways England to agree sites for new signage on the M20, the words on the signs themselves are dependent on what is done at Sevington IBF and at Dover IBF once foodstuff checks are started during 2022 as the UK food standards start to diverge from the EUs.

There is a consultation on the testing of plant and plant material, which is otherwise expected to start at Sevington from 1 January 2022 (see <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/gb-plant-biosecurity-strategy/a-plant-biosecurity-strategy-for-great-britain>). Comments by 30 November 2021.

EAST LODGE



I have requested that KCC put in a drop down kerb at the bottom of the footpath / cycleway built by the developer consortium from Repton Park (Sir Henry Brackenbury Rd) into East Lodge Road. It was odd that the developers ended the footpath so abruptly at the fence so this needs to be rectified.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES

- 21/01173/AS - 5 houses in Kingsford Street, I have called this into the planning committee.
- 21/01169/AS - Frith Road, 30 park homes for residents aged 50, I have called this into the planning committee.
- 19/01004/AS - retrospective change of use of the Chequer Tree Paddock site, ABC awaiting PINS hearing date following refusal from ABC.
- 21/01595/AS - ecological study and nutrient neutrality for 400 new homes proposed on Waterbrook (Charters Edge). Concerns expressed about apparent plans to resurrect the “Ashford Great Park” from 2004 with plans showing a planned link to Conscience Farm (18/00095/CONQ/AS) and loss of wildlife area that was recently used to locate owl boxes.
- 21/00595/AS - concerns expressed with long delays over time to approve.
- CO/19/00223 – under investigation by officers as an unauthorised telecom mast. Permitted development by mobile operators must be notified to ABC (which this was not) but mobile phone operators do have emergency powers to install a temporary mast for 18 months.
- 21/01764/AS – new footpath/cycleway should improve accessibility to the town centre from Finberry.
- Cloverleaf roundabout. Planning contravention notice issued with steps towards legal enforcement. Community Protection Notice issued, breaches may be prosecuted. Environmental Protection Team have used noise monitoring equipment in resident’s homes.

ALDI

I have proposed a condition is placed on the development of the new Aldi supermarket in Waterbrook that smaller unit (not Aldi) is brought forward in Finberry before the Aldi can open. This outcome is not a guaranteed but once a formal planning application is submitted for the Aldi residents will have the opportunity to comment and this will be the time to deliver a message to the Church Commissioners (who partly control both sites).

Another point is that notwithstanding the fact that their presentation shows the tree being retained I have asked for a TPO to be considered by ABC....just in case.

Amended Proposals



- Develops an allocated site with outline planning consent, bringing it into economic use.
- Provides a 1,815 m² store within the approved masterplan.
- Retaining the existing oak tree and complementing with new landscaping.
- Good pedestrian and cycle links
- New local employment opportunities during operation and during the construction phase.
- Free parking spaces for 120 cars, including accessible bays, family and electric vehicle charging points in accordance adopted standards & 10 cycle parking spaces.



QUANTOCK FENCING

Investigation has been carried out about who is responsible for the chicken wire / barbed wire fencing between Quantock and the wooded verges which are alongside the dual carriageway by Sainsbury's. The land does not belong to ABC and is still in the ownership of the original development company.

The fencing has been beaten down by ne'er-do-wells who are operating in Sainsbury's car park and then taking their "customers" into the wooded area, then making a nuisance of themselves in Exmoor Rise / Quantock.

After consideration, ABC have appointed a fencing company and received quotes for a fence. Funding will be provided out of mine and Andrew Buchannan's community funding. No gating is proposed because residents (the majority at least) use the back entrances/exits to their properties for bin purposes. In addition, a full consultation with residents will be required before gating and an assessment by Kent Fire and Rescue. Safety of residents is paramount and by reducing the alleyways accessibility from gating, in an emergency access is hindered. Also, gating would potentially block an escape route for any person that may find themselves being followed and as such trapped.

PLAN BEE

KENT'S PLAN BEE



PROVIDING FOR POLLINATORS IN LINEAR FEATURES

23rd November 2021 - 10.30am-1.00pm

An invitation to Kent's Plan Bee 2021 summit

Man-made linear features, such as roads, rail tracks and waterways, are a familiar sight across our landscape. With effective management and planning, the habitats that frame these features – verges, embankments and waterway banks – can provide important shelter, forage, and connectivity for our pollinators.

When maintained with biodiversity in mind, linear features will sustain an astonishing amount of wildlife – more pollinators are found on well-managed verges than in the neighbouring countryside and nearly 45% of our total flora, so vital for these important insects, is found on these borders. This network of linear features therefore has the potential to contribute in a significant way towards the conservation and recovery of our county's pollinators and wider biodiversity.

Kent's Plan Bee's summit for 2021 will consider the role these linear features could play in the county's action to reverse pollinator decline.



Speakers

- Welcome and introduction from **Seán Holden**, Chairman Kent's Plan Bee.
- **Jamie Robins, Buglife** - The importance of linear features to pollinators.
- Changing our approach to grass verges for the benefit of wildlife (speaker TBC).
- **Mike O'Connor, Network Rail** - Greening the railways.
- **Bethany Pateman, Kent Wildlife Trust** - Lessons from the Grassification project.
- **National Highways** - Delivering green transport corridors on the strategic road network.
- **Ben Morris, Environment Agency** - Waterways for pollinators.
- **Maureen Rainey, Kent Wildlife Trust** - Pint-sized pathways in our gardens.
- Panel discussion - How do we get the most out of our linear features for pollinators?
- Closing remarks from **Susan Carey**, Cabinet Member for Environment and **David Brazier**, Cabinet Member for Highways.

The event, which is free to attend, will be hosted on an online platform.
To receive the event link please register at [Eventbrite](#).

Paul Bartlett
Mersham, Sevington South and Finberry Ward & Deputy Leader, ABC
Ashford Central Division, KCC
Grosvenor Hall Ward, Kennington Community Council
Sevington South Ward, Sevington with Finberry Parish Council
0773 929 3502
paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk or paul.bartlett@kent.gov.uk