

COUNCIL UPDATE 8.2022

OAKLANDS CAR PARK



I have reported the potholes in the Oakland car park to ABC/KCC for repair. There is a complexity due to part of the area needing repair being on KCC's highway (yellow on the map – completed on 23rd August) and part on ABC Housing land (white on the map – yet to be done).

JOHN WALLIS ACADEMY

KCC have agreed to allocated £380,000 from its Capital Budget to add additional dining facilities at The John Wallis Academy to enable it to accommodate an additional 30 Year 7 pupils in September 2023.

Secondary school rolls have risen significantly over the last 10 years. For several years, schools have temporarily offered places above their published admissions number to support KCC in being able to allocate sufficient places

The pressures for non-selective places in Ashford are particularly acute. For September 2022, it was forecast that 52 additional Year 7 places were required in the planning group.

Figure 1: Forecast Year 7 surplus/deficit capacity if no further action is taken (KCP 2022-26)

Planning Group Name	2020-21 Capacity	2020- 21 (A)	2021- 22 (F)	2022- 23 (F)	2023- 24 (F)	2024- 25 (F)	2025- 26 (F)	2026- 27 (F)	2027- 28 (F)	2027-28 Capacity
Ashford North Non-Selective	840	12	-35	-52	-107	-69	-21	-81	-33	758
Ashford Selective	420	-13	-1	0	1	0	1	3	-2	420

If additional secondary provision is not provided forecasts suggest a shortfall of 107 Year 7 places in 2023. These forecasts could be conservative.

The wider Ashford Borough forecasts do not include the impact of the closure of High Weald School (Cranbrook) or Homewood School reducing their published admission number by 30 places in 2023.

CHILMINGTON GREEN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Given the urgent need to provide additional secondary school places in Ashford non-selective schools in September 2023 and September 2024, existing schools have all been admitting further pupils and cannot continue to do so without significant additional investment. The solution is the provision of a new secondary school at Chilmington Green. This development, consent for 5,750 new homes, provides a site for a new secondary school and, over time, £22.5m of contributions.

The Department for Education (DfE) has, in principle, included the new school in its “wave programme” and has appointed United Learning Trust (ULT) to be the school sponsor. The DfE secured planning permission for the school in June 2022. It is unlikely that the school will be open on the permanent site until Easter 2024 at the earliest, but this could be delayed further so off-site provision is now required. Currently there are two off site options available, The Former Ashford South Primary School, Jemmett Road or the Former Linden Grove Primary School, Stanhope Road, Ashford. The costs for refurbishing the school sites and insuring that there is sufficient provision for up to two years is: Ashford South, £2,525,557 or Linden Grove, £2,909,668.

Subject to final approval by the Secretary of State for Education, the DfE is willing to approve the opening of the school from September 2023 and to progress the build of Chilmington Green Secondary School, if KCC provides and funds any temporary accommodation needed by the school prior to its new, permanent buildings being occupied. KCC has therefore authorised the funding of £2.9m for temporary accommodation.

IBF

Ebbsfleet, North Weald and Warrington IBFs were closed Tuesday 9th Aug to Friday 12th Aug to see if Sevington IBF could cope with the increased in traffic on export checks. The checks are to ensure compliance with the new tax rules since we left the EU. HMRC expected an extra 500 lorries each day on top of the up to 2,500 it currently has. Import checks are still yet to start as the government are still exploring ways to use new innovative technology to streamline processes.

The impact of the Biodiversity Strategy on the area east of the IBF can now be noticed. The following picture is taken from the CTRL, left of the hedge is the IBF Biodiversity area (the Highfield) which even during early August looks green; right of the hedge is the Church Commissions land being grazed by cattle which is brown and uninspiring. I have asked the DfT how they are monitoring the biodiversity to demonstrate that there are the gains they promised during the planning application process.



ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – RECOGNISING, RECORDING, REPORTING

Ch Insp Nick Sparkes attended the Community Council meeting on 10th August. Antisocial behaviour can ruin lives and devastate communities, a key message is that reporting antisocial behaviour early on is important to prevent it from escalating.

The Local Authority, Social Housing Landlords & the police all have powers to deal with antisocial behaviour. It is important that on reporting anti-social behaviour to ABC, police or housing provider that you detail the impact that it is having on your health and wellbeing.

If the antisocial behaviour is serious, criminal or causing a risk to a person report it to the police in the first instance. If it's an emergency and the crime is still taking place, call 999 and ask for the police, if it's not an emergency, call the non-emergency number 101 or use the live chat facility. The website you can access this at <https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

In the second instance, contact the Local Authority or the Social Housing Landlord. Landlords should take complaints seriously and act professionally. If you ask, they must publish and provide documents that set out the types of behaviours they can help to tackle. The landlord should clarify what information they need from you and what help they can provide and keep you updated until your case has been closed. They should also tell you about the help available from other agencies with different powers and responsibilities, such as the local authority or the police, and support you to approach them. They should also put you in touch with services such as Mediation and Victim Support if needed.

If you are in private rented accommodation or a homeowner, contact your local authority who will have dedicated personnel who deal with antisocial behaviour.

If you are unsure who to report to ASB Help provides a useful Act Now! online interactive guide that takes you through a series of questions to show you who you should contact <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/asb>

The meeting covered the following operational issues:

- There would be advantages linking the CCTV at Eureka into ABC's monitoring centre. The Monitoring Centre is expanding its access to CCTV with new cameras in the town centre (including the underpass) and gaining access to the Elwick Road cameras.
- Implement community speed watch at Kingsnorth Road, Brookfield Road and Beaver Road. The speed watch on the A2070 will need to be delivered by police officers as it is a national highways road.
- Improvement of lighting and design is key to reducing crime, Kent Police now have a "Design Out Crime Officer" (POCO) and the first venture for this could be the Council's development at Eastmead Ave.
- Kent Police are carrying out a review of how it provides community policing.
- Improvement works to the Police Station will enable a number of officers based at Maidstone to relocate to Ashford. These officers work on county wide projects but it will increase the number of officers in the town.
- Ashford Police are trialling carrying out interviews under caution which are relayed to the custody suite in Folkestone. Before the trial, suspects under arrest had to be conveyed to Folkestone where there is a custody suite which took officer time which can now be used on front line activities.
- "My Community Voice" is a two-way engagement tool that Kent Police use to hear the concerns of residents, provide crime prevention advice and latest updates on scams, events and local Police activity on the district. Residents are encouraged to sign up to My Community Voice and find out further information at www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk

COMMUNITY HALL – FINBERRY

I had a meeting on 1st August to discuss how ABC can put pressure on Crest to deliver the hall. The key deliverable is to ensure the main hall is designed so it is cheap to run and easy to maintain which is important if the Parish Council ever needs to be involved. Ideally the hall will generate enough revenue to enable a professional management team (as in Repton) to run it. I stressed the importance of not over complicating the delivery by including add-ons such as a 3G pitch. This is because there can be issues with hours of operation for nearby residents as have been illustrated recent with Courtside in Stanhope. I provided ABC with Daniel Wilson's (Crest) contact details, and the PC can get an update from his side when they next meet. Whatever is delivered normal planning consultation will take place, I have

asked that the planning consultation should be the whole of Finberry village as the hall is a community asset for all to use.

G-LINE EXTENSION

I met with Council officers and Matthew Arnold from Stagecoach on 8th August to hear how usage of the G line has changed since ABC took on funding obligations in April 2022. Usage across Stagecoach is now at 93% of pre-pandemic levels and there are long term issues in Ashford including the ability to recruit drivers. The early signs with the G line are encouraging but elderly residents use is still down on pre-pandemic numbers. A further review will be carried out in the winter.

KCC are planning to roll out enforcement at the three bus gates in Ashford in 2023 (assuming legislation is passed by Government). It is reasonable to assume that there will need to be a period of review before any decision is made to extend enforcement to Damara Way / Avocet Road bus link between Bridgefield and Finberry. For this reason I have asked Stagecoach to consider extending the the G line from South Willesborough to Finberry once the traffic lights at the A2070 Orbital Roundabout are operational. This is not ideal as the bus service will not offer a stop at Park Farm Tesco's but is better than no service. It could enable the service to be augmented in Godinton and Repton and put back to a half hourly service.

SIMONE WEIL AVE

I have reported the overhanging hedges growing on the footpath between Chamberlain House and Sainsbury's



EVOLUTION POWER

The second Community Liaison Panel met on 12th August in Aldington. The following key points were discussed.

- The planning application is due to be submitted in Q1 2023, before which community engagement events will be repeated. I have asked

for a public meeting where residents can raise questions and be given answers in a public forum.

- EP are confident for a high level of biodiversity gains possible 5x higher than KCC's target of 20% net gains. We asked for EP to work with EDF to see if any biodiversity benefit can be delivered together.
- EP have agreed to build a new footpath / cycleway south of the cut and cover at the back of Mersham School across Church Commissioners for England (CCE) land to Aldington. Consent from the CCE will be required and that can take time. The new path is show red on the following map.



- There was a commitment to not use Station Road south of the CTRL bridge to avoid the difficult to navigate bends in the road.
- Additional viewing points need to be agreed so that the impact of the EP PVs (along with the EDF PVs) can be properly assessed as part of the application.

VICTORIA PARK

I met with Cllr Suddards and local residents on 20th August to discuss issues with ongoing work at Victoria Park.

1. The temporary portable toilets should be relocated to the path between the car park and the MUGA so access is via the smooth tarmacked path. Wheelchair access is difficult to the disabled loo across the car park as the level area is too narrow next to the loo and needs to be widened. Failing relocation, a tarmacked route should be provided from

the disabled bay to the disabled toilet and the level area outside the disabled loo should be widened.



2. The Heras fencing surrounding the wetland space should be moved very marginally so that waste bins are not the wrong side of the fencing, and a walking route is possible by creating a small gap between the fencing and the large trees adjoining the wetland space



3. Only part of the MUGA is occupied by site containers, can the part of the MUGA not being being used for construction be re-opened for the summer holiday?



4. The new play area needs to include an adult gym area. These are very successful where they have been established next to the play areas in Rylands Road and Hunter Ave.

EV CHARGING POINTS

The Government has announced a £20m pilot scheme that will deliver more than a thousand new electric vehicle (EV) charging points across England. The scheme is aimed at helping people who own EVs, but who do not have driveways, get better access to chargers and to encourage the uptake of zero emissions cars. The money will be targeted at areas including Kent. The pilot is backed by £10m of Government cash, a further £9m from industry, and £1.9m funding from local councils.

In Kent the cash is expected to deliver 26 public charge points across four different locations. It means residents, who do not have access to off-street parking at home, will have better access to EV chargers. It will also allow KCC to test out new technologies to bring forward charge points in areas constrained by electricity supply.

MOBILE LIBRARY



After conducting a review, KCC are able to facilitate a brand-new mobile library stop in Finberry. From Wednesday 14th September, the mobile library will be stopping at Robin Road (alternate Wednesdays 3:20pm - 3:50pm (on the “blue” route). The mobile library will stop in the layby by the junction with Avocet Way, opposite the school. Hopefully, this new mobile stop location will maximise the potential for more residents to use the mobile library. Kent Libraries will be looking to promote the new mobile library stop as widely as possible.

STROKE SERVICES



Work will start on phase 1 of Kent's new stroke service at Maidstone Hospital next month. The first phase, which is expected to take three months, involves remodelling work in the old Acute Medical Unit to create stroke clinic rooms

and an 18 bedded area which will become the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit or HASU once the whole programme of work is complete.

This forms part of a wider Kent and Medway system plan to change the way stroke services are delivered across the region. The was given the go ahead by the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in November last year and will see three new HASUs created at Maidstone, Dartford and Ashford. These will provide very specialist care to stroke patients in the immediate days after a stroke, helping to save lives and reduce disability. Maidstone is the first trust in the region to start work on a new HASU and once it is completed it will provide patients and staff with a much better environment to be both cared in and work in. Phase 2 and 3 will follow next year.

FOOTPATH AE345



Comments on the proposed diversion of footpath AE345 must be sent to melanie.mcneir@kcc.gov.uk by 12th September.

KENT COMMERCIAL SUPPLIES (KCS)

I attended a site visit at KCS's distribution warehouse in Aylesford on 30th August. This is a 100-year-old business owned by KCC which is a large-scale purchaser of 20,000 product lines for schools. Councils benefited significantly from policies introduced by the Coalition which enabled additional sources of income to be raised from commercial activities. The impact of commercialisation has been transformational for many forward thinking councils such as KCC and ABC.

KCC's commercial operations are characterised by social gain as well as commercial drivers. Examples include an agreement with Redrow that show home furniture will be stored in the warehouse and gifted to care leavers for their first homes.

The purpose of the visit was to speak to management about issues including putting PV units on the warehouse roof, identify any surplus land for rewilding, WFH policies and green travel plans.

The vans shown in the picture are electric vehicles and they are available for Kent businesses to trial for 3 months to see if they are suitable for their business.



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