

**TUNSTALL PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**Held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

<b><u>Present:</u></b>	Cllr. L. Burgess – Chair	Lynda Fisher, Clerk
	Cllr. P. Mitchell – Vice-Chair	Approx. 150 Members of the Public
	Cllr. C. Browning	County Cllr. Roger Truelove
	Cllr. A. Spicer	John Burke, Constituency Manager for
	Cllr. J. Mills	Gordon Henderson MP
	Cllr. R. Spencer	PCSOs Lings and Ansbros
	Cllr. I. Davison	

The Chairman welcomed all visitors to the meeting and stated that normally only 15 minutes is put aside for the public session, but on this occasion due to the school planning application this was being extended until everyone has had the chance to put forward their views.

**Public Time**

County Cllr. Roger Truelove referred to the Tunstall School proposal and past consultations. He commented that there are two stages in the decision making process; the first is an education decision and this was made in January by KCC's Cabinet Member for Education; the second is the planning stage, which we are now in. Consultation letters have been sent out seeking views from the Parish Council, residents close to the proposal, County and Ward Councillors. Responses are important and there may be many issues, but at this stage it is essential to mention that the application will be considered on planning grounds and residents must address these issues in their responses. County Cllr. Truelove backs the issue, but as an elected member he needs to make sure that he addresses the concerns of his constituents.

Members of the public and parents, both from the Parish and outside, came forward with numerous points of view and concerns.

Many complained at the lack of notification of the proposal. Another asked why the public notice is in the church Porch and not on the highway?

Highway issues were high on many peoples' minds – lack of visibility at new entrance; parking/congestion on the busy Tunstall Road and neighbouring roads; siting of pedestrian crossings; lack of footpaths; safety of children cycling or walking to and from school and safety of children walking to Church. Amount of extra cars generated by the proposal; however it was put forward that the extra cars would not be as high due to car sharing; they would also be spread over a period of time, some arriving early to attend the Breakfast Club and others leaving later due to clubs after school.

Another mentioned that KCC recognises that Ruins Barn Road cannot be built upon because of traffic travelling to and from the Science Park; it also recognises that there is a problem with Tunstall Road because it has installed traffic calming on this highway. Concerns over emergency vehicles gaining access if parked cars cause a problem. The extra traffic will not improve the 'carbon footprint'; a business person commented that her firm are sent numerous forms to show they are reducing their carbon footprint, why is KCC not made to answer this?

Visual impact on the area; a modernistic building out of context with the Conservation Area; this was countered by someone drawing attention to the modern style property located in Tunstall Road close to the proposed site. It was commented that there is a gradual destruction nationwide of our rural landscape.

Many raised concerns regarding flooding on site, in Tunstall Road, Chegworth Gardens (there is local knowledge of a spring) and Cranbrook Drive; this is a known problem and they worry that the hard surfaces on the new site will exacerbate the problems.

Residents and Parents agree that Tunstall School has a reputation as a good school. Comment was made that it is a Church of England School and not a village school and its admissions criteria are wide reaching.

Some parents would prefer it to remain as it is and not lose its character. Others are keen to see it change; the portacabins are not an ideal teaching environment and only have temporary planning permission which runs out soon; children have to go outside in all weathers to gain access to toilets; there have been issues with parking, both for staff and parents. A new school will have improved and up to date facilities, it will become a school for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and will meet the needs of their children.

A member of the public asked if a site meeting has been arranged. The Parish Council has already asked for this and County Cllr. Truelove agreed to take this back to KCC's Planning Committee; hopefully to arrange a meeting during school times.

There is a rumour going round that the school will close; that it is not viable if it remains a one-form entry. The Chairman raised this issue at KCC and was informed that the school would not close. Mr. Burke also commented that Tunstall School is not closing.

A member of the public asked why KCC had not looked at other sites that were more suitable; sites were available at Eden Park and Sonora Field. County Cllr. Truelove commented that at the time it was not apparent that there was a need for more places; with increased development in the area this has changed and there will be a shortfall in 2015.

John Burke, Constituency Manager for Gordon Henderson M.P., addressed the meeting. He is going to report back to Gordon Henderson on the comments raised and reminded those attending to take on board County Cllr. Truelove's comments at the beginning of the meeting. We are now in the planning application area and any comments put forward to KCC must be on planning grounds. He added that the M.P. wishes to see an improvement in primary schools in Sittingbourne, particularly as the birth rate has increased which is putting pressure on the need for primary school places.

After a two and a half hour public session, the Chairman thanked everyone for their important input and formally opened the Parish Council meeting.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chairman formally welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from the PCSO, Sophie Clements.

### **2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest. A Dispensation has already been granted to all Members relating to Tunstall School.

### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Proposed by Cllr. Spicer and seconded by Cllr. Spencer the Minutes of the Monthly Parish Council meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2014, were agreed by Members and signed as a true transcript.

An amendment was also agreed to the 4th November 2013 Minutes; page 2, second paragraph, ‘A gentleman representing the School’ should read ‘A member of the public’.

### 5.3 Traffic Survey, Tunstall Road

Members agreed to bring this item forward for discussion prior to considering the School Application. The survey was carried out by Amey, who undertake this process for Kent County Council. Most Members were surprised how many vehicles traverse the road. The survey was carried out over a 7 day period – 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2014; the equipment was located on Tunstall Road in an area between Coffin Pond and Cranbrook Drive and gave the following weekly results:

West Bound	-	11312 vehicles; averaging 1616 vehicles per day
East Bound	-	10613 vehicles; averaging 1516 vehicles per day

If the school is expanded it would be logical to assume that the amount of traffic will increase and bearing in mind these figures Members expressed concern regarding children walking to the new school. It was suggested that it might be worthwhile arranging an informal meeting with KCC Highways to look at this; Clerk to action. **Action: Clerk**

## 4. Planning

**KCC/SW/0025/2014 - Construction of a two form entry primary school with associated external play areas and parking facilities - Land at Tunstall Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent** - Details are now on KCC’s website. This application is the biggest development proposed in Tunstall since 1960, when the Sterling Estate was built, and will have quite an impact on the Parish. The Parish Council’s views have not been sought in the early stages of the development of the school strategy, which certainly goes against the spirit of Localism. The process is being pushed through quickly and it would appear that only 72 properties in Tunstall have received notification of it through their letterboxes.

It is not part of the Swale Local Plan, which is supposed to be the Master Plan for Swale for the next 15 years, nor is it part of the current draft Local Plan, the consultation for which was published on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and has now closed.

There have been two recent opportunities for new school sites, Eden Park and East Hall both were rejected due to insufficient demand at the time. Insufficient consideration has been given to other sites, some of which have far less issues in terms of transport problems and some have been rejected without actual investigation; KCC should give an explanation as to why they did not consider them. This site is owned by KCC.

From the diagrams enclosed with the application Members can see that most of the children will be coming from other parts of the Borough and will travel by car with all the traffic and environmental impacts. More consideration should have been given to this. The 73 car parking spaces allocated for parents and visitors is an improvement but will not be adequate when the school is full. There are insufficient parking spaces for staff. There is mention of a S.106 agreement to install restrictions to stop inconsiderate parking. The School Travel Plan is only in draft format; the final version will not be formalised until after planning consent.

The site is considerably sloped and will increase development costs. The scope of the Geological survey is only the site of the school, but the whole area is subject to pluvial flood risks (shown on the Environment Agency’s website). No reference is made to the surrounding areas as regards drainage, soakaways, etc., and this should be taken into consideration.

The new school will offer better education facilities than the old and will remove the dependency on the Portacabins; the proposed sports facilities look good as does the proposed landscaping. The two-storey construction and vivid colouring will be more obvious from the road and the houses opposite. The building does not have the character of a ‘village school’.

It was proposed by Cllr. Mitchell and seconded by Cllr. Mills to object to the proposal; 5 against the proposal, 1 for and one abstention, agreed to object on the following grounds: not included in the Local Plan; highway issues and Pluvial flooding and the impact on the surrounding area.

Members agreed that the school needs better facilities but it is the wrong site and wrong place; the highway will not cope. The Parish Council contacted the School in September 2012 to explore the possibility of having a representative from the Parish Council on the Governing Body in the hope that it would open up communication between the School and the Council and help build closer relationships between the two bodies, which would ultimately be beneficial to the community as a whole. The Headteacher passed this request to the Chair of Governors but nothing further was heard. The Parish Council reiterated that it is still keen to work with the School to try and find an alternative solution.

## 5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

1. **Commemorating Frank Panton** – Date still to be agreed.
2. **Traffic Survey, Tunstall Road** - See above comments under Item 3.

## 6. Finance

1. **Coffin Pond** – Nothing further to report at the moment; still awaiting a response from the contractor.
2. **Clerk's Salary** – Agreed to progress to point 27 (top of scale, Scale LC1 and part LC2), with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2014.
3. **Cheques raised at this meeting:**

The following cheques were signed and the accounts to the 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2014, approved.

Date	Cheque	Details		Amount
06.01.14	0973	H.M. Revenue & Customs	Tax – December, 2013	£44.80p
06.01.14	0974	L. Fisher	Expenses – Telephone; home as office; 7 Canon XL Ink Cartridges – one quarter share	£15.78p
06.01.14	0975	Tunstall PCC	Hire of Midwinter Room 06.01.14	£12.50p
06.01.14	0976	McCabe Ford Williams	Preparation of Salary quarter ended Dec 2013	£39.00p
Four Cheques in total				

Paid by Direct Debit – L. Fisher – Wages, January, 2014: £178.90p

## 6 Correspondence

1. **Public Consultation on the Pre Submission Draft of the Kent Minerals & Waste Local Plan** – Noted, no observations; to place on Parish Council website.
2. **Consultation on outpatient services in east Kent** – Noted and to place on Parish Council website.
3. **Changes to Planning Department Operations - Swale Borough Council** – Changed noted.
4. **KCC Consultation - Road Casualty Reduction Strategy for Kent** – Document noted.
5. **KCC's Safe & Sensible Street Lighting Plan** – Noted, does not impact on Tunstall.

## 8. Any Other Matters Arising

1. Cllr. Browning expressed concern at surface water flooding on the junction of Bredgar Road and Hearts Delight Road. Clerk will report this again to Kent County Council. Action Clerk

2. Cllr. Spencer reported a problem with Public Right of Way ZR136; there is a bush blocking a section of the footpath; Clerk to report this to KCC's Public Right of Way Section. **Action: Clerk**
3. Cllr Davidson raised the issue of agreement of Newsletter content which will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **11. Next Meeting(s)**

The next Meeting will be on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, commencing at 6.45 p.m. in the Midwinter Room, St. John the Baptist Church, Tunstall.

**The meeting closed at 11.35 p.m.**