

**Minutes of Mersham with Sevington Parish Council
Meeting held in on Monday, 17th February 2020**

Present

Geoffrey Fletcher (Chair)
Rick Martin
Pete Turley

Chris Kennedy
Jan Oakley-Hills

In attendance: 2 members of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from Cllrs Murphy and Townsend and Borough Councillor Bartlett.</p>	
<p>Declaration of interest in items on the agenda Cllrs Fletcher and Turley declared a personal interest in the Sports Club.</p>	
<p>Minutes of the Meeting on 20th January 2020 were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.</p>	
<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes VE 75 The next meeting of the VE 75 committee will take place on 27th February 2020 at 7pm in the Forge at the Farriers Arms. All are welcome. Cllr Fletcher reported that he is still hopeful for a Spitfire fly-by. Cllr Turley reported that there is a pre-AGM for the Sports Club on 24/02/2020. Cllr Turley also reported that the Caretaker review will take place on 18/03/2020, any feedback should be given to Cllr Turley ahead of that meeting.</p>	
<p>Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item. The members of the public raised continued concern with regard to the speeding issues as they have lost another animal. Cllr Turley explained that the Parish Council had put together a wish-list which included extending the 30 mph limits but there is a lack of finance available and speed can not be legislated. Kent Highways Services were keen to visit Mersham and discuss Village Gateways which they are interested in having installed to encourage the reduction of speed in the village. They will be looking at suitable sites for these. The whole village needs to speed reduction and Kent Highways were keen to assess the ability to provide safe access to the Sports Club from the School. The member of public suggested installing child size bollards as they have down outside schools in London Boroughs. Photographs of these will be circulated. The member of public also asked about land-owner ship for the area in which they live as they have drainage issues as well as issues with livestock on their land. The land owner is believed to be Ashley Pickford. The Council was also asked how the Sports Cub is doing with fund-raising and it is thought that the Sports Club needs to raise a further £30,000.</p>	
<p>Report from Borough Councillor</p>	

MERSHAM, SEVINGTON SOUTH & FINBERRY, MARCH 2020

HGVs ON RURAL ROADS

KCC are planning a trial area for lorry control south of Maidstone. The idea is that lorries will not be banned from rural roads, there will be consent system which will mean they have to have a valid reason to use the road such as delivery or collecting or it might be where their depot is located. If successful KCC will consider rolling it out to other parts of the county in light of recent complaints about HGVs on rural roads in the parish.

MOUNTBATTEN HALL

ABC has granted planning consent for 7 new dwellings (4 two storey and 3 bungalows) to be built on land behind the village all to be accessed from Blind Lane (Jemmett Lane). This is one less than expected as the Local Plan provided for 8 dwellings. The conditions include that the extension to the village hall must be completed before the dwellings are occupied, there will be new yellow lines in Church Road to prevent congestion during school drop off and collection and an extension to the village hall car park to be built (which will accommodate displaced cars from the yellow lines). The scheme requires a sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS) to prevent rainfall entering the sewer system. This is unusual for such a small development and it is hoped this will be a template for future small sites in Ashford.

WATERBROOK

Waterbrook had been planned to be used as a temporary customs clearance facility if the United Kingdom had left the European Union without a deal. The site was due to be operational from 31 January 2020. However, the UK left the EU on 31 January under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement. Consequently, the site is no longer needed. HMRC will secure the premises whilst they review our requirements in the context of the UK's future partnership with the European Union.

FINBERRY BOLLARDS

A while back I was contacted by a Bridgefield Councillor following an altercation with the bollards one night between Bridgefield and Finberry. I contacted Crest and the bollards have now been fitted with reflectors.





BYBROOK WWTW

I conducted a site visit on 22 January 2020 with KCC officers. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss recent improvements that have been carried out on site to improve air quality and future mitigation.

Lorry movements, specifically empty lorries leaving the WWTW, are believed to be an important odour factor. There are limits of 6 cake lorry movements on Saturdays and bank holidays, but although there are limits on working days these are much higher than the actual number of cake lorry movements so the working day limits have no meaningful impact. Cake lorries are normally from Broomfield (Dover), Weatherlees (Thanet) and occasionally from Sussex. These **lorries are typically covered on exit from WWTW but it was agreed that this needs to be monitored as uncovered cake lorries cause odour.** It was noted that cake from Weatherlees can be contaminated with salt water and this can smell more, however **a new ferric dosing unit is to be operational shortly at Weatherlees which should assist with odour at Ashford.** Monthly meetings are held with the Environment Agency to discuss the timing and location of air quality complaints. The meetings review the output of Enviro Sweep, a system of 4 smell monitoring sites at WWTW which provide data on odour every 15 minutes. This system enables the EA to reference complaints to odour and pinpoint the source of the odour. As a result, **consideration is being given to relocate the cess reception site elsewhere at WWTW as the cess reception is a significant odour production site and although covered by odour reduction mist would benefit from relocation.** The costs of this relocation would be significant a financial impact assessment will be required and confirmation obtained that the relocation would reduce odour. If necessary s106 funding may be considered in discussion with ABC. **Perfumed odour reduction sprays are now located between the cake storage silo and Little Burton Farm.**

A newsletter setting out these actions taken is to be distributed to the community. It was noted that most complaints were received via the Environment Agency or directly from residents, few complaints were received from ABC even though ABC have a Report It App for environmental matters on their website.

DECIBEL METRE

I have provided £2,533 of funding from my KCC Combined Members Grant for a decibel metre to be used by the police to enforce exhaust noise which is a source of anti-social behaviour in Ashford. Ashford police station is the only station with a decibel metre. Please report any anti-social behaviour, including noise issues, to <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/report/report-housing-and-community-issues/> so resources can be deployed correctly.

KNIFE CRIME

Kent Police and Ashford Borough Council would like to invite you to a FREE session, aimed at parents and guardians, to help safeguard young people and recognise the early warning signs that may identify involvement in knife crime, drug use or gangs.

The events are:

- Wednesday 26 February, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre
- Wednesday 4 March, 6-8pm, Sinden Theatre, Tenterden
- Monday 9 March, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre
- Tuesday 17 March, 6-8pm, Sinden Theatre, Tenterden
- Thursday 19 March, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre
- Friday 27 March, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre

Please reserve your space at: www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/unitedkingdom--kent/knife-crime-prevention-ashford/

KENT MEDICAL SCHOOL

Dr Anna Romito, deputy dean of the new Kent Medical School in Canterbury briefed KCC Councillors on the progress they are making towards opening in September 2020. The cost of the new facilities are £56m and includes two buildings, one at each Canterbury Christ Church University and one at University of Kent in Canterbury. The purpose is to support recruitment of GPs to Kent. The Medical School had 1,537 applications for 100 places and the 5-year course will include 26 weeks of placements at GP surgeries in Kent. They have secured £1m in philanthropic funding including corporate sponsors.

EAST KENT HOSPITAL RECONFIGURATION

Two options for improving hospital services in east Kent have been shortlisted for inclusion in a pre-consultation business case. Option 1 is to have a two-site A&E covering East Kent with units based at the WHH and QEQM in Thanet. Option 2 is to have a single A&E based in Canterbury covering the whole of East Kent. The Hospital Trust is now working through the NHS England assurance process for the pre-consultation business case before a public consultation can begin. Timings for a consultation will be published as soon as they are confirmed.

WESTVIEW HOSPITAL

A new community ward has opened at Westview Integrated Care Centre in Tenterden. A total of 15 new beds have opened, thanks to joint working between KCHFT, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT), Twenty-Four Seven Nursing, Kent County Council and Ivy Court Surgery. The beds are designed to support patients out of an acute (main) hospital ward and into a community setting; in this case KCHFT's Westview inpatients ward, to support recovery. The community ward helps to relieve pressure in the healthcare system, but is also supporting patients to recover faster. This new ward opened on 2 January and will remain open until the end of March, supporting patients throughout winter.

COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

The budgets for KCC's and ABC's Council Tax are being prepared. KCC plan a 4% increase and ABC a £5 per band D property increase. KCC's annual expenditure will exceed £1bn for the first time with an increase of 6.9%. Adult Social Care expenditure is up 5.3%, Children & Young People up 7.4% and transport spending up 2.9%.

ABC has earmarked £3.2m for new initiatives. Last year the spending on new initiatives was £3.7m which included projects such as the Coachworks next to the station and CCTV upgrades. This year the spending is yet to be finalised but it is expected there will be capacity to include provision for Bockhanger Hall and a new community hall next to Christchurch in Beaver Road. ABC also has allocated £2m to the Economic and Regeneration Board which can also be called on

assuming a viable business case comes forward (e.g. business start-up units within the new hall?). The plans for a new hall at Bockhanger were discussed at the Ashford Young Peoples Partnership on 16th January at the Mabledon Road Youth Centre. The idea of a new community hub at Bockhanger was well received and its possible use will be on the agenda for future meetings.

Other Central Ashford initiatives include the KCC depot purchase at Conningbrook, a car park at Adleys Yard, relocation of telephone boxes and repairs to paving & gullies in the High Street, road surface improvements in the lower High Street, a shop front design code, residential conversions in the lower high street, town centre play spaces and Phase 2 of the Coachworks.

COUNCIL TAX FOR CARE LEAVERS

Councils have the power to introduce exemptions for council tax for certain groups. KCC has agreed to fund council tax payments for Kent young people who are Care Leavers from the age of 18 years, up to the age of 21 years from 1 April 2020. Kent has 1,718 young people who they have corporate parenting responsibility for as Care Leavers aged 18-25 years. The reasons for this scheme are as follows.

- KCC aims to improve the lives of Care Leavers by giving them the best start in life and this scheme would improve the outcomes of Care Leavers by ensuring that they are financially supported and give them the best possible opportunities for their futures as adults.
- It would open up the opportunity for Care Leavers to use their own income for more social and leisure activities, promoting and improving their mental health and well-being.

All Care Leavers are expected to claim any council tax benefit/discount entitlement but no backdated payments will be made.

STREETLIGHTS

ABC owns over a thousand streetlights, mostly outside the town centre in parished areas. These will now be upgraded to energy-efficient LED following the success of KCC's project to convert its 123,000 lights started in December 2015. LED lights are cheaper to run and create less light pollution. In Central Ashford division the lights affected are in Bybrook Road and Nine Acres. In Mersham the lights affected are in Cherry Glebe & Orchard Close, Bower Road, Flood Street and Flanders Field. Once converted they will be handed over to KCC.

HELP TO SAVE

The Help to Save scheme was launched by the government in September 2018 to enable individuals who receive tax credits or universal credit, subject to certain conditions, to earn a tax-free bonus of up to 50% of amounts saved. The help to save account, which is delivered by NS&I and HMRC, has been introduced by the government in order to help those on low incomes build up short-term savings and to encourage them to form a regular savings habit. Further information is available at <https://www.litrg.org.uk/tax-guides/other-tax-issues/savings-and-tax/help-save>

Paul Bartlett
Mersham, Sevington South and Finberry ward & Deputy Leader,
Ashford Borough Council

1. 18/00098 - lighting at the new Truckstop, any impact on residents?
2. 20/00183 - new resident at Copperstone, within HOU5 - is this "close" to the village?
3. The KCC legal team are assessing viability for prosecution GSE for the ongoing blockage of

AE350.

4. I have raised the lack of progress on extending the B-line to Finberry with Michael Payne who is the KCC portfolio holder for Highways. Should the PC wish to write to him to bring additional pressure, that would be most welcome.
5. ABC held a visioning event on 3rd February which was productive; it was held to discuss priorities for Ashford. Follow-up events are to be held on 17th March and I understand PC's are to be invited - have you had an invite?
6. An ABC Council meeting had Insp Jason Atkinson present on Kent Police and how it will deploy its additional 188 officers who are being recruited (Ashford has 20 trainees). KALC has had a similar discussion and there are hoped to be an event later on the year as the new officers come through training and are being deployed through the County.

It was agreed that the Parish Council will write to Michael Payne as he is the KCC portfolio holder for KCC to back up the requests made by Cllr Bartlett.

Report from PCSO

A PCSO report had been received and circulated.

Clerks Report – February 2020

Planning Enforcements

There has been no further news on the Planning Enforcement Issues in the Parish and all listed below have been reported to ABC.

Chequer Tree Paddock is on-going. Planning application refused. Further information received from Eileen and circulated.

Pettworth – the situation is being monitored

There have been reports of further burning at Pettworth, these have been reported. This property has been entered and withdrawn from Auction twice.

Correspondence

Harlequin Mast – A pre-application letter and drawings were received and an application at the new site is expected.

De-coupling – to be finalised at this meeting

Keeping the following on the report seems sensible but with updates:

1. A minutes resolution to pursue a de-grouping of the Parish Council – **minuted 170619**
2. A consultation undertaken to parishioners asking for feedback on the idea – latest copy circulated and amendments suggested by Sarah Hartles.
3. A collation of results of the consultation and, if appropriate, a minuted resolution to de-group.
4. A formal request sent to Ashford Borough Council (Sarah Hartles) along with a copy of the minuted resolution, the consultation and the results of the consultation.
5. A clear financial plan for each of the new parish councils – **Partially drawn up previous to meeting on 170619, to be revisited regularly**
6. A list of assets for each of the new Parish Councils – **sent to PT following meeting on 170619**
7. Precept amounts for 2020-21 agreed – **suggested precepts discussed but to re-visit before finalising**

8. The names of the new Parish Councils agreed
9. Confirm the numbers of Parish Councillors for each Parish Council and begin advertising for them.

NB. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were submitted in writing to Sarah Hartles.

*This first meeting will be for Councillors to consider the request and to make a recommendation to full Council as to whether to make the order de-grouping the Parish Councils or not. **The full Council meeting that will make the final decision and approve the Order will be on 5th March.***

The initial meeting was unanimously agreed that the de-coupling should go ahead.

A grant application has been completed and returned to Michelle Byrne for a laptop to be purchased for the new Parish Council. **Unfortunately, Paul has agreed to fund the Finberry Scouts and so our application will not be considered until April 2020.**

The speed sign in Mersham has caused ABC/KCC some consternation. It does not have permission to be mounted on the streetlight poles and so needs to be removed for now.

I have contacted both KCC re: permissions/licences and also Kent Highways regarding the speed detector poles.

Legislation states that as these are not permanent approved signs, the Speed signs have to be moved every 2 months to alternating locations around the village, 3 locations would need to be sought approval for and then KCC would erect the poles having given all the permissions required etc.

Kent Highways and I are in discussion with regard to the sign we currently own as they say it is not one of the signs provided by their specified supplier, however, it is and I am currently discussing this issue.

They have said that the solar system used is too heavy and as no risk assessment/health and safety assessment would be passed because of the weight and risk of strong wind bringing the panel down, this would not be acceptable.

Discussions continue but in the meantime, the sign needs to be removed or it will be disposed of. Cllrs Fletcher and Turley to remove the sign on Wednesday pm.

PT/GF

Planning Matters:

A list of Planning Applications was circulated as Appendix A with the agenda, those requiring a response were:

[20/00031/TP](#)

Unit A, Foster Road, Ashford Business Park, Sevington, Ashford, TN24 0SH

Tree survey recommended works to be carried out across the business park and various species of tree - units A, B, C, D & H

The Parish Council raises no comment

[20/00037/AS](#)

2 Chestnut Cottages, The Street, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6NF

Replacement of defective bathroom window

The Parish Council raises no comment

[20/00161/AS](#)

Quarrington Farm, Quarrington Lane, Brabourne, Ashford, Kent, TN25 5NG

Proposed reinstatement of farmyard access, conversion of oast to ancillary annexe accommodation to include reinstatement of roundel and additional window

The Parish Council raises no comment

[20/00162/AS](#)

Quarrington Farm, Quarrington Lane, Brabourne, Ashford, Kent, TN25 5NG

Internal alterations at ground floor level of Farmhouse and works of conversion of oast to ancillary annexe accommodation to include reinstatement of roundel and additional window.

The Parish Council raises no comment

[18/00098/CONF/AS](#)

Waterbrook Park, Waterbrook Avenue, Sevington, Kent

Discharge of condition 16 A (Truck Stop Management Plan)

The Parish Council has historically had issues with the lighting at this site. Low level lighting was suggested at the consultation event attended by two Parish Councillors and the Parish Council respectfully requests that the officer considers the residential sites around this area.

[20/00194/AS](#)

Copperfield, Kingsford Street, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6PF

Proposed new 4 bedroom detached dwelling house within the site of Copperfield with new vehicle access driveway and drainage. New double garage for Copperfield.

The Parish Council comments as follows:

The site is significantly outside the adopted village confines so policy HOU3a is not applicable and is also not adjacent to the confines so Policy HOU5 does not apply either. The application is in a ribbon development of spacious houses. It is important to the Parish Council that there is no deterioration to the amenity of neighbouring properties having been subjected to the works on J10a and losing the privacy from their gardens following these works. For these reasons we do not support this application

Financial Matters

a. To note/authorise the following:

i. To note the Parish Council's Financial position

The Parish Council bank balance as at 31/01/2020 was £12,326.47

ii. To authorise any payments

Cheque No:	Payee	Amount
501977	HMRC	£ 72.20
501978	HMRC	£ 62.40
501979	JRB Enterprise – Dog waste dispenser and fittings	£ 27.00
501980	Mersham Litterpicker – February	£ 106.73
501981	Sevington Litterpicker – February	£ 109.86
501982	Clerks Salary – February	£ 621.65

A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.

Historically, the sum of £20,000 had been agreed some years ago to be given to the Sports Club. There had been some discussion about this and £15,000 had been given with a further £5,000 promised for the future.

It was agreed that as this had been agreed, Sevington with Finberry would certainly honour their half of this in the future.

<p>Future Meeting arrangements for Sevington with Finberry Parish Council</p>	
<p>It was agreed that the Sevington Councillors would agree a day and time going forward with the aim to initially meet 10 times a year although this would be reviewed.</p>	
<p>To consider any changes to the Risk Assessment</p>	
<p>There were no changes to the Risk Assessment at this time</p>	
<p>Website</p>	
<p>The Clerk suggested waiting to see if HugoFox are to become compliant in the future with regard to the website legislation and if so, they offer a free service to Parish Councils.</p>	
<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Susan Wood is retiring and it was suggested that the Clerk might take on the Caretaker Management.</p> <p>Cllr Kennedy reported that Finberry will be getting some disability enabled play equipment for their play park.</p> <p>Would the Village Events Committee be able to apply for funding if the majority of Councillors were also on the Committee. The Clerk advised that if the committee wanted to apply, a declaration of interest would need to be made and then the remaining Councillors could decide.</p> <p>A request had been received for another noticeboard in Sevington North. It was agreed that there are not enough funds to support this at this time. Sevington South does not have a noticeboard and it was felt that as over £1000 was spent on the noticeboard in Sevington North, another noticeboard could not be justified at this time.</p> <p>Advance apologies for the next meeting were received from Cllr Turley.</p>	<p>TB</p> <p>TB</p> <p>TB</p>
<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 16th March 2020 – to be held at the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Monday 13th April 2020 – Mersham Council meeting if separation occurs.</p> <p>Monday 18th May 2020 - Mersham Council meeting if separation occurs.</p>	
<p>The meeting closed at 9.15pm</p>	