

COUNCIL UPDATE 9.2021

HIGHWAYS PLAN 2021/22-2022/23

The plan includes the following.

- Footway surface preservation, Billington Gardens Kennington
- Road reconstruction, Mersham primary school to Farriers Mersham
- Road surface preservation, A28 to Tudor End Kennington
- Bridge reconstruction, The Forstall Mersham
- Road surface renewal, Mace Lane Ashford
- Bridge reconstruction, Maidstone Road, A20 Ashford
- Road surface retexturing, Magazine Road roundabout Ashford
- Footway reconstruction, Rothbrook Drive Kennington
- Road surface renewal, The Street/Ulley Road Kennington

BROOKE ROAD YELLOW LINES

These have been investigated by parking services and no action is to be taken. A reminder that if issues remain on parking in Ashford reports go to parkingcustomercare@ashford.gov.uk or call 101.

BOWER ROAD LIGHT

This has now been replaced following the incident with the farmer knocking the light off. The situation was complex because the light is an ABC light, but the repair was commissioned by ABC of KCC. ABC are in the process of handing over responsibility for lights to Parish Councils.

BROCK

Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) brought back Brock (M20 contraflow) to coincide with lifting of COVID restrictions on 19th July 2021. The move was made to support the Department for Transport (DfT) in managing the strategic network ahead of tourist traffic returning.

The concrete barrier which creates a contraflow is designed to be deployed quickly to help keep traffic flowing on the M20 in both directions and to reduce disruption for local communities. It covers the 16-mile stretch of the carriageway between Junctions 8 and 9. It means lorries heading to the Continent will be legally required to follow the signed HGV routes to the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel and speed restrictions will apply to both London-bound and coast-bound carriageways. It provides a potential lorry holding area on the M20 to allow tourist traffic to be prioritised. This is because the Sevington IBF is **NOT** a lorry park.

The contraflow was removed 31st July / 1st Aug once the risk of disruption reduced following the start of the summer holidays. The decision to take

down the M20 barrier is based on passenger booking forecasts and reduced check-in times at border inspection points at the cross-Channel borders.

SEVINGTON IBF

A BECG update call was held on 15th July 2021.

- The lighting consultant's report on including baffles and adjusting the angle of lights nearest to Church Road, reducing the luminaire levels and providing a long terms solution on dimming is expect during the summer. Some baffles appear to have place on lights near the staff entrance.
- Part of the Biodiversity report will be released to the IBF website in due course but is awaiting agreement over how the top and subsoil is to be used, this is expected during the summer. The biodiversity report may include reports of rare species such as little winged plover and common sandpiper on the balancing ponds, a dormice update and planting reports.
- HE plans new permanent signage on the M20 approaching the IBF from London and Eurotunnel. Topographical surveys are now being carried out to identify the positions for the signs. New signage will coincide with DEFRA operations which are due to start in January 2022. Improved leaflets at the advance information points across the UK and at Eurotunnel will be provided and translated into many languages.
- DfT have been in contact with google maps. There is an issue with users pinning the IBF with incorrect labelling. DfT are to be advised (via ABC reporting tool at www.ashford.gov.uk/Brexit) because they have senior contacts with Google Maps so they can ensure rapid correction of the platform.
- Other Satnav platform providers have been advised of the correct postcode issued by the Royal Mail and DfT are encouraging drivers through their leaflets to update their Satnavs.
- ABC are close to finalising their request to take ownership of the surplus land (to the east of Highfield Lane).
- Remedial works have been ordered on the bridleway as there has been some fall out on the sides.
- Plot G lights have been switched off.
- AXA designs for the green corridor which will run through the centre of the site have been shared with the request that DfT follow the same design and the PROW is reinstated on their exit in 5 years time.

A site visit is scheduled during August which will give the opportunity to check on progress.

WATERBROOK IBF

HMRC are currently decommissioning the site and aim to be vacated by 31st October 21. The majority of the lights can be turned off before then, but they

will need to retain a small number around the buildings on the site. Concrete blocks will be placed across the entrance and exits.

MHCLG have already agreed the removal of the temporary modular buildings that are located at the North end of the site. These will start to be removed from the end of August.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES

21/01173/AS – 5 houses in Kingsford Street, target decision date is 25 August 2021. Consultation ended, 29 July 2021.

21/01169/AS – Frith Road, 30 park homes for residents aged 50+, target date is 30 September 2021. Consultation ended, 30 July 2021.

21/00971/AS – new hot takeaway at 76 Hythe Road, refused prior to referral to 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.

MULBERRY HOMES, WATERBROOK

A meeting held on 7th July with the developer to discuss the following issues.

- Landscaping and unadopted areas management will be run by GSE, not HML.
- Work will start on “the Retreat” (shops and community space) will start first and this will be the location of the show home.
- There will be 400 units built, the maximum allowed under their planning consent in three phases, with Phase 1 & 2 starting first.
- Car charging points will be provided throughout with no car ports.

ALDI, WATERBROOK

A meeting held on 13th July with the developer to discuss the following issues.

- The footpath through the path is a bridleway, they understood the requirements and the need to avoid a repetition of the court case over AE350.
- "Aldi helps other stores" and they understood the need to provide a smaller unit on Finberry, progress is being made on this by Church Commissioners.
- Aldi will adhere to Waterbrook sitewide lighting policy and will ensure there is no lights directed towards Finberry, lights in the car park will be downward only.
- A tree survey is being carried out and they think the oak tree is outside their boundary, if not will be retained "as far as possible".
- No occupation until new traffic lights completed.
- Meeting with PC requested.
- Design "in keeping" with site wide requirements.

CREST AT FINBERRY

Start by Crest on the traffic lights at the entrance / McDonalds roundabout may indicate that further progress will be made on the following issues:

- Resident's involvement in HML management as per s106.
- Link Road to Rutledge Ave as per proposed changes to s106.
- Management plan for Captains Wood.
- Agreement of the enforcement necessary to allow the bus service to commence once Stagecoach see fit to do so.
- Start of work on retail development (to pre-date start of work on Aldi supermarket).
- Design and delivery of the community centre.
- Footpath bridge across the railway to Park Farm and cycleway to Ashford.

SOMERSET / STOUR HEIGHTS

Ashford Borough Council has officially opened Somerset Heights and Stour Heights comprising 109 quality apartments in the town centre. A large proportion of the lettings have been allocated to keyworkers. When the council announced the deal to buy the New Quarter, as it was then called, the £18.5m investment represented the largest ever handover of general needs accommodation to be managed on one site by the council.

The mix of one and two-bedroom open-plan apartments are contained in two blocks built either side of the Panorama building. Stour Heights has 65 homes over five floors and Somerset Heights is split over three floors with 44 homes. Work on Somerset Heights was completed at the end of last year, while Stour Heights was completed this summer and the first tenants have moved in.

The addition of the new homes is freeing up existing homes through transfers of keyworkers and, where possible, provides vacant units in which to house those in temporary accommodation, or from the housing waiting list.

The development has highlighted the need to give local authorities more freedom to help residents with disturbances from nesting seagulls. A licence is needed to allow nests to be cleared for public health reasons, including for issues like sleep deprivation. There is currently a need to justify nest removal on a case-by-case basis, making it difficult for residents and councils to remove nests in time to stop gulls from breeding close to homes and businesses.

BARN OWLS

KSCP successfully installed two new owl boxes on 14th July 2021 on land between Waterbrook and Finberry. They have installed 30 or so of these boxes in the Stour Catchment. The next nearest one is at the Givudian site near Conningbrook and they have nesting barn owls there. This project was a combined effort of several parties:

- The Parish Council paid for it.
- KCC facilitated Gallagher's who cut down old telegraph poles on Highfield Lane.
- DfT as landowner of the poles when they were previously in situ agreed we could have them.
- GSE as landowner of the land where the poles sit agreed KSCP could place them there.
- The truck stop manager allowed access through their site.
- KSCP brought it all together and the volunteers did the work.





KCC BUDGET

The KCC Budget Consultation 2022-23 launched on 28th July and closes at midnight on 19th September 2021. KCC are asking residents to have their say on where they think spending reductions could be made to service areas and on our Council Tax proposals.

KCC are asking residents to tell them what they think the most important things KCC should consider when deciding how services are delivered. Full details of the strategy can be found in the consultation document on the webpage www.kent.gov.uk/budget.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

The Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines ASB as: “Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person, or conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person’s occupation of residential premises.” The term is used to describe actions that unreasonably interfere with or could interfere with an occupier’s normal use and enjoyment of their home, garden or neighbourhood.

ABC works closely with other services including Kent Police, KCC, Kent Fire and Rescue Service as well as a number of other organisations within the Community Safety Partnership. Its aim is to reduce crime and the fear of crime, sharing information and taking co-ordinated action against anti-social behaviour, such as the partnership’s recent visit to Kennington.

ASB can include a wide range of activities such as; noise nuisance, drunkenness, dealing or taking drugs, graffiti, damage to property and the

environment, fly-tipping and harassment. Nuisance can escalate if not dealt with, and this can erode people's sense of attachment to where they live. If you are experiencing ASB please let us know via ABC reporting form. <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/report>.

If the anti-social behaviour you are experiencing is of a criminal nature it needs to be reported to Kent Police directly. This can be done by calling their 101 number or by using their online reporting tool (<https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/>). In emergencies, always call 999.

Kent Police are re-introducing policing in schools. This project starts with 4 targeted clusters in Kent, of which Ashford is one. This will include 1:1 work with vulnerable children and will convey messages around knife protection, staying safe and keeping out of trouble. It will take 18 months to roll out as staff are recruited and trained. Back rooms of the renovated Ashford police station will open in September, permitting an injection of staff.

KNIFE BINS

The third knife bin (which was going to be placed in Bockhanger) went to Stanhope Road as there was demand there and also from Park Farm (which is not so far away). So far nearly 100 knives have been handed in (across all three bins).

SAFER STREETS FUNDING

ABC and Kent Police are submitting a bid to the Home Office for "Safer Streets". The focus of the funding applications is tackling violence against women and girls in outdoor spaces / public areas across the town centre and ring road periphery. The proposed projects are additional CCTV, active bystander training and introducing a digital app to provide safe route information. The council will be advised if it is successful in September.

KENT VOLUNTEERING AWARDS

The Kent Volunteering Awards 2021 are now open to nominations. Nominate the heroes in your community who have made such a difference during a particularly difficult year. The Kent Volunteering Awards will select winners for each Kent district along with one overall Kent Volunteer of the Year.

Please nominate individuals, teams, and volunteering organisations who you think deserve to be recognised and thanked. Find out more, or nominate, at www.kmcharityteam.co.uk/kva before the deadline of 20 September 2021.

COVID-19 SUPPORT

New COVID-19 grant rounds are available from KCC which can support the safe reopening of community venues and activities that can engage groups

particularly impacted and at risk. There are different aspects to the funding, one builds on the council's recent support to local councils and community-run venues to help open up local community venues safely, protecting both staff and visitors.

The other fund is looking to support creative ways to reduce inequalities that may have been created through the pandemic and help groups who may be disproportionately affected.

Activities could be outreach work, group based such as sport or arts that provide a mechanism to engage these groups and thus offer a platform to then work in turn effecting positive change.

Applications are welcomed from not-for-profit and charity organisations offering activities and/or facilities to support the safe opening of spaces and those that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic in a way that will contribute to the prevention of COVID-19 outbreaks. Visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding/coronavirus-covid-19-grant>

RECONNECT

Children and young people in Kent will be given free bus travel and offered discounted Stour Centre leisure centre passes as businesses, organisations and members of the community unite with Kent County Council to launch a programme of fun activities and learning opportunities for the school summer holidays.

The summer activities are part of Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People, which was launched by KCC in March and will run until August 2022. Reconnect is a community-led initiative designed to support Kent's children and young people to reconnect with the activities and interests they enjoyed before the COVID-19 pandemic, help them catch up with learning they may have missed and, along the way, discover new interests and activities.

Every young person in school Years 6 to 13 will receive a free bus pass, which can be used on Stagecoach and Arriva buses, as well as on other services KCC subsidises, between Thursday, July 22 and Tuesday, August 31. The pass can be used as many times as necessary during that period. The Reconnect bus pass is also available for college students and children and young people (aged between 11 and 18) who are educated at home. They should contact their local library or children's centre to reserve and collect their free bus pass.

The Stour Centre is offering children and young people a six-week pass for £25, or £10 if they are in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals. Parents or carers can buy the pass for their child or children direct from the leisure centre they wish to use this summer. There is no limit on the number of times that children and young people can use their pass during the summer holidays.

Invicta National Academy is offering free maths & English lessons from live teachers as well as fitness and well-being sessions to all children aged between 6 and 16 every morning. All lessons are fun, live, interactive, and completely safe. Pupils will also have the opportunity to win up to £250 in Invicta's new summer video competition – "Inspire Us To Be Good to the Environment". (Lots of cash prizes). Book your lessons at www.invictaacademy.com. Enter the summer competition here <https://www.invictaacademy.com/competition>



XPLORER

fun for all the family!

A family friendly fun navigation challenge that is educational and gives children a sense of adventure as they explore the park to find the markers. It involves a healthy mix of physical activity and decision making that the whole family can enjoy together.

9 August - Conningbrook Lakes
16 August - Spearpoint Pavilion

our Xplorer team will be available between 10am - 1pm to register you and your family for this fun adventure

Booking is not required, if you require any further information contact:
lauren.piper@freedom-leisure.co.uk
01233 613131

freedomleisure where you matter
Bridgton & Stone Life Centre

BOCKHANGER LIBRARY

The final easing of Covid restrictions under Step 4 of the Government plans has now been confirmed. This is a big step and will mean Bockhanger library will re-open on 9th August. The re-opening day of the library will be advertised locally and on the website.

TAP WATER SUPPLY ISSUES

Following the recent issues with water supply following the burst pipe on the weekend of 3rd/4th July, it is worth remembering that you can sign up to South East Water's priority service register if you are vulnerable at

<https://www.southeastwater.co.uk/get-help/help-for-priority-customers/apply-for-our-priority-services-register>

The supply area map is updated on their website at:

<https://inyourarea.digdat.co.uk/southeastwater?pc=ashford>

KCC & NHS SURVEY

The NHS and Kent County Council are working together to try and improve the way people are discharged from hospital. They are looking to find people who are willing to share their experience of being discharged from hospital. Would you be happy to join a small, friendly group of people online to talk about your experience? There are 3 sessions planned

- Tuesday 17th August 2021 at 11:00 – 12:00
- Thursday 19th August 2021 at 11:00 – 12:00
- Friday 20th July August at 11:00 – 12:00

If you are interested contact innovationdeliveryteam@kent.gov.uk for more information.

SECAM



**Join us online at our
Annual Members Meeting**
Date: Friday 3rd September 2021
Time: 2.30pm – 4pm

Open to all to come and hear the latest news from
your NHS Ambulance Service in Kent, Surrey, Sussex &
North East Hampshire.



- Hear directly from our Chair and Chief Executive on our response to the pandemic.
- Watch our latest patient experience video.
- Take part in our question and answer session.
- Hear what your Governors have been seeking assurance on.
- Learn where our funding comes from and how we use it to deliver our services to you.

How to register to attend:
Scan the QR code —
Visit the event page at www.secamb.nhs.uk
Ring the Membership Office on 0300 123 918



Best placed to care, the best place to work

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