

DARENTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Remote Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 9 December 2020

COVID-19 2020 Regulations Statement

The COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented Government measures in response to the crisis (e.g. prohibitions on gatherings, social distancing, self-isolation and shielding of those deemed to be the most vulnerable) have meant that the requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place cannot currently be met. The statutory requirements for meetings are mainly contained in the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 ("the 1960 Act").

In recognition of the difficulties of holding and attending meetings, the Government included s.78 in the Coronavirus Act 2020 and provided the Secretary of State the power to make Regulations for the provision of holding alternative format meetings.

As such, this Meeting was held under agreed terms, being to conduct the Council business remotely by Zoom with decisions recorded by the Clerk.

Councillors' participating in virtual meeting: I Gutteridge (Chairman), D Carey, T Hicks, D Risely, Y Seymour and N Weavis (Vice Chairman).

Public present: There were two members of the public present who had registered to observe the meeting. Another member of the public joined the meeting at agenda item 85/12/20.

Ahead of the business of the meeting, The Chairman reported with great sadness, the contents of a letter from former Councillor Ian Armitt, tendering his resignation as Borough Councillor for Darenth Ward from 7 December 2020. The Chairman reported that Mr Armitt had greatly enjoyed his seventeen-plus years at the Council, firstly as one of the three Members for Bean and Darenth Ward and more recently as the single Member for Darenth Ward. Throughout his time on the Council, he had done his best to represent the residents of those Wards and protect the areas from over-development to ensure that they were not drawn into the urban sprawl. The Chairman reiterated Mr Armitt's sentiments and said he would be a huge loss to Darenth Parish Council and the community.

Questions from the public: The Chairman had received two questions from the public.

- 1) Can the Parish Council approach landowners, Dignity Funerals Ltd, to secure their sites to address motorbike access at the country park and Littledale viaduct?

Response: Prior to his resignation, Darenth Ward Councillor, Ian Armitt had written to Dignity Funerals Ltd, informing them that access to the Mabledon Site had been gained by breaking down the boundary fence between the site and the entrance to Darenth Country Park, which is owned and managed by Dartford Borough Council. He reported the urgent need for fence repair and confirmed he had also made Kent Police aware of the situation.

- 2) Does the Parish Council receive data regarding the number of residents of our village contracting the COVID 19 virus?

Response: The Parish Council receives Government Data from Public Health England on a national basis but not specifically for Darenth.

78/12/20: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cook. Councillors' Mahoney were unable to join the meeting remotely and submitted their apologies by email to the Clerk.

79/12/20: TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

80/12/20: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE REMOTE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2020

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Wednesday 18 November 2020 were approved and adopted as a true record.

81/12/20: MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting.

82/12/20: FINANCE

(a) **To receive Financial Statement as at 30 November 2020**

RESOLVED: Approval of the Financial Statement as presented. Proposal for approval was made by Councillor Carey and seconded by Councillor Weavis.

83/12/20: PLANNING

(a) **To consider new applications**

DA/20/01339/FUL - Darent Valley Hospital, Darent Wood Road DA2 8DA:
Installation of a 2nd Oxygen storage facility (VIE, Vacuum Insulated Evaporator).
Incorporating Oxygen storage tanks, Oxygen vaporising equipment, and associated security fencing (retrospective application)
Observation: The Parish Council noted details of the application.

DA/20/01409/TPO - 22 The Green, Darent DA2 6JS:
Application to reduce height (pollard) to line as marked on plan to 1 No. Sycamore tree subject to Tree Preservation Order No.1 1995
Observation: The Parish Council noted details of the application.

DA/20/01430/TPO - 58 Darent Park Avenue, Darent DA2 6LX:
Application to raise crown over road to 6m and over footpath by 2.5m on trees, 0023, - Low canopy overhanging pavement and roadway of Latham Close, 0024 - Low canopy overhanging pavement, 0028 - Low canopy overhanging pavement and roadway of Latham Close and reduce 0028 by 2m all over, reduce 0023 by 1.5m all over subject to tree Preservation order No.1 1995
Observation: The Parish Council noted details of the application.

(b) **To note recent decisions and appeals decisions made by the Planning Authority**

No recent decisions or appeal decisions had been received from the Local Planning Authority.

(c) **To consider new applications/recent decisions received after agenda production**

DA/20/01290/COU - Caravan Site Hillside Farm, Darent Hill, Darent:
Extension to existing gypsy/traveller site to provide an additional 6 pitches, comprising the siting of 1 No. mobile home and 1 No. touring caravan per pitch. As well as associated car parking, hard-surfacing, and landscaping

Observation: The Parish Council objected to the application and previous comments would be reiterated to the Local Planning Authority.

84/12/20: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date for the next meeting of the Council will be Wednesday 20 January 2021.

85/12/20: EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the **exclusion** of the **press and public** for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

86/12/20: TO CONSIDER WALLER PARK PAVILION GREENS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT RENEWAL ON 1 MARCH 2021

Members considered cost comparisons for Greens Maintenance renewal at Waller Park for the ensuing year, with the agreement being on a one-year basis. After considerable deliberation, Members agreed a preferred contractor.

87/12/20: TO RECEIVE VERBAL REPORT FROM THE WORKING PARTY IN RESPECT OF HIGHWAYS UNDER COUNCIL REMIT

The Working Party reported their findings to Members with a proposal for the road outside The Ship, off Sandbanks Hill through to join Green Street Green Road, to remain open to the public. With this area falling under Parish Council remit, it is the Council's objective to bring the road up-to-standard by carrying out pothole repairs. The current state of the road is in a deteriorated condition and Members wish to address any potential issues at this extremely busy 'cut-through' road. Members were all in favour of the proposal but would ask that they have Kent County Council's Highways Division support for proposed works in terms of procedure.

The Working Party were also keen to establish with Kent County Council, the fact that, as a relatively small parish, we do not take on sole responsibility for future maintenance and that the proposed remedial works are required for the safety of the public.

RESOLVED: Members unanimously undertook the proposal for the roads outside The Ship, off Sandbanks Hill through to Green Street Green Road, to remain open to the public. Advice would be sought from Kent County Council's Senior Project Manager regarding necessary repairs due to the seriousness of the issue being appreciated by all involved.

88/12/20: TO CONSIDER FACILITY REFURBISHMENT UPGRADE AT DARENTH HALL

Members were asked to consider proposals for minor works to deliver improved facility provision at Darenth Hall. It was agreed that upgrade works to the kitchen facility would not only enhance aesthetically, but would generate future revenue in terms of private hire.

It had not been possible to organise a physical quote for the installation of blinds because of continuing COVID-19 restrictions in the Kent area. Members envisaged this could be arranged early in 2021.

Those present wished it to be noted that any damage to Council property be monitored regularly by the caretaker, and any recurring misuse would result in repair costs being charged to the hirer responsible.

It was noted that project expenditure would be met under the Joint Handyman Services Scheme using funding from a grant award received from Dartford Borough Council under the Capacity Building Fund arrangement.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:46.