

COUNCIL UPDATE 2.2022

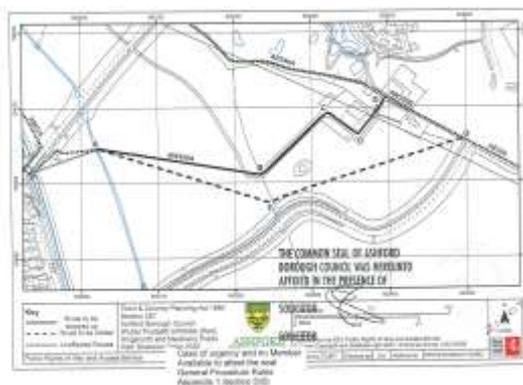
FOOTPATH AE345 & AE354

An application to divert a section of Public Footpath AE345 (south of Captain's Wood) at Mersham has been received from Crest. Crest have planning consent for 326 new dwellings (reference 16/00125/AS). The proposal is necessary in order to enable the development to take place because the line of the footpath will be affected by several new properties.



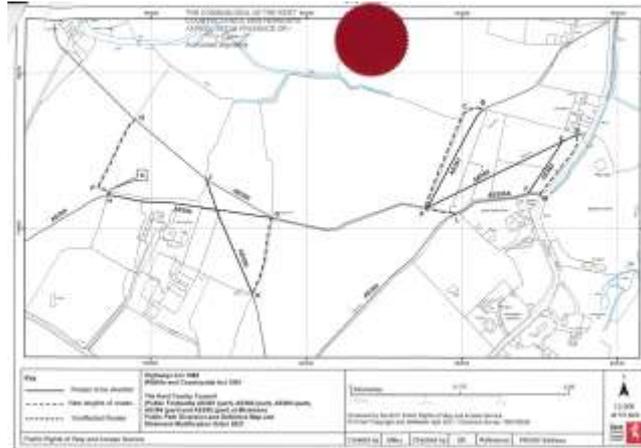
FOOTPATH AW306A

A consultation has been launched on the diversion of AW306A. Comments to Kent County Council, PROW & Access Service, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX not later than 11 March 2022.



AE381, AE382, AE383, AE394 & AE395

The following Public Path Diversion and Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order 2021 has been made.



QUANTOCK DRIVE

The trip hazard on the informal footpath from Quantock Drive towards M&S / Sainsbury's has been removed by KCC following my request.



SEVINGTON IBF

A stakeholders meeting was held on 3 February 2022. The key issues raised included:

- A Special Development Order consultation was run from 14th February for two weeks. This included small changes to the IBF (wheel washing units, higher fences, three sealed generators necessary to provide cover for power cuts such as the one on 29th January which blacked out residential properties and the IBF) but DfT took the opportunity of announcing the environmental benefits that they will deliver on the land to the east of the IBF.



In summary:

- The site will be retained for the long-term benefit of biodiversity and the local community. In essence this ends the speculation that the site will be developed as a distribution hub as envisaged by the previous owner (AXA/Friends Life).
- In partnership with KCC, DfT have implemented a pilot woodland scheme on site, "trees outside woodland" which aims to reconstruct indigenous woodland within 20-30 years.
- Planting will be completed winter 2022/spring 2022.
- A footpath across the centre of the land will be the only public access with the rest of the land dedicated to biodiversity enhancement.
- The land will provide a habitat for hedgehogs, bats, dormice, brown hare, reptile, newts, birds of prey and breeding birds of conservation priority including skylark and nightingales.
- Archaeological investigations have found roman kilns, bronze age trackways, burial sites, and early medieval agricultural activity. Information boards will highlight heritage assets and relay information about archaeology on site including the cold war underground monitoring post on site.
- A presentation was requested to Mersham Historical Society.
- Additional planting was requested to reduce the impact of light pollution on Mersham and Sevington (specifically in Sevington for properties nearest Plot F). Planting should try, where possible, to soften the impact of metal fencing now it is topped with security fencing
- Concern was expressed over the viewing corridor but this is a legacy planning stipulation to prevent the IBF (and subsequent operators) creating buildings across the whole site. The request was originated by Historic England and KCC Archaeological Services who identified historical reasons to maintain a viewing corridor. This was related to a historic Pilgrims Way so they stipulated there should be no building between the Churches of Sevington & Mersham. The streetlights on the viewing corridor have been removed and the area returned to grass in compliance with this planning condition which was mostly developed

for Stour Park which were designed to avoiding a single building created for a large distribution operator.

- Evidence was requested that light pollution has been reduced from the ANOB. Those closest to the IBF in Church Road are still badly affected so further work on baffles, height of streetlights and angling them away from residential properties was requested. In addition, baffles on the lights alongside Highfield Lane should be considered to reduce the light pollution on Mersham.
- Pollution monitoring is being carried out but current usage of the site (between 500 and 2,000 lorry movements per day) is considerably below forecast of 6,000 which was the original trigger points for particulate prevention.
- A report will be delivered by HMRC after 30 June 2022 on lorries getting lost trying to access the IBF. This will be compared to ABC's lorry parking reports so further action on local signage can be agreed. The possibility of renaming "Sevington Church" with "St Marys Church" was discussed at the PC on 7 February.
- National Highways are planning permanent signage once the use of Dover IBF and the location of small animal checks is agreed by DEFRA. Large animal checks and plant and seeds will be at Sevington from July 2022 when phytosanitary (food etc) checks will also commence under ABC's environmental health obligations.

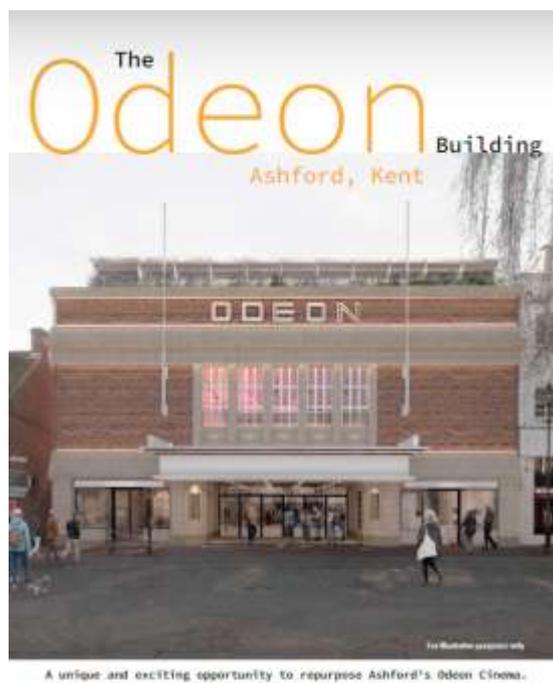
This news about the last east of the IBF follows ABC agreeing in October 2020 that the site should be promoted as a buffer site between the IBF and Mersham and the pressure that all The Parish, Borough and County Councils have put on the Government with support from the Village Alliance.

PARISH BOUNDARY

I have asked for work to start on redrawing the parish boundary so that whole of Finberry is in Sevington Parish. The following map illustrates the current Sevington boundary. If there is no change the community centre site will be in Mersham parish!



THE ODEON



ABC now actively seeking ideas from interested parties who would like to bring something new to the former Odeon cinema. The Odeon provides an exciting prospect for a whole range of operators to put their own unique stamp on this historic building and return a much-loved and repurposed building back to Ashford.

The plan is to retain and enhance the front of the building facing the High Street to create an active entrance and frontage to the Lower High Street. The rear of the building which houses the old auditorium will be demolished and replaced by a new extension that provides a modern, flexible space which will open up and enhance views to St Marys Church.

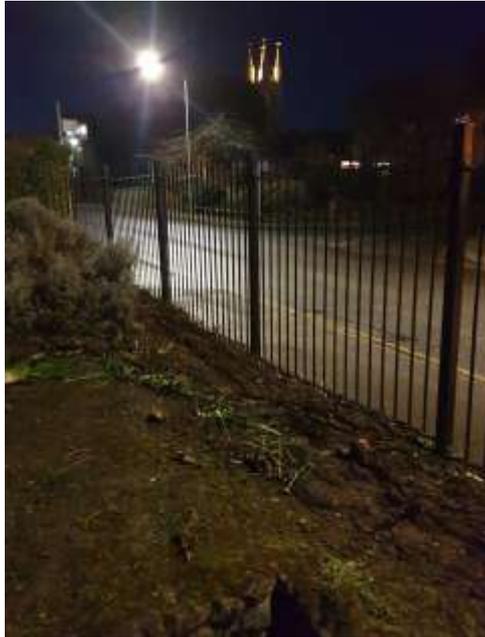
The building provides an exciting opportunity for a whole range of operators; craft or cultural, hospitality, co-working, health and wellness, fitness, F&B or leisure with retail and commerce woven through to bring back the life, creativity and excitement that the building once exuded.

Further details at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-council/council-projects/odeon-development/>

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Funding has been secured for an additional 11 CCTV cameras in the town centre. Sites for the cameras have been identified by the Ashford Monitoring Centre and Kent Police using the intelligence and historic reports of where anti social behaviour has occurred in the town centre. Locations include the

underpass by Ashford train station, Victoria Park, Edinburgh Road multi-story car park and the Memorial Gardens. Alongside the CCTV, the Memorial Gardens has benefited from replacement of the timber fencing around its boundary and a general uplift including removing the hedges. These improvements to the look of the area will enhance the feeling of safety in the town centre and create a much safer walking route from the town centre to the station.



An advisory group has been formed by Kent Police from individuals they consulted when formulating the funding bid, and then from others who have shown interest in VAWG events. The advisory group provides independent advice and support to the delivery and promotion of the delivery of project work to reduce violence against women and girls.

NOISY EXHAUSTS



Following reports of anti-social bikes on the A2070, Kent Police were in the area on Wednesday 9 February and took an uninsured and untaxed bike off the road who was speeding and doing wheelies in front of officers!

Please continue to report these incidents to 101 to get action from the Police.

BYBROOK-BOCKHANGER COMMUNITY FACILITY COMMITTEE

On 9 February 2022 the Community Council, while continuing to support ABC in the viability of an affordable housing-led scheme which provides a flexible community hub, agreed to develop three other options:

- A stand-alone community facility incorporating a main hall and a community café.
- A phased development beginning with a community café and a meeting room with clear scope for additions when funding sources permit.
- A baseline option of retaining the site in its present state with some improvements and enabling the more effective use of existing facilities in Kennington.

A subscription to ACRE (Action on Communities in Rural Kent) to access advice they provide on Community Halls and potential funding streams.

KCC BUDGET

The 2022/23 Kent County Council budget was approved on 10 February 2022 and includes:

- £484million – for providing adult social care and health services
- £52million – for maintaining roads, improving communities and digital connectivity
- £270million – for helping young people, and
- £5million – for protecting and improving the environment and tackling climate change

KCC voted through a 2.99% increase in Council Tax, equal to an additional 82p for a typical band D household per week, to help cover costs that cannot be met by annual central government funding alone. 1% of the rise will be ring-fenced to meet an increase in spending on adult social care. Two amendments were voted through as follows:

- A proposal not to increase the cost of the KCC Travel Saver Pass for children on free school meals by £30 a year.
- A proposal to keep the Disabled Companion Pass.

Alongside the revenue budget, a £1.7billion programme of capital works for the next decade was also approved. Projects include:

- £92million for highways and other transport improvements – including Green Corridors, plus
- £85million to provide additional school places – in 2022-23.

Changes to several **discretionary** services included:

- £80 increase to the full price of the Kent Travel Saver. Under the proposal, KTS passes for those in care groups would remain free and the Sibling Offer (which enables families with three or more children in

the same household in school years 7-11 to only pay for the first two passes) remains.

- A proposed move to a new contract to deliver special educational needs home-to-school transport – to manage the significant rise in the number eligible for such support and the capacity issues.
- Proposed changes to some bus routes.
- Transitional arrangements to be put in place when a £5million contract for Kent Homeless Connect which expires in September.

The following table illustrates the impact on Council Tax

Financial Year	Ashford Borough Council			Kent County Council			Kent Police			Kent Fire		
	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%
2022/23	177.50	5.00	2.90	1,461.24	42.48	2.99	228.15	10.00	4.58	82.35	1.53	1.89
2021/22	172.50	5.00	2.99	1,418.76	67.50	5.00	218.15	15.00	7.38	80.82	1.53	1.93
2020/21	167.50	5.00	3.08	1,351.26	51.84	3.99	203.15	10.00	5.18	79.29	1.53	1.97
2019/20	162.50	5.00	3.17	1,299.42	61.74	4.99	193.15	24.00	14.19	77.76	2.25	2.98
2018/19	157.50	3.50	2.27	1,237.68	58.86	4.99	169.15	12.00	7.64	75.51	2.16	2.94
2017/18	154.00	4.00	2.67	1,178.82	45.27	3.99	157.15	5.00	3.29	73.35	1.35	1.87
2016/17	150.00	4.55	3.13	1,133.55	43.56	4.00	152.15	5.00	3.40	72.00	1.35	1.91
2015/16	145.45	0.00	0.00	1,089.99	21.33	2.00	147.15	2.87	1.99	70.65	1.35	1.95
2014/15	145.45	0.00	0.00	1,068.66	20.88	1.99	144.28	2.81	1.99	69.30	1.35	1.99
2013/14	145.45	4.78	3.40	1,047.78	0.00	0.00	141.47	2.79	2.01	67.95	0.00	0.00
2012/13	140.67	0.00	0.00	1,047.78	0.00	0.00	138.68	0.00	0.00	67.95	0.00	0.00
2011/12	140.67			1,047.78			138.68			67.95		

BUS SERVICE 111

Residents are being asked to share their views on a proposed reduction of KCC Supported Bus Services. KCC currently spends about £6 million a year to contract services which are not profitable for bus companies but which the council thinks are important to the communities they serve. 48 contracts have been selected for withdrawal from the budget including the one listed below which runs only on Thursdays. The consultation opened on 24th February and will close on 20th April. Visit www.kent.gov.uk/bussavings to view the full list of the services proposed to be withdrawn and take part in the consultation. If Service 111 is discontinued, it will end in August. The current cost of the service to KCC is £13,007.

Service 111 – Ashford to Folkestone (Thursday)

Service 111 is fully subsidised and provide a shopper service for several rural villages between Ashford and Folkestone on a Thursday

	Th
Ashford, Park St. Stop A	0930
Willesborough, Tesco	0941
Mersham, Royal Oak	0946
Aldington Frih, Priory Rd	0953
Aldington Fire Station	0958
Lympne County Members	1007
West Hythe, Garage	1011
Burmarsh Shepherd & Crook	1021
Hythe, Palmash Avenue	1030
Hythe, Red Lion Square	1036
Seabrook, Fountain	1043
Sandgate, Memorial	1048
Folkestone, Bus Station D2	1058

	Th
Folkestone, Bus Stop Bay A2	1317
Sandgate, Memorial	1322
Seabrook Fountain	1326
Hythe, Red Lion Square	1334
Hythe, Palmash Avenue	1339
Burmarsh Shepherd & Crook	1346
West Hythe, Garage	1354
Lympne, County Members	1358
Aldington Fire Station	1407
Aldington Frih, Priory Rd	1411
Mersham, Royal Oak	1419
Willesborough, Tesco	1424
Ashford, Park Street Stop A	1434

Unconnected to this is Stagecoach decision to end the G Line service from Godinton to South Willesborough via the town centre from 17th April 2022.

BERRY PLACE

I attended a site visit prior to the opening of ABC’s new housing development on Beaver Road. The scheme will be home to those mainly aged 50 and above, some of whom will have an assessed need for level access accommodation.

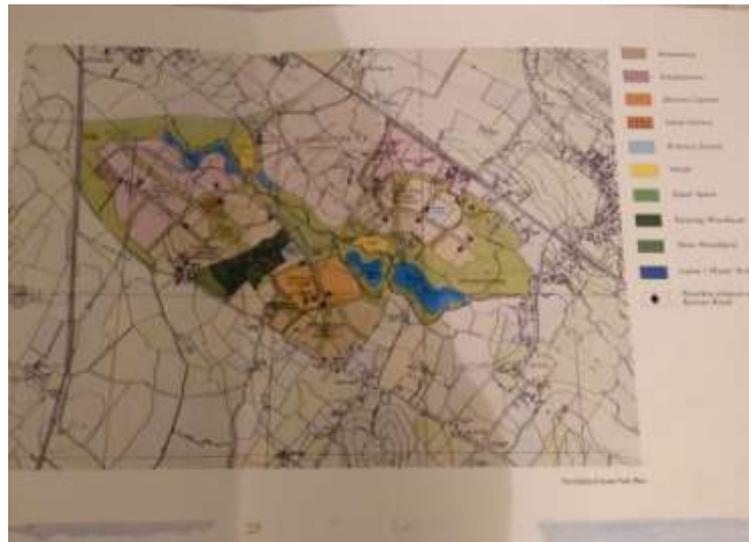


MULBERRY HOMES

There are two planning applications recently submitted by the Church Commissioners and their partners. They are for housing development west of Cheesemans Green Lane which is supported. However a road is included in the plans up to Cheesemans Green Lane. This road can only be to facilitate

development around Conscience Farm as envisaged in 2005 under the Ashford Great Park proposals. These planning applications might be discussed at the April Planning Meeting by ABC. The reference numbers are 18/00098/CONQ/AS and 21/01595/AS and it is important you comment on both. We do not want to derail the development west of Cheesemans Green Lane but we do not want urban creep into the village and this application could be "development by stealth".

A map of the Ashford Great Park proposal from 2005 which never made it into the local plan is below.



NINE ACRES BIN

The missing bin from Nine Acres has been replaced by ABC following a request by me.



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