

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 26th April 2021 via Skype

Present	Peter Turley (Chair) Peter Hawkins Stewart Ross Melanie Wells	Geoffrey Fletcher Gavin Murphy Kenton Stewart
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In attendance: Borough Councillor Paul Bartlett, 3 members of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

<p>Chairman Cllr Murphy proposed Cllr Fletcher to stand as the Chairman, Cllr Wells seconded this proposal. All were in favour. Cllr Fletcher accepted his position. Cllr Fletcher proposed Cllr Murphy as Vice Chairman, Cllr Turley seconded this proposal. All were in favour.</p>	
<p>Signing of Acceptance of Office As Cllr Fletcher was attending this meeting remotely by telephone, it was agreed that the signing of the Declaration of Office Form would be deferred until the next meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Turley Chaired this meeting</p>	
<p>To receive and approve apologies for absence. There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. Cllr Bartlett noted an interest in the Inland Border Site due to the proximity of the site to his property. Cllr Wells noted a personal interest in the Inland Border facility as a family member works on the site.</p>	
<p>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2021 Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 15th March 2021 were approved as a true record and were signed as such. Cllr Stewart proposed approval and Cllr Murphy seconded this.</p>	
<p>To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda. Any further progress regarding Mersham Manor and the Tithe Barn: We facilitated a meeting between the applicant, Heritage England and the Borough Council. Cllr Bartlett chaired this meeting with a purpose to have a full and frank exchange of views and for the applicant to discuss their intended revised proposals. It is hoped that all sides will land on a plan that can progress the repair of the Tithe barn. Cllr Turley has since spoken to the applicant and they had found the meeting useful. They will send their proposal documents once updated. They will provide 3 options and will copy these to the Parish Council. This will keep us aware of progress. Response from Speedwatch regarding the Kent Police Speed sign initiative “We are trialling another device but as it is in trial at the moment not able to discuss it in detail yet sadly – but there may be a condition that you will need an active Speedwatch group to be able to use the device we are looking at, but this will be confirmed at the end of our trial.” The Clerk is to reconnect with KCC regarding the speed sign. Mersham Sports Club are proceeding with purchase and updating of the land. The Parish Council is asked whether they can use the funds given for the pavilion to use it for purchasing the land. Also, can the additional funds be processed? All were in favour of this.</p>	<p>TB</p> <p>TB</p> <p>MW</p>

<p>The resurfacing of the A20 – some of the larger holes have been filled. The resurfacing of the A20 is a project for 2021-22 but it will be in the programme of work. The Clerk is to write to Lisa Willoughby to ask for a date for this work and the Clerk will update the Councillors as to when this will take place.</p>	TB
<p>Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item.</p> <p>The gateway sign location on Bower Road was questioned. The Parish Council has requested that the gateway be moved towards Evegate, this was previously refused. It is something that we will continue to push with KCC. There is little pavement, no street lighting and we consider this to be a safety issue. The Parish Council continue to fight the cause.</p> <p>The bridge on Flood Street is to be repaired/ upgraded. The proposed design is potentially going to cause more dangerous driving. We would like a priority traffic only bridge. The Parish Council heard noises about a bridge redesign, and we escalated the matter through KCC. We have seen the plans recently following circulation by the senior structural engineer. We have asked for a site visit with the designers to see how the overall scheme will not worsen the traffic issue we have at present. Nothing in the design information provided mentions traffic calming measures. Cllr Fletcher is chasing the matter; we would encourage all residents to highlight the concerns as best they can. The widening of the bridge is going to increase the speed. We will respond to the consultation and we will discuss with the local neighbours.</p> <p>A member of the public asked for a dimple roundabout to be re-instated. The mechanism we have to get any highways improvements undertaken is the Highways Improvement Plan. We can add this to the HIP, but it will only be accepted if KCC agree. If KCC will consider this, we would need to look at costing.</p> <p>One member of the public is concerned about the speed of the cars, particularly as children are queuing on the pavement.</p> <p>Will the Parish Council be commenting on the extinguishment of the footpath to Sevington church through the IBF site? As yet we have not discussed it. Cllr Bartlett had commented that it might need to be closed whilst the IBF is in use but that does not require a permanent closure. The Parish Council would wish to object to say that this should be a temporary closure that is extinguished once the IBF is no longer required. The only reason we could envisage as to be a reason to close it permanently is to heighten the value of the site. The previous owner accepted that there would be a footpath across the middle of the land. The original plan was for a green corridor through the site. The Clerk will submit this objection on behalf of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Ashford Borough Council has commented on the SDO and included comment how far away the planting on the corridor is from the previous owners plans with native trees and shrubs in the green corridor. The new application has not yet been granted; it is therefore hoped that when the SDO is approved we may have some new planting.</p> <p>There is a consultation for double yellow lines near T. Denne & Son and the Forstal. We have previously discussed the issues with the access to T. Denne and Son, we have had issues with cars parking on the pavement, so this consultation has come out of these issues. This might be a little premature because it might be better once the Village Hall car park has been extended. Cllr Hawkins felt that this will impact The Farriers as parking is an issue there. A member of the public considered the school parents may have issues with parking. The Borough Council will be responsible to enforce the issue if it continues. Parking issues would be for the locals to report.</p> <p>We have inconsiderate parking issues, loss of on-street parking and a local company unable to access their property due to parking on the road. There was a discussion regarding this matter. There was a discussion about obtaining additional parking and this is not possible at the Village Hall. Cllr Stewart suggested that another resident could be asked to donate some land to parking for the school.</p> <p>There is no strong view but the loss of parking for the School and the Farriers is a concern and it was considered that this could be delayed until the Village Hall car park is completed.</p>	<p>GF</p> <p>TB</p> <p>TB</p>
<p>To receive report from Borough Councillor</p> <p>A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website: http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/</p>	
<p>To receive and update on the current situation of the Highways Improvement Plan</p> <p>The Parish Council was hoping to install a dropped kerb for access to the bus stop. The site of the entrance to Oaklands was considered the best location. Kent Highways have agreed to undertake this themselves as it is an accessibility issue. We will revisit the HIP.</p>	

To receive an update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in High Field

An update was received from Vincent at KWT had located species of Dormice, Greater Crested Newts etc. We will obtain the deliverables and then we will have another meeting with KWT. A site meeting will be undertaken. Delaying this causes damage, e.g., the bat population will be affected by the light pollution, Vincent felt that there could be a lot of improvement to the site. Whether a biodiversity net gain could be achieved is questionable given the damage already done by the IBF works but it might be possible to have a neutral impact.

The site meeting is to be on the 20/5 in the pm, all Councillors to be invited to both meetings, TB to organise.

Cllr Ross raised concerns over the managers of the IBF and the refusal to provide details. There needs to be discussions to learn how to best use the arguments, how to escalate the matters and when to approach our MP. The Parish Council would need to work with Cllr Bartlett and the County Councillor too.

A member of the public agreed that this should be progressed, it was suggested that the PC should contact Daniel Fryd. We had an action to set up a meeting with Daniel, TB to organise. Cllr Ross also suggested contacting other groups to get them involved with the plight.

It was agreed that the Highfield sub-committee would meet to decide who they are targeting and how to best affect the issues. A session will be arranged to discuss these issues.

The other matter is how to take forward engagement with the community. Covid restrictions are in place until 21st June. It is considered best to invite KWT to an open meeting to explain the justification and design. The PC would inform residents of the plans and obtain feedback. This is likely to be undertaken at the end of June.

It has not been confirmed whether the DfT will allow ABC to have the land. The Parish Council is told that the DfT will agree this with ABC. Cllr Turley agreed that he does not see the path that provides that site to ABC. Cllr Bartlett is the link to that.

The sub-committee will meet to discuss these issues.

TB

TB

TB/PT

To receive an update regarding position of the broadband project for Mersham

Disappointingly, the DCMS decided that this was not viable without top up vouchers from KCC which were unavailable at the time, this project is currently on hold until the County Council elections are complete.

Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters.

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

21/00473/AS	The Old Bakery House, The Street, Mersham	Minor alterations in conjunction with conservation works
The Parish Council raised no objections		
18/01527/CONA/AS	Chequer Tree Farm, Chequer Tree Farm Road TN25 7HL	Discharge condition 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10
The Parish Council raised no objections.		
18/01527/AMND/AS	Chequer Tree Farm, Chequer Tree Farm Road TN25 7HL	Nonmaterial amendment to planning permission for changer to external materials, fenestration and extend the rear
The Parish Council raised no objections.		
21/00505/AS	3 Chequer Tree Cottage, Chequer Tree Farm Road TN25 7HL	Extension to existing agricultural building
The Parish Council raised no objections.		
21/00536/AS	Orchard Lodge, Church Road, Mersham, TN25 6NS	To form a dormer to the rear roof slope and 1 x Velux roof light to the front roof slope
The Parish Council raised objections as above.		
21/00569/AS	Bower House, Bower Road, Mersham, TN25 6NW	Repairs to Stair 1
The Parish Council has no comment regarding this application.		
21/00595/AS	Acorn Cottage, Coopers Lane, Mersham TN25 7HW	Demolition of existing garage, store and summer house. Construction of new garden studio workshop as ancillary accommodation for home-run business.
The Parish Council raised no objections if this does not impact on the neighbours or impact the road layout. The Parish Council supports local business.		

21/00514/AS	Conifers 1 Flanders Field, Mersham. TN25 6PA	Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed extension to crossover and driveway																						
The Parish Council raised no objections																								
21/00711/AS	Stonelees, Laws Lane, Mersham, Ashford, Kent, TN25 7HG	Prior approval for change of use from agricultural barn and land within its curtilage to one dwelling house and associated operational development																						
This application is outside of the village envelope and is therefore not supported.																								
<p>To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Controls: Councillors are asked to consider the Statement of Internal control in support of the Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>The Parish Council reviewed and approved its system of Internal Controls.</p>																								
<p>To approve the Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment and confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.</p> <p>The Parish Council approved the Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment and confirmed insurance cover for the forthcoming year.</p>																								
<p>Review of the Council's subscriptions to other bodies i.e., KALC/CPRE</p> <p>The KALC membership is to be renewed. Membership to CPRE is to be considered at the next meeting.</p>																								
<p>Financial matters:</p> <p>a) To approve the following financial documents:</p> <p>i. To receive the end of year accounts The Parish Council approved the end of year accounts.</p> <p>ii. To receive the report from the Internal Auditor The Parish Council received the report from the Internal Auditor.</p> <p>iii. To approve the Governance Statement 2020/21, section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2021 The Parish Council considered and approved the Governance Statement 2020/21, and the Governance Statement was signed by the Chair of the meeting.</p> <p>iv. To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2020/21, section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2021 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2021, the explanation of significant variance. To ensure that the Accounting Statements 2020/21 are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting. The Accounting Statements 2020/21 and the document was signed by the person presiding at the meeting. These documents were supported by Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2021 and the explanation of significant variance.</p> <p>b) To note the Parish Council's financial position for the beginning of the new Financial Year. The financial position was noted as at 1st April 2021</p> <p>c) To authorise any payments</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cheque No:</th> <th>Payee</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>502083</td> <td>Came & Company Insurance</td> <td>£ 508.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502084</td> <td>S Lister – Internal Audit</td> <td>£ 60.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502085</td> <td>Kent Association of Local Councils</td> <td>£ 554.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502086</td> <td>T Block (April salary)</td> <td>£ 384.06</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502087</td> <td>I King (April salary)</td> <td>£ 124.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502088</td> <td>The Villager contribution</td> <td>£ 400.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Cheque No:	Payee	Amount	502083	Came & Company Insurance	£ 508.78	502084	S Lister – Internal Audit	£ 60.00	502085	Kent Association of Local Councils	£ 554.78	502086	T Block (April salary)	£ 384.06	502087	I King (April salary)	£ 124.14	502088	The Villager contribution	£ 400.00	
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A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.																								
<p>Suggestions for future organisation of the Parish Council</p> <p>Cllr Turley discussed the issues that the Parish Council face. This was a good time to reflect on the issues. The focus areas were highlighted, see documents below. The concept seems to be sound. It was considered a</p>																								

reasonable idea by all, could all Parish Councillors let the Clerk to know if they wish to undertake a role.	All
<p>Any Other Business (for information purposes only):</p> <p>The Clerk to place another order for the dog poo bags.</p> <p>The gateways into the village have been reported as they are in a state of disrepair.</p> <p>The footpath through Bower Farm has been suspended during building works.</p> <p>The streetlight on Bower Road has been removed, Cllr Bartlett will get on the case if photographs can be sent.</p> <p>Why has the traffic Marshall been moved? A near miss occurred hence the move of location, there was concern expressed over the location now as well as before.</p> <p>Clair Bell and Cllr Turley met a member of public and discussed the HGV issues and the signage problems in the area. Cllr Turley disputed the signage on the M20 as being suffice and Clair Bell has agreed to take this forward with Highways England and Kent Highways. The signage is currently minor and poor. Clair has committed to contact the relevant people. We will continue to push forward.</p>	TB PB
<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 21st June 2021 Monday 19th July 2021 Monday 20th September 2021 Monday 18th October 2021 Monday 15th November 2021 Monday 17th January 2022 Monday 21st February 2022 Monday 21st March 2022 Monday 18th April 2022</p> <p>Cllr Murphy thanked Cllr Turley for all of his work over the past year.</p>	All
The meeting closed at 9.35pm	

Focus Area	Lead Councillor	Comments
KALC	Cllr Murphy	Lead Mersham PC engagement with KALC
Planning		Lead Planning agenda item each month, Develop Subject Matter Expertise ,
Finance (precept etc)	The Clerk	Lead Finance agenda item each month,
Village Caretaker	Cllr Wells/Cllr Turley	Represent Mersham on Sub Committee, Primary contact for all Caretaker items
Village Hall	Cllr Wells	Act as interface between Parish Council and Village Hall Committee
Mersham Sports Club		Trustee
Highfield ownership development and ongoing maintenance ideas		Act as "project manager"
Highway Improvement plan and Traffic	Cllr Murphy	Act as "project manager"
Mersham Manor and Barn		Act as "project manager"
Inland Border facility, lighting, errant vehicles and signage, Kingsford Street		Act as "project manager"
State of A20 Mersham to J10A		Act as "project manager"
Broadband		Act as "project manager"