

Rolvenden Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Rolvenden Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th February 2018 at 7.30pm in Rolvenden Village Hall, Maytham Road, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4ND.

Present: Cllr D Murray (Chairman), Cllr Mrs D Curtain (Deputy Chairman), Cllr.B Hindley, Cllr. M Hook, Cllr Mrs I Newman, Cllr Mrs J Stace, Cllr G Tiltman, Cllr R Wilcox

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Locum Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Also present: Cllr M Bennett (Ashford Borough Council) and 10 residents

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr J Wilkins (holiday)

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

- a. **Declarations of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:** None.
- b. **Declarations of Members' Other Significant Interests:** None.
- c. **Declaration of Members' other Interests:** Cllr M Hook declared his membership of the Weald of Kent Preservation Society and the Rolvenden History Group. Cllr B Hindley declared his Chairmanship of Rolvenden Cricket Club.

12. APPOINTMENT OF LOCUM PARISH CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER:

RESOLVED: TO APPOINT PETER SETTERFIELD PSLCC AS LOCUM PARISH CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER.

13. MINUTES:

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16th January and extraordinary meeting of 30th January were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

A resident raised the issue of parking on the pavement/grass in Sparkeswood Avenue, this is a known issue and will be placed on the next Parish council agenda, the Parking Officer from Ashford Borough Council will be invited to attend.

15. STANDING ORDERS:

RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the Standing Orders presented which mirror the model provided by the National Association of Local Councils.

16. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS:

RESOLVED: To defer decision to the next meeting of the Parish Council as the model Financial Regulations need amendment to meet local requirements.

17. DATA PROTECTION:

RESOLVED: To register as a data controller with the Information Commissioners Office.

18. PLANNING

Planning application 18/00065/AS – 37 Sparkeswood Avenue, Rolvenden – Proposed 3 bedroom detached dwelling adjacent to 37 Sparkeswood Avenue.

RESOLVED: to object to the application (submission attached)

Planning application 18/00190/AS – Folly Farm, Puddingcake Lane, Rolvenden – Retrospective change of use of agricultural land to residential, new access and decking to rear of dwelling.

RESOLVED: to submit no comment regarding the application.

Planning application 18/00223/AS – Lower Winsor Cottage, Mounts Lane, Rolvenden – Proposed two storey rear extension and detached double garage.

RESOLVED: Rolvenden Parish Council objects to the proposals submitted for a two storey rear extension as the design is not in keeping with the conservation area in which it sits. In addition the neighbouring property is a listed building. The roof height of the proposed extension appears to be much higher than the existing roof line.

Planning application 15/01555/AMND/AS – Halden Field, Tenterden Road, Rolvenden – Non material amendment to application 15/01555/AS (Reserved matters application for the erection of 40 dwellings, of which 14 are affordable, together with associated roads, car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and earthworks) for the revision of the layout to include provision of lighting columns.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council wish to express their concern about the lighting being proposed for the development. The lamps being proposed do not match the description: the illustration is not of a bollard, and is not low level as described in the original planning application. The design is considered to be inappropriate, being of vaguely Georgian effect with no contextual relevance to the village or the new development. Whilst the description quotes a maximum wattage of 100 no type of bulb is specified and the spread of light is not shown. Rolvenden is a rural area and benefits from Dark skies: any lamp of this nature will possibly give rise to light spill destroying the dark sky. It should be made clear what the intention of the lights is, and if they are intended to be on in all hours of darkness or are extinguished through the middle of the night.

The survey for the Neighbourhood Development Plan showed that the general view is that the character of the village benefits from the low number of street lights, excessive use of street lights will create a suburban atmosphere.

It is not considered that the open space will be enhanced by the proposed concentration of lighting, which is inconsistent with the principles of rural design.

19. HALDEN FIELD:

Nothing to report.

20. BARRETT FIELD:

Nothing to report.

21. PAVILION PROJECT:

Discussions have continued with the Football Club Committee who are still unable to provide a copy of their lease. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the other party to the lease in order to try and resolve this.

22. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT INITIATIVE:

Councillors Curtain and Tiltman recently attended a meeting with Ashford Borough Council with regard to working with them on a pilot Wellbeing Transport Scheme. The scheme will be hosted by the Parish Council and will be open to all clubs, societies, businesses and individual groups provided they apply through the Parish Council and agree to the hire terms.

This not for profit scheme will be run by volunteers from groups participating in the scheme, who will be able to provide their own drivers or use a driver from a bank of volunteers supplied by the Parish Council.

It is anticipated that the scheme may commence in May/June this year for a trial period of 18 months.

23. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

Councillor Curtain advised that the analysis of comments from the public consultation was ongoing and that the Statutory Consultees consultation period was taking place until the end of the month.

24. FINANCE:

External Auditor Report 2016/17 has been received from PKF Littlejohn LLP:

The smaller authority failed to approve the Annual Return in time to publish it before by 3 July 2017, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The smaller authority failed to publish the final signed Annual Return by 30 September 2017, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. This is as a result of:

- Correspondence received by the appointed auditor that had to be considered before the review could be completed.
- The Annual Return and additional documentation not being submitted for review until 12/02/18.

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertions in Section 1, Boxes 1 – 6 and 8, but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified.

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, the Internal Auditor has drawn attention to significant weaknesses in relation to all internal control objectives. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

The Internal Auditor is not independent of the financial decision making, management and control of the smaller authority and the smaller authority must disclose this by answering 'No' to Assertion 6 of the Annual Governance Statement on the 2017/18 Annual Return. In future years, the smaller authority must maintain an independent system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems. In the current year, the Internal Auditor has helped to prepare the Section 2 figures and the bank reconciliation due to exceptional circumstances.

We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2017/18 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not include the first 10 working days of July. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2018/19.

The external auditor does not certify that they have completed their review of the annual return, and discharged their responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2017 because the smaller authority set a period for the exercise of public rights that finishes on 23 March 2018 meaning that the appointed auditor has to wait until after that date before the review can be completed.

Payments authorised at the meeting

Cheque no	Payee	Amount
300005	S Brooks	£295.00
300006	Tony Fullwood Associates	£7,955.56
300007	Kent Association of Local Councils	£177.31
300008	Kerrin Malone	£118.60
300009	G Tiltman	£57.64
300010	Information Commissioners Office	£35.00
300011	PKF Littlejohn LLP	£276.00

25. STREYTE PLAY AREA:

It was reported that there has been some vandalism to the play equipment on the Streyte Play area and that some of the posts are showing signs of decay. The Locum Clerk queried the inspection frequency of the play areas as there are requirements included in the insurance. The Locum Clerk was asked to undertake further research on the matter and report back to Council.

26. BT TELEPHONE KIOSKS:

It has not been confirmed to the Parish Council that the adoption of the telephone Kiosk at Rolvenden Layne has been completed. The Locum Clerk was asked to ascertain the position with regard to this.

27. HIGHWAYS MATTERS:

The cones placed opposite the Village Hall have deterred parking here and act to protect the verge from further damage. A resident advised that the footpath floods in heavy rain as a trench has been dug into the verge to alleviate flooding on the road, the effect being the road drains onto the path depositing mud and silt. This becomes slippery and as this is the entrance to the churchyard constitutes a Health and Safety issue it was agreed that the Parish Clerk would contact the Highways Steward and Highways area Manager to request a site visit.

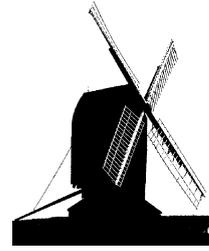
28. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960:

RESOLVED that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.

29. GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURES AND TRANSPARENCY:

Councillors Murray and Curtain attended the recent Kent Association of Local Council conference on Governance, Procedures and Transparency as did the Locum Clerk. Great emphasis was placed on the need to have adequate and robust policies and procedures in place for the running of the Parish Council.

Rolvenden Parish Council



Wealden House
Grand Parade
Littlestone
Kent TN28 8NQ

27 February 2018

Planning application 18/00065/AS 37 Sparkeswood Avenue, Rolvenden

Rolvenden Parish Council objects to the proposal on the following grounds.

The site is adjacent to the Rolvenden Conservation area and within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This application is in contravention of Ashford Borough Council Policy TRS1 (b) in that the proposal increases the density of buildings and TRS1 (d) the loss of gap which is an important characteristic of Sparkeswood Avenue. The proposals are also contrary to Policy CS1 clause (d) and Policy CS9 clause (a).

The proposals are also in contravention of the forthcoming Local Plan 2030 policies HOU3 (b) and (c) and policy HOU10 (a) and (e).

The NPPF states that it is inappropriate for the development of gardens for housing. The NPPF also states that new development should also preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area and protect the landscape vale and scenic beauty of the AONB.

1. Sparkeswood Avenue was designed to have generous open space at roadside and between houses. The proposed development would detract from, and be harmful to, the visual amenity of the area.
2. There is already insufficient parking for residents in Sparkeswood Avenue, and this development would create an additional load on the capacity and further inconvenience to residents. The following photographs have all been taken in the vicinity of the application site.



In additional detail.

1. The proposed dwelling would not be appropriate and would diminish the existing form and appearance of the location and Sparkeswood Avenue as a whole, detracting from and harmful to the visual amenity of the area.

The land for Sparkeswood Avenue was provided by local landowner Mr Thoburn, with the instruction that it should be attractive and spacious, in the manner of 'garden village' design.

The Avenue was designed with the deliberate use of trees, curves and bends, spacious verges and garden areas, and with the conscious allowance of spaces between houses at various points. There are several houses where there are generous spaces in which a house could have been constructed if the architect and council had so intended. These gaps break up the flow of development and add to the sense of space and greenery.

The gaps also allow a visible connection from the Avenue through to the High Street in one direction and to the open countryside in the other, providing a constant confirmation of the place of the Avenue within the village.

To allow a house in this garden would close the space, diminish the sense of space and connection, and create a more terraced impression. The precedent would also be likely to create opportunities for all similar gaps to be infilled, creating a much diminished space, and reduction in character and connection.

Residents talk of the attractiveness of living in this area of the Avenue where the view from the windows is onto the open space and through to the High Street. They also describe how the evening sun comes through the gap. This benefits all residents, not only those adjacent.

2. The proposal shows provision of a driveway which theoretically accommodates the additional parking required by the development.

However every crossover causes the loss of parallel kerbside parking for at least one car, and more likely 2 due to the constraint on the positions available and due to the narrowness of the carriageway.

Additionally the loss of parking would be for the general use of residents. Existing residents who are already short of parking will lose some of the limited availability, while the new residents would have their own private parking spaces.

The shortage of parking space is already such that cars are often parked on grass verges and footpaths to the detriment of everyone else, damaging the verges, and limiting space for other vehicles, including emergency and service vehicles.

The Parish Council heeded requests to try to resolve the parking problem, and in 2011 carried out a survey and detailed assessment. Leaflets were circulated and residents consulted.

While it was confirmed that there was a shortage of space, it was decided that additional parking space would be to the detriment of the Avenue. Also, the creation of spaces required the loss of the green frontages, but the number of spaces gained would be very small due to the consequential loss of parallel parking spaces.

Residents frequently bring up the subject, and we have to advise that there is no easy solution, but we recognise the problem and will take whatever measures we can to improve it, or at least stop it becoming worse.

Additional comments.

We wish to refer the planning officer to the previous proposal for number 14 Sparkeswood Avenue (15/00058/AS) which was a similar infill situation.

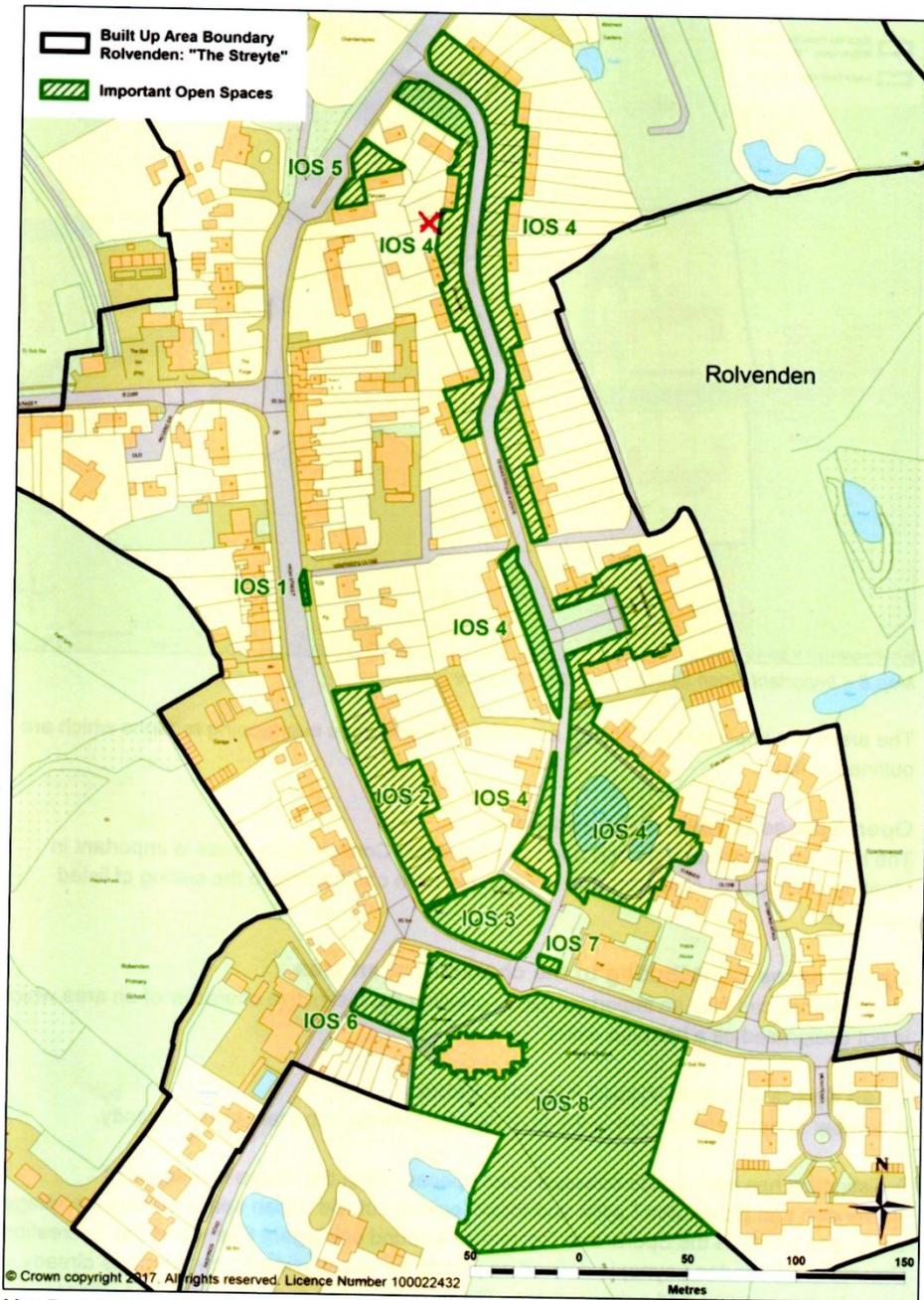
In particular we note the comment in the decision notice: *The proposed dwelling, by virtue of its siting, scale, design and appearance combined with the narrow width of the plot and limited road frontage, would relate poorly to the existing form and layout of development in the locality. As a result, the development would introduce a cramped, visually incongruous and intrusive form of development that would fail to respond positively to the established character and grain of Sparkeswood Avenue, detracting from and harmful to the visual amenity of the area.*

While the current proposal is for a larger plot, the situation is similar.

At appeal, the Inspector noted, in his report rejecting the appeal, that: *(Sparkeswood Avenue) is of a generally green and verdant character, with houses set back from, but fronting the road, giving the area a feeling of spaciousness.*

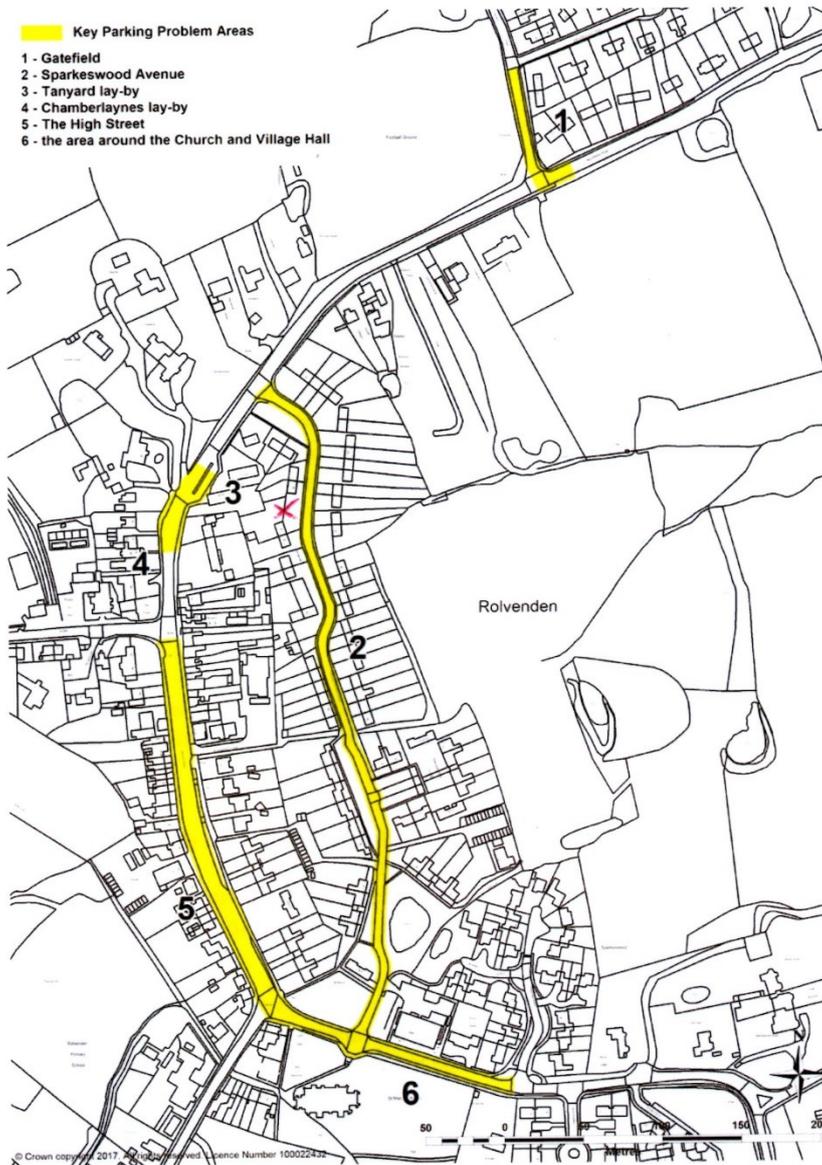
Spaciousness is the key, and the proposed development would remove that from this point in the Avenue, and could lead to similar infill in all larger gardens, as well as causing additional parking difficulties, all to the considerable detriment of residents and the village as a whole.

We attach two plans from the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan which is currently at consultation stage. These confirm that parking is considered already to be a problem.



Map 7 – Important Open Space - Rolvenden

- Key Parking Problem Areas**
- 1 - Gatefield
 - 2 - Sparkeswood Avenue
 - 3 - Tanyard lay-by
 - 4 - Chamberlaynes lay-by
 - 5 - The High Street
 - 6 - the area around the Church and Village Hall



Map 2 - Problem Parking Areas

In the event that approval was considered further then there are technical matters to consider.

The proposed driveway for existing house number 37 shows the new driveway being approximately 3m wide, but a dimensioned plan is to be preferred. We also consider that a swept path should be shown on the plan to indicate the amount of road frontage that will be lost.

The existing driveway on the proposed development is not dimensioned. We consider that it should be, and that it also be 3m wide and constructed to the modern requirements for drainage within the site. The plan should also show the swept path, combined with that for the new drive. This will also allow the Planning Officer to consider the number of roadside parking spaces which will be lost.

We would also request the opportunity for input to the design and materials proposed, which have not been considered at this stage, and that the developer is not permitted to use the road or verge during construction.