

COUNCIL UPDATE 6.2022

VICTORIA PARK



I attended the drop in session at Victoria Park on Wednesday 1st June. There are understandable frustrations around the project because it has been a long time since it was formally announced, but the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic required ABC to pause many of its ambitious projects to ensure they still provided value for money in the new economic climate. ABC are able to continue with the project by securing additional funding to protect and enhance what was already planned. ABC have now been able to sign contracts with the builders and landscapers who will be undertaking the work in the park.

The project now has a online presence and regular articles in the printed press to promote the project and build awareness of likely disruption as contractors begin their “soft launch” in the park.

SECOND THAMES CROSSING

I attended a presentation by National Highways on their latest proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing on 31st May. They have refined the scheme and consultation on these refinements can be viewed on National Highways' dedicated webpage: <https://ltcconsultation2022.nationalhighways.co.uk/>



A couple of points of interest:

- The project has been designated a pathfinder as carbon neutral construction
- Carbon reduction targets are matched by plans to enhance biodiversity, build new parks (including 40ha Chalk Park) and woodland and promote active travel (20kms of new or improved footways or crossings)

TRANSPORT BOARD

I was pleased to take the chair of the Board for the new municipal year at its 7th June meeting. The key issues covered in the meeting included:

- The board agreed to progress the introduction of limited waiting bays outside the Royal Mail Delivery Office, Tannery Lane following the submission of a petition in March. The process requires a road safety audit and the development of a detailed scheme. The Board asked for three spaces
- A Community Speedwatch in the area surrounding the A2070 is to be progressed by the Community Safety Unit and the Community Speedwatch Coordinator. This followed increased work on educating drivers and riders who use this road, sharing relevant safety measures and engaging with road users. Damian has asked the Secretary of State that the A2070 is part of a trial of roads for acoustic cameras
- The design of the Tank Roundabout to accommodate the new McDonalds on Carlton Rd / Bridge Rd has been adjusted to take into account the impending dualling. The McDonalds work will not now have to wait for the dualling.
- Delays on accessing Finberry during the overnight works on 6th / 7th June were reported to National Highways via KCC. There were reported delays of up to 45 minutes which is not acceptable.



- North Street (Somerset Rd to A28 Canterbury Rd) to be resurfaced 11th July – 20th July. Signing improvements are been ordered for the junction with Somerset Rd and Somerset Rd / Mace Lane.

- Drovers Roundabout improved lining / signing is at the design stage.
- Somerset Rd / Forge Ln formal pedestrian crossing to start 2022/23.
- A new pedestrian crossing is proposed for Violet Rd on Bridgefield.
- Bridge repairs in Flood Street now scheduled for 2024, a new design proposal has been commissioned for the bridge.
- The damaged stone surface has been repaired on AE390A between Damara Way and Rutledge Ave.

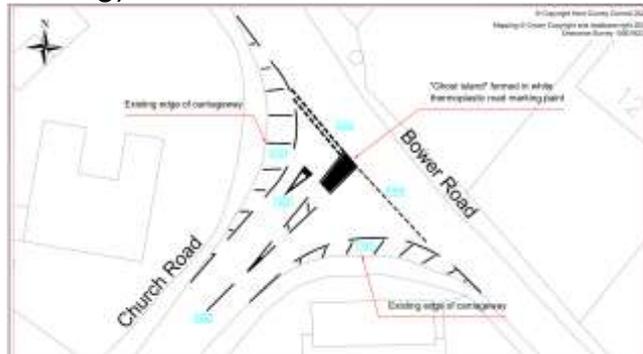


- Initial indications are that there is support for KCC to take on enforcement powers for moving traffic violations. Further analysis of the responses is being carried out and if taken forward this will be used in Beaver Rd / Godinton Rd and Bluebell Rd bus gates. This can be extended to the Damara Way / Avocet Rd bus link which will permit the start of bus services to Finberry.



- The Board approved the 'making' and implementation of the TRO for which intends to reduce the 30mph speed limit to 20mph on Bybrook Road, The Pasture and adjoining roads. This forms a key part of the wider 20mph zone scheme complete with associated signing, roundels, advisory cycle lane and raised table (at the site of the existing zebra crossing) - for delivery in 2022/23.

- The Board approved the continued enforcement of illegal lorry parking with a clamp release fee of £150 including the authority to instruct the use of Bailiffs.
- As part of the Mersham Highways Improvement Plan, KCC have agreed to extend the 30 mph zone beyond Quarry Road and install a white painted “ghost island” at the junction of Bower Road and Church Road (see attached drawing)



STONESTREET GREEN SOLAR

I attended the Community Liaison Panel meeting on 9th June in Aldington to discuss the Stonestreet Green Solar Project. The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping was adopted by the Secretary of State on 30th May 2022. You can see this document and sign up for updates by visiting <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/stonestreet-green-solar/>. The meeting was told that statutory consultation is expected to take place in Aug/September over a six week period; public events are expected to be held during the week commencing 5 September. There will be a leaflet drop across a 4km² area around the site to inform residents. Further information was requested at the next meeting (in August) on:

- Biodiversity gains
- Improvements to local footpaths (the developer has a meeting with KCC PROW team lined up)
- Community benefit fund (indexed linked)

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ASHFORD

This year has been challenging for some families accessing a Year 7 place of their choice for September 2022. This is due to

- Rising secondary school rolls
- The delay in the opening of Chilmington Green Secondary School
- The closure of High Weald Academy by the DfE which was out of KCC's hands

Planning permission for Chilmington Green Secondary School was granted on 15th June 2022 which is a positive step. If the DfE enters into a build contract within the next couple of months, the new school will be open on the

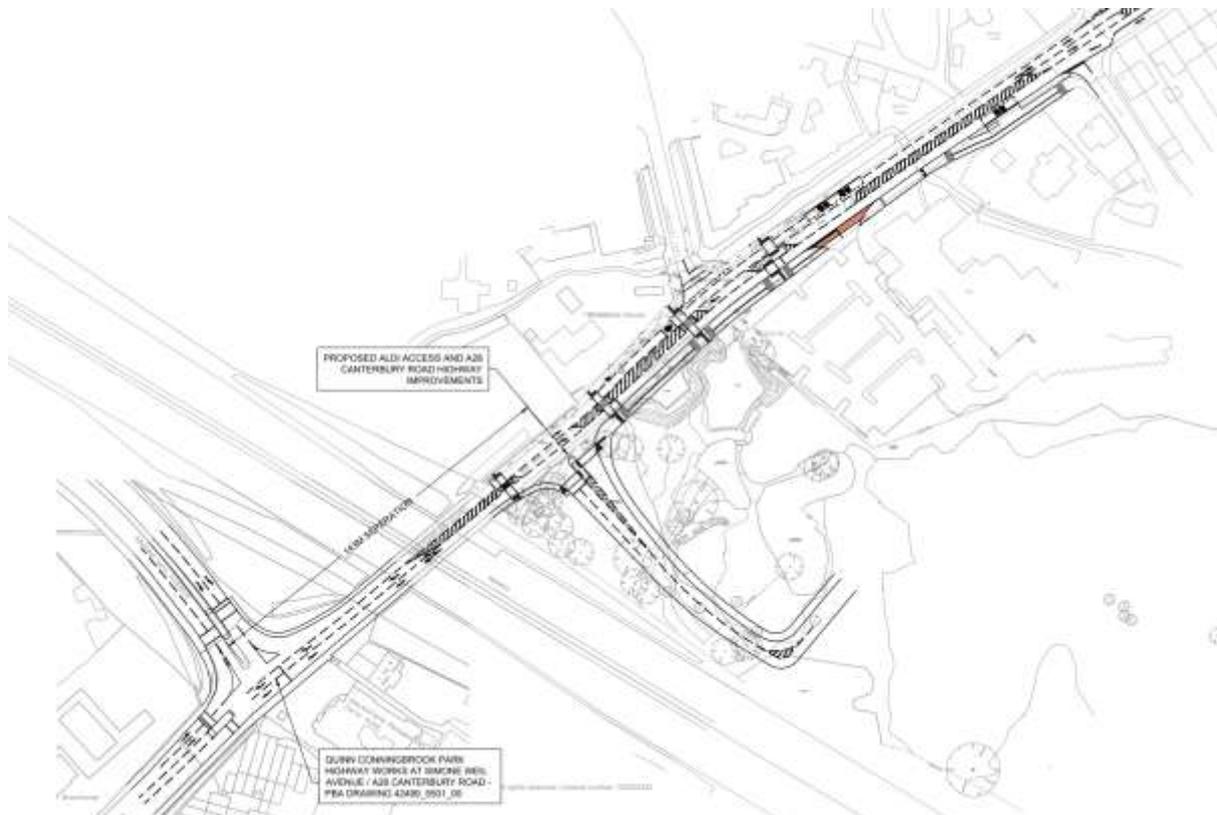
permanent site at Chilmington Green by September 2024 at the latest. Given the continued need for additional secondary school places for September 2023 onwards, KCC officers are working the DfE to open the new school in temporary accommodation for September 2023, initially offering 120 Year 7 places. There are two possible locations and both options will require significant investment from KCC and - due to the limited space available - would only provide accommodation for 2023-24 and 2024-25 so this would only be for Year 7 pupils.

Alongside this, KCC have been working with secondary schools and provided £3.6m of funding to add 123 Year 7 places for September 2023:

- The North School - 25
- The Towers School - 35
- The John Wallis Academy – 60

ALDI - KENNINGTON

The proposed traffic scheme to accommodate the Aldi on the A28, Canterbury Road have been shared. The right turn lane into the Aldi site is 30m in length. Based on the typical length of the average light vehicle, the lane would accommodate 5 light vehicles or one Aldi delivery HGV and 2 cars. The right turn phase will run with the main A28 green phase.



On the question of a footpath to the rear of the store, the application will include the provision of an ecological corridor parallel to the M20. This space

has been designed to provide for the provision of the necessary habitats for species that will need to be relocated as part of the proposed development. The Ecologist has worked with the Landscape Architect and Lighting Engineers to ensure that the resulting habitat created is appropriate. The applicants are concerned that providing any public access through this space would lead to a reduction in the creation of new habitats that are required to offset the proposed development and introduce materials and lighting that would mean that the required habitats would not be created.

SEVINGTON WITH FINBERRY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The key issues from the inaugural APM on 13th June included:

FINBERRY

- A representative of residents will be invited to join the HML management team.
- A long term management plan will be written for Captains Wood and an ecological survey has been commissioned to inform the plan.
- A meeting will be arranged with Stagecoach / ABC / KCC / Crest to ensure the bus service is started ASAP.
- Savills have commenced marketing the commercial units in the village centre. This is because a smaller foodstore being commissioned is a condition of the Aldi opening on Waterbrook.
- Finberry allotments will be delivered as part of the “Bilham Farm” phase (Plots B6/B8).
- Crest are investigating which provider will deliver the Extra Care unit.
- The Community Facility is likely to include a 3G pitch, subject to planning consent.
- Access from Finberry over the Ashford / Hasting railway to the new publicly accessible park being delivered as part of Brompton Bikes will need to be agreed (planning application expected July 2022).
- Concerns were expressed over health and safety breaches on Sevington Lakes including operating hours, river pollution, pools of water, lack of road sweeping, idling engines / generators, speeding lorries and manhole cover safety.
- Planning breaches at Sevington Lakes are being considered via ABC complaints system.

IBF

- Proposal has been made to use IBF to clear 1,600 domestic pets from Ukraine who are prevented from entering the UK due to rabies in the Ukraine. This is possible due to lower than expected demand for HMRC checks at Sevington IBF but it is noted that the proposed HMRC site at Dover has been shelved and the North Weald and Birmingham IBFs are to be closed.

PLANNING

- Street votes may provide consent over certain developments on existing residences such as loft extension without formal applications.
- Pre-application advice is being suspended by ABC as it is not a statutory requirement and this will enable officers to concentrate on discharging their statutory duties.
- A new software system will be rolled out on the planning portal on 4th July

SEVINGTON DEFIBRILLATOR

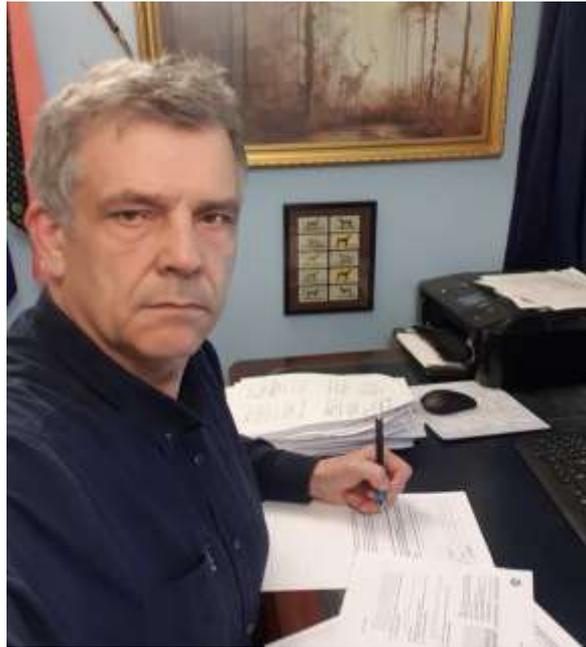


Pictures from the opening of the Sevington defibrillator on 17th June

VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATION – QUANTOCK



Two public meetings were held on 17th & 23rd June on the green in Quantock Drive to discuss how we can officially register this land as a Village Green with KCC. This follows news that the land had been put on the market for auction on 29th June 2022.



This is me signing the Village Green Application to KCC on Monday 27th June, two days before the auction giving lawyers time to alert the auction house. The big pile of forms are the 145 Section 15 Evidence Questionnaires supporting the application, these are the forms sent to me by residents supporting the Application. The next step is to get as many TPOs put on the trees on the Village Green.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

The ABC Cabinet meeting on 30th June created a Climate Action Team to coordinate the council's commitment to net zero targets in its own estate by 2030. The council aims to be in line with government targets for the wider borough by 2050. The work to date includes:

- Building zero carbon in the Council House estate by using the “code for sustainable homes” which includes
 - PV panels
 - Solar thermal panels
 - Heat recovery on boiler flue
 - Heat sinks, preheating hot water/heating circuits
 - Water conservation
 - Grey water recycling
 - Air source heat pumps
- Retrofitting housing stock to achieve a EPC rating of C or above which includes:
 - Solid wall & flat roof insulation
 - PV panels
 - Air source heat pumps where current heating system is oil fired
- Decarbonising the corporate estate including
 - The Stour Centre gas fired heating plant was replaced with air sourced heat pump and substantial PV array

- Replaced 30 year old air handling unit at Tenterden Leisure Centre
- PV array at Carlton Road Light Industrial Park
- PV array at Stour Centre Car Park
- Feasibility study for PVs Ellingham Industrial Estate
- Improved energy efficiency at International House
- Sustainable Warmth Grants which offer homeowners / tenants who live in homes with a low energy rating and have a household income of less than £30,000 a year, or are unemployed and receive an income, health or disability benefit.
- Create a Supplementary Planning Document to ensure that planning applications are low carbon
- Plant 135,000 trees, representing one for each resident in the borough, as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. 45,000 trees are already in the ground.
- Run a programme to install EV chargers throughout the borough.

A representative Community Stakeholder Group will be set up, the new team will support parishes work in this area.

HELPING HOUSEHOLDS SAVE WATER AND ENERGY

As people look to reduce their bills this year due to cost of living increases, KCC are working to encourage sustainable habits that will reduce energy and water consumption and the environmental impacts of these. KCC, Ashford and other authorities successfully applied to the Local Government Association to fund a behavioural insights trial to help householders reduce their energy usage. This project will focus on lower to middle income households who can't access the advice or support that is targeted at the fuel poor and encourage them to take low-cost and free actions that will reduce the energy they use in their homes.

The second phase of a water saving campaign with South East Water and Southern Water will start this summer. Kent Green Action branded postcards will be sent to households that are more vulnerable to water and fuel poverty, to encourage them to book a water audit or apply for free water-saving devices. For more information contact KES@Kent.gov.uk or follow Kent Green Action on www.facebook.com/KentGreenAction/

KENT CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (KCWIP)

KCC plans to develop a KCWIP. It will:

- Make clear which corridors in urban areas, between urban areas, or tied to the wider National Cycle Network that KCC views the most worthwhile
- Demonstrate KCC's priorities for network improvement

- Be used by the Borough to develop its own detailed schemes with its own LCWIP
- Used by Sustrans to understand where the National Cycle Network forms a likely part of the delivery of KCC's county vision
- Used by KCC to illustrate how any individual new component for the walking and cycling networks forms part of a county-wide programme

HENWOOD TRANSPORT DEPOT



KCC have switched the lighting at the Highways Henwood offices / depot in Ashford to light emitting diodes (LEDs). 109 lights were replaced with LEDs including in the office, car park, storage building, flood lights and streetlights. Five KCC libraries have also moved to LED lighting. The total energy savings for these projects is estimated as over £96,000 per year (this figure was calculated before the energy price increases experienced this year).

SUPPORTING A GREEN RECOVERY FOR BUSINESSES

A new voucher scheme has just been launched to help small and medium sized businesses across Kent to invest in sustainable changes that will support a green recovery from covid. The Green Recovery Voucher Scheme is part of the C-Care (Covid Channel Area Response Exchange) project which is funded by the EU Interreg France (Channel) England programme.

Businesses can apply for up to £1,500 to make their organisation more energy efficient, reduce their waste, improve the sustainability of their transport, support biodiversity or transition to net zero. Services will be provided by an approved list of green providers across the Kent, which further supports the growth of the green economy in Kent. The voucher scheme is now live and will run until March 2023, or until the voucher budget has been fully allocated. Certain eligibility criteria apply, and companies can obtain more information by visiting

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/business/business-loans-and-funding/green-recovery-vouchers>

BOCKHANGER COMMUNITY HALL

I submitted an “expression of interest” ahead of the deadline of 16th June for a potential Government funding opportunity, through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports’ (DCMS) Youth Investment Fund. As part of the ‘levelling up’ agenda, the purpose of the funding is to provide new, refurbished or upgraded youth facilities in the most disadvantaged wards, as identified by DCMS.

4 pathfinder schemes are proposed to start construction in January 2023 but the new hall is not ready for that as design / planning consent has not been granted. These 4 pathfinders are being piloted direct by the DMCS (not KCC).

The next bidding round is in August 2022 and this is a better option for the hall as KCC will coordinate.

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