

**Minutes of Mersham Parish Council**  
**Meeting held on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022 in the Church room at St John the Baptist Church**

<b>Present</b>	Geoffrey Fletcher (Chair)	Peter Hawkins
	Stewart Ross	Kenton Stewart
	Peter Turley	Melanie Wells

In attendance: 3 members of the public, Cllr Bartlett and Tracey Block (Clerk)

*To be actioned by:*

<b>To receive and approve apologies for absence.</b> Apologies had been received from Cllr Murphy.	
<b>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.</b> Cllr Wells noted a personal interest in the Inland Border facility as a family member works on the site and a personal interest in the Village Hall.	
<b>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022</b> Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 17 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.	
<b>To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda.</b> There were no matters arising to discuss.	
<b>Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item.</b> The member of public explained that he had heard that the Parish Council were in discussions with the land owner of the old allotments. He asked whether there had been discussions and what the details of these discussions were. The Chairman responded explained that a Councillor had been approached by the owner of the land regarding what could be done with the site, what the possibilities were, i.e. building a property on the land or selling the land. The Chairman had then approached the land owner for an informal discussion but had not discussed this with the full Parish Council. Provisional thoughts had been around the purchase of the land for parking in order to alleviate the parking issues in the village. The member of public explained that he and his neighbours are affected by this piece of land; there is an issue with access to the properties at present and lack of access for emergency services. This is to be an agenda item for the March meeting.	
<b>To receive report from Borough Councillor</b> <b>A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website:</b> <a href="http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/">http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/</a> The main developments to report are on high field. The Land Mapping Commission deadline is 25/3 and the Parish Council needs to respond. The Land Mapping Commission is looking for sites to develop. Ashford Borough Council will need to deliver circa 1,000 new homes per annum but it is important to be parochial right now. The link farm across Cheeseman's green application is to be discussed at planning committee in April. The Parish Council need to consider this as it is an incursion - application no: 21/01595/AS. The progress with Kingsford Street and the High field is appreciated and the Council extends their thanks to Cllr Bartlett for his input and commitment and Cllr Bell for her input as well as those around the table.	
<b>To receive an update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in Highfield</b> The Parish Council will be asking for the High Field site to be designated as an SSSI or other suitable designation. The Clerk will send the proposed letter to Historic England to keep a path between the 2 churches but not protect the site lines. The Clerk is to complete a response to the Highfield consultation – requesting SSSI designation, ensuring the site is secure, potentially with a footpath around the perimeter, the PC would prefer to see thick planting rather than fencing with high planting on Blind Lane to protect the site for the future.	
<b>To discuss the current situation at the inland Border facility</b> Cllr Bartlett explained that the current situation with the IBF suggests that HMRC taking over responsibility has shown that there is not any change to their engagement.	

A stakeholder meeting is due to take place, date to be arranged, where we will be able to discuss traffic movements and signage. It is now known that the Sevington IBF will not be used to check small animals and it is still anticipated that this site will no longer be used after December 2025 when all checking is to be undertaken electronically. The checking of food products is due to take place from July 2022, to date there have been significantly less lorry movements than were forecast.

Cllr Turley stated that he finds it incredible that there are no motorway signs directing lorries to the IBF. Cllr Bartlett explained that members of Ashford Borough Council had undertaken an Environmental Health trip to Calais to see how the food checks are carried out there as they will be responsible for carrying these out from July. These are undertaken using coloured tarmac to direct vehicles to the correct point and he felt this could be replicated at the IBF.

In order to secure signage we would need to be in discussion with the decision makers. We had previously spoken with Rachael Maclean and Grant Schapps but now we are reliant on our MP taking our cause to the correct minister.

Cllr Fletcher explained that he had circulated a letter to Historic England regarding the site line gap that residents of Mersham would like to see closed. The viewing gap would appear to be irrelevant and undesirable but keeping the ancient path open is vital.

The Parish Council is concerned that when HMRC/DfT sells the site, Highfield must be protected and if we can use the argument about the ancient pathway, it will protect the site from development. Having a right of way across the site would be ideal but that matter is to be decided by the Planning Inspectorate.

**To receive an update on Highways Issues (Including the Highways Improvement Plan)**

Cllr Turley had attended a site meeting with a team from Kent Highways. They had walked the village and drawn up some plans that had been circulated.

The plans are to move the 30mph speed limit to incorporate Quarry View. Paint pedestrians in road signs along Bower Road, have white lines to give the impression of road narrowing on the road past Old Rectory Close to The Street and create a new road layout for the Church Road, Bower Road junction.

There was a discussion regarding Flood Street improvements and speed limits near the school.

All Councillors are in favour of going ahead with the whole project which will cost in the region of £5,000 - £10,000.

The bridge is to be repaired rather than redesigned and rebuilt; thanks were extended to Clair Bell and Paul Bartlett for their support with this.

**To receive an update on the Broadband project for the Aldington exchange in Mersham.**

Despite there being a big push to get residents signed up for the project, the results were that only 40% of the required funds had been received.

Thanks were extended to all involved for their time and effort.

**To receive an update regarding the Village Hall**

Cllr Wells provided an update on the Village Hall.

Thanks were extended to Cllr Bartlett for his support by way of a grant for the new windows.

**To discuss the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations/Queen's Green Canopy Project**

The events committee had met and Cllr Wells had attended this. There will be a celebration on 2/6 at Mersham Sports Club and the beacon will be lit at 9.45pm.

**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.**

The Planning Applications requiring a response were:

22/00102/AS	Bramleys, Bower Road, Mersham TN25 7HJ	Enlargement of Front Porch
The Parish Council raised no objection to this application		
22/00143/AS	The Barn, Flood Street, Mersham TN25 7HE	Conversion and extension to outbuilding to provide ancillary annexe accommodation
The Parish Council raised no objection to this application		
22/00144/AS	The Barn, Flood Street, Mersham TN25	Proposed alterations to the

	7HE	windows/replacement and cart wells to the main house																						
The Parish Council raised no objection to this application																								
22/00145/AS	The Barn, Flood Street, Mersham TN25 7HE	Detached garage																						
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<b>Financial matters:</b>																								
<p><b>a) To note the Parish Council's financial position.</b></p> <p>The financial position was noted as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021</p>																								
<p><b>b) To authorise any payments</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cheque No:</th> <th>Payee</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>502167</td> <td>I King (February salary)</td> <td>£ 124.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502168</td> <td>HMRC</td> <td>£ 29.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502169</td> <td>JRB Enterprise Ltd</td> <td>£ 103.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502170</td> <td>Mersham PCC (Hall Hire)</td> <td>£ 40.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502171</td> <td>T Block (February salary)</td> <td>£ 383.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>502172</td> <td>Litterpicker equipment</td> <td>£ 21.60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Cheque No:	Payee	Amount	502167	I King (February salary)	£ 124.14	502168	HMRC	£ 29.20	502169	JRB Enterprise Ltd	£ 103.14	502170	Mersham PCC (Hall Hire)	£ 40.00	502171	T Block (February salary)	£ 383.86	502172	Litterpicker equipment	£ 21.60
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<p>3 quotes had been received for the reduction of a tree on the JPF. The Councillors approved the quote from T Gardener Ltd.</p> <p>A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.</p>																								
<b>Any Other Business (for information purposes only):</b>																								
<p>Cllr Stewart asked if there were any dates for when the Bellamy Gurner Scheme must begin.</p> <p>The Clerk had no update regarding the swing gate at Bower Farm.</p> <p>The pollarding of the trees on the Millennium Green was noted.</p>																								
<b>Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.</b>																								
<p>Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2022</p>			All																					
<b>The meeting closed at 9.15pm</b>																								