

## COUNCIL UPDATE 4.2026

### **CYCLEWAY IMPROVEMENTS - AIDI (KENNINGTON) s106**

KCC's recommendations for the s106 £33k from the Aldi scheme in Kennington are shown below.



Location - R11B/Kinsey's Lane Crossroad



Signage Refresh



New walking, wheeling & cycling path from existing path to bridge on the desire line.



1. Sign Refresh 2. Interpretation board replacement 3. Path repairs 4. Entrance improvement



### **PLAY BUS**

I have allocated £500 from my Community Grant to support a community Play Bus which aims to provide social interaction for families on Finberry. It is a large double decker bus that has been converted to a free play facility which will visit areas without a family play centre for children such as Finberry. It will be advertised when it is visiting and will be open to all families at no cost to them. In other areas it has visited, they have always had large numbers of children and parents turning up.

### **KENT LIONS DISABILITY FOOTBALL CLUB**

I have provided £500 of my Community Grant Fund to Kent Lions Disability football club, a parent run non-profit football club that currently supports 130+ (including some from my ward) individuals with additional needs to play football.

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT**

The unit met on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Key issues included.

- 29 reports of ASB in March, up from February.

- Crime remains on a downward trend; burglary risk has reduced following several arrests. Current trends are motorcycle thefts, often burnt out or dumped with 48 hours sobering ridden around town possibly without helmets.
- The relationship with Neighbourhood Watch is being reset following a less than positive engagement in the recent past. This will increase information flow.
- Gaming bus carried out its last visit of allocated funding, stats are awaited. The last visit was on a Saturday rather than a midweek visit.
- The PSPO for Singleton has been renewed; signage will now be reviewed.
- 141 fly tips in March, latest since July 2024; a lot of gas cannisters were included. This was believed to be linked to the HWRC temporary closure at Cobbs Wood.
- 61 Safeguarding referrals were made, most are adult mental health, hoarding and suicide risk which are referred to Mental Health Together. Financial abuse risk including pension fraud is reported to the Police, Domestic Abuse Team or Adult Social Care depending on the circumstances; KCC Kent Wardens Team can coordinate referrals.
- A downward trend of house fires (2 in March; 8 in January). A trend from last year was due to “wrong charger; wrong device”. A list of derelict buildings is being prepared for KF&R following the Swanton House Fire; this will enable KF&R to assessment to mitigate risk (fly tipping is also a risk).
- Reports of WHH visitors parking in adjoining residential streets have been made. To impose parking restriction (DYL) an informal survey is required by KCC with residents to ensure that would support them. This will encourage KCC to carry out a formal Traffic Regulation Order.
- Delivery Trolleys with excessive cardboard presenting a fire risk is a reported issue with Taylors Passage; the BY box is open and could be a fire risk. There is no lighting, mirrors and CCTV. The businesses (Tesco) will be spoken to.
- Antennae need to be removed from Edinburgh Road car park can be demolished.
- No news on County Square larger former NCP car park being reopened. County Square don't have the staff themselves but are exploring options.

## **IBF AIR QUALITY POLLUTION**

The DfT have published their air quality management plan. A major source is vehicle idling, and the following are proposed to reduce avoidable engine running, thereby lowering emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, from HGV. Actions include. *Display and maintenance of clear anti-idling signage*, signs will instruct drivers to switch off engines when stationary for extended periods, where this is operationally safe and practicable.

*Communication of anti-idling expectations to staff, operators, and drivers, on-site briefings, inductions, protocols, and targeted communication during periods of high activity. Operational management to reduce unnecessary waiting times where reasonably practicable, inspection procedures will be designed to minimise periods where vehicles are required to wait with engines running; efficient processing reduces the likelihood of prolonged or repeated idling within the IBF. Any locations where vehicles are observed to idle frequently will be identified. The sensors are described as “low cost”, which I have questioned.*

An annual air quality monitoring programme which focuses on pollutants associated with vehicle movements and idling activity namely:

- Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>); and
- Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>).



## WASTE COLLECTION AT IBF

I have reviewed the waste collection policies at the IBF. The following concerns have been raised.

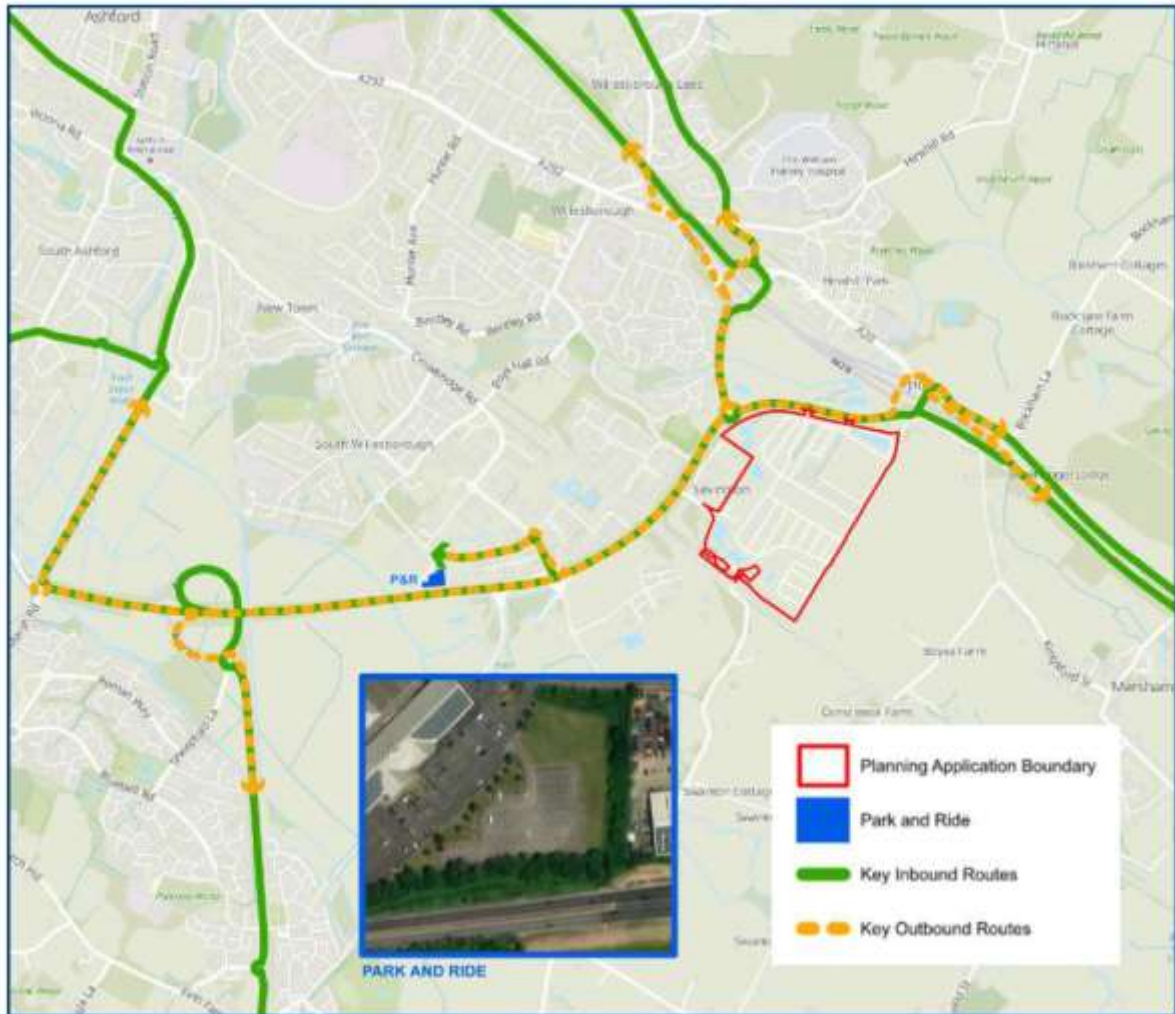
- It seems odd that it is stated that no glass is generated, therefore glass bins and collections were not required. At the least I would expect some glass from office food.
- It is disappointing that further segregation of dry mixed recyclables with the waste provider is not possible because there is "insufficient space for additional bins in the external waste compound". Also, the sites do

not have a dedicated waste team to manage waste across 230 acres, and are not resourced to collect multiple segregated recycled waste streams which “would be a time and cost burden that makes little practical or financial sense”. We should remind the DfT that from 31 March 2025, significant changes to the segregation of dry mixed recyclables came into effect mandating that businesses with 10 or more employees separate specific materials from general waste. This ensures that paper, cardboard, plastics, metals, and glass are not mixed with food or general waste, with a requirement to separate paper and card from other dry recyclables where possible. The DfT should comply with this.

- Female hygiene waste disposal bins are legally mandated, but there is no reference to male hygiene waste disposal in men’s washrooms for incontinence products, stoma bags, and wipes, driven by rising rates of prostate conditions and age-related bladder issues. I understand male sanitary bins are not legally mandatory but providing these units is considered best practice and it is disappointing that the DfT does not recognise this.
- Due to the nature of inspections and risk of infection, especially during high alert epidemic events in Europe (e.g., Foot and Mouth Disease) all plastic and PPE go for incineration.

### **IBF GREEN TRAVEL PLAN**

A park and ride exists for IBF staff to use. It is used by 1% of staff.



It is disappointing that there is no reference in the Travel Plan to eliminate the use of e-scooters and modifies e-bikes, an issue in the area particularly between the IBF and J10 in early mornings (1% of staff use the category that includes scooter use).

### **GREENBOX FIRE**

The Greenbox fire at Cobbs Wood on 7<sup>th</sup> April generated much debate. The regulation of sites such as this cuts across three authorities, KCC, ABC and the Environment Agency (EA). The crux of the problem (IMHO) could be out-of-date planning consent conditions, which do not properly translate to current operations. Businesses often develop this business models significantly after planning consent is granted and waste regulation has changed with the much wider use of lithium batteries for example.

Green Box has conditions that I considered somewhat outdated from the original consent for the site when I was the Divisional Member for Ashford Central up to May 2025. These cannot be unilaterally updated by KCC (the planning authority for waste transfer operations). Such conditions could only be updated if the existing consent was varied. KCC need to audit current

activities on site and scope of existing permission to determine if there is a breach of the existing planning permission.

The EA regulates the permitted activities, and act as the lead regulator.

Practically ABC's role is complex. They don't need permission to investigate statutory nuisances from permitted activities, but would require permission from the Secretary of State to prosecute/enforce a statutory notice, especially in relation to fire incidents. This is to prevent double regulation. I have made Sojan Joseph MP's team aware in case he is minded to the Secretary of State.

## **DEMENTIA FORUM**

I attended the Demetia Forum at Farrow Court on 7<sup>th</sup> April.

I provided information on council tax discounts, pension credit and financial entitlements. A significant amount of pension credit remains unclaimed nationally and encouraged individuals to check their eligibility. Specific reference was made to council tax reductions available for those with severe mental impairment, including dementia, and the importance of ensuring claims are backdated where appropriate. Members were advised that local councillors can support residents in navigating these processes, and Age UK advisers are available to assist with applications. Pension frauds in 2025 cost savers £14m, each pension fund has a member appointed trustee there to safeguard members against fraud – use them.

A discussion followed regarding Power of Attorney. It was generally agreed that arrangements should be put in place early, even if not immediately required, and that while it is possible to complete the process independently, there can be advantages in seeking legal advice.

## **CHILMINGTON GREEN SOCIAL HOUSING**

ABC intends to pursue the purchase of 225 residential units from the Man Group at Chilmington. The project will be supported by grants from Homes England. Enforcement of the s106 obligations is expected to be suspended on these properties if they are used for affordable housing on Chilmington Green.

When properties on new developments are sold to private owners there is a carve-out in the s106 which removes them from responsibility for s106. ABC/KCC's High Court action to seek a permanent prohibitory injunction to prevent Hodson occupying or permitting occupation of any more dwellings at Chilmington Green, but these affordable housing are not part of that limit on occupation.

## **IBF PLANNING CONDITIONS**

Councillors met with the DfT/HMRC/DEFRA/JLL to discuss progress on the planning conditions put on the IBF by the Planning Inspectorate on 15th April. Key issues included a discussion on upgrades to J10A. KCC have appointed a contractor to produce detailed designs by June 2026. The estimated costs of the work are £1.5m and the deadline is to develop (not implement) the scheme by October 2026. Traffic lights are expected on the A20 access/egress to J10A.

## **ABC CABINET**

Councillors met on 16<sup>th</sup> April. Key issues included.

- Tenants' overall satisfaction with ABC housing service is at 55.8% and has reduced by 3.4%; this is in the bottom quartile of comparable landlords and shows there is significant room for improvement. Reasons for their dissatisfaction include speed of repairs, work not being done, the maintenance of communal areas and responsiveness of staff. 61.7% of respondents reporting a repair within the last 12 months as still incomplete. To address this ABC has created a sub-contractor portal which will give a greater visibility of repairs, assists with resource planning to complete repairs and enable transparent and clear communication with tenants if repairs are subject to delays. ABC are reviewing the grounds maintenance offer for estates. New legislation applied for private landlords from 1st May under "Renters Rights" and the council will be enforcing that new legislation and must they adhere to the highest standard themselves.
- The Council deals with service charge as follows. Quarterly statements are issued for information with annual service charge calculation sets out the final costs recoverable. Quarterly statements give leaseholders an overview of communal repairs and other relevant service charge items incurred during the year. Only reasonably incurred actual costs, and costs relating to works or services relating to the building the leaseholder resides in will be included in the calculation. Leaseholders may request further supporting documents about their service charges. The Council may agree a reasonable payment arrangement based on individual circumstances and may ask for evidence to assess affordability. Leaseholders who sub-let their property are generally expected to meet their charges in full, but the Council may consider a temporary repayment arrangement in exceptional cases of demonstrable hardship. The Council consults leaseholders before recovering service charges for major works. Fees for leaseholder's alterations are not mentioned.
- Since November 2024, Ashford Port Health officers have seized and destroyed 208,563.81 kilograms of food products deemed unfit for human consumption at the IBF in Sevington. To put that into context that's the equivalent weight of 35 Elephants! Concern was expressed

on drive-by vehicles that have not presented at the IBF. It may be a genuine error but any goods that are selected for inspection at the BCP and do not arrive are followed up with the inland bound Local Authority as they are in effect illegal imports. In cases of genuine error, a warning will be issued and the next load imported through that importer will be called but where deliberate action has been taken to ensue legal proceedings / seizure of goods that may be needed. The Customs Declaration Service (CDS) and Import of Products of Animal Food and Feedstuffs system (IPAFFS) have created confusion in respect to importers due to a failure to automatically flag to lorry drivers using the short straits that the goods must be presented but remains important as evidenced by the spread of diseases such as 'foot and mouth' on the continent with outbreaks in the UK incredibly rare. Many traders do not support the UK Government's position, but the loss of the IBF would result in a loss of jobs near the Kent Coastal Strip which is recognised to have significant levels of deprivation and poverty.

***The highest hourly average HGV movements are 98 HGVs/hr day, 63 HGVs/hr night); the maximum hourly HGV movements (300 HGVs/hr day, 184 HGVs/hr night).*** I can't say I am surprised that there are up to 5 lorries going in/out every minute as I live next door to the IBF. I think it is fair to say that the DfT/DEFRA/HMRC are doing their best to reduce the impact on the village, we have had monthly meetings with them this year and plan to increase them to every two weeks. I am working hard with the Parish Council to manage issues that are affecting us and fair play to the users of the site (HMRC are the biggest, much bigger than ABC) in meeting us and listening to our concerns.

It was helpful to hear that Sodexo are responsible for unloading HGVs at the BCP not ABC (impact of sliders was referred to). Wider issues that create disruption are ASB and how they are handled by the site operators. This responsibility falls to HMRC not ABC as Port Health Authority. The way that lighting and CCTV is directed towards operations without regard to the impact on adjoining property. It was helpful to hear that drivers (and their unit) tend to be kept on site even if the trailer needs to be detached as there can be a considerable impact on the village from the drivers waiting on local roads.

- Ashford Cinema outperformed the general trend during the third quarter of 2025/26. Footfall had fallen slightly, but this was consistent across the sector, but Ashford Cinema's market share had grown, reaching 23% for the quarter. Cinema performance was very much driven by film offer, with a general 19.5% fall on the same period for the previous year, however Ashford Cinema's own Box Office was only down 5.27% year on year.
- The First World War Mark IV Tank in the Town Centre was planned to be the subject of a Member Briefing in May, this is replaced with a task

group being created to consider but there are no plans to move the tank out of the Borough.

- A Civic Twinning Visit to Ashford's Twin Town in Germany, Bad Münstereifel would take place between 24th and 28th September 2026. This was planned to be organised by the Ashford Twinning Association (ATA) with the theme 'Tradition and Modernity'. The Council will provide a grant to help subsidise costs and some Officer support. It was noted that the ATA did not elect a Chair or Secretary at its recent AGM. An (unfinished) revised Memorandum of Understanding between ABC and the ATA was in development in 2023, the understanding that roles for future visits would be clarified through the new Memorandum. ABC say "it would be really helpful" if the ATA could again take the lead on booking the coach for the Civic Visit to Bad Münstereifel. Wider issues must also be resolved including and given the current position with ABC Twinning Champion and have a revised Memorandum of Understanding to be in place prior to Local Government Review.

### **BEAVER ROAD BUS ENFORCEMENT**

KCC have provided an update on the number of contraventions issued to drivers for using the bus gate. Beaver Road is much more of a 'convenient short cut' than Sackville Crescent and Carlton Road. The current situation appears to be down to human behaviours which is all but impossible for KCC to measure. Beaver Road continues to be a busy site, with more drivers contravening here in comparison to other sites in Kent and indeed in Ashford, and continues to be one of the busier sites across the County, but on investigation of our figures and statistics, the PCN issue level has reduced, which indicates that the site at Beaver Road continues to be successful in managing driver behaviours, improving traffic management and public transport.

### **EAST KENT HOSPITALS UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION NHS TRUST (EKHUFT)**

I attended a meeting as public governor (representing Ashford) on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April. EKHUFT (including WHH) was one of five worse offending trusts placed in a new "National Intensive Recovery Process" regime by NHSE in March due to "stubborn underperformance". Makeshift solutions have become ingrained, due to institutional complacency. These 5 trusts will be given help to improve patients flow. These must be the most unwell or those with mental health problems.

EKHUFT has had a troubled history, with frequent changes of executives, financial difficulties and a maternity scandal. Hospital Stay Mortality Rate (HSMR) is 3% above standard. These metric measures mortality from common diagnosis treated in hospitals). SHMI (Strategic Hospital Mortality Index – all deaths in hospital and 30 days after discharge) are more above

national targets. However, there had been some signs of improvement over the past year, with greater executive team stability and improving performance on some access targets.

Issues behind this include:

- Coastal areas are more deprived which leads to worse health outcomes.
- The area is under resourced by GPs.
- Problems in recruiting, partly due to location (note that 20% of Ashford's employment is in health services).
- Clinical lead roles have been taken on rotation rather than skill.
- Training of staff have fallen short of expectations to support career progression (there is now a programme for consultants)
- Patients are in hospital without a clinical need as there is no pathway outside hospital to support them. This blocks bed usage in wards leading to "corridor care" (even in the Costa coffee, defined as 45 minutes in "clinically inappropriate" settings) and 12+ hour waits in A&E. Immediate actions to reduce "corridor care" include:

- 1) Radiology teams are currently exploring ways to improve their turnaround times to ED and reduce the high volume of duplicate or multiple requests. Requests for leadership support has been made to ICB.
- 2) Specialty teams are also reviewing Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) models to improving referral criteria to ensure EKHUFT achieved a specialty referral response within 60 mins. Work to improve the SDEC units, which will help reduce waiting times and corridor care at WHH and QEQM, is entering its final phase; NHSE business case funding of £28.95m has been approved for the two sites which will benefit both patients and the healthcare system. Building work at both sites got underway last autumn should be completed by this summer.
- 3) Exploring opportunities to work with SECAMB and primary care to move towards more direct access pathways.
- 4) A member of staff is now allocated to each patient bay in Kent Ward as a trial to assess its impacts on patient falls.
- 5) EKHUFT remains poor in elective care (discharge within 18 weeks of referral, we are at 56%, target 60%) even following the funding to March 2025 from NHSE. The trust has 2% on the waiting list of 52 weeks.

The Governors will play their full role in the process of appointing a new CEO and holding NEDs to account. This will ensure the patients and their families who have entrusted us with this governance role have confidence in EKHUFT.

## **LOCAL NEEDS PLANNING SCHEME IN MERSHAM**

English Rural Housing (ERN) are working with the Church Commissioners for England (CCE) to develop a further local need housing site in Mersham. They presented at the Mersham Annual Parish Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April. The development will be south of the existing Quarry View scheme with a buffer one of meadow planting to deliver biodiversity gain of 10%+.

Early discussions have taken place with ABC planning who are supportive subject to questions over access through Quarry View. KCC Highways are considering if there should be a second access east of the development on Bower Road.

There are planned to be 20 units (5, 3bed open market units; 11 social rent – 1 1bed, 5 2bed & 2 3bed; 4 3bed shared ownership). Air sourced hot water system will be provided with strong energy saving credentials.

A planning application is expected in autumn 2026 with construction within 2 years. A pre-application community consultation will take place.

### **SECURE CYCLE PARKING**

The Active Travel Councillor Group met on 21<sup>st</sup> April. Key issues noted included.

- 9 secure cycle storage units have been ordered for delivery across the borough. This will enable cyclist to park their cycles safely to promote cycling.
- ABC will promote the available cycling apps that provide cyclists with access to maps showing cycle routes in the borough.
- Schemes will be developed to enable reduced costs cycles to target groups.
- A new cycle store will be provided on the international side of Ashford Station.

### **BROCK 2 (“MINI” BROCK)**

Plans are being developed to revise the length of Brock on the M20 between J8 and J9 between National Highways and DfT. Although primarily an issue for Maidstone, some of the villages west of Ashford (so in our Borough) better access M20 from J8 which is impossible east bound during Brock. The new design will involve starting Brock further east of J8 leaving J8 fully accessible.

Designs are done and the plan is awaiting final Ministerial sign off. I have asked Sojan if it will come in before summer this year. National Highways also need to arrange some survey works and possible repairs before it can be implemented.

## **SOUTHEAST COAST AMBULANCE SERVICE (SECamb)**

Governors met on 23<sup>rd</sup> April to discuss 5-year Strategic Aims.

Current triage results in 88% of patients taken to hospital with the rest receiving remote care or signposting to other health providers (GP, pharmacy or community hospitals etc). The strategy is to reduce conveyances to hospital to 65% by enhanced Virtual Care consultations (“Hear and Treat”) with health professionals.

The target is for Category 2 mean response time of 18 minutes by 2028/29 (currently it is 25 minutes), reducing handover times to ED by 15mins by 28/29 and increase cardiac arrest 30-day survival rates by 5%.

These require

- Strengthened digital capability including automation across call allocation and dispatch using better Business Intelligence and Analytics.
- Accessing specialist services (“priority pathways”) quickly such as the under construction Hyper Acute Stroke Unit (HASU) at WHH.
- Improve vehicle availability by a 10% reduction (2% per year) in crew downtime when vehicles are off by rolling out new fleet of MAN Double Crewed-Ambulances and an electric vehicle trial of 5 vehicles across key sites to test a range of geographic conditions to see if the technology works in different areas. New vehicles replace Fiat models which have faced issues securing repair supplies.
- Reduce administrative burden and release capacity to support frontline services and improved patient outcomes by collaborating with South Central Ambulance Service (covering Oxford to Hampshire).
- Reduce sickness rates by 1% each year.

We discussed whether SECamb should adopt an approach similar to Kent Police who now have “Right Care; Right People” which means they no longer attend mental health crises unless there is a threat to life. I am concerned about SECamb becoming emergency only service without much better contact with and resources in the Voluntary Care Service Community and Safeguarding teams (noting this may change with Local Government Review).

## **WASTE COLLECTION FROM COMMUNAL FLAT AREAS**

ABC offers separate collection of recyclable material and a weekly collection of food waste. As with houses, collection is alternate weekly for residual and recycling.

Management agents/owners are responsible for ensuring that all waste is contained with separate bins and clear access given for the Sue crew. When crews cannot gain access and/or waste is on the floor or not separated, ABC contact the managing agents so that they can resolve this. ABC do not, as a rule, clear bin stores, unless they are owned by the Council.

ABC will contact the Leaseholders and Freeholder / Management Agent to advise them of their responsibility, along with the residents. If problems occur repeatedly, it will be reported to enforcement.

### **ASHFORD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY (AAS)**

I met with AAS and ABC officers on 28<sup>th</sup> April. The Allotment Society AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> May will consider if they wish to express an interest in taking on management of allotments. The process of transferring will take time as there will be a shadow unitary and/or town council formed in May 2027. A request submitted by the AAS will need to be responded to by ABC within 3 months; ABC may have reasons to delay such as LGR, management arrangements and leases (as ABC will remain the landlord) etc.

### **IBF**

There remain ongoing issues at the IBF in Sevington, these were discussed at Council on 28<sup>th</sup> April. It's the responsibility of the IBF's three operators - the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), HMRC and ABC - to address the issues, alongside the Department for Transport (DfT) who owns the site. ABC employ 168 staff out of 650 at the IBF. I have been speaking to officials to address residents' concerns since January 2021 when the site first opened. Councillors meet on 28<sup>th</sup> April and discussed ABC's role in the IBF will be discussed. The main issues are:

- The impact of movements of HGVs on J10A, the existence of the IBF has created different routes for HGV. The Planning Inspector recognised that the Developer (together DfT/HMRC/DEFRA) should provide £1.6m to develop a solution for delays from the A20 joining J10A at peak times. Highways England have appointed KCC Highways to develop a solution the "smart money" is that this will result in signalling both exit/entries from the A20 to J10A. The deadline for design work to be completed is 9 months from consent, so it takes us to September. Pressure should be put on Highways England to ensure they deliver a solution as we approach September.
- Linked to traffic issues at J10A is a need to review signage along the M20 and other approach roads to ensure IBF traffic does not use J10 as right turns from the link road into the IBF are very disruptive and dangerous. National Highways are reviewing signage.
- The planting scheme around the IBF has been allowed to die due to lack of a maintenance strategy. The planning Inspector recognised this

and put a condition that a Landscape Management Plan should be developed, and this is in hand.

- Ambient noise issues include pole sliders, but it also covers idling lorries, reversing beepers poorly maintained vehicles with squeaky breaks. ABC Environmental are aware and have been fully engaged. Noise assessment equipment is being deployed (including at my property). HGVs at the ABC BCP are unloaded by a contractor to Sodexo not directly by ABC staff. A meeting with noise consultants, Waterman was held on 30<sup>th</sup> April. Notably they will look at how the Southern Perimeter Road can be used differently during nighttime. Noise assessments for refrigerated lorries in the BCP area to be included. Signage has been requested to mitigate drivers using horns for extended periods.
- Drivers take their cabs off-site if their trailer needs to be unhitched for a deep dive examination. The impact of behaviour of drivers when cabs park up locally is material. It results in considerable local litter along A2070 link road and beyond including local roads. The DfT recognises this notwithstanding the lack of welfare facilities on site. Sojan Joesph MP is aware and has been asked to examine whether enhanced on site welfare facilities should be provided. The DfT encourage staff at the IBF to carry out informal litter picks in the roads around the IBF when capacity arises but arrangements for litter collection need to be formalised and this is now a planning condition.
- CCTV needs to be made available to Kent Police following reports by residents of ASB. CCTV footage is managed by HMRC, the major operator on site. Following legal advice, the Commissioners for Revenue & Customs Act 2005 (CRCA) advise that HMRC data, whether personal or not, can only be released under limited circumstances. This requires a legal gateway with another government department or for criminal proceedings to the police, among others. Unfortunately, it is not permissible to release this HMRC data. This is another one for Sojan to take up as it is frustrating to residents who would normally expect ASB to be investigated because the operator running the CCTV is limited in what they can share because special restrictions apply to HMRC.
- Light spillage from streetlamps on the IBF remains and issue as does the lighting used and required by operators as part of their work such as the direction in which that the light shines. Operators need to be aware and need to ensure night-time operations are carried out with regard to light spillage.
- An Emergency Use Strategy (when there is disruption to short straight crossing) is being developed and a communication policy with residents in in hand. This has only happened a handful of times and good communication when it does is essential. Hold ups on the short straights without the time to deploy Brock are inevitable (weather and strikes can cause them) although "Mini-Brock" may be helpful.

There are other issues including drainage, SUDS management which are covered in regular meetings with DfT/DEFRA/HMRC.

These issues can be linked to operators including ABC. Whilst ABC are a small operator on site, how we carry out our operations can contribute to these issues particularly offloading HGVs. Wider issues such as litter, lighting, ASB and noise do not arise in a vacuum and exist due to the fact there are operations on site. This is where all operators (including ABC) need to be aware and act as good corporate citizens and tread softly in the way they operate so it minimises impact on nearby residents.

### **LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes require that any local plan had to be completed by December 2026 for it to fall under current rules; this is impossible due to lack of progress to date.

This means that the new Ashford Local Plan to 2042 must be produced under new planning guidance and adoption of the new plan will not be until April 2029. The key change will be a new spacial development plan for Kent and Medway (there has been Regional Planning in the past) will be produced. Consultation on sites put forward will be in December 2026 / January 2027.

It will also matter who we are paired up with under Local Government Review (LGR) which is scheduled to replace ABC/KCC with a new unitary council from April 2028. It is hope that there will be no seismic shifts between the view of the new unitary and the Borough Council if ABC has done as much of the heavy lifting and it is compliant with NPPF.

The next local plan will “spread the burden” so the largest villages do not support a disproportionate amount of development. This means that “non-primary villages” may be allocated housing notwithstanding more remote area have limited access to day-to-day services and transport.

### **CONNINGBROOK COUNTRY PARK**

ABC will be installing a destination play area, an Activity Hub with a café and toilets on site and formalising the car parking facilitates to cope with the additional footfall. A public consultation will shortly be available for residents to comment on the Destination Play to ensure we create something that children will use for many years to come, using the consultation to feed into design. The café will have public toilets and will operate in unison with an “activity hub,” which will be used for people to access water sports. Existing clubs and public will have access to the changing facilities and toilets making the lake more accessible for all.

**Paul Bartlett - 0773 929 3502**

**Mersham, Sevington South and Finberry Ward, ABC**

**[paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk)**

**Grosvenor Hall Ward, Kennington Community Council**

**[paul.bartlett@kenningtoncc.gov.uk](mailto:paul.bartlett@kenningtoncc.gov.uk)**

**Sevington Ward, Sevington with Finberry Parish Council**

**[cllrbartlett@sevingtonwithfinberry-pc.gov.uk](mailto:cllrbartlett@sevingtonwithfinberry-pc.gov.uk)**

**Public Governor, Kent & Medway, Southeast Coast Ambulance Service**

**[Paul.ABartlett@secamb.nhs.uk](mailto:Paul.ABartlett@secamb.nhs.uk)**

**Public Governor, Ashford, East Kent Hospitals**

**[p.bartlett2@nhs.uk](mailto:p.bartlett2@nhs.uk)**