

**Minutes of the Inaugural Sevington with Finberry Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting  
on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at the Chamber of Commerce at 7pm**

In attendance: Clair Bell, Kent County Councillor  
 Steve Campkin, Kent County Councillor  
 Simon Cole, Head of Planning, Ashford Borough Council  
 Daniel Wilson, Planning Manager, Crest Nicholson  
 Paul Bartlett, Ashford Borough Councillor (Sevington Ward)  
 Dawnie Nilsson, Ashford Borough Councillor (Highfield Ward)  
 Rick Martin, Chairman of the Sevington with Finberry Parish Council  
 12 members of the public  
 Tracey Block, Clerk to the Parish Council

1.	<b>Welcome</b>
	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2.	<b>Report from Clair Bell</b>
	<p>In February Kent County Council approved the budget for 2022-23. The council tax rise is just under 3% (including 1% Adult Social Care levy) which means for the average Band D property, KCC's element of council tax increases from £1418 to £1461. The £150 rebate scheme is administered by Ashford Borough Council.</p> <p>Colleagues at KCC agreed this was the hardest budget setting process any of us has known. The pressures and demands on council services this year are unprecedented and our funding sources are limited. Each 1% rise in council tax raises just £8m of funding for the council. The overall revenue budget is around £1.1 billion.</p> <p>Local authorities have a legal duty to set a balanced and sustainable budget, across the council as a whole. KCC has to meet its statutory duties, for example in social care, which accounts for almost half of the total revenue budget, and in other areas too such as school transport for children with special educational needs. Government grants have reduced over the years and the council's ability to raise council tax is restricted. Councils are affected too by the increase in the cost of utilities etc.</p> <p>All departments of the council have had to make savings and some of these have been very difficult and painful. For example we have reduced the subsidy we offer to some bus companies, meaning certain bus services are no longer viable and are likely to be withdrawn. We recognise this will have a huge impact on some of our residents who rely on those services but we have little choice in the current circumstances. In my own Adult Social Care portfolio I have had to cease a programme of support for homeless people, again with enormous regret, but we simply don't have the money to keep it going.</p> <p>As I said, social care is a major part of the council's activity. Alongside dealing with the increased demand for social care and workforce shortages which our providers are experiencing, we are working hard with the local NHS on the new NHS structure, called the Integrated Care System, which is designed to make health and social care more joined up. Joint commissioning and pooling budgets are key elements of this with a strong focus on hospital discharge, to make best use of resources and improve the experience of patients. It is not an easy task – our two organisations are very different in terms of structure, responsibilities, funding etc. but I think we're making progress and good relationships are being established between the partners, which</p>

	<p>I believe is the key to success. Those partners include district councils, voluntary sector organisations, social enterprises and patient liaison groups. Together we are trying to move more in the direction of prevention, with a focus on supporting people in their communities, promoting independence, encouraging healthy lifestyles, addressing social isolation and loneliness, and thus improving overall wellbeing and reducing the reliance on costly health and social care services. Tackling health inequalities is also high on the agenda.</p> <p>Elsewhere in KCC we've seen a large increase in the number of children with special educational needs - up 20% - for whom we need to find school places and provide transport. Again these are statutory responsibilities which we have to discharge before we consider what we can do in terms of discretionary services. But we have managed to find resource for extra things such as Reconnect, which is a project to support youngsters following the pandemic, helping them to catch up on missed learning, providing opportunities to engage in sports and activities, access to mental health support, and so regain confidence and have fun.</p> <p>Now that we are coming out of the pandemic, which impacted every aspect of the council over the last 2 years, we are turning our attention to the future. KCC is the strategic authority for Kent and we are developing a Strategic Plan for the next 4 years, setting out how we will work as a council and with our partners to deliver better outcomes for Kent residents, businesses and communities and how we will respond to the government's agenda for Levelling Up and County Deals. We are looking at community infrastructure, such as libraries and children's centres, highways assets, digital connectivity and how we can improve support for schools, offer enhanced opportunities to develop skills for employment and make sure that vulnerable people are safe and have access to the services they need. One specific commitment is to support our rural communities and businesses which have distinctive challenges and opportunities. We want to explore innovation and technology and involve community and voluntary groups to deliver projects for rural communities, as well as supporting Kent's rural environment, productive farmland and protected landscapes. We will also include a commitment to the environment in the wider sense, working towards Kent being net zero by 2050 and the need to adapt to climate change, for example by taking steps to establish sustainable water management.</p> <p>At the same time as planning for the future the council deals with the never-ending day-to-day challenges which arise. In recent weeks our highways team worked round the clock to manage the traffic congestion on the county's roads, stemming from the problems at the port of Dover. Children's services continue to support young unaccompanied asylum seekers. Alongside our district partners and various agencies across the county we have been preparing to welcome Ukrainian refugees who have now started arriving in Kent. The work includes carrying out checks on families who have offered accommodation, welfare checks and follow-up visits, processing payments for both hosts and guests, finding school places for the children and offering mental health support. Full details are available on the KCC website at <a href="https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/support-for-ukrainian-nationals">https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/support-for-ukrainian-nationals</a></p>
3.	<p><b>Report from Steve Campkin</b></p>
	<p>I have been working on parking and traffic issues. There is no parking engineer at present but having regraded the position, it is hoped that it will soon be possible to employ someone. I sit on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where we have recently employed Haroona, there is much discussion about moving freight to rail services. It is noted that recently there has been some barriers put up in South Willesborough to limit access to open spaces and in other areas benches have been removed. This is something that Kent Police believe to be a good course of action. KCC has recently agreed and implemented a new drainage clearing scheme, it is hoped that this</p>

	will be a success but drainage clearance is now scheduled.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Report from Simon Cole</b>
	<p>Stodmarsh has dominated planning in Ashford following the advice from Natural England, all granting of new permission for overnight accommodation of any sort had to be stopped. This affected about 50% of the permissions for Ashford which in turn meant that 90% of the development sites were unable to progress. In order for developments to be lawful now they have to demonstrate that the development will be nutrient neutral. The majority of developments cannot provide this mitigation. A sizeable amount of East Kent has been affected by this issue and it is growing in magnitude.</p> <p>The Planning department has been looking for mitigation solutions, looking at Wetlands that will provide short-term solutions and improvements to dealing with waste water. The Environment Agency have the authority to accept or decline the mitigations put in place. This issue has also meant that we are prevented from making a start on the next Local plan. The timescales for resolving the issues in Ashford Borough are unknown but it is hoped that the Borough council will be in a position to release planning permissions by the end of the year.</p> <p>The new Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill – we are awaiting details of the bill but the key highlights are:  The requirement for the authority wide design code but it is not yet known how this will be managed.  The CIL will be replacing S106 agreements.  Single Local Plan – most of the topics are related so it is likely to be set at a National level.  Street votes is another highlight – this suggests that there are options for neighbourhoods to hold referenda for applications.</p> <p>I have been in my post for 14 months and there has been a huge turnover of staff. This is a new beginning now and there was a significant backlog of over 800 applications, the staff had a week to clear applications and they managed to clear 170 of the application backlog which was a good start.  The Pre-app service has been suspended. We are looking at reviewing this to make it fit for purpose and will then re-open the service.</p> <p>On 4<sup>th</sup> July, new planning software will be implemented and this should make life easier.</p> <p>There 3 big schemes that Simon wanted to address:  Brompton Bikes – they are building a new manufacturing site and the application for this is expected in early July. Their London base will also move to this site in the future and there will be a public park as part of the application.</p> <p>Newtown Works – Planning Permission for the conversion of the sheds and the new studio has been approved. The Government provided a levelling up grant towards this.</p> <p>Court Lodge – 1000 dwellings west of Kingsnorth. This has its own mitigation scheme onsite and will mean a decision can be made. It is hoped that this development will come forward by the end of the year.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Report from Daniel Wilson</b>
	<p>This is my first day in the role.  It is the intention of Crest Nicholson to implement the Management Committee for Captains</p>

	<p>Wood. So far we have had Solicitors drafting a report but the ecology of the site needs to be looked at. Crest is awaiting a report of which trees may be felled/coppiced for putting in the pathways. A woodland management plan must be in place for this site. I will front the Management Meetings for the site.</p> <p>The bus route has not yet been progressed. I am unable to answer much on this. Cllr Bartlett explained the situation and the responsibility lies with the decision makers. It was agreed that the Parish Council would arrange for a meeting of Crest Nicholson, Stagecoach, KCC, ABC and the Parish Council.</p> <p>Carehome – Crest has been looking for partners for the running of the Carehome.</p> <p>Commercial units – looking to have a food outlet, a pub and a retail store.</p>
6.	<p><b>Report from Paul Bartlett</b></p>
	<p>Cllr Bartlett reported that he had spent a lot of time on the IBF site and it is now settling in to the landscape. The use of the site has been significantly lower than was anticipated with between 500 and 2000 lorry movements a day. The Brexit deal means that there are less checks required.</p> <p>It is possible that the site will be used for the 1600 Ukrainian dogs waiting to be reunited with their families who have come to the UK. These dogs need to be in quarantine in the UK to be treated for rabies before they can be reunited.</p> <p>There are still issues with stray lorries trying to access the IBF site, this is a particular issue in Church Road Sevington.</p> <p>Aldi at Waterbrook – the PC met with them and they have agreed to retain the oak tree. There is a condition on the developers that the commercial development on Finberry must be in the Solicitors hands before the development of Aldi begins.</p> <p>400 Mulberry homes – there are still many issues to resolve, including the link road to Finberry. The S. 106 agreement says that the road should only be for buses. Mitigation for the nutrients is supposed to be undertaken on site and KCC Ecology have supported this.</p> <p>Bilham Farm developments will have allotments.</p> <p>The Community Centre on Finberry – ABC have aspirations to build a bigger centre so Crest and ABC are in discussions about how this might be achieved.</p> <p>A review of the parish boundaries is being undertaken.</p>
7.	<p><b>Report from Dawnie Nilsson</b></p>
	<p>Pot holes in Church Road have been reported again.</p> <p>One of the traffic lights on Barrey Road is pointing in the wrong direction, this has been reported. The defib is being officially opened on Friday at 3pm</p> <p>A newsletter will soon be distributed.</p> <p>Aspire have said that the ground under the goal posts is so worn that the posts could be moved to an alternate location. They will paint and reset these but the community need to be consulted as to where they think the goals should be positioned.</p> <p>There was a very enjoyable Jubilee picnic, oak tree planting and beacon lighting. These were well attended and Dawnie was thrilled to be involved.</p>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Financial report</b>																														
	<table data-bbox="284 309 933 1025"> <tr> <td>Precept</td> <td>15000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concurrent Functions</td> <td>92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grant</td> <td>1145</td> </tr> <tr> <td>uncleared cheque</td> <td>452.11</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Receipts</b></td> <td><b>16689.11</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salary</td> <td>5480.66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC</td> <td>1355.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KALC</td> <td>527.06</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance</td> <td>338.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Room Hire</td> <td>420.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audit</td> <td>300.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Owl Boxes</td> <td>720.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Defibrillator</td> <td>1374.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenses</td> <td>236.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Payments</b></td> <td><b>10751.88</b></td> </tr> </table> <p data-bbox="261 1061 1396 1167">The Parish Council raised a Precept of £15,000. Other income came from a grant towards the defibrillator, thanks to Dawnie, and a concurrent function grant from Ashford Borough Council and uncleared cheques written back in for £452.11.</p> <p data-bbox="261 1205 1420 1310">Salaries totalled £6836.00, Room Hire cost £420.00, the Audit cost £300, Finberry were provided with Owl Boxes at a cost of £720.00 and Sevington North was provided with a defibrillator at a cost of £1374.00. Other payments were for insurance and KALC membership and expenses.</p> <p data-bbox="261 1348 1423 1453">The year opened with £7,949 in the bank and closed with £13,886. The Parish Council has assets that valued £2749, this will increase with the defibrillator now it is installed. These assets are in Sevington North: a notice board, 2 x dog waste bins, a kiosk with defib. and a beacon.</p>	Precept	15000	Concurrent Functions	92	Grant	1145	uncleared cheque	452.11	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>16689.11</b>	Salary	5480.66	HMRC	1355.6	KALC	527.06	Insurance	338.40	Room Hire	420.00	Audit	300.00	Owl Boxes	720.00	Defibrillator	1374.00	Expenses	236.16	<b>Payments</b>	<b>10751.88</b>
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<b>9.</b>	<b>Parish Council Chairman's Report</b>																														
	<p data-bbox="261 1532 1378 1637">As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic there was no Annual Parish Meeting in the year ending March 2021 and accordingly this Report covers that year, together with the year ending April 2022.</p> <p data-bbox="261 1675 1431 1742">As you may be aware, the past two years were our first as a newly formed parish council after we divided from Mersham to form Sevington with Finberry Parish Council.</p> <p data-bbox="261 1780 1418 1848">It has been a privilege to be the chairman for those two years, and I was honoured to be elected into the role for a third year at our May meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="261 1886 1374 1993">It should be said that it was clearly quite a challenging time to establish a new parish council, particularly as we couldn't meet in person and had to rely on Zoom calls due to the Covid lockdowns and restrictions.</p>																														

So, with that in mind, I want to start by thanking each of our parish councillors for their hard work and support over the last two years, including those who decided to stand down during the period.

In particular, we should note the contribution of Jan Oakley Hills, who stood down in July 2021 after serving the local community with distinction for many years as part of both Mersham and then Sevington Parish Councils.

I also wanted to give huge thanks to our clerk Tracey Block, without whom we would frankly have been all at sea for the past two years. She is easily the most organised and patient person I have ever worked with, and makes my role as chairman infinitely easier and more enjoyable as a result.

Congratulations to Tracey for recently passing her Certificate in Local Council Administration, which I am sure means she will serve the council with an even higher level of skill and dedication from here on, if that is indeed possible!

Thanks should also be given to our Ashford Borough Council Ward Members, Councillor Paul Bartlett, who now also has a dual role as a Parish Councillor with us, and Councillor Dawnie Nilsson, for all of their support and input.

CLLr Nilsson replaced CLLr Gerald White, who sadly passed away in October last year. We give our heartfelt thanks for all his hard work serving the local community and reiterate our sincere condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

Many key issues, both within the Parish and further afield, have received attention during the course of our two years in operation as a council, and these are fully documented in the Parish Council's meetings' Minutes, which can be found on the Sevington with Finberry Parish Council website.

I'll now run through some key highlights.

One of the very first issues which arose was the construction and opening of the Sevington Inland Border Facility in 2020/21. As a reminder, the IBF did not go through the normal planning process as it was considered by the government to be a scheme of national significance and was assessed as a Special Development Order.

In partnership with councillor Bartlett and other local stakeholders, we have represented residents' concerns on a number of IBF-related issues in meetings with government ministers and associated officials.

Whilst this is an ongoing situation, and there is more work to be done, we have seen progress made on issues that matter to local people, including improved signage and a reduction in noise pollution as a result of the installation of bunding at the site.

In other planning matters, we have considered over 50 planning applications over the past couple of years. Key ones include a proposed new housing development at Waterbrook and a new supermarket nearby, where we successfully argued that the plans should be amended to ensure well-loved local trees were retained.

Elsewhere in the parish, we are delighted to have repurposed a decommissioned phone box in Sevington North into a defibrillator, a vital community resource which has been proven to save

	<p>lives when installed elsewhere.</p> <p>Although the Parish Council contributed the modest £1 fee to BT to adopt the phone box, the defibrillator itself was funded through an Ashford Borough Council grant, as Cllr Nilsson honoured the late Cllr White’s promise of funding.</p> <p>We are very grateful to Lang Contractors Ltd for kindly refurbishing the phone box itself before the installation after it was unfortunately vandalised, with the work free of charge.</p> <p>We hope to further strengthen links in the Sevington North area with the recent formation of our Sevington North Sub-Committee.</p> <p>On this note, I should remind the public that they are, as always, warmly invited to attend Parish Council meetings, which at present are held on the first Monday of the month, other than in August and December, at the Kent Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>Members of the public are also invited to share their views with the Parish Council on any matters of concern, including formal agenda items, through writing by emailing the Clerk, Tracey.</p> <p>All the necessary contact details and relevant information can be found on our website and on noticeboards in Sevington North and Finberry. Thank you!</p>
10.	<p><b>Questions from the audience</b></p>
	<p><i>Who should I contact regarding a breach of planning conditions?</i> Simon Cole suggested contacting Roland Mills.</p> <p><i>The list of breached conditions include:</i> <i>Windows, roads and site access is a problem because it is not secure, there are drainage issues, a generator is in use one site 24/7 which is causing a disturbance, the road sweeper sweep isn’t being used, there is litter in the river, gaps in the Heras fencing, works starts at 6am on a Sunday morning, polystyrene boarding stored in incorrect locations. This is only on the Sevington Lakes site, the Bilham Farm site is much better.</i></p> <p><i>How are you measuring the improvements you have put in place in the Planning Department?</i> Simon Cole responded that he had stabilised the issues, stopping the passing of planning applications from Officer to officer and therefore, stopping the delays. To date we have been spinning plates but now we have a foundation upon which to build.</p> <p><i>How do you ensure consistency and quality assurance? Because correspondence has been received from both Alex Stafford and Simon Cole to say the windows were of a poor quality and unsafe to use but now they are being used elsewhere on the estate.</i> Simon Cole responded that the lady asking the questions had been provided with the opportunity to complain and she had gone through the process. Details change and developer proposals change as time elapses.</p> <p><i>There is some special diversity in the area – are there plans to have linked green corridors?</i> Paul Bartlett responded that yes, we need green corridors to track through all developments. If the applications were submitted now they would be refused but it is 15 years ago and there was very little structure for green corridors. Biodiversity and the scrutiny of the wildlife landscape is far more important than it was previously.</p> <p>Crest Nicholson and the Church Commissioners can make amendments to their plans and Officers have looked at the biodiversity link from Captains Wood to Cheesemans Green Lane.</p>

Crest assured that an independent report was being created.

Paul Bartlett explained that ABC have aspirations for an additional 3G pitch. This would be high quality and additional use will be encouraged. Planning permission was given for a small hall but the new plan is a different animal.

Crest will need to look at the trigger points for the community centre as well as a care home, village centre, Rutledge Avenue etc. A member of the public claimed that Ashford Medical Partnership had been refusing new registrations. Cllr Bartlett explained that the Ashford Medical Partnership can only refuse new patients if they have told the CCG that they cannot take any more. It would appear that they are not following due process.

The meeting closed at 9pm