

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE VILLAGE HALL**

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**Present:** Cllr R. Streatfeild (Chairman), Cllr A. Baker, Cllr C. Bishop, Cllr Mrs P. Harris, Cllr P. Myers, Cllr Mrs M. Quirk, Cllr J. Roper and Cllr H. Williams  
**Apologies:** Cllr B. Taylor, District Cllr Mrs S. Coleman and District Cllr J. Osborne-Jackson  
**In attendance:** Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr P. Lake attended the Open Session only.

**Open Session**

**Report by District Cllr Mrs Coleman**

In the absence of D.Cllr Mrs Coleman, the Clerk read her report:

- “1. Local Plan: The Council has now sent a detailed, evidence based, response to the Planning Inspector showing that the Council’s duty to cooperate has been met. In addition, some Parish Councils, former Planning Inspectors and Developers have written in to support the Council’s position. Although not a political organisation, the Inspectors office will not engage further until after the General Election. Nor will they provide the Council with the codes necessary to upload extra documents on to the Local Plan Library during purdah. However, detailed information can be found on the ‘News and Updates’ section of the SDC website. In practice, it is unlikely that anything will happen until after Christmas. The likely outcome is that the Inspector will not back down and nor will the Council withdraw the Plan so it will be published unfinished and it will then go through the court process.
2. CIL: The six short listed applications for funding will be heard by the CIL Spending Board on December 9<sup>th</sup>. There was a lot of competition this year. One application, if approved, could benefit our rural community as it is to provide funding for a demand responsive bus service through a partnership between Go Coach, Go taxi hire, Age UK and SDC.
3. The Big Sing: The Council will be hosting the next Big Sing on May 4<sup>th</sup> and groups have until 28<sup>th</sup> February to register.
4. Climate Change: The Council is working toward net zero by 2030 and a working group has been set up to develop an action plan. We will be looking at what other countries are doing as well as what other Districts are doing in the UK. The Council is limited by National planning policies as to what can be done but local policies can be changed which are within the Council’s control. A Green Summit will be held in Spring/Summer 2020 to bring together different, groups, organisations and experts so that ideas can be shared.
5. Investor in People Awards: The Council were finalists in the category for organisation of the year and our Chief Executive, Pav Ramewal, was awarded Leader of the Year.
6. Planning application Chiddingstone Castle: I have informed the Planning Officer that, should he be minded to refuse the application for 3 Horseshoes Lodge, I am minded to call it to Development Control Committee. I feel that the improved design will outweigh the harm caused to the AONB by the increase in scale and bulk, and will actually enhance the local area.”

The Clerk reported that D.Cllr Mrs Coleman was absent as she was attending a meeting at SDC for her portfolio.

**Report by County Cllr Lake**

County Cllr Lake reported as follows:

1. The Parish Council’s petition to seek a speed reduction in Chiddingstone Causeway from 40mph to 30mph will go to the KCC meeting on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December and C.Cllr Lake said that he will speak strongly in support of this initiative.
2. The headteacher at Hugh Christie school has said that bad behaviour has caused one bus company to withdraw its Edenbridge to Tonbridge bus service. KCC has said that it is not prepared to negotiate another contract. Cllr Roper asked whether KCC has a statutory duty to get children to school? C.Cllr Lake said yes it does and KCC is laying on some buses and commercial operations but not enough for all children.
3. It has been announced that 50% of all ash trees in Kent have ash die-back disease. Such trees alongside the highway will have to be removed at huge cost to KCC. Suffolk and Somerset have a scheme where they provide 3 new trees for every ash tree removed with ash die-back. It is hoped that Kent will follow a similar scheme.
4. He went to the NMB meeting and AGM last week. KCC has formally said that it does not support the use of the emergency runway even if it is moved sideways as it would be highly dangerous.

Cllr Streatfeild said that the second runway would take 40% of the additional growth that GAL is seeking. 60% of the additional growth would use the existing runway, all without scrutiny.  
County Cllr Lake left the meeting at 7.45pm.

### **Closed Session**

97. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Taylor and members accepted his reason for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from District Cllr Mrs Coleman and District Cllr Osborne-Jackson.
98. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**  
None.
99. **The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Roper and all were in favour.
100. **Planning:**
- i. To consider planning applications received  
None.
  - ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions
    - SE/19/02182/FUL: Land to North-East of Sharps Place, Bayleys Hill Road, Bough Beech - demolition of an existing barn, erection of a cartshed for car parking, conversion of existing agricultural buildings to form two dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. Application approved.
    - SE/19/02969/LBCALT: Hale Oak Farmhouse, Hale Oak Road, Sevenoaks Weald - erection of hardstanding. Application withdrawn.
    - SE/19/02874/HOUSE and SE/19/02875/LBCALT: Horseshoes Cottage, Tonbridge Road, Bough Beech - demolition of garage and car port and erection of single storey side extension. Applications approved.
    - SE/19/02830/LDCEX: Newtyehurst Farm, Chiddingstone Hoath - confirmation that the end two sections of Building B at Newtyehurst Farm are lawful. Application granted.
    - SE/19/02912/LBCALT: Lockskinners Barn, Chiddingstone - single storey infill extension and alterations to the roof of the cow shed. Application approved.
  - iii. Notification of Appeal Decision

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/19/3233445: Wilken's Ghyll, Pigdown Lane/Rectory Lane, Chiddingstone. The appeal was made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The application ref SE/18/03940/AGRNOT, dated 21 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2019. The development proposed was for an agricultural/forestry style barn. Appeal dismissed.

The provisions of Class E of the Order require the building to be reasonably necessary for the purposes of growing and managing the woodland, including that of the new planting. Whilst some of the operations outlined by the appellant could be considered potentially ancillary to forestry this would only be to the extent that the processing activity related to timber grown on site, rather than that timber imported. Consequently, the importation and processing of timber from elsewhere would be a different activity to that which would amount to development relating to forestry activity at this land. The proposal would, therefore, fall beyond the scope of Class E.
  - iii. To hear update regarding SDC's Draft Local Plan  
See Open Session above.
  - iv. To consider draft proposals for the Post Office Store, Chiddingstone Causeway  
Members discussed the proposals as sent by the owner of the Post Office Store and agreed that, in broad terms and in principle, the Parish Council is in support of the proposal and has nothing to add. The Parish Council would, however, be keen to see legal preservation of the sports ground in order to stop creeping development and to retain this much loved and important amenity.

- v. To discuss planning training event at SDC to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
The Clerk reminded members that the planning training event will take place on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January from 4.30pm-6pm in the Council Chamber. Cllr Roper, Cllr Williams, Cllr Bishop, Cllr Mrs Harris, Cllr Mrs Quirk and the Clerk will attend.
- vi. Newtyehurst Farm  
The Clerk reported that District Cllr Mrs Coleman has emailed to say that the landowner has volunteered to consider re-siting the barn for which he got permission under the AGNOT regime near Oakenden Lane. A new AGNOT would not be necessary but the change would be secured by legal condition. Cllr Mrs Harris declared a DPI in this matter. Members discussed the proposal and members strongly opposed this suggestion for the following reasons:
  - planning legislation states that it is not possible to erect a new barn within 400m of a listed building. There are three listed buildings within 400m.
  - the proposed position of the barn would be on a PROW.
  - the applicant would have no access to the barn from Oakenden Lane as, although the lane has no ownership, the strip of land between the lane and the proposed site is in private ownership.
  - the Parish Council ask that determination of this proposal to move the barn waits until the outcome is known of the enforcement investigation of the track. This goes for all proposals relating to this barn.

### 101. Licensing:

#### To discuss the Neverworld Festival 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2019

The Clerk reported that she has now received a response from the festival organiser, as follows:  
Ticket sales this year were less than 5000. The new parking arrangements and the traffic management plan worked very well. There were two violence incidents, both connected and related to ongoing off site issues. Both were reported to the Police. There were no drug/alcohol related incidents of any significance other than alcohol being a factor in the above two incidents. There were no issues with footpath access. The organisers abided by the conditions set by the SDC Environmental Health Officers, and are waiting for them to formally send a report of how it went overall. Noise monitoring worked work well in Truggers Lane and Pigdown Lane, and again they are waiting for the EHO report for details. The organisers plan to apply for a licence next year, again with anticipated ticket sales of up to 5000.

### 102. Finance

- i. To discuss Gatwick Obviously Not's application for grant towards Gatwick's Big Enough  
The Clerk reported that the Gatwick's Big Enough campaign coalition has written to seek a grant towards its campaign. They attached a short paper detailing the challenges and impacts the campaign is seeing to address, including those for Chiddingstone, some information on GBE itself and a summary of the work they will be doing and its likely cost. They are seeking a grant in the range £500-£1,000 which would make a substantial contribution to the campaign's expected costs this year. Cllr Roper proposed that a grant of £500 be given, this was seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour.
- ii. To hear report of Finance Committee meeting held 26.11.19  
The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee met to look at the Year to Date figures.
- iii. To hear overview of 2019/20 Actual & Year End Forecast, and 2020/21 Budget and Precept requirements  
Members discussed the expenditure expected in the remainder of the year, and had a broad discussion about the budget for 2020/21. The budget and precept will be set in January.
- iv. To approve list of payments  
Cllr Williams proposed that the list of payments be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Mrs Quirk and all were in favour. Cllr Streatfeild and Cllr Roper undertook to authorise the payments online.

### 103. Affordable Housing provision in the parish

The Clerk reported as follows:

- i. Site adjacent to Chequers Barn, Bough Beech – no update.
- ii. Site adjacent to Bassetts, Chiddingstone Causeway – ERHA has sent the following update: “I am pleased to say that we have now agreed Heads of Terms with the landowner and will be proceeding with a conditional sale contract; solicitors are instructed.

“We are required to submit a planning application within nine months so I would like to arrange an Information and Consultation event in early February to display the preliminary plans. As usual the format will be a drop-in event between say 3.30 and 8.00pm.” Members agreed that the best date would be Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February. Clerk to book the Causeway Hall.

iii. Site Opposite The Rock – no update.

#### **104. Highways**

i. To discuss the proposal to reduce the speed of vehicles on B2027 though Chiddingstone Causeway  
See Open Session above.

ii. To hear report of meeting regarding the use of farm vehicles on the roads

The Clerk reported that she, Cllr Roper and Cllr Mrs Harris met the farmer and his farm manager. The following was agreed:

- This year Vexour Farm told their drivers not to leave the farm in the morning before 6am-6.30am. This will be reiterated next year.
- Churchill lorries use Hampkins Hill Road, Vexour’s own tractors and trailers use lanes from Hobbs Hill Farm to Vexour. Churchill drivers will be told that they must not travel faster than 20mph on Hampkins Hill Road, and the farm’s own contractors will be asked to drive slowly and considerably at all times. The tractors cannot drive faster than 20mph when the trailers are full of grain. At the hill on Chested Lane there is sometimes revving noise which can’t be helped if a full tractor and trailer has to get up the hill. They have to by law have the orange flashing beacons at night on the vehicles.
- The farmer asked that his drivers be treated with respect.
- The farmer said that if any residents have any concerns they should contact him direct.

Members asked the Clerk to write to those people who made contact regarding this issue and advise them accordingly.

iii. To hear update regarding the spring in Wellers Town

The Clerk reported that she and Cllr Bishop met the drainage officer from KCC to look at the spring at Wellers Town. She agreed to consider whether a dipped gully could be installed from the spring to the ditch, or whether a French drain would be more suitable, she agreed to get costings and schedule work in within 90 days.

iv. To hear update regarding fly tipping in the area

None.

#### **105. Rights of Way**

Cllr Bishop reported that it has been brought to his notice that a ROW in Chiddingstone runs directly adjacent to a silage clamp. It was agreed to monitor the situation, and possibly put up a notice to divert the footpath whilst the weather is so wet.

#### **106. Tree Warden / Pond Warden reports**

Cllr Bishop reported that he has approached Bore Place who has agreed to plant trees where it can, and he has also approached five landowners regarding free trees.

#### **107. To discuss Kent Wildlife Trust’s application to designate the woods South of Chiddingstone Castle as a Kent Local Wildlife Site**

The Clerk reported that Kent Wildlife Trust has applied to designate the woods South of Chiddingstone Castle as a Kent Local Wildlife Site. The report states that this site is a very good example of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland and associated gills, identified on Natural England’s Provisional Ancient Woodland Inventory. At least 36 ancient woodland indicator plant species are recorded there. There is a series of woodland ponds and damp semi-improved meadows with a rich assemblage of plant species. Kent Wildlife Trust administrates the system and updates go to the Kent Nature Partnership Management Working Group for approval, then the next KNP Board meeting to be ratified, should they agree. All Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are surveyed at intervals on a rolling monitoring programme to check they still meet the selection criteria. Botanical surveys are carried out in the areas where they have access permission and updated the citation to take account of recent survey data. There were no proposed changes to the boundary of the SE28 LWS with this update.

The update itself does not change the protection, but it means the information held on the site is more current and the site still meets the criteria. LWS are non-statutory but usually taken account of in the planning process. They are reliant on gaining landowner permission for surveys and it just happened that the estate that owns a large part of this LWS gave permission.

Members considered the additional information sent and agreed to support the application.

#### **108. Aviation**

None.

#### **109. To report on correspondence received**

The Clerk reported that lists of correspondence received have been circulated and drew members' attention to the following:

- i. Item 3: SDC News Releases: (i) SDC has sent a detailed response to the Planning Inspector after she cancelled the Local Plan hearings last month. In the letter sent on 18 November 2019, SDC argues it has met the legal requirement to co-operate with neighbouring councils to find sites for new homes in its proposed Local Plan. SDC believes it has taken a pragmatic approach to meet the duty and sets out in detail how it worked constructively with its neighbours to achieve this. SDC also explains why it is disappointed that the Planning Inspector dismissed the conclusions of the Government's Planning Advisory Service (PAS) without giving any reasons for doing so. Earlier this year, PAS gave SDC's approach to the duty to co-operate a clean bill of health. Dismissing the PAS conclusions without good reason could, says SDC, undermine the service while discouraging other local authorities from using it. SDC says it is keen to resolve the matter as soon as possible so the Local Plan can be progressed and would welcome the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the Planning Inspector. (ii) SDC CEO, Dr. Pav Ramewal, has won 'Leader of the Year' at the annual Investors in People Awards. The Awards celebrate best practice amongst Investors in People accredited businesses. SDC was also runner up in the Platinum Employer of the Year category for 2019.
- ii. Items 6 and 12: Kent Police:
  - Hever Road, Bough Beech: on Saturday 30th November around 12:00am, somebody stole used cooking oil from a public house.
  - Moat Lane, Chiddingstone - between 10:00pm on Thursday 5th December and 5:55pm on Friday 6th December, somebody damaged the lock and latch on the body of a lorry. They do not appear to have taken anything.
- iii. Item 9: High Weald AONB Unit re: the Sussex Lund grant programme which has re-opened for applications. Sussex Lund supports small, practical projects that improve the landscape of the High Weald. Schemes should improve wildlife habitats, improve scenic beauty or improve access to green spaces. They are also working with national charity Plantlife who are offering free advice and support for creating and restoring wildflower meadows. Deadline is: 2 March 2020. See [www.highweald.org/sussexlund](http://www.highweald.org/sussexlund)
- iv. Item 10: KALC Sevenoaks branch – minutes of meeting held on 22nd November. Dates for 2020: Fridays 21st February, 5th June, 4th September and 20th November (also AGM). Venue: Sevenoaks Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Rd, Sevenoaks.
- v. Item 11: SDC Portfolio Holder Decision: to provide £25,000 non-repayable funding to the Margaret Hyde Almshouses Charity to contribute to essential improvement works on a newly vacant property with the aim of protecting and preserving much needed affordable housing for older people in a rural area. Funding is via Section 106 Affordable Housing contributions. £25,000 grant also given to the Penshurst Almshouses.

#### **110. To adopt the KALC Community Award Scheme 2020**

Cllr Mrs Quirk proposed that the award scheme be adopted for 2020, this was seconded by Cllr Myers and all were in favour. Clerk to seek nominations for discussion at the January Parish Council meeting.

#### **111. To consider how the following Parish Projects are progressing:**

- i. Maintenance of Closed Churchyard and other parish areas:  
The Clerk reported that she has asked the contractor to tidy up the yew trees at the entrance to the church and the hedge cutting will be done within the next couple of weeks.

- ii. Rural swathe and visibility cutting contract  
The Clerk reported that the third and final cut this year is in the process of being done, or about to start.
- iii. Community Garden: to discuss new lease from The National Trust and agree legal fees  
Cllr Roper reported that he has discussed the matter further with the National Trust, and the National Trust has said that legal fees would be capped at £350 for the Parish Council, the remainder will be covered by the Trust. The Trust is, however, willing to grant a lease for 10 years rather than the proposed 5 years. Members were all in favour of approving the new lease as set out above.
- iv. Chiddingstone village carpark  
The Clerk advised that the owner of the Chiddingstone Shop was finding it hard for her customers to park in the road as all the spaces are taken by school members of staff.
- v. Bough Beech car parking area:  
The Clerk reported that an email has been received from SDC regarding the Parish Council's application for CIL funding: "Thank you for your recent application for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to the CIL Spending Board. Under the Council's CIL governance arrangements, applications that have been made to the Spending Board for additional top-up funding must be vetted through a two-stage process. This process is explained through the Council's Constitution (Appendix X1 – Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Board). Your application has gone through the two-stage validation process. There have been a number of submissions for CIL funding, all varying in scale. Following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the CIL Spending Board, I must inform you that your application has been unsuccessful due to the number of projects submitted to the CIL Spending Board, and other schemes were deemed to have greater priority at this time. We will notify you when the next CIL Board has been confirmed and when the next round of bidding is open." The Clerk reported that BBRAT has offered £5000 towards this project.
- vi. Bulk Refuse Freighter  
The Clerk reported that the last bulk refuse visit was Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. No reported issues.
- vii. Rural Crime  
None.

**112. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Causeway Village Hall.

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