

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 20TH JULY 2021 AT 7.45PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE CAUSEWAY VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr A. Baker, Cllr C. Bishop, Cllr P. Myers and Cllr H. Williams
Apologies: Cllr P. Harris, Cllr M. Quirk, Cllr B. Taylor, District Cllr S. Coleman and District Cllr J. Osborne-Jackson and County Cllr M. McArthur
In attendance: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk).

Open Session

1. Report by County Cllr McArthur

In the absence of County Cllr McArthur, the Clerk read her report:

“The County Council budget is approved, but there was a reduction in income over the previous year of approx. £22m. This was due to lower Council tax revenue

- Council tax uncollected and unchased during the pandemic
- Council tax base reduced as against expectations (slower house building rate)
- Increased household support/discounts for council tax (lower incomes, more single households).

Budget gap for 2021-22 has been balanced primarily due to over £50m of one-off government grants – but overall this situation still assumes we can deliver £34.5m savings. Looking further ahead, budgets become increasingly difficult, so that in 2022-23 KCC will need to find £60m savings, and in 2023-24, £80m. However, Members have managed to secure much needed increases for high-needs school budgets by 9.6%, though still running a large deficit (30m). Have also secured £10m for the ‘Reconnect’ programme – which aims to address educational gaps arising from lockdown, especially for lower income families. There will be extra activities through the summer – virtual lessons, subsidised access to sports and cultural places, outdoor team activities. For your information, I have now been appointed to the aviation group GATCOM (Gatwick Airspace Consultative Committee) where I will be immersed in airspace change proposals, and Gatwick’s northern runway proposals.”

2. Report by District Cllr Mrs Coleman

In the absence of District Cllr Coleman, the Clerk read her report:

“Covid cases are rising sharply in the district, now up to 400 having doubled in the last week, and although locally 65% of adults are fully vaccinated, we expect this number will rise further. I think it’s reasonable, given my Housing & Health role, to share my intention to continue wearing my mask in crowded or indoor areas even though legal restrictions are lifted.

The Local Plan is now expected to be redone by 2023, the Council is undertaking a Characterisation Study (to include a Town Centre strategy) and an updated Housing Needs analysis (to reflect environmental drivers to reduce travel and the growth in smart technology/working from home) in preparation for the Government’s White Paper consultation response to come out, regrettably delayed from Spring until the Autumn.

SDC is piloting the use of public ‘smart bins’ which can be monitored remotely so they can be emptied when full not just on a rota and hopefully reduce the problem of overflowing bins.”

Closed Session

- 34. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Harris, Cllr Quirk and Cllr Taylor and members accepted their reasons for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur, District Cllr Coleman and District Cllr Osborne-Jackson.
- 35. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
- 36. To minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 22nd June 2021** were approved. Proposed by Cllr Bishop, seconded by Cllr Baker, and all were in favour.

37. To discuss the vacancy on the Parish Council

The Clerk reported that SDC has advised that ten electors have not written to request an election and therefore the Parish Council is able to co-opt a new member. There are two candidates and members agreed to hold informal interviews in early September.

38. Planning:

i. To consider planning applications received

- i. SE/21/01883/LDCPR: Rectory Cottage, Somerden Green, Chiddingstone TN8 7AL - proposed conversion of existing garage and workshop to habitable use and alterations to fenestration. Members supported this application.
- ii. SE/21/02038/HOUSE: 1 Ryewell Cottages, Ryewell Hill, Chiddingstone Hoath TN8 7BN - erection of single storey side/rear extension. Members supported this application.
- iii. SE/21/02204/FUL: Land North of Chiddingstone Sports Ground The Village Chiddingstone conversion of stables to provide two bedroom dwelling, including small extension to create porch and hallway, provision of associated amenity space, biodiversity enhancements, vehicle charging point and parking adjacent to highway. Members agreed that the Planning Committee will give this consideration.
- iv. SE/21/02213/HOUSE: Crest Cottage, Chiddingstone Hoath TN8 7BT - formation of an en-suite bathroom within a first floor extension. Members supported this application.

ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions

- SE/21/01035/LBCALT: Lockskinners House, Chiddingstone - reinstatement of previously existing window to form a lightwell to basement, new air bricks and insulation of floor. Application approved.
- SE/21/00860/FUL: Prinkham, Moat Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath - installation of solar panel system. Application refused. Reason: The proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and it fails to conserve the character of the AONB landscape and character of the area.
- SE/21/01231/HOUSE: Hale Oak Barn, Hale Oak Road, Sevenoaks Weald - erection of a domestic glasshouse, a bin and log store and a minor fenestration alteration. Application refused. Reason: The proposal would represent inappropriate development and result in unjustified built form in the open countryside and Green Belt by adding new buildings to previously open and undeveloped land. This would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and to the intrinsic landscape character and qualities of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. No case of very special circumstances have been advanced which outweigh the significant harm identified. The proposal is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy EN5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and the Sevenoaks Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document.
- SE/21/00197/ADV: Commonwork Organic Farms Ltd, Bore Place, Bore Place Road - erection of two unilluminated freestanding entrance signs and direction sign. Application approved.
- SE/21/01570/AGDET: Field West of Kilnwood, Coopers Corner, Ide Hill - agricultural building for general purpose use and grain storage, relating to 21/00863/AGRNOT. Application withdrawn.
- SE/21/01628/MMA: Land North of The Horseshoes, Tonbridge Road, Bough Beech – Minor Material Amendment to SE/21/00723/FUL. To allow for the substitution of the approved proposed block plan with an amended proposed block plan which shows the proposed dwelling repositioned further away from an existing oak tree, in order to alleviate potential pressure on the root protection area of the oak tree. Application approved.
- SE/21/01767/HOUSE: Thatch Barn, Hoath Corner, Chiddingstone Hoath - construction of outbuilding to form double garage within sloped ground to rear of garden fronting highway with home office accommodation in roof over accessed from first floor at garden level. Application withdrawn.

iii. To discuss paperless planning applications

The Clerk reported that she responded to Richard Morris at SDC to say that the Parish Council still would like to receive some of the plans in paper and that training on the online system is not the issue, but has not heard back.

iv. Local Plan update

The Clerk reported that SDC has updated all the Town and Parish Councils as follows:

- As the plan will cover 15-20 years, it is important that legislation that will come in during that longer term period should be included if possible.
- Legal challenge – the inspector’s decision was challenged by Judicial Review through the courts and subsequently appealed through the High Court. Both were dismissed and SDC is now keen to move forward with the new Local Plan as soon as possible.
- SDC has been engaging with the government department that deals with planning, the ministry of housing and the planning inspectorate to agree key steps. A huge amount of public engagement took place as part of the previous Local Plan work, and SDC is keen to include that public engagement and ask the communities to comment on an updated plan.
- Changes such as town centre trends, internet shopping increases due to the pandemic etc will now be included.
- District wide characterisation study will be done, this will look at the built form plus the wider character of the landscape, and also economic trends. Town centre strategy will pick up on the demand for retail development and how this may change over the life of the plan, also what other influences there will be. It is important that town centres remain healthy and vibrant.
- Housing Need changes will be included, in particular how many affordable housing units and how many open market housing will be required. The Housing requirement is calculated by an algorithm that calculates central targets per district.
- Better use of land in built-up area is encouraged.

39. Finance

- To discuss costs associated with tree work on Parish Council land at the tennis courts
The Clerk reported that there are three ash trees with Ash Dieback on the tennis courts car park, which is in the ownership of the Parish Council. The Clerk has met the tree surgeon there who recommends that the three trees are felled as limbs could fall. This would require permission from SDC as the location is in the Conservation Area. There is also some deadwood on two oak trees in the same location. Cost £925 + VAT. Members approved. It was agreed not to grind all three ash tree stumps to 200mm below ground level which would cost an additional £1,050 + VAT. Clerk to seek approval from SDC as the trees are located in the Conservation Area. Cllr Bishop said that there is another tree with Ash Dieback on the corner, but it is not sure whether this belongs to the Parish Council, the Sports Association or the neighbouring resident. Further investigation required. Members discussed whether one or more trees could be planted here to commemorate the Queen’s Jubilee next year as part of The Queen’s Green Canopy. Cllr Bishop undertook to look into this.
- To discuss proposal to fund a leaflet to all households on rural crime measures
The Clerk reported that she and Cllr Bishop attended the local meeting held to discuss rural crime. A small committee has been formed to take this forward and the first stage is likely to be a leaflet to all households to highlight the various WhatsApp groups, how to contact the police, and to ask residents to consider the provision of cctv in the parish. This would be funded by residents themselves. The first meeting of the committee has yet to be held and it was agreed to defer the request to fund a leaflet until the September Parish Council meeting.
- To approve list of payments
Cllr Williams proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Baker and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Myers to authorise the payments online.

40. Affordable Housing provision in the parish

- To discuss public consultation requirements for the Chiddingstone scheme
The Clerk reported that an update has been received today from ERHA. There have so far been 70 hits to the website, and some comments received. The consultation has been advertised on the Parish Council’s website, Facebook and Instagram pages with a link to the consultation, posters on the noticeboards and the Clerk has hand delivered 30 leaflets to the nearest residents to the proposed development. The Clerk reported that some comments have been made on the proposals, which ERHA will respond to in due course.

- ii. Email from Liz Crockford, Housing Enabling Officer at SDC: “Our 5 year programme of parish needs surveys is identifying a need for these homes in many areas. The homes are important to help sustain and strengthen local communities. We know delivery of local needs homes is notoriously difficult. However the time and effort is worthwhile, as they do make such a difference to the community. Now that we are in Rural Housing Week, the Rural Housing Alliance has published a new guide for parish councils. See: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/parish-guide-to-affordable-rural-housing>. It adds to the advice and guidance already provided in the Kent Rural Housing Protocol, that was adopted earlier in 2021 <https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/guide-developing-affordable-homes-rural-communities>”.

41. Highways

- i. To hear update on the application to reduce speed on B2027 through Chiddingstone Causeway
The Clerk reported that the £2500 contribution has been paid as approved last month. Whitney Gwillim from KCC has today reported that she has been advised by their TRO co-ordinator that the proposals will go out to public consultation on 30th July. Notices will be posted on site next week and, once KCC has the feedback from the consultation, Whitney will be able to advise on next steps and anticipated timescales.
- ii. To discuss BBRAT’s project of purchasing Bough Beech gateway signs
The Clerk reported that BBRAT has said that they are not pursuing this project at the current time.
- iii. Temporary Road Closures:
 - B2027 Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway between the junction of Bore Place Road and Hampkins Hill Road The closure is for road surface improvement works and will start on the 23rd July 2021 and should take 3 nights (excluding weekends) to complete. These activities will be undertaken between the hours of 20:00 and 06:00 each night.
 - B2027 Chequers Hill & Tonbridge Road, Bough Beech. The road closure is for works undertaken by Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd and will start on 19th July 2021 for 5 nights between 22.00hrs and 06.00hrs.
 - Baileys Hill Road, Bough Beech will be closed near Sharps Cottage. The closure is for works to be undertaken by Openreach, and will be on 19th July 2021 for 1 day.
 - Bore Place Road, Chiddingstone will be closed at the junction of Winkhurst Green Road. The road closure is for works to be done by Openreach and will be on 30th July 2021 for 1 day.
 - Wellers Town Road, Chiddingstone Hoath, will be closed approximately 20 metres northeast of Salman’s Lane. The closure is for works to be carried out by Openreach, and will be on 2nd August 2021 for 1 day.
 - Bowzell Green, Sevenoaks Weald will be closed between Bowzell Farm and Old House Farm. The road closure is for works to be done by Openreach and will be on 4th August 2021 for 1 day
 - Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone will be closed adjacent to Larkin's Farm. The road closure is for works to be done by Openreach and will be on 3rd August 2021 for 3 days.
 - B2027 Clinton Lane, Bough Beech will be closed between How Green Lane and Bough Beech Manor. The road closure is for works to be done by Openreach and will be on 2nd August 2021 for 1 day.
 - Finch Green, Chiddingstone Hoath will be closed from 11th August 2021 for 3 days, outside 2 Blacksmiths Cottages. The alternative route is Grove Road, New Road, Smarts Hill, Coldharbour Road and vice versa. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while works are undertaken by Openreach.
 - Hale Oak Road, Weald, will be closed from 14th July 2021 for up to 3 days. The road will be closed at Halls Green Farmhouse. The alternative route is via Scabharbour Road, Coppings Road, Camp Hill. This is to enable water pipe repairs to be carried out by South East Water.
 - Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone, will be closed from 26th July for 3 days for large scale carriageway patching.

Clerk to put details of these road closures on the website and Facebook.

42. To hear report of meeting with the Chiddingstone Castle Trustees on 13th July 2021

Cllr Roper reported that he, Cllr Myers and the Clerk had a very useful meeting with Mark Streatfeild and Nancy Lovegrove, who are two trustees of Chiddingstone Castle.

The Literary Festival is one of the events run by the Denys Bower Bequest and they were pleased that the Parish Council topped up the sponsorship made last year to cover this year's event. In future, the trustees may approach the Parish Council for a grant if funding is required. Nancy will be new chair of Trustees when Mark steps down. Nancy said that she is keen to work with the Parish Council and she would be happy to come and speak to the Parish Council possibly at the September meeting. The question of a sign pointing to the car park was discussed and it was agreed that it would be raised at the next Trustees meeting. Mark said that the Castle would be very happy to host an event to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next year, and it was agreed to discuss this at the September Parish Council meeting.

43. Aviation

The Clerk reported that Richard Streatfeild is going to discuss noise monitors at the next Natmag meeting (The Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group).

44. To discuss correspondence received

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

i. Item 2: SDC regarding the roll out of the first phase of 25 dual general and recycling waste street bins with smart sensors. There will be two located in Chiddingstone parish - Chequers Barn, Bough Beech, and in Chiddingstone Causeway.

ii. Item 4: June report from PCSO Sam Rustrick and PCSO Hannah Rainbow: "As of this month I have another officer, PCSO Hannah Rainbow, joining me and will be working on the same patch. This will now mean you will get an increase in patrols in your area. Throughout the area we have seen a big increase in fraud cases, and a lot of people have unfortunately lost money due to these scams. Some of the recent scams we have seen are people pretending they are from the police, or from a banking fraud departments. They then try to make you think you are at risk of fraud and then start to gain details, or they try to make you put money in a 'safe account'. If you ever get a call from someone who you weren't expecting or someone asking about fraud or your bank, please ensure you do not give any details out. If your bank does need to speak to you they will be more than happy for you to go into a branch and do it face to face.

Leigh and Chiddingstone – Since the nicer weather we have had a big increase in nuisance youths and youths coming into Leigh on the trains and hanging around in hotspot areas. Officers are aware of this issue and regular patrols are conducted when possible, on occasions it has been locals we are talking to who are trespassing and causing some of the trouble. It is important that private land does not get trespassed on and public footpaths are used just as footpaths and not as areas to have barbeques and gather in large groups. Patrols have been conducted regularly around the villages and we have not had any reports of Covid breaches from individuals or companies.

iii. Item 7: KCC: re: Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme. This exciting programme aims to support Kent's children and young people to reconnect to:

- Health and happiness
- Learning missed
- Friends, family and community
- Sports, activities and the outdoors
- Economic wellbeing.

This ambitious community programme invites the whole Kent community to join together to provide a range of exciting and supportive opportunities for all the county's children and young people. Reconnect is a programme for every child and young person in Kent, recognising that some will need more support than others and different types of support will be required by each individual. It will run until 31 August 2022.

iv. Item 15: Email from BBRAT regarding the parking area at Chequers and speed limits through Bough Beech. It was agreed that Cllr Roper, Cllr Taylor and the Clerk would meet with representatives of BBRAT to discuss this further.

v. Item 16: Email from SES Water: Mains replacement project in your area regarding a mains replacement project taking place in Tonbridge Road and Camp Hill, Chiddingstone.

What does it involve? The project involves laying approximately 1.5km of new water main along Tonbridge Road and part of Camp Hill, starting from the junction of Hampkins Hill Road.

Why is this work necessary? The current water mains, which date back to 1974, have now reached the end of their operational life. The new water mains will provide secure, safe, and reliable drinking supplies for homes and businesses.

Traffic management Due to the location of the existing water main, and a number of other utilities already in the ground, we will need to work in the public highway. To keep residents, motorists and our workforce safe during these works, we will be carrying out phased closures of Tonbridge Road and Camp Hill. The first phase will involve the closure of Tonbridge Road, followed by the second phase, the closure of Camp Hill. We will maintain access for residents, deliveries and emergency vehicles. All traffic management arrangements and necessary diversions will be advertised on our website and information boards will be visible in the affected areas prior to any closure being implemented. We will maintain access for residents, deliveries and emergency vehicles. Road closures are used when we are unable to provide the required legal distances around our works.

Timetable of work The Tonbridge Road closure will start on Tuesday 10 August 2021 and will last until October 2021. The closure of Camp Hill will then commence in October 2021 and be in place until February 2022. When possible, our delivery partner Clancy Docwra will be working 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturdays. However, these hours may vary depending on weather conditions, daylight and staff availability. You will find a dedicated website for the Tonbridge Road and Camp Hill scheme at <https://seswater.uk.engagementhq.com/tonbridgeroad> where you can take part in a forum discussion, leave questions for our team and receive the latest updates.

45. To hear a report and discuss Parish Projects:

i. Rural Swathe and Visibility Cutting

It was agreed that the second cut should ideally be done before mid-August as the contractor would not be able to do it otherwise until after 25th October. Clerk to contact other parishes.

ii. Summer Family Fun Play Events 2021

The Clerk reported that she's booked the Chiddingstone play event for Friday 20th August, from 2pm to 5pm. The circus workshop with giant bubbles has been booked. Penshurst Parish Council has asked to join in with Chiddingstone and Leigh events and is happy to give a donation towards maybe the PTA for face painting. Members approved. Clerk to arrange the advertising boards.

iii. Litter Pick and Bulk Refuse Freighter

Bulk refuse freighter this Saturday 24th July, stopping at:

The Rock Inn, Chiddingstone Hoath 10.30-11.15

The Wheatsheaf Inn, Bough Beech 11.30-12.15

Richards Close, Chiddingstone Causeway 12.30-13.15

Cost £69.43 + VAT per stop. Total £208.29 + VAT

iv. An event to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, weekend of 4th/5th June 2022

To be discussed at the September Parish Council meeting.

46. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Bishop asked if the hedge at Vexour Bridge could be cut back as the visibility is poor. Clerk to contact landowner.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st September 2021 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

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