

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE VILLAGE HALL**

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**Present:** Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr C. Bishop, Cllr P. Harris, Cllr M. Quirk, Cllr B. Taylor, Cllr P. Vicary and Cllr H. Williams

**Apologies:** Cllr A. Baker, Cllr P. Myers, County Cllr M. McArthur and District Cllr J. Osborne-Jackson

**In attendance:** Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr S. Coleman and 2 members of the public attended the meeting for the Open Session only

**Open Session**

**Report by District Cllr Coleman**

District Cllr Coleman reported as follows:

1. Covid: Sevenoaks District has seen a huge drop in Covid infection rates. The figures have been driven by the 5 to 14 year olds so the level may increase again now that schools have returned. Vaccination take-up has generally been very good although there are a few pockets of those not taking it up. Fortunately, Covid levels amongst the Council staff have not been huge and currently a maximum of 60 staff are allowed to work in the Head Office, this number will not change until the rules change. Direct Services are continuing to work in bubbles which has helped to reduce cases and very few bin collections have been missed – a very good thing given that there has been a 15% increase in waste due to people working from home and internet deliveries.
2. Business Grants: several Government grants have been allocated to help businesses in the hospitality and leisure industry and to provide additional relief to those business rate payers that did not previously qualify for Expanded Retail Discount. SDC is working to administer these schemes before the deadline of the end of March.
3. Budget: officers and members have worked hard to find areas where savings can be made and to look at income streams to ensure that the Council remains in good shape financially. In particular, legal services, building control and audit have managed to make cost savings without any impact on service levels. Money has also been saved due to the numbers of staff working from home. A total of £300k of economies have been made, leaving only a small deficit for the financial year 2022-2023. The Government has allocated grants to councils to ensure that no council is worse off than it was last year and SDC has been allocated £103,000. The Government has also allocated £159,000 as a Services Grant to offset the increase in NI payments. Council Tax collection rates have been better than anticipated over the last year but will need to increase to preserve spending power. The assumption is for a 2% increase but there is the potential for 2.2% and this is the likely outcome. By law, councils have to set their budgets by February but, without hybrid meetings, it is likely that some will be unable to do this.
4. Housing Allocations Policy: this policy is currently being revised to ensure that SDC continue to help the most needy and make the best use of housing stock. As at November 2021 there were 774 people on the Housing Register, 3% of whom are actually homeless and living in temporary accommodation provided by SDC. Whilst the policy will go out to consultation, it is intended to change the local connection criteria from six months to three years with an increased emphasis on family connection for those needing to give or receive care. The banding groups will be reviewed and it is intended that this will include a provision to allow officers to prioritise certain groups for a particular period of time following consultation with partner organisations, e.g. to prioritise homeless people for vacant stock. Income caps will also be brought up to date.
5. Solar Together: SDC is going to take part in the KCC Solar Together Scheme. This is a collective buying scheme offering good quality solar photovoltaic panels and battery storage to help reduce energy bills and prevent harmful carbon emissions.
6. Track in Chiddingstone Hoath: officers are expecting an appeal to be lodged against the refusal to grant planning permission. The applicant has until January 21<sup>st</sup> to lodge an appeal.
7. New Tyehurst Farm Appeal: as the Parish Council is aware, SDC was not notified about the appeal on this site until a few weeks after it was lodged with the Planning Inspector due to IT issues at the Planning Inspector's office. As procedural guidance issued by the Planning Inspectorate does not have statutory authority and the omission was not the fault of the appellant, the appeal will now be considered in the usual way. There is still no start date for the appeal and the affordable housing Section 106 agreement has not yet been signed.

### Report by County Cllr McArthur

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

1. KCC has reached a proposal for a balanced budget for next year by taking some tough decisions, for example on staffing reductions and increasing some prices. The budget has been helped by the grant from Government which was more than expected. Also there is a higher council tax base than anticipated. The budget is now out to consultation and then through Scrutiny before final approval. Further savings will still be required over the next two years.
2. The Household Waste Recycling Centres consultation had a very high response, some 10,500 replies, which has steered the decision to amend the system. Most responders were now happy with the booking system:

Positives:

- No vehicle queuing, less car emissions, and roads not being blocked
- HWRCs recorded less frequent visits but 50 % increase in each load being deposited
- Quicker unload with fewer vehicles
- Operatives happy to give much more help to drivers
- Such help increases recycling rates, which reduces cost for KCC

Confirmed:

- Will be open 7 days a week, 362 days a year
- 64,000 slots available
- Slots can be booked online or by phone; multiple bookings can be made; for up to a month ahead
- Next day booking available now, same day will be available later this month
- No complaints received about availability since October.

### Report by District Cllr Osborne-Jackson

The Clerk reported that D.Cllr Osborne-Jackson had hoped to send a report but was experiencing technical difficulties.

### Questions from members of the Public

Two residents from Chiddingstone Causeway attended the meeting to seek the Parish Council's help with some antisocial behaviour in the area.

District Cllr Coleman and the members of the public left the meeting at 8.00pm.

### Closed Session

- 102. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Myers and Cllr Baker and members accepted their reasons for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur and District Cllr Osborne-Jackson.
- 103. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**  
Cllr Taylor declared a DPI in item 105(i)(iii) as he is the applicant for this planning application.
- 104. The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Vicary, and all were in favour. Members approved the meeting dates for 2022.
- 105. Planning:**
  - i. To consider planning applications received  
None. The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, the Planning Committee has considered the following applications:
    - i. SE/21/04139/FUL: Annexe at Lockskinners Oast, Chiddingstone TN8 7NA - conversion of an annexe into a self-contained 2-bedroom dwelling with associated parking, amenity area and landscaping. Members had no objection to this application.

- ii. SE/21/03757/HOUSE: Garden Cottage, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AB - various internal and external alterations to the existing outbuilding with rooflights to create new ancillary accommodation to the main house (amended plans received from applicant following initial Conservation Officer comments). Members supported this application providing the Conservation Officer and Planning Officer have no objection.
- iii. SE/21/04240/HOUSE and SE/21/04241/LBCALT: The Rustles, Ide Hill Road, Bough Beech TN8 - 7PG - conversion of the existing garage to a bedroom and bathroom, and the creation of a new link extension to connect the existing Orangery to the converted garage. Cllr Taylor had declared a DPI in this application and took no part of discussion or vote. Members supported this application.
- iv. SE/21/04251/LDCEX: Lockskinners Farm, Chiddingstone TN8 7NA - the static caravan has been used as a self-contained residential unit for in excess of 10 years and its use should be confirmed as lawful. Members had no objection to this application providing it satisfies planning policy.
- ii. Cllr Quirk said that she has looked into SDC policies regarding the changes of use for equestrian and agricultural buildings.
- iii. Members discussed the appeal process for application SE/20/01834/FUL: Newtyehurst Farm, Cowden Pound Road To Truggers Lane, Markbeech TN8 7DA - Proposed conversion of agricultural barns into 12 residential units including the demolition of 2 existing residential units and the construction of 2 replacement dwellings. Members agreed to seek legal advice from KALC. The Planning Committee has the authority to seek further advice from planning consultants if required.
- iv. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions
  - SE/21/03579/HOUSE and 21/03580/LBCALT: Stonelake, Camp Hill, Chiddingstone Causeway - roof extension and porch to annexe, alterations to fenestration and internal alterations. Applications withdrawn.
  - SE/21/03742/HOUSE: 12 Dukes Meadow, Chiddingstone Causeway - loft conversion and internal alterations. Application approved.
- v. Grove Close  
The Clerk reported that this application has been withdrawn.

## 106. Finance

- i. To hear report of Finance Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
The Finance Committee met on 11<sup>th</sup> January and went through the accounts in detail, both the actual vs budget and the budget and precept for next year.
- ii. To discuss the 2021/22 Actual & Year End Forecast, and the 2022/23 Budget  
The Actual vs Year End Forecast and Budget for 2021/22 is on track. The Finance Committee agreed the draft budget for 2022/23. The major change in the budget is that any applications for grants will be taken from the Grants Earmarked Reserve, which will be increased by £2,000 in 2022/23, and the Grants Budget for that year will be zero.
- iii. To approve Clerk's salary review effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022  
The Clerk left the room whilst this matter was discussed. Members agreed to increase the Clerk's salary by 3% from 01.04.22, and to carry out an annual review in January each year.
- iv. To set the level of the 2022/23 Precept  
The Finance Committee agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that the precept for 2022/23 be set at £43,000, this represents a 2.87% increase and a Band D property would pay an additional £1.97 per year at £70.59 towards the Parish Council's portion of the Council Tax. Proposed by Cllr Vicary, seconded by Cllr Bishop and members were unanimously in favour.
- v. To approve list of payments  
Cllr Vicary proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Harris and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Myers to authorise the payments online.
- vi. To discuss Earmarked Reserves  
The Earmarked Reserves for 2021/22 were discussed and various transfers to and from reserves were agreed. Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour.

- vi. To discuss quotes for the replacement of part of the fence at the Closed Churchyard, Chiddingstone and the wooden posts at Gilwyns  
The Clerk reported that three quotes have been received for both the fence and the posts. Hever Landscapes provided the most competitive price at £1,375 + VAT and were awarded the work.
- viii. To discuss quote for tree work in the Closed Churchyard and the Tennis Club carpark, Chiddingstone  
The Clerk reported that the Tree Survey was carried out in December and a report was received. The recommended work included the removal of deadwood and ivy. There are two cypress trees in the Closed Churchyard that are recommended to fell. Clerk to obtain approval from SDC and inform the Diocese that the work will be carried out. The oak tree in the Closed Churchyard has developed a split and the Tree Surgeon has recommended felling the tree, this has also been requested by the Church Warden. The Clerk has obtained one quote for this work and undertook to obtain one more quote.

#### **107. Affordable Housing provision in the parish**

- i. Chequers site in Bough Beech: the Clerk reported that ERHA has updated the Parish Council as follows: “Our consultants are working on the drainage strategy, which has entailed far more investigative work than we anticipated. However we’re nearly there and believe we can produce something that should be acceptable to the Environment Agency. We’ve agreed Heads of Terms with Bore Place regarding the reptile relocation. Subject to the final reports being written, I’m hoping we can submit a planning application later next month.”
- ii. Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: the Clerk reported that ERHA said reported as follows: “You’ll appreciate that until the Parish Council has received formal confirmation and a programme of works with costings, we’re unable to progress matters further. Our Highways consultant is also trying to follow this up with KCC Highways.”

#### **108. Highways**

- i. To hear update on the application to reduce speed on B2027 through Chiddingstone Causeway and to consider scheme details and associated costs  
The Clerk reported that the update and details on costings have not been received. Clerk to chase.
- ii. To hear update regarding SES Water’s project for mains replacement works  
The Clerk reported the Cllr Roper, Cllr Myers and the Clerk attended a zoom meeting with SES Water, who reported as follows:
  - Trial holes were dug to investigate whether the water main could be replaced and the road kept open. The result was that the work can be done using just half of the road using a redundant pipe on the southern side of the road. The existing pipe is on the northern side of the road. The work will be done in the verge rather than digging up the road, although some holes will need to be dug in the road in order to see where the existing electricity and gas services are. The verge will be reinstated.
  - There would be two way traffic control using traffic lights.
  - There are ponds in the area which have Great Crested Newts so additional measures will be required.
  - There have been no complaints received whilst the trial hole work was carried out.
  - Expected start date 14<sup>th</sup> March and will take two and a half to three months.
  - Work will be during daylight hours.
  - The work will be done in 100m to 150m sections.
  - A communication will go out to all stakeholders including local businesses and the school.
  - There will be an online forum for comments.
  - The life expectancy of the pipe is 100 years
- iii. KCC Highways: Temporary Road Closure  
Hale Oak Road, Sevenoaks Weald - 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 for 3 days between 08.00hrs and 18.00hrs. Hale Oak Road, Sevenoaks Weald will be closed outside Hall's Green. A diversion will be in place. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while works are undertaken by Openreach.

## 109. Aviation

- i. The Clerk reported that the CAA has launched a 12-week consultation on a refreshed Airspace Modernisation Strategy which will:
  - extend the strategy out to 2040
  - place integration of all airspace users at the core of the strategy, including accommodating new aerial vehicles like drones, advanced air mobility and spacecraft
  - aim for simpler airspace design and supporting regulations
  - introduce sustainability as an overarching principle to be applied through all modernisation activities, including better managing noise and helping achieve government commitments to net zero emissions
  - align delivery of the strategy with the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan and provide a clear strategic path for rulemaking activities, now that the UK has left the EU and European Aviation Safety Agency.

<https://consultations.caa.co.uk/policy-development/draft-airspace-modernisation-strategy-2022-2040>.  
The consultation closes on 4 April 2022.
- ii. AEF and the Aviation Communities Forum (ACF) will combine under the AEF structure with ACF becoming the Airspace and Noise Community Forum of the AEF.
- iii. GACC Newsletter: “Noise Management Board: Some of the work of the Noise Management Board has been deferred whilst traffic levels remain low. In particular actions that require observation of significant levels of traffic, and airspace trials, are not currently practicable and will not happen until volumes increase. In other areas - such as on night flights and Gatwick’s noise envelope proposals - we feel the NMB’s leadership has been too passive and we are encouraging them to do more. There are, however, potentially valuable studies underway on the fair and equitable distribution of flights and the joining point for flights at night. We await the results of these with interest. The year ahead: 2022 promises to be another busy year for GACC. The shape of aviation should become clearer as and when the industry recovers from Covid, and there are important Government policy announcements due on the industry’s climate impacts and on the future strategic framework for aviation. The regulation of aviation noise will also be in the spotlight, following pressure on government to look again at this important but neglected area. Finally the airspace modernisation process will progress, both at Gatwick and nationally, with potentially important consequences for local communities and people under flight paths. We are participating in much of this work through our membership of the Aviation Environment Federation and Aviation Communities Forum and look forward to continuing to work closely with them and like-minded campaign groups around the country.”

## 110. To discuss the proposal to move the red telephone box from Chiddingstone to Chiddingstone Hoath

Members continued the discussion on whether to move the telephone box from Chiddingstone to Chiddingstone Hoath. Cllr Harris undertook to obtain some costings and it was agreed to ask the members of the public at the Annual Parish Meeting whether they were in favour of the proposal.

## 111. 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: Email from SDC “We are currently promoting our Making it Happen Community & Voluntary Awards, which is due to take place at St Nicholas’s Church on Wednesday 9 March. The categories are:
  - Charity Project of the Year
  - Community Arts or Sports Group of the Year
  - Youth Group/Young Person of the Year
  - Best Business in the Community
  - Local Hero - Outstanding Individual Community Champion
  - Carer of the Year
  - Lifetime Achievement
  - Volunteer Group of the Year
  - Older Person’s Group/Older Person of the Year
  - Contribution to the Environment
  - Healthy Living Award

You can nominate by visiting [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communityawards](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communityawards). You can also request a nomination form by emailing [communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk) or calling 01732 227000.”

- ii. Items 4 and 10: Kent Police:
  - Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone - on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> December between 00:01 and 23:59, somebody damaged a fence and let dogs in to attack some chickens. Crime Report No. 46/267750/21
  - Clinton Lane, Bough Beech - on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January, somebody damaged a gate in an attempt to gain access to farm land. Crime Report No. 46/6143/22.
  - Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone - on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January between 16:30 and 22:00, somebody stole shopping from a doorstep. Crime Report No. 46/8274/22
- iii. Item 5: Kent Police: monthly report: “Police have started using a social media system called My Community Voice. This allows members of the public to contact officers, ask questions and raise concerns and receive updates/alerts sent out by Kent Police. Please find more information and sign up at [www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk](http://www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk). Leigh and Chiddingstone – PCSOs continue to patrol the area of Leigh and are pleased to report that after various measures and extra patrols the issue of the ASB bikes in Leigh seems to have died down and is no longer an issue. If you do see the bikes or encounter or are the victim of any ASB, please report this to us as soon as possible by calling 101 or via the live chat, however patrols in the area will continue. We have also had reports of a homeless male living in a tent near the Plough Pub in Leigh. Police are aware of the matter. We have spoken to the male and are working with the council to get this male rehomed as soon as possible.”

#### **112. To discuss nominations for the KALC Community Award Scheme 2022**

Members discussed nominations and agreed the recipient of this year’s award.

#### **113. To hear a report and discuss Parish Projects:**

- i. Proposed car park at Chequers Cottages in Bough Beech  
None.
- ii. Rural Swathe and Visibility Cutting  
The Clerk reported that the third cut has been done and the invoice received. The Clerk will now invoice the other parishes for their share of costs and KCC for their contribution.
- iii. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter and Flytipping
  - i. The Bulk refuse freighter next dates: 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> September  
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
  - ii. Flytipping cameras: members agreed that the Parish Council should discontinue with the project and residents can apply to the Parish Council for a grant towards a cctv camera for flytipping purposes providing they follow GDPR guidelines.
  - iii. Litter Pick: a parish wide litter pick will be done on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 9.30am. Clerk to borrow equipment from SDC and mention in the parish magazine.
- iv. Train horns in Bough Beech  
The Clerk reported that she has contacted the South-East Rail Partnership to see if they could help. The response stated that there are sets of unguarded level crossings at Bough Beach, primarily as farm and footpath crossings. Crossings like these are protected by whistleboards further up the track, where a driver will sound their horn to give pedestrians the chance to get clear. Network Rail has a quiet period between 24:00 and 06:00, this was until a few years ago slightly longer at 23:00 to 07:00 but was changed after research identified that those two shoulder hours contained the most near misses and there was a tragic case of a fatality and a lawsuit against Network Rail. The line speed is 85 mph, so the whistleboard will be some distance from the crossing itself on either side, usually about half a mile or so given the speed of the train. The Clerk has asked Network Rail to investigate the possibility of funding and installing an alternative crossing. To be discussed further once more information available.
- v. An event to commemorate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, weekend of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
Cllr Roper reported that the Jubilee working party has now met twice on zoom and arrangements are being considered. The date is Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June in the grounds of Chiddingstone Castle from 11am to 5pm.

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

None.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Causeway Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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