

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 17TH JANUARY 2023 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE CAUSEWAY HALL**

Present: Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr C. Bishop, Cllr P. Harris, Cllr P. Myers, Cllr M. Quirk and Cllr B. Taylor
Apologies: Cllr P. Vicary and County Cllr M. McArthur
Absent: Cllr H. Williams
In attendance: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). Three members of the public attended part of the meeting.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr McArthur

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

- School buses: still some local parishes are struggling with absent or very restricted bus services from home to school.
- KCC Budget: there will be more difficult budget cuts at KCC, the situation is extremely grave. The priority will be to support the most vulnerable of our citizens.
- Kent Community Asset Programme: a consultation started today on consolidation of community assets. The project has been looking at where KCC's community services are located to ensure its estate is in the best places to give focused service delivery. Proposals consider relocating or amending some services, children's centres, youth hubs etc.

Questions from members of the public

1. Mr Brian Adcock attended the meeting to let the Parish Council know about arrangements for the Chiddingstone Fete and the Fete Dance and Rugby Tournament. The Rugby Tournament will be held on the Chiddingstone Sports Field on Saturday 15th July starting at 11am. The Fete Dance will start at 7pm on the 15th July, and the Chiddingstone Fete will be on Sunday 16th July opening at 1pm. There is a new chair of the Fete Committee, Abbi Brown, and a new deputy chair, Catherine Huxtable. The Cricket Club is happy for the events to take place on the Sports Field, and other parish organisations will be encouraged to get involved. More committee members are sought. The Rugby Tournament last year, together with a contribution by Chiddingstone Football Badgers, made donations to Chiddingstone School of £5,000, to Jigsaw South-East of £1,000 and to Wooden Spoon of £1,000. The Badgers are seeking a grant towards the hire of tipi tents for this year's events. Cllr Roper advised that this will be considered by the Parish Council under the Finance item below.
2. Cllr Roper asked Mr Adcock if the Chiddingstone Badgers would be willing to help with the Coronation event to be held during the weekend of 6th May. Mr Adcock said that he was sure that the Badgers would help but probably not organise the whole event.
3. Mr David Robinson asked whether the Parish Council has considered the draft policies in the SDC Draft Local Plan on renewable energy consumption, and undertook to email the Clerk with some information.
4. A resident attended to ask the Parish Council about a vehicle that continually parks at night facing the wrong direction in front of Causeway Cottages which is very dangerous. Clerk to report to the relevant authorities.

Closed Session

121. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Vicary, and members accepted his reason for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur. Cllr Williams was absent. The Clerk reported that Cllr Baker has resigned from the Parish Council with immediate effect. The vacancy will need to be advertised but an election cannot be requested or held as it is within 6 months of the elections in May. The Parish Council may co-opt to fill the vacancy if it wishes. Cllr Roper said that the reason for Cllr Baker's resignation is work and family commitments. Members thanked Cllr Baker for all his time and help on the Parish Council.
122. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
123. **The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 13th December 2022** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Bishop, and all were in favour.

124. To approve meeting dates for 2023

Members approved the meeting dates for this year.

125. To discuss Chiddingstone Fete to be held on Sunday 16th July 2023

See Open Session above.

126. To discuss King Charles III's coronation to be held on 6th May 2023

Members discussed options for an event to celebrate the Coronation.

127. Planning:

i. To consider planning applications received

- i. SE/22/03374/FUL: Land North of Orchard Cottage, Clouts Farm, Ide Hill Road, Bough Beech TN8 7PH - erection of a replacement agricultural barn. Members strongly objected to this application on the following grounds:
 - (i) this is a retrospective application and the erected barn is nearly twice the size of the barn that used to be present on the site. This constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
 - (ii) before the new barn was built, all that was left of the old barn was a short stretch of wall.
 - (iii) there is no justification for an agricultural barn, no animals have ever been kept on this land, and the plot is too small to warrant the use of an agricultural barn or the storage of a tractor.
 - (iv) there is no business plan included in the application for the use of the barn.
 - (v) a number of mature trees have been felled on this site and the Parish Council understands that more than 5 cubic metres of trees have been felled for which a felling licence would be required.
- ii. SE/22/03430/FUL: Vexour Farm, Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7BB - agricultural building to cover a silage pit. Members supported this application.
- iii. SE/22/03431/FUL: Commonwork Organic Farms Ltd, Bore Place, Bore Place Road, Chiddingstone - the construction of a roofed entrance gate and welcome area / visitor information hub. Members wished to undertake a site visit.
- iv. SE/22/03295/HOUSE: 14 Chequers Hill Cottages, Chequers Hill, Bough Beech TN8 7PB - demolition of existing garage and proposed garage and alterations to vehicular access and associated work. Members supported this application.
- v. SE/22/03518/FUL: Stable West of Little Truggers, Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath TN8 7BP - conversion and change of use of stables into separate unit of residential accommodation with associated parking and landscaping. Members had no objection to this application.

The Clerk reported that since the last Parish Council meeting, the Planning Committee has considered the following applications:

- vi. SE/22/02435/HOUSE: Tithe Barn North, Clouts Farm, Ide Hill Road, Bough Beech - single storey rear extension with associated internal alterations. Members supported this application.
- vii. SE/22/03354/HOUSE: 2 Hobbs Hill Farm Cottage, Bradley Road, Blackham, Kent - erection of two storey side extension. Solar panels. Alterations to fenestration. Members had no objection to this application.
- viii. SE/22/03282/FUL: Land North of Winkhurst Farm, Coopers Corner, Ide Hill TN14 6LB - change of use of field to Equestrian Use and construction of stable with store and tack room. Members objected to this application on the following grounds:
 - (i) there is no justification for the stables, no animals are kept in this location and there would appear to be no need for a stable block.
 - (ii) this proposal therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
 - (iii) the application does not include any details for the storage of horse waste.
 - (iv) The Forestry Commission's comments about ancient woodland do not seem relevant to this site.
- ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions
None.
- iii. To report notification of appeal decisions
SE/20/01834/FUL: Newtyehurst Farm, Chiddingstone Hoath. The appeal was allowed.

The appeal related to the conversion of agricultural barns into 12 residential units including the demolition of 2 existing residential units and the construction of 2 replacement dwellings.

The planning application was refused on the following grounds:

1. Insufficient information has been provided to adequately justify the loss of a non-allocated employment site.
2. Development would be located in an unsustainable location.
3. Development would be considered to represent an inappropriate design, which would be out of character of the local area.
4. Applicant has failed to provide a completed section 106 agreement for the provision of on-site affordable housing.

The key points of the appeal decision are below:

1. A completed Section 106 Legal Agreement was provided prior during the appeal and therefore this ground of refusal fell away.
2. The Planning Inspector considered that six months of unsuccessful marketing of the property was sufficient to meet the test of EMP5 of the ADMP and therefore the appeal proposal complied the policy.
3. The Planning Inspector considered that “the design of the appeal scheme would reduce the overall mass and bulk of the built development” and that “while the new cladding and the introduction of domestic doors and windows would change the appearance of the existing agricultural structures somewhat, it would not alter their essential form and character. The overall design of the scheme could be readily assimilated into the existing locality, preserving the character of the area, and would be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the locality.”
4. The Planning Inspector considered future residents would be reliant upon motor vehicles for their journeys to and from the site. The Inspector also noted that the two existing dwellings are already sited here. Under a previous appeal on this site relating to planning application 19/01052/FUL, the Planning Inspector had stated “would be largely dependent on transport by car, both national and local planning policies allow for the possibility of converting existing rural buildings to residential use. These policies necessarily entail a degree of car traffic and some additional use of local services”. The Planning Inspector on the current appeal then said that “it remains that there would be some conflict with the provisions of the Framework relating to sustainable access to shops and services, however I will return to consider the weight to be given to this conflict in the planning balance section below.” The Planning Inspector then applied to the titled balance of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF and concluded that the presumption in favour of development weighted in favour of granting planning permission.

The appellant submitted a cost claim against SDC for unreasonable behaviour in delaying the granting of planning permission for the following three reasons:

1. The Members of the Committee should have followed the officer’s advice
2. The length of time it too to determine the planning application
3. The length of time to took to complete the Section 106 Legal Agreement

The Planning Inspector did not find that SDC acted unreasonably in any of the three instances and refused the cost claim application.

iv. To hear update on potential breaches of planning policy

The Clerk updated members regarding a potential breach of planning policy in the parish.

v. Causeway House

The Clerk reported that an email has been received from Ashill Regen regarding the Parish Council’s points raised in their objection to this planning application. Members noted these comments but wished to make no additional comment.

128. Finance

i. To discuss valuation and approve changes to contributions to the Kent Pension Fund

The Clerk reported that the Kent Pension Fund has carried out a valuation of the pension fund and the employer contributions will increase from 24.7% to 28.8% from 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2026. Members approved this increase.

- ii. To hear report of Finance Committee meeting held on 10th January 2023
The Clerk reported that a Finance Committee meeting was held on Tuesday 10th January and members reviewed both the accounts for 2022/23 and the budget for 2023/24.
- iii. To discuss the 2022/23 Actual & Year End Forecast, and the 2023/24 Budget
The Clerk advised that the Finance Committee agreed that the actual and year-end forecast figures for income and expenditure versus budget for 2022/23 are on track. Cllr Roper said that the budget for 2023/24 is a balanced budget.
- iv. To discuss Earmarked Reserves
Members approved the following transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves:
 - i. £3,000 from PWLB Earmarked Reserve to the General Fund
 - ii. £8,955.80 from the Infrastructure Projects Earmarked Reserve to the General Fund
 - iii. £5,000 from the General Fund to Planning & Legal Fees Earmarked Reserve.
- v. To set the level of the 2023/24 Precept
The Clerk reported that Chiddingstone's tax base has increased from 609.13 to 619.26. The 2022/23 precept is £43,000. To retain same level of precept in 2023/24, there would be a decrease of 1.64%. The Finance Committee's recommendation is an increase of 7.52% to £47,000. Cllr Myers proposed that this recommendation be accepted, seconded by Cllr Bishop and by show of hands all members were in approval.
- vi. To discuss application for grant from Chiddingstone Badgers towards hire of tipis for the fete dance
Members approved a grant to Chiddingstone Badgers for the Rugby Tournament of £800. Members said that the Chiddingstone Fete Committee could make a grant application towards this year's event later in the year.
- vii. To approve list of payments
Cllr Quirk proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Bishop and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Myers to authorise the payments online.

129. Affordable Housing provision in the parish

- i. Chequers site in Bough Beech: the Clerk reported that the planning application has not yet been determined.
- ii. Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: the Clerk reported that KCC as Lead Local Flood Authority has reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment for the Causeway House application and additional flood modelling would be required. ERHA said that Ashill has agreed to share the initial modelling data with them, and ERHA is hoping to be able to redesign the Bassetts layout to account for the 5m flood buffer now required. ERHA hope to be able to submit a planning application in February, if Ashill is able to satisfy the Flood Authority's requirements, which it believes it can.

130. Highways

- i. To hear update regarding applications for speed reduction measures in Bough Beech and on Camp Hill
The Clerk reported that she has asked whether BBRAT would be willing to fund some of the Bough Beech traffic surveys, and is waiting for some information from them. Members agreed to ask KCC to proceed with the traffic surveys at Camp Hill and in Bough Beech.
- ii. To discuss bus services in the parish
The Clerk reported that some bus services are likely to finish at the end of the summer school term. The bus services from Bough Beech were previously secure. The 237 service from Chiddingstone has already ceased to operate.
- iii. To consider initiating a SpeedWatch Scheme
The Clerk reported that the SpeedWatch Scheme can be operated at risk assessed sites in 20mph, 30mph and 40mph speed limits. Kent Police will pre-approve the sites and provide free training for volunteers. Volunteers will assess vehicle speeds, and record and report details of vehicles travelling at or above nationally-specified thresholds (25mph, 35mph and 46mph). The registered keepers of vehicles observed repeatedly or excessively (limit plus 50%) speeding anywhere on the system in the previous 12 months are then sent advisory letters by Kent Police. Fourth-time letters are frequently delivered by a uniformed officer. Clerk to advertise for volunteers in the parish magazine.
- iv. To discuss the oak posts in Chiddingstone village
The Clerk reported that she has asked Kent Highways whether they would be willing to replace all the oak posts in front of the school and they said that budgets will be extremely tight next year,

However, the Parish Council could make contact again in the summer. It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain some prices for replacing all the posts in the meantime.

v. Highways

- i. The Clerk reported that she requested a new salt bin on the corner by The Old Forge in Baileys Hill Road. The request has been denied, with KCC saying: “Further to the start of our review during the 2021/2022 winter season, we are continuing the exercise to fully establish which salt bins are utilised and those that are seldom used. In view of this and the widespread availability of salt bins now already in place on our network for the 2022/2023 season, no further new salt bins will be placed. The existing access to salt bins is considered to be sufficient to meet the needs of local communities.” Clerk to ask C.Cllr McArthur if she could request a new salt bin.
- ii. Drainage issues reported in Chiddingstone outside The Old Rectory and also outside The Castle Inn. These are both causing huge issues. Drainage officers attended on Monday.
- iii. Potholes reported in Wellers Town, Mill Lane, Hampkins Hill Road and Ryewell Hill.
- iv. Temporary Road Closure - B2027 Clinton Lane, Bough Beech - 29th January 2023 for 1 day between 09.00hrs and 15.00hrs. The road will be closed between How Green Lane and Ide Hill Road for the safety of the public and workforce while works are undertaken by Openreach. See <https://one.network/?tm=131359832>
- v. Temporary Road Closure - Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath - 31st January 2023 for 1 day. The road will be closed for the entire length for the safety of the public and workforce while drainage cleansing works are undertaken by Kent County Council. See <https://one.network/?tm=131656156>
- vi. Emergency Road Closure - Mill Lane, Chiddingstone - 10th January 2023 for up to 7 days. The whole road will be closed.
- vii. Cllr Quirk advised that the salt bin on Hampkins Hill Road has disappeared. Clerk to request a replacement.

131. To discuss proposal for new Chiddingstone Sports Association constitution and associated costs

To be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

One member of the public left the meeting at 9pm.

132. Aviation

The Clerk drew members’ attention to the GACC newsletter in the correspondence list. Also GAL have invited the Parish Council to an engagement event to look at the airspace change proposal as part of the Future Airspace Strategy Implementation.

- 10:00 to 12:30 on 25th January
- 17:00 to 19:30 on 30th January
- 14.00 to 16.30 on 2nd February. The Clerk advised that she is booked onto this event.

133. 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: Kent Police
 - Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone - between 00:01 on Thursday 1st December and 09:55 on Friday 16th December, somebody drove across farm land in a 4 wheel drive vehicle causing significant damage to the land and wooded areas. Crime Report No. 46/240200/22
 - Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone - between 00:01 on Saturday 10th December and 10:47 on Thursday 15th December, somebody stole batteries, electric fence units and poached pheasants from a farm. Crime Report No. 46/239898/22
- ii. Item 3: ACRK regarding the closure of Action with Communities in Rural Kent. ACRE, the national organisation, is still in place and can be contacted with urgent queries relating to village halls, affordable housing etc. ACRK is exploring possible options for the continuation of the services it currently provides and hope that it will be able to resume under another organisation in the future.

- iii. Item 6 Stagecoach bus users in the South East are set to benefit from three months of bus fares of no more than £2 for a single journey as part of the Department for Transport's new fares initiative. All Stagecoach local bus services across Kent and East Sussex will offer a maximum fare of £2 for any single journey between 1st January and 31st March 2023. See www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/national/2-pound-fare.
- iv. Item 8: KALC courses:
- January
- 17th Becoming a Local Councillor (7-8pm online)
 - 19th Allotments Law & Management (10am-1:30pm Lenham Community Centre)
 - 19th An Introduction to Planning (6-9pm online)
 - 25th Implementing effective community engagement / building sustainable conversations (2-4pm online)
 - 26th The clerk in action (1:30-4:30pm online)
 - 31st How Councils can more effectively engage with young people (6-8pm online).
- February
- 7th How to recruit and retain a diverse pool of councillors (2-4pm online)
 - 21st Social Media for Councils: getting started, creating an effective social media strategy and getting the fundamentals right (10am-12pm online)
 - 21st Becoming a Local Councillor (7-8pm online)
 - 23rd Achieving the CiLCA (9:30am - 3pm Lenham Community Centre)
- March
- 2nd Implementing effective community engagement / building sustainable conversations (6-8 pm online)
 - 9th Equality, diversity and inclusion training for Local Councils (2-4pm online)
 - 21st Becoming a Local Councillor (7-8pm online)
 - 23rd The Dynamic Councillor (6:30-9:30pm online)
 - 23rd Achieving the CiLCA (9:30am - 3pm Ditton Community Centre)
 - 30th The Planning Conference (time tbc Lenham Community Centre).
- v. Item 13: Email from Elaine King, Chiddingstone WI regarding the closing of the group. Members were very sad that the group is closing. Members asked whether they could have the gazebo donated to the group and all the cutlery and crockery could be left in the locked cupboards in the village hall for use at parish events.

134. To hear update regarding the Margaret Hyde Almshouses

Cllr Roper updated members on the situation with the Margaret Hyde Almshouses which is ongoing.

135. To consider nominations for the KALC 2023 Community Award Scheme

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

136. To hear report and discuss Parish Projects, including approval of costs:

- i. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter and Flytipping
- i. Parish litter pick – 28th January, 4th March, 1st July and 9th September. Cllr Taylor reported that he will litter pick on Saturday 4th February the B2027 towards Chiddingstone Causeway. The Clerk reported that a request has been made by a member of the public to litter pick between Lockskinners and the parish boundary which is half way between Rectory Lane and Wilderness Farm.
 - ii. Bulk Refuse Freighter visits – arranged for 28th January, 4th March, 1st July and 9th September.
 - iii. Flytipping – luckily very little in the parish.
- ii. Train horns in Bough Beech
- The Clerk reported that a meeting was held with Network Rail on Wednesday 11th January and the level crossing was looked at. Network Rail said that they carried out a pedestrian census and over a 9 day period, there were an average of 10 people using the level crossing. It would cost between £150,000 and £200,000 to install an MSL (Miniature Stop Light) System which would be the recommended action. This could take years to implement because there are a large number of requests submitted for solutions to problems where there are many more people affected.

There is also the capital cost of investment plus future maintenance charges. It was agreed that the best solution would be to try and divert the footpath on the northern side of the track and close the level crossing. Clerk to progress.

137. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Harris requested that the phone box in Chiddingstone Hoath be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st February 2023 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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