

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE VILLAGE HALL**

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**Present:** Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr P. Myers, Cllr K. Outlaw, Cllr M. Quirk, Cllr C. Shamwana and Cllr H. Williams  
**Apologies:** Cllr P. Harris, Cllr T. Nunn, Cllr P. Vicary, County Cllr McArthur, District Cllr R. Streatfeild and District Cllr M. Silander  
**In attendance:** Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk).

**Open Session**

**Report by County Cllr McArthur**

In the absence of County Cllr McArthur, the Clerk reported that County Cllr McArthur has authorised a contribution of £500 from her member's fund towards child sized litter pickers, high visibility vests and hoops to be shared between Chiddingstone and Leigh Schools.

**Report by District Cllr Streatfeild**

District Cllr Streatfeild reported as follows:

- "I asked a question to Cabinet last week about water testing on the River Eden post the illnesses after the triathlon. Environmental Health are working on it.
- Government data sets about the Homes for Ukraine scheme sets out the number of visa applications and arrivals in the UK. The latest data sets show that Sevenoaks district continues to have the highest number of applications within the KCC area, with 622 applications so far received, 555 visas issued and 496 arrivals. Overall, Kent has received the second highest number of applications for the scheme – 5,040 in total – with Surrey having slightly more at 5,085. Our Housing Team continues to work with KCC and with local communities to encourage more hosts for the scheme, to make sure host homes are suitable for purpose and to meet the challenges of providing accommodation for families if the host is no longer able to provide this.
- There is an update on Green Belt statistics, which shows the percentage of land within each district council area that is designated as Green Belt. Sevenoaks district had the second highest percentage in the country, at 92.9%, with neighbouring district Tandridge in first place with 93.9%. The Green Belt is undoubtedly one of our district's defining characteristics and points to the challenges we have more than many other councils of balancing preservation and the need for new homes.
- The latest national influenza and Covid-19 report by the UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) monitoring Covid-19 activity, seasonal flu and other seasonal respiratory illnesses was published at the end of last week. Multiple indicators show that Covid-19 case rates have slightly increased compared to the previous report. Overall, Covid-19 hospitalisations also increased compared to the previous report. UKHSA is urging everyone eligible to come forward to increase their protection, and to keep the vulnerable around them safe this winter.
- The Government launched its £1 billion drive to help the most in need heat their homes for less, through the Great British Insulation Scheme. The scheme will boost help for those on the lowest incomes as well as extend support to a wider range of households compared to other existing government-funded schemes. Those eligible for support under the Great British Insulation Scheme include families in council tax bands A-D in England, A-E in Scotland and Wales, with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below. Households in the lower council tax bands with less energy efficient homes will be offered upgrades such as roof, loft or cavity wall insulation."

**Report by District Cllr Silander**

In the absence of District Cllr Silander, the Clerk read his report:

- "Richards Close, we met with Julie Terry from WKHA.
- Green Belt sites that have been submitted for allocation in Plan 2040 will be announced following the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.
- The Extraordinary Council meeting is to discuss a multi-million pound Council development of Spitals Cross, Edenbridge, which has been approved by the Development Management Committee but questioned by the Finance & Investments Advisory Committee.

- “Parking fees have been discussed by the Cleaner and Greener Committee, and it was voted to recommend a zero percentage increase on all parking fees and charges, but an end to free parking and an expansion of operating hours/days across the district.”

### **Closed Session**

- 68. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Harris, Cllr Nunn and Cllr Vicary, and members accepted their reasons for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur, District Cllr Streatfeild and District Cllr Silander.
- 69. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**  
Cllr Outlaw declared an NPI in item 77 as she is the Chair of Trustees for the Margaret Hyde Trust.
- 70. The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Shamwana, seconded by Cllr Quirk, and all were in favour.
- 71. To discuss and approve list of Committee members and representatives to outside bodies**  
Members approved the appointment of Cllr Nunn to be the Parish Council’s representatives for CPRE and the Causeway Hall Management Committee. Cllr Roper suggested that notification of the latter is delayed until the constitution document has been seen.
- 72. To approve and sign the Clerk’s Contract of Employment**  
The updated contract of employment for the Clerk was approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Outlaw, seconded by Cllr Myers and all were in favour.
- 73. Planning:**
  - i. To consider planning applications received  
SE/23/02705/FUL: Bough Beech Farmhouse, Chequers Hill, Bough Beech TN8 7PB - 3 timber stables and tack room in an L shape. Members felt that this application is justified because the applicant has horses and the proposed location is acceptable. Members supported this application.
  - ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions
    - SE/23/02069/HOUSE: 6 Dukes Meadow, Chiddingstone Causeway - demolition of existing conservatory to form a single storey rear extension. Garage conversion. First floor extension over the existing garage with dormer windows. Canopy. Alterations to fenestration. Application approved.
    - SE/23/01582/FUL: Land at Eight Acre Wood, Hale Oak Road, Sevenoaks Weald - shed, container and water tank used in connection with forestry. Application approved.
    - SE/23/01604/CONVAR: The Walled Garden, Threshersfield, Chiddingstone - variation of condition 6 of SE/11/03125/FUL (conversion of existing single storey outbuilding into a holiday let, including alterations and an extension to implement the use as amended by revised block plan received on 23/01/12) to use the building as an annexe to the main dwelling. Application approved.
    - SE/23/02233/FUL: Mole End, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone - conversion of the existing detached house into two semi-detached properties with an additional single storey rear extension. New vehicle access for the additional property will be formed to the north of the site. Application withdrawn.
  - iii. To hear update on potential breaches of planning policy  
The Clerk updated members regarding a potential breach of planning policy in the parish.
- 74. Finance**
  - i. To hear update on application to the Better Together Community Mobilisation Grant Prosperity Fund  
The Clerk reported that she applied for a grant of £1,000 towards the replacement telephone box, but unfortunately this was unsuccessful.
  - ii. To discuss the replacement of the bus shelter in Chiddingstone Causeway and approve costs  
The Clerk reported that she has obtained three quotes for a new bus shelter.

These are from The Shed Man, Littlethorpe and Woodscape. Members accepted the lowest quote which was provided by The Shed Man as follows:

The “Village Rural Bus Shelter.”	£5,850.00
Clear Site and residual work on base.	£675.00
Rubbish clearance and collection.	£300.00
Total Net.	£6,825.00 + VAT

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has received a grant of £4,000, so net cost to the Parish Council is £2,825. Proposed by Cllr Myers, seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour.

iii. To consider application for grant from We Are Beams

The Clerk reported that a grant application has been received from We Are Beams, which is a charity based in Hextable that supports disabled children and their families in Kent. They are currently supporting two families who reside within the parish of Chiddingstone. Members agreed that reluctantly they are unable to provide a grant on this occasion.

iv. To discuss the External Auditor’s Report for year 2022-23

The Clerk reported that the external audit has been concluded and there were no concerns or issues raised apart from the requirement to sign bank reconciliations and bank statements quarterly.

v. To approve list of payments

Cllr Outlaw proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Myers to authorise the payments online.

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

i. To hear update regarding the Chiddingstone Affordable Housing schemes

The Clerk reported that Alison Thompson has now retired from ERHA, and the following report has been provided by Graham Mann, who is ERHA’s Development Design Manager:

- i. “Chequers site in Bough Beech: English Rural have now acquired the land for the affordable homes. The Ecologist has now reached 50 capture sessions with 152 slow-worms, 6 lizards and 4 grass snakes relocated to Bore Place. As of last week, he had achieved 3 clear visits, so hopefully just 2 more with no slow worms being found and the relocation works will be complete. The soil investigation has been carried out under the watching brief of the Ecologist and results indicate no contamination in the ground. We have appointed Canterbury Archaeological Trust to undertake the archaeological investigation work. Their ‘written scheme of investigation’ has been approved by KCC Archaeology and CAT hope to be on site in early November to start digging trenches. We have been talking with potential building contractors to undertake the building work and remain on target to commence work on site in February/March 2024.
- ii. Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: My Director has continued discussions with the Redleaf Trust via Savills. Our offer has been accepted in principle and heads of terms are currently being drawn up. Our Executive Management Team is currently reviewing the financial viability based on the mix Alison reported last month (with the HNS caveat also) and I hope we can achieve a positive outcome here. I will keep you updated as I hear anything further.”

ii. To discuss the Chiddingstone Housing Needs Survey 2023

The Clerk reported that the Chiddingstone HNS survey postcards were sent to every household in the parish in September and those with a housing need were asked to complete the survey online. The deadline was extended from 4<sup>th</sup> October to 13<sup>th</sup> October. 15 responses were received. Members felt that the process of receiving a postcard in the post with directions to complete the HNS online meant that it was probably missed by some residents. Cllr Outlaw advised that she has a meeting arranged with ACRE and RACE and will discuss the Parish Council’s concerns. Clerk to also discuss with RACE.

iii. RACE (Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service): invitation to a one-hour online session on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 12.30pm to 1.30pm to introduce the RACE service and to hear about housing needs surveys and affordable housing schemes. Cllr Outlaw and Cllr Shamwana expressed interest in attending.

## **76. Highways and Rights of Way**

i. To hear update regarding applications for speed reduction measures in Bough Beech and on Camp Hill

The Clerk reported that a response has been received from KCC.

Pedestrian warning signs could be installed on Camp Hill but there is zero crash data and existing average speeds on Camp Hill are 29mph and therefore the road is classified with the correct speed limit. However, KCC is happy to undertake a speed survey on Camp Hill at £85 + VAT which the Parish Council has offered to fund. KCC have said that they are happy to fund speed surveys in Bough Beech. Clerk to find out how many speed surveys would be undertaken and members offered to fund additional ones as they felt it is important to cover all the roads.

ii. To hear update on the Chiddingstone Community SpeedWatch Scheme

The Clerk reported that the Chiddingstone Community SpeedWatch Scheme volunteers have undertaken three speed watch sessions, and the next date is arranged. Generally 10% of vehicles are found to be driving over 35mph in the 30mph zone. Cllr Outlaw said that there are some Bough Beech residents who have offered to help and she will be discussing the matter with them again at the next BBRAT meeting.

iii. To discuss rural swathe and visibility cutting in the parish

The Clerk reported that all four parishes are interested in opening up discussions on taking the function back again next year. Clerk has contacted KCC and the dates for two cuts next year would be March/April and October/November. Chiddingstone, Leigh and Penshurst Parish Councils have agreed to take the function back next year, and a response is due from Hever Parish Council.

iv. To hear report of damage to Vexour Bridge

The Clerk reported that there was damage to the capping stones on Vexour Bridge, this was reported to KCC who treated the case as an emergency and repairs would be completed quickly.

v. To hear update regarding hedge cutting in the parish

The Clerk reported as follows:

- i. Chiddingstone Castle hedges will be cut in half term.
- ii. Gilwyns junction hedge will be cut and the contractor is booked.
- iii. Bough Beech bridge – Network Rail has responded to say that the Parish Council can cut back vegetation growing over the road, if a wider cut is required their contractors will undertake the work.

vi. Highways

- i. KCC will be carrying out post treatment works to the carriageway between Truggers Lane and Oakenden Lane. These post treatment ironworks are programmed to start on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 and take 1 day to complete between 8am and 5pm.
- ii. Urgent Road Closure - Wellers Town Road, Chiddingstone Hoath - 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 for up to 5 days outside Mollys Cottage to enable water pipe repairs to be carried out by SES Water.
- iii. Email from KCC Highways offering a free salt/sand bag again. The Clerk has responded to ask for one to be delivered to the school as normal.

**77. To hear report on the Margaret Hyde Trust by the Parish Council's representative Trustees**

Cllr Outlaw reported that the Trustees and residents are happy and all is progressing smoothly.

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

Cllr Shamwana reported that he has arranged a meeting with Mark Streatfeild from Chiddingstone Cricket Club to discuss the draft constitution. Cllr Roper undertook to forward the draft to Cllr Shamwana.

**79. Aviation**

- i. AEF: invitation to a meeting of groups working on aviation issues to develop the No Airport Expansion! Campaign in London on Saturday the 14th October.
- ii. Email from Emma Henshall, SDC Principal Infrastructure Delivery Officer, Planning Policy: the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway proposal has recently been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for examination. The application is currently at 'pre-examination' stage. Members of the public can register to become an interested party until 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023. After this, the examination stage will begin and there will be an opportunity for anyone registered as an interested party to submit their comments/views on the proposal. The District Council is a statutory consultee and as such will be invited to comment alongside interested parties. We have commented on previous consultations leading up to the submission of the scheme and will continue to do so. Our response tends to be strategic in nature, recognising the concerns of our communities in the south of the District in relation to additional noise disturbance and air pollution.

“It also recognises the economic benefits the expansion will bring to the District’s economy and that of the wider South East. To register to become an interested party see <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/South%20East/Gatwick-Airport-Northern-Runway/>. You can also register by phone on 0303 444 5000. The Clerk reported that she has registered with PINS to become an interested party on behalf of the Parish Council.

- iii. GACC Briefing for DCO Representation.

#### **80. 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 is teaming up with KCC and Solar Together to offer residents an opportunity to purchase solar panels at a competitive price.
- ii. Item 6: High Weald AONB Partnership: The High Weald AONB is working with KCC PROW to supply and deliver free galvanized metal pedestrian gates to replace existing stiles. The landowner needs to sign a simple agreement with the relevant county rights of way team, undertake correct installation of the gate following the instructions provided and keep it well maintained. Contact: Public Rights of Way and Access Service, Kent County Council, Worrall House, Kings Hill, Kent, ME19 4AE Email: [westprow@kent.gov.uk](mailto:westprow@kent.gov.uk). Telephone: 03000 417171. This project is led by the High Weald AONB Partnership with support from the Government’s Access for All programme.
- iii. Item 7: Email from Hever Parish Council offering spaces for Chiddingstone Parish Council members on a tour of Bough Beech Water Treatment Works on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October. Cllr Williams reported that he and Cllr Harris attended and it was very interesting. Cllr Outlaw said that she is planning to arrange a tour too for other Chiddingstone members and BBRAT.
- iv. Item 12: Kent Police: No Road Name in Chiddingstone - on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October between 20:00 and 22:00 somebody stole a trailer and a digger. Crime Report No. 46/182927/23
- v. Item 13: KALC: the theme for this year's KALC Annual General Meeting is Health and Wellbeing. The event will take place at the Ditton Community Centre, Kilnbarn Road, Ditton ME20 6AH on Saturday November 18<sup>th</sup> 2023. Cost £6 per person.
- vi. Email from Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust: “As you may know, we are in the process of building a large new health centre for the town which is due to open this winter. As part of this, the community hospital will be closing and the minor injuries service previously delivered from the hospital site has moved to a service delivered from the GP surgery.”

#### **81. To hear report and discuss Parish Projects, including approval of costs:**

- i. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter and Flytipping
  - i. Parish litter pick – Next date in 2024.
  - i. Bulk Refuse Freighter visits – Next date in 2024.
  - iii. Flytipping - The Clerk reported that she has collected the flytipping cameras from Ben Taylor
- ii. Emergency Plan  
Cllr Outlaw reported that the Kent Resilience Forum is pushing for all villages to have an Emergency Plan. Some have already been prepared in communities that suffer from flooding or other emergencies. Cllr Outlaw suggested that this could be done in conjunction with neighbouring parishes as they share the same issues, and there would be savings in terms of cost and time. Members agreed to pursue this and Cllr Outlaw and the Clerk undertook to work together. The Clerk advised that Margot McArthur is the Chair of the Emergency Planning Committee at Edenbridge Town Council and she has offered to discuss this with Cllr Outlaw.
- iii. Parish telephone boxes and defibrillators  
The Clerk reported as follows:
  - i. Chiddingstone Hoath: the new phone box has been delivered – kindly arranged by Heidi Witchell – and erected with the help of Jason Wing, who bolted it down and concreted it in. He made the area around the phone box good and laid Portland stones at the entrance. Local residents gathered there on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October to celebrate. Cllr Harris has given the Clerk another £100 towards the purchase of the phone box, which has been paid in. The new phone box has been added to the Parish Council’s insurance policy at no additional premium.

- ii. Chiddingstone: the phone box has been rubbed down by Hilary Allen and Letty Sundt and painted with undercoat. The Clerk has obtained a free tin of top coat and a free tin of undercoat from the British Heart Foundation in conjunction with a paint firm who send free paint for refurbishment of phone boxes that will house a defibrillator.
- iii. Chiddingstone Causeway: the paint and undercoat was dropped off to the Causeway Shop and hopefully refurbishment will take place soon.
- iv. Chiddingstone Car Parking  
No update.
- v. Parish planters  
The Clerk reported that Virginia Baldock has offered to look after the planter outside the village shop and the one on the Bough Beech side of Chiddingstone Causeway. A local resident looks after the planter near The Little Brown Jug. The planter opposite the Village Hall is in the wrong position and members agreed to consider moving it. The planters at Gilwyns and in Chiddingstone Hoath will be looked after, the only one with no offer of help is the one in Chiddingstone village on the small village green. The Parish Council has offered to reimburse the reasonable cost of plants on production of receipt.

## 82. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Williams asked about the cost of emptying dog bins in the parish.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Causeway Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

### Chiddingstone Parish Council – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023

List of Payments since last meeting (figures inclusive of VAT)

Payment Number	Date	Payee	Amount inc. VAT	VAT
547	17.10.23	Clerk - salary	£1,252.75	
548	17.10.23	HMRC – PAYE	£206.13	
549 SO	17.10.23	Kent County Council – pension contribution (paid by standing order)	£500.90	
550	17.10.23	Clerk – mileage, petty cash	£152.29	£5.83
551	17.10.23	Hever Landscapes Ltd – closed churchyard & areas	£403.20	£67.20
552	17.10.23	The Causeway Hall – hall hire 04.10.23	£4.63	
553	17.10.23	The Causeway Hall – hall hire 25.04.23 (Annual Parish Meeting)	£45.00	
554	17.10.23	The Causeway Hall – hall hire 27.06.23	£33.75	
555	17.10.23	The Causeway Hall – hall hire 19.09.23	£30.00	
556	17.10.23	SDC – emptying dog bins Jul to Sep 2023	£112.32	£18.72
557	17.10.23	SDC – bulk refuse freighter 09.09.23	£405.72	£67.62
558	17.10.23	Mazars LLP – external audit fee 2022/23	£378.00	£63.00
559	17.10.23	Knockout Print – production of some Danger Keep Out signs	£42.00	£7.00
			<b><u>£3,566.69</u></b>	<b><u>£229.37</u></b>

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