

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 16TH JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE CAUSEWAY HALL**

Present: Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr P. Harris, Cllr P. Myers, Cllr T. Nunn, Cllr M. Quirk, Cllr C. Shamwana and Cllr P. Vicary
Apologies: Cllr K. Outlaw, Cllr H. Williams and District Cllr M. Silander
In attendance: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr R. Streatfeild and 1 member of the public attended the meeting for the Open Session only.

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Streatfeild

District Cllr Streatfeild reported as follows:

1. The public consultation on the draft Local Plan, Plan 2040, has now closed. However there is still the possibility that new sites will come in.
2. The SDC budget discussions continue and the deficit is reducing, it is now nearer to £300,000. It is hoped that the budget will balance. The next budget meeting is on 14th February. Currently there are £618,000 worth of unfilled positions at the council, and no redundancies will be made.
3. SDC will be carrying out a planned review of waste collection which will be ‘far-reaching and comprehensive’. KCC will save £11m if separate food waste collections are introduced but SDC will need to change its fleet of vehicles. The Conservative manifesto promised to retain weekly collections so hopefully this will continue.
4. SDC has grant funding schemes open as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
5. A leisure consultation opened today.
6. On KCC matters, the Budget for 2024/25 has taken up a lot of everyone’s attention. There is currently a £45m budget gap which is proving hard to close. KCC has received grant funding from the Government for bus services and so bus services will continue to be provided. See <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/bus-travel/bus-services-in-kent>. If KCC cannot afford to provide its statutory services, then Commissioners will have to be called in and there will be a huge cut in services.

Report by District Cllr Silander

The Clerk reported that District Cllr Silander did provide a report but the items mirrored those provided by D.Cllr Streatfeild.

Questions from members of the public

One member of the public attended the meeting and asked the following questions:

1. Why is there no report in the parish magazine from the District Councillor who is responsible for Chiddingstone Causeway? Clerk to forward this comment onto D.Cllr Silander.
2. When are the bulk freighter visits booked for this year, and the litter picks which are always on the same dates? The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has just been informed of the 2024 dates, which are: 17th February, 15th June, 14th September and 9th November. See item 123(i).

District Cllr Streatfeild and the member of the public left the meeting at 7.50pm.

Closed Session

- 111. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Outlaw and Cllr Williams, and members accepted their reasons for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from District Cllr Silander.
- 112. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
- 113. The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 12th December 2023** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Shamwana, seconded by Cllr Quirk, and all were in favour.

114. To approve list of meeting dates 2024

Members approved the following meeting dates for 2024:

Tuesday 16 th January	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Causeway Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 20 th February	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 19 th March	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Causeway Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 16 th April	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 23 rd April	Annual Parish Meeting ¹	Chiddingstone Causeway Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 21 st May	Annual Parish Council ²	Chiddingstone Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 18 th June	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Causeway Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 16 th July	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 17 th September	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Causeway Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 15 th October	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 19 th November	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Causeway Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 10 th December	Parish Council	Chiddingstone Village Hall	7.30pm

115. Planning:

i. To consider planning applications received

- i. SE/23/03551/FUL: Newtyehurst Farm, Cowden Pound Road to Truggers Lane, Mark Beech TN8 7DA - removal of two bays of an agricultural barn and conversion of retained barn into 3 bedroom dwelling with ancillary accommodation including biomass woodchip boiler and car parking. The Clerk reported that a site visit is arranged for Thursday at 12pm and the Planning Committee will prepare a response.
- ii. SE/23/03708/WTCA: Old Granary, Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath TN8 7BP – to fell a Silver Birch tree. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- iii. SE/23/03517/HOUSE: Tyehurst Hollow, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AB - demolition of existing outbuilding, erection of single storey rear, side and front extension. Members had no objection to this application if it satisfies planning policy.
- iv. SE/23/03707/MMA: Lockskinners Farm, Lockskinners, Chiddingstone TN8 7NA - amendment to SE/19/02061/FUL (partial demolition of workshops/offices (building 2) and conversion to facilitate a gym with alterations to fenestration. Demolition of storage area and partial conversion of existing stables with installation of mezzanine floor for light industrial/ workshops and offices, with alteration to fenestration. Erection of two stable blocks. Relocation of site access and associated landscaping.) This application proposes a small, mono-pitched lean-to building adjoined to the external wall of the east elevation of Unit 2. 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:

- v. SE/23/03340/NMA: Bassetts, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JX – Non-Material Amendment to SE/23/00182/FUL. Addition of a basement. The Clerk reported that SDC has found this application to be a material one and not non-material, so a planning application is required.
- vi. SE/23/03602/NMA: Truggers Barn, Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath TN8 7BP – Non-Material Amendment to SE/22/03533/HOUSE. Amendments to fenestration and external finishes. Members had no objection to the suggested new finishes to the extension. The Clerk reported that SDC has found this application to be a material one and not non-material, so a planning application is required.

ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions

- SE/23/03316/AGRNOT: Land North of Oakenden Farm, Oakenden Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath - agricultural store. Application refused. Reason: Insufficient evidence is available to confirm that there is a reasonably necessary need for the barn for agricultural purposes. Consequently, the scheme fails to meet the criteria under Class A, Part 6, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). In these circumstances it is necessary for a full planning application to be submitted should the applicant wish to pursue the proposal without amendment.
- SE/23/03032/LBCALT: Bore Place House, Bore Place Road - internal upgrade to 6 existing bathrooms and the installation of a pressurised hot water system. Application approved.
- SE/23/02705/FUL: Bough Beech Farmhouse, Chequers Hill, Bough Beech - 3 timber stables and tack room in an L shape. Application approved.

- SE/23/03602/NMA: Truggers Barn, Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath TN8 7BP – Non-Material Amendment to SE/22/03533/HOUSE. Amendments to fenestration and external finishes. This application is classed as material and not non-material, so a planning application is required.
 - SE/23/03340/NMA: Bassetts, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JX – Non-Material Amendment to SE/23/00182/FUL. Addition of a basement. This application is classed as material and not non-material, so a planning application is required.
 - SE/23/03334/LDCPR: 1 Dukes Meadow, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8LW - Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed conversion of existing attached garage into habitable accommodation. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03455/NMA: Causeway House, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JP – Non-Material Amendment to SE/22/03067/FUL (demolition of existing buildings. Erection of 18 residential units with vehicular access, parking, carports, electricity substation and hard and soft landscaping). This Non Material Amendment seeks to make minor change the enlargement and re-siting of the proposed on-site electricity substation. As a consequence, a slight amendment is proposed to the indicative landscaping scheme and parking layout. In terms of the landscaping, one proposed tree to the western boundary would be replaced with planting of smaller trees and planting of a hedge/shrubs. This will assist in softening the visual impact of the re-siting of the substation. Even though the substation is sited forward of its original position, it would not become a prominent feature. With regards the parking, the layout has been slightly amended, but it does not affect the level of overall parking provision within the site nor does it affect access. The overall the site layout of the proposed residential units will not change as a result and will remain as approved.
- iii. To hear report of the Parish Council’s response to the SDC Draft Local Plan public consultation
Cllr Roper reported that he, Cllr Quirk and the Clerk met and went through the consultation in detail and agreed the Parish Council’s response which was submitted prior to the deadline. The consultation provided three options (1) showed sites within existing settlements and on the edge of higher-tier settlements in the Green Belt and AONB, this approximately met the housing need, (2) showed sites within existing settlements and on the edge of higher-tier settlements in the Green Belt plus a standalone settlement in the AONB and Green Belt at Pedham Place, this met the housing need, and (3) showed sites within existing settlements and on the edge of higher-tier settlements in the Green Belt and AONB, plus a standalone settlement in the AONB and Green Belt at Pedham Place, this exceeded the housing need. The Parish Council’s preferred option was (2) as the housing need for the district would be met and there would be minimal impact on the Green Belt and AONB. Rural exception sites for schemes of affordable housing would still be allowed in the Green Belt.
- iv. To hear update on potential breaches of planning policy
The Clerk updated members regarding a potential breach of planning policy in the parish.

116. Finance

- i. To discuss the 2023/24 Actual & Year End Forecast, and the 2024/25 Budget
The Clerk reported that the spreadsheets have been circulated both electronically and in hard copy. Members discussed the accounts for this current year and the 2024/25 budget.
- ii. To discuss Earmarked Reserves
Members discussed and approved the following transfers of £2,000 from the Election Earmarked Reserve to the General Fund, and £2,000 from the Coronation Event Earmarked Reserve to the General Fund.
- iii. To set the level of the 2024/25 Precept
The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee has discussed the budget and precept requirements and made a recommendation that a precept of £48,950 is set in order to balance the budget. Cllr Harris proposed that the precept for 2024/25 is increased by 3.96% from £47,000 to £48,950. For a Band D house this is an annual increase of £3.01. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Vicary, and all were in favour.
- iv. To approve list of payments
Cllr Nunn proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Shamwana and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Myers to authorise the payments online.

117. Affordable Housing provision in the parish

- i. To hear update regarding the Chiddingstone Affordable Housing schemes

The Clerk reported that Graham Mann, who is ERHA's Development Design Manager, has provided the following update:

- i. Chequers site in Bough Beech: "In the week prior to Christmas, I am pleased to confirm that we agreed a price and terms with a Building Contractor and issued a letter of intent whilst the contracts are signed, at which point I will let you know who the Contractor is. (They are an experienced SME based approximately 20 miles from the site). The technical design and approval work has commenced, and the Contractor is due to start work on site in April."
- ii. Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: "This is with respective Solicitors to thrash out the finer detail. We will provide a further update when we have it."
- ii. To discuss the Chiddingstone Housing Needs Survey 2023
The Clerk reported that the Chiddingstone Housing Needs Survey report has been published and SDC has asked for it to be posted on the Parish Council's website. In summary, of the 21 returns, a need for up to 18 affordable homes, for the following local households was identified:
 - 3 x single people
 - 6 x couples without children
 - 9 x families with children2 of the 18 households include older people and 12 of the households live in Chiddingstone Parish and 6 live outside but indicated local connections. In addition to the above, there was a requirement for 2 Self-Build properties. The survey did not identify a need for alternative housing for older homeowners. SDC has asked for the Parish Council's comments on the survey and members agreed their response.
- iii. To discuss recent flooding in Redleaf Close and hear an update on progress
The Clerk reported that a meeting was due to be held on Friday with the Redleaf Trust and WKHA. This unfortunately had to be postponed and the new date has yet to be set. Residents have reported that flooding continues and it has made it unbearable for them in the winter months.

118. 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 the traffic surveys will take place for a week from Saturday 27th January.
- ii. Highways
 - Urgent Road Closure - Moat Lane, Chiddingstone - 18th January 2024 for up to 2 days. The road will be closed between the junctions of Coldharbour Road and Top Hill, and is to enable urgent carriageway patching works to be carried out by KCC.
 - Cllr Harris reported potholes from Bradley Road to Walters Green, Clerk to report.

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

Cllr Shamwana reported that there is a meeting next Tuesday, 23rd January, when the constitution will be discussed.

120. Aviation

- i. The Clerk reported that the third annual meeting of the AEF's Airspace and Noise Community Forum will be held at 10.00am on Friday 9th February 2024 by zoom.
- ii. The Clerk reported that the GACC newsletter has been received, see correspondence list. GACC say that funding will be required to help GACC with their costs associated with the DCO consultation. Members agreed to add this request to the February Parish Council meeting agenda.
- iii. There will be a Preliminary Meeting which will be held on Tuesday 27th February at 10:00am at the Sandman Signature London Gatwick Hotel and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

121. 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: Southeast Communities Rail Partnership: the history of Gatwick railway station and the airport has been prepared by Bruce Healey and can be found at <https://www.reigatesociety.org.uk>

- ii. Item 3: SDC: “Sevenoaks District Council has allocated £1,308,500 in the latest round of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to support exciting local projects. The projects will help to deliver health, social and environmental benefits to communities right across the District.”
- iii. Item 5: SDC: Better Together Community Mobilisation Funding application form for 2023/24. This funding has come from the UK Prosperity Fund. This fund is up to £1000 (revenue) and needs to link to one of the 5 priorities below. All applications need to be received by Friday 16th February 2024 at 5pm. Bids will be appraised on 1 March 2024
 - Priority 1 Community-led projects addressing local priorities, fostering sense of local pride
 - Priority 2 Tackling isolation and loneliness
 - Priority 3 Improving physical and mental wellbeing
 - Priority 4 Promoting and encouraging community safety
 - Priority 5 Improving the environment or promoting biodiversity and sustainability
 Projects must achieve all of the following:
 - Help to deliver at least one of the five priorities identified.
 - Provide demonstrable benefits for residents of the Sevenoaks District.
 - Provide support and/or services within the Sevenoaks District.
 - Be able to provide evidence that the project has achieved its objectives.
- iv. Item 7: Email from Howard Clark, Sevenoaks District Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Chair: “The IAG is a group of community volunteers who work with Kent Police to improve policing services across the county acting as critical friends. IAGs were created to challenge conventional thinking, to give an independent perspective on issues and to work as partners with Kent Police to inform improvements in service delivery. The group support policing by:
 - providing a link between the police and the communities of Kent
 - sharing community feedback with the police and other agencies
 - giving advice and support during critical incidents as required
 The first meeting will be held on Thursday 25th January 19:00 – 21:00 at SDC offices”
- v. Item 9: Email from Bob Golds regarding the history of Chiddingstone in particular the Chiddingstone Air Raid Warden.
- vi. Item 11: KCC Public Transport: This summary identifies any change to a bus service that has been registered by an operator to take place in December, January, February and March 2023-24. It includes all changes from minor timetable changes to whole service cancellations. (There are none affecting the Chiddingstone parish or neighbouring parishes). Bus services in the UK operate in a de-regulated (privatised) environment outside of the control of KCC who do not license or contract operators or their services. Bus operators are able to change or cancel any service by giving 70 days’ notice to the Department for Transport. Operators will make decisions on what services to run, their routes and their frequencies based on commercial and operational considerations notably that the use of the service will cover the costs of operation. Although operators can make these changes without the permission of KCC who cannot therefore resist them and cannot commit to securing replacement services, KCC will ensure that bus users and other stakeholders are aware of pending changes. See <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/bus-travel/bus-services-in-kent>
- vii. Item 12: KALC: “KALC is actively assisting Town and Parish Councils in addressing the challenges posed by the rising cost-of-living within their communities. We are thrilled to announce the launch of the Kent Parish Council Winter Support Scheme, which officially launched on 10/01/24. Applications are now open for Town and Parish Councils to seek funding for either new or existing initiatives aimed at assisting individuals experiencing financial hardship due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. The scheme is designed to support a diverse range of low-income households, including families with children, older individuals, unpaid caregivers, and those living with a disability - each facing unique and acute challenges. Funds from the scheme can be utilised for various purposes, such as purchasing food, washing machines, fridge freezers, slow cookers, air fryers, as well as energy-saving items like lightbulbs, warm packs, draft excluders, and winter clothing. Additionally, the funds can contribute to managing health conditions, safeguarding independence, and preventing social isolation.”

122. To discuss nominations for the KALC Community Award 2024

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

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

- i. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter and Flytipping
 - i. Parish litter pick
17th February, 15th June, 14th September and 9th November, at 9.30am in Bough Beech, Chiddingstone, Chiddingstone Causeway and Chiddingstone Hoath.
 - ii. Bulk Refuse Freighter visits
17th February: £338.10
15th June: £363.75
14th September: £363.75
9th November: £363.75
10.45-11.15: The Rock Inn
11.30-12.00: The Wheatsheaf
12.15-12.45: Richards Close
Members approved the cost and details.
 - iii. Flytipping
None.
- ii. Chiddingstone Community SpeedWatch Scheme
Next dates to be arranged.
- iii. Rural Swathe & Visibility Cutting contract 2024
The Clerk reported that the contractor can do the dates and Leigh, Penshurst and Hever all happy to proceed. Members agreed to take on the contract for this year as a cluster.
- iv. Emergency Plan
The Clerk reported that Leigh and Penshurst Parish Councils have discussed the idea of a cluster Emergency Plan and are happy to take discussions to the next stage, and a response is due from Hever Parish Council.
- v. Parish telephone boxes and defibrillators
 - i. Chiddingstone: the phone box is now being painted with the red top coat of paint by Hilary Allen and Letty Sundt. A request has been made for a Chiddingstone name plate at the top of the box. Members did not think that this is appropriate for Chiddingstone and felt that the defibrillator plate would be better in this location.
 - ii. Chiddingstone Hoath: members agreed that the Clerk should order the unheated defibrillator box as previously approved. This is currently out of stock but Clerk will investigate alternative suppliers.
- vi. Chiddingstone Car Parking
Members discussed the car parking issue and agreed to take this forward as a priority.

124. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Nunn asked about broadband provision in the parish and undertook to speak to KCC and BT Openreach to see if there are any developments planned in this area that we could communicate to residents.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Village Hall. The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Chiddingstone Parish Council – 16th January 2024

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

Payment Number	Date	Payee	Amount inc. VAT	VAT
575	16.01.24	Clerk - salary	£1,307.87	
576	16.01.24	HMRC – PAYE	£244.98	
577 SO	16.01.24	Kent County Council – pension contribution (Amount due £531.00)	£500.90	
578	16.01.24	Kent County Council – pension contribution (shortfall from S.Order)	£30.10	
579	16.01.24	Clerk – mileage	£69.30	
580	16.01.24	Hever Landscapes Ltd – closed churchyard October	£403.20	£67.20
581	16.01.24	The Shed Man – balance for bus shelter	£4,095.00	£1,365.00
582	16.01.24	SDC- emptying dog bins Oct to Dec 2023	£112.32	£18.72
			£6,763.67	£1,450.92