

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 19TH MARCH 2024 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE CAUSEWAY HALL**

Present: Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr P. Harris, Cllr P. Myers, Cllr T. Nunn, Cllr K. Outlaw, Cllr M. Quirk, Cllr C. Shamwana, Cllr P. Vicary and Cllr H. Williams

Apologies: District Cllr M. Silander

In attendance: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). PC Harry Kemp, County Cllr McArthur, District Cllr R. Streatfeild and one member of the public attended the meeting for the Open Session only.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr McArthur

County Cllr McArthur said that she had nothing to add since last month's report.

Report by District Cllr Streatfeild

District Cllr Streatfeild reported as follows:

- The free distribution of black refuse sacks will stop at the end of March. The Environment Act that was passed by Westminster is having an impact at County and District level on recycling and the reduction of waste. There is a requirement to separate food waste and plans for this will be brought forward in due course.
- At an SDC budget meeting held last month a discussion was held regarding the cut in grant to the CAB of £35,000. However, KCC and central Government have given a one-off grant of £40,000 to the CAB to give them time to consider future funding options.
- The leisure centres in Edenbridge and Sevenoaks will require funding of £185,000, which is under consideration. They received a two year initial finance package in March 2023. The leisure centres are contracted out to Everyone Active for the next two years.
- There is currently a consultation on housing allocations policy. The number of people on the housing register is growing and there may be stiff penalties if people do not accept their first offer of accommodation, but this could be anywhere in the district. District Cllr Streatfeild said that he has resisted this strongly as local people who want to stay in the local area will not want to live in another part of the district.
- SDC had hoped to reach Net Zero by 2030 but this has now been described as no longer realistic.
- D.Cllr Streatfeild said that he will be attending a tour of Gatwick Airport.

Report by District Cllr Silander

The Clerk reported that District Cllr Silander provided a report, but all items were covered by D.Cllr Streatfeild.

Questions from members of the public

1. Katie Ashworth attended the meeting in order to discuss the arrangements for the Real Football match to be held on Good Friday. Katie chairs the committee who run the event. So far this year £7,500 has been raised in sponsorship and it is hoped to raise a further £8,000 for charity on the day. The charities this year are Hospice in the Weald, the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance and local food banks. The game starts at 2pm and people will start to arrive from midday. There will be four portaloos which are being provided by one of the sponsors, Langdale Landscapes. For litter, there will be white ton bags at various places which will reduce the dropping of litter. The Police, Kent Fire & Rescue and SDC have been notified. There will be a lot of marshals on hand during the day and volunteers will be needed to help clear up any rubbish left after the event. Cllr Roper thanked Katie for coming along and hoped the event was a success. He said that the event appears to be well organised.
2. The Clerk relayed a question from a resident regarding mud and manure on Hampkins Hill Road which is incredibly slippery and dangerous. The Clerk has reported this on the KCC online system.

District Cllr Streatfeild and the member of the public left the meeting at 8.03pm.

PC Harry Kemp

Cllr Roper welcomed PC Harry Kemp to the meeting.

PC Kemp said that he is the beat officer for the towns/parishes of Chiddingstone, Leigh, Hever, Penshurst, Cowden and Edenbridge. He will work with the District Council and Parish Councils to resolve issues such as antisocial behaviour or frequent reoffending and will gather evidence on rural burglaries, coordinating with the rural task force and farmers. Community issues will be directed to him, and he reviews the calls received on a daily basis in his area. The Police are seeking another beat officer to work alongside PC Kemp. Members discussed a local antisocial behaviour issue and also a welfare call for a missing person locally. PC Kemp said that it is important that all concerns are reported online at <https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report> including things that you may have seen or heard and this can be done anonymously. It is vital that all crimes are reported as it allows the Police to build a picture of the crime in the area.

County Cllr McArthur and PC Kemp left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Closed Session

- 139. Apologies for absence** were received from District Cllr Silander.
- 140. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
- 141. The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 20th February 2024** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Shamwana, seconded by Cllr Outlaw, and all were in favour.
- 142. To discuss the format of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024**
Members discussed the arrangements and format for the Annual Parish Meeting. SES Water will come to give a talk about Bough Beech Reservoir and the oast house, barn and surrounding area. Cllr Outlaw will give a talk about the cluster Emergency Plan.
- 143. Planning:**
- i. To consider planning applications received
SE/24/00521/FUL: Bassetts, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JX - demolition of existing dwelling, erection of new dwelling, alterations to landscaping and driveway. Following refusal of a recent non-material amendment application which sought changes to internal layout, windows and creation of basement, a new full application has been submitted. The Planning Committee to consider this application and agree a response on behalf of the Parish Council.
 - ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions
 - SE/23/03551/FUL: Newtyehurst Farm, Chiddingstone Hoath - 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. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03603/HOUSE: Truggers Barn, Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath - proposed raised landscape terrace and balustrading. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03517/HOUSE: Tyehurst Hollow, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone - demolition of existing outbuilding, erection of single storey rear, side and front extension. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03068/FUL: Coles Farm, Bore Place Road, Chiddingstone - demolition of existing barn and stable building and erection of a replacement stable building. Construction of private sand school for home and personal use. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03115/FUL: Ancillary Domestic Outbuilding, The Piggery, Vexour Farm - conversion of existing former garage outbuilding and domestic store to provide a one bedroom, one person dwelling with storage space in roof, including replacing garage doors with sliding doors and introduction of velux cabrio rooflights. Application approved.
 - SE/24/00436/AGRNOT: Bore Place Conference and Study Centre, Bore Place Road - a polytunnel for the growing of vegetables for the market garden. Decision: Prior Approval not Required.
 - iii. To report planning appeal decisions
Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/23/3317614. Grove Close, Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone, Kent TN8 7BA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Ms Clifford-Baynes against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
- The application Ref 22/02461/FUL, dated 6 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 December 2022.
- The development is described as ‘retention of stables with ancillary storage and maneges’.

Appeal Dismissed. Conclusion: The appeal scheme represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by the Framework. The Framework indicates that this is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The development results in a loss of spatial and visual openness, thereby adversely impacting upon one of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt and one of its main purposes of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. There is also significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Government policy dictates that, in carrying out the balancing exercise, substantial weight is to be given to any harm caused to the Green Belt. The substantial harm that the development causes the Green Belt and the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area mean that the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. As such, the development conflicts with Core Strategy Policies LO1 and LO8, and ADMP Policy LT2, which aim to protect the Green Belt against inappropriate development, as well as Chapter 13 of the Framework.

iv. To hear update on potential breaches of planning policy

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

144. Finance

i. To consider 2023/24 Earmarked Reserves

Members discussed and agreed the Earmarked Reserves with no changes required.

ii. To consider application for grant from High Weald Churches for Audio/Visual Upgrade in both St. Mary’s Church Chiddingstone and St. Luke’s Church Chiddingstone Causeway

Members discussed this grant application and Cllr Vicary proposed that a grant of £500 is given, this was seconded by Cllr Nunn and all were in favour.

iii. To sign quarterly bank reconciliation

Cllr Roper signed the quarterly bank reconciliation and corresponding bank statement as a correct record.

iv. To approve list of payments

Cllr Outlaw 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. The Clerk reported that £421.83 has been received from Leigh Parish Council towards shared office expenses.

145. 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: “Good progress is being made behind the scenes. Homes England have approved grant funding for this scheme. We have formally signed the build contract with Vulcan Ellis. The pre-commencement planning conditions have been submitted to SDC for approval. The technical design and approval work is well under way. The grass is being maintained at a short height to discourage slow worms from re-establishing themselves. Subject to the approval of the planning conditions, the Contractor will commence building work on site on the 2nd April. Initially this will involve the construction of the new road and the drainage. To ensure pedestrian safety, the PROW will be temporarily closed where it crosses the site from the start of construction for an initial period of 6 months. This has been formally approved by KCC. The contractor will apply for an extension to the closure as required for the completion of the project.”

ii. Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: “I met yesterday with my Director and my colleague Wendy, who will be progressing this project, to discuss the appointment of consultants and the validation requirements for a new planning application. This site is still with solicitors from both English Rural and the Redleaf Trust who are agreeing terms for land purchase and timings etc. When terms are agreed we will move quickly to submit a planning pre-application enquiry to SDC and then a full application.”

- ii. To discuss recent flooding in Redleaf Close and hear an update on progress
The Clerk reported that she attended a meeting with Cllr Roper, WKHA and the agent for the landowner, Laphone Properties, to look at the flooding issues and to try and agree how this could be mitigated. WKHA's property officers are considering whether the flood water could be diverted into the mains drainage in the road.

146. 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 took place for a week from Saturday 27th January. An update from the KCC officer is that due to unplanned roadworks one of the surveys had to be postponed until 21st March, so hopefully an update will be available at the end of next week.
- ii. To discuss whether large vehicles should be discouraged from using Chiddingstone village at peak times
The Clerk reported that a request has been made for two signs in Chiddingstone village restricting large vehicle access over 7.5 tonnes between 08.15 and 09.00 and between 15.00 and 16.00 weekdays only. The response from Nigel Rowe at KCC Highways is that this should be added to the Chiddingstone Highways Improvement Plan but more about the problem should be explained, then the engineers can look at it with a more holistic approach and see what can be done.
- iii. To discuss application to amend the alignment of SR535 at Hoath Hall, Chiddingstone Hoath
Members had no objection to this application.

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

Cllr Shamwana reported that he is waiting to hear back from Chiddingstone Cricket Club and will report further next month.

148. To discuss Bough Beech Reservoir and SES Water's plans to improve the area around the reservoir

- i. Cllr Outlaw reported that the SES Water Flow Zone has made some progress with Chiddingstone School and Four Elms School. Ide Hill School has been contacted as well as other schools in the Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks areas. Cllr Vicary reported that bat studies are being carried out in the barn and oast.
- ii. Cllr Nunn reported that he has been in contact with SES Water regarding Triswim's use of the reservoir for open water swimming. A productive meeting was held and although there were health and safety concerns, these can be mitigated. The times of use will be outside the Bough Beech Sailing Club's operating hours.

149. Aviation

- i. Gatwick Airport: "As part of London Gatwick's noise management initiatives, we started the Reduced Night Noise trial on 11th January. The trial is being conducted between the hours of 01:30-05:00, and only applies to aircraft arriving on to the main runway. This trial aims to lower the noise impact on the ground of arriving aircraft by keeping them flying higher for longer on their approach into London Gatwick, through the use of precision-based navigation technology. Separately, we are also hoping to trial a refreshed Departures Noise Limits scheme later this year, ahead of submission of the new scheme proposal to the DfT for approval."
- ii. GACC: DCO Updates: "The Examination in Public commences with the Preliminary meetings on the 27th February. This is where we challenge any technical concerns we have about the procedure to be followed in the hearings rather than discussion about the application itself. We're challenging the lack of a Specific Hearing on Climate Change/Carbon Emissions, Air Quality, Flooding and Water Environment among others. The hearing itself becomes more active from the 28th February through to 6th March with presentations on a number of subjects. As the hearings develop the process will lead to more detailed examination sessions in the future programme up to the end of August. GACC's team and its fellow community groups and members have been working on challenging this unnecessary and highly damaging project. Our associates at the New Economics Foundation (NEF) will demonstrate that economic and employment benefits have been shown to be grossly over estimated whilst noise mitigation proposals are virtually worthless. The Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) will be challenging the Climate Change/carbon emissions and Sustainable Aviation Fuel claims.
- iii. SDC Portfolio Decision re: Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Examination. SDC's Local Impact Report gives details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area. It says:

“The District has a high quality landscape with a mostly rural character. 60% of land lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald National Landscapes and 93% of the land is designated as Green Belt.

The positive local impacts are:

- Benefit from the £1 billion projected economy creation
- Benefit from the creation of 14,000 jobs
- Benefit from increased tourism
- District Council ambition to create a world cluster of sporting facilities in the north of the district with key hotel developments
- Improvements to the railway station at Gatwick Airport to provide greater capacity

The neutral local impacts are:

- Road improvements, car parking and active travel routes are localised impacts only.

The negative local impacts are:

- Communities in the southern part of the district already experience adverse disturbance from aircraft noise. The situation would be made much worse. If the number of flight paths are not increased, those communities under the narrow flight path will suffer from 35% more aircraft movements and aircraft noise will become much more intrusive.
- Noise pollution for regional tourist attractions and heritage assets.
- There is little clarity on how Gatwick will achieve the reduction in the noise footprint.
- There is little clarity on the enhanced noise insulation scheme and the areas that will benefit. Request that communities in the southern part of the district are included in the scheme.
- There would be an impact on the district transport network with a 40% increase in passengers travelling to the airport – this will create congestion and increased carbon emissions.
- A lack of improvement to the wider rail infrastructure.
- Little clarity on how Gatwick will directly achieve net zero targets.

Conclusion

Support in principle but concerned about negative social and environmental impacts to communities in the south of the district. These need to be mitigated.”

150. To consider and update Risk Assessment

Members considered and updated the Risk Assessment.

151. To discuss correspondence received

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

- i. Item 3: KALC: The government is offering a free portrait of His Majesty The King to all town, parish and community councils in the United Kingdom from 12 February. The Clerk reported that she has ordered the free portrait for the parish.
- ii. Item 7: SDC regarding their recent decision to end the delivery and supply of black sacks and moving to bags for life for recycling. “Black Sacks: we will continue to deliver black sacks to residents up until 1 April 2024. However distribution of black sacks will stop after this date. We are asking residents to put their waste out in the black or grey household waste sacks typically available from most supermarkets and hardware stores. Residents should not put out waste in carrier bags. You can order black sacks from us until 1 April to sell to local residents. Clear Sacks: these will still be delivered to residents until they receive a bag for life for their recycling around September 2024. These can also still be purchased from us.”
- iii. Item 8: SDC News Release: Sevenoaks District Council is taking action to help the environment while protecting its waste collection service. Like many authorities, the Council is keen to reduce its carbon footprint as well as tackling rising costs. Since the pandemic, the volume of household waste and recycling collected has increased significantly with more people working from home and greater reliance on home deliveries. This has meant the cost of providing the service has rocketed in the past four years with more staff and vehicles needed and increased visits to the waste transfer station. Residents value weekly waste collections and the Council is determined to continue to offer this service for as long as it can. That is why the Council has taken the decision that, from 1 April, it will no longer supply residents with black waste sacks.

During the autumn, the Council will also provide every household with a 'sack for life' for their recycling. These will replace clear recycling sacks and will cut down on single use plastics. The Council will continue to supply residents with black sacks until 31 March and clear sacks until everyone has their recycling sack for life. Removing free waste sacks has been shown to increase recycling rates as residents make the best use of their recycling facilities. Once fully implemented, the changes will also save 30,000 miles of driving every year to deliver sacks, further cutting carbon emissions. From 1 April, residents are being asked to put their household rubbish in sacks made for waste. These could be the black or grey sacks available from most supermarkets and hardware stores. Cllr Margot McArthur, Sevenoaks District Council's Cabinet Member for Cleaner & Greener, says: "As far as we are aware, we are just one of a handful of councils to still provide weekly waste collections and the last in the country to supply residents with waste sacks. We hope that residents will support these changes to deliver both cost reductions as well as helping the environment. We are confident that the changes will deliver environmental benefits by encouraging residents to make the best use of our recycling facilities, decreasing our use of disposable plastics and reducing travel - cutting the District's carbon footprint."

- iv. Item 13: Copy email from the Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough Embankments Scheme to District Cllr Streatfeild regarding the number of flood events this year: "Thank you for your email regarding the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankments Scheme. As you may be aware the current legal storage level in flood storage area is 28.05m AOD and this will increase to 28.6m AOD as part of the Leigh expansion scheme. We have attached a map which shows how the flood depths will change across the flood storage area due to the increase in storage capacity. This shows that for Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone there will be no change in flood depths as a result of operation of the Leigh Flood Storage Area to the new impounding level. In terms of operation of the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) our operators use flow data from a catchment flood forecasting model input into our operational tools to determine if we will need to store water for individual storm events. We then use real time telemetry data from rainfall and river level/flow gauges in the catchment to monitor conditions and understand the flows upstream on the River Eden and River Medway. We start to store water in the flood storage area when flows coming into Leigh FSA reach 75 m³/s. During a flood event the catchment conditions and upstream level/storage capacity of the flood storage area are continually reviewed and the plan for managing the event is updated based on the real time and future forecast model data. The number of times that Leigh FSA is operated across a winter period depends on catchment ground conditions (how saturated the ground is) and the amount of rainfall/distribution of rainfall that falls during individual events. Over this winter although it has been a very wet winter, we have not met our impounding threshold and so the storage area has not been used to store any water, although there have been several times that it has come close to needing to do this.

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

- i. Chiddingstone Car Parking
Members discussed car parking possibilities in Chiddingstone.
- ii. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter and Flytipping
 - i. Parish litter pick: the next date is 15th June.
 - ii. Bulk Refuse Freighter visits: the next date is 15th June, stopping at:
 - 10.00-10.30: The Rock Inn
 - 10.45-11.15: The Wheatsheaf
 - 11.30-12.00: Richards Close
 - iii. Flytipping: none.
- iii. Chiddingstone Community SpeedWatch Scheme
None.
- iv. Rural Swathe & Visibility Cutting contract 2024
The Clerk reported that she is still waiting for KCC to advise the amount of funding they will devolve to the cluster.
- v. Emergency Plan
Cllr Outlaw reported that the initial cluster meeting will be held on 21st March in the Causeway Hall. A representative from the Kent Resilience Forum will attend as well as representatives from Penshurst, Hever, Leigh and Chiddingstone.

- Cllr Outlaw said that she attended the Penshurst and Hever Parish Council meetings to explain the project.
- vi. Parish telephone boxes and defibrillators
Chiddingstone Hoath – The Clerk reported that she asked an electrician to have a look and the electricity has been cut off from the phone box. The manufacturers of the external defibrillator cabinets say that power is required for temperature control otherwise the defibrillator and pads become damaged. It was agreed therefore not to have a defibrillator in the phone box, and the nearest one is at The Rock Inn.
 - vii. Parish broadband provision
The Clerk reported that a meeting is in the process of being arranged with Bob Golds and Reverend Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff to talk about broadband provision in the hall and church, with Cllr Nunn and Cllr Shamwana.
 - viii. Summer Family Fun Play Event
The Clerk reported that this will be held on Friday 16th August from 10.30am to 1.30pm on the Chiddingstone Causeway Sports Field.

153. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

None.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 16th April 2024 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Village Hall. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Causeway Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Chiddingstone Parish Council – 19th March 2024

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

| <u>Payment Number</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Payee</u> | <u>Amount inc. VAT</u> | <u>VAT</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 590 | 19.03.24 | Clerk - salary | £1,317.60 | |
| 591 | 19.03.24 | HMRC – PAYE | £235.25 | |
| 592 SO | 19.03.24 | Kent County Council – pension contribution | £531.00 | |
| 593 | 19.03.24 | Clerk – mileage | £72.45 | |
| 594 | 19.03.24 | SDC – election costs | £163.51 | |
| 596 | 19.03.24 | GeoXphere Ltd – subscription renewal Parish Online | £120.00 | £20.00 |
| 597 | 19.03.24 | SDC – bulk refuse freighter 17.02.23 | £405.72 | £67.62 |
| 598 | 19.03.24 | High Weald Churches – grant towards new sound system | £500.00 | |
| | | | <u>£3,345.53</u> | <u>£87.62</u> |

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