

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE CAUSEWAY HALL**

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

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Richard Streatfeild

District Cllr Streatfeild reported that the KCC elections will now take place in May as Kent and Medway had not been accepted as one of the areas that would be part of the Government's Devolution Priority Programme. This was because the Government felt that the size of the population disparity between the two proposed constituent members of the proposed Kent and Medway Combined County Authority would have impact on its governance. However, the Government has asked the authorities to press ahead with their proposals for local government reorganisation, and that all two tier authorities should now make plans to merge to create single authorities, and make structures simpler and more efficient. The leaders of KCC, Medway Council and all twelve district and borough councils in the county have until 21st March to come up with an interim proposal as to how Kent and Medway could be divided into unitary authorities, with full proposals expected by 28th November. No mayor will be elected under these plans and there will be no additional Government funding to carry out these proposals. The political parties will be preparing their manifestos for the county council elections on how they think devolution should progress. It is unknown whether there will be three unitary councils or more, and whether ultimately there will be a mayor. Timescales are also unknown at this stage.

SDC is working on the new Local Plan 2040, although this has been delayed due to the increased housing targets imposed by the Government, SDC is keen to get their new Local Plan in place before the unitary councils are established. The latest NPPF, released in December, has given an immediate mandatory increased housing target for the Sevenoaks district of 1,149 new homes a year, which is a 63% increase on the current target. As 93% of the Sevenoaks District is Green Belt land it will be difficult to reach this target without some inroads being made into greenbelt land. Much of the district is also designated as National Landscapes (AONB) which affords even greater protection. Not all land in the parish is under a National Landscape and so this could potentially be targeted for development. Cllr Nunn asked if it is possible to apply for the National Landscape to be extended and he undertook to make some initial investigations into the process.

Cllr Streatfeild said that Eynsford and Farningham have started the process to create a Neighbourhood Plan, and are currently consulting on a new joint Neighbourhood Plan Area. Once adopted a Neighbourhood Plan becomes a Statutory Planning Document and the planning officers are obliged to consider this when considering planning applications within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Clerk undertook to contact the Eynsford Parish Council clerk to discuss likely timescales.

District Cllr Streatfeild left the meeting at 8.10pm.

Closed Session

- 117. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Myers and Cllr Vicary, and members accepted their reasons for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur and District Cllr Silander.
- 118. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Nunn declared a NPI in item 122(ii) as he is neighbour to the applicant.
Cllr Quirk declared a NPI in item 122(viii) as she is neighbour to the applicant.
- 119. The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 20th January 2025** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Nunn, and all were in favour.

120. To discuss the format of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Monday 28th April 2025

The Clerk reported that the meeting is at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Village Hall. Potential speakers are SES Water, ERHA, Kent Police, the Chiddingstone Fete committee, and maybe someone who can talk about the Emergency Plan. The Community Award will be presented and there will be a Chair's report and reports by County and District Councillors.

121. To hear update on local Government Devolution proposals

See Open Session above.

122. Planning:

i. To consider planning applications received

- i. SE/25/00143/HOUSE: 1 Newtyehurst Cottages, Cowden Pound Road to Truggers Lane, Markbeechn TN8 7DA - erection of double garage. Members objected to this application as the proposed garage would be built in front of the house line and would be better located in the area next to the dwelling. There is concern that the proposal would change the street scene and that trees would have to be felled to facilitate the erection of the garage.
- ii. SE/24/03042/HOUSE: Annexe at Coles Farm, Bore Place Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7AP - extension of the property to provide two new dormer windows. Cllr Nunn reiterated his NPI in this matter. Members had no objection to this application.
- iii. SE/25/00249/FUL: Lockskinners Farm, Lockskinners, Chiddingstone TN8 7NA - proposed temporary timber decking and fencing with soft landscaping ancillary to gym use of Unit 2. Members objected to this application on the grounds that the original application for the change of use to the gym included an acoustic assessment with the doors shut and the windows open. This proposal would have a far higher acoustic impact on the surrounding buildings. Members queried whether the area outside the gym should include a change of use application as part of this proposal.
- iv. SE/25/00357/AGRNOT: Newtyehurst Farm, Cowden Pound Road to Truggers Lane, Markbeechn - demolition of existing forestry building and erection of replacement forestry building with solar panels on roof. Members supported this application.
- v. SE/25/00399/WTCA: Chiddingstone Hoath Green, Chiddingstone Hoath – works to trees in a Conservation Area: Oak; crown reduce 25% (1.75m height and 1.5m width). Members supported this application.
- vi. SE/25/00400/WTCA: St Marys Church, The Village, Chiddingstone TN8 7AH - works to trees in a Conservation Area: large Oak overhanging road - prune back 1.5m from road. Members supported this application.

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

- vii. SE/25/00111/NMA and SE/25/00115/NMA: Tithe Barn North, Clouts Farm, Ide Hill Road, Bough Beech TN8 7PH - Non-Material Amendment to SE/24/01312/HOUSE and to SE/24/01313/LBCALT to change the double back door to a single stable-style door. Members had no objection to this application.
- viii. SE/24/03426/FUL: Watstock Farm, Wellers Town Road, Chiddingstone TN8 7BH - conversion of part of the existing stables into two dwellings. Parking. Alterations to fenestration. Internal alterations. Landscaping and raised beds. Fencing. Members had no objection to the proposed conversion of the stables into dwellings, but the Parish Council notes that the allotted car parking spaces for this proposal are already designated as visitor parking spaces under application 22/03102/FUL.
- ix. SE/24/03443/HOUSE: Pilbeams, Bradley Road, Blackham, Chiddingstone TN3 9UP - demolish and replace garage and adjoining pool building, ancillary garden landscaping works. Members objected on the grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt due to the size of the proposal and the negative impact on the listed building. There was also concern about impact on dark skies due to the amount of glass contained in the proposal.

ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions

- SE/24/02254/HOUSE and SE/24/02255/LBCALT: Hoath House, Chiddingstone Hoath - new internal openings to form new kitchen and dining area, replace existing external doors and window, replace window with patio doors, separate shower to first floor bathroom, repair porch and alter patio levels.

Applications approved.

- SE/24/02994/FUL: Winkhurst Farm, Coopers Corner, Ide Hill - construction of new metal framed and clad vehicle workshop on existing hard standing. Application approved.
- iii. To hear update on potential breaches of planning policy
The Clerk updated members regarding a potential breach of planning policy in the parish.
- iv. To discuss the SDC bespoke planning training event for Chiddingstone and Leigh Parish Councils
The Clerk reported that she has asked for dates in March/April.

123. Finance

- i. To approve list of payments
Cllr Shamwana proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Quirk and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Outlaw to authorise the payments online.

124. Affordable Housing provision in the parish

- i. To hear update regarding the Chiddingstone Affordable Housing schemes
The Clerk reported that English Rural Housing Association has provided the following update:
 - i. Chequers site in Bough Beech: “Arazu Construction Limited continue to make excellent progress on the site which is well managed and organised, with no health and safety issues to report. They are still forecasting the end June 2025 for completion. Sewage Treatment Plant installation is complete, and SES Water connections are commencing this week. UKPN to confirm when they will start on the electricity supply to site. Plots 4-7 are at 2nd fix and decoration stage including tiling and vinyl flooring. Plots 8-11 have plaster boarding and plastering progressing. Our Lettings Team will begin the process of advertising properties shortly. Anyone who contacts the Parish Council expressing interest should be signposted to register with Sevenoaks District Council if they are not already registered and also they should express interest in Chiddingstone/Bough Beech.”
 - ii. Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: “The consultant team continue to work on finalising the drawings and reports for the planning submission at the end of March 2025. Our engineer has completed the Flood Risk Modelling and currently working on access road levels. The landscape architect is liaising with the ecologist to finalise landscape drawings and management plans to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain targets. The architect issued house type plans last week which have been commented on by consultant team. I will circulate the updated drawings in due course. An internal review of the scheme with our housing team has provided some additional comments which the consultant team are addressing, mainly around future maintenance of the Biodiversity Net Gain mitigation area.
University College London – Bartlett School of Planning visit
The Clerk reported that ERHA has advised that there will be a planned visit of 37 students and 3 lecturers from the Bartlett School of Planning on 10th March 2025. The undergraduate planning students will meet with the Sevenoaks Housing team and the Rural Housing Enabler at Causeway House to understand the challenges of rural housing delivery. They will visit both the Chiddingstone Causeway and Bough Beech sites to understand the challenges of rural housing planning. Topics for discussion are:
 - Rural planning priorities, villages and affordable housing: Sevenoaks District Council
 - The function of rural housing enablers and Rural Exception Sites: Rural and Community Housing Enabler from Kent
 - The work of English Rural Housing Association: English Rural Housing Association.Members asked if they could attend this visit.
- ii. To discuss measures to mitigate flooding in Redleaf Close
The Clerk reported that Neil Diddams at WKHA has responded to say that his contractor has now come back with an alternative solution to divert the water from the ditch into a new manhole in the pavement. WKHA will need permission from the landowner, Thames Water and the highways authority. WKHA believe this to be a sensible option as it will not put increased pressure on the pond or necessitate the uplift of the car park. The contractor carried out a full CCTV of the drains including the ones in the path. They are going to fit a new manhole and are aware of the level differences.

WKHA has applied for all the permissions and has undertaken to keep the Parish Council updated. The contractor is SP Bardwell, based in Cheltenham. The Clerk has updated the residents and also Batcheller Monkhouse, the land agents for The Redleaf Trust.

iii. To hear report of a vacancy at Slaters in Bough Beech under a Local Lettings Plan

The Clerk reported that there was a vacancy at a two bedroom house in Slaters under the Local Lettings Plan. Details were sent to people who may have been interested and some did apply. The rent was £165 per week (£715 per month) for a mid-terrace house with its own garden and parking space.

125. Highways and Rights of Way

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

No update. Clerk to chase again.

ii. To discuss a resident's request for speed reduction measures in Chiddingstone Hoath

The Clerk reported that a resident has requested a speed reduction or speed reduction measures on the road from Truggers Lane to Mark Beech. The resident said that the speed limit is 60mph and as it is a straight road vehicles often speed. Members were sympathetic but agreed that any speed reduction measures on this road are unlikely as KCC is unsupportive of such measures in much more built up areas.

iii. To discuss the provision of kerbing along one side of the green in Chiddingstone Hoath

The Clerk reported that after Cllr Harris raised this last month, she made enquiries with KCC and was told that as the Parish Council own the green, KCC will not install kerbs as they do not protect land that it not in their ownership. It would be down to the Parish Council to fund. Clerk to obtain a quote.

iv. To discuss the mud on the road on Hampkins Hill Road

Cllr Shamwana reported that the farmer left a very large amount of mud on the road after tractor work in the fields. This was not cleared after two days, although the contractor did attempt to, but it was still very muddy. The Clerk then contacted KCC and it was classed as an emergency because the mud would make the road very dangerous and slippery. Clerk to follow up the impassable footpath

v. KCC Highways

- Temporary Road Closure - B2027 Chequers Hill, Bough Beech - 12th February 2025 for two days between 09.30hrs and 15.30hrs outside Bough Beech Farm House. Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while BT pole replacement works are undertaken by Openreach.
- Urgent Road Closure - The Village, Chiddingstone - 17th February 2025 for up to 2 days between Castle Inn Public House and the junction of Mill Lane. It is planned that the road will be closed between 07:00hrs and 16:30hrs each day. This is to enable carriageway repairs to be carried out by KCC.
- Urgent Road Closure - Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone Causeway - 18th February 2025 for up to 3 days. The whole length of the carriageway will be closed. It is planned that the road will be closed between 08:00hrs and 16:00hrs each day. This is to enable urgent carriageway repairs to be carried out by KCC.

126. To hear update on the ongoing works at The Castle Inn

Cllr Roper updated members on his ongoing discussions with the Licensee of The Castle Inn.

127. To discuss the proposal for a new play area in Chiddingstone Causeway

i. The Clerk reported that she met a representative from Wicksteed at the sports field in Chiddingstone Causeway, and he has now provided a quote of £49,560.10 + VAT for a see-saw, a rock n' bowl roundabout, a two bay swing with three swing seats, a Levant multi-play unit, a caterpillar counter and a cuckoo clock. There would be soft play tarmac under the equipment only, the rest would be grass, with a green fence and yellow gate. Members were grateful to receive the quote but decided to put this proposal on hold for the time being until a need for the equipment is evident.

ii. The Clerk reported that she asked Batcheller Monkhouse about clearing the brambles and the refurbishment of the pavilion, and was told that the brambles will be cleared in the springtime, and the pavilion refurbishment will follow.

128. To discuss the provision and siting of a new bench on the green in Chiddingstone Hoath

The Clerk reported that as part of the Annual Tree Survey, the contractor said that the split in the trunk of the tree is a concern and recommended that the canopy of the tree be reduced by 25%, which would be 1.75m in height and 1.5m in width. This would reduce the weight of the branches and minimise the chance of a branch falling. It would mean that the tree hopefully can stay in situ for longer. There was also a recommendation that for safety reasons the bench currently located under the tree be moved. The Clerk will add these recommendations to the Parish Council risk assessment. The contractor, The Original Tree Surgeons, has applied for permission for the tree works in a Conservation Area, see item 122(v) above. Members agreed to move the bench away from the canopy and to create a new hard standing, and remove the existing hardstanding.

129. 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: Kent Police:
 - Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone - between 16:00 on Wednesday 15th January and 08:00 on Thursday 16th January, somebody broke into a barn and stole items including power tools. Crime Report No. 46/9025/25
 - Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone - on Saturday 18th January between 00:01 and 03:21, somebody tried to break into a garden shed, damaging the door. Crime Report No. 46/9919/25
- ii. Item 4: KCC is consulting on Post 16 Transport Policy Statements for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years. No significant changes are being proposed for the 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. KCC is proposing two main changes for the 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.
 - The first is for a Personal Transport Budget to be provided to most learners of sixth-form age who qualify for funded travel support from KCC.
 - The second is to initially require adult learners (those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) to apply for a discretionary bursary from their education or training provider for help with travel costs first before applying to KCC for additional support.

See www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation. The consultation is open until 23rd March 2025.
- iii. Item 5: SDC: The owner of a vehicle used in a fly tipping incident in Eynsford, Kent has been prosecuted by SDC. The case was brought to court following an investigation by the SDC's Environmental Enforcement Team. The illegal fly tip took place at 5.20pm on 14 February 2024 in Crockenhill Lane, Eynsford.
- iv. Item 8: SDC: the next CIL Spending Board will be taking place on Wednesday 2nd July 2025. All applications must be received by no later than 11.59pm on Monday 24th March 2025.
- v. Item 9: Aviation Environment Federation: Webinar on Airport Expansion on Wednesday 5th March 2.30-3.30pm. "With Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton now being eyed up for expansion, AEF wants to provide a comprehensive overview of current Government positioning in relation to expansion. AEF's director, Tim Johnson, will talk through the current situation, and the implications at a local and national level. While media focus has been the south-east, the problems of noise pollution, air pollution and congestion are common to all communities around the country impacted by airports' plans to expand. This webinar aims to provide a forum for members to share experiences, ask questions and hopefully find new ways to challenge expansion wherever it happens."
- vi. Item 10: GACC February Newsletter. The Clerk reported that the Parish Council gave a grant of £500 in February 2024. Members agreed to discuss a further grant at the March Parish Council meeting.

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

- i. Chiddingstone Closed Churchyard

The Clerk reported that she met with Cllr Harris and Hever Landscapes to look at the work required in the Closed Churchyard. The quote to cut down the Goat Willow that is growing on one of the graves and also the Elder that is overhanging a grave, also to tidy the large Holly bush removing as many brambles as possible, also to trim around the memorial plaques is £240 + £65 for the removal of debris, plus VAT. Members approved the quote. The Original Tree Surgeons has requested permission from SDC to remove a small amount of the Oak tree growing over the road. Cllr Harris said that the works have the approval of the Church Wardens.

- ii. Chiddingstone Car Parking
None.
- iii. Rural Swathe cutting contract
The Clerk reported that the cost of the two rural swathe cuts has been £7,200. The devolved funding from KCC is £4,950.07. The net cost therefore is £2,249.93. Divided by four parishes, the net cost is £562.48 per parish. Penshurst pay less (£228.45) as they undertake their own hedge cutting which is included in the KCC funding. The Clerk has submitted invoices to KCC and the three other parishes. For 2025-26, KCC has asked if the cluster wish to continue the service. They have asked for a lot more documentation this year, and for next year, they have asked that Chiddingstone Parish Council as the lead parish has its own Health & Safety Policy and nominate a competent person. The Clerk has received a quote from BA Compliance for the preparation of an adequate Health & Safety Policy of between £130 and £150. Members approved the quote and agreed to continue with the contract in 2025-26.
- iv. Installation of the memorial bench and Holiday Fellowship sign on the Village Green in Chiddingstone
None.
- v. SpeedWatch
It was agreed to arrange a session when the weather has improved.
- vi. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter and Flytipping
 - i. Parish litter pick
Members agreed to have the next litter pick on 5th April at 9am in Bough Beech and Chiddingstone village, and at 9.30am in Chiddingstone Hoath and Chiddingstone Causeway.
 - ii. Bulk Refuse Freighter visits

2025 dates:	05.04.25	10.45-11.15: The Rock Inn 11.30-12.00: The Wheatsheaf 12.15-12.45: Richards Close
	14.06.25	10.00-10.30: The Rock Inn 10.45-11.15: The Wheatsheaf 11.30-12.00: Richards Close
	13.09.25	10.00-10.30: The Rock Inn 10.45-11.15: The Wheatsheaf 11.30-12.00: Richards Close
	08.11.25	10.45-11.15: The Rock Inn 11.30-12.00: The Wheatsheaf 12.15-12.45: Richards Close
 - iii. Flytipping
There was a fly tip on Hampkins Hill Road which the Clerk reported and was removed.
- vii. Emergency Plan
Cllr Outlaw reported that this has been delayed due to health reasons, but it is intended to get the draft Plan in place and then the community engagement part can take place. SDC have said that they are happy to come and talk to the committee and the Chair of the National Flood Forum has also offered to be involved. Flood Wardens can then be sought. Once the Emergency Plan is in place, the committee can move onto the Resilience section.

131. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Cllr Shamwana asked whether the Charcott phonebox will be refurbished. The Clerk reported that this is in Leigh parish and the landlord of The Greyhound Inn has offered to coordinate the refurbishment.
- ii. Cllr Outlaw gave an update on the Margaret Hyde Trust. Two of the properties are undergoing refurbishment and a new heating system. The charity took out a £40,000 interest-free loan from the Almshouse Association. There have been 12 applications for the current vacancy, this was reduced to a short-list of 6, and the Trustees are currently considering these, using the guidance and advice of the Almshouse Association.
- iii. Items for future agenda: GACC grant funding, application to extend the National Landscape and whether the services of a professional planning consultant should be used.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 17th March 2025 at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Causeway Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Chiddingstone Parish Council – 17th February 2025

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

Payment Number	Date	Payee	Amount <u>inc. VAT</u>	<u>VAT</u>
688	17.02.25	Clerk - salary	£1,363.63	
689	17.02.25	HMRC – PAYE	£247.47	
690 SO	17.02.25	Kent County Council – pension contribution	£549.66	
691	17.02.25	Clerk – mileage and reimbursement of costs	£63.45	
692	17.02.25	P.P. Broad Agricultural Contractors – 2 nd rural swathe cut	£4,320.00	£720.00
			<u>£6,544.21</u>	<u>£720.00</u>

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