

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DITTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE **COUNCIL CHAMBER** AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 8TH APRIL 2024

PRESENT: CLLRS. M J PORTER [VICE-CHAIR], A WATERS, A R MULCUCK, D ADLINGTON,
 MRS L COX, J COX & MRS K NASH
 MRS N GREENAWAY [CLERK OF THE COUNCIL], MRS B BENN [ADMIN ASSISTANT]
 KCC CLLR A KENNEDY, TMBC CLLR C WILLIAMS

411. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The Vice-Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

412. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Newman, Mrs Dearden, Laidouci and Mrs Throssell. The previously notified reasons for absence were **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED** and recorded in the absence book Ref. 539.

Apologies were also received from Borough Cllrs Cannon and Hammond

413. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

414. **CASUAL VACANCIES**

It was **NOTED** that no applications had been received.

415. **CONFIRMATION & SIGNING OF MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 4TH MARCH 2024**

The minutes of the above meeting were **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true record.

416. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

417. **MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD DURING MARCH 2024**

(a) **For Confirmation & Signing**

(i) COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE, 11th March 2024

The minutes of the above meeting were presented by Cllr Porter and signed as a true record.

418. **CORRESPONDENCE**(a) For Noting

The following items were **CIRCULATED, READ** and **NOTED**:

Ditton Twinning Assoc. Minutes of Meeting held on 14.03.2024

SLCC: The Clerk, March 2024

Clerks & Council's Direct: March 2024

Larkfield 10K Road Race: Details of race 22/09/2024

Nat West Larkfield: Notice of Branch Closure – 10/07/2024

(b) For Decision

NOTED none received to date.

419. **FINANCE**(a) Accounts For Payment

RESOLVED the following payments be **APPROVED** and **RATIFIED**:-

March Payroll Summary

<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Gross</i>	<i>£31,359.73</i>
	<i>Net</i>	<i>£23,221.42</i>

Accounts (approved and paid 15.03.24)

Community Centre				
JPS	Toilet Refurbishment – part payment	VAT	25000.00 5000.00	£30,000.00
M Matei	Youth centre cleaning		56.00	£56.00
Envirocure	Legionella Testing	VAT	48.75 9.75	£58.50
1 st A Pest Control	Pest Control	VAT	60.00 12.00	£72.00
KCS	Cleaning & consumables Cleaning & consumables Stationary	VAT	107.96 125.98 79.33 62.66	£375.93
Atlas	Alarm Activation	VAT	57.50 11.50	£69.00
Bar				
Lansdell	Bar Stock	VAT	187.04 235.75 136.80 -2.99 97.79	£654.39
F&A				
Aquaid	Water cooler	VAT	41.96 8.39	£50.35

Savills	Quarry Rent		100.00	£100.00
OSA				
Sovereign	Trim Trail – part payment	VAT	8333.33 1666.67	£10,000.00
Lister Wilder	Tools – Blade x 3	VAT	288.00 57.60	£345.60
Travis Perkins	Consumables	VAT	11.66 6.35 3.60	£21.61

Accounts (approved and paid 26.03.24)

Community Centre				
Travis Perkins	Car park repairs		7.46 43.54 7.57 38.92 19.49	£116.98
KBC	Heating repairs	VAT	90.00 18.00	£108.00
Glass & Mirror Co	Fire door replacement – cedar room	VAT	915.00 183.00	£1,098.00
Matt Stephens	Stage lighting		250.00	£250.00
Fours Jays	Water Trailer Toilet Trailer Toilet Trailer refund Water Trailer refund		289.26 1800.00 (1350.00) (267.84) 94.28	£565.70
Maidstone Cleaners	Window Clean		260.00	£260.00
RB Plumbing	Replacement shower heads		337.06	£337.06
Bar				
Lansdell	Bar Stock	VAT	293.43 180.97 82.97	£557.37
Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	VAT	617.68 123.54	£741.22
F&A				
Rialtas	Training	VAT	100.00 20.00	£120.00
OSA				
J Dowle	New Road fencing	VAT	4851.00 808.50	£4,851.00
EDF	New Road electric	VAT	83.97 4.20	£88.17

March BACS Payments (not previously listed)

08.03.24	Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	£2,064.33
08.03.24	A Payne	Electrical work	£445.00
08.03.24	Fourjays	Toilet trailer deposit	£188.00
08.03.24	Trevor May	MUGA resurfacing	£11,611.80
14.03.24	Savills	Quarry Rent	£100.00
15.03.24	Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	£758.04

15.03.24	M Lancely	Kilnbarn entertainment	£230.00
15.03.24	HMRC	PAYE/NI	£4,653.97
15.03.24	KCC Pension	Pension contributions	£1,410.16
25.03.24	M Beautridge	Bar Services	£218.40
26.03.24	Natwest	Petty Cash	£200.00
27.03.24	Tree Monkey's	Tree work	£900.00
28.03.24	Excel Klean	Carman Room floor	£90.00
28.03.24	Lansdell	Bar Stock	£234.95
28.03.24	HMRC	PAYE/NI	£5,750.06
28.03.24	KCC Pension	Monthly contributions	£1,353.56
28.03.24	Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	£582.10

March Deposit Refunds

07.03.24	Carman Room 03.03.24	£66.50
12.03.24	Oaken Hall 20.03.21	£50.00
13.03.24	Carman Room 09.03.24	£59.00
20.03.24	Oaken Hall 10.03.24	£50.00

(c) Direct Debits

RESOLVED the following direct debits be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-

March Direct Debits

01.03.24	Paymentsense	Card Charges	£82.44
04.03.24	WEX	Vehicle Fuel	£100.06
04.03.24	BT	Telephone	£142.31
05.03.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£2,357.26
07.03.24	Rentokil Initial	Washroom services	£179.85
07.03.24	Sky	Sky Sports	£433.86
11.03.24	Commercial Services	Energy charges	£16,028.87
12.03.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,332.14
14.03.24	FDMS	Card Charges	£262.75
15.03.24	Natwest	Bankline	£42.20
15.03.24	Safety Effect	H&S	£114.00
15.03.24	DHFE	Till Rental	£369.60
15.03.24	Paytek	Card Charges	£54.00
18.03.24	Sage	Monthly subscription	£229.20
19.03.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,942.49
20.03.24	BT	Broadband	£139.61
21.03.24	Hugo Fox	Website	£23.99
25.03.24	WEX	Vehicle Fuel	£126.04
25.03.24	Host My Office	Computer support	£402.12
25.03.24	NEST	Pension contributions	£1,034.67
25.03.24	BOC	Bar Gas	£140.17
26.03.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,386.36
28.03.24	Natwest	Bank charges	£114.47
28.03.24	Focus	Telephone	£96.28
28.03.24	BT	BT Sports	£445.44
28.03.24	Focus	Telephone	£165.00
28.03.24	Veolia	Refuse collection	£501.26

(d) Debit Card Payments

RESOLVED the following debit card payments be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-

March Debit Card

01.03.24	Jayar Parts	Vehicle Parts	£34.92
05.03.24	Screwfix	Plumbing repairs	£5.79
08.03.24	Tesco	Raffle Prizes	£85.19
08.03.24	Eventbrite	Allotment training	£168.00
11.03.24	Amazon	Monthly subscription	£8.99
11.03.24	Sign Shed	Toilet Signs	£42.90
11.03.24	Amazon	Padlocks	£22.22
11.03.24	Amazon	Stationary	£14.99
11.03.24	Timpson	Key Cutting	£28.00
13.03.24	Amazon	St Patricks decorations	£25.96
22.03.24	Amazon	Poles/barrier fencing	£143.83
22.02.24	Poyntell	Key cutting	£149.40
28.03.24	Boro Green Machinery	OSA Tools	£20.95

(d) Audit(i) KCC Internal Audit Programme and Fees for 2024/25 & Report of Visit 2

READ, NOTED and **APPROVED**.

(ii) External Audit [dates for A/Cs and Annual Return Submission]

It was **NOTED** that the accounts and annual return would be approved at the meeting on 3rd June 2024 and that the submission deadline for the Annual Return was 30th June 2024.

(e) End of Year/Unspent Budget to Earmarked Reserve

RESOLVED to slip forward unspent budgets in the OSA budget for training, tractor/mower repairs, trees/planting, general treatments and playground repairs. Also in the Bar's budget to slip forward the unspent repairs/replacements and service contracts budgets towards the cost of the new bar counter.

(f) Insurance Renewal

NOTED this is due for renewal on 1st June and that the Clerk is reviewing the insurance needs and renewal quotations. Information to be available at the next meeting.

(g) Asset Register – for approval and signing

RESOLVED to defer this item to the next Full Council meeting.

420. **REPORTS FROM BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

TMBC Cllr Colin Williams **REPORTED** on the following items:

New Chief Executive

A new Chief Executive for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council has been chosen subject to formal approval at Full Council tomorrow. The successful candidate is Damian Roberts who is currently the Chief Executive at Surrey Heath Borough Council, having previously served in

senior roles at Waverley, Croydon and Tower Hamlets. He will be joining us in the summer after he has served his notice period. However, he has a good track record in delivering high quality services to help us achieve the ambitious goals set out in the corporate strategy.

Parking Charges

Some of you will have read about parking charges being implemented at Martin Square and the Aylesford Car Parks. Rob and I pressed Cabinet for a period of free parking at Martin Square bearing in mind some of the concerns raised by Ditton Parish Council and as a result a late change saw half an hour's free parking – alternatives such as a refund scheme from traders was not being considered practical. Paid for parking will be implemented at Aylesford although we as the local Borough Councillors are looking to further mitigate charges as far as possible for residents and visitors.

Planning Matters

Rob has called in the Cobdown House application today. Rob and I visited the site recently and met one of the residents of Cobdown Close who showed us inside the Finnish Sauna and showed exactly where the proposed houses would be situated.

I along with Steve Hammond will be attending the public meeting regarding the East Malling Trust development here on Monday 15th April with Matt Boughton, the Leader of the Council. Rob has to chair the Audit Committee meeting that night and so he sends his apologies.

The following questions about the parking charges were asked – what time will the charges be applicable, will there be concessions for those with disabilities and how will it be enforced. Cllr Williams responded that it would likely be between 6am-8pm, disabled parking will hopefully be free of charge and initially it will be monitored by Wardens but possibly ANPR cameras in the future.

KCC Cllr Andrew Kennedy **REPORTED** on the following items:

KCC's Financial Position

Cllr Kennedy said the current position is not good as over £1/2 billion has been taken from the budget since 2020. There has been a cut to grants and council tax increases are restricted. He added that over 100 Councils in the country have been issued s.114 notices. Fortunately KCC is not one of them and not in as bad a position as many others but there is still a great shortfall in the funding received from Government to what is actually needed to deal with issues such as potholes. He added that the biggest issue was the cost of Adult Social Care that has to be funded.

Community Website

Cllr Kennedy advised that following the meeting held last year, he is still working with volunteers to create the new website which will list everything that is available within each parish/village.

Members Grant

Cllr Kennedy advised that this year his grant had been greatly reduced. He has previously supported many projects in the village. Recent donations were made to Ditton Scouts and he has also donated packs of sunflower seeds to all the local schools and pre-schools.

Planning

Cllr Kennedy said unfortunately he would be unable to attend the public meeting on 15th to discuss the EMT application but he will be lobbying against it. He added it would be bigger than Peter's Village and would fundamentally change the character of the area. He advised the council needed to find a "legal loophole" to challenge this application and seek professional assistance in obtaining this if possible.

The Chairman thanked both councillors for their reports.

421. **REPORTS FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE TEAM & KCC WARDEN**

It was NOTED that there was no report available but the Clerk had received information from TMBC about their new ASB Team. This was circulated and the Clerk will try to find out if this new team will be able to assist with ASB issues in the village such as those experienced in the car park last summer.

422. **DATE SENSITIVE PLANNING MATTERS**

(a) Plans Received for Comment

(i) TM/24/00412/PA - Planning Permission (Minor Development) - SEW SITE, Mill Hall Road, Ditton, Aylesford

Installation of a new building to house UK Power Networks UKPN infrastructure to power equipment at South East Waters water treatment works site at Aylesford

RESOLVED NO OBJECTION

(ii) TM/24/00408/PA Planning Permission (Minor Development) ADVO Group Limited DEVELOPMENT SITE SOUTH AND WEST OF COBDOWN HOUSE, Station Road, Ditton, Aylesford

Residential redevelopment of the site, to provide 9 dwelling houses, incorporating parking provision, private amenity space and biodiversity enhancements

RESOLVED THIS COUNCIL HAS THE FOLLOWING STRONG OBJECTIONS TO THIS APPLICATION:

Vehicular Access

The private road to site has a system of barriers near the clubhouse (including a maximum height barrier). These barriers would constrain access to the site for emergency vehicles.

- DPC has particular concerns about:
 - Access for emergency vehicles, such that they can pass the barriers with the minimum delay, and travel along the access road at pace, if required.
 - The poor state of repair of the metalled access road
 - Inadequate nature of bridge repairs in place at present, Loose steel plates have been laid upon it (to spread the load?).
 - Not suitable mitigation for regular use by
 - heavy plant during construction; and/or
 - service vehicles e.g. refuse lorries have a maximum weight of 32 tonnes
- Should development proceed, to prevent obstruction of Ditton Stream, DPC request TMBC include planning conditions that, before any works commence:
 - Both bridges are replaced/upgraded to cope with the maximum weight of construction and service vehicles; and
 - Access for service and emergency vehicles must be addressed.

Flooding

- The Ditton Stream is known to flood in this area; and the changes in water flow due to surfacing and terracing may make this worse.

The loss of mature trees with TPOs

- 3 trees will be destroyed
- 1 may be damaged

Traffic generation

These additional properties will generate additional traffic which will have to feed into Station Road, which is already congested at morning and evening peaks.

Effect on the Cobdown Farm Conservation Area

- Destruction of the recognised setting to the North
 - The extensive open space (sports fields), provides an attractive and generally open setting to the north¹

Effect on Impact on a Listed Building (Finnish Sauna)

- Currently a tranquil setting
- Described by the Finnish Ambassador as “a little bit of Finland in the UK”

Provision of Parking

- Properties 1-3 have inadequate parking for the location² which recommends two independently accessible parking spaces per property.

Impact on Wildlife

- The plans include:
 - The terracing of the slope above the Ditton Stream.
 - New impermeable surfacing for driveways and roads, will reduce the absorption of rainfall where it meets the surface.
- These changes to the local watershed may lead to greater run-off and significant reduction in water quality of the stream, especially during construction.
- Any reduction in the stream's water quality could be devastating to local wildlife, either in the stream itself; or, in extremis, further down river where it could affect the SSSI at Burham and Holborough Marshes.

Badgers³

- DPC is concerned about implications of this development upon the badgers known to frequent the area
- Areas surrounding the site are suitable for badgers as they contain suitable foraging and commuting grounds such as woodlands to the east and north. The developer's survey³ found no signs of badger activity on site during the survey, however it states that some parts of the woodland were inaccessible therefore it was not possible to conclude if badger setts were present.
- DPC is concerned that the assessment was insufficient to confirm that there were no badgers on site. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence!

Biodiversity augmentation

- Part of the biodiversity augmentation includes log piles in private gardens. It is difficult to conceive that these features will be maintained by future property owners in perpetuity even if a covenant is placed upon them to do so.

References

- 1 COBDOWN FARM CONSERVATION AREA; TMBC; Cobdown Farm Conservation Area Appraisal
- 2 SUBURBAN EDGE/VILLAGE/RURAL as defined in Kent Design Guide Review: Interim Guidance Note 3, 20 November 2008
- 3 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Report number: BWE-PEARBNG-DittonME20 (FINAL)

(iii) TM/24/00290/PA Lawful Development Certificate Proposed - 69, COBDOWN CLOSE, DITTON, AYLESFORD, ME20 6SZ

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Extend existing drop kerb

RESOLVED NO OBJECTION

(iv) TM/24/00372/PA - Maj outline planning permission with EIA DEVELOPMENT SITE LAND EAST OF KILN BARN ROAD AND WEST OF, Hermitage Lane, Aylesford

Outline planning application with all matters reserved (except for access) for development of land to west of Hermitage Lane and East of Kiln Barn Road comprised of: a residential-led development including affordable housing; a new village centre including a primary school; ancillary commercial, community and employment floors pace; strategic open space, parkland, child play provision and sustainable drainage infrastructure; new access points and associated transport infrastructure. Application supported by an Environmental Statement

Cllr Waters gave a presentation of the application and a suggested response prepared by himself and the chairman. The draft response was very comprehensive and specified 14 areas of concern:

RESOLVED that the draft to put forward at the public meeting as Ditton Parish Council's initial response is as follows:

Ditton Parish Council strongly objects to the planning application, as specified, in the following areas of concern:

1. Loss of Privacy
2. Overshadowing and Overlooking
3. Adequacy of parking
4. Highway safety
5. Traffic Generation
6. Noise Dust and Air Pollution
7. Impact on Conservation Area(s)
8. Facilities
9. Intrusion into the countryside
10. Public Rights of Way (PRoWs)
11. Archaeology
12. Tree Protection Order / Species Protection
13. Water Usage and Sewage
14. Hazardous Waste and Contaminated Ground

The council's objections are described in more detail in an attached 17 page document.

Public Meeting

It was **NOTED** that following a great public response to this application, a public meeting had been called for the following Monday (15th April) which would be followed by an Extra-Ordinary parish Council Meeting to update [if necessary] and finalise the parish council's initial objections.

Cllr Porter thanked Cllrs Waters and Newman for all the hard work put into researching and preparing the information.

(b) Plans Dealt with in March

TM/24/00387/TPOC – 613 London Road, Ditton, Aylesford, Kent

4 x Sycamore trees. (T1,T2,T3,T4 Applicant references) Reduce all by 50% by pollarding or worst case by 30% and if remaining, remove any overhang into the adjacent road and dead wood throughout the trees in general. Trees along the boundary line within G1 of TPO

NO OBJECTION SUBJECT TO TMBC TREE OFFICER'S APPROVAL

(c) Orchard Mill [Ditton Edge]

(i) Update if Available

NOTED no updates to report.

423. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

NOTED all arrangements are in hand.

424. **MATTERS ARISING FROM “CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING”**

No matters were arising.

425. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.36pm

Chairman
8th May 2024