

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DITTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 4TH MARCH 2024

PRESENT: CLLRS. N NEWMAN [CHAIRMAN], M J PORTER [VICE-CHAIR], MRS J DEARDEN, A WATERS, A LAIDOUCCI, A R MULCUCK, MRS A THROSSELL, D ADLINGTON, MRS L COX, J COX & MRS K NASH
MRS N GREENAWAY [CLERK OF THE COUNCIL], TMBC CLLR R CANNON

394. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

395. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Borough Cllrs Hammond and Williams.

396. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

397. **CASUAL VACANCIES**

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

398. **CONFIRMATION & SIGNING OF MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 5TH FEBRUARY 2024**

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

399. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

400. **MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD DURING FEBRUARY 2024**

(a) **For Confirmation & Signing**

(i) **COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE, 12TH FEBRUARY 2024**

The minutes of the above meeting were presented by Cllr Porter and signed as a true record subject to the addition of Cllr Newman to the list of those present.

(ii) **PLANNING, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, 19TH FEBRUARY 2024**

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

(iii) **OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES COMMITTEE. 19TH FEBRUARY 2024**

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

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

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

Ditton Heritage Centre:	<u>Thank you for donation</u>
Heart of Kent Hospice:	<u>Thank you for donation</u>
KSS Air Ambulance:	<u>Thank you for donation</u>
Citizens Advice Bureau:	<u>Thank you for donation</u>
Local Council's Update:	<u>March 2024</u> <u>Notice of ceasing of publication</u>
UK Government/Cubiquity:	<u>Confirmation of order of Kings Portrait</u>
KALC:	<u>Newsletter March 2024</u>

(b) For Decision

The Chairman asked that two date sensitive items be considered.

RESOLVED to accede to the request:

KCC Hardship Support: Request to place device linked to Kent Money Advice Hub
Discussion took place and it was agreed that there was not a suitable location within the Community Centre for such a facility and a library or facility that had staff fully available to assist would be better.

RESOLVED NOT TO ACCEDE TO THIS REQUEST.

Cllr Muluck: Request for Council support in forming a litter picking group
Cllr Muluck asked if the council would allow him to use a room at the community centre to hold a meeting to hopefully set up a group of volunteer litter pickers and also to put an article in the next gazette.

RESOLVED TO ACCEDE TO THIS REQUEST AND TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT.

402. **FINANCE**(a) Payments to be Ratified

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

February Payroll Summary

Monthly	Gross	£28,088.91
	Net	£21,212.24

February Deposit Refunds

02.02.24	Oaken Hall 27.01.24	£81.00
08.02.24	Oaken Hall 06.07.24	£103.75
20.02.24	Oaken Hall 11.02.24	£97.75

23.02.24	Carman Room17.02.24	£53.00
29.02.24	Oaken Hall 25.02.24	115.00

(b) Direct Debits**RESOLVED** the following direct debits be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-**February Direct Debits**

01.02.24	Carlsberg	Cellar system	£187.20
02.02.24	HMRC	Games machine duty	£375.95
06.02.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,324.81
07.02.24	Rentokil Initial	Washroom services	£179.85
07.02.24	Sky	Sky Sports	£411.34
12.02.24	WEX	Fuelcard	£80.00
13.02.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,445.21
14.02.24	FDMS	Card charges	£358.75
15.02.24	Safety Effect	H&S support	£114.00
15.02.24	DHFE	Till rental	£369.60
15.02.24	Paymentsense	Card charges	£54.00
15.02.24	Bankline	Monthly charges	£43.72
16.02.24	Sage	Monthly subscription	£229.20
16.02.24	Commercial Services	Energy charges	£2,749.56
19.02.24	WEX	Fuelcard	£25.00
20.02.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,089.25
22.01.24	Hugo Fox	Website	£23.99
23.02.24	Host My Office	Computer support + New WiFi Lin	£776.16
23.02.24	Host My Office	Computer Support	£372.00
23.02.24	BOC	Bar gas	£210.39
26.02.24	WEX	Fuelcard	£1.80
27.02.24	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,615.50
28.02.24	BT	BT Sport	£445.44
28.01.24	Veolia	Refuse collection	£619.58
29.01.24	Focus	Telephone	£92.20
29.01.24	Focus	Telephone	£165.00
31.01.24	O2	Mobile phone	£18.85

(b) BACS Payments**RESOLVED** the following BACs payments be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-**February BACS Payments (not previously listed)**

02.02.24	Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	£1,790.21
02.02.24	Trevor May	MUGA	£9,676.50
07.02.24	J Dowle	Fencing NRRG	£2,481.00
09.02.24	Strictly Tables	Chairs	£11,145.00
09.02.24	Four Jays	Temporary toilets	£672.00
15.02.24	HMRC	Paye/NI contributions	£5,098.99
15.02.24	KCC Pension	Pension contributions	£1,495.05
20.02.24	Triple A Events	Music festival stage deposit	£1,419.00
23.02.24	M Beautridge	Bar Services	£180.18

(d) Debit Card Payments

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

February Debit Card

01.02.24	Screwfix	Protective work wear	£22.99
01.02.24	Toolstation	Protective work wear	£14.96
02.02.24	Godfreys	Machine parts	£17.00
05.02.24	Amazon	Computer mouse	£9.99
05.02.24	Amazon	Display stand	£55.99
07.02.24	Tools Today	Machine parts	£45.94
09.02.24	Amazon	Subscription	£8.99
09.02.24	Amazon	Door lock replacement	£36.94
13.02.24	Amazon	Hazard tape	£9.99
15.02.24	Tesco	Bar stock/consumables	£98.50
16.02.24	Direct Hygiene	Baby change unit	£158.64
22.02.24	Amazon	Toilet roll dispensers	£628.20
23.02.24	B&Q	Fertiliser for New Hollybush	£20.00
23.02.24	Crocus	Hollybush for o/s Parish Office	£30.73

(e) End of Year Close Down

It was **NOTED** this will take place on 22nd and 23rd April 2024.

(f) Date Sensitive OSA Issues

(i) Damaged Tree Bradbourne Lane

It was **REPORTED** that a large tree [found to be dead] had partially fallen onto the fence of a property in Bradbourne Lane. A quote of £750.00 for safe removal had been obtained. It was noted only one quote had been possible to obtain as it was required to be done as soon as possible. It was further noted the Council's grounds staff could not remove the tree but should be able to repair the fence. There are sufficient funds in the Trees budget to cover the work.

RESOLVED to accept the quote from Tree Monkeys to safely remove the tree as soon as possible.

(ii) Memorial Trees NRRG

It was **NOTED** that two of the Memorial Trees at NRRG had died. One was in Memory of the Dunster family and the other donated by the Kent Men of The Trees. It was further noted the Grounds Team Leader could find suitable replacements for around £40 - £60 per tree.

RESOLVED to purchase two replacement trees.

(iii) Large bushes in the verge of Community Centre

It was **NOTED** that the phased removal of the large bushes in the verge between the car park and Scott Close had been previously approved. The Clerk advised that the Grounds Team Leader said a smaller digger may be required to dig the roots out. Whether to replant the beds or put grass there was also discussed. It was agreed to defer this issue to the Open Spaces Committee as it would not be able to be undertaken until the Autumn now.

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

TMBC Cllr Rob Cannon **REPORTED** on the following items:

COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

At the last full Council meeting on 20 January members unanimously approved a budget for the new financial year starting in April. Council Tax bills will increase by just under £7 to £238 a year or £4.58 a week for a typical Band D property. This is an increase of 3% on the current year which compares to 5% increases for KCC and Kent Police whose budgets continue to make up the bulk of the average Band D Council Tax in the Borough of £2266.

TMBC's medium term financial strategy is addressing a forecast funding gap of £1.7m over the next four years. Savings and efficiencies in the current year totalled £195,000 with a further £305,000 planned for the next financial year. Unlike many councils, as has been widely reported in the media, TMBC is debt free and in a good position to invest in both core services and schemes to deliver improvements for the Borough's residents.

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The process for finding a successor to Julie Bielby is well underway and there was over 40 applicants for the post which have since been trimmed down to a shortlist of 10. It reflects reasonably well on the Council that so many have applied because it can be quite difficult to attract suitable candidates for this role at tier 2 council level. It is expected the new Chief Executive will be in place by Annual Council in May.

FINNISH SAUNA

The Leader of the Council Matt Boughton referenced the Finnish Sauna in his Leader's announcements at Full Council. He was pleased to see it had been granted Grade 2 listed status and was delighted to help welcome the Finnish Ambassador at his visit to the unique building and celebrate the connection the community had with Finland.

TRACEY CROUCH

As you will be aware Tracey Crouch will not be seeking re-election for Chatham and Aylesford. Although Ditton will as from the next General Election be in the new Maidstone and Malling constituency, she has of course been an exceptional champion for our community and had a national reputation through her work on loneliness, fixed odds betting terminals and her Independent Review into Football Governance. Personally I found her always willing to help or give advice on ward matters and casework and she will be greatly missed by many of our residents.

CLOSURE OF RECYCLING POINTS

The Cabinet at their last meeting on 13 February have decided, following a report from the Council's waste team, to remove the remaining bottle, can and recycling banks in the Borough. The reason for this is that since recycling was integrated into household collection rounds, deposits of glass and plastic at the car park sites have dropped by around 90%, with paper and cardboard deposits falling by 65%. However much of the residual waste now being collected from the recycling points comes from local businesses looking to avoid paying for commercial collection services.

With savings as mentioned above needing to be made removing the facilities will save £100, 000 annually once the initial costs of clearing the sites has been met.

PLANNING

Over the coming weeks TMBC will be considering which areas are considered as 'Local Green Space' in the forthcoming Local Plan, and Planning Policy will be writing shortly to Parish Councils asking for a form to be completed with details of the sites put forward.

Cllr Newman asked if the proposed Lorry park at Junction 2 would go ahead and Cllr Cannon advised that TMBC had refused the application.

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

It was **NOTED** no report was available.

405. **DATE SENSITIVE PLANNING MATTERS**

(a) Plans Received for Comment

TM/24/00089/PA - 54, Priory Grove, Ditton, Aylesford, ME20 6BB

Proposed rear single storey extension, loft conversion and chimney stack removal

RESOLVED NO OBJECTION

TM/24/00224/PA - 63, Cherry Orchard, Ditton, Aylesford, ME20 6QS

Single storey rear extension

RESOLVED NO OBJECTION

TM/24/00228/PA - Land Eastern Part Of Former Aylesford Newsprint South Of Invicta Park, New Hythe Lane, Larkfield, Aylesford

Change of use of former B2/B8 Aylesford Newsprint Site to flexible B2, B8 and Class E(g)(i)&(ii) uses, or for flexible commercial yards and haulage yard within plot 3 with a workshop and modular office, and the creation of a new access road, erection of plot fencing, re-surfacing and drainage and other associated works

The Environmental issues were discussed and it was **NOTED** that East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council had submitted a comprehensive response that included all the issues that this council would wish to comment on. Therefore it was

RESOLVED TO SUPPORT THE COMMENTS MADE BY EAST MALLING AND LARKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL:

1. This site is part of the former East Mill area of Reeds paper group which is mainly in Ditton but with its access out to New Hythe Lane, Larkfield by the old Ferry Inn building. On one side is the Medway Valley Railway line and the other the tidal River Medway with its towpath. It is an existing industrial area.
2. The riverside path MR443 once a used towpath is an important link path along the Medway connecting onwards to the path into Aylesford village and to Snodland in the other direction. It is unclear if it is within the ownership of this site. In any event it should be kept open as any development proceeds.
3. As to the Ecological Appraisal it recognizes the site adjoins mud flats in this tidal section of the river and there are bushes, small trees and plants along the riverside. We are aware herons are frequently seen in this section of the river and downstream there is the area of Holborough Marshes. In carrying out the development there should be no spillages or deposits or materials falling or blowing into the river so as to have an adverse affect on its flora and fauna.
4. It is noted the consultants make reference at para 5.1.9 about lighting potentially affecting wildlife and we ask that appropriate conditions be included in any consent for this development.
5. As to Flooding it is agreed that flooding of New Hythe occurred in 1953 and 1965. The latter at least up to the railway line Since the concrete flood wall has been erected and it is important this be retained.
6. As to the Transport Statement the only access by vehicle or on foot is out to New Hythe Lane. There is the station here but no bus service. The nearest is about half a mile away on foot cutting through the Tesco car park There is money under a legal agreement with Panattoni but so far no sign of a bus or proposed route from KCC. It would be good if this development could make a contribution. There is a redundant bus stop except for railway replacement buses near the station.
7. The Planning Statement refers to a "walkable route" at para 1.2.3 for MR 443 and when previous proposals were being considered there was talk of improving this route alongside the river. It is unclear if the site includes this strip of land out to the river? But the improvement of the path should be considered.
8. In respect of construction works it would be appreciated if the restrictions on the southern section of New Hythe Lane were drawn to the attention of construction traffic especially any HGVs and that access be along Leybourne Way out to the A228/M20.

TM/23/03381/FL – Ditton Church of England School, New Road, Ditton, Kent ME20 6AE

Replacement of perimeter fencing and gates to front of the school to improve the safeguarding of the children.

Discussion took place about the legislation for security fences at schools and what was guidance and what was compulsory. Concerns were made about variation in height to various areas and about deliveries. The Council

RESOLVED TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

The Council has no objection to measures being taken to ensure security at the school and no issue with the installation of the electronic gates. It is concerned about the height and style of fencing as it is within the Conservation Area of Ditton. The Council is also concerned about about how deliveries would be made safely with the new gate and layout and also access for those that need access to the school out of school hours

TM/24/00271/FL – Park Farm Cottage, Bradbourne Lane, Ditton, Aylesford ME20 6PE

Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 2no. semi detached dwellings with associated landscaping and parking.

It was **NOTED** that there had been no changes to this plan from the one previously submitted and subsequently withdrawn.

RESOLVED TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:-

This Council has concern about the design not being consistent with existing surroundings. Not sure if an ecological study has been done recently – disagree about the lack of amphibians due to location of large amount of water on site nearby.

Points raised in May 2023 have not been addressed with the new plans and cannot see any changes compared to the May 2023 application. The Council would therefore make the same comments again:-

The Council is concerned about the development of a property within a private industrial area. The area has no clear detail of what future development of this area will be (especially since EMR are looking to sell land and have a track record of selling large parts of land within the last ten years). The building plan shows the splitting of existing utilities to expand for two residential properties. We are not sure if there is suitable facilities to cater for this. We are not sure there if there is any plans to sell the properties commercially when the land is private and have heavy restrictions. We are also concerned about the large restrictions on access for building work to take place. The property is located next to an industrial area which means it would not be seen to be in a good location for residential properties (especially if children live there).

(b) Decisions from TMBC Area 3TM/23/03369/LD - 15, Cyril West Lane, Ditton, Aylesford, ME20 6FJ

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Loft Conversion with Dormer Window to Rear Elevation

CERTIFIED 09.02.2024

TM/23/01478/RD - Development Site South Of Brampton Field Between Bradbourne Lane and Kiln Barn Road

Details of Condition 18 (Surface water drainage scheme) submitted pursuant to planning permission TM/18/02966/OA (Outline Application: Development of the site to provide up to 300 dwellings (Use Class C3) and provision of new access off Kiln Barn Road. All other matters reserved for future consideration)

APPROVED 12.02.2024

TM/23/03452/FL - 45, Acorn Grove, Ditton, Aylesford, ME20 6EL

Single storey side and rear extensions and conversion of garage to habitable rooms

APPROVED 15.02.2024

TM/23/03539/FL - 153, Woodlands Road, Ditton, Aylesford, ME20 6HB

Non Material Amendment to planning permission TM/23/01382/FL to change the material on the first floor rear extension from brickwork to weatherboard (HardiePlank)

APPROVED 21.02.2024

(b) Bradbourne – EMT Proposal

NOTED no updates.

(c) Ditton Edge

NOTED no updates.

406. **MEETING DATE CHANGES**

The Clerk advised it would be necessary to change some meeting dates due to staff absences in April and June.

RESOLVED to hold all three April committee meetings on Monday 15th April, commencing with Planning, followed by Open Spaces and Community Centre and in June to swap the Open Spaces Committee date with the Community Centre, so Open Spaces will be on 10th June but Planning will stay on 17th June followed by the Community Centre. If there is insubstantive business for any of the committees for these months consideration will be given to not holding the meeting.

407. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

NOTED the Heritage Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau had agreed to give talks at this year's meeting.

408. **DITTON GAZETTE – SPRING EDITION**

Any copy/photos/articles to be forwarded to the Clerk as soon as possible.

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

No matters were arising.

410. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.

Chairman
8th April 2024