

**Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 13 August 2018 at Beechen Hall,
Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm.**

Present: Mrs W Hinder (Chairman), Mrs A Brindle, Ms L Clarke, Mr J Constable, Mr I Davies, Mr B Hinder, Mr D Hollands and Mr J Willmott together with Mrs P Bowdery (Clerk), Mr G Hayday (visiting Councillor) and two members of the public.

Cllr Willmott was welcomed to the committee as a newly appointed member.

1 Apologies and absences

None as all councillors present.

2 Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying

None declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting 11 June 2018.

The minutes were **agreed** and **signed** as a correct record.

In order not to inconvenience the two members of the public and Cllr Hayday the Chairman took item 7 and item 8 at this point in the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.34pm to allow the residents to address members on the flooding issue at the south cul de sac on Boxley Road, Walderslade. Members had been shown a video and pictures of the flooding which had badly affected their gardens, but which had also flooded property. It was noted that this flooding was caused by an overflow from the flooding by the Boxley Road/Longwood junction. Water was flowing over the eroded verge, there being no kerbstones on that part of Boxley Road, and down to the lower ground in front of their properties. The problem had been very bad this year and other residents had also been affected. KCC Highways had attended and one of the the residents had been informed that there was a broken drain which had not been repaired. Members were also shown a video of the flooding on Boxley Road/Longwood and of a particularly dangerous piece of driving. The Chairman thanked them for attending and for the videos and pictures which she felt would be invaluable. The residents were encouraged to write a letter of complaint to KCC Cabinet Member Mike Whiting with a copy to County Councillor Paul Carter and the parish council. The meeting reconvened at 7.48pm.

Members **agreed** that the information obtained from the Freedom of Information request had highlighted a lack of proper drainage management and no planned long term remedial work for the problem areas at Boxley Road Walderslade, Impton Lane and Boxley Village. Members **agreed** that a report and also the videos needed to be submitted to the Maidstone Joint Transport Board (MJTB). It was **noted** that recent MJTB meetings had been cancelled and the Parish Council Chairman Bob Hinder was asked to write a letter to the Chairman of the MJTB about the need to deal with this issue quickly. **Action Clerk and Cllr Bob Hinder.** The Clerk was asked to provide a copy of the dangerous driving video to the PCSO to see if the Police could become involved. Cllr Clarke notified members that the flooding at Boxley Village had worsen since the ramp outside the pub had been reduced in size. **Noted.**

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- 4.1 Minute 3133/4.1 Ancient Woodland and TPOs. Cllr Davies notified members that the issue will be taken to KALC/MBC meeting on 24 September 2018. **Noted.**
- 4.2 Minute 3133/4.3 Traffic Speeds, Boxley Road/Beechen Bank Road. Helen Whately MP has written to Neil Davies CEO Medway Council and is now pressing for a response. **Noted.**
- 4.3 Minute 3133/4.4 Fixed plate pedestrian crossing signs Grovewood Drive North. Cllr Hollands informed members that they had not yet been erected. **Noted.**
- 4.4 Minute 3133/4.5 Yellow lines at junctions along Provender Way. The Chairman had contacted an officer in Paul Carter's office and would update members as she received more information. **Noted.**

- 4.5 Minute 3133/4.6 Chatham Road Sandling new road layout. The Chairman reported that the project had been completed but the footway near the junction with Tyland Lane was in a poor condition and she had reported this to KCC. A HGV had managed to squeeze between the bollards by the bus stop and had parked up overnight. KCC will be installing an extra bollard to stop this occurring again. **Noted.**
- 4.6 Minute 3133/4.7 Litter bins. MBC has replaced the open topped bins with enclosed bins. **Noted.**
- 4.7 Minute 3133/4.8 Speed cushions, Boxley Village. Work to replace the speed cushions is being programmed and KCC has been contacted about undertaking it during a planned closure for South East Water works. Cllr Willmott asked that KCC be reminded again that the ramp outside the pub was too low. **Noted. Action Clerk.**
- 4.8 Minute 3133/4.9 Parking hotline. Details were sent to Maidstone KALC with a request that this is considered by the committee. **Noted.**
- 4.9 Minute 3128/4.10 Junction 3 M2. Helen Whately meeting with Highway England. Response awaited. **Noted.**
- 4.10 Minute 3133/4.11 Pothole app. County Councillor Carter has been contacted about reconsidering a mobile app for reporting potholes, a response is still awaited. **Noted.**
- 4.11 Minute 3133/4.12 School site adj. to KIMS. Helen Whately MP response to why she refers to the site as at Bearsted had been circulated to members. Members still expressed concern over the proposed schools site and the impact on traffic.
- 4.12 Minute 3135/7.1 Roundabout sponsorship. The Chairman thanked Cllr Constable for his offer to allow the £400 donation he had received to go towards the wildflower management project.
- 4.13 Minute 3135/7.5 MBC grounds maintenance. Request for new wildlife management regime for verges. MBC's response that it was actively pursuing the suggestion and would be contacting the parish when it had undertaken more investigation on costs was **received** and **noted**.
- 4.14 Any other matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda. None

5. Planning Applications for Consideration

18/503459/FULL Extension to the existing car park to provide an additional 87 No. parking spaces with landscaping. Newnham Park Bearsted Road. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with members: *The parish council has no material planning reason to object.*

18/503492/OUT Outline application with access matters sought for erection of a care home (Use Class C2) with access to Bearsted Road including landscaping, parking and associated works. Matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for future consideration. Land at Junction Of New Cut Road and Bearsted Road, Weavering. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with members:

Wish to see refused and reported to the Planning Committee for the following reasons.

- As the site forms part of the landscaped boundary to the Weavering/Grove Green urban area, the change in development would seriously alter the character of the street scene.

This undeveloped area of marshy land forms part of the rural barrier which, including the adjoining Weavering Heath, adjoins urbanised Weavering/Grove Green. For this reason and its prominence to drivers entering Bearsted or New Cut Roads it could be considered as being of local landscape importance although never formally designated as such. The proposed sprawling agglomeration of contiguous 3/4 storey blocks parallel to the roundabout will destroy both the habitat and this view. It would therefore seriously alter the character of the street scene.

- Because the site is adjacent to a busy road junction it suffers unacceptably high noise levels. The height of the acoustic fencing required to mitigate this would be unacceptably intrusive on the street scene.
- The site is not allocated for development in the Local Plan.
- Development is on a previously undeveloped greenfield site that it is believed has protected flora and fauna and would see the loss of some significant established

grassland with ecological potential. The last reptile survey undertaken on the site was in 2012 and so is considered out of date.

- *Site is an extremely important wildlife corridor connecting Mote Park/Vinters Valley Nature Reserve to the surrounding countryside including Weaverling Heath, Horish and Popes woods. When the site is boggy it provides an important feeding site for bats.*
- *The site is crossed by a vitally important stream, fed in part by Weaverling Heath, that feeds into the lake at Vinters Valley Nature Reserve. Interruption of this water course and water source and any contamination from pesticides etc. will adversely impact and irrevocably damage the wildlife habitats and ecosystems in the nature reserve. Given that the site is low-lying, there are also concerns about flooding that may increase with further development of the KIMS site to the north.*
- *The size of the secure garden and its location at the back of the care home immediately adjacent to the stream is of concern. The safety of vulnerable elderly people must surely be compromised by having the only garden area next to water and with limited public or staff areas overlooking the garden.*
- *Unfortunately the planning application states that no staff will be employed, obviously an error when completing the form, so it is not possible to fully understand the parking requirement however experience has shown that such developments drastically under estimate the number of parking spaces required and over estimate the number of people walking, cycling or using public transport to go to work. The 25 spaces provided will need to serve staff as well as visitors and in staff shift change periods you will potentially have double the amount of staff quite a few of which will be travelling by car. It is acknowledged that Grove Green has a fairly good daytime bus service but the buses stop running fairly early in the evening which may cause a problem for staff wishing to use public transport. There is no safe on-street car parking available near the site and for any special events/festivals when a greater number of visitors may be expected there will be nowhere for them to park.*
- *There are also serious concerns about the location of the site's access and egress so close to an extremely busy roundabout and an M20 feeder road. In particular, traffic leaving the roundabout to travel east on Bearsted Road may be seriously impeded by traffic turning right from that road into the site unless mitigating arrangements are made.*

Should the Planning Committee be minded to permit the application then stringent conditions must be put in place to protect the water course.

A previous outline application for 8 dwellings on the site (14/502252) was refused by Maidstone Borough Council and subsequently by a Planning Inspector on appeal. It is considered that the reasons contained within those decisions are still relevant to this site and the proposed use.

18/503906/TPO/PAHE TPO Application to fell tree due to root rot. Forestdale Road Walderslade. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with members: *Do not wish to object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.*

18/503845/TPO/NIGATPO application to trim one Oak tree back to boundary fence. Sylvan Glade Walderslade. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with members: *Do not wish to object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.*

18/500346/Full Erection of 115 dwellings – Lords Wood Urban Extension Gleaming Wood Drive. REVISED DETAILS. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with members: *The parish council's previous objection to this application is reiterated and it makes the following comments on the revised details.*

The proposed road improvements at the junction of Gleamingwood Drive and Lordswood Lane are welcomed however it is noted that the junction improvement of the left hand lane of Gleamingwood Drive, for drivers turning left into Lordswood Lane, is not included and it

is unlikely to be financed by the Gibraltar Farm development. This is a major issue and it is considered that this application should provide a Section 106 for this work.

There is concern that the proposed improvement on Lordswood Lane will be insufficient in width and length especially as the junction is extensively used by HGVs. Congestion at this junction can, and often does, tail back to obstruct the roundabout.

- *Insufficient parking spaces, based on the current on/off road parking in the adjoining estate. This is regardless to the "Residential Parking Standards" as detailed in section 5.33 of the Planning statement. Maybe compliant with section 7.18, but the formula is dated and not appropriate for today's use of the private vehicle.*
- *All road surfaces should be permeable to allow rain water to be captured over a larger area as possible.*
- *The Green Travel Plan is aspirational and not achievable and certainly not enforceable.*
- *KCC's Consultee Comment –
The cycle path has a missing link with the path going via Albemarle Road and does not continue along Gleaming Wood Drive (past the Industrial Estate) to the Lords Wood Lane junction. This route adds 1/2 to 3/4 mile to anyone wishing to cycle from the development, a cycle route from the development to the Lords Wood Lane junction is needed.
Over all this is a good response from KCC, however it falls short on the impact of the development on Jct3 of the M2 and associated roundabouts, Walderslade Woods and local highway infrastructure.*

The parish council objects and wishes the application to be reported to the Planning Committee.

The Chairman notified members that Borough Cllr Bob Hinder would be attending the MBC Planning Committee Meeting on Thursday 16 August to speak against this application. The Chairman will clarify with MBC whether she could also speak as a Borough Councillor, if it was not allowed then she would attend and speak as the Boxley Parish Councillor. Cllr Davies volunteered to speak as the Parish Council representative should the Chairman go as the Borough Councillor. The Clerk to be notified of who to book in to speak. **Action Cllr Wendy Hinder.**

18/503611/FULL Replace existing conservatory with a brick build ground floor rear extension and change glass roof to tiled pitched roof. Hillview Tyland Lane Sandling. *The parish council has no material planning reasons to object.*

18/504004/TPO application to reduce height of one Lime Tree by 50%, & prune back remainder proportionally. Lime Court Grovewood Drive. *Do not wish to object defer to landscape officer's views.*

18/503977/FULL The erection of a new freestanding masonry wall and entrance way to the North and West site boundaries. (Resubmission of 18/500416/FULL. Part Retrospective). Park Cottage Boxley Road Boxley.

Wish to see refused and reported to the Planning Committee for the following reasons;

- *The wall's height and overpowering bulk detracts from the street scene of the village and adversely impacts on its visual amenity.*
- *It is not in keeping with the design of the dwelling and it is disproportionate to the site.*

There is grave concern that the entrance to the site and the empty nameplate niche will be illuminated which will cause a safety issue for any vehicles approaching the site as the wall is on a blind bend.

18/504005/FULL Erection of a two storey side extension. Quinon Close Walderslade. *The parish council has no material planning reasons to object.*

18/503946/FULL Demolition of existing Garage. Erection of a single storey side extension to West elevation and single storey side and rear extension to East and South elevations, with new brick boundary wall to match existing. Gleaners Close Weaverling.

The parish council has no material planning reasons to object.

The Chairman asked that MBC Parks and Open Spaces be notified of the planning application as it was might be encroaching on their land.

6. Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions

Members **received** and **noted** the following decisions:

18/502621, 1 The Spinney, Walderslade - REFUSED

17/501540 Stables Stone House, Sandy Lane. This application was permitted, with the condition members requested that, only private use is allowed,

Medway Council refusal to sell a piece of its land to the developer to gain access to the Gibraltar Farm site was welcomed by members. It was noted that the developer might find an alternative route into the site which would allow the agreed development of 450 dwellings.

7. Highways and Byways - DECISION

7.1 Flooding and drainage. Members **received** and **noted** the Clerk's report. The Clerk to draft a report, including location maps, for the MJTB. The draft report to be approved out of meeting by members. MJTB members to be lobbied with a copy of the videos showing the flooding. **Action Clerk and councillors.** The Chairman asked that a meeting with County Councillor Paul Carter is arranged. **Action Cllr Wendy Hinder and Clerk.**

The Clerk was asked to check whether the drain and gully at the subway on Cossington Lane had been cleared. **Action Clerk.**

7.2 KCC programmed Tree Work. **Received** and **noted**, Cllr Davies asked that KCC be questioned why only part of Boxley Road/Beechen Bank Road appears to be scheduled for work. **Action Clerk.**

7.3 Lidsing Road. The Clerk's report on a recent site visit with a resident and a KCC Officer was **received** and **noted**. Cllr Bob Hinder reported that in the past few days there had been another crash at the Dunn Street junction. **Noted.**

The issue regarding whether a speed survey would identify daily vehicle numbers, rather than speed, too ascertain how many vehicular movements there were in the local area and going through Boxley Village was briefly discussed. Members were not clear whether the information gathered would be useful and so it was **agreed** to defer the issue to the next meeting and the Clerk was asked for maps and ideas on what might be done. **Action Clerk.**

7.4 Walderslade Woods Road Speed reduction review. After consideration it was decided **no further action.**

As it was 9.30 pm the Chairman used her delegated power to extend the meeting for up to 30 minutes.

8. M20 Junction 7 Planned Improvements.

It was **agreed** that the parish council would ask to be allowed to have a presence at any local event to allow residents to leave their comments with councillors. **Action Clerk.**

Lengthy discussion took place on the proposed works and also the impact on the area with many councillors feeling that it would just move the congestion further down the road. It was highlighted that the proposed junction 7 works would likely clash with the highway works that the STEM school would require. Grave concern was also raised about the traffic impact of the possible Care Home and the proposed two school adjacent to the KIMS site. The highway situation outside Gidds Pond Cottages and further along Bearsted Road was also highlighted. It was **agreed**:

- South Ward councillors would set up an informal working group inviting representatives from adjacent parishes and also Borough Councillors to consider the situation.
- The group to consider the additional traffic movements through the Grove Green/Weavering area that will come from proposed development inside and outside of the parish boundary.
- The Chairman to ask for an urgent meeting with County Councillor Paul Carter and Highway Officers to discuss the situation.
- The relevant authorities to be notified that the proposed off-street car parking for residents at Gidds Pond Cottages, as a result of the KIMS site development, never materialised.
- Helen Whately to be copied in on correspondence.

Action Clerk to provide e-mail contact details to Cllr Constable.

9. Franklin Drive Play Area.

The Chairman reported that the installation of equipment had been completed, MBC had repaired the fence and would be cutting back some branches from above the swings. Cllr Bob Hinder reported that he and the Chairman would be combining their Borough Councillor Allowances, total £2,000, to purchase another piece of equipment.

10. KCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028 Consultation.

In view of the time it was **agreed** that members would notify the Clerk of any comments.
Action councillors.

11. Policy and Procedures

None submitted for consideration.

12. Members Reports

Cllr Bob Hinder notified members that KCC had been contacted about a possible encroachment on public land at Boxley Road, Walderslade. **Noted.**

13. Volunteer Groups

Cllr Bob Hinder notified members that the volunteer group was now down to four members and would need to decide whether to continue. **Noted.**

14. Matters for Information

- 14.1 NALC response to revised NPPF document. **Received** and **noted**.
- 14.2 MBC new dog fouling orders. **Received** and **noted**.

15. Items for Next Agenda

Requests for items to be included on the agenda to be submitted no later than 3 September 2018. **Noted.**

16. Next Meeting

Next Environment Committee meeting 10 September at Beechen Hall commencing at 7:30pm.

17. Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC

Members received a verbal update on outstanding enforcement issues.

Meeting closed at 9.49 pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman Date