

Minutes of the Meeting of Penshurst Parish Council held on 3 February 2025 at 7.00 pm in Penshurst Village Hall

1. PRESENT: Cllrs A Campbell (Chairman), Mrs D Broad, N Furnell, N Furnell, R Rees, B Townsend, D Howard,

2. APOLOGIES: Cllrs S Jolly & R Gerard-Sharp; KCllr Mrs Margot McArthur

In Attendance: PC 30366 John Donegan, SDClr R Streatfield,

3. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 2 December 2024, having been circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Declarations of interests in agenda items. None

5. OPEN SESSION: A request was made for up-to-date information available relating to the Kingdom site in relation to Building Regulations, Planning Conditions and any Fire Inspection undertaken. Cllr Streatfield updated those present in relation to current applicable conditions,

6. KCllr Mrs Margot McArthur: No Report

7. SDClr Richard Streatfield: Cllr Streatfield provided information on the current devolution arrangements, KCC and Sevenoaks District Council would be replaced with a Mayoral system, this included SDC assets, this issue did not affect Penshurst. It was anticipated that Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Maidstone would become a Unitary Mayoral Authority. Elections would be cancelled and deferred until 2027/28 which some councillors did not agree with; it was suggested that those councillors who did not agree with the arrangement should stand down and force an election. It was expected the Local Plan would be in place prior to the change and be followed by the new authority. Rural Exception Sites in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells would be far lower than other areas. Problems were being experienced with refuse collections which were being addressed.

8. PC 30366 John Donegan: PC Donegan reported on a number of issues in the area including speeding cars – a Speedwatch session was arranged with one driver receiving a ticket. Members were aware of the theft from sheds/barns of equipment, Cllr Townsend confirmed that eight break-ins had occurred since Christmas in the surrounding area. Bogus number plates were being used in the theft of cars. The use of firearms and increased use of drugs/drug dealing in the area was a worrying addition. Members acknowledged the work load undertaken by their local officer and his colleague(s) and supported his method of dealing with the many problems in the area, members would write to Matthew Scott/Tom Tugendhat again to emphasize their concerns about the situation.

9. Tom Tugendhat Report – Friday 31 January 2025:

South East Water badly let down thousands of us across Tonbridge, Hildenborough, and Leigh this week and we all know what a nightmare that is for every family. Some people even went 3 days without water. That's not good enough.

On 2nd December last year I reported water leaking from a pothole in the road in Poundsbridge Lane. Highways informed SE water the next day. About 3 weeks later a barrier was put around the hole. It is still like that today, 9 weeks after being reported. Worse still – with all vehicles being forced to track along the same path, two massive potholes opened up. They were filled in this morning but the water leak remains. People cannot complain directly to Ofwat you have to go through the 'Consumer Council for Water'. They spring into action about 3 months later. This is completely ridiculous and something needs to change!

10. Neighbourhood Watch/Report Cllr Furnell:

10th January 2025: police found a massive cannabis farm worth an estimated £3 million in Tunbridge Wells (Chapman Way). Five men have been charged and remanded in custody. No discoveries so far in our parish

3 February 2025: 80% of trades people have had tools stolen and they want stronger action from the law. **Spring Hill, Penshurst:** Container broken into and trailer and reel of cable stolen, later found dumped in the water works: Crime Report 46/1315/25.

11. Matters Arising:

- a. **Affordable Housing:** Chairman reported that the legal agreement was still under discussion for agreement. Any future WKHA properties that were proposed for sale would be offered for purchase to Becket Trust prior to going on the open market. Cllr Mrs Broad asked if any properties would be offered on a share ownership basis, it was noted this would not be the case.
- b. **Parish Records:** Chairman advised files were available with the Chiddingstone Clerk and he would collect them at the next Resilience meeting, the last one having been cancelled.
- c. **The Ice House Appeal Decision:** No update available.
- d. **Gatwick:** The latest information available, provided by Charles Lloyd, had been forwarded by Cllr Furnell for circulation to members.
- e. **Allotments: Fordcombe** – A gate had been installed to prevent access deer were using to enter and gain to the plots, this would remain in place to protect the area from damage.

12. PLANNING: Planning Applications:

24/03428/LBCALT: Springs Cottage, Bullingstone Lane, Penshurst: Raising of roof area and eaves over the external door openings and slightly extended either side. Raising of the ceiling to the living area including a central fully vaulted area. Raising of ground floor by approximately 50mm allow for raising the existing floor level by approximately 50mm. Removal of 20th century? / modern? brick drylining skin to internal face of original solid external wall and replacement with timber stud insulated drylining with plasterboard and skim coat as internal finish including formation of recess to wood burner on north wall.

SE/24/03327/HOUSE & LBCALT: Yeomans, Walters Green Road, Penshurst: Demolition of existing garage, summerhouse and single storey extension. Erection of linked single storey extension. Internal alterations. Alteration to fenestration. Associated landscaping.

SE/24/03041/FUL: Lake House, Poundsbridge Lane, Poundsbridge, Penshurst: New dwelling with outbuildings, including self-contained guest accommodation, and swimming pool. Associated hard and soft landscaping works.

SE/24/03016/HOUSE: 1 Rectory Cottages, High Street, Penshurst: Replacement central heating with a new external oil boiler and oil tank. Install a new hot water cylinder and add 4 radiators to the existing 3, alterations to pipework

SE/24/02520/FUL: Fordcombe Village Recreation Ground Fordcombe Road Fordcombe: Existing single storey storage building 36 sqm and one 15 sqm shipping container to be removed, and to be replaced by storage building of 56 sqm, for storing equipment for charitable functions.

SE/24/02585/FUL: Barn North of Little Chafford, Spring Hill, Fordcombe: Conversion of existing agricultural buildings to residential use. Penshurst Parish Council note the reasons for the refusal of the previous application (23/02304) and consider that these have been fully addressed in the current application. We therefore support the proposed development.

SE/24/03005/LDCPR: Bacchus Barn, Grove Road, Penshurst: Creation of agricultural access Under Class A & Class B of part 6 of schedule 2 to the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. Proposed track would be 4 metres wide in order to allow vehicular access for woodland management. Works to include excavation for formation of track 4 metres wide, sub base stone to prepared areas, type 1 road stone topping. **REFUSED**

25/00145/FUL: Birches, Fordcombe Road, Penshurst: Refurbishment and alteration works throughout the existing property, including the conversion of the existing basement to provide additional habitable accommodation. Construction of an orangery extension to the west-facing elevation. Removal of the existing shed outbuilding and outdoor swimming pool. Construction of a replacement outdoor swimming pool with new detached outbuilding. Removal of the existing greenhouse structure. Construction of a detached garage and storage building with new driveway and parking area, served by new vehicular

access. New gates to serve the existing driveway. Associated hard and soft landscaping works in the vicinity of the proposed extension and swimming pool. Sunken area for Air Source Heat Pump units and below ground LPG tanks. **Please Note: This application is no longer valid: Further information has been requested, sections of proposed sunken area for Air Source Heat Pump, below ground LPG tanks and noise assessment report.**

Tree Surgery:

24/02738/WTCA: Rogues Hill House, Rogues Hill, Penshurst: Various works to trees.

24/02722/WTCA: Garden Cottage Fordcombe Road Penshurst: Various works to trees

24/02803/WTCA: Rogues House, Rogues Hill, Penshurst: Beech Tree - Cut back 20% of tree canopy.

24/02692/WTP0: Wayside, Spring Hill, Fordcombe: Conifer - fell to ground level. Horse chestnut - reduce by up to 2.5m. **GRANTED**

25/00181/WTP0: Daneby Hall, The Lane, Fordcombe: Proposal (T1 & T2) Oaks - reduce lower lateral spread over garage by 30% (G1) group of Oaks - reduce by 30%

13. HIGHWAYS

838448: Rogues Hill: Boundary enquiry, completed 25.10.24

833678: Overgrown hedges: Adjacent to New Road and towards Saints Hill: Attended, work planned under normal programme.

854466: Spring Hill: Public House and Village Hall: Issue reported again, report on information relating to work carried out and further work to be done requested. Flooding reported to KCC Highways, confirmation received regarding problem with pipework serving the area, Southern Water responsible for work required to rectify.

817283/814110: Leigh to Stocks Green: Work undertaken.

826354/755185: Finches, Fordcombe Road: Flooding due to blocked Drain/Gulley. Gulley scheduled for cleaning.

826364: Blocked Drains Rogues Hill: originally promised for clearance in July 2023, reported on 20.8.24 that cleaning was scheduled.

832644/801957: Spring Hill: Continuous flow of water downhill, possible blocked drain/culverts. Work completed 24.9.24.

832672: Flooding of property and problems with drainage at another submitted 24.9.24: Reported to Kent Highways, SE Water and Southern. Checks carried out by water companies and highways; currently Southern Water approached to deal with issue.

PROW: 822853: SR465 – Walters Green Road/Weavers Cottage: Poor surfacing with possible septic tank issue; **240712840: - Coach Road, SR 546:** Overhanging trees. *Footpath repairs delayed.*

823784: Extension of yellow lines to The Lane in Fordcombe: To improve safety for the septic tanker whilst working. PC advised to include on HIP. Reported again under 844790 for update on current situation.

835121: White/Yellow Lines: Request for road markings to be reinstated adjacent to hedging from new rectory area down towards entrance to Leicester Square. **Application plus photographs (Provided by Cllr Furnell) submitted to SDC together with request for reinstatement.** Cost of

241097018: PROW: Buggy area on Bridle Path - Walters Green Lane. **Acknowledged.**

842230: Poundsbridge Manor: White lines require reinstatement; Poundsbridge Manor – Speldhurst drains now blocked due to hedge cutting, clearance required. **Works being programmed – 20.11.24**

839558: Cleave House: Multiple potholes. **Works being programmed – 1.11.24**

Chafford Lane Wall: Issue still ongoing due to check on liability for maintenance. Further information awaited from SDC.

Highway Improvements Plan: Updated to confirm yellow line request for The Lane/Fordcombe Lane installation.

14. Finance/Accounts: The following accounts were presented and unanimously approved for payment:

Penshurst Village Hall	Hall Hire	£18.00
Mrs E M Divall	Parish Clerk Tax	£141.80
Sevenoaks District Council	White Lining Reinstatement	£288.00

Quarterly Accounts: Draft accounts had been circulated to members for approval at the meeting, the Chairman and ED had initialled the bank statements balance figures with the printed accounts. It was unanimously agreed these be approved and forwarded to the Internal Accountants for verification.

- (a) **Councillor Gov.UK Email Access:** VisionICT – Clerk had checked with KALC Website/ fellow Clerks regarding the number of PCs who had changed to the GOV.UK option there had been a minimal take up by Parish Councils. Currently gov.uk was not a legal requirement but would be a **requirement by 31 March 2027**. Members were however required to have a generic email address, owned by the council, such as office@ or clerk@ PeshurstPC.
- (b) **Bank Account:** Interest bearing account to be considered, current accounts available varied greatly with some at 4.5 – 5.2%
- (c) **Play Area:** ED had asked for information from Kompan relating to a Safety check inspection of the aerial ropeway to be carried out plus information on options for various materials to install in the worst areas of mud to save wear and tear on the play items. She had met with Rob MacDonald of Kompan to obtain costings, A CIL payment had been received recently which should be cover the costs involved.
- (d) **Town & Country Planning Association:** Request for annual subscription of £114.00; consideration on continuing with membership. ED reported on a poor response from the organisation when contacted for information relating to installation of solar panels on agricultural land. In view of the lack of relevance of the organisation currently it was agreed not to continue with the subscription.
- (e) **Complete Weed Control:** Quotation for work for Weed Treatment for Fordcombe to consider (in place of Lengthsman) of £585 for 2025. (Option for Peshurst offered at £765.00 for 2025) It was agreed that CWC be asked to continue with the work in Fordcombe, with the option for them to provide work should the need become necessary in Peshurst, ED to action.
- (f) **Deer Fencing - Smarts Hill:** In response to concerns raised by a number of residents, the Chairman and Cllr Streatfield had visited site in relation to fencing installed to prevent access for deer. Although hedging along the road boundary and between the neighbouring property had been removed, there was no evidence of works to any of the trees in the area covered by the TPO. Whilst the general appearance of the fencing might not be in keeping with the area, Permitted Development rights did not place restrictions on the materials which could be used.
- (g) **Beams:** A letter of thanks to the PC for the contribution towards the charity at Christmas.
- (h) **Bulk Freighter Service:** Information provided by SDC for 2025 service available, confirmation of booking required. Bookings offered for 5 April, 14 June, 13 September & 8 November 2025 at a cost of £127.31 each collection. Timing would be 9.15 - 9.45 for Peshurst and 10.00 – 10.30 at Fordcombe. It was noted that these could be liable to change during the year, any changes would be placed in the noticeboard and also on the website.
- (i) **Castle Water:** PC had been approached to arrange a direct debit payment system. ED advised that the water company did not read the water meters, she checked them and submitted readings when required. Currently bills were submitted six monthly. It was agreed not to go ahead with DD payments.
- (j) **White Line Reinstatement – Leicester Square area:** Details of costs and work circulated to members for information prior to meeting. Cost of installation by SDC totalled £288 including VAT, this was unanimously agreed by the members, ED to confirm with SDC.

13. Any Other Business:

i. Parking – Fordcombe Village Green Area: Cllr Horsford mentioned the problem with parking in the centre of the village around the green area; the problems that had recently occurred when the area

flooded and Southern Water was involved: Road Work scheduled for the parish would not result in the school bus services being withdrawn as arrangements had been made.

ii. Highways Meeting: ED asked to request outstanding meeting with the Highways Authority to discuss the outstanding issues.

iii. Potholes: Reported at the bottom of The Lane, near Cleave House.

iv. VE Day Grants: Clerk asked to find if any grants were available for parish activities.

v. Leaf Blowers: Clerk confirmed there were restrictions on their use relating to noise levels.

vi. Spire Hospital: A report of people trying to access cars slowing near the site was received, this had happened at approximately 6am one morning, Clerk had checked with The Spire who were unaware of this problem.

vii. Branch Hanging in Road: Little Chart

viii. Poundsbridge Lane: towards The Manor 7-8" drop for a long stretch in the ditch from Meadow Wood with the water now washing away the edge of the road.

ix. The Lane: Brick path near Reeves Court collapsing.

x. Bottle House Tap: Chairman to contact Mr Wickens regarding issue.

Chairman advised members the clerk wished to report something:

The Clerk told the Councillors that she would be retiring, having spent many years as Clerk to the Parish she felt it was time that she stepped back and let a new Clerk take over. She would be happy to remain to assist a smooth transfer to the new Clerk for as long as she was required.

Meeting concluded 9.20 pm