

## **Minutes of the Meeting of Penshurst Parish Council held on 7 October 2024 at 7.00 pm in Penshurst Village Hall.**

**1. PRESENT:** Cllrs A Campbell (Chairman), Mrs D Broad, Miss S Jolly, N Furnell, R Gerard-Sharp, J Horsford, D Howard, R Rees, B Townsend

**2. APOLOGIES:** PC John Donegan

**In Attendance:** KCCllr Mrs M McArthur, SDCllr R Streatfield

### **3. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 2 September 2024:**

Cllr Horsford asked for clarification on the site involved in the SDC Licencing item under the Open Session of the September meeting, this was confirmed as Chafford Park Estate; this to be included.

The minutes were subsequently unanimously approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Declarations of interests in agenda items.** None

### **OPEN SESSION:**

**5. KCCllr Mrs Margot McArthur:** Cllr McArthur advised that KCC supported public pension credit and the fuel allowance to help parishioners; there were concerns regarding the possible removal of single occupancy financial reduction for rates. The introduction of VAT to private education would impact in Kent with 19,000 students and possibly 200 schools closing. The changes due to the Shengen changes due at 2am on the 10 November 2024 could cause delays of up to 15 hours at the passport checks at the ports; shuttle delays were expected to be only minutes.

**6. SDCllr Richard Streatfeild:** Cllr Streatfeild reported that the SDC Website information showed that Health Checks were not being attended and would encourage everyone to take advantage of the options available. The issue of housing of tenants from other council areas was raised and he confirmed that this was a legal requirement for councils to comply with if tenants were at risk of abuse to ensure their safety based on a tier system. The new green bag recycling bags were being circulated, these were to encourage more recycling and cut costs. Residents living a long way from the roads, in blocks of flats or other access issues would continue to use the existing bags provided by the council. A wider range of items could be disposed of in the green bags including glass.

**7. PC Maunsell:** No report.

### **8. Neighbourhood Watch/Report:**

- Cllr Furnell raised mentioned the continuing use of the temporary Swaylands entrance, it was anticipated this would continue due to the amount of work that had been, and still was, being undertaken on the site.
- Vegetation in the field opposite Leicester Square was impacting on visibility.
- Hedge opposite Leicester Arms – ED to contact landowner.
- Problems with repairs requested of the water company near Leicester Square and on Spring Hill had been referred to the Consumer Council for Water three times and Leicester Square having finally been completed in September 2024 after six months, Spring Hill still not being resolved.
- Hay bale stock fire in Sevenoaks, 6 units attending.
- Males posing as police in order to steal cars in Sevenoaks. There had been reports of men wearing vests similar to those worn by officers.
- 3 Cars stolen locally 26 August: Bidborough; 8 Sept and 25 Sept from Hildenborough.
- Information was still awaited from Matthew Scott regarding the current and future provision and funding of policing in the parish.

### **9. Matters Arising:**

**(i) Speeding:** In view of the requirement that police must be in attendance at Speedwatch Sessions in order for drivers to be charged and the lack of police time available to support Speed Checks by Speed Watch teams it was agreed to defer any decision on purchasing up to date equipment until Spring 2025.

**(ii) Spire Hospital Bus Service:** Cllr Mrs McArthur advised that KCC were in support of helping with this request.

**(iii) Pedestrian Signage (HIP):** Requested for Leigh Road - Doubleton – Salmons – overgrown by layby. Signage indicating danger due to pedestrians in the road. Confirmation from Highways Officer to include on HIP.

**(iv) Parking – Site on The Lane:** Request submitted regarding van parked reducing visual access for other vehicles. Parking currently not an issue, problem to be monitored.

**(v) Hedging – Penshurst:** Clerk to contact resident and ask for area to be cut back again opposite Leicester Arms.

## **10. PLANNING: Planning Applications:**

**SE/24/02542/ADJ:** Spire Health Care, Ashurst Park Care Centre, Fordcombe: Erection of two-storey & partial front extension.

**SE/24/02421/LDCPR: Lisney, Spring Hill, Fordcombe:** Alterations to convert existing "Outbuilding/Garage" into Ancillary space/Gym/Home Office. Internal alterations, replacement/infilling of doors/windows.

**SE/24/01896/HOUSE: 4 Pioneer Cottages, Smarts Hill, Penshurst:** Single storey flat roofed rear extension. Removal of two outbuildings to be replaced with new single storey flat roofed outbuilding, to provide home office and garden room.

**SE/24/02065/FUL: Beech Glade, Doubleton Lane, Penshurst:** Demolition of existing single storey dwelling and extension and replacement with new dwelling over ground floor and part first floor. **PC**

**Response:** The proposed dwelling is no larger than that allowed on Appeal under application 09/02937 and is of a similar style. Penshurst Parish Council consider the proposed design and materials to be an improvement on the existing building and therefore have no objections

**SE/24/02216/DETAIL: Land South Of Hallborough, Poundsbridge, Penshurst:** Details pursuant to Condition 4 (Noise Impact Assessment) of 23/01473/FUL

**SE/24/02265/DETAIL: Land South Of Hallborough, Poundsbridge, Penshurst:** Details pursuant to Condition 5 (Biodiversity Impact Assessment) of 23/01473/FUL **Note:** Applicant proceeding with first planning consent awarded 23/01473

## **Appeals:**

**24/00025/CHGADD STREET NAMING & NUMBERING - SECTION 64 TOWN IMPROVEMENTS ACT 1847** **Site:** Penshurst Off Road Cycling Club, Grove Road, Penshurst. **New Address:** Treetops, Grove Road, Penshurst, TN11 8DU. **UPRN: 050002019006**

## **Tree Surgery:**

**24/02207/WTPO: Hurst House Fordcombe Road Fordcombe:**

Oak Tree (Front) - Fell due to lots of dead limbs. These have been snapping out on the drive and over the highways. Oak Tree (Rear) - Reduce by 20% to reduce weight and risk of summer shedding and to allow air flow through the canopy.

**24/02146/WTCA: Mitre Farm, Fordcombe Road, Fordcombe:** Fell Silver Birch.

## **11. HIGHWAYS**

**Highway Verges Maintenance:** ED to check with fellow clerks for information available for 2025 regarding maintenance of verges in parish.

Cllr Horsford raised the issue of poor maintenance by Kent Highways and the impact this was having on the drainage systems and consequent flooding being caused. Verges were no longer maintained resulting in build up of detritus then washing into drains and blocking the systems. Fordcombe has suffered badly in recent weeks with flooding impacting both the Village Hall and the Chafford Arms. Southern Water had identified work necessary to alleviate the problem but were not planning to carry it out until 2025, members considered this unacceptable especially in view of the costs they were incurring to provide a

vehicle on an almost daily basis to empty the holding area to prevent further flooding in the immediate area. Clerk had obtained photos from the KCC Officer which had helped identify the problem and reasons for it. Members recognised that if maintenance of the system was not improved then it was possible the same problems would become regular occurrences. It was reported that the area of road verge and the parking area at the bottom of Spring Hill had also washed away in the recent heavy rains. Consideration to be given to the PC using funds in emergencies to get drain clearance carried out to prevent future flooding or alternatively requesting KCC funds/work be transferred to PC in similar way to current management of verge mowing.

It was agreed that an on-site meeting was necessary with the KCC Officer dealing with the highway maintenance, it was understood the current KCC officer was Mark Hardcastle. Mike Payton was another officer dealing with other areas of highway maintenance. Clerk to check if PC could have a copy of the parish map of its village drainage system, it would be of assistance if a tour was undertaken with the list of trouble points being identified.

**833678: Overgrown hedges:** Adjacent to New Road and towards Saints Hill.

**833693: 'SLOW' Signage:** White sign on road near waterworks on road from Penshurst to Fordcombe requires refreshing.

**833164: Layby bottom of Spring Hill:** Base area washed away into adjacent field by storm water.

**832746: Poundsbridge Lane/Poundsbridge Hill Junction:** Road covered in road chippings, approximately 1 tonne laying at the junction of Poundsbridge Lane and Poundsbridge Hill, sweeping/clearance required

**832742: Spring Hill: Public House and Village Hall:** Flooding reported to KCC Highways, confirmation received regarding problem with pipework serving the area, Southern Water responsible for work required to rectify.

**829775: Debris and Signage:** Request for removal of road materials and signage left after recent work in Chafford Lane. Report acknowledged 9 September 2024.

**817283/814110: Leigh to Stocks Green:** Work curtailed due to withdrawal of funds, application resubmitted for funding to be reinstated but doubtful that work would be undertaken during current year.

**826354/755185: Finches, Fordcombe Road:** Flooding due to blocked Drain/Gulley. Noted 20.8.24 - gulley to be cleaned.

**The Lane, Fordcombe:** Request submitted for update on current position with regard to work identified as necessary. PC advised responsibility of others.

**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. Under investigation 18.4.24. Previous reports: 794607/779993/749311 October 2023 Blocked Drains. Update from Highways indicated that they were trying to arrange a camera check on the length of drains.

**Update requested: Advised job attended, further work required.**

**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.*

**823718: Signage** towards at Saints Hill Junction wrongly pointing to Cowden and Chiddingstone incorrectly reinstated. **Noted as completed 5.8.24**

**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

**12. Finance/Accounts:** The following accounts were presented and unanimously approved for payment by the council:

Forvis Mazars	External Annual Audit Fee	£426.00
Complete Weed Control	Village Weed Treatment	£228.00
HMRC	Clerk Tax Payment	£141.60
Sevenoaks District Council	Static Freighter Hire Fee	£291.00
Penshurst Village Hall	Hall Hire	£12.00
Oast & Oak	Churchyards/Stones Grass Cutting	£408.21
Lucy Fuller Rowell	Lengthsman	£100
Castle Water	Allotment Water Supply	£27.64

- (a) Allotments:** Clerk received verbal request from one holder to relinquish plot at Bottle House site. Cllr Campbell advised he had been asked if there were any vacancies, in view of this the vacant plot could be offered to the enquirer.
- (b) Play Area:** Main items identified on RoSPA Inspection addressed, estimate awaited from NJL for fencing, smaller items being dealt with as weather permitted. Litter bin contents had been thrown across the play area, also dog faeces in the area. Clerk to check bin being emptied regularly.
- (c) Councillor Email Access:** VisionICT dealing with request.
- (d) Bus Shelter New Road/Smarts Hill Junction:** Cllr Campbell reported that the contractor had cleared the main branches of the tree, and Chairman would check and remove any further growth as necessary.
- (e) Accounts:** Clerk had circulated the draft accounts for period July – September, these would be finalised at the November meeting when the bank statement providing the September month end balance was received.
- (f) VAT:** Clerk had submitted the claim for VAT refund for the period April – September 2024
- (g) Penshurst Magazine Costs:** Cllr Rees asked if the PC could make a contribution to the magazine printing costs, Chairman confirmed that the PC had provided a one off payment for the Fordcombe Magazine and it was considered this could be done for the Penshurst magazine.
- (h) Deposit Funds (Investment):** It was agreed that Cllr Howard approach the NatWest Bank, Tunbridge Wells regarding transfer of funds held by the PC, a balance to be retained to cover ongoing expenditure with Lloyds.

### **13. Any Other Business:**

- a. Police and Crime Commissioner's Consultation:** Information placed on PC Website, Report from new Officer circulated to members.
- b. Gatwick:** Cllr Howard advised that the current advice regarding the latest applications were to keep fighting the proposals, the question of compensation was raised but this was generally only available to those directly impacted by the issue. It was noted the City Airport had been approved.
- c. Water Leak:** There was a further mains water leak in the pipework near Leicester Square
- d. Salt Bag:** Cllr Horsford agreed to store this for the parish, ED to arrange
- e. Affordable Housing:** Chairman reported that legal terms were being finalised between the Estate and English Rural. They would try to build the majority of houses to the required size which would be 2/3 bedroomed. No further details were available currently
- f. Bridle Path:** ED to check situation with reported issues, further problem to be report at Vexour Farm with surfacing which had been described as a 'boggy' area and thought to be dangerously deep.
- g. Closed Churchyards:** Members noted that a report had been made that closed churchyards may be re-opened if suitable.
- h. Poultry Keeping:** New regulations have been introduced affecting anyone keeping domestic poultry. It is now the law that you have to register, the email link for this is:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-as-a-keeper-of-less-than-50-poultry-or-other-captive-birds>