

**Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 11 February 2013 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.**

Councillors present: Mr Ivor Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr P Dengate, Mr A Springate and Mrs M Waller together with the Clerk.

**1. Apologies and absences**

Cllr B Hinder (family commitment), Cllr W Hinder (family commitment), Cllr Holmes (work) and Cllr Perry (holiday). Cllr Spain (absent).

**2. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**

Cllr Dengate declared that he was predetermined on item 5.8 (MC/12/3046).

**3. Minutes of the Meetings of 7, 28 and 29 January 2013.**

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

**4. Matters Arising From Minutes.**

4.1 Minute 2499/4.1 signs at Cossington Lane. After considering the residents' submission detailing the problems being experienced, members did not object to the submitted wording but asked that the residents be asked for the dimensions of the proposed sign for the Clerk to circulate to members. **Action: Clerk.**

4.2 Minute 2499/4.2 Boxley Road/Grange Lane movement of speed restriction. **Received** and **noted** the copy of the Police objection to the request to extend the speed limit. **No further action.**

4.3 Minute 2499/4.3 Beechen Bank ownership. Members **noted** the information obtained from Land Registry. It was **agreed** that when office time allowed ownership, where identifiable, would be plotted on a map. **Action: office.**

4.4 Minute 2499/4.4 Saracen Fields and Iris Close open areas. KCC's reasons for not adopting and managing the land were **received**. After discussion members **agreed** that the estimated cost of a single cut should be obtained so that further discussion could take place. **Action: office.**

4.5 Minute 2499/4.5 County Councillor Paul Carter's devolved budget: trees leaning over Walderslade Woods Road and other work. Members **noted** the KCC response that there was no budget to undertake the work and that it would be rolled over for consideration in the new financial year. Members asked that signs be erected on Lordswood Lane to warn motorists of pedestrians' crossing to access the footways near the junction with Gleamingwood Drive. **Action: office.**

4.6 Minute 2499/4.6 salt bins 'For use on highways only' signs. It was **noted** that KCCH&T had started installing signs on all its salt bins; and at no cost to the parish council. Bins with no signs had been reported and this should be rectified by the end of February. **Agreed** a targeted letter drop would be made in areas where it was suspected that residents were using the salt on private driveways. **Action: office and councillors.**

4.7 Minute 2493/4.7 Maidstone Studios. **Noted** the issue of no reply to a request for a meeting has been escalated to the chairman. **Action: Cllr Wendy Hinder.**

4.8 Minute 2502/9 Walderslade Woods Road traffic island work. It was **noted** that County Cllr Carter had paid for the installation of islands along Walderslade Woods road. This, it is hoped, will eradicate the overtaking which has caused safety issues at these junctions. A period of monitoring will be undertaken by KCC and if there is no improvement then a reduction in the speed limit would be considered.

4.9 Minute 2501/12.2 Listed Buildings Register. **Noted** that members will be updated on the situation as soon as the list has been checked.

The meeting was not adjourned as no members of the public were present.

**5. Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.**

5.1 MA/12/2222 – Retrospective application for the creation of a parking bay in front garden including the excavation of earth and erection of walls at Fortrouge, Weaving Street.

*Do not wish to comment on the application but there is concern about the applicant's statement that they had originally been advised by MBC that planning permission was not required.*

5.2 MA/12/2285 demolition of existing garage and workshop and erection of an annexe at 78 Chatham Road, Sandling.

Members, who were unhappy with the inadequate plans and information supplied, felt that the description as an "annexe" was misleading as the development was for a stand-alone residential property. Concern was also raised about the location on the boundary. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the planning officer for a decision to be made out of meeting after discussion with members. **Action: office and councillors.**

5.3 MA/13/0095 erection of new side entrance porch at Court Lodge Farm, The Street, Boxley.

*Do not wish to object.*

5.4 MA/13/0096 Listed building consent to demolish existing side entrance and erection of new side entrance porch at Court Lodge Farm, The Street, Boxley.

*Do not wish to object, defer to the views of the Conservation Officer.*

5.5 TA/0222/12 Tree Preservation Order No. 1 of 1969: An application for consent to coppice 1 Oak tree at 11 Sylvan Glade, Walderslade.

*Do not wish to comment, defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.*

5.6 Pre-application discussion: telecoms upgrade (O2) 12836 New Cut Road Flexicell. Replacement of pole and installation of equipment cabinets to allow Telefonica UK Ltd to share the network grid in that area.

*Do not wish to object but would like the equipment to be the same colour as the existing installation.*

5.7 Pre-application discussion: proposed base station upgrade at (CS)111655 highways land (beside bus lane) Ashford Road, Grove Green.

*Do not wish to object but would like the equipment to be the same colour as the existing installation.*

5.8 MC/12/3046 Asbestos First Ltd application for North Dane Way, Lordswood.

After discussion covering; the location; current use of the site; the proposed development etc. Members **agreed** the response.

*Members wish to see the application refused due to; the potential hazards to the local community and schools due to its location adjacent to a large residential area; additional hazardous traffic on the local roads.*

*Should the Medway Planning Officer be minded to agree then the following conditions should be attached:*

- *Improved security to the site; which is currently only secured by corrugated iron. Steel palisade type fencing should be installed to impede any access to the site that might result in vandalism.*
- *The setting up of an 'alert' system to local schools and residential areas to notify local people should there be any problems. An annual leaflet drop to all local residents, schools, businesses reminding people what the alert system is for and that they must stay indoors and close all windows etc. until told it is safe.*
- *A 24 hour physical presence on site and also CCTV.*
- *Strict conditions regarding the handling of the asbestos to ensure that the sealed and bagged waste is not opened at the site in any circumstance and any changes to this must be subject to a planning application.*

*As the proposed site is located close to schools and residential areas it is suggested that the sealed lockable units (containing the asbestos waste) is within a larger sealable unit that is equipped with a water damping system so that any spillage or leaks can be immediate dampened down with waste going into sealed water chambers.*

5.9 Planning appeal Bredhurst Nurseries, Dunn Street, Bredhurst. Variation of condition 11 of MA/04/1503 (change of use from agricultural land to recreational land and erection of a timber shed for use as changing rooms) as follows – ‘The use hereby permitted shall only be carried on by Bredhurst Juniors Football Club or other football club based in the parishes of Bredhurst or Boxley’.

Members **noted** that the previous response would be supplied and additional reasons for refusal that needed to be included were identified as:

- *The application, due to the reliance on private motor cars will be contrary to NPPF 2012.*
- *There is a long history of complaints, the last as recently as November 2012, about noise and disturbance from this site which is detrimental to residents’ amenities and quality of life. Any increase in the number of matches played at the site would significantly increase this disturbance which is contrary to Policy ENV28 of the Maidstone Borough-wide Local plan and NPPF 2012.*
- *Whilst the site is adjacent to open fields it is a flat area and the noise from the football pitches travels an extremely long distance into the village.*
- *The applicant argues that this is a ‘not for profit’ community facility however it should be pointed out that the sole reason for the building of a refreshment pavilion adjacent to the playing area is for the owner, who runs a restaurant at the site, to gain income from the players and spectators.*

*This parish council has regularly supplied information to the LPA about the site and highlighted when breaches of conditions have taken place. It understands and shares the frustration of some residents that enforcement by the LPA takes too long and then is suspended when the applicant submits a new planning application or lodges an appeal thus allowing the nuisance and unsustainable use to continue.*

5.10 MA/12/1426 Retail units at Penhurst Close. Members were notified that the planning officer has not yet made a decision.

## 6. Planning Applications and Appeals Decisions

MA/12/2142 listed building consent at Barn Cottage, Boxley Road – REFUSED. Members were informed that a planning application was never submitted.

MA12/2149 erection of two storey and single storey rear extensions and installation of swimming pool - REFUSED. Members studied the reason for the refusal as their decision had been not to object.

## 7. Neighbourhood Development Plans

**Noted** a working group meeting will be arranged, an e-mail to members asking for availability will be sent. **Action: Clerk.**

Cllr Springate notified the meeting that he wished to come off the working group but would like to continue to receive copies of any documents etc.

## 8. Volunteer Groups.

Cllr Springate reported that the previous morning’s task day had had to be postponed because weather and ground conditions made it too dangerous to do the planned work. The AGM on 7 February had been well attended.

## 9. Highways and Byways.

9.1 Grove Green Lane. **Noted** KCCH&T’s response to the residents’ petition explaining why no action could be taken to change the junction.

9.2 Cabinet Member Cllr Ring’s invitation to meet with parishes about any litter issues. **Noted, no further action required.**

9.3 Setting local speed limits DFT guidelines: the Clerk’s report on the new guidelines was **received**. It was **agreed** that a process of reviewing roads that members were concerned about would start at meetings.

9.4 Quad bikes, Lordswood: as Cllr Wendy Hinder was not present the item was deferred to the next meeting. **Action: agenda.**

- 9.5 Winter maintenance: the report was **received**. It was **noted** that the tractor driver had to use discretion when entering closes or roads, both to ensure that there is no damage to parked vehicles and that the tractor, which now has a larger scoop, could get safely in and out. KCCH&T were no longer encouraging the drivers to go into smaller closes due to complaints received from residents about snow piles obstructing vehicles.
- 9.6 Lights Beechen Bank Road: **noted** that electrical work to connect the new lights to the system is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March.
- 9.7 Weaving Roundabout, road works closure over Easter. Members, having been notified of the planned work and closure, **agreed** that the parish council should ask for details of the planned landscaping. **Action: office.**

**10. Policy and procedures review.**

The Street Maintenance policy and pro forma was, with two amendments, **agreed**.

**11. Matters for information.**

- 11.1 Public Right of Way. **Noted** there had been a minor reorganisation at KCC PROW.
- 11.2 Fire hydrants. It was suggested that Kent Fire & Rescue could ask KCCH&T to include fire hydrants in their on-line highway fault reporting system. This would allow members of the public to report any issues. **Action: office.**
- 11.3 Diseased tree rear of 12 Violet Close. Concern was raised that once felled the tree did not appear to be diseased. After discussion it was agreed **no further action.**

**12. Next Meeting.**

Next full environment meeting 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

**13. Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC.**

**Agreed** the response to the KALC Maidstone branch's request for details about any outstanding long-term cases. This would state that, whilst there were now no outstanding cases, there was concern over the length of time it took to investigate even simple cases. Furthermore, MBC appeared very reluctant to take swift enforcement action even on repeat offenders.

An issue within the Kent Downs AONB would be notified to MBC.

Meeting closed at 9.18 p.m.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman.....Date.....