

**Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 14 July 2014 at
Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.**

Councillors present: Mrs P Brooks, Mr Ivor Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr M Hinchliffe, Mrs Wendy Hinder (Chairman), Mr Bob Hinder, Mr D Hollands, Cllr A Spain, Mr A Springate together with the Clerk (left after planning application 14/500932) and Assistant Clerk.

1. **Apologies and absences.**

There were none.

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

Cllr P Brooks declared she had been lobbied on Item 9.4.

3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 9 June 2014.**

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

4. **Matters Arising From Minutes.**

4.1 Minute 2651/10.5 Westfield Sole Road additional signage. Members **noted** that KCCH&T have agreed to arrange 'unsuitable for HGV' signs to be placed at the ends of the road.

As no member of the public was present the meeting was not adjourned.

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

MA/14/0018 land to the rear of Hillah, Cossington Lane. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with members that this planning application is not reported to the MBC Planning Committee.

Asbestos Waste Site, North Dane Way KSL140603/HW07: Environment Agency - 3R Waste Limited, North Dane Way, Lordswood - Environmental Permit application (e-mail 4.6.14). **Ratified** the Clerk's response, after consulting members. *The following was placed beside the relevant section of the risk assessment produced by the company.*

Boxley Parish Council comments

The site is situated to the adjacent to the extensive Lordswood housing areas, a leisure centre (with outside football pitches) and farmland. The agricultural plateau is also a water catchment area for the spring line just below the North Downs. Pumping stations exist along the bottom of the North Downs Escarpment and so this is a very sensitive area. There is a proposal to build 500 homes on the land adjacent to and surrounding the site (and it is understood that further large developments may be under consideration) so the potential for human exposure to contamination will have increased if any accidental spillage occurs.

Inadequate road infrastructure increases risk of spillage leading to air transport then inhalation. The site is situated off of North Dane Way which is a modern road however the road infrastructure that delivers traffic to this road is old and not suitable for the traffic that currently uses it. Access to the site will either be via;

- Walderslade/Lordswood;
- The Medway Towns conurbation; or
- Across country.

These routes are unsuitable because they are either through heavily populated areas or on roads primarily designed for local residential use. Each route has its own problems but share a common safety issue in that there are regular crashes and shunts. Access from M20 J6/A229 and M2 J3 would be via the A2045 which leads into residential roads before reaching North Dane Way. Access from M2 J4 would be via either single track country lanes or through the urban area. It is not if a crash happens but when a crash happens causing spillage and unacceptable exposure to the asbestos

being carried by the vehicles. Any ground spillage will result in: Ground and wind pollution not only affecting residential properties in the adjacent area but also potentially contaminating farmland and water supplies for years to come.

Flytipping. This is a particular problem in this area and CCTV cameras have had to be installed outside Shawstead Lane Household Refuse site to identify offenders. There is concern that asbestos waste will be dumped at this site by unscrupulous contractors. Column D of this assessment fails to recognise the danger to the local human population.

The site is within an agricultural area with the associated wildlife. Any materials left outside, whilst waiting to be unloaded, will attract crows and magpies. These local birds and foxes have learnt that plastic bags are associated with food and now have a learnt habit to rip open anything that is plastic. This would cause a pollution hazard.

The agricultural plateau is part of the North Downs chalk aquifer which is important for supplying water within Kent and to London. It is also a water catchment area for the spring lines situated along the base of the North Downs Escarpment which feeds into the ponds and streams that ultimately find their way into the River Medway. Pumping stations exist along the bottom of the North Downs Escarpment and so this is a very sensitive area.

This is a site set back from the road and it has in the past been the subject to anti-social behaviour and there is concern that if this happens again then the resulting vandalism will cause health and pollution issues.

The site is located on a plateau that is high, exposed and windy.

The agricultural plateau is part of the North Downs chalk aquifer which is important for supplying water within Kent and to London. It is also a water catchment area for the spring lines situated along the base of the North Downs Escarpment which feeds into the ponds and streams that ultimately find their way into the River Medway. Pumping stations exist along the bottom of the North Downs Escarpment and so this is a very sensitive area.

14/500168/TPO - Application to fell 1 x Ash tree at 30 Spenlow Drive Chatham Kent ME5 9JT.

Wished to see refused, members were concerned at the lack of information submitted with this application and felt that a photograph would have been helpful. They also had concerns that with the outbreak of Ash die back disease they are reluctant to see the felling of a healthy Ash tree.

14/500574/PNJCLA **FOR INFORMATION** Article 10 consultation, change of use of the Pump House, currently in use as B1(a): Office to 5 x residential apartments falling within use class C3 Forstal Pumping Station Forstal Road Aylesford Kent ME20 7AH. *Members raised concerns that the Parish Council was not a consultee at this stage however **noted** the Clerks comments that under the new permitted development regulations only the planning authority, Kent Highways, the Environment Agency and Environmental Health team can state whether there are objections, thus triggering a full application, objections can be based on highway traffic, flooding, contamination etc.*

14/500676/FULL Single storey side and rear at 56 Fir Tree Grove Lordswood Kent ME5 8XD. *Do Not Wish to Object.*

MA/14/0018 Proposal: Revised plans including two windows being fitted with obscure glass at Hillah, Cossington Road.

Do not wish not object but members assume the condition for using obscure glass will be rigorously enforced as the parish council has previous experience of this not

happening to the detriment of local residents.

14/500451/FULL/GFBR- New Annex Extension at 14 Exton Gardens, Weaving Kent ME14 5AT. Wished to see refused and reported to the planning committee for the reasons below:

MBC does not consider garden land to be previously developed land and therefore this development, despite its title of annexe is an independent two bedroom property in what is a desirable location. It will have vehicle access to the public highway via a shared driveway and may be easily split off from the main property by the installation of a garden fence.

The development being termed as an annexe means that the planning requirements are not as stringent as those required for a new dwelling.

It is likely, as supported by the planning officer's pre-application advice dated 11 December 2013, that a new dwelling might be refused as *"there is insufficient space to satisfactorily accommodate a new house here. A new dwelling would appear as a cramped over development of the site with the dwelling being located close to the road on quite a prominent corner site. In addition to the adverse visual impact, there would seem to be no available space for private garden areas to serve what would presumably be a family sized dwelling. I am also concerned that the new dwelling would dominate the outlook of the adjacent property no 14"*.

Whilst sympathetic to the needs of the family this parish council has a policy that it will only take into account planning material reasons.

- The height, bulk and location are detrimental to the existing street scene.
- There are insufficient provisions for a garden and car parking.
- This is overdevelopment of the site.

If the planning officer is minded to approve then a planning condition must be included that links the occupation of this house to that of the persons living at no 14 so that it remains an annexe to the main property and should not be separated, subdivided or altered in anyway so as to create a separate self-contained residential unit.

14/500932/FULL Conversion and change of use of Church Hall to 5 bed dwelling at Boxley Church Hall The Street Boxley Kent ME14 3DX.

*Do not wish to object, but rely on the views of the Conservation Officer. It was **agreed** that BPC's traffic management policy is forwarded to the applicant.*

14/500705/FULL/JOBA: Proposal: Extension to the existing dormer roof at the rear and create a full width extension in the same style at the front of the house. Location: 17 Woodlands Boxley Kent ME5 9JX. *Do not wish to object.*

14/500290/FULL/MAHA: Proposal: Demolition of a number of disused temporary structures associated with Maidstone Studios and the erection of 77 dwellings together with access, parking, garaging, landscaping and ancillary works on land to east of Maidstone Studios. Location: The Maidstone Studios, Vinters Business Park, New Cut Road, Maidstone. **Deadline 31 July 2014.** This application arrived today with little time to prepare a report for the meeting therefore the Clerk will view the plans and circulate a report out of meeting to canvass members' views/decision. **Noted.**

Members raised the question of whether there was a Section 106 agreement in place when this site was originally approved for redevelopment. It was **agreed** that the Assistant Clerk would investigate, Members suggestions for a 106 agreement could include:

- A crossing for residents to access local facilities including play areas for children.

- Additional play facilities.

Pre-application notification

Brooklyn Yard Land north of M20 J6 Chatham Road Sandling Maidstone Proposed development by Scania UK. Cllr Bob Hinder informed members that this site has been put forward by the company Scania to become its main depot once the leases have expired on its depots at Sittingbourne and Dover.

6. Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions.

The following were **noted**:

Newnham Court Shopping Village. REFUSED

MA/14/0517* – Alterations to existing double garage to provide ancillary accommodation at The Banks, Boxley Road, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent, ME5 9JE.

This application was Approved/Granted with conditions on 2/6/14.

7. Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Noted the first stage for obtaining the community's views is under way.

8. Volunteer Groups.

Friends of Boxley Warren. Cllr Bob Hinder gave a verbal report on the recent task day which was spent clearing the area around the box trees to open it up and encourage new growth. Outside of Surrey this is the only area where box trees are grown. He also reported that due to Ash die back they are keen to support the Forestry Commissions National Strategy to conserve Ash.

Walderslade Woodlands Group report by Chairman Rob Burrows.

At the start of the month, some members of the group cut back the vegetation in the following places:-

- branches obstructing the CCTV cameras at Beechen Hall
- the steps on the footpath (KH32) between Impton Lane and Tunbury Avenue
- the steps and footpath joining the above with Chippendale Close
- Miss Kissick's Glade - the seated area in Tunbury Bottom.

The Friday Task Force has commenced work on the plateaux. East, Central and North have all had their peripheral paths mowed, with ash saplings on Central from last year and this, being chipped for pathing topping.

Unfortunately, both chipper outings have resulted in punctures being sustained, and needing emergency recovery work.

To prevent this from happening again, we are going to get the tyres filled with a special rubberised foam, which will make them permanently puncture-proof.

The next few weeks should enable us to also open up the West and North East plateaux. This will mean that these plateaux will be accessible to the public for the very first time. Watch this space!

Cllr Springate added that there has been a lot of preparation by the group for the Friday task day and should be commended. He also remarked the areas they have been working on are full of regenerated Ash trees with no evidence of the die-back disease.

9. Highways and Byways.

9.1 Bollards

- Members agreed that additional bollards on both sides are required at the village end of Boxley Road, Walderslade to prevent further parking along the verge and dropped kerb. The cost of these bollards will come from the street maintenance budget and the office will determine how many will be required. **Action office.**

- Members **agreed** that before considering bollards at Boxley Road/Travertine Road that it would do a letter drop to the dwelling responsible to explain the dangers of parking on this spot. If the problem persists then it should be brought back to a future meeting. **Action office.**

9.2 Condition of vegetation throughout the parish – Cllr Waller reminded the Assistant Clerk that the roots of trees removed by MBC on a piece of land by the Yew Tree pub were still there and should be removed. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

9.3 Integrated Transport Policy – **Noted** KCC has agreed to a representative of Parish Councils to be on the working group to produce this strategy. Cllr I Davies confirmed that at the latest KALC meeting this had been agreed.

9.4 Speed Limit Grange Lane. Members **received** a residents request to support the reduction of the speed limit along Grange Lane. It was concluded that whilst the Parish Council was sympathetic to this request it did not have the power to resolve it and needed to be taken up at a higher level. Cllr Wendy Hinder has **agreed** to take up this request as a Borough Councillor. **Action Cllr Wendy Hinder.**

9.5 Speed Limit Walderslade Woods Road – Members **noted** a request from a resident to reduce the speed limit to 40mph from the traffic lights to Roundwood Roundabout. The Clerk has requested an explanation from KCC why this stretch of the road has not been reduced in line with the stretch from Bridgewood Manor Roundabout to the traffic lights. Once this has been received the committee will be more informed to make a decision. **Action Clerk.**

9.6 A 20mph Speed Limit from Yew Tree Pub to the Scouts Activity Centre along Grange Lane. Members queried why this request was placed on the agenda? They raised concerns that it could not be enforced as it was difficult to travel any faster along this road. **Action Clerk.**

10. **Policy and procedures review.**

Annual Competency Review – Members **received** and **agreed** the clerk's comments with small amendment. **Action office.**

11. **Maidstone Play Area Strategy Consultation Results**

Members **received** the Clerk's report with two sections requiring answers from the committee.

- The first was a reference to play areas in Walderslade, MBC confirmed that there is a play area 'Timber Tops'. Members would like it acknowledged that this is not in Walderslade but in Lordswood. The nearest play area to this falls within Tonbrige and Malling at Tunbury Wood and is in fact more than 12 mins walk due to the topography of the land. Therefore there aren't any play areas in Walderslade within the Maidstone boundary.
- The second, being lack of play areas in Boxley and Sandling – A suggestion from MBC was whether the Church would consider using some of its land to incorporate a play area? The Council has it on good authority from the Parochial Church that there is no land available at St Mary's and All Saints Church to develop a play area, equally there are little or no footpaths through the village.
- There is no land available at Sandling. However the walk to Cobtree Manor Park is via the A229 Chatham Road, which takes at least 20 minutes.

Members also requested that part of the section 106 funding from the Maidstone Studios development should be earmarked to maintain a play area in Grove Green.

12. **Matters for information.**

Noted The order to change the yellow lines and restrictions at Cuckoo Woods Avenue has been advertised.

13. **Next Meeting.**

Members agreed to change the next full environment meeting from 11 August to 18 August 2014 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

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

None submitted.

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

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