

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr A Staples (Chairman)
Cllr R Vernon
Cllr M Viviers
Cllr G Lawrence
Cllr S Murray
Cllr J Tuke

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), Cllr S Holden (County), Cllr A Fairweather (Borough) and 3 members of the public.

PUBLIC FORUM:

A resident spoke in support of planning application 23/02102/FULL which was to be considered by the Council at this meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr L Gosbee

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct Part 2)

None

3. BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Cllr Holden reported that the overriding issue at KCC was the £50m overspend on last year's budget. 50% of that overspend would be met from reserves, with the other 50% being met from contingencies. This was not sustainable and action needed to be taken to avoid KCC following Birmingham City Council into effective insolvency. The overspend was largely driven by spending on Adult Social Care and Special Education Needs, particularly transport costs for pupils with Special Education Needs. The number of children with Special Education Needs in Kent was 20% higher than the National average. The costs of meeting the care needs of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers also put a strain on KCC's budget. KCC was caring for more unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in its system than Kent children. KCC had received £5m from Central Government to assist with those costs, but what was needed was for other local authorities to be required to share the burden by taking a proportion of minor asylum seekers coming into Kent.

Cllr Holden acknowledged that the potholes on Kent's roads were not getting any better. There were five times more potholes reported this winter than during last winter.

Cllr Holden was working to get a resolution to the reoccurring problem of road closures. The number of road closure permits issued by KCC had gone up threefold from 4,000 to 12,000 in the last 12 months. Cllr Holden has received agreement, at least in principle, to the establishment of an Inspectorate to monitor road closures and ensure that roads are only closed if necessary for safety reasons, not simply for the convenience of contractors, and only for as long as reasonably necessary.

Cllr Holden was pleased to report that his Plan Bee initiative to protect pollinators had won an award from Central Government.

Cllr Staples raised the issue of Bettenham Lane Bridge repeatedly sustaining damage caused by HGV's. The Council believed that this could be prevented, or at least reduced, by putting signage up warning that the lane was not suitable for all HGV's, not just low loaders, and having that signage at the junction of Bettenham Lane and Hareplain Road. Cllr Holden asked that Cllr Staples write to him with the details and he will take the matter up with the appropriate Officer.

Cllr Staples also asked about the proposed closure of Tovil Waste Recycling Centre. Whilst outside of the Borough, it was the nearest facility for Frittenden's residents and therefore it would be a substantial loss of amenity to the area if it was closed. Cllr Holden noted that there would shortly be a Public Consultation on this. It had been due to commence earlier in the Summer but had been delayed whilst further information was obtained.

Cllr Vernon raised the poor state of the Weald Leisure Centre and the fact that the pool was rarely open. In his view all the issues which led to the pool being closed stemmed from extremely poor management by Fusion. Cllr Vernon had been asked to flag up an incident where a user had suffered significant injuries due to a faulty piece of gym equipment. Despite being made well aware of the fault, and the injuries it had caused, the management had allowed that piece of equipment to continue to be used with no care for the Health & Safety of other users. This was unacceptable. Cllr Fairweather will provide Cllr Vernon with the relevant contact details so he can take this matter up with the appropriate Portfolio Holder at TWBC.

Cllr Fairweather reported that there was very little activity going on at the Town Hall. Cllr Fairweather had followed up reports relating to the fly tipping on Sand Lane with the relevant Officer and been told that a specialist contractor was being sought to remove the fly tipping because of the volume and the fact that it contained asbestos, albeit Cllr Fairweather had not been able to see any asbestos material when he inspected the waste that had been dumped.

After a period of inactivity, a Landscape & Environmental Management Plan has been submitted in relation to the Four Acres development site on Cranbrook Road. The Environmental Officer has made a number of observations in response to that plan which needed to be addressed and so more work will need to be done by the developer in that regard before any development could be progressed.

Cllr Fairweather advised that Kim Fletcher of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council had arranged for a public meeting to take place in Cranbrook on 4th October to discuss the lack of non-selective secondary education in the area. Cllr Holden confirmed that he had spoken to a cabinet member about this and they would like to have a meeting after the Public Meeting had taken place to discuss the views expressed at that meeting.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THE 6TH JUNE 2023 & 4TH JULY 2023 AND THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON THE 1ST AUGUST 2023

It was proposed by Cllr Lawrence, seconded by Cllr Tuke, and **RESOLVED** (1 abstention) that the Minutes from the Council meeting on 6th June 2023 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. That being so, the Chairman signed the said Minutes.

Approval of the Minutes from the Council meeting on 4th July 2023 was postponed to the next meeting, there not being the required quorum of members who were present on 4th July 2023.

It was proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Murray, and **RESOLVED** (2 abstentions) that the Minutes from the Planning Meeting on 1st August 2023 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. That being so, the Chairman signed the said Minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Laundry Lane Hedge

The Clerk has instructed the Grounds Maintenance Contractor to reduce the width of the hedge as far as is possible whilst preserving the health of the hedge. This work should take place during the course of September, weather permitting.

Highway Improvement Plan

The Clerk was liaising with the relevant officer at KCC. That officer had been away for the whole of the school summer holiday and so the Clerk will arrange for the Council to be provided with items from KCC's 30mph toolkit during the course of September.

Playground Equipment

Cllr Gosbee had raised whether anything could reasonably be done to prevent equipment from getting hot during sunny weather. The Clerk is making enquiries of the manufacturer, Proludic.

Dig Dog Lane Hedge

The owner of the hedge has been identified and the Clerk will be writing to request that it is cut as a matter of urgency.

On the subject of hedges, Cllr Staples reported that he had spoke with Cllr Fairweather about the hedges on Satins Hill. Cllr Fairweather had been told that ordinarily the hedges would not be cut until October and he is seeking to discuss this with the relevant landowners.

6. NOISE NUISANCE

Cllr Staples suggested that the Council put something in the Parish Magazine next Spring/Summer reminding all residents to be considerate to others when hosting outdoor events or simply enjoying their gardens in the evenings. Noise could travel a surprisingly long way depending on the wind direction/weather conditions.

7. WEBSITE HOSTING – HUGO FOX

Cllr Tuke reported that Hugo Fox would start charging for hosting the Council's website. There were various levels of service available depending on the fee paid. It was proposed by Cllr Tuke, seconded by Cllr Viviers, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to sign up to the bronze level service at £9.99 plus VAT per month, to be paid by direct debit.

8. DEVELOPMENT AT 4 ACRES, CRANBROOK ROAD, FRITTENDEN – SUGGESTIONS FOR ROAD NAMES

Cllr Staples suggested that the developer be invited to adopt road names that memorialized Rupert Inglis, a former Rector of Frittenden and Army Chaplain who was killed at the Battle of the Somme whilst retrieving wounded from no man's land, and Christopher Parish, who had made a substantial contribution to the Frittenden Community throughout his time in the Parish. It was agreed that Cllr Staples would obtain consent from their relatives before the Clerk put this proposal to the developer.

9. VILLAGE CLEAN UP

Cllr Lawrence confirmed that all arrangements were in place for this community event

10. SPEEDWATCH

Cllr Staples reported that 6 sessions had been planned but 2 had been cancelled, 1 because of the weather and 1 because of roadworks. 27 offenders had been recorded. 4 letters had been sent to repeat offenders and there were 2 further pending actions. The highest speed recorded was 50 mph, but that vehicle's registration number was not on the DVLA website and so the driver could not be traced.

11. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS

It was agreed that Cllrs Lawrence, Vernon and Viviers would inspect the playground with reference to the action points set out in the independent annual report prepared by RoSPA Playsafety. They would take whatever remedial action they could and note where work would need to be carried out by a professional contractor.

The Clerk noted that it remained unclear who owned / was responsible for the goal posts and nets as these had not been purchased by the Parish Council. Cllr Lawrence will look into this and report back at the next meeting of the Council.

It was reported that one of the gate posts on the gate through to Laundry Lane was wobbling. Cllr Lawrence will look at this when inspecting the playground.

12. ROAD REPORT

This item was postponed to the next meeting of the Council in the absence of Cllr Gosbee.

13. PLANNING

New Applications

23/02071/FULL	Land adjacent to Tile Barn Cottage, Ayleswade Lane, Headcorn Change of use from agricultural to equine, formation of sand school, plus 4 stables with tack room and mobile unit (retrospective) Proposed by Cllr Lawrence, Seconded by Cllr Vernon RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that the residential mobile unit is not consistent with a change from agricultural to equine use.
23/02102/FULL	The Hatchin Tan, Grandshore Lane, Frittenden Stationing of one mobile home, one touring caravan and a utility room for a gypsy family. Proposed by Cllr Lawrence, seconded by Cllr Tuke RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL subject to planning conditions: (i) permitting no more than 2 parking spaces; and (ii) requiring additional planting to be completed within 12 months of the grant of permission to further screen the development from Grandshore Lane (VOTE: 3 For, 3 Against - resolution passed on Chairman's casting vote)
23/01908/FULL	Lake House, Staplehurst Road, Frittenden Creation of three ponds under Natural England Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing Scheme

	Proposed by Cllr Vernon, Seconded by Cllr Lawrence RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL
23/02122/FULL & 23/02123/LBC	Gould Farm, Mill Lane, Frittenden Demolition of chimney on rear extension, reinstatement of a new chimney over existing study, demolish window and lower opening at rear of property, remove timber weatherboarding; works to renovate the interior of the building, demolishing floor coverings and rotten joists, removing brick covering, strip carpet, demolish walls, demolish fireplace, demolish internal doors, relocation of oil tank; demolition of an existing annex and garage and replacement with a new garage Proposed by Cllr Vernon, Seconded by Cllr Viviers RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL
23/02160/SUB	Land at Four Acres, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Submission of Details in relation to Condition 18 – (Landscape and Environmental Management Plan details) of 21/01638/FULL. NOTED
23/02253/FULL	Oaklands, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Proposed change of use of redundant building and detached garage with amenity area to dwellinghouse. Proposed by Cllr Vernon, Seconded by Cllr Tuke RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL
23/02246/FULL	Buckhurst Farm, Biddenden Road, Frittenden Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 19/03080/FULL (Conversion of existing barn to residential use for 2 no dwellings) - remove link element of roof between two dwellings Proposed by Cllr Venon, Seconded by Cllr Murray RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL
23/02247/FULL	Buckhurst Farm, Biddenden Road, Frittenden 4 No. open fronted car ports to previously approved barn conversions of 20/03002/FULL, 19/03081/FULL, 19/03080/FULL Proposed by Cllr Vernon, Seconded by Cllr Lawrence RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL

Outcome of Previous applications

23/01788/LBC	Burnt House Farm, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Listed Building Consent – Remedial works to internal wall plaster, ceilings and floors. CONSENT GRANTED
23/01558/FULL	Willow Cottage, Ayleswade Lane, Headcorn Installation of static caravan for residential use PERMISSION REFUSED

Planning appeals

- None.

14. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- Kent Police had asked the Council to publicise a Violence Against Women & Girls Engagement Event which is to take place in Tunbridge Wells on 6th October 2023. Cllr Tuke will put the details on the Council's website.
- The Annual Survey on the performance of Kent Police was also now being undertaken and residents were invited to have their day. Cllr Tuke will again publish details on the website.

15. FINANCE

- It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to pay the accounts as follows:

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – August 2023					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£15.00	Nil	£15.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Room Hire – Meeting Room (1 x session)
BACS	£213.00	£35.50	£177.50	Kent Grassland Services	Grounds Maintenance – July
BACS	£55.40	Nil	£55.40	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses – August
BACS	£50.40	£8.40	£42.00	Urbaser Ltd	Street Cleansing – July
BACS	£38.88	£6.48	£32.40	JRB Enterprise	Dog Bags
BACS	£119.40	£19.90	£99.50	Playsafety Ltd	Annual Inspection - Playground
DD	£46.78	£2.23	£44.55	Npower	Streetlighting Energy – July
Total	£639.66	£89.31	£550.35		

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – September 2023					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£15.00	Nil	£15.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Room Hire – Meeting Room (1 x session)
BACS	£213.00	£35.50	£177.50	Kent Grassland Services	Grounds Maintenance – August
BACS	£50.40	£8.40	£42.00	Urbaser Ltd	Street Cleansing – August
BACS	£50.00	Nil	£50.00	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses – September
BACS	£105.57	Nil	£105.57	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk's Salary – September
BACS	£70.40	Nil	£70.40	HMRC	PAYE
DD	£46.42	£2.21	£44.21	Npower	Streetlighting Energy – August
Total	£550.79	£46.11	£504.68		

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:35 pm.

Chairman's Signature: _____

Date: _____