

REPORT TO AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL 18th March 2025

By the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors for

Aylesford North and North Downs Ward
Councillors Dave Davis, Alex McDermott and Roger Dalton

Aylesford South and Ditton Ward
Councillors Rob Cannon, Steve Hammond and Colin Williams

Walderslade Ward
Councillor Des Keers

ALL WARDS ITEMS

COUNCIL TAX 25/26

1. The Council Tax for a Band D, Aylesford, property for next year is £2354.46. This is made up of the following elements :
 - a. KCC £1691.19
 - b. Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority. £94.86
 - c. Kent Police and Crime Commissioner £270.15.
 - d. Consolidated TMBC, Special Items and Parish precepts £298.26. The TMBC element of this is a rise of 3% or £7.14 for a Band D household.

TMBC ASB REDUCTION & PC INVOLVEMENT

2. The TMBC ASB Team have worked with many agencies to reduce ASB across the Borough. This has been highly successful, reducing ASB by about a third in the last year. (See Parish Comparisons below) As a result, we were nominated for and won a National Silver Award for this work.
3. A significant part of this success has been the employment of 4 ASB officers by TMBC.
4. This effect could be magnified, if Parish Councils would like to join us, to contribute to the employment of more ASB Officers. The contributions sought this year, would be of the order of £2000 to £3000 per council, for the next year. With this, there will be an opportunity for PCs to contribute through a service delivery plan. This will focus on Parishes, bringing a weekly engagement with TMBC officers and parish members and clerks, to plan and tackle issues that your local residents feel require attention. There will also be regular update meetings with parish clerks to make all aware progress and outcomes.

5. Parish Comparisons

6. The following table shows the ASB incidents by Ward (April 2024 – September 2024) when to new ASB team were in and working. The table was created using Kent Police data

7. TMBC saw the greatest reduction across the whole of Kent last year.

	2023	2024	+ / -	%
Aylesford North & North Downs Ward	74	43	-31	-41.89%
Aylesford South & Ditton Ward	70	54	-16	-22.86%
Birling, Leybourne & Ryarsh Ward	49	18	-31	-63.27%
Borough Green & Platt Ward	23	26	3	13.04%
Bourne Ward	21	13	-8	-38.10%
Cage Green & Angel Ward	108	72	-36	-33.33%
East and West Peckham, Mereworth & Watlington Ward	29	22	-7	-24.14%
East Malling, West Malling & Offham Ward	62	74	12	19.35%
Higham Ward	17	23	6	35.29%
Hildenborough Ward	16	14	-2	-12.50%
Judd Ward	114	60	-54	-47.37%
Kings Hill Ward	46	22	-24	-52.17%
Larkfield Ward	126	41	-85	-67.46%
Pilgrims with Ightham Ward	66	54	-12	-18.18%
Snodland East & Ham Hill Ward	58	66	8	13.79%
Snodland West & Holborough Lakes Ward	83	36	-47	-56.63%
Trench Ward	48	35	-13	-27.08%
Vauxhall Ward	36	33	-3	-8.33%
Miscellaneous	3	1	-2	-66.67%
Total ASB	1,049	707	-342	-32.60%

Parishes in red are signed up for next year.

8. During the 2025 campaign we will be capturing all real time reports with day, date, time and extract three-word location, journey planning the two teams of two ASB Officers covering the Borough.

a. For Town and Parish Councils who have agreed to finance the 2025 ASB Enforcement Team, a Service Level Agreement would be put in place detailing a joint agreed programme of frequency of presence in the parish council, timings and addressing specific local ASB issues, working with our enforcement partners.

NEW FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH

9. At the TMBC Full Council, on the 8th April, Royal British Legion Industry will become a Freeman of the Borough. We look forward to this honour being conferred on this most deserving institution.

LOCAL PLAN – UPDATE

TMBC MEMBER / PARISH COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT PLAN

10. In our last report we introduce you to the:

- a. The Local Plan, Engagement and Consultation Strategy.
- b. TMBC Member, Officer and Parish Council Engagement Plan.

11. These are critical documents in the build-up to the Regulation 18 Consultation that you may well wish to make plans for a significant response from your council and critically from your residents.

12. This Consultation will be not only on this parishes own housing allocation but that of neighbouring parishes and the wider northeast to the Borough that will affect us. It will deal with a mass of conflicting issues and marrying them into a cohesive whole. Thus roads, bus services, all utilities, schools, medical services, farmland, the environment, local commerce and industry to name but a few.

13. We would be grateful if you have any comments or questions about preparing for the Regulation 18 Consultation to raise these with at your upcoming meetings and at any time in the future.

NATIONAL PLANNING PPOLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) CHANGES

14. The NPPF is a fundamental planning document and the latest revision was received on 12th December 2024. This results in many changes to the planning regime and the development of the Local Plan. We raise only 2 key ones you must be aware of:

a. **Housing Numbers.** There is a new Standard Method Formula for determining the number of houses to go into the Local Plan. TMBC is now required to produce 1067 houses per year for the lifetime of the Plan. That is an annual increase of 277 dwellings per annum. There is further increase caused by the absence of a TMBC Local Plan that requires a 20 % increase on that figure. The Local Plan is liable to run until 2042 and a such TMBC are required to produce 25,388 dwelling in that time. At present we have about 57,000 homes, so not much short of half as much again.

b. **Green Belt.** The Borough is 71% Green Belt and this has meant that our part in the Northeast has had to bear a disproportionate part of previous building. The new NPPF has a new definition of land in the Green Belt of “Grey Belt”. This is previously used land in the Green Belt that does not really act as Green Belt ie to prevent urban sprawl. This may relieve some of the pressure on us in the Northeast.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.

15. A key requirement in the new NPPF was to submit a Local Development Scheme to government by 6th March this year. A copy is attached.

16. This is a key document setting out the principal stages for the submission of our new Local Plan by 12th December 2026.

17. For you, a key date in this document is 1st October 2025, as the planned start date for the Regulation 18 consultation, which is the next major activity for you to do. Critically, before that date, is the completion of any planning activity for that event you wish to make.

DEVOLUTION

18. Since last month’s report, KCC’s application to be in the Fast Track to become a Unitary Authority has been rejected. We are waiting for government guidance on the ramifications of this in the next few weeks.

AYLESFORD NORTH & NORTH DOWNS ISSUES

LAND AROUND ECCLES

19. At your last meeting, we reported on the meeting with a group of concerned Eccles residents to form a working group to determine the wishes of the village as the development takes place.

20. This is now making significant progress.

21. We are in the process of leafletting the village to advertise two meetings on Wednesday 26th March from 18:00 to 20:00 and Sunday 30th March 11:00 to 13:00 . All your councillors are. Most welcomed to attend these events.

22. This will be followed up with a survey to all houses in Eccles from which we intend to get a report out to you and the Planners in TMBC.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS IN PROGRESS

Nursery Rochester Road Aylesford

23. The application decision for 23/01072/FL to turn the old nursery into an equestrian holiday centre with 8 caravans was appealed and the appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate with a decision date of 20th December 2024. Almost immediately the owner submitted another application. This will delay enforcement action. However Dave Davis and Roger Dalton had a meeting with both the case officer and the enforcement officer who are now working together on this issue.

Land Rear of Mackenders Lane Eccles Aylesford Kent

24. There is no change on this application.

25. There is a farm building that has been largely built. It is a building for farm use such as storing farm machinery. This building is permitted development.

26. There is also a caravan on site that is been occupied during the period of construction of the permanent building above which is permitted during that construction. A meeting has been held with the owner and TMBC Enforcement Officers and there is still work going on the approved building. As such continued use of the caravan is lawful until that work stops.

27. Land On Former Scout Camp Warren Road

28. There is no change on this which is in the hands of the over stretched court system awaiting further prosecution.

29. Land North of Lower Warren Road and East of Warren Road

30. The closure of this enforcement action was reported to your last committee. Since then, a new application 24/02027/PL has now been submitted for a mobile home on the site.

31. Considerable earth works have been done over the Christmas break and enforcement officers have visited the site. They are unable to issue a Stop Notice because of the live application. They have however informed the site owners that they are proceeding “At their Risk” We are doing our best to get a speedy decision on the application so that any subsequent enforcement action will hopefully take less than the previous one that lasted some 4 years.

32. Common Road Blue Bell Hill

33. Your longer serving members will recall Barron Deschaeur who bought a field to the northeast of Common Road which is split by a footpath. The area to the southeast of the footpath is in your parish and to northwest is in Burham. This land was split up into what

was sold across the world as “building plots” although the chances of ever getting any planning permission with present planning laws is close to non-existent.

34. TMBC’s original reaction back in 2012 was to serve an Article 4 Direction on the whole field removing all permitted development rights. Nothing can be built and no change of use can take place on any part of the field without planning permission from TMBC.

35. Recently there have been some activity there with crude building materials being dumped and some spray-painting marking being made that has cause local concern.

36. There may also be attempts to sell plots of land though it is not clear if the sellers own the land.

37. This is now an active enforcement case.

AYLESFORD SOUTH AND DITTON

East Malling Research Station Development.

38. On 26th February several TMBC councillors attended a site briefing on this 1680 house development. This is a significant development that we can expect a formal application for in the not-too-distant future. When that comes in it will unusually be decided by a combined meeting of Area 2 and Area 3 Planning Committees.

WALDESLADE WARD

39. There are no items of significance to report this month.