

Aylesford Parish Council

Meeting of the Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at Tunbury Hall, Walderslade, on Tuesday 16 January 2024

Present: Councillors Sullivan (Chairman) and Councillors Balcombe, Mrs Birkbeck, Chapman, Craig, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Gadd, Ms Oyewusi, Rillie, Sharp, Shelley, Smith and Walker.

In Attendance : Mrs Randall (Clerk).

Also in Attendance: Borough Councillors, Davis, Dalton, Keers and Williams. One member of public.

Apologies: Councillors, Fuller, Gledhill, Mrs Ogun and Borough Councillor Cannon.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for Absence from Councillors Fuller, Gledhill, Mrs Ogun and Borough Councillor Cannon were received, and the reasons for absence agreed.

2. Declarations of Interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests.

3. Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairmans Announcements.

4. Adjournment of the meeting to allow Public Participation.

There was no Public Participation.

4.2 Police Report

There was no representation from Kent Police. However, the monthly reports were circulated for November and December.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 14 November 2023

It was proposed by Councillor Balcombe and Seconded by Councillor Mrs Gadd that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 14 September 2023 be **approved** as a correct record and signed.

6. Any Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no Matters Arising.

7. To Receive and Note the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee

- a) It was **Resolved** to note the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee on 5 December 2023. There were no matters arising.
- b) It was **Resolved** that the Fees and Charges for 2024/25 be adopted as submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee on 9 January 2024 (draft), item 8.

It was **Resolved** that the Budget – Precept Setting be adopted as submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee on 9 January 2024 (draft), item 12.

8. To Receive and Note the Minutes of the Environmental Services Committee

- a) It was **Resolved** to note the Minutes of the Environmental Services Committee on 21 November 2023. There were no matters arising.
- b) It was **Resolved** to note the Minutes of the Environmental Services Committee on 12 December 2023 (draft). There were no matters arising.

9. To Receive and Note the Minutes of the Planning Committee

- a) It was **Resolved** to note the Minutes of the Planning Committee on 14 November 2023 There were no matters arising.
- b) It was **Resolved** to note the Minutes of the Planning Committee on 5 December 2023. There were no matters arising.
- c) It was **Resolved** to note the Minutes of the Planning Committee on 12 December 2023 (draft). There were no matters arising.
- d) It was **Resolved** to note the Minutes of the Planning Committee on 9 January 2024 (draft). There were no matters arising.

10. To Receive the Report of the County Councillor

There was no County Councillor present, and no report was provided.

11. To Receive the Report of the Borough Councillor(s)

See attached report at Appendix A written by the Borough Councillors for Aylesford North and North Downs Ward including Walderslade Ward **Noted**

Members raised various questions with the Borough Councillors, on subjects such as

- The new Planning system (Agile) recently implemented by TMBC and the issues being experienced by the Parish Council. The Clerk was given a contact at TMBC with whom she can raise the issues with directly. A Councillor thanked Borough Councillor Davis for the information he has already provided in response to the queries previously raised by the Council and the Clerk about the new planning system.
- The TMBC owned public car parks in Aylesford Village and what the timeline is for the results of the consultation. These are expected in approximately 4-6 weeks' time. It then must go to TMBC Members for discussion, hopefully in March/April.
- Bushey Wood and residents working with the Parish Council for the benefit of the Eccles village. The Clerk informed members that she is already talking to St. Marks School in Eccles about hiring the hall for a public meeting so residents have a chance of voicing their views around what enhancements could be considered for Eccles as a result of developer contributions for things like Sport and Recreation facilities.

12. Accounts for Payment

The Council considered the Payment Schedule attached to the Agenda and Councillor Mrs Gadd proposed and Councillor Balcombe seconded and it was **Resolved** that 11 payments totaling £8,266.58 be made.

13. Council Vacancies

The Chairman reported that there is currently one vacancy for Eccles Ward and that the Parish Council has been informed by TMBC that a By Election has been called by residents of Eccles. Electoral Services at TMBC will send the details of the election including all key dates of the process including for the nomination period to the Clerk once they have them. **Noted**

14. Decisions taken under S101 Delegated Authority

No decisions have been taken under S101 Delegated Authority. **Noted**

15. Consider Any Other Items of Correspondence

There was no Other Correspondence.

16. Duration of Meeting

7.35pm to 8.03pm

REPORT TO AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL 15th January 2024

By the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors for

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

**Walderslade Ward
Councillor Des Keers**

AYLESFORD NORTH AND NORTH DOWNS

LAND AT ECCLES, EAST AND WEST OF BULL LANE ECCLES

1. Sadly, but as expected, the appeal concerning the development around Eccles, that we know as Bushey Wood, has been allowed.
2. This is an outline planning permission except for the roads which are now fixed.
3. As such more applications will come with more detail and possible opportunities to adjust aspects of the development.
4. We have spoken with the TMBC planners and their advice is:
 - A) That at present, Trenport seem to be waiting for the costs of the appeal decision by the Planning Inspectorate before taking further action.
 - B) That when that is decided, Trenport will probably move fairly swiftly to implement the next phase of planning process, submission of a series applications on reserved matters.
 - C) Hopefully this will be done using a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) where Trenport and TMBC planners work together prior to and during and after the submission to iron out the planning issues.
 - D) Those conversations will probably be taking place between when the appeal cost decision has been made and about 2 to 3 months after that so possibly as early as the spring.
 - E) It is vital that any ideas on the future of Eccles are generated and passed both to TMBC and to Trenport. It is however a question of the best vehicle for doing this. Ad Hoc village groups will in themselves carry little sway themselves but may be a useful sounding board and a source of intimate knowledge on the village. APC could if it wishes be involved in this process, and we are ready to work with you in achieving that.
5. If your Council have anything that should be considered please inform us ASAP.

ASB SURVEY IN BLUE BELL HILL

6. There have been some reports of ASB in Robin Hood Lane in Blue Bell Hill Village. We have taken this up in TMBC and this has resulted in the following action.

a. A residents Anti-Social Survey has been delivered to residents and the forms have started to be returned. We attach a copy of the survey for your reference. Although this has a return date of 30 December 23 TMBC wish this to be filled in by any concerned resident and returned ASAP.

b. These residents' surveys will then be analysed and then TMBC's Anti-Social Behaviour Officer will be contacting the residents.

c. TMBC will then be producing a delivery plan in consultation with the local external partners.

AGILE

7. We reported last time about the move over to Agile as the administrative computer program for much of TMBC's work.

8. The first department to move over was planning and they are up and running totally on Agile. Several functions still need to be fully worked up.

9. Whilst writing up this report, we note that last week's list of applications and decisions are on the planning application search website. The lists don't have parish or ward details but are complete otherwise.

10. Many thanks for the questions raised by you, to your Clerk, which were passed to us 20th November. All the questions and answers so far are at Annex A.

11. This is very much work in progress and is a high priority for TMBC but as with all major IT projects the work is complex and slow.

REVIEW OF CHARGING AT TMBC CAR PARKS

12. The TMBC Parking Charge Consultation ran from 24th November to the 7th January. There have been more than 4000 responses and these are now being analysed.

NURSERY ROCHESTER ROAD AYLESFORD

13. We reported to your last three meetings on planning application TM/23/01072/FL. Proposed change of use of land, on Rochester Road, Aylesford, from a nursey (plants) to mixed equestrian and a holiday park comprising 7 mobile homes, 4 serviced camper van places and a recreational area.

14. We regret to inform you no decision has yet been made application and that this is holding up the any enforcement action on the rest to of the site.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS IN PROGRESS

Land Rear of Mackenders Lane Eccles Aylesford Kent

15. Officers are seeking advice on legal matters that complicate this case.

Land on Former Scout Camp Warren Road

16. No further progress to report.

Land North of Lower Warren Road And East Of Warren Road

17. There are three planning applications that concern this site.

- a. 20/01125/FL - Extension to existing stables – Approved.
- b. 20/01845/RD - Drainage conditions for above - - Approved.
- c. 22/00417/NMA - Addition of windows change of openings - Refused 25 Mar 22

18. 22/00417/NMA was a retrospective application and the two Enforcement Notices served on 14th April 22 to two different people for non-compliance.

19. This in turn led to two appeals to the Planning Inspectorate in May 22.

20. At our request our planners has chased up the Planning Inspectorate. Their reply was as expected that like most planning authorities, the Planning Inspectorate is short of qualified planners and especially those capable of dealing with the complexity of planning enforcement issues.

21. This matter is out of TMBC hands until the Inspectorate have decided it.

WALDESLADE WARD

WASTE SERVICES

22. The Council has been made aware that our current contractor, Urbaser Ltd, is currently selling its UK business to FCC Servicios Medio Ambiente. Until the transition is effective Urbaser will be operating business as usual. Following transition is also expected that services provided to our residents under the current contract will continue without any change.

AYLESFORD CAR PARK – CCTV

23. Regarding the Aylesford car park CCTV – There is a total of 13 static cameras covering both car parks (8 High Street side & 5 Allotment side). They are part of the Councils 'Passive' CCTV System. This means they are recording 24/7 and when a crime/incident is reported, TMBC staff carry out a review and update the Police accordingly. If the footage is of use to the Police investigation, the Police can view the footage or seize it on disc. The CCTV images are checked twice a week for faults and image quality. Any issues are repaired ASAP, using the councils CCTV maintenance contract. The car parks also get a H&S

maintenance inspection every 3 months, as part of these inspections the CCTV cameras are visually check from the ground and any tree branches blocking the cameras are cut back.

24. CCTV footage contains a lot of personal data (GDPR) and it needs to be managed appropriately. The review and release of CCTV footage is set out in our CCTV Code of Practice and Guidance Note. However, if the Police are investigating a crime and they request the footage to be check, we always do our utmost to work with the Police and provide the required CCTV footage. Since 2020 we have had 6 requests for CCTV footage and 4 of these were seized by the Police to assist with their investigation.

TADDINGTON VALLEY

26. This is for a complete woodland management programme. 20 responses received back from the consultation, of which most comments are positive. Following the consultation an official management plan will be devised for the committee, then take to the forestry commission for their approval and views. Money is already allocated in the budget. The Council aims to manage this ancient woodland for public access, biodiversity, and landscape value. Its ambition is to bring the previously managed coppiced trees back into a rotation of coppicing, with some blocks of woodland cut each year. We are looking to manage the site including the mature and immature standard trees, hedges, and the grassland to achieve a healthy, vibrant and well-balanced woodland, that is in keeping with the nature conservation value and Ancient Woodland status, whilst recognising the constraints on the sites management. There will be a key focus on tackling Anti-Social Behaviour within the report and any ongoing works.

27. The Public Consultation concluded on 22nd December 2023. We have received a steady flow of feedback forms from the public and have nearly 30 responses. The majority of feedback is from nearby residents. There is a good spread of responses from around the main site from different roads. It is a bit early, to get much insight into the final results but there appears a lot of support and several mentions of control of motorbikes. It is encouraging to see that from those respondents, the average rating score for 'How easy was the plan to understand' is 4 out of 5.

28. I understand from our Media Team that our Social Media posts have generated a lot of interest, the figures show there have been many more people following the links looking at the plan, than have followed up by completing a feedback form.

29. The next steps utilising all of the information received are to devise the Management plan and seek the approval of the Forestry Commission to proceed with works. Des Keers will keep APC through Mel and Allan aware of the salient updates and progress to ensure that the committee is kept fully informed.

**ANNEX A to
AN&ND WARD TMBC
MEMBERS REPORT
TO AYLESFORD PC
MEETING OF 14 JAN 24**

QUESTION RAISED APC CLERK ON 20 NOV 23 ON AGILE

The questions below are in Black. Dave's immediate response is in red and the officer response at that time is in blue. The officer's update last week is in Green.

1. *One of our members, Tim, raised a few points at Full Council on Tuesday.*

2. *He has concerns around the time it will take for Agile to be fully implemented 6 – 12 months. Planning has moved over to Agile and is not using any other program for planning. There will be a review of what, in the main, has been a very successful operation although it is not fully complete yet. Then housing waste and other services will move across. But for planning it is implemented now albeit with a few bits missing notably decisions and enforcement. We have yet to open the Building Control and Enforcement Citizen portal and are still having some data migration issues with some of our historic information. There are also some technical issues with configuration with the new system. However, we are working hard to resolve these issues and work through our current backlog. We are still currently working through issues we have with the new system. This is work in progress. We are also still working through the backlog that was created because of the implementation of the new system.*

3. *He is having trouble accessing some planning applications and others agreed they had trouble too. He doesn't think all the information is available on the planning portal that the Council needs to be able to make an informed comment, therefore leaving ourselves open to judgement and criticism from residents as members risk making errors in their comment to TMBC if something is not on the planning portal.
<https://planning.agileapplications.co.uk/tmbc>. Use the new hyperlink in the main text above. It is a matter of two or three clicks from any application. As set out above, there are some data migration issues still outstanding which we are seeking to resolve but this only relates to old histories and we are still able to access this from our old system. It is not clear what information is still not available. Officers are currently processing applications the system. I would ask for what details you consider are missing? We are still resolving data migration issues where some information was not transferred over from the Uniform system. This will be a longer term fix due to priority being given to day to day operational matters.*

4. *It was explained by another member that we are simply a consultee and can only make a comment based on the information available to us i.e., the documents on the planning portal. If there are some missing, then the PC cannot be held responsible for any comment it makes as it is the responsibility of TMBC to ensure all documents are available on the planning portal. He also mentioned that planning errors could be blamed directly on PC members and them as volunteers are not covered by or carry indemnity insurance, which he assumes TMBC do have, unlike us. All documents relevant to a planning application are available on the portal now and as before. The change is that it is much better in that the documents are grouped. I am not sure what the question is here? All information is displayed on the portal except that which is deemed sensitive and displays personal or restricted information. I have no update here.*

5. He would like to be assured that the planning department are making their best efforts to ensure the planning portal is fully functional in a timely manner. *In large measure the planning portal is fully functioning and better than before. Users do need to put a bit of work into getting used to it after decades of the old system. One or two bits are still missing notably Decisions and Enforcement but the planning portal on each application is as complete as it ever was. We are doing everything possible to ensure the citizen portal is functioning as it should do. We have had no reports that the citizen portal is not working properly.*

6. I am not sure what information he thinks isn't there though because we don't know what should be there in the first place to be able to say something is missing. I think ultimately, he wants reassurance that everything is on the planning portal that should be and that it will be fully implemented as quickly as possible. *Almost everything is there and one must be a real pundit to work out what is not there though I note Decisions and Enforcement. If there are problems, please do come back to me with what cannot be found. Answered above already. See above.*

7. A couple of things from Mel from the office point of view

8. We are finding it quite bitty at the moment. We currently receive the spreadsheet on all different days, whereas the old List B used to be sent on a Monday, Tuesday morning at the latest. The letters are sent to us on all different days as well and we don't get the letter the same week the application appears on the spreadsheet. So, they come the week after. *This is a change. I get the list of New Applications on a Monday or Tuesday and you should as well. However that is for information only. Anybody can of course raise comments as of right but it is not an action notice to statutory addressees. If you are a Statutory Consultee, you will receive a formal letter and that is the trigger for your statutory response. The date of that letter sets your response clock running. It may be before or after the initial notification of New Applications. Do keep an eye on this until it settles down. Because the Parish are now consulted individually on applications and not via the List B, we cannot group these together and must consult as and when the application is validated. No update as the need to change to individual consultations was prompted by the new operating system.*

9. Would it be possible just to send us the spreadsheet and not the letters, as while I am aware there are applications the PC is not required to comment on, like discharge of conditions for example the members agreed some time ago that they would like to continue to comment on everything so that nothing is missed. Or if we must have the letters, can they at least come all together in one email on the same day of the week please? Then we know to expect them, like we did the List B. *Will Check out. Unfortunately not as the Parish are treated similarly to Statutory consultees and there is a process which needs to be followed for such consultations. This requires individual consultations. No update to this*

10. Same with the spreadsheet, can that be sent on the same day of the week please, it would just make it easier because then we know to expect the emails and if we haven't had anything by a certain day, we can ask planning if there is a problem, like we would if we hadn't received the List B by a Tuesday afternoon. *Will Check out. Addressed above. As above*

11. Also, just a suggestion but would it be possible for the links to the applications to be included on the spreadsheet please, like they were on the List B? *Will Check out. We will*

investigate this but it is unlikely that this can be done as the weekly list is generated from a report and there is currently no function to allow links to be added to the report. We have investigated this and at this time this cannot be done as we use a power bi report to generate the list which does not allow this function to be incorporated.

12. I appreciate that it is all still very new for TMBC staff but thought I would mention the above so that time can be given to consider my points. Will Check out.

13. Lastly, we are still not receiving the Enforcement Cases Open and Closed or the List of Decisions. This will happen once it has been sorted out. We are awaiting a new report to enable this to happen. Unfortunately, we are having to build a new report to generate these cases. This is currently underway, and we hope to have the report soon.