

Aylesford Parish Council

Environmental Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held in the Parish Council Offices, Aylesford on Tuesday 19 March 2024

Present: Councillor Mrs Gadd (Chairman) and Councillors, Balcombe, Chapman, Craig, Mrs Eves, Gledhill, Hammond, Rillie, Sharp, Shelley, Smith, Sullivan and Walker.

In Attendance: Melanie Randall (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors Ms Dorrington, Mrs Birkbeck, Fuller, Ludlow, Mrs Ogun and Ms Oyewusi.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Ms Dorrington, Mrs Birkbeck, Fuller, Ludlow, Mrs Ogun and Ms Oyewusi were received, and the reason for absence agreed.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 February 2024

It was **Resolved** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the inclusion in item 8 of 'however, Councillor Gledhill as member for Eccles declared his support of the Funfair coming to Eccles'.

4. Small Works Programme

The painting/staining programme of fences, gates, bollards etc will commence as the weather allows. However, it is now grass cutting season so it will become more difficult for the contractor to fit the work in.

Ongoing

5. Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)

The Agreed Action Plan was submitted to KCC on 30 April 2022.
No update to report.

Ongoing

6. Metal Coronation sign for Coronation Gardens

The Clerk informed the committee that staff have found someone who could potentially make His Majesty the Kings Cypher in metal and is in the process of obtaining a quote. Once this is received the Clerk will report back. **Ongoing**

7. Eccles Car Park – White Lining

There was no update. **Ongoing**

8. Tunbury Car Park – White Lining

There was no update. **Ongoing**

9. Request received regarding making MR438 at Podkin Meadow wheelchair accessible

It was **Resolved** to **Refuse** this request, please see attached at Annex A. the report and the Councils answers in red.

10. Any Other Correspondence

It was **Resolved** to Note the Meeting Notes from the Climate Change Forum Meeting held on 16 January 2024.

11. Duration of Meeting

7:42pm to 8:07pm

Environmental Services Committee Meeting 19 March 2024

Re: Request to investigate making public footpath MR438 at Podkin Meadow wheelchair accessible

David Munn – West Kent Area Manager for the Public Rights of Way & Access Service at KCC has contacted the Parish Office regarding a request they have received to make public footpath MR438 in Podkin Meadow (which goes straight across the middle of the field) wheelchair accessible. KCC have received the same type of requests for other footpaths within the Borough.

There are two kissing gates at Podkin Meadow, one at the Mill Lane/Warren Road end and one at the Crematorium end. These were put in a number of years ago to stop the off-road bikes from accessing the land as Podkin Meadow was suffering quite badly with this which obviously had an impact on residents' quality of life as a result of the anti-social behaviour. Since the kissing gates were installed, the problem ceased.

Normally the landowner can just say yes or no to these types of requests received from KCC, giving no justification, however as a Parish Council we are covered by the Equality Act 2010 so have to make a considered opinion and decision backed by an Equality Impact Assessment. That does not mean the Parish Council has to agree, but if it decides not to make any adjustments there must be a justifiable reason, in the event of it being challenged by the requester.

The Parish Council are required to assess the request and balance any benefits there would be to those with disabilities with any disbenefits that may arise from any potential wheelchair accessible entrance for the wider community/population.

The Council needs to consider allowing the two access points on Podkin Meadow to be made more accessible for a wheelchair user.

The thought process should include

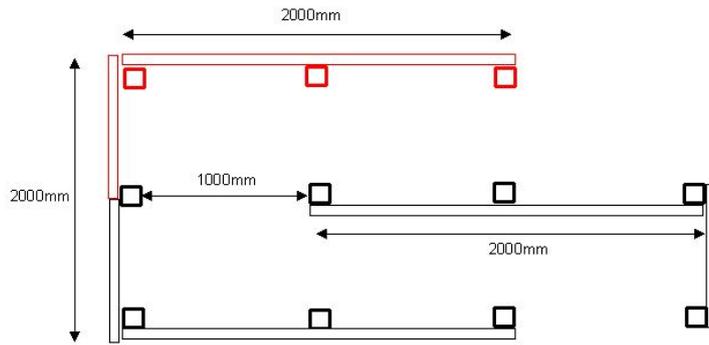
1. What is there now and why is it there? **There is a kissing gate at each end of the meadow, that were put in a number of years ago to stop motorcycles accessing the land. They caused a lot of anti-social behaviour and created noise disruption to residents.**
2. Is it because of a problem that might occur? **Yes, there is a high risk this problem will restart.**
3. Is it because of a problem that has occurred? **Yes, the kissing gates were installed to stop the motorcycles accessing the land.**
4. If it is because of a problem that has occurred, has it been effective in preventing said problem? **Yes, it has been.**
5. Is there an effective need for the existing gates? **Yes**
6. What would the impact be if the existing gates were to be removed/changed? **The site would become prone to problematic issues that will severely affect residents' quality of life. Motorcycles would gain entry and cause great destruction to the meadow which would affect residents' quality of life due to noise and anti-social behaviour.**

The council then needs to look at and consider the various options which are.

1. Replace the kissing gates with just a gap of 1m. (would this be effective at preventing any problems that the existing gates sought to stop? If not, why not?). **No there was just a gap there before the anti-social behaviour mentioned, which is how the motorcycles got onto the meadow. So a gap of 1 meter would not prevent the issues from recurring.**
2. If the answer is no, then repeat the above (in brackets) for a motorcycle inhibitor. **No, this option would not be effective at preventing the anti-social behaviour previously experienced as you can fit a mini moto through these types of access points.**
3. If the answer is still no, then repeat for a RADAR kissing gate. **The downside to this option is that the RADAR keys can be purchased online and as these are slightly bigger a mini moto could still fit through as could a motorcycle put up on its back wheel. So, no this wouldn't be an effective option to prevent the previous issues from recurring.**
4. If it is still a no, then repeat for the last option which is an 'accessible' chicane. **No this would not be effective at preventing the issues previously experienced as a motorcycle could fit through it.**



Motorcycle Inhibitor, although a mini moto would be able to get through this type of gate.



Simple 2 leaf chicane (black)

- 8 No 100mm x 100mm x 1500mm posts
- 6 No 100mm x 50mm x 2000mm rails
- 6 No 100mm x 50mm x 1000mm rails

3 leaf chicane (black and red)

- 11 No 100mm x 100mm x 1500mm posts
- 9 No 100mm x 50mm x 2000mm rails
- 3 No 100mm x 50mm x 1000mm rails

Example of an 'Accessible' Chicane. The only difference to make it accessible is that the enclosed space at the end would have to be 2m long instead of the 1m shown in the drawing. This does mean that it would be accessible by motorcycles.

The RADAR kissing gate will look just like the existing gate that is there but with a wider gate and a bigger compound and will have a RADAR lock that allows the gate to be fully opened, so that it acts just like a normal gate. The weakness with this option is that a mini moto could get through the compound, if a standard motorcycle is put up on its back wheel it can then be maneuvered through, and anyone can buy a RADAR key off the internet.