

Aylesford Parish Council

Environmental Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 September 2019

Present: Councillor Ludlow (Chairman) and Councillors Balcombe, Beadle, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Gadd, Ludlow, Ms Papagno, Rillie, Shelley, Smith, Sullivan, Walker, Williams, and Winnett.

In Attendance: Neil Harris (Clerk) and Melanie Randall (Assistant Clerk and Finance Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Gledhill, Ms Oyewusi, and Wright

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Gledhill (Holiday), Ms Oyewusi (work commitment) and Wright (Personal Commitment) were received, and the reasons 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 23 July 2019

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. General Highway Matters – Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk which was circulated with Agenda setting out the details of a HIP on how it would work and how schemes could potentially be funded. The Clerk set out the 3 following options for the Council to consider: -

Option 1 – Enter into a HIP with KCC and accept that to progress some schemes the Council would have to fully or partially fund them for any action to be taken. This would be contrary to the view expressed by Members previously that KCC should fund all highway improvement schemes

Option 2 – To enter into a HIP with KCC in order to identify schemes for the Parish area but indicate right at the outset that the Council would expect KCC to fund the schemes in totality and that there would be no funding from the Parish Council. The downside of this approach is that no schemes might progress and the Council could get tarnished with KCC on non-deliverability of these schemes.

Option 3 – To not enter into a HIP with KCC and to raise any issues with them on an individual basis, as an example the Council could ask them to undertake a further traffic survey in Bull Lane. In these instances, it is very likely that KCC will decide to take no action but it will clearly be seen as their decision to take no action.

The Committee **Agreed** to adopt Option 3.

The Chairman indicated that he had made a Freedom of Information request to KCC regarding the possible pedestrian crossing in Tunbury Avenue near to the school, and in their response, he had received a copy of the following statement made to a local resident: -

"KCC will be working with Aylesford Parish Council on a Highway Improvement Plan which basically sets out all the priorities for highway improvements in the Parish so that there is a list and the KCC/Parish agree in what order issues should be tackled, who is to fund them and a programme of works. At present Aylesford Parish Council have not returned a highway improvement plan but saying that, this approach has only recently been rolled out so I suspect that they are still developing their plan. I will ask that you are kept informed of any progress on this particular issue. "

The Committee felt that this statement was misleading as the Council had not agreed to enter into a HIP with KCC whilst the statement gave the impression that it had been agreed. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should take up this matter of the misleading statement with KCC.

5. Eccles Highway Matters – Speed of Traffic in Bull Lane

The Clerk reported that at the Council meeting held in Eccles in July local residents had asked that a traffic survey be undertaken to ascertain the speed of traffic in Bull Lane.

It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should request KCC to undertake a traffic survey at the approaches to the village both north and south as traffic enters the 30mph speed limits.

6. Blue Bell Hill Highway Matters – A229 Slip Road Lights

The Clerk reported that KCC have informed the Council that the lights at the bottom end of the slip road (Columns 6-10) are working. However, they are still having problems with the remaining columns and looking to schedule in further works at these lights. The Clerk is still pursuing this with KCC.

7. Blue Bell Hill Highway Matters – A229 Accidents

The Clerk reported that the Committee had agreed to push for a 50mph speed limit that should run the whole length of the A229 from Blue Bell Hill until the 50mph zone as you

enter Maidstone. The Clerk wrote to the Director of Highways at KCC and received the following reply: -

“The A229 Bluebell Hill is reviewed on annual basis, but should a serious collision occur a further investigation is undertaken.

This investigation will review the incident to establish cause, which will assist in our crash remedial activities.

Whilst we receive many requests to implement improvements and safety measures on the highway, we prioritise our efforts at location where there is a pattern of incidents where engineering intervention could help to prevent or reduce road crashes.

On review of the historic data there is no pattern which would support a change to the speed limit, and whilst there have been changes to the route the current speed limit remains in accordance with the Department for Transport's circular 01/2013 Setting Speed Limits.

At this stage we have no plans to undertake any improvement schemes at this location although we will of course continue to monitor this route.”

The committee expressed their disappointment with the reply and **Agreed** that the Clerk should request a copy of the last review undertaken by KCC.

8. Aylesford Highway Matters – Aylesford Village Square

The Clerk reported that he had just received the details of a potential funding scheme from the English Heritage London and South East Regional team but had not had time to read the lengthy document in any detail other than it looked as though the scheme would have to be processed through TMBC. The Clerk indicated that he would consider the scheme in detail including taking up the matter with TMBC, if appropriate, and report back to the committee.

9. Aylesford Highway Matters – Closure of Forstal Road

The Clerk reported that the Committee had agreed that this matter should be considered as part of the HIP. As the committee had agreed to not enter into the HIP it needed to consider whether it wished to pursue this idea with KCC.

It was **Agreed** to take no further action in respect of the proposal for the possible closure of Forstal Road.

10. Walderslade Highway Matters – Pedestrian Crossing at Tunbury Avenue

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting it was agreed that the possible provision of a pedestrian crossing in Tunbury Avenue should be considered for inclusion in the HIP if the Council decided to proceed with this idea. The Clerk indicated that in view of the fact that the committee had decided not to enter into a HIP with KCC it needed to consider whether it wished to pursue this matter as an individual scheme and how that could be taken forward.

It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should follow this up by meeting with the local petitioner, the Headteacher at Tunbury School, if possible KCC Officers, and other interested parties where possible to see how this could be taken forward.

11. Walderslade Highway Matters – Walderslade Woods Road

The Clerk reported that he had taken up the matter of the speed of traffic in Walderslade Woods Road and potentially reducing the speed limit to 50mph with Boxley Parish Council who were also concerned about this issue and were already in the process of holding a meeting with KCC but as yet no reply had been received about the outcome of their meeting. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should ascertain what had arisen from Boxley Parish Council meeting and find out what action they were taking and if necessary, take this matter up with KCC.

12. Public Footpaths

There were no public footpath matters reported to the meeting.

13. Street Lighting

There were no street lighting matters reported to the meeting.

14. Car Parks

There were no car parks matters reported to the meeting.

15. Bus Services – 155 Bus Service

The Clerk reported that progress was being made and that it looked very possible that an improved service potentially every half hour, including entering Maidstone along the A20 could be achieved for Eccles. He would report further when he had received further information.

16. All Sites – Caloo Outdoor Gym Equipment

The Clerk reported the committee had agreed, at its last meeting to undertake the repair work and that a date of 3 October had been scheduled for the work.

17. All Sites – Resurfacing Works

The Clerk is seeking a further quote on the required surfacing work and will report to a future meeting.

18. The Hollow

There were no matters relating to The Hollow reported to the meeting.

19. Ferryfield – Play Equipment

The Clerk reported that work on this scheme will commence on 30 September and should last no longer than 3 weeks. This means that the new facility should be open for school half term.

20. Forstal Road Recreation Ground – Aylesford Football Club

The Clerk reported that the meeting with the Aylesford Football Club to consider the length of tenure for the use of the pitches at the Forstal Road Recreation Ground was being arranged.

21. Allotments

There were no matters relating to allotments reported to the meeting.

22. Eccles Recreation Ground

There were no matters relating to the Eccles Recreation Ground reported to the meeting.

23. Tunbury Recreation Ground, Changing Rooms and Car Park

There were no matters relating to the Tunbury Recreation Ground, Changing Rooms and car park reported to the meeting.

24. Blue Bell Hill Recreation Ground

There were no matters relating to the Blue Bell Hill Recreation Ground reported to the meeting.

25. Blue Bell Hill Pond Site

There were no matters relating to the Blue Bell Hill Pond Site reported to the meeting.

26. Cemetery

There were no matters relating to the Cemetery reported to the meeting.

27 Churchyard

There were no matters relating to the Churchyard reported to the meeting.

28. Old Bridge Gardens – Request to Park Motorcycle by the Floodgate at the Entrance to Old Bridge Gardens

The Clerk reported that the Council had received a request from a local resident to park a motorcycle by chaining it to the lamppost next to the floodgate as they wanted to be able to park it safely overnight. The motorcycle was not there during the day as the owner was at work. The request had been made because the applicant indicated that there was no other area to park a motorcycle safely in the village. There was no dedicated facility for motorcycles in the car parks. He indicated that this location was not very suitable for parking a motorcycle particularly when the floodgates were in use. The Clerk also reported that he had been in touch with TMBC re the provision of a motorcycle bay in the car park and the response received was that they were looking to put one in but that would not be until December/January.

It was **Agreed** that the request from a local resident to park a motorcycle by chaining it to the lamppost next to the floodgate be refused.

29. Mill Hall (Beside Rose Cottage/Old Bridge)

There were no matters relating to Mill Hall reported to the meeting.

30. Aylesford Old Pit (Yoakley Land)

There were no matters relating to Aylesford Old Pit (Yoakley Land) reported to the meeting.

31. Walderslade Open Spaces

There were no matters relating to Walderslade Open Spaces reported to the meeting.

32. St Mark's Square, Belgrave Street car park, new car park

There were no matters relating to St Mark's Square, Belgrave Street car park, new car park reported to the meeting.

33. Podkin Meadow

There were no matters relating to Podkin Meadow reported to the meeting.

34. Christmas Lights

The Clerk reported that the cost of the installation and removal of the Christmas lights in Aylesford village, Eccles, and Walderslade by Gala Lights were £3755. This cost was within the budget provision.

It was **Agreed** that that the quotation for the installation and removal of the Christmas lights in Aylesford Village, Eccles, and Walderslade by Gala Lights in the sum of £3755 be approved.

35. Aylesford Flood Plan

There were no matters relating to the Aylesford Flood Plan reported to the meeting.

36. Duration of Meeting

7.30pm to 8.31pm