

WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 12TH APRIL 2021, 7.30 PM
VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL

Present: Mrs Trudy Dean (Chairman)
Mrs Linda Javens
Ms Sara Margetts
Ms Camilla Medhurst
Mrs Yvonne Smyth
Ms Min Stacpoole
Mr Nick Stapleton
Mr Peter Stevens
Mr David Thompson

Also Present: Resident
Representatives from Gillings Planning, Perseus and architects associated with the
planning application at minute number 21/

Minute		Action by	Action taken	Response
21/199	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Ms Gwyneth Barkham, Mr Keith Bullard and Borough Councillor Lee O'Toole			
21/ 200	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Mr Stapleton declared an interest in 21/207 as he is a Borough Councillor for West Malling. Mr Stapleton took no part in this agenda item. Mrs Dean declared a non-pecuniary interest in 21/209 as Rotary House is owned by KCC & Mrs Dean is a KCC Councillor.			
21/201	MINUTES – the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 1 st March were agreed and are to be signed at a later date.	TD	✓	
21/202	MATTERS ARISING – none			
21/203	CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS – On behalf of WMPC, Mrs Dean expressed her sadness at the death of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh. It was agreed that WMPC would submit a message to the Royal Family online book of condolence. Clerk to draft and submit	Clerk	✓	
21/204	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - none			
21/205	QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS – none			
21/206	POLICING MATTERS			

206.1	Police Update – March Tonbridge & Malling Police update received. The large number of shed break-ins were noted. It was agreed to put another warning message on social media.	NS/ Clerk		
206.2	Other Policing Matters - none			
21/207	PLANNING – LAND WEST OF STATION ROAD NORTH WEST MALLING			
	<p>Members considered an application for the erection of a care home (within use Class C2) including parking, access, landscaping and other associated works – TM/21/00598/FL</p> <p>Following a general discussion involving members and the representatives from Gillings Planning, Perseus and associated architects, Mrs Dean proposed that the Council object to the application and members voted unanimously against the application. Comments submitted to T&MBC as follows:</p> <p><i>West Malling Parish Council met on the 12th April to discuss this application and has decided that it objects on the basis that:</i></p> <p><i>The proposals run contrary to the Parish Council's stated ambition to extend the Green Belt in this area and further erode the green space between West Malling and East Malling.</i></p> <p><i>The proposals are for a highly sensitive and prominent site at the entrance of the town, a sylvan location to West Malling which is opposite a primary school.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed structure is too large and imposing for the site and the design is not sympathetic to the surrounding dwellings.</i></p> <p><i>The Council wishes to raise concerns about the sustainability and financial viability of such a large development of this nature.</i></p> <p><i>Concerns were also raised about issues of Highways safety as access to the site is on a narrow and busy road, consideration should be given to a pedestrian crossing. Members of the council would also ask that the existing street-lighting be assessed in order to determine if it is sufficient. Should this application be granted, we would ask that these concerns be addressed in planning conditions.</i></p>			
21/208	LOCAL PLAN			
	It was noted that the full report was not expected until the end of April.			
21/209	ROTARY HOUSE			
209.1	<p>Ms Margetts provided a brief update on further option research undertaken to date. This research included information supplied by Action for Communities in Rural Kent regarding Community Land Trusts; potential uses for the building should it either be retained or replaced with another community building and the impact to the precept of obtaining a loan from the Public Works Loan Board.</p> <p>Members voted on whether or not WMPC should bid for Rotary House subject to price to be agreed at a future meeting. Ms Margetts proposed that WMPC should bid for Rotary House subject to price to be agreed at a future meeting. This proposal was seconded by Ms Stacpoole and following a vote, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>A letter to KCC notifying them of the Council's intention to bid is to be drafted and circulated to members for comments. It was agreed that it would be useful to request a meeting to try to ascertain what the requirement is for 'community use'.</p>			
209.2	<p>It was agreed to undertake an audit of spaces available to hire within the Parish; this is to be used as a means of assessing the needs for meeting places in the Parish and identifying shortfalls in provision.</p> <p><i>Subsequent to the meeting, Rev'd Green agreed to undertake this exercise with WMPC and Ms Margetts & Ms Stacpoole agreed to draft the initial audit.</i></p>			

21/210	<u>VIRTUAL MEETINGS / REVIEW OF DELEGATED POWERS / ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</u>			
210.1	<p><u>Virtual meetings</u></p> <p>It was noted that the current regulations cease on May 6th 2021 and that the regulations are not to be extended at this stage.</p> <p>It was agreed that WMPC should respond to the government call for evidence about how remote meetings have been used during the pandemic to inform any potential future legislation regarding their use beyond the coronavirus pandemic. Deadline 17th June. Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>			
210.2	<p><u>Review of Delegated Powers</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the use of delegated powers (under S.101 of the Local Government Act 1972) which enable the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman / Vice Chairman and relevant Committee Chairs to take appropriate action / decisions in the absence of a meeting. It was agreed that these powers be extended in view of the on-going pandemic and the uncertainty over face to face and virtual meetings.</p>			
210.3	<p><u>AGM / Full Council</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the AGM / Full Council will take place on Wednesday 5th May.</p> <p>Committee Chairmen to be elected at committee meetings.</p>			
21/211	<u>HIGH STREET WELCOME BACK FUNDING</u>			
211.1	<p>It was noted that T&MBC has been awarded the sum of £117,531 from the Welcome Back Fund and it is understood parishes will be asked for their suggestions as to how this money could be spent in their parish.</p> <p>It was agreed that Mrs Dean would ask the Chamber of Commerce for suggestions as to how the money could be spent in West Malling.</p>	TD	✓	
211.2	It was agreed that WMPC should request that TMBC apply some of the funding to installing modern toilets in the shoppers High Street car park			
21/212	<u>WEST MALLING GROUP PRACTICE</u>			
	<p>The Parish Council has received a number of complaints regarding the new system upgrade. The Clerk had written to the surgery regarding the complaints and received a response from Martin Swindlehurst, the Interim Operations Manager.</p> <p>Having considered the response, members were disappointed that a letter explaining the upgrade and subsequent impact on repeat prescriptions had not been sent to all residents by post. Members expressed concern that the new system of requesting prescriptions may not suit some members of the community as they may not have the devices or technical knowledge to use the new systems, could it be possible that some residents may miss out on prescriptions? Concerns were also raised about the possible loss of the repeat prescription box as and when the Milverton site is redeveloped. Mr Stevens agreed to draft a letter to WMGP. Subsequent to the meeting, the following letter was drafted and agreed by members via email.</p> <p><i>Thank you for your recent email which members of the Parish Council discussed at their meeting on Monday 12th April. I have been asked to raise a number of issues arising from your email.</i></p> <p><i>Sadly, we have had a number of representations from local residents that suggests that if text messages were sent, they certainly were not received. As a parish council, we utilise a</i></p>			

	<p><i>number of different ways to get messages out to residents and we would be more than willing to make use of our noticeboards, mailing lists and social media so that your message is spread further in future. Councillors are saddened that there is not a more open dialogue between the practice and the council, particularly as the Patient Participation Group appears to have a fairly limited reach.</i></p> <p><i>With regard to the prescription box, members are further concerned that with the imminent redevelopment of the former surgery site in the High Street that this facility will be removed permanently, and we urge the practice to ensure that a facility to drop off prescriptions is maintained within the town centre either at Boots or at another suitable location. The Parish Council may be able to assist you in finding a suitable location if this becomes an issue.</i></p> <p><i>Members have first-hand experience of the problems in signing up to the NHS app, and although they appreciate that it is outside your control, it is disappointing that this is being pushed as the main way to access services. You will be well aware that we have a significant elderly population – many of whom will not have either passport or driving licence, nor a smart mobile phone – and we are very concerned that a large number of local residents are effectively being excluded from accessing health services as a result. We have received representations from residents who are now considering having to incur the considerable expense of applying for a passport and buying a mobile phone just so that they can more easily deal with not just this, but other, government services which all now seem to demand electronic access. This is discriminatory and we are disappointed to see that so little appears to have been done by the practice in implementing this system to ensure that all residents are included. Very sadly, it appears that the needs of patients appears to be an afterthought in the whole process.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, we understand from other comments by residents that the implementation has not gone smoothly, and the queues seen in Boots appear to support our understanding. From overheard comments, some people are finding the problems so frustrating that they express a desire to change GP surgery. Members fervently hope that lessons are being learnt very quickly to minimise disruption and that no residents are being unfairly excluded from accessing your services.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you for your assistance in this matter and I look forward to hearing from you on the above.</i></p>		
<p>21/213</p>	<p><u>CONSULTATIONS</u></p>		
	<p><u>T&MBC Air Quality Consultation</u></p> <p>The following responses had been drafted on behalf of the Planning and Highways Committees. It was agreed that the responses be submitted.</p> <p>WMPC Planning Committee Response</p> <p>The impact on clean air of residential and commercial developments is also a key factor to consider. Given the importance of keeping our air clean to public health, in particular the impact that high levels of particulate material can have on respiratory health and on the rate of incidence of other conditions such as heart disease, it should be a consideration for all development in Tonbridge and Malling.</p> <p>Planners should require the highest possible standards of sustainable design and tools designed to improve air quality. These should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A requirement to include alternative energy provision on all new developments. This could include a combination of solar power, deep and efficient ground source heat pumps and other renewable means of energy generation. Consideration should be given to stipulating that a proportion of the total energy input to new builds should come from renewable sources, to be determined at planning stage. · A further requirement that all new builds are equipped with the highest possible grade insulation materials, limiting heat loss, improving home efficiency and reducing energy usage 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Electric car charging points wherever possible and as a requirement for new builds. In some instances, it will be possible to install exterior, standalone chargers and this should be encouraged. In other locations it will be necessary to consider other means, which could include simply having power connections provided to outdoor space. · Recognition of the power of planting as a means of dramatically improving air quality. Small quantities of trees are simply not effective and developers should be encouraged to include low-growing planting and species which are particularly effective at carbon capture such as cotoneaster wherever possible. · Consideration in larger developments of communal heating systems. These are often popular with residents and provide a cheap, effective and efficient way of heating homes. Lessons could be learnt here from ambitious proposals and developments overseas and in the UK, for example in the London Borough of Enfield. <p>When it comes to commercial development, all of the above should apply at scale, in a way which reflects the increased energy and resource consumption of commercial activities.</p> <p>In addition to requiring developers to go further on clean air and sustainable design, planners should also work with residents to encourage the inclusion of similar systems and materials in upgrades and extensions to existing buildings.</p> <p>WMPC Highways Committee Response</p> <p>We are fully supportive of TMBC initiative of improving the quality of the air that we breathe.</p> <p>We would like to see an enhanced network of smaller electric buses. Delivery drivers could be incentivised to use electric HGV & LVG's through the premises they are delivering too. All taxi licences should cost less if the taxi is electric.</p> <p>Increased use of electric vehicles needs to run alongside a reduction in journeys. There are many health benefits of walking and cycling but it is essential that the lack of feeling safe is addressed. It would be advantageous to have an enhanced network of 'Quiet Streets' where walking, then cycling, takes precedence.</p> <p>Idling should be banned outside schools, taxi ranks, pick-up points and shops.</p> <p>A huge number of more electric charging points are needed but an understanding of how this would work for residents, with no off street parking, is essential.</p> <p>The speed of traffic needs to be reduced and implemented. The stopping of driveways being concreted over would reduce the rain water which is now lost as it runs off into the streets.</p> <p>While green walls have a place in reducing air pollutants we also need our whole residential network to feel safer and be more environmentally friendly. Planters full of wild flowers could also be used for traffic calming. Hedgerow, which will lock up more carbon, could be planted alongside miles of Kent's roads. More trees in towns would provide shade as our climate warms.</p>			
21/214	<u>RISK ASSESSMENTS</u>			
214.1	<u>Playing Field Risk Assessment</u> - recommendation from the Amenities Committee to adopt the draft risk assessment – agreed.			
214.2	<u>Highways Risk Assessment</u> - recommendation from the Highways Committee to adopt the draft risk assessment – agreed.			
21/215	<u>FINANCIAL MATTERS</u>			
215.1	Transfer of current account and savings account to Unity Trust Bank - following the			

	<p>Council's previous decision to transfer bank accounts from Santander to Unity Trust the following members are to be signatories to the account, Mrs Dean, Mrs Javens, Mr Stapleton, Mr Thompson and Ms Margetts.</p> <p>Following a recommendation from the F&GP Committee, it was agreed that the savings account also be transferred to Unity Trust despite the bank currently offering no interest on savings accounts and Santander offering 0.01%.</p>			
215.2	Accounts for payment - totalling £4142.39 were approved - see attached.			
215.3	It was noted that payments of £3357.10 were authorised at the meeting of the F&GP Committee on 15 th March			
215.4	Financial Statement – bank reconciliation as at 31 st March was received – see attached			
21/216	<u>MATTERS FOR REPORT</u>			
216.1	<p>Amenities Committee – receipt was noted, of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2021</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
216.2	<p>Finance & General Purposes Committee – receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2021</p> <p>{21/176} It was noted that a review of WMPC finances including safeguarded sums, reserves and monies owed to Public Works Loan Board had been undertaken and reported to the committee</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
216.3	<p>Planning Committee – receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
216.4	Malling Action Partnership – no report.			
216.5	School Governors – no report			
216.6	Malling Society – no report			
216.7	Chamber of Commerce / Christmas Lights Committee – no report			
216.8	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council – receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the Parish Partnership Panel meeting held on 4 th February. It was further noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 10 th June.			
216.9	<p>KALC/NALC/ACRK/CPRE:</p> <p>KALC – KALC Chief Executive Bulletin – receipt was noted of the March 2021 bulletin and of the KALC News for March.</p>			
21/217	<p><u>MEETING DATES</u></p> <p>Amenities Committee – Monday 19th April 2021 (concentrating on Churchyard)</p> <p>Planning Committee – Thursday 15th April 2021 (previously scheduled for 27th April)</p> <p>(No Highways meeting to be held)</p> <p>AGM / Full Council – Wednesday 5th May 2021</p>			
21/218	<u>REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR, NICK STAPLETON</u>			

	<p>Regarding the boundary review at TMBC, the Borough Council has suggested a reduction of 11 councillors to the Boundary Commission, taking the number down to 43. I did not support this reduction as I think there is a danger of residents not being properly represented at the Borough, especially given that there will be a rise in population over the coming years with future developments. Also it could result in some very odd warding patterns, putting villages together which don't have a lot in common, or that have very different needs. The Boundary Commission will put forward their proposal, which will go to public consultation.</p> <p>The Aylesford Newsprint site went to Area 3 on Thursday 18th March, and approval was given for the site to be developed, containing warehouses and B-class use buildings.</p> <p>Further break ins have taken place throughout March, to sheds and garages on the London Road in West Malling, Leybourne, Ryarsh and Addington. They seem to be similar thefts to those which have been taking place over the past few months.</p> <p>For the upcoming elections in May, West Malling's Polling Station will be moved to the Baptist Church. The Returning Officer tries to avoid using schools where possible, as to not disrupt children, staff and parents, and felt that this could be a suitable alternative. If it seems successful, it will become the permanent Polling Station for West Malling.</p>			
21/219	<p><u>REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR</u></p> <p>Unauthorised Lorry Parking Clamping. As at 6th April, 2,187 lorry clamps for parking in unauthorised locations were issued in total with 91 so far in April with March (819), February (770), January (507) Lorry clamping powers have been applied only in East Kent so far though KCC is considering extending it.</p> <p>Larkfield and Kent Libraries Larkfield Library is expected to cease operation as a test centre at the end of April. Necessary building repair works will then be carried out prior to reopening. Borough Green and Allington Libraries are two nearest of 32 KCC Libraries Opening Kent wide today (April 12th). West Malling is expected to open in the summer depending on experience with social distancing and infection rates.</p> <p>Waste Collection and Litter Services. At a zoom call with TMBC officers, it was reported that the large increase in volumes of waste (up to 50% in places) have delayed collection rounds as bins/sacks take longer to empty. Ubaser are catching up at weekends but rubbish is on streets longer and more is being blown out of containers. Litter enforcement, street bin emptying and roadside verge clearance staff have all been used to prioritise household collection, so these other activities have been halted or reduced. Volunteers have been active but are limited to roads with speed limits of 40 mph or less. TMBC low levels of fines were discussed. Time spent on education is preferred to litter enforcement fines. (TMBC levied 7 fines in four years. Maidstone BC levied 200 last year.) Officers asked for specific hotspots to be reported to waste.services @tmbc.gov.uk</p> <p>PROW Obstruction I have reported again the obstruction of the footpath from Teston Road to the bypass by the traveller site.</p> <p>Waste bin Scared Crow I have again requested replacement of the bin near the Scared Crow which I think is a hazard in its broken state.</p> <p>New Barns bollards I have again requested replacement of the bollards at Braymead, New Barns.</p> <p>Litterpicking activity locally. Kings Hill and West Malling Eco Hub, and Kent Litterpickers are working together to encourage volunteer activity. The Eco Hub has set a challenge total of 500 bags of waste to be collected during an extended Great Spring Clean. Parish Council Litterpicks are</p>			

	<p>organised for East Malling and Larkfield during that period.</p> <p>Deprivation Achievement Gap The proportion of children from poorer backgrounds passing the Kent test has fallen again last year. Kent has one of the worst attainment gaps in this respect. Some Grammar Schools have set aside places for children receiving free school meals, but places are very limited and not offered by all. By contrast the Birmingham King Edward VII Grammar Schools are aiming for 25%. In answer to a formal question, cabinet member said ‘ While early data suggested that COVID-19 had a minimal impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils through the selective process, analysis of National Offer Day intake shows a 4.2% reduction in the proportion of FSM eligible pupils who secured a place at a Kent Grammar school. This means that of the 1419 FSM pupils that took the Kent Test, 339 were offered a place at a Kent Grammar school.</p> <p>OPERATION BROCK. The M20 contraflow system between junction 8 (Maidstone) and junction 9 (Ashford) in Kent has now fully reopened to all drivers. The M20 carriageway is operating a contraflow system under Operation Brock to help manage freight heading to the cross-channel ports, but is now open to all traffic in both directions, with two lanes running coast-bound, and another two lanes running London-bound. All Dover / Euro Tunnel freight traffic should continue on the M20, following the signs to leave the motorway at junction 8, where they will be directed to join Operation Brock.</p> <p>GP Surgery complaints I am raising the large number of complaints regarding the operation of the new GP system both in WM and Thornhills practice with the PPG.</p> <p>Pannattoni Park Aylesford The Panattoni application for the former Aylesford Newsprint/Reeds site has been approved. Redevelopment will begin by the reopening of Bellingham Way to traffic between New Hythe Lane and Station Road. KCC Highways predict this will reduce traffic on the A20 between NHL and junction M20 junction 5. Two new warehouses will be built in the land closest to the motorway. All lorry traffic will be directed along Leybourne Way to A228 and M20. I have asked for discussions on investment in bus services locally to be coordinated so as to improve links between N Larkfield , New Hythe Lane station, the Leisure Centre., the Malling School and West Malling Station and High Street.</p>			
<p>21/220</p>	<p><u>CORREPENDENCE</u></p>			
	<p>Open Space Spring 2021 – available from the Parish Office</p> <p>The email invitation to attend ‘Meeting the Needs of an Ageing Population’ virtual conference to be held on 27th July 21 was noted. Chairman and 2 councillors invited to attend. Tickets part funded and cost £295.00</p>			
	<p>There being no other business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.15</p> <p>Signed..... Dated.....</p>			

West Malling Parish Council				
<u>Accounts for Payment 12th April 2021</u>				cheques to be drawn
KALC (cheque 2281)			880.76	£1,056.91
(invoice 8161 subsription for 21/22)		VAT	176.15	
Kingfisher Direct Ltd (cheque 2282)			195.19	£ 234.23
(Litter bin for play area)		VAT	39.04	
Philomena Wright (cheque 2283)				£ 50.00
(allotment deposit refund Plot 25A)				
April Salaries				
Mrs Claire Christmas - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments				£1,581.41
(Clerk - net salary for April £1566.16 + reimbursement for fax £1.20, stationery £3.85 & stamps £10.20)				
Mrs Sarah Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments				£460.51
(Ass Clerk - net salary for April £425.72 + reimbursement 34.79 for printer inks)				
(reimbursement for duplicate barrier key)			17.45	£ 19.94
		VAT	2.49	
HMRC - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments				£601.49
(Deductions from salaries - April)				
Nest - authorisation to pay pension contributions by Direct Debit for April				
Employer's contributions				£ 59.10
Employee's contributions				£ 78.80
		TOTAL		£4,142.39

