

Minutes

Meeting held in Studdal Church Hall on Tuesday 2nd January 2024 at 7.30 pm.

1. Present and Apologies

Present

B Merriman (Chair)
R Buxton
D Willet
H Densham
A Nigol (Clerk)
12 members of the public

Apologies

KCC Member Steve Manion

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Approval of the minutes 5th December 2023

The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by Cllr Merriman, seconded by Cllr Buxton and all members voted in favour.

4. Matters arising from the minutes 5th December 2023

- i) KCC Highways agreed to replace the missing salt bin at Boys Hill, however it has not been delivered yet. Clerk to chase KCC Highways.
- ii) More salt is needed urgently. Clerk to chase up salt delivery from Highways.
- iii) Annual return report from external auditors. A declaration of exemption means that the external auditors are not required to carry out a review, therefore we will not receive a report. All Parish Council annual return documents are published on the website.
- iv) New playing field football nets support and hooks have been ordered but have not been received yet. Clerk to contact customer service.
- v) Drain at the bottom of Church Hill is still blocked. Clerk to follow up with KCC Highways.
- vi) A local resident interested in the vacant allotment plot has not responded to Clerks email, however had been in touch with Cllr Vickers and confirmed verbally that he would be interested. The Council agreed that the new plot owners contract will start from April 2024, however he is allowed to start some pre-works on the allotment from January 2024.
- vii) Removal of the old shed. The Chair thanked Cllr Vickers for demolishing the old shed and taking it away.
- viii) Both the broken sign posts at Boys Hill and Straker's Hill junction have been reported to KCC Highways.

5. Visitors

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the trees that line both sides of Sandwich Road, Waldershare and concerns about safety as in recent months trees have fallen across the road on several occasions. Parish Council to investigate who the land on both sides of the road belongs to.

6. Finance

- i) To approve the payment schedule for January was proposed by Cllr Willet seconded by Cllr Densham and all members voted in favour.

Chq No.

001584 Clerk	December wages	£468.00
001585 Clerk	December ex – One drive	£14.76
001586 P Evans	Grass cutting October- December	£900.00

ii) Bank reconciliation at 23rd December 2023. The bank statements for December didn't arrive on time, therefore to go on February meeting agenda.

7. Precept and Budget

Discuss/agree 2024/5 precept. To request £16,227 from DDC as the precept figure. A new figure represents a 6.40% increase to the last precept. This was proposed by Cllr Merriman seconded by Cllr Willet and all members voted in favour. Clerk to organise signing and return of paperwork to DDC.

8. McAfee Software

To renew McAfee software for the laptop for two years at £69.99 This was proposed by Cllr Merriman seconded by Willet and all members voted in favour. Clerk to action.

9. Local Community

None.

10. Local Planning

For consideration by Councillors:

i) 23/01365 The Malverns, Downs Road, East Studdal, CT15 5DA. Erection of first floor extension Council decided to support this application. Clerk to submit response to DDC Planning.

ii) 23/01296 Great Napchester Farm, Napchester Road, Whitfield, CT15 5HD Change of use of land/buildings for weddings and events, guest accommodation in dwelling, the siting of 5 Shepherd Huts and formation of 62 parking bays.

Councillors were informed of objections to the application from members of the public who attended the meeting. A list of objections to the proposed development was read out to the meeting and it was agreed it would form the basis of the response to DDC Planning.

The following response to be submitted to DDC Planning. This was proposed by Cllr Merriman seconded by Cllr Willet and all members voted in favour. Clerk to action.

a) Road Safety It is clear that the narrow, winding, un-lit roads with very limited passing places local to the site will not safely accommodate a significant increase in traffic as proposed. Being quiet rural roads, they are frequented by walkers, cyclists and horse riders seeking to make best use of the quiet countryside environment. Local Plan policy TI2 requires that it be demonstrated that traffic movements can be accommodated safely. With no survey or report related to the proposal it has not been demonstrated but just assumed there will be no adverse impact. Previous planning application 20/432 for the same site in 2020 was refused on road safety grounds. There have been no significant changes to the local roads since then. This is not just for a one-off event it would be every weekend as well some events taking place during the week.

b) Noise The impact of this proposal will significantly disturb neighbouring properties in the area. With music in the barn, it is proposed to use noise limiting devices but no limit on noise level has been specified. It is further stated that noise outside the barn will be monitored but again no limit has been set nor has equipment or location been specified. It is not clear what action would be taken if a limit is exceeded or how and who would enforce this at the time. It has been stated that all windows and doors will be kept closed, again who would enforce this at the time, but this is completely unrealistic on a warm evening and probably un-safe for those inside the barn. In addition, there will be noise generated not just by activity within the barn but also from traffic movement and general conversation in the carpark and those

wishing to smoke etc. It is noted that although stated that all activities and events will only take place in the barn, a marquee is also mentioned. In a quiet open rural location, any noise will easily carry for some distance.

c) Environment The environment would obviously be impacted by noise and light pollution. More specifically, the site adjoins both a Local Wildlife Site and an ancient woodland. Both are offered protections but the ancient woodland is a unique environment which is offered specific direct and indirect protections. It is obvious that up to 150 people and 62 vehicles will put these unique environments at risk. The concern is that the impact to the adjoining protected sites has not been given due consideration in the application. As a specific example, the siting of the proposed shepherd huts is in contravention of the Dover Local Plan Policy SP13g implementation, which states a 15m buffer is expected around an ancient woodland. Overall, Policy SP13 states, development resulting in deterioration to ancient woodland will only be permitted in wholly exceptional circumstances where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the deterioration. We see no such justification. It is stated that all activities will take place inside the barn. There are already many indoor venues available for hire in the local area. Core Strategy Policy CP1 states that a hamlet is not suitable for further development unless it functionally requires a rural location. Core Strategy Policy DM1 states that development is not permitted outside the urban boundary unless functionally requires such a location. As all activities are to be inside, the venue certainly does not functionally require a rural location. To strongly object the application was proposed by Cllr Merriman seconded by Cllr Willet and all members voted in favour. Clerk to submit response to DDC Planning. Some general concerns were raised by various locals related to works already undertaken at the site. The exact details of the activities are not known as it is on private property but views from public land, Google maps, advertising for the current businesses and show the general activities. There is no evidence of either planning applications or prior approvals for permitted development and no evidence of building control applications. The points of concern are:

- i) What is the planning approval status of the existing two barns, originals having been demolished.
- ii) Change to the layout of where the driveway joins with Napchester Road.
- iii) Conversion of stable to café/restaurant/this events venue.
- iv) Internal changes to the Grade II listed farmhouse.
- v) Making up of land with large quantities of waste topsoil adjoining ancient woodland, in terms of impact on ancient woodland and quality of the soil.
- vi) Conversion of former workshop to two rental cottages.

Clerk to write a letter and share these concerns with DDC Enforcement officers. Clerk to send a copy to Cllr Kenton from DDC and Cllr Manion from KCC.

- iii) 23/01408 Barley Fields, Chapel Lane, Ashley, CT15 5HZ Horse Chestnut - reduce by 50%; T2 - Sycamore - fell, both the subject of Tree Preservation Order No 6 of 1977

To support the application was proposed by Cllr Merriman seconded by Cllr Willet and all members voted in favour. Clerk to submit response to DDC Planning.

23/01442 Jadaal, Roman Road, Maydensole, CT15 5HP Erection of a single storey rear extension with raised decking and glass balustrade. Not to comment on the application was proposed by Cllr Buxton seconded by Cllr Merriman and all members voted in favour. Clerk to submit response to DDC Planning.

Noted:

- i) 23/01213 The Piggery Northbourne Road East Studdal CT15 5DE Conversion of garage to annex (retrospective). Granted permission.

- ii) CON/18/00125/A East Studdal Nurseries Downs Road East Studdal Kent CT15 5DB 11 - Archaeological watching brief. Condition approved.

11. Section 106 contribution from East Studdal Nurseries in Downs Road.

The Council discussed this item during the last meeting. The grant won't be available until the developer has paid the money to DDC. Parish Council would be interested in developing the playing field by using this grant. Clerk to write to DDC and ask when do they need our proposals. To go on February meeting agenda.

12. Resubmission of application to KCC to adopt Three Horseshoes Green as a Village Green

The Council discussed the resubmission of the application. Clerk to forward the Village Green application pack to Cllr Merriman and Cllr Vickers and arrange an informal meeting prior to the next parish council meeting to review the questionnaire and the evidence information required. To go on February meeting agenda.

13. Report from DDC/KCC

No report.

14. Playing Field

The Council discussed cutting boundary hedge and agreed this needs to be done this year. Cllr Merriman agreed to type up the specifications and what needs to be done. Clerk to get three quotes. To go on February meeting agenda.

15. Allotments & Orchard

Apple tree pruning. Saturday 24th February 10am-12pm was fixed as the date for holding the event at the Community Orchard. Council to consider the risk assessment relating to the proposed pruning day. To go on the February meeting agenda.

16. Correspondence

None.

17. To discuss KALC's suggested Parish Charter

The Council reviewed KALC suggested Charter between Parish Councils and Dover District Council and had no objection to its adoption.

18. Parish Councillor vacancy

Two vacancies at the moment. To keep in the agenda for February. Clerk to publish vacancy notice on the website.

19. Any other business to report/matters to discuss.

- i) Cllr Densham mentioned that no road salt has been delivered from KCC and stocks are running low. Clerk to follow up with KCC.
- ii) Cllr Willet reported the overgrown hedges down the Stoneheap road which cause vehicles to drive on the very edge of the other side of the road resulting in the road surface breaking away. Clerk to report to KCC.

20. Date and status of next meetings

Monthly Tuesday 6th February 2024 7.30pm – Studdal Church Hall

Signed: Barbara Merriman

Date: 6th February 2024

Paper copy on file with Clerk