

Minutes of the MEETING of BIRLING PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 9th July at 8pm at All Saints Church, Birling

Present: Councillors Mrs J Westwood (Chair)
Mr N Hewett
Mr S Hirst
Mrs H Walker
Ms H Wright
Mr D Yates

Also in attendance: J Miller, Clerk; twenty-nine members of the public; four representatives from Obee Estates and Larkfield and New Hythe Football Club.

51. Apologies for absence

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and approve apologies from Cllr Nevill with reasons. It was noted that Borough Councillors Bill Banks and Paul Boxall had sent apologies.

52. Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

53. Approval and signing of minutes of meeting 18th June 2024

It was **RESOLVED** to sign and approve the minutes of the meeting of 18th June. 2024.

54. Monthly Reports - County, Borough, and Police Reports

(a) County Councillor Sarah Hohler

Cllr. Hohler provided an update on local road conditions and other community concerns:

Road Repairs and Closures:

Due to the wettest June on record, the Government has allocated additional funding for pothole repairs. Most potholes are expected to be repaired by mid-October. Road closures affecting Birling are planned as part of new road surfacing works, including resurfacing on the A20. This new surface is intended to protect the roads from future pothole issues.

Public Transportation:

There have been issues with bus services, as operators have been unwilling to run services due to cost concerns. The Government has been providing assistance, but the situation remains challenging.

Foster Care Campaign:

There is a pressing need for more foster carers, with over 11,000 children in the Southeast requiring support. A campaign is being set up in collaboration with other counties in the region to encourage more individuals to become foster carers. Cllr. Hohler will forward the contact details for the foster care program to those interested.

Cllr. Hohler congratulated the parish council on its strong commitment to environmental matters within the parish.

(b) Borough Councillors Paul Boxall and Bill Banks – a report had been circulated.

(c) Kent Police – no report was received.

55. Open Forum – Public Participation Session

A member of public asked about the level of engagement that councillors have had with Obee estates regarding the Oast Park Golf Course development. It was confirmed that a meeting had taken place to update the chair and vice chair.

56. To suspend standing orders to allow developers of Oast Park Golf Course to address the meeting.

Cllr Hewett introduced the concept of a pre-application consultation, that the Government guidance encourages developers prior to submitting a planning application. This allows developers to present their case to the local community for comment, it is an informal process.

During the meeting, the public provided extensive feedback and raised various concerns regarding the proposed development on the nearly 98-acre site. The key points discussed include:

1. Site Background and Proposed Development:

- The land has been partially filled with questionable materials. In 2022, initial plans were introduced to expand sports usage on the site.
- The Football Club (FC) owns their current site on New Hythe Lane, but the pitch suffers from waterlogging issues. The FC approached Obee to collaborate on developing the site.
- An initial planning application by TMBC included a hotel alongside a driving range and the football club, but this was not pursued. Instead, housing delivery was suggested to fund new facilities.

2. Residential Housing and Viability:

- The residential housing component is deemed necessary to cover the costs of the new sports facilities. TMBC requires a detailed viability assessment of the scheme.
- The proposal has been subject to public consultation in Larkfield and Snodland, leading to changes in the scheme based on public input. These include improved site access.

3. Public Amenities and Access:

- A significant portion of the site will be available for public use, enhancing local amenities. Access to the site is planned via a layby on Castle Way, and discussions with the Highways Authority are ongoing. Surveys of layby usage are also being conducted.
- The driving range will be situated lower on the site, and additional sports facilities include a full-size all-weather 3G pitch, training pitch, and parking for up to 150 cars. Plans initially showed three tennis courts, which will be increased to six.

4. Football Club Relocation:

- The FC chairman highlighted difficulties in finding a new site. The current grass pitch leads to frequent match cancellations, and a 3G pitch cannot be accommodated on their current site, making relocation necessary.

5. Public Questions and Concerns:

- **Green Lines on Plans:** The developers were uncertain about the green lines shown on the plans.
- **Top Land and Toxic Waste:** Concerns were raised about the potential development of the top land and the presence of toxic waste. Developers stated that only one sample containing lead was found, and the area currently has no development plans.
- **Social Housing:** There is a requirement for 40% social housing across both sites, amounting to 75 affordable homes (50%). However, the exact location within the golf course site has not been determined.
- **Environmental and Safety Concerns:** The public expressed concerns about flooding, traffic impacts, and potential issues with the layby, including the use

of the site for camping or other unauthorized activities. Developers assured that no major excavation is planned and that ecological work will be conducted to maintain the site responsibly.

- **Access:** The public asked about school access to the sports facilities, the maintenance of the public footpaths & the need to ensure the safety of the major pipeline on the site.
- **Infrastructure:** Concerns were raised about the need for additional provision of doctors, schools etc

6. Future Steps and Ongoing Discussions:

- Developers are working with KCC to finalize details regarding the layby, access, and traffic management. They emphasized that the project's success depends on addressing these concerns to KCC's satisfaction.
- The public was encouraged to continue engaging with the consultation process to ensure that their concerns are addressed as the planning process progresses.

57. (a) Matters arising and last month's circulation

i. Ryarsh School

To receive any update.

ii. Village Hall

To receive any updates on availability of hall

Village Picnic 7 September – it was **RESOLVED** to make a donation of £350.00 towards the band.

(b) Matters for Information circulated to councillors

13/05 Let's get TMBC Digital
13/05 E Watch 2181
13/05 Chief Executive Bulletin
13/05 RDN Rural Funding
13/05 NALC Newsletter
13/05 The Rural Bulletin
13/05 KALC Weekly Bulletin
13/05 NALC events
13/05 E Watch 2180
13/05 Chief Executive Bulletin
14/05 E Watch 2182
14/05 The Rura Bulletin
20/05 KALC Bulletin
20/05 Chief Executive Bulletin
20/05 E Watch 2183
20/05 NALC Newsletter
21/05 E Watch 2184
21/05 Parish Partnership Panel Agenda
31/05 The Rural Bulletin
31/05 NALC Events
31/05 Draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan
31/05 NALC Newsletter
31/05 Southeastern Business Update
31/05 Chief Executive Bulletin
31/05 Weekly Bulletin
31/05 Let's get TMBC Digital
31/05 E Watch 2185
31/05 E Watch 2186
31/05 NALC Newsletter
31/05 58 & 70 buses

31/05 Let's Get TMBC Digital
05/06 E Watch 2168
05/06 The Rural Bulletin
05/06 KALC Training Bulletin
05/06 The Rural Bulletin
05/06 KALC News June 2024

58. Meetings

(a) Meetings attended on behalf of the parish council

There were none.

(b) Future meetings

- i. KALC T&M Area Committee 11/07/2024 (Teams)
- ii. Parish Partnership Panel 29/08/2024
- iii. KALC T&M Area Committee 03/10/2024 – AGM in person
- iv. Parish Partnership Panel 21/11/2024
- v. KALC T&M Area Committee 12/12/2024 (Teams)

59. Parish Business for Decisions

(a) Highways Improvement Plan

- i. To note petition results and consider next steps.
Cllr Hirst shall prepare a response including details of the proportion of households that responded.
It was noted that Birling is not on the list for a 20mph scheme and this shall be followed up.

(b) Local Plan

- i. To receive any updates – it was noted that an update is expected on 23 July.

(c) Community Transport Grant / Bus Services

- i. To receive update on KALC T&M parish council initiatives.

(d) Jubilee and Coronation

- i. To receive update on visit to Gallaghers to choose stone.

(e) Village Maintenance, Waste and Litter

- i. To receive any updates – there were none.
- ii. To note and arrange Clock maintenance required – this will be arranged.
- iii. To agree quote for Box Tree removal at £600.
It was noted that the box tree appears to have come back to life and will be monitored.

(f) Community Resilience Plan

- i. To receive updates from councillors.
Words to describe how the pub will be used as a refuge in the case of emergencies shall be supplied to the landlord by Cllr Hewett. Cllr Wright shall draw up a shopping list, including items such as a megaphone and hi-vis jackets. Cllr Walker is shortly meeting with the Church council and will confirm proposed usage.

(i) Reviews

- i. To agree the following annual reviews:
Climate Plan in April; Strategy in September and Community Resilience plan in January.

60. Parish Business for Noting

(a) Website/social media update

To note the following added to the website:-

- Road Closures
- Oast Park Golf Course

61. Correspondence – there were none.

62. Finance & Accounts

(a) To approve Bank Reconciliation May 2024

Net Bank Balances as at 31/05/2024 £19,238.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliation.

(b) To note budget position year to date May 2024 – noted.

(c) To approve PAYE record June 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the PAYE record.

(d) BACS to be approved and signed

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

| Supplier | Budget | Gross | Net | VAT | Reason |
|------------|----------------|---------|--------|--------|--------------------------|
| Ryarsh PTA | Donations | £50.00 | | | Donation for inflatable |
| Various | Staff Costs | £527.44 | | | Staff costs June |
| LASER | Streetlighting | £27.72 | £26.33 | £1.39 | Streetlight energy costs |
| Waveney IT | IT Costs | £63.65 | £53.04 | £10.61 | Monthly Mailbox Costs |
| HugoFox | IT Costs | £11.99 | £9.99 | £2.00 | Monthly website costs |

63. Roads

(a) To report any road issues

It was noted that the white lines had been repainted.

(b) Road Closures

- To note temporary road closures affecting Birling: Castle Way; A228 Malling Road

64. Planning

(a) Applications to be considered – There were none.

(b) Decisions by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council - There were none.

65. Matters for future meetings

The possibility of a Neighbourhood Plan was noted, membership of Action with Communities in Rural Kent will be explored, and another meeting with Obee estates will be arranged. The internal audit report will be on the next agenda. A 40mph speed limit will be considered for Snodland Road.

66. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10 September 2024

Meeting closed at 9.48pm

Signed.....

Date.....