**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF EAST MALLING AND LARKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2024 AT CHURCH FARM AT 7.30P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. D. Thornewell (Chairman), Mrs. M. Moore (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C. Bell, Mrs. R. Belton, T. Bishop, Mrs. L. Cook, Mrs. J. Sharpe and Mrs. C Woodger

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllrs. R. Haffenden, Mrs. A. Oakley, Mrs. C. Shire and Mrs. M. Tatton

**APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF MINUTES AND APPENDICES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 6th NOVEMBER 2024**

 It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes and Appendices of the Meeting held on Wednesday 6th November 2024 be **APPROVED AND SIGNED** by the Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING**

 There were no Matters Arising.

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

(i) **Ratification of Planning Comments Submitted Since 6th November 2024**

 The List of Planning Comments submitted to the Borough Council since 6th November 2024 had been **CIRCULATED** and it was **AGREED** that the action taken be **RATIFIED.**

(ii) **List of Decision Notices Received since 6th November 2024**

 The List of Decision Notices had been **CIRCULATED**  and was **NOTED.**

The Chairman commented that the application for a dwelling at Hilltop Farm to replace the tea room requires planning permission.

(iii) **Any Other Planning Matters**

 The Chairman reported that an email has been sent to Robin Gilbert in respect of the revised access off the A20 to Forty Acres. He has requested a copy of the plan from Vistry. This action was **RATIFIED.**

The Chairman reported that the planning application for 150 houses off Clare Lane, East Malling was approved by the Area 2 Planning Committee last night, the voting was 8 for and 7 against.

**RATIFICATION OF PAYMENTS SINCE LAST MEETING**

 The Lists of Payment made out of Meeting and Direct Debits had been **CIRCULATED** and the action taken was **RATIFIED.**

**REPORTS ON STANDING COMMITTEES HELD DURING NOVEMBER**

(i) **Planning and Development Committee** – 20th November 2024

 Cllr. Thornewell presented these Minutes and gave an update on the planning application in respect of the barn at Lunsford Farm, Kent County Council are raising no objection on highway grounds despite evidence of large lorries visiting the site and the presence of a sign stating “Unsuitable for Heavy Vehicles”

 The Conservation Officer’s comments say it is close to one of the Listed Buildings, this information is on the Planning Portal. Cllr. Mrs. Oakley has asked for a site inspection before the application is determined.

 No application has yet been submitted for the proposals at Larkfield and New Hythe Football Club.

 The bus service at Leybourne Park is still being discussed between the Borough Council and Kent County Council regarding the Legal Agreement and the Variation document.

 The application for houses on the MOD site at Kings Hill will be heard at the Area 2 Planning Committee on 12th December 2024, there is no proposals for an access onto Teston Road.

 It was **AGREED** the Minutes be **ADOPTED** as a true record of the Meeting.

(ii) **Finance and General Purposes Committee** – 25th November 2024

 Cllr. Mrs. Moore presented these Minutes which she felt were self explanatory but mentioned that the Precept will be discussed at the meeting of this Committee later this month with recommendation to the January Full Council Meeting.

 It was **AGREED** these Minutes be **ADOPTED** as a true record of the Meeting.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

 The Chairman’s Report had been **CIRCULATED,** as follows:-

**CPRE AGM on Friday 22nd November 2024 at Lenham**

I attended this meeting for the Parish Council as we are members and as it is a useful source of information.

It was the last AGM for Hilary Newport who is retiring. We were introduced to the new Director, Andrea Griffiths, who was at the Meway Valley Partnership and we dealt with recently over the tree planting in Larkfield. She lives on the edge of the Hoo Peninsular.

Damian Green the former MP for Ashford was there and was elected as a General Board member.

**Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

The keynote speaker was Elizabeth Milne who is the KCC Natural Environment and Coast Manager and is responsible for the above which is due to go out to consultation in the New Year.

She explained under the Environment Act, 2021 this strategy being a statutory document has to be produced by KCC as the lead authority. The aim after consultation is to publish the final document in May 2025. She explained the idea is to seek to improve biodiversity across the County and I understood this to include Meway Districts are intended to include policies arising from it in local plans.

She is clearly someone keen to progress the plan though in answer to questions it was clear the document will not have any real teeth. It will not for example improve upon existing protections but it is intended to provide a base of knowledge. There are, it appears, trials in Kent to improve biodiversity by landowners working together and questioners made reference to a group of farms in the Darenth Valley as one of these schemes.

She said there had been an effort across the County to involve what she descried as stakeholders and she showed maps of Kent with different habitats and wildlife. I spoke of the role Parish Councils could play as landowners and mentioned thee recent acquisition by Leybourne Parish Council of Castle Lake and Leybourne Wood. The audience was generally concerned about the loss of countryside in Kent and one speaker said Kent topped the list of counties losing such land to building.

**Local Government Reform**

It appears this is back on the agenda with the Government likely to produce a White Paper in the Spring which the newspapers say will include Kent. Press reports say the Government is keen to have more elected mayors across England and that District Councils are seen as a block on building more houses. It is claimed single authorities would be more efficient compared with the two tier system of County and Districts in Kent outside Medway.

**The Shed at Lunsford Farm**

It appears this will now be reported to the January Area 3 Planning Meeting.

**Bus Service to Serve Panatonni Site**

It appears this is now held up due to the Councils deciding who will pay the legal costs of the Variation Agreement required. The local residents of Leybourne Park have asked the new Labour MP for Chatham and Aylesford to involve himself in this issue.

 The Chairman added at a recent meeting of the Joint Transportation Board, KCC have received quotations for renovation of soakaways opposte B& Q on the A20 and are awaiting programme dates from the Contractors.

**REPORT BY BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

 Cllr. Mrs. Oakley has sent an email to the Chief Executive of the Borough Council regarding the Area 2 Planning Committee Meeting and the way it was conducted.

 Cllr. Bishop reported that the Leisure rust have been chosen to run the Angel Centre in Tonbridge.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

 Cllr. Mrs. Woodger reported that a building has been constructed in the garden at 183 The Heath, this should be reported to Enforcement at the Borough Council.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

 There were no Members of the Public present.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, 8th January 2025

**CLOSURE**

 The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 8.15p.m.

 Chairman

 8th January 2025