

Minutes of the Council Meeting of EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL held in Rickards Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 12 February 2018

Present: Cllrs R Bell, Mrs J Davison, A Layland, (Vice Chairman), M McArthur (Chairman), V Maynard, S McGregor, B Orridge, C Pearman and B Todd.

In attendance: C Lane (Town Clerk), no members of the press and fourteen members of the public.

Prior to the start of the meeting representatives from the newly formed Edenbridge Community Christmas Association updated the Council on the progress they have made in the last month. The group now has 356 members, has appointed a committee, opened a bank account and received two donations towards the project. They will be approaching this Council to request funding towards the cost of servicing and safety checking of the lights they have been given by the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has advised that they do not wish to organize the event this year but are happy to support them and be involved.

Carl Dodd the Project Manager for the combined medical facility advised members the team would now be looking for wider stakeholder engagement, are looking into sustainable funding schemes and site selection is still underway. No decisions have been made.

The Chairman opened the meeting

Councillors, and those present at the meeting, observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to Cllr Richard Davison, who sadly passed away on 8 January. Richard was a loyal member of this Council and had twice been its Chairman and had represented the Town at district level - he will be sadly missed.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs J Barnett (holiday), T Bryant (unwell), J Scholey (holiday) and M Robson (unwell).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION

The District Council members stated that although they would be considering planning applications at this meeting they would be reconsidering them at the district level, taking into account all relevant evidence and representations there.

Cllr Roger Bell declared pecuniary interest in item 8.10 as he is the Landlord of the Old Eden Public House.

The meeting was adjourned

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The Chairman of the Stangrove Residents Association advised Council that the Association was completely against the District Council proposals for the estate (Item 8.6), even if the consultation results were supportive. The plans would result in a 40% loss of green space. He provided members with the objections lodged when plans for homes on the land at the top of Cedar Drive were proposed in March 2010. The Association believes that their alternative plan for layby parking is a better option and would like this to be considered. The issue of emergency vehicle access remains unresolved. Works currently being undertaken to rectify Kerb damage at Park Avenue would not interfere with plans that the District Council has, but would with the alternative plans proposed by the residents Association. No consultation had been undertaken by Highways on this issue. The District Council would benefit from the New Housing Bonus should the plans be taken forward.

Residents from Greshams Way adjacent to the estate stated that they had not been directly consulted. They had attended the consultation but hadn't yet had time to gather their objections. They hoped that the Town Council would work with them to protect the green spaces where homes are proposed off Cedar Drive.

4. TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 January 2018

Resolved: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 8 January 2018 be duly signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FOR REPORT AND NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA - none

6. TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Proposed single storey front extension with structural alterations and remodelling. **Ashcombe Drive Edenbridge KENT TN8 6JY** Ref. No: 18/00257/HOUSE

Members supported this application

Demolition of existing industrial buildings and erection of a supermarket, a comparison based variety store and small 'sandwich shop' unit with associated access, parking and landscaping. **Land At Station Road And Fircroft Way Station Road Edenbridge KENT TN8 6HQ** Ref. No: 18/00233/FUL

Members supported this application providing that conditions are applied to ensure that responsibility for the maintenance of the drainage systems for the car park is clearly identified between the individual users. Members request that the applicant looks again at the parking to see if a more generous provision could be made to help meet some of the additional demand at the north end of the town and to consider installing electrical charging points. To mitigate concerns regarding loss of trade for the High Street a contribution towards the cost of Wayfinder signs directing residents and visitors to the various areas of the town is requested. This scheme is being initiated by the Edenbridge Business Forum in partnership with the Town Council's parking group.

Variation of S106 agreement relating to redevelopment of site comprising of the demolition of existing vacant industrial building and the erection of 36 affordable residential units, 50 car parking spaces, associated highways and landscaping works under approved reference 15/00376/FUL dated 26th January 2017 in order to include a mortgagee exclusion clause. **Westerham House Fircroft Way Edenbridge KENT TN8 6EL** Ref. No: 18/00141/VAR106

Unfortunately a definition of the term 'in order to include a mortgagee exclusion clause' had not been forthcoming so members do not have the information to understand the proposed amendment. Cllr Alan Layland will consult with the planners at SDC to progress this matter.

Use of a building as commercial B2 unit in connection with the surrounding commercial yard area. **The Old Woodyard Marsh Green Road Marsh Green Edenbridge KENT TN8 5QR** Ref. No: 18/00086/LDCEX

Members did not believe that B2 use was suitable for a small village, as this could result in noise issues for neighbours.

Alterations, conservation and repairs, change of use from offices B2 to four dwellings C3 including parking provision. **128 High Street Edenbridge KENT TN8 5AY** Ref. No: 18/00076/FUL

Members objected to this planning application and were concerned that the application contained incorrect information. Previous proposals did not have planning permission and the commercial use has only very recently been lost. The application refers to offices but states change from B2 General Industry, not Offices B1 to C3. Finally members were concerned that 10.0 states that the applicant wishes to defer the exact arrangements for parking until implications of all adjacent planning applications become clear or determined. Members do not believe this to be acceptable.

Alterations, conservation and repairs, change of use from offices B2 to four dwellings C3 including parking provision. **128 High Street Edenbridge KENT TN8 5AY** Ref. No: 18/00077/LBCALT

Members objected to this planning application and were concerned that the application contained incorrect information. Previous proposals did not have planning permission and the commercial use has only very recently been lost. The application refers to offices but states change from B2 General Industry, not Offices B1 to C3. Finally members were concerned that 10.0 states that the applicant wishes to defer the exact arrangements for parking until implications of all adjacent planning applications become clear or determined. Members do not believe this to be acceptable

The conversion of a detached garage/coach house on land originally part of the farm Lodge to residential. Land South of Holmcroft And Farm Lodge, Lydens Lane, Hever KENT TN8 7EP SE/17/03501/FUL **Amended Plan showing correct elevations and a structural survey report.**

Members previously considered a similar application (17/02499/HOUSE) and still have a fundamental problem in respect of the openness of the Green Belt. Members remain very concerned about the proposed extra traffic exiting onto Lydens Lane (a very narrow lane) on a sharp bend.

7. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING REPORTS

7.1 Open Spaces, 22 January

Resolved: that the minutes presented by Cllr A Layland be adopted

7.2 Planning and Transportation, 22 January

Resolved: that the minutes presented by Cllr M McArthur be adopted

7.3 Finance Committee, 22 January

Resolved: that the minutes presented by Cllr S McGregor be adopted

7.4 County Councillor's Update

Cllr Peter Lake will be arranging to meet with Cllr Roger Gough regarding the disappointing OFSTED results from Edenbridge Primary School. He will also be taking forward a resident's concerns over parking permits and looking at the proposals for Stangrove Estate. He anticipates that KCC will be setting a budget increase of 4.99%.

7.5 Working Groups / Delegate Reports / Clerk's and Officers' Reports

7.5.1 Business Forum follow up

Resolved: that the Council should put together a scheme to encourage shops in the High Street to improvement to their shop frontages. Funding to be sought from the SDC Improvements (Grot Spot) Funding for these proposals. No members wished to work on this proposal.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Council vacancies, and appointments to committees, working groups and representation to external organisations

Members noted that two vacancies had occurred following the unexpected passing of Cllr Richard Davison the recent resignation of Cllr Joseph Woollorton. Notices were posted on 29 January, to advertise both the vacancies, one in the North & East Ward, and the other in the South & West Ward. Residents have until 16 February to write to the District Council should they wish an election to be held. If not, the Council will advertise for residents who wish to be considered for co-option and formally consider them at a Council meeting.

Resolved: that Cllr Roger Bell should be appointed to the Open Spaces Committee and Cllr Bob Orridge volunteered to attend the PPG and CCG meetings relating to the new combined medical facility. Cllr Bob Todd is proposed as the Council's representative on the Great Stone Bridge Trust. All other vacancies will be considered at the May Council meeting.

8.2 Items referred from Committees for decision

8.2.1 Open Spaces Item 8.5, 10 Year Maintenance Plan, Valley Builders costing for options to stabilize the older western end of the Cemetery Wall

Resolved: to accept the quote from Valley Builders to take down and rebuild the oldest section the western end of the Cemetery wall at the cost of £15,195.94. The bulk of the funds will come from the 10 Year maintenance plan in Market Yard and Closed Churchyard headings, costs for the additional bricks between £1,500 and £2,500, dependent on the number of new bricks required, to be taken from the Council Depreciation Fund as the Open Spaces Plan contingency has already been spent.

8.2.2 Finance Item 6.4 Leases and Agreements - Extension to the Lease with Ritagate

Resolved: to give a one year extension to Ritagate to manage the Thursday Market in the Market Yard Car Park giving time to complete a feasibility study on a possible entrance from the High Street to be completed.

8.3 Building Manager's Report, inc annual planned maintenance, update and testing reports

10 year Maintenance Plan – 2017 to 2018

Due to the expected size and cost of the oak frame renovation work, an invitation to tender was placed on the Contracts Finder website. The response to this was very disappointing. A number of companies were only interested in providing architectural services for the works, and several would not quote for contracts under £250,000.

Resolved: Valley Builders be appointed to carry out the renovation works to the oak frame at Doggetts Barn and Church House at a cost of £33,477 from the 10 year Building Maintenance Plan.

Resolved: SAS Energy be appointed to carry out works to install solar panels to the roof at the sports pavilion at a cost of £9,700 from the 30year Building maintenance plan.

Members noted the additional works to the noisy fan in the Rickards Hall boiler which was replaced earlier in the year, and that the annual boiler inspections were due to take place this month.

Legionella Testing

The water testing regime for vulnerable buildings is continuing. The inspection revealed no new issues this year, apart from a problem with the extraction units on the pavilion roof.

All the Council's properties remain rated as low risk for Legionella.

8.4 Fire Risk Assessment Reviews

The Fire Risk Assessment Reviews for council occupied properties have taken place for 2017 to 2018. There has been no significant change of use or practice over the past year. There are no outstanding issues identified, and no actions required. The Rugby Club has once again provided evidence of their own Fire Risk Assessment Review this year.

They also carried out their own PAT testing in the autumn.

Martin Leach, Property Manager, 7 February 2018

8.5 Internal Audit Review

Resolved: to accept the report from the Council's Internal Audit Review Group Cllr Bob Todd read a statement from the latest Internal Auditors report which stated that the Finance Committee, Town Clerk and RFO all work well together adopting appropriate strategies, procedures and good practices to manage the Council's revenue/expenditure to its best use for the community. The group wished to minute its appreciation to the Finance Officer for her exceptional work.

The Finance Officer has confirmed that the required changes were implemented to the Audit Form last year but the Auditor had continued to use the old form, she will ensure that in future he uses the updated paper work.

8.6 Stangrove Estate consultation, parking, management of trees, open spaces, a new shop and some housing on the estate

The District Council had held two drop-in consultation sessions to enable residents to find out about proposals being developed to address the residents ongoing concerns over the lack of parking on the Estate, and to prevent damage to the existing Green Spaces by their use for parking. As part of the preparation, and in response to claims made by property owners for damage by tree roots, the District Council had commissioned an independent tree survey. The results of this survey were used to develop the proposals to provide 47 additional parking spaces, make improvement to the green spaces, and to provide a new, bigger community shop. They propose to build 13 new terraced and semi-detached homes, in addition to two flats above the local shop. Copies of the plans were circulated.

Cllr John Scholey, the portfolio holder for Finance at SDC, had advised members' that the District Council does not have funds to take this or other projects forward without the income raised by the new homes as, for the second year, Sevenoaks District Council had not received any Revenue Support Grant from central government and projects have to be self supporting.

Resolved: to make the following response to the District Council consultation:
Members welcome the proposals to increase the number of parking spaces on the estate. This has been a long term wish of Edenbridge Town Council which it anticipates it would ease the current situation and reverse damage to the greens caused by residents driving over and parking on them. It believes additional parking is essential.

Members accept that current financial restraints mean that improvements have to be self funded but do not wish to see advantage taken of the residents by squeezing in unnecessary houses to profit from the new homes bonus and the sale of houses. Members wish the scheme to be cost neutral. If in achieving this a reduction in the number of homes required is established, believe that the released land should be used to provide additional parking spaces.

The Stangrove Community Group has provided alternative proposals which members ask the District to take into consideration as part of the consultation response.

It is unclear if a survey of the number of additional parking spaces required on the Estate was carried out, (the Residents Association had offered to do this), the Town Council would be interested to see these results so it can understand the impact that the proposed additional 47 spaces would make against the identified need.

If the new homes proposal does go ahead the issue of access for lorries will need to be carefully considered. Access through the narrow section of the one way system at Cedar Drive is inappropriate, as it is one of the most congested and narrow roads on the Estate, with residents having little option but to park on both sides of the road.

It appeared that residents living in properties in Greshams Way whose homes back onto the site had not been specifically included in the consultation. Their views should be sought.

8.7 Edenbridge Combined Doctors Surgery and Hospital Team

Members were disappointed progress remains slow and believe little can be achieved until the site proposals are known.

The further correspondence and pamphlet received on the hospital site, and the additional papers tabled at this meeting by the same local resident, were noted. Members did not want to take any further action at this time.

8.8 House Project request for funding

Details were circulated of a project to enable 10 young people to learn about local history at the time of World War One and the impact it had on everyday life. It includes a trip to France for five days and the staging of an exhibition at a local Community Centre. The group is currently £2,106.02 short of their £8,956.02 total. Cllr Clive Pearman made a passionate appeal to members, who then considered what level of support they wished to offer and where the funding would come from.

Resolved: to seek to cover any shortfall the group may have up to £2,106.02, the offer to be unconditional. Members were aware that sufficient funding is not available in the grants or contingency fund and have instructed the Clerk and Finance Officer to find it elsewhere in the Council's budget. Options will be reported the Finance Committee.

8.9 Police presence at meetings and other policing matters

Correspondence has been received from Sgt Pete Ballard with regard to attendance of Police Community Support Officers at local parish meetings. His aspiration is that these Officers will attend at least one meeting every three months.

Resolved: to advise Sgt Ballard that the Council has an excellent working relationship with PCSO Simon Humphries and doesn't consider his time would be well spent attending Council meetings. It would however like to have regular update from a member of the Senior Policing Team who would be available to discuss funding, police numbers etc. Members suggest that this should be twice yearly at Council meetings.

8.10 Premises Licence, 91 -91A High Street Edenbridge

Resolved: *to support this application*

8.11 The Great British Spring Clean, 2 March, 9.30am

Members were advised of this event being organised by the Community Warden and were encouraged to become involved.

8.12 Guidance for Councillors, Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

To assist Councillors, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Building Manager had carried out an exercise to bring together the elements of the Council's current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and to create a simple chart for use by Staff and Councillors when deciding what authority and processes they need to carry out when placing orders or commissioning works.

Resolved: to accept the minor changes to the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to include the Service Level agreements.

8.13 Road Naming - Land off Enterprise Way/St Johns Way Edenbridge

Following a request from this Council, and the family of the late John Surtees CBE, Sevenoaks District Council and the Developers had put forward a selection of possible names for the roads in the new development. They draw on all aspects of British success in motor racing, including many directly connected with Mr Surtees.

Resolved: to submit the following names for consideration: Surtees Drive, Goodwood Close, Silverstone Way, Cadwell Park Road, Thrupton Road, Mallory Park Road, Hailwood Drive, Buckmore Park Road, Brooklands Close, Trophy Way and Donnington Park Road. Members are particularly keen that the road name Surtees Drive is given to one of the more prominent roads and would be disappointed if this was not possible. If the District Council did not approve any of the others proposed, and wanted to include other drivers, Graham Hill and Jim Clark would be this Council's preferred choices.

8.14 Wildlife in Edenbridge 2017

The latest edition of Wildlife in Edenbridge has been given to the Council. Over 20 years of records have now been collected. Some species have disappeared from the area, including the Tree Sparrow, Whinchat, Snipe and Little Owl, but others absent 20 years ago are now seen regularly, such as Little Egret, Red Kite, Ring-necked Parakeet, Ringlet Butterfly, and hopefully in the future, Brown Hairstreak.

9. PRESS RELEASE

Members propose that a press release be issued on Council's support for the Lidl and Home Bargains planning application.

In view of the confidential nature of the following items to be discussed, the chairman moved that the press and public be excluded from the Chamber. Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960.

10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

10.1 Staffing Issues

Members noted that the Head Groundsman had resigned and the process of finding a replacement was underway. The additional staffing for the summer period was approved, and management of staff returning to work following illness discussed.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.