

/Aylesford Parish Council

Planning Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 March 2021

Present: Councillor Smith (Chairman) and Councillors Balcombe, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Ludlow, Ms Oyewusi, Ms Papagno, Rillie, Shelley, Sullivan and Walker, Winnett, and Wright..

In Attendance: Neil Harris (Clerk) and Melanie Randall (Assistant Clerk and Finance Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Beadle and Hammond

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Beadle (work commitment) and Hammond (unwell) were received, and the reasons for absence agreed.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 October 2020

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. TM/20/01820/OA – Outline Application: Hybrid planning application for the following development: Outline planning permission (all matters reserved) for the erection of flexible B1c/B2/B8 use class buildings and associated access, servicing, parking, landscaping, drainage, remediation and earthworks; and, Full planning permission for erection of two warehouse buildings for flexible B1c/B2/B8 use class, realignment of Bellingham Way link road, creation of a north/south spine road, works to the embankment of Ditton Stream, demolition of existing gatehouse and associated servicing, parking, landscaping, drainage, infrastructure and earthworks - Aylesford Newsprint Bellingham Way Larkfield Aylesford

The Committee considered the revised representation in respect of this application which was attached to this Agenda and it was **Agreed** that the following representation as set out below

be submitted as this Council's representation in respect of this application which was being considered at the TMBC Area 3 Planning Committee on 18 March:-

The Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on application TM/20/01820/OA and would make the following comments that are set out below:-

1. The Council welcomes that the applicant supports the principle of this site remaining an Economic Hub and being used for employment purposes only.
2. The Council's main concern in respect of this application is the impact of traffic such a large development would have on an already over capacity road network particularly taking into account other proposed developments along the A20 corridor. The Council does have some reservations about the opening of Bellingham Way as the release of any traffic to this part of the highway network would make the position worse on an already over capacity road network particularly at the junctions with the A20. If Bellingham Way is opened the Council would have the following specific comments:-

(a) that traffic using this road must be restricted to car and light commercial vehicles only (the definition of light to be established) and a there must be a total ban on HGV vehicles exiting/entering the site from Station Road.

(b) traffic controls should be put in place at the junction with Station Road and further back along Bellingham Way. Physical measures should be put in place to prevent HGVs from using this road. Height, width and weight restrictions should apply. The Council is pleased to note that the provision of traffic controls has been incorporated in the revised proposal.

(c) the Bellingham Way Link Road Improvements Overview Plan shows an HGV Turning Area near the Station Road junction which, it is assumed, is there to redirect HGVs. Clarification about this feature is sought. The Council believes that HGVs should be physically prevented from getting this far into Bellingham Way and would want consideration to be given to moving this turning area further west.

(d) Ditton Corner has an urgent need for traffic reduction. The proposed improvement works at Ditton Corner will not reduce the volume. Traffic volume will also increase along Station Road in both directions.

(e) The junction of Station Road and Hall Road will require improvement as there is regular queuing far back along Hall Road to The Avenue and beyond. Traffic congestion at this junction is further complicated by the problems caused by the railway level crossing. In particular the Council would ask that serious consideration is given to a scheme previously proposed by KCC Highways using traffic lights and slip road accesses for alleviating this problem. There is no proposal identified within the revised application for any works to be undertaken at this junction even though Kent County Council Highways had identified this as a junction in need of mitigation measures arising from this development. The Council still believes that junction

improvement works are needed here and would ask the applicant to seriously consider undertaking these works as part of this development.

3. The Council supports the comments by Ditton Parish Council and East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council made in respect of Footpaths and the Ditton Stream and the Old Mill Pond.
4. The Council wishes to ensure that adequate signing for the site is installed in the surrounding road network, especially along Station Road, at Ditton Corner and New Hythe Lane.
5. The applicant should have discussions with Network Rail regarding upgrading Aylesford Station arising from the increased passenger numbers using the station from this new development..

Aylesford Parish Council has met with our neighbours at Ditton and East Malling & Larkfield Parish Councils and have agreed on the above comments. The other parishes may raise additional or different points regarding this application and the Council supports their comments in this regard.

5. TM/20/02749/OA - Outline application: Erection of up to 330 dwellings (including 40% affordable homes), together with associated open space, play areas, and landscaping (including details of access) - Land South of Barming Station and East of Hermitage Lane, Aylesford

The Committee considered the Council's original objection to this application submitted to TMBC and noted that the application was likely to be submitted to TMBC Area 3 Planning Committee in May.

6. Meetings with Burham, Ditton, East Malling and Larkfield, West Malling and Wouldham Parishes

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February and received a verbal update from the Chairman on the meeting held that day. It was **Agreed** to note the minutes and the update.

The Clerk also reported that South East Water were in the process of submitting a planning application for the works needed at their site just of Bellingham Way in order to provide temporary solutions to the local water supply.

7. TMBC Planning Applications and the 5 Year Land Supply for Housing Development

The Committee considered the document attached to the Agenda explaining the current position in respect of the TMBC 5-year land supply for housing development. It was **Agreed** to note the document

8. A20 London Road, Aylesford Roundabout Consultation

The Committee considered the Consultation Paper on the above attached to the Agenda which was referred to this Committee by the Environmental Services Committee. Members felt that as they were not Highways Engineers they did not understand the scheme and how it resolved the problems at this site and felt that it would be useful if KCC Officers came to a Zoom Meeting and explained their scheme. It was **Agreed** that KCC Officers be invited to attend a Zoom meeting to explain the scheme and that Members be invited to attend and that Council on 16 March formulate a response.

9. Vision Zero: The Road Safety Strategy for Kent

The Committee considered the Consultation Paper on the above attached to the Agenda which was referred to this Committee by the Environmental Services Committee. The Committee also considered the briefing paper from the Clerk which was attached to the Agenda. It was **Agreed** to respond to the Consultation Paper as follows:-

The Council welcomes the Vision for 2050 so clearly stated in this document and in particular its aim to have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities and serious injuries. The Council also welcomes the Strategy for the next five years as an important step to achieve this vision.

However, the Council believes that this change can only be achieved by not only taking into account the statistics relating to fatalities and accidents but also, very importantly, by listening to the local community. Kent Highways need to listen to Parish Councils and local people to ensure that they are ahead of the statistics and not following them. This is vitally important if the aim of zero fatalities is to be achieved. The importance of listening to Parish Councils is that they are local people who use the roads all the time and also speak to their local community who express their views through their local Parish representatives. Listening to Parish Councils and local people is absolutely vital if Kent Highways wish to get ahead and reduce the fatalities rather than just taking account of statistics of what has happened.

However, in the past, Kent Highways have been guilty of following only statistics and not listening to the Parish Councils and the local community until too late, and the accidents that might have been avoided have occurred. As an example, over the last few years this Council has raised the following issues, all of which, the Council believes would help Kent Highways to achieve their vision of zero fatalities.

- 1 Since 2015 the Council has raised on numerous occasions the speed of traffic in Fostington Way and highlighting, in particular, the contradictory nature of having a 40mph and 30mph signs so close together – Nothing has happened and the suggestion ignored
- 2 Bull Lane/Pilgrims Way junction – The Council raised this issue and supported by local people through the Bull Lane Safety Group, Kent Highways undertook minor works to improve the situation. However, the inherent danger of this junction still remains and it seems that this will only be resolved by an additional 900 dwellings

being added to the local area and adding to the problem their additional traffic movements.

- 3 Since 2016 the Council has suggested moving the slow sign on the A229 South slip road from under the bridge to a more effective position on the actual slip road thereby improving safety – this was ignored.
- 4 In 2017 the Council asked that Tunbury Avenue be considered for a 20mph speed limit particularly as there is a school in this road and later in 2019 supported the provision of a pedestrian crossing to help children access the school on this very busy road – no action taken on both
- 5 In 2018 the Council asked that a 20mph speed limit be introduced in Eccles village and that the speed limit on Bull Lane coming from the junction with the Pilgrims Way be reduced from 40mph to 30mph – both of these were rejected.
- 6 In 2019 the Council proposed a reduction in the speed of traffic on the downhill section of the A229 Blue Bell Hill as it heads south towards Maidstone and to create a 50mph speed limit from the Lord Lees roundabout to the approach into Maidstone. – This proposal was rejected as there had not been enough accidents to merit such a reduction.
- 7 In 2020 the Council raised the issue of the widened Rochester Road as it meets the new Sandpit entrance. This wider road has led to traffic speed increasing as it leaves the village before it returns to a narrow lane at too fast a speed and also as traffic enters the village there is urgent braking because the cars are travelling too fast before it accesses the village traffic calming scheme. Both of these could easily end in a major accident and to avoid this the Council asked that something be done now but was told that nothing could happen as there was no record of any accidents. This being obvious as the new entrance had only just opened and what was being suggested was action that could prevent the accidents and the creation of statistics.

These examples show that there has to be a significant change in the way Kent Highways function for this vision to be achieved and the first of these steps would be for them to listen to Parish Councils and their local communities.

10. Duration of Meeting

7.30pm to 8.11pm