

**MINUTES OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 17TH MARCH 2025 AT 7.30PM IN CHIDDINGSTONE CAUSEWAY HALL**

Present: Cllr P. Myers, Cllr T. Nunn, Cllr K. Outlaw Cllr M. Quirk, Cllr C. Shamwana, Cllr P. Vicary and Cllr H. Williams
Apologies: Cllr J. Roper (Chairman), Cllr P. Harris, County Cllr M. McArthur and District Cllr M. Silander
In attendance: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr R. Streatfeild attended the meeting from 9.00pm to 9.14pm.

In the absence of Cllr Roper, members agreed that Cllr Outlaw would chair the meeting.

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Silander

In the absence of District Cllr Silander, The Clerk read his report:

- SDC approved its budget on Tuesday 25th February at £20.3m. At the last minute the council had to find an additional £200,000 in the budget for increased National Insurance contributions. SDC run a ten year budget and costs are spread out and balanced over this period. If SDC joins a unitary authority with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Maidstone Borough Council, it is unsure how SDC's ten year budget will be managed if these councils don't operate in the same way. There is also the question of how debt and risk will be managed once the councils join together as a unitary authority. Adult Social Care will then sit with the unitary authority rather than KCC, and these costs escalate rapidly. SDC's Audit report recommended that the public be consulted on budget proposals but this was rejected by the council.
- The Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted, and is now a Statutory Planning Document. However policies contained in the NPPF will override the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- The Local Boundary Review of the Sevenoaks district has been paused due to unitary proposals.
- Land East of the High Street in Sevenoaks is up for development. This is SDC owned land and the proposals are currently subject to public consultation.

Report by District Cllr Richard Streatfeild

See page 80.

Closed Session

- 132. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Roper and Cllr Harris and their reasons for absence were accepted. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur and District Cllr Silander. District Cllr Streatfeild apologised for arriving late to the meeting.
- 133. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
- 134. The minutes of the Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting held on 17th February 2025** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Nunn, seconded by Cllr Williams, and all were in favour.
- 135. To discuss the format of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Monday 28th April 2025**
Members discussed the format of the meeting to be held at 7.30pm in Chiddingstone Village Hall. Clerk to organise light refreshments.
- 136. Planning:**
 - i. To consider planning applications received
 - i. SE/25/00505/MMA and SE/25/00505/CONVAR: Tithe Barn, North Clouts Farm, Ide Hill Road, Bough Beech TN8 7PH - Minor Material Amendment to SE/24/01313/LBCALT to change rear door from double door to stable style door. Members had no objection to these applications.

- ii. SE/25/00499/MMA: Bassetts, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JX - Minor Material Amendment to 24/00521/FUL for reduction in glazing across the elevations of the dwelling and the removal of brise soleil on the side elevation. Members supported this application.
 - iii. SE/24/03444/FUL: Pilbeams, Bradley Road, Blackham TN3 9UP - demolish grounds maintenance building and shed, erection of tennis court and pavilion plus ancillary garden landscaping works. Members had no objection to this application, but requested that consideration be given to a condition imposed on any approval to say that no external lighting at the tennis court will be allowed without prior planning approval, this is to protect dark skies.
 - iv. SE/25/00585/WTCA: Apple Tree Cottage, Truggers Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath TN8 7BP - to fell a Silver Birch tree. Members agreed to leave the decision on this application to the tree officer at SDC.
 - v. SE/25/00529/HOUSE: Glebe House, The Village, Chiddingstone TN8 7AH - erection of two storey rear northern extension, re-provision of front door on southern elevation, alterations to windows and tile hanging and introduction of basement to provide swimming pool to be served by rear facing windows. Members had no objection to this application.
- ii. To report SDC notifications of planning decisions
SE/25/00357/AGRNOT: Newtyehurst Farm, Cowden Pound Road To Truggers Lane, Mark Beech - demolition of existing forestry building and erection of replacement forestry building with solar panels on roof. Decision – Prior Approval Not Required.
 - iii. To hear update on potential breaches of planning policy
The Clerk updated members regarding potential breaches of planning policy in the parish.
 - iv. To discuss the SDC bespoke planning training event for Chiddingstone and Leigh Parish Councils
Date: 3rd April 3.30pm to 5.00pm at SDC offices. The training will cover the role of development management, how applications are considered, and an update on green/grey belt changes and the implications on assessing planning applications. Following the changes to the NPPF on the 12 December 2024 and the guidance provided by Government on Green Belt and grey belt assessments, the SDC policy team has commissioned a green/grey assessment for the district. At this stage, further work is ongoing over any future housing allocations, which has not been completed yet. Therefore, training on housing numbers, allocations, impacts and mitigations will be provided in future, once all the Local Plan work has been completed.
 - v. Local Plan Timescale
The Clerk reported that SDC has published the following timetable:
 - Regulation 18 consultation – October/November 2025. Regulation 18 is the Local Plan preparation stage.
 - Regulation 19 publication – Summer 2026. Regulation 19 is the Local Plan publication stage.
 - Submission - before 31 December 2026
 - Examination – 2027
 - Adoption - December 2027
 - vi. Neighbourhood Plan
Members discussed whether it would be a good idea to start work on a Neighbourhood Plan and, in the first instance, agreed to discuss with neighbouring Parish Councils whether they are considering taking this forward as the Neighbourhood Area could possibly be combined. Further investigation is required on the process and costs involved.

137. Finance

- i. To consider 2024/25 Earmarked Reserves
Members discussed Earmarked Reserves and Cllr Myers proposed that £3,027 is transferred from the Grants & Other Projects Earmarked Reserve into the Planning & Legal Fees Earmarked Reserve. This was seconded by Cllr Vicary and all were in favour.
- ii. To sign quarterly bank reconciliation
Cllr Outlaw signed the bank reconciliation and corresponding bank statements as a correct record.
- iii. To consider subscription renewal and application for grant from GACC
The Clerk reported that the subscription renewal of £10 is paid by standing order. The Parish Council gave GACC a grant of £500 in March 2024. Members agreed to give a grant of £600.00 Proposed by Cllr Vicary, seconded by Cllr Nunn, and all were in favour.

- iv. To approve subscription renewal to Parish Online
Members approved this subscription renewal at £100 + VAT. Proposed by Cllr Quirk, seconded by Cllr Shamwana, and all were in favour.
- v. To approve list of payments
Cllr Myers proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Vicary and all were in favour. Cllr Roper and Cllr Outlaw to authorise the payments online. The Clerk reported that Leigh Parish Council has paid £384.33 towards shared costs of phone and printer.

138. Affordable Housing provision in the parish

- i. To hear update regarding the Chiddingstone Affordable Housing schemes
The Clerk reported that English Rural Housing Association has provided the following update:
 - “i. I would like to formally thank Louise Kleinschmidt and Howard Williams for taking the time to join us at Chiddingstone Causeway Hall on Monday 10th March for a visit by thirty first year planning students from UCL Bartlett School of Planning, who came to get an overview of the challenges and importance of providing rural affordable housing. The parish’s perspective you gave was invaluable. The speakers included Emma Coffin and Liz Crockford from Sevenoaks District Council who gave an overview of rural planning priorities, villages and affordable housing, Tessa O’Sullivan from Rural and Community Housing Kent who outlined the function of rural housing enablers and the purpose of rural exception sites and Wendy Farrell and Richard DeVille from English Rural who spoke about the role of English Rural as a registered provider and the challenges of delivery of affordable rural housing. The students asked some very pertinent questions and were given the opportunity to visit the site at Chiddingstone Causeway. Feedback from the lecturers was that the students really enjoyed their day and hopefully they will go on to fight the case for affordable rural housing in their future careers.
 - ii. Chequers (Millbrook) site in Bough Beech: Arazu Construction Limited continue to make excellent progress on the site which is well managed and organised, with no health and safety issues to report. They are now forecasting a slightly earlier handover for the end of May 2025. Internal decorating and kitchen and bathroom installations are progressing, and works will soon commence on the external landscaping. SES Water have completed the water supply to the site and UKPN will commence works shortly. People who have a local connection and need an affordable home, and who are interested in applying for one of the proposed homes, can visit our website at englishrural.org.uk to register interest and read more about what we do or, if preferred, they can call us on 020 7820 7930 to request a form or speak to someone about registering. Interested applicants looking for an affordable rented home must also have registered with Sevenoaks District Council. Access to the online application is via kenthomechoice.org.uk or telephone 01732 227000.” The Clerk advised that the properties will be on Kent Homechoice between 24th March and 6th April, and the Clerk has contacted all the people who have shown interest in affordable housing to let them know that the properties will soon be available to bid on. Details have also been put on social media, website, the parish magazine and noticeboards.
 - iii. Bassetts site in Chiddingstone Causeway: “We are now undertaking the final design coordination, picking up the work of the Landscape Architects, the Civils, Drainage and Highways Engineers and the architects to have everything ready for the planning submission in the first week of April 2025. The extensive flood risk modelling has provided comfort that the proposed dwellings are situated well away for the flood risk zone (based on current worse case plus a 40% uplift for climate change). The site includes a large area of land set aside for the on-site mitigation required to meet SDC’s requirement for a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain improvement and we are actually achieving over a 20% improvement on the baseline assessment across the site. This is likely to be the future improvement target which many local authorities are moving towards. Biodiversity Net Gain has been defined as ‘development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, and an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support their priorities for nature conservation’. The link to our online portal is <https://chiddingstone.englishrural.org.uk> includes the latest plans for the land adjacent to Bassetts and gives people the chance to register their interest in this second affordable housing scheme.

“We would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support for both the Bough Beech and Chiddingstone Causeway sites.”

The Clerk said that the planning application will be a full application for the affordable housing units and outline for the open market housing, including the self-build plot.

ii. To discuss measures to mitigate flooding in Redleaf Close

The Clerk reported that she has emailed WKHA to advise that the landowner is waiting for a detailed specification from them.

iii. To hear report of the event held in Chiddingstone Causeway Hall with planning students

See item 138(i) above.

139. Highways and Rights of Way

i. To hear update regarding applications for speed reduction measures in Bough Beech and on Camp Hill

The Clerk reported that she contacted KCC as there were some strips across the road on Camp Hill to survey traffic movements. KCC responded to say: “The strips were my doing, we are looking at the feasibility of extending the 30 limit. That is all sitting with engineers at the moment and the speed survey was all part of the studies. I have not seen results as yet but I will share any updates with you as they occur.”

ii. SR499

The Clerk reported that an email has been received from KCC PROW regarding SR499: “I managed to look at SR499 this morning. I have contacted the landowner to try and arrange a meeting with him along with my manager to see what we can do to support him in getting the footpath back to a usable state.”

iii. KCC Highways

- Hampkins Hill Road, Chiddingstone: 17th March 2025 for 1 day between 09.30hrs and 15.30hrs between Coneyearth and Chested Farm. See <https://one.network/?tm=141530190>
- Truggers Lane To Grove Road, Chiddingstone Hoath: 19th March 2025 for 1 day between Hoath Corner To Oakenden Lane and Truggers Lane.
- Moat Lane, Chiddingstone Hoath & Cowden: 2nd April 2025 for 1 day between Top Hill and Bassetts Old Barn. See: <https://one.network/?tm=141665189>
- Truggers Lane To Grove Road, Chiddingstone Hoath: 8th April 2025 for 1 day near Hoath House. See: <https://one.network/?tm=141716020>

The closures are required for the safety of the public and workforce while works are undertaken by Openreach. Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works.

140. To consider process for applying for an extension to the National Landscape (AONB) area

Cllr Nunn reported that the Government had a plan to increase the number of National Landscape Areas, and two have already been enlarged, these are in Surrey and in Yorkshire. The part of the Chiddingstone parish that is not included in either the High Weald National Landscape or the Kent Downs National Landscape has an SSSI, a SSSI Risk Zone, a nature reserve, Local Wildlife Sites, and the Reservoir. He said that he already has a meeting planned with the High Weald National Landscape Trust regarding the protected landscape and members agreed that he could commence discussions on the potential process involved in applying to extend the National Landscape area. Cllr Vicary said that the Eden Cluster Group is doing some good work in conservation, and Cllr Williams said that the Eden Valley flood plain is important in the area and should be protected. The Clerk said that National Landscapes are excluded from the grey belt definition, which covers 60% of the district, and suggested that CPRE would be a good source of advice.

141. To hear update on the ongoing works at The Castle Inn

The Clerk reported that she and Cllr Roper met Tom Tugendhat MP at The Castle Inn, along with the landlords. Tom said that he would invite Hilary McGrady, the Director General of the National Trust, to a meeting in Parliament. Cllr Outlaw said that volunteers are currently being sought to help improve the garden area ready for the Real Football event.

142. To discuss the provision and siting of a new bench on the green in Chiddingstone Hoath

To be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

143. To consider and update Risk Assessment

Cllr Outlaw reported that the Risk Assessment is in the process of being updated to include some new emerging risks, and hopefully this will be ready for the April Parish Council meeting. However in order to ensure that the Risk Assessment does not miss its annual review, it was agreed to update and approve the assessment in its existing format. Members considered the risk and agreed that they remain current. Proposed by Cllr Quirk, seconded by Cllr Nunn and all were in favour.

144. To hear report of the Margaret Hyde Trust

Cllr Outlaw reported that the two almshouse houses, no.5 and no.6, have been refurbished. The Weekly Maintenance Charge has been increased for all beneficiaries, this is the first time it has been changed in six years. The vacant almshouse has now been offered to a local person who was in housing need. It is clear that there is a need for affordable homes for local people in the parish, and applicants were from different generations.

145. To discuss correspondence received

The Clerk reported that lists of correspondence received have been circulated and drew members' attention to the following:

- i. Item 2: GACC Newsletter March 1st 2025: The Secretary of State for Transport has made a decision stating that she is "minded to grant consent" for the development of Gatwick Airport based on an amended plan. Further consultation is now expected with a final decision earmarked for October 2025. The decision was delayed because the Planning Inspectorate recommended against the expansion plan, and the Secretary of State's office has suggested that if Gatwick complies with revised conditions relating to Surface Transport Access and Noise Mitigation they will reconsider the application favourably.
- ii. Item 3:SDC: Boundary Review: this has been paused whilst discussions are under way on unitary proposals for the district.
- iii. Item 3: Kent Police: Hoath Corner, Chiddingstone - between 00:01 on Tuesday 11th February and 16:39 on Tuesday 18th February, somebody stole heating oil from a farm. Crime Report No. 46/28610/25
- iv. Item 4: Kent Police: February newsletter.
- v. Item 5: SDC re: the 80th anniversary of VE Day on Thursday 8th May 2025. To commemorate this occasion, SDC have arranged a week of free events from Monday 5th to Friday 9th May, culminating in an outdoor concert and afternoon tea at St Clere Estate in Kemsing on Friday 9th May from 2pm to 5pm.
- vi. Item 8: KALC training events, contact the Clerk for more information.

146. To hear report and discuss Parish Projects, including approval of costs:

- i. Chiddingstone Closed Churchyard
The Clerk reported that the contractor has carried out the work in the Closed Churchyard, including the removal of the Goat Willow and the Elder, tidying the large Holly bush removing as many brambles as possible, and trimming around the memorial plaques. Original Tree Surgeons have requested permission from SDC to remove a small amount of tree growing over the road, but the decision has not yet been made.
- ii. Chiddingstone Car Parking
None.
- iii. Rural Swathe cutting contract
The Clerk reported that the cost of the two rural swathe cuts has been £7,200. The devolved funding from KCC is £4,950.07, and a remittance advice has been received. Leigh, Hever and Penshurst Parish Councils have paid.
- iv. SpeedWatch
The Clerk reported that a SpeedWatch session was held in the layby opposite St. Luke's Church on Friday 28th February. 160 cars passed, and 24 were recorded as speeding.
- v. Summer Family Fun Play event
The Clerk reported that this is booked for Friday 1st August in the Chiddingstone Causeway Sports Field.
- vi. Litter Pick, Bulk Refuse Freighter and Flytipping
 - i. Parish litter pick
Saturday 5th April at 9.30am

Chiddingstone Parish Council – 17th March 2025
List of Payments since last meeting (figures inclusive of VAT)

Payment Number	Date	Payee	Amount inc. VAT	VAT
693	17.03.25	Clerk - salary	£1,363.63	
694	17.03.25	HMRC – PAYE	£247.47	
695 SO	17.03.25	Kent County Council – pension contribution	£549.66	
696	17.03.25	Clerk – mileage and reimbursement of costs	£97.45	
697	17.03.25	Chiddingstone Village Hall – hall hire 2024	£120.00	
698	17.03.25	GeoXphere – subscription renewal Parish Online	£120.00	£20.00
699	17.03.25	Imperative Training – defibrillator pads & battery	£379.80	£63.30
700	17.03.25	Hever Landscapes Ltd – maintenance closed churchyard & areas	£403.20	£67.20
701	17.03.25	Hever Landscapes Ltd – hedge cutting and cut of wild area	£480.00	£80.00
702	17.03.25	GACC – grant	£600.00	
			<u>£4,361.21</u>	<u>£230.50</u>
