

Minutes of the Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council meeting held on Monday 11th March 2024 in Aldington Village Hall at 7:30pm.

Present: Councillors; L Harman (Chair), R Boulding, P Hannabuss, H Stebbings, G Taylor, and S Wagstaff.

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk.

1388. Apologies for absence:

Councillors L Guy & J Weatherall. P New (Neighbourhood Watch)

1389. Declarations of interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

1390. Public participation:

A submission was made by email for the Parish Council to consider re-siting the teen shelter further away from the bungalows in Ragstone Hollow due to anti-social behaviour.

It was decided that the costs would be too high and that a suitable location would be difficult to find, anti-social behaviour needs to be reported to the Police.

1391. Neighbourhood Watch:

Report attached.

1392. Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:

The change-over of waste contractors is now imminent. All householders should this week receive a letter from the Council describing how the change over will impact each area. About 20% of the borough will have a change of bin day. I do not know if Aldington and Bonnington are affected by this – we will find out this week. The Parish Council should receive posters, which I hope the Clerk will put up on the Parish Notice boards as a reminder.

On Monday 18 March, the Council will publish all sites submitted as part of the Ashford Local Plan 2041 – Call for Sites. The information will be held on the Borough Council website. At this stage, sites listed as put forward for Aldington are just that – sites that have been put forward by landowners for consideration. This is the start of a long process to put together the next stage of the Ashford Local Plan, deciding how to meet our housing need and planning for the future of our borough. There will be extensive public consultation throughout the process and I will bring these opportunities to you as they occur.

In Council this week, we will have an extraordinary meeting on Thursday to discuss options for the Picturehouse cinema in Elwick Place. Members will be asked for their support for temporarily managing the facility in order to keep the cinema offering open in the town centre, following the announcement of the operator's intention to withdraw. If approved, the council will be reviewing operations alongside a specialist consultant and seeking investment from alternative operators in the longer term once the facility has established that, with the right support, it is a viable operation. Obviously, whether or not the Ashford Cinema is a success depends upon residents.

Assuming that Council supports the proposal to support Ashford Cinema, I very much hope that Saxon Shore residents will also do so.

1393. Minutes:

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th February 2024 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

1394. Chairman's Report:

I am delighted to share with you that we successfully applied for funding support for Aldington Hub from the Parish Council Winter Support Scheme that is administered by KCC. I have confirmation that we have £1000 funding – though I don't know whether the Clerk has had confirmation of this via KALC.

Cllr Hannabuss and I last week attended the Ashford KALC meeting. There was, as usual, a report from the Police Community Safety Unit. I took the opportunity to ask about the strategy regarding use of electric scooters, which are of course not road-legal. I was told that the strategy is to confiscate, rather than to criminalise young people. The Aspire Team brought a presentation about the King's Living Heritage Fund, which Ashford Borough Council are championing in the borough. They are inviting parish councils to apply to plant fruit trees and create community orchards. The meeting was the last under the current chairmanship. A new Chair will be selected at the May meeting.

This morning I collected litter picking equipment from the Civic Centre. We will be organising a community litter pick to join in with the Keep Britain Tidy 2024 Great British Spring Clean. The initiative is being led by Cllr Weatherall.

Cllr Taylor has been working with Kaleidoscope Childcare and was instrumental in inspiring a Taskforce Day last weekend. Families turned out to sweep and scrub the play areas so that local children can play outside. The outdoor equipment there is dated and lacking seating for both children and supervising adults. I have taken the liberty of discussing this with Colin, our current handyman, who has made garden furniture that is in use at The Walnut Tree pub. I would like to propose as part of this report that we fund the production of 2 child-sized benches and one adult one. The cost will be £550 quoted by Colin already. If you approve, I would like to propose that all 3 benches carry a small plaque that says "Donated by Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council Spring 2024". I look for your support to help Kaleidoscope, which is under new management, to succeed as I feel that this is a service we do not wish to lose in the village.

Resolved: to request the handyman to construct the benches as reported.

1395. Solar:

Report from the Aldington and Mersham Support Group:

1. At the last Parish Council meeting there was news of a "Limited Round Consultation" being undertaken by the applicant EPL001. When details were obtained it was clear that this was in relation to a small oversight by the

- applicant relating to the extent of the scheme which failed to link up a proposed new footpath with an existing footpath (AE474).
2. Following the decision of Derek Burles to step back from the Group (as previously reported) we have approached the Chair of the Community Liaison Panel (CLP) about our continuing involvement and have confirmed with them that Jonathan Tennant from our group will attend meetings. We understand from EPL that the next meeting is expected to be “mid-April” but this will be dependent on whether or not the application has by then been made.
 3. We previously reported meeting with CPRE in the village on 22nd January. We have been in further contact with them in relation to the Cleve Hill solar farm and BESS (which has recently been in the press having been refused permission). We attended a meeting with them on 1st March which was very helpful in providing new points of contact and practical aspects of the forthcoming Examination process. They are very supportive of what we are trying to do. The key point they took away from their site visit was the visual impact that will be caused by having a large amount of the scheme located on a hillside. Their view is that it is “almost impossible” to mitigate the impact of these schemes when elements are located on a hillside.
 4. We propose to hand-deliver a leaflet together with a copy of our summary note and plan to each household in the parish very shortly. The package will enable people to register by email and obtain a copy of the full submission we have made if they so wish so that they can get a better understanding of what we see as the failings of EPL’s consultation process.
 5. The update provides details of the next community meeting at which we will be able to provide much more information, answer questions about the next steps and importantly extend an invitation for those who are prepared to volunteer their services. The date on which the DCO application will be made is of course unknown but said by EPL to be “late March”.
 6. We are liaising with Mersham (and Smeeth and Brabourne) parish councils – each of which have also received a copy of our submission. So far, we have only met with Mersham at their Parish Council meeting. We were invited to give a short presentation and answered questions about the scheme. Mersham have since written to Ashford supporting the case we have made for a further consultation.
 7. We request that Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council do likewise and look forward to their support in this way whether this is done in advance of the March meeting or needs to be discussed and agreed at that meeting which we will attend. Clearly in the context of what we are trying to achieve for both communities it is important that Ashford is aware that the same support for a further consultation comes from both villages.
 8. We continue to develop a budget cost for engaging the expertise we will need once the DCO application is made - whether or not the submission we have made results in a requirement for a further statutory consultation phase. Having obtained the advice that we have from counsel we do not currently anticipate incurring further costs prior to the DCO submission. We would like to explore with the Parish Council its own budget provision in relation to

protecting the parish from a solar scheme that may, when the application is submitted, not accommodate the concerns the parish has raised in the responses it has made to the planning process.

9. We recognise that we are going to have to find ways in which we can raise funds ourselves and whilst we are, as indicated, seeking confirmation of support from the Parish Council (and indeed other parish councils) as part of an overall fundraising endeavour we know there is work that we will have to do on our own initiative.
10. As far as the EDF application is concerned, the Church Lane Group have now made their submission which has hopefully been uploaded onto the planning portal (the full version may be under Files not Comments). The application number is 22/00668/AS. It was noted that the parish council has submitted a further very brief comment making the point that none of the detailed concerns it had raised previously (as long ago as 2022) appear to have been addressed. Ashford have indicated that despite the various deadline dates given for comments they remain able to consider any that might be submitted at any stage prior to the planning committee meeting that will consider this application.

1396. Finance:

Schedule of payments:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
Staff costs		£2,480.50
Harmer & Sons	Grounds maintenance	£990.00
JRB Enterprise	Dog Waste Bags	£485.40
G Taylor	Reimbursement	£130.66
Aldington Village Hall	Room Hire	£135.00
C Wimble	Handyman expenses	£18.00
Easy Start lawnmowers	Service of mower	£278.00

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and authorise the payment of the items of expenditure.**
- 2. To authorise the transfer of £5,000.00 from deposit account to current account.**

1397. Planning Committee:

Three applications were considered, two for Hogben Farm one being listed building consent. No objection to the proposals subject to compliance with the dark skies policy.

The other application was for Knoll Hill House it was agreed that no comment would be submitted.

1398. Neighbourhood Plan:

The plan is currently at the examination stage and the examiners initial questions have been received. These questions will be responded to prior to his visit to the Parish.

1399. Highways:

The Parish Council met on 26th February as a public meeting to consider issues relating to highways for inclusion in the Highways Improvement Plan prior to its submission to Kent Highways for consideration. The principal area where a number of options are to be considered is on Roman Road from the junction of Forge Hill towards and beyond the school.

Before inclusion on the Highways Improvement Plan consultation has to be held with residents and evidence submitted with the plan as the works entailed in the proposals will require a traffic regulation order which will not be granted if there are a number of objections.

It was agreed that an online consultation would take place, in addition all of the properties in the affected area would be delivered a paper questionnaire to complete and return. This will be drawn up and submitted to the next Parish Council meeting for approval.

1400. Annual Parish Meetings:

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meetings would be held as follows:

Aldington – Monday 29th April 2024 in the Village Hall

Bonnington – Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at Goddard Farm, Bonnington.

1401. Events Committee:

The events committee are teaming up with the WI and the Fire Station to organise Easter events. There will be a litter pick in conjunction with the Great British Clean up on 16th March.

The Village Fete will take place on 10th August 2024.

1402. Quarry Wood:

A survey of the wood has been booked with consultants to ascertain which trees need to be removed to enhance biodiversity before obtaining a quote for the tree work.

1403. Quarry Field and Pond:

It is intended that the planting of plug wild flowers will take place at the end of March. A date has yet to be set for the start of the removal of the Parrot Weed from the pond.

1404. Aldington Meadows:

The Contractor is to be contacted for an update on the clearance of the old tennis court and a timeline for the seeding.

1405. Any items for information:

Following discussion in the finance section regarding the cost of dog waste bags it was requested that consideration be given to requiring dogs to be on leads on the green. This to be brought forward on the next agenda.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:25pm.

REPORT TO ALDINGTON & BONNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MARCH 2024.

Neighbourhood Watch membership continues to grow, and it is about working a jigsaw puzzle. Every new member is a piece of the overall picture to help keep residents safe and secure. The more we are the stronger we are.

When I can I attend the coffee mornings and that has allowed each month new NHW members to be recruited. Importantly I can sit and discuss informally any residents concerns and offer first hand any advice on crime trends. I have been made to feel very welcome, residents are keen and very supportive.

Naturally "SCAMS" feature highly in those discussions as we know they are a 365x24x7 operation. We need to be vigilant and aware for 365 days, criminals need to be just lucky on 1 day.

My advice to the community is do nothing in a hurry or rush. To check, check and then check again and if any doubt still exists then **DO ABSOLUTLEY NOTHING!**

Preventing fraud

Together, let's
stop scammers



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm

Get the latest scam
advice @KentPoliceCyber



We must remember that 'scams' can come from 3, 30, 300 or 3000 miles away. They can come on any device and phone, by letter or even face to face on your doorstep.

They can route phone calls in via a 01233 number to catch people out.

There have been reports in other rural areas of ROGUE TRADERS /BOGUS CALLERS calling looking to tout for and carry out unsolicited work.

NEVER EVER AGREE to unsolicited work on your doorstep no matter how attractive the price. Patio cleaning, driveway maintenance, gutter cleaning, roof repairs, fence repairs are just some of the jobs that are touted for.

A £50 job is suddenly £500 and on a roof job suddenly £5000. These persons become pushy, aggressive and on occasions violent.

If in doubt do not even open your front door. If anyone calls and fails to withdraw when asked, close the door, and call 999 immediately, even if they then leave.

Please remember, these criminals will look for the vulnerable in our communities especially those who live alone. The need to report these matters is essential as you may be strong but further down the road, they locate a helpless vulnerable person.

Those people are so embarrassed they have been a victim that they fail to tell friends, relatives, or the police so we are completely unaware and therefore unable to issue alerts and warnings.

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

Rogue Traders

We have seen an increase in reports of this type of criminality recently.

Opposite is our leaflet on how you can protect yourself against these types of scams.

If you think that you may have been a victim of this type of scam, then contact your Bank immediately, which you can do by calling 159 and report it to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.



Protect yourself and others against rogue traders

Most people who call at your home are genuine. But sometimes people may turn up unannounced and try to sell you services or items you do not want or need or carry out unnecessary repairs to your home at inflated prices.

If you're concerned about someone calling at your home, **don't open your door.**

You can:

- Ask for identification and call their company yourself (not on a number they provide) to check they are genuine
- Ask the visitor to return another time when someone can be with you
- Get three written quotes
- Ask family and friends for recommendations
- Agree payment arrangements and start and finish dates in writing beforehand, and never pay in full until you're completely satisfied with the work.

Preventing fraud

Together, let's stop scammers.

Remember, ABC:

- Never** Assume
- Believe**
- Confirm**

Get the latest scam advice: @KentPoliceECU

Pressurised selling on your doorstep is a crime and you can report it:

- kent.gov.uk/tradingstandards or call 0808 223 1133
- For advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/
- Follow @kent_ECU or email kfas@ecis.police.uk



Contacting Kent Police
 Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report
 Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact
 In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**
 If deaf or speech impaired, text 'police' and your message to **60066**
www.kent.police.uk



**Kent
Police**

Contacting Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report
 Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact
 In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**
 If deaf or speech impaired, text 'police' and your message to **60066**
www.kent.police.uk

Beware of suspicious callers

Most people who call at your home are genuine.

But sometimes people may turn up unannounced and try to:

- Trick their way into your home to steal valuables or money
- Sell you services or items you do not want or need
- Carry out unnecessary repairs to your home at inflated prices.



If concerned about someone calling at your home, **don't open your door.**

You can also:

- Ask for identification and call their company yourself (not on a number they provide) to check they are genuine
- Never leave your door unattended
- Ask the visitor to return another time when someone can be with you.



Contacting Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report
Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact
In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**
If deaf or speech impaired, text '**police**' and your message to **60066**
www.kent.police.uk   

Recently there has been intelligence that these rogue traders have had children/youths with them, and they request the child uses the toilet. It is when the occupier is distracted that items like purses, wallets, handbags, and phones are often snatched away. DO NOT ENGAGE WITH THESE PEOPLE. DO NOT EVEN OPEN YOUR DOOR.



I have supported the Ashford Police Task Force which has been deployed in recent weeks on the problem of theft of motorbikes and off-road bikes of the type that caused criminal damage to your recreation field and football pitches.

I trust the police are keeping you briefed on progress on that crime. Sadly, they give me no feedback at all.

It is essential that the community reports every single occasion of Anti-Social behaviour and Criminal Damage.



Whilst my focus in this report has covered several important parts of my work as always, the need to stay secure, alert, and vigilant in the following areas cannot be overstated.

Vehicles both cars and vans carrying tools.

Sheds, garages, barns, stables, and any form of outside storage

Domestic Heating Oil Tank thefts.

Internet shopping parcels, thefts from doorsteps (vans now followed)



Regards.

Peter

Peter New peternew1@aol.com

91725 Peter New Kent Police Volunteer & Community neighbourhood Watch.