

Minutes of the Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th April 2024 in Aldington Village Hall at 7:30pm.

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

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk.

Also present: 4 residents, P New (Neighbourhood Watch) + representative from Welsh Power.

1406. Apologies for absence:

There were no apologies for absence.

1407. Declarations of interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

1408. Sellindge Synchronous Condenser Project:

Welsh Power gave an update on the project, all of the signage is now in place and subject to regular inspection. The main contractors have been briefed about deliveries and the requirement to keep the road clear at all times, CCTV is being set up to monitor. Site fencing has been delivered ready for work to commence on 30th April with establishing the site completed by the end of May.

1409. Public Participation:

A resident asked if double yellow lines could be installed opposite the village shop to prevent parking on both sides of the road impeding traffic and blocking the buses.

1410. Neighbourhood Watch:

Report attached.

1411. Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:

As mentioned at last month's Parish Council meeting the new waste collection contract with Suez commenced at the beginning of April. For the most part, collections have been successful, but, there have obviously been some issues. This is to be expected when introducing major change. Both residents and contractor have had to get used to new routes, new collection times, new technology and new management systems. Where staff ran out of time to complete a route, they returned the next day. The online Collection Day tool has caused some confusion due to the new technology including a real time reporting tool that synchronises with the ABC app and automatically changing the collection day to the next day where routes were incomplete. This initially led people to think that different types of waste collection would be going to be on different days, which is not the case. The usual collection remains the same, however the missed collection may show as the next day when crews intend to return to complete a route. We are now into Week 3. Next week the contractor and council Environment Team will review how the collections and routes are working and there may be revisions. My own road, for example has been collected a day late both weeks, which may suggest that the route is too long to be achieved in a day. Please be patient. The new system required 150,000 bin collections to be planned and coordinated and the majority of collections have gone

smoothly. I am more than willing to help where individuals or roads are having problems.

On the 13th March I was delighted to be invited to attend the official filling of Bug Ben which is a giant bug hotel, inspired by Big Ben and designed by Joseph, a pupil at Aldington Primary School. Joseph's Bug Ben was a winning submission to the McArthur Glen Bug Hotel Competition, the prize for which was to have your design made by the Singleton Environment Centre Repair team and installed at the Designer Outlet. Congratulations to both Joseph and Aldington Primary School!

Last month I also mentioned the extraordinary meeting to consider a proposal to support Ashford Picturehouse in Elwick Place. I am delighted to report that this Motion went through. ABC are now working with the appointed specialist consultancy to relaunch the venue as an independent cinema. I hope that the website will be available very soon. We need to double the footfall to ensure the continued success of this cinema. I went to see a film the week before Easter and had a very pleasant evening. I hope that you will all support it too.

1412. Minutes:

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th March 2024 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

1413. Chairman's Report:

We participated in the Great British Spring Clean on Saturday 16th March. Though it was sparsely supported, we still collected a fair mountain of black sacks of rubbish. Thank you to Jess and Ginny for your support, and to the residents that joined in too. Following the official litter pick, I walked along part of Giggers Green Road and collected a further couple of bags. It's appalling how much litter is discarded so this activity is very worthwhile in keeping our village and lanes clean and tidy.

This month, we will be planting the wild flower meadow with Led by the Wild on Friday 19th April. I very much hope that those of you that are able to join us will do so. Jess has been in contact with Aldington Primary School and we hope that some children will be able to join in with the planting. Fridays are Led by the Wild's regular Volunteer Day so they will have hands to help – but the more we have the quicker we will get this job done. The planting will also start to make the project clearer to residents. Some have been mystified by the roped off area, I know. As the grass and the wild flowers grow and the mown path becomes the clear walking route, it will become more obvious.

In other news, I have received complaints about the tennis court lights being on overnight. I have been in contact with the Tennis Club and there appears to be an issue that needs addressing as the automatic system is failing on occasion. I am assured that, for the time being, a manual system has been put in place.

In closing just a reminder that the Annual Parish Meetings would be held as follows:

Aldington – Monday 29th April 2024 in the Village Hall where we will offer refreshments. We hope all clubs and societies will join us to give residents an update on their activities as well as ourselves.

Bonnington – Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at Goddard Farm, Bonnington. Thank you to Lita for offering to host this event.

1414. Solar:

Evolution Power have indicated that they anticipate applying for the Development Consent Order at the end of April, with a community liaison panel meeting to follow in May.

The Aldington and Mersham Support group recently held a community meeting which was well attended, they advise that they have established their own website www.amsg.org.uk

Councillor Harman advised that the Borough Council will be determining two other solar applications this month one of which is in Aldington.

1415. Finance:

Schedule of payments made prior to the meeting:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
3 Flow drainage solutions	Village hall drains	£8,160.00
Alison Eardley	Neighbourhood Plan	£4,482.00
Alison Eardley	Solar Farm	£540.00
KCC	Traffic survey	£1,360.00

Payments authorised at the meeting:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
Handyman expenses	Path to Quarry wood	£319.88
CPRE	Subscription	£60.00
Harmer & Sons	Grounds maintenance	£990.00
Donation of benches		£550.00
Payment from Fordred monies		£100.00
Aldington Village Hall	Room hire	£262.50
Groundwork UK	Return unspent NDP grant	£421.00
Staff costs		£2,491.19
3 Flow drainage solutions	Village hall drains	£6,504.00

Resolved:

1. To authorise the transfer of £9,000 from deposit account to current account to cover the payments made prior to the meeting.
2. To authorise the transfer of £11,000 from deposit account to current account
3. To receive and authorise the payment of the items in the schedules of payment,

1416. Planning Committee:

There were no planning applications for consideration this month.

1417. Ashford Local Plan 2041 – Call for Sites:

Ashford Borough Council has commenced the process for the next iteration of the Local Plan to 2041, the first stage being the call for sites whereby landowners can submit land for consideration for building homes, jobs as well as community infrastructure and visitor and tourism facilities. The call for sites was open between September and December 2023, all of the sites put forward have been listed on the Borough Council website.

The next stage in the process is for an assessment via a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), this is a technical assessment that is prepared by Ashford Borough Council and forms an important part of the evidence base supporting a new Ashford Local Plan 2041. It provides a clear and up-to-date picture of land availability across the borough, and assess each site's suitability, availability, and achievability for their proposed land uses.

The HELAA does not:

- Represent policy
- Determine whether a site should be allocated for future development
- Determine whether planning permission should be granted.

When the site assessment has been completed, the Borough Council will work and consult with local communities to consider how sites which have passed through the HELAA process, fit with the preferred spatial strategy to accommodate future planned growth in the borough to 2041. The preferred spatial strategy will form part of a draft Local Plan which will be the subject of a future public consultation.

The sites that have been listed for Aldington are:

- Land to the north side of Bourne Road – Housing 35 dwellings
- Land on the west side of Calleywell Lane – Housing 30 dwellings
- Land opposite Goldwell Farm, Goldwell Lane – Housing
- Land on the east side of Goldwell Lane – Housing 26 dwellings
- Land to the north side of Roman Road – Housing 55 dwellings
- Land lying to the north east of Ragstone Hollow – Biodiversity net gain
- Land at Forge Hill – Housing 20 – 25 dwellings, Employment, Leisure & Tourism, Green Infrastructure.

There have been no sites submitted within Bonnington.

1418. Neighbourhood Plan:

The plan is currently with the examiner whose comments are awaited.

1419. Public Space Protection Order:

Report ABPC/23/011 has been compiled as a result of the request at the March meeting of the Parish Council to consider a dogs on leads order for Reynolds Playing Field and Quarry Field.

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report ABPC/23/011**

2. **To raise the issue at the Annual Parish Meeting and consider the outcome at a future meeting of the Parish Council.**
3. **To enhance the current level of signage regarding clearance of fouling.**

1420. Highways:

Prior to the Highways Improvement Plan being submitted to Kent Highways the Parish Council has to undertake a local consultation to confirm residents are prepared to accept the proposal. It should be made clear that the consultation does not commit the council to undertake any of the works as objections would be considered by Highways as the required traffic regulation order could be refused.

A draft consultation document was circulated, however it was felt that further explanation was required as to what was being asked. It is intended to launch the consultation at the Annual Parish Meeting.

1421. Events Committee:

The next event is the Village Fete in August.

1422. Quarry Wood:

The results of the woodland survey are awaited, this will be followed up.

1423. Quarry Field and Pond:

Covered within the Chair's report.

1424. Aldington Meadows:

Little progress has been made on the old tennis court as the area is waterlogged preventing machinery being brought in.

1425. War Memorial:

The Parish Council has received a suggestion that a framework is installed at the memorial in order that wreaths can be attached more securely as at the present time they come loose. It has been suggested stainless steel but no costs or design have been submitted.

It was questioned about wreaths being left in situ for long periods of time. The Clerk was asked to research any protocols on the subject and to report back to Council in due course.

1426. Any items for information:

Cllr Hannabuss raised the issue of the area of land between Wheatfields and Quarry Wood as there is evidence of fly tipping. The Parish Clerk was asked to research what is happening in particular with the strip of land between.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:20pm.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ALDINGTON & BONNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL APRIL 2024

An area of growing concern is dog attacks on livestock in the countryside. Please take great care when enjoying a country stroll with your dog. Please keep your dog on a lead near animals and cattle. Remember it is not just the avoidable suffering and injury caused to innocent animals, but also the loss of livelihood of a farmer.

This advice is especially important if persons live in an urban area and visit the countryside with their dogs.

Protecting livestock – know the law

'Worrying' livestock is a crime under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953.

If you are on agricultural land and a dog you own or are in charge of **attacks** or **chases** livestock in a way that may cause **injury, suffering** or **loss**, you could be **prosecuted, fined** and **ordered to pay compensation**.

Under the Animals Act 1971, a person acting to **protect livestock** may be able to **kill** or **injure a dog**, without incurring any criminal or civil liability, if he or she believes it is worrying livestock.



Please keep your dog on a lead.

If you see a dog worrying livestock, please call the police on **999**.



Protecting and serving
the people of Kent

Speak up to stop rural crime.

Criminal gangs exploit our local wildlife, environment and communities.

Your voice can make a difference.

Speak up to our charity. 100% anonymous. Always.

crimestoppers-uk.org




CrimeStoppers.
0800 555111
100% anonymous. Always.

LAMBING SEASON

PLEASE WALK YOUR DOG RESPONSIBLY



Keep to footpaths

Keep dogs on leads

Just another crime prevention tip.

If you drive to a rural setting and park and go off for a long walk. Please consider what you leave in a vehicle, even if it is locked in the boot. Cars that will be left parked and unattended for long periods can be targeted.

Travelling to railway station car parks and shopping centres in other towns also require care when parking with items left inside cars.





Police are asking people to take valuables out of their cars

LEAVE NOTHING ON SHOW IN A PARKED CAR ESPECIALLY LAST PARK UP FOR THE NIGHT.

OPERATION GUARDIAN ANGEL

To help protect vulnerable persons I can badge up their properties to try to discourage unwanted callers to their doors.

If anyone has an elderly relative in Ashford District who may need this help, please contact me. I can include your contact details into my NHW systems so you can be alerted also to any crime concerns in their area.

Sometimes advice over a cup of tea with a relative may help to get the safety message across.

I call this work **OPERATION GUARDIAN ANGEL**





KENT
NEIGHBOURHOOD
WATCH

KENT
POLICE



NO CANVASSERS OR CALLERS

We do not buy or sell to callers at the door.

We do not require services of any kind.

CALLERS ARE ONLY SEEN BY APPOINTMENT

WE WILL ALWAYS ASK FOR IDENTIFICATION!

Many of the crimes that occur in the community are **AVOIDABLE and PREVENTABLE**

Examples of those thefts are from

Vehicles, you must leave nothing on show in a vehicle when parking especially last park up for the night. Care when parking in long stay car parks like railway stations and shopping centres and any items left in cars.

Sheds and Garages please keep as secure as possible, and risk assess the value of items left in sheds with a flimsy door latch.

Carports Sadly the modern carport is a criminal's paradise, great care must be taken with what is stored there.

Internet shopping parcels stolen off of doorsteps as the delivery vans are now followed by criminals.

With a few moments thought crimes from the above list can be avoided.

CAR THIEVES ARE IN YOUR AREA



LEAVE IT LOCKED, LIT AND EMPTY.

WHY DID THE CAR THIEF CROSS YOUR ROAD?



PROTECT YOUR CAR, LEAVE IT:

- 1. LOCKED**
LOCK YOUR CAR WHEN YOU LEAVE IT
- 2. LIT**
PARK IN A WELL-LIT AREA
- 3. EMPTY**
HIDE ANY ITEMS ON SHOW

SHARE THESE 3 STEPS WITH 3 FRIENDS

BECAUSE THERE WAS AN IPAD ON THE SEAT



CRIME

Parcel thefts rise from doorsteps as gangs follow courier vans



Protect your property

Given the opportunity, thieves will target **sheds and garages** for items such as high-value power tools and bikes.

Take measures to protect your valuables and reduce this risk of theft.



- Keep garages or sheds locked when not in use
- Consider fitting security alarms and external lights where possible
- Security mark valuable items and keep receipts somewhere safe
- Lock away tools or equipment that could be stolen or used to break in to your property
- Dispose of packaging carefully – wrapping and boxes can advertise rich pickings for criminals

Allotment Watch area

This allotment is part of the **Kent Allotment Watch** scheme

This area is regularly patrolled by police



Members have taken extra security measures to keep their sheds safe

Report it
Online www.kent.police.uk/report
Talk to us on LiveChat www.kent.police.uk/contact



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   



I have decided to bring this part of the report to council tonight in view of the reports in the media following the first part of the inquiry into the terrible circumstances of Sarah Everard's kidnap and brutal murder.

I would also comment on the brutal murder in 2021 of a serving off duty PCSO Julia James of the Kent Police.

These are terrible events to read about anywhere, worst still just a few minutes' drive from these meetings.

In 2022 I wrote to Kent Police and attended several online presentations about a police campaign

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS.

Straight away I felt their plan was flawed in that its first principle of the plan was,

HOLD OFFENDERS TO ACCOUNT

I challenged and asked for a rewrite of the plan which put **PREVENTION** as the first principle and platform. Sadly, that request was refused but I have persisted and continue to push for a review. The circumstances over recent days and the reports now being published are a mandate to continue the battle.

A fundamental basic principle of Neighbourhood Watch is to keep people crime free **BUT IMPORTANTLY** free from the fear of being a victim of crime also.

**The question naturally asked is IN ASHFORD ARE WOMEN & GIRLS SAFE ?
however it should be IN ASHFORD HOW SAFE DO WOMEN & GIRLS FEEL ?**

It is no comfort if all agencies, councils and the police state they are safe it is do they feel safe?

I have set out below Kent Police Plan for VAWAGs and my response and the plan I am promoting, also the requested change.



Tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The term VAWG covers a range of crimes, the common theme is that they disproportionately affect women and girls. Although we use the term 'violence against women and girls', our approach refers to all victims of any of these offences.

Crimes and behaviour covered by the term Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) include:

- rape and other sexual offences
- domestic abuse
- stalking
- 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and 'honour' killings)
- as well as many others, including offences committed online

We are committed to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls and have a strong approach to actively pursue violent perpetrators. We want women and girls who live, work and socialise in our communities to feel safe. To achieve this we will be focussing five key areas:

1. [holding offenders to account](#)
2. [support victims](#)
3. [keeping you safe](#)
4. [our culture](#)
5. [strengthening the system](#)

I have consistently proposed the following. My plan will be.....

- 1. PREVENTION**
- 2. KEEPING YOU SAFE**
- 3. SUPPORT VICTIMS**
- 4. OUR CULTURE**
- 5. HOLD OFFENDERS TO ACCOUNT (constant debrief to direct our prevention)**
- 6. STRENGTHEN OUR SYSTEMS. (constant review).**

Rather than labour the point I pose to council the following statement. You will recall I was Assistant Chief Officer Kent Fire Brigade, Head of Operations and Safety for all of Kent when I retired.

Does anyone think my plan for fire would have started with and have said.

“If your house is on fire, we will put it out”.

No absolutely not!, it would be PREVENTION, PREVENTION and then MORE PREVENTION FROM LESSONS LEARNT AND INCIDENT DEBRIEFS

At the same time as tackling the Kent Police for a rewrite of the plan I also look to councils

In my public engagement work women constantly tell me that darkness and poor street lighting concerns them and, in many circumstances, worries them deeply.

Why in Ashford are we continually allowing new build developments with poor or even no street lighting at all? I understand the dark sky discussions however there are more than enough methods to satisfy all viewpoints.

However, where it suits, we have lighting that can be seen from the orbiting space station with lights protecting lorries at junction 10A of the M20.

An aggravating factor also is a policy of “no garage doors only carports on many new build estates. Some carports are not even alongside a property. Criminals can stroll in at their leisure. Incidents of rough sleepers also. All matters that concern women.

Horrible alleyways and dark corners are all concerns to women.

I am regularly told “they have decided”. Or “it’s been decided”

Where does the blame lie. Importantly who are they?

We have, and we had the chance to try to build safer communities.

It is no good telling Women and Girls they are safe. It is no good having big words and statements like Safer Streets campaign.

The question remains DO WOMEN FEEL SAFE ON OUR STREETS IN 2024.? And can we all work towards making them feel safer.

In all my work and presentations, I stress to women how they can verify that they are dealing with a Police Officer



VAWAGs work across the District

COMMUNITY HELP

The community can assist greatly with crime prevention and community safety by two ways.

1. **Reporting** all incidents of Crime, Attempted crime, and Anti Social Behaviour
2. **Joining Neighbourhood Watch** (it's completely free.) to help communities you just read and stay safe and secure. Aldington & Bonnington NHW continues to grow steadily



“Crime cannot flourish in Communities that care.”

The community café on Wednesday continues to provide fantastic community support and allows either group or personal discussions on any area of concern. Never ever forget council we cannot ever quantify what we have prevented.

To join NHW email me at peternew1@aol.com or ring 07768437422 if not on line.

Thank you for your support.

Peter

Peter New (Kent Police Volunteer & Community Neighbourhood Watch)



Thank you,

Peter New (peternew1@aol.com)

Kent Police Volunteer & Community Neighbourhood Watch.