

# BAPCHILD PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Zoom Meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

A meeting of Bapchild Parish Council was held via Zoom on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30 p.m.

**1. Present:** Cllr Liz Trott (Chairman) Cllr Richard Bush (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Carol Culver, Cllr Matthew Juliens, Cllr Mary Pape, Cllr Michael Palmer.  
Mrs Liz Cruise (Clerk)

**2. Apologies:** Received from Cllr Mik Larking.

**In attendance:** Ward Cllr Monique Bonney and Kent County Cllr Andrew Bowles

**Public Participation:** Two residents were welcomed to the meeting.

We also welcomed Charlotte Whitney-Brown, Conservative Party Candidate for Swale East Division on KCC and Richard Lehmann, Green Party Candidate for Swale East Division.

**3. Approving the Minutes:** The Minutes of the previous virtual meeting held Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 were approved unanimously by all members and will be signed by the Chairman.

### **4. Matters arising from previous Minutes:**

**4.1 and 4.1.2 Stones Farm 18/505151 – Future maintenance and wardenship management of Countryside Gap and Attenuation pond issues with Tonge stream/pond area** – Points 4.1 and 4.1.2 were discussed together as they involve the same area within Stones Farm. A site meeting had been held 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021 with Cllr Bush, Cllr Culver, Ward Cllr Bonney, SBC Open Spaces Team, the owners of Tonge Mill, and officers to discuss the handover and maintenance of the landscape buffer and the countryside gap, plus the issues involving the attenuation pond. Cllr Bonney has requested an Audit review be carried out by SBC of the construction/design plus operation of the attenuation pond further to issues around the flow rate/volume of water and impact on the 1840's sluice gate (which belongs to the owners of Tonge Mill). There is also the potential impact/possible flooding on the houses opposite Tonge Mill. The Countryside Gap Wardenship plus the sustainable drainage system will be the responsibility of SBC upon completion of the construction of the 200<sup>th</sup> dwelling.

We have also noted a mismatch in the contract documents and this has been pointed out to SBC Planning whereby the planting of the Countryside Gap and the landscape buffer should be provided by the 200<sup>th</sup> dwelling, but the drawings signed by the developer and Swale Planning say that the landscape barrier should be provided when the 100<sup>th</sup> dwelling has been completed which would bring it into the phase 1a which has commenced construction (phase 1a we understand is between 140-150 homes).

Cllr Bonney confirmed the Open Spaces Team are currently working on a specification for a consultant to independently assess the size of the attenuation pond. Cllr Bonney is awaiting clarification on the query raised in the planning documentation, plus confirmation on when the planting/landscape barrier will be provided. Members commented on the importance of this vegetation being planted soon as once established will assist with the soaking up of water.

**4.1.3 Vehicle traffic impact on the A2 – Bus Service/Detector Loops Swanstree/Traffic lights entrance to Stones Farm** – Photographs have been taken on the North side of the A2 which show when waiting in the bus shelter, the view of the shelter (when a bus driver is travelling from Sittingbourne towards Bapchild) is being obscured by the Stones Farm site fencing. This is not a 'request stop' and some residents have reported incidents whereby buses have continued straight

through the village. We have been in contact with Mike Knowles (SBC) who is going to take this issue up with KCC Highways to see if the hoarding line can be altered to give both passengers and drivers a view of the bus stop.

Cllr Culver also reported traffic visibility issues for pedestrians when crossing the A2 from the Fruit Stall using the islands which could be partly due to the positioning of the site hoarding. Cllr Bush suggested photographic evidence be provided which could be incorporated into the reporting of the bus issues. Cllr Culver to take photographs.

Cllr Bush also reported site visibility issues when driving at dusk from Sittingbourne towards the new road layout as you are drawn towards the new parking area at Fox Hill, and it could possibly need a chevron to indicate the bend in the road/change in road layout. The Clerk reported a resident has also reported this as an issue. Also reported was an issue with delivery drivers parking and blocking the residents parking bays (Fox Hill) and driving over the new grassed area. Jamie Hare (KCC Highways) has confirmed with Cllr Bush that the contractor will be installing bollards – installation date unknown.

We have also raised concerns again about the installation date for the traffic detector loops being provided at Swanstree Avenue as this needs to be completed prior to occupation of the first dwelling at Stones Farm. This is a condition of the planning approval and we are already experiencing traffic build up along the A2 and through the village. At 8.30 am the line of traffic includes the whole length of Bapchild as far as the Cricket Ground. This will impact on air quality, particularly those residents living in the narrowest part of the village (The Street). We also received a report the traffic lights at the Stones Farm new junction went live today.

A resident has also enquired about the parking of vehicles during construction of Stones Farm – that planning condition has been discharged. Cllr Bush confirmed Paul Gregory (SBC Planning Officer) has sent through a drawing of where the site parking should be and as a further condition of planning on such a large site all parking should be on site so as not to impact on the roads around the village. We have advised residents of Fox Hill of where to report any issues they might have. The newly displayed signs confirm Chartway will be building the first phase.

A discussion was held around the provision of the new bus shelter on the South side of the A2 (next to the Fruit Stall). The existing one is on private land leased to Bapchild Parish Council but Chartway will not provide a replacement due to it not being a planning condition. The layout drawing for the new layby/bus stop area shows a new shelter being provided. This is ongoing and Cllr Bonney has enquired about this further with Mike Knowles (SBC). Cllr Bush enquired whether some of the commuted sums within the S106 Agreement could possibly be used for this.

**4.1.4 Fox Hill Landscaping cul-de-sac area, parking spaces, bus stop, lighting column and light barrier test (resident issues)** – Cllr Bush explained the Parish Council wish to have the landscaping uniformly maintained both sides of the A2 and raised the query what planting is going to be put there and can it be maintained properly? Cllr Bonney confirmed the landscaping level is still being discussed. Members enquired whether Cllr Bowles could request an increase in the landscaping maintenance, but Cllr Bowles responded as there is a County-wide regime getting an exception for one small part cannot be guaranteed. Cllr Bowles commented this should have been picked up when the original planning application went in.

Due to a connectivity issue reported by Cllr Liz Trott (Chair) and a Fox Hill resident, Cllr Richard Bush (Vice-Chairman) presided as Chair for this section of the meeting, and everyone gave permission for matters concerning the lighting column plus light barrier issues to be recorded. The issues with connectivity quickly resolved, enabling matters to be discussed directly and recording was therefore discontinued.

We received a specific request from a Fox Hill resident about the light barrier test (part of a previous discussion between Cllr Bonney and Cllr Valentine). The light barrier test was to check if lights leaving Stones Farm junction would shine directly into the Fox Hill properties opposite plus concerns over a lighting column being sited in the wrong position directly outside her property. The resident concerned has requested a site visit from KCC Highways, UKPN, Contractor, which has not taken place.

Cllr Bowles read out a letter he had received from Jamie Hare KCC Highways, on the subject of a further site meeting - quote "I really don't see the benefit in attending a site meeting – UKPN have confirmed twice it cannot be relocated - if relocated a complete re-design of all the lighting in this area will be required to ensure a uniform spread." Despite Cllr Bowles requesting a meeting this has been refused by KCC Highways plus UKPN have said moving the column is impossible because of underground facilities.

Cllr Palmer, who is an Electrical Engineer confirmed he visited the site of the column on behalf of Bapchild Parish Council and noted there is an underground junction/joint box which would prevent the column being sited where it is supposed to go but said it could probably be moved by extending the cable, but suggested the best thing would be for a site meeting to be carried out with UKPN, the Contractor and KCC who could at least explain things directly to the resident concerned. Cllr Culver raised the question if the lighting column couldn't be sited in the position on the drawing, have all the other columns been distanced correctly and which column went in first, i.e. was this the last column to be installed? Cllr Palmer also enquired whether a survey was done as surely that would have shown the junction box.

Cllr Bush requested on behalf of the resident Cllr Bowles and Cllr Bonney to encourage officers to have a site meeting. Cllr Bowles confirmed he did not have the power to make a meeting happen unfortunately.

The resident informed everyone she has a detailed timeline of events concerning the installation of the lighting column, together with photographic evidence. She has also spoken with UKPN, Chartway Site Foreman plus has exchanged emails with Jamie Hare which initially seemed to agree with her about moving the column, but subsequently he changed his opinion on the matter. The resident had also been assured a "light barrier test" would be carried out with residents being present last Autumn, but this has not happened to date. The fencing is an issue for her as the lights from the estate will shine over the fence and during the evening, she has issues with the red and green lights from the Pelican crossing shining into her property now they are live. Cllr Bush reiterated the importance of the site meeting. The resident also reported an issue with the position of the lights which are currently at an angle. The possibility of the provision of shading/filters on the traffic lights and pelican crossing was also suggested. Cllr Bowles will forward our comments on this matter to KCC.

Cllr Bush suggested to Cllr Bonney if a request could be made for attendance at the site meeting from Hyde Housing (who own the site) to discuss with residents the issues raised. Cllr Bonney explained that the barrier fence divides the Fox Hill parking area, and it was provided to cut down some of the traffic noise, but that it was also installed to prevent headlights (when parking on Fox Hill side) shining across the A2. Cllr Bonney confirmed she had previously raised the height of the fence and was told categorically it was for vehicle lights when coming out of the junction, not for residents houses in Fox Hill as it would have necessitated a significantly higher barrier to stop the lights shining across when leaving Stones Farm.

Cllr Bowles confirmed all his conversations to date have been with KCC/UKPN and not with Hyde Housing or Chartway the Contractor. Cllr Bowles was happy to go into Officers and copy to the Cabinet Member tomorrow and to come back to the Parish Council Clerk with an update. It was also reported

the issue with the traffic lights not being co-ordinated with Swanstree Avenue traffic lights. Cllr Bonney confirmed she is happy to attend a site meeting.

It was confirmed the only access road designated for site use is the one which runs from the Fox and Goose back up, but the main entrance is currently being used by construction vehicles and workers from the construction site. A resident also confirmed they opened the main entrance road to take the tarmac lorries across the road and that was when the traffic lights were switched on. Cllr Bush confirmed under the Conditions of the Planning Approval this main access road was not to be used until the first house is developed. It was suggested more communication between the developer and residents would be helpful for everyone to understand what is happening. Cllr Bush will send out information he received from Paul Gregory, SBC Planning Officer, the phase 1 plan.

The Parish Council recently received a list to confirm the Chartway Street Naming which has been based on previous names put forward. All members agreed the approved names unanimously with a query over the spelling of "Pippen" which should be "Pippin" – Clerk to report back confirmation of approval, with query over spelling.

**4.2 Amenity areas – update pruning, and new trees planted.** New trees have recently been planted on the amenity areas. A bit of pruning has been undertaken between Doubleday and Morris Court Close. Cllr Culver confirmed when the pruning took place one bed has been taken down to ground level – now it is in a mess, edging stone left in, nettles growing up and will possibly need replanting. The other part along the fence line of the school hasn't been touched. Cllr Culver will take some photographs to be emailed to Graham Tuff with a site report request to ask what the intentions are as this appears to have been left unfinished.

## **5. Highway Matters**

**5.1 KALC SAC** Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated feedback from a recent zoom meeting attended by Cllr Pape and the Clerk. There was a useful presentation about the Local Plan Review included from Jill Peet, SBC Planning Policy Manager and as a follow up, details of her slides will be emailed.

**5.2 Bapchild HIP** – Cllr Trott confirmed further to Bapchild HIP it was agreed that the signage would be put up along the main road. Sarah Ellcock, KCC Highways confirmed this was due to be completed at the end of the month and is awaiting a date for installation as this needs to be completed before the financial year end. This is the signage to keep HGV traffic on the main road rather than using a shortcut via Panteny Lane and School Lane KEEP CLEAR, plus Hempstead Lane/Panteny Lane signs to warn drivers of the staggered junctions. A further update from Sarah earlier today confirmed she has been in discussion with Tonge PC as well and has commissioned traffic surveys which won't happen until after Easter but will confirm or not the speeding issues in the survey. It will be interesting to see the data when it comes back. Traffic data will also give us "Real time" data on the impact of the second phase of Stones Farm, and also the developments with the revision to the local plan, plus the Quinn development therefore a useful document when we comment on those situations.

It was reported as you drive along the A2 from Sittingbourne and pass Lansdowne School there is still a 40mph sign, which did have red tape across it, but it has since been taken off. Cllr Trott confirmed as far as we are aware this will be changed to 30 mph as it was part of the changes implemented with Stones Farm, but it is unclear when this will happen. Cllr Trott suggested we enquire when the 30mph is going to be implemented.

**5.3 Lighting matters** –The Clerk reported the problem with the lighting column issue in Hempstead Lane has been resolved for the time being and the new LED lantern has been installed. Hempstead Lane is now complete and that means we have 19 conversions with one concrete column awaiting

installation in School Lane – on the amenity grassed area awaiting a date from Phil Papas KCC. The next column on the list to be replaced is sited at the top end of Wihtrud Road - a quotation needs to be requested from Phil Papas, KCC. That leaves a further 8 lantern conversions to complete the project.

**5.4 Flooding reported – bottom of Ashtead Drive update – blocked gullies update** – Cllr Bush reported back from Alex Brauning KCC Highways that the surveys have been carried out and a report is imminent (end of March/early April). This was in relation to the ongoing flooding issues at the bottom of Ashtead Drive recently being exacerbated by water cascading down from Church Street, Rodmersham. The report should indicate what KCC are proposing to do to catch the water and mitigate the flooding. Cllr Trott confirmed this work is listed on the KCC document Forward Works Programme. Cllr Bush confirmed the gullies were cleaned 10 days ago.

## **6.0 Planning Matters**

**6.1 Local Plan Section 19 Review response** – our draft response has been prepared and we have concentrated on the aspects specific to Bapchild – currently there are no developments which fall within Bapchild, but we looked at the cumulative effect, particularly traffic with other big developments. Cllr Trott enquired from Cllr Bonney if there is any value in us commenting on more general points within the local plan i.e. infrastructure, healthcare etc. and if they are of value when it is passed on for inspection. Cllr Bonney advised if we support them and agree with them then we should put a marker on them and could comment on them.

**6.2 Highsted Park EIA Scoping Report** – We submitted our comments on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Cllr Bush raised a question about questions which had arisen concerning the EIA Scoping document for Highsted Park, a huge proposal which sits outside of the current local plan and for which we predict a planning application to be deposited within the next couple of months and asked if Cllr Bonney had any guidance. Cllr Bonney explained the Local Plan Process and said it would depend on where we are in the local plan process at the point when it is submitted. This would therefore be judged against the existing Local plan and would fall outside of the emerging Local Plan Section 19 review and any major application would take longer than the usual 12-week period to get through the system.

**6.3 Wyvern Heritage Landscape Character Assessment update** – Cllr Trott confirmed Emma Rouse, Wyvern Heritage is going to do a character assessment detailing the character of the village covering the area up towards Rodmersham Church, the area around Bapchild Church, through to Bapchild Fruit Stall, Tonge stream and down to Tonge Mill, i.e. the natural arc which delineates us from Sittingbourne. Emma is currently doing a desk stop study and will undertake a detailed field study in a couple of weeks. She describes the document we will receive as one which will be able to be used to inform neighbourhood planning policies and objectively comment on environmental implications on developments i.e. evidence we can use in the future. We can confirm the Parishes of Tunstall, Bredgar, Rodmersham and Milstead are also committing to this too. We will have an individual report but a link of reports going through describing and presenting the area we live in too – the cost has been reduced by the other Parishes being involved.

**6.4 Fernfield Homes Ltd – 8 houses School Lane site** – There are two updates reported by Cllr Bush. We have reported a number of planning condition issues with this development to SBC Planning Department going back to June 2020. The developer has now issued a Section 73 Notice and is proposing a revised landscaping scheme which is about half the number of shrubs and trees which were in the original plans without saying why.

Cllr Bonney met with the developer last November together with the Planning Officer to enquire what was happening and why the landscaping hadn't been provided and was assured revised plans were

imminent. Seven of the properties are now occupied with none of the landscaping being supplied including the 10-metre landscape buffer between the Grade II Listed Morris Court Farmhouse which should have screened off the Farmhouse from the new properties. Also, the developer has sold some of the 10-metre buffer zone area as extra gardens with 3 of the properties.

Cllr Bonney asked Richard Bush and the Clerk to re-submit all the significant emails from when we first reported issues to Andrew Jeffers, copy to James Freeman, SBC Planning Department and there will be a Planning Meeting at SBC after Easter to determine these issues.

Cllr Trott enquired whether there is a mechanism whereby conditions attached to Planning are checked up on, but Cllr Bonney explained, there are too many applications therefore the Planning Department rely on breaches being reported via Enforcement.

## **7. Items raised under AOB at last meeting**

**7.1 Electrical vehicle charging** – Cllr Trott discussed with members there is now a Parish Charger project in discussion where there may be some funding for one or two electric vehicle charging points. We could perhaps consider this for the Village Hall Car Park. We will need to look into this further to find out how the funding is delivered and how the scheme works. A discussion was held around Stones Farm and the number of charging points being provided, but there are fewer points being provided due to the large number of affordable housing properties, but new policies could mean this would be applied to later phasing of Stones Farm.

**7.2 Additional tree planting School Lane** – Cllr Palmer suggested this to compliment the row of trees along the front of School Lane, but if any were planted, they should be smaller flowering varieties – research required into the cost and who would maintain once planted would need to be carried out. Also, when exiting from Ashted Drive careful thought would need to be given about the site line looking left onto School Lane. We would need to consult the residents because it is directly in front of them, and they currently look out over a field. At the other end of the amenity area – they have put a new tree Silver Birch Tree in. More research and consultation required – Cllr Palmer happy to take this item forward.

**7.3 Defibrillator** – We haven't taken this forward any further, more research required.

**8.0 Resident query re provision of gigabit capable broadband for existing residents (being installed for residents of Stones Farm.** Cllr Bush had received an email from a resident of Canterbury Road who noted the duct or cabling which has been run to provide very high-speed broadband at Stones Farm and wondered whether Canterbury Road and Fox Hill residents could have access to that service too? The Parish Council will take this idea forward with a discussion with Hyde Homes.

## **9.0 Accounts**

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had emailed out the bank reconciliation reports for February and March (balance to date). These were approved unanimously by all members together with the Clerk Salary due 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

	<b><u>Cheques/online payments already made:</u></b>	<b><u>Details</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
9.1.1	08/03/2021	SBC Grounds Maintenance Bapchild	2778.72
9.1.2	15/03/2021	EDF 1-28 February 2021	108.85
	<b><u>Cheques/online payments due:</u></b>		

9.1.3	By end of March	Streetlights,LED Lantern Hempstead Lane	390.00
9.1.4	26/03/2021	Clerk Salary March	388.53

## **10. Any Other Business**

This is for information only and no decisions can be made on matters raised.

Cllr Palmer had been involved in Star Count – organised by KALC . It was snowing, at the time and he went to the field opposite his house. Cllr Palmer was surprised at over 50 stars counted which puts us in the top 3% of the country for night-time vision – with the current lockdown we don't have light pollution from the school with the floodlights, but also highlights the benefits of the LED lighting not only from terms of cost reduction but cuts down on light pollution.

Cllr Palmer suggested we could add this commentary into any future schemes we are looking at – the area has the potential to be a low light-polluting area.

Cllr Pape thanked Cllr Bush for all the correspondence this week and enquired about clarification of the working hours for Stones Farm. We are not notified automatically if the hours are extended. Cllr Bush advised if on a Saturday pm after hours, residents could complain, and SBC would involve Enforcement. During the lockdown they could extend their hours as the rules were relaxed.

Cllr Trott thanked Cllr Culver for sending through more ideas on the Local Plan extension response. Cllr Trott did advise if anyone else had any comments to be incorporated a further draft would be emailed out.

### **11.0 Litter Pick – Spring Litter Pick 29<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – confirmed by Cllr M Larking.**

**12. Bapchild News** – Parish update has been put together for entry into the Bapchild News, Cllr Larking confirmed as being published in April.

**13. Date of Next Meeting:** - After 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 the Government wants a return to face-to-face meetings. If this is confirmed, the Annual Meeting and Annual Assembly of Parishioners will be brought forward to possibly 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and will be virtual meetings. The Clerk confirmed she had also brought forward the date of the Audit visit to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 in case virtual meetings cease.

N.b. Cllr Bonney explained there is a Court Case going through at the moment which will clarify whether we can continue Zoom meetings – Case Rule should clarify what the position is. If determined favourably Councils will be able to use Zoom/Skype for meetings. If we can continue with Zoom/virtual meetings, we will leave both meetings until our original date of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

If our meeting is after 6<sup>th</sup> May, Cllr Bowles confirmed this would be his last meeting. Cllr Trott thanked Cllr Bowles on behalf of members for attending all our meetings and answering our queries and issues raised.

Cllr Trott thanked everyone for attending and wished Good luck to the candidates in the forthcoming KCC elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10.00 p.m.

**Next Meeting Date: To Be Confirmed – May 2021.**

**Signed:**

**Chairman**

**Date:**