

Minutes of a meeting of Bilsington Parish Council held at Bilsington Village Hall on Wednesday 6th December 2023 at 7:00pm.

Present: Councillors; S Hudson (Chairman), M Bilham and L Lawson.

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

Also present: Cllr L Harman (ABC) and P New (Neighbourhood Watch)

1017. **Apologies for absence:**

Cllr R Thompson and Cllr D Robey (KCC).

1018. **Declarations of interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

1019. **Public participation:**

There were no public submissions.

1020. **Kent County Councillor's Report:**

I haven't got much to report, and the main issue at KCC remains the budget problem, which I think that we will contain, but which puts pressure on everything that we do.

One thing that you might be interested in is the Family Hub Project, and the note below explains this in more detail:

The next step towards delivering services for Kent children and families more effectively and sustainably has been taken by Kent County Council's (KCC) Cabinet.

Following two public consultations on where and how community services can be provided in the most integrated, accessible and cost-efficient way across Kent, Cabinet Members have set the course for a transformation that will ensure all families can get the support they need, where and when they need it.

The community services consultation looked at buildings across the county where families can currently access support, some of which are underused, in unsuitable locations and not fit for purpose when it comes to providing joined up support or meeting KCC's environmental ambitions for the future.

The consultation on Family Hub services looked at how children's centre services, youth services, health visiting and work alongside community-based midwifery care could be brought together, making them easier to access.

Throughout, the focus is on need to ensure the best use of funds, supported by strong data and a knowledge of Kent's residents.

Cabinet opted to co-locate 12 sites, making the most of existing spaces across the county in a move that has a successful precedent. There are schemes already in place - such as children's services within library settings - that combined make a holistic difference to communities.

The decision on Thursday (30 November) also seeks to exploit complementary digital technology advances and outreach work that will help to extend to children, young people and families who might not otherwise engage with services available to them.

In addition, the Family Hub model was approved for Kent by Cabinet. This will unite a range of professional partners from different organisations whose common goal is to give children the very best start in life, and their parents and carers improved confidence and skills, with the help of £11m worth of transformation funding from the Department for Education (DfE) over three years.

KCC was invited to apply for the programme, one that was not offered to all councils.

Sue Chandler, KCC Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, said: "We have listened to residents first and foremost and believe that the decision taken by Cabinet is an exciting next step towards putting these vital services where they can deliver the maximum impact, and offer the best value in what are extremely challenging circumstances for all local authorities.

"The Family Hub programme, and a DfE transformation grant of £11m to develop the offer and deliver it, has given us a fantastic opportunity to provide an improved continuum of support for babies and children in the first 1,001 days of their lives, as well as join up our services for 0- to 19-year-olds - or up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

"This decision means we can now implement our plans to work more closely with health partners to reduce inequalities, integrating our children's centre services, health visiting, community midwifery care and youth services, public health services under the Start for Life programme and placing support in communities where it is needed most by families across Kent, improving health and education outcomes for all. The needs of families and young people will be at the centre of how the Council will continue to develop the new Family Hub model."

KCC's Cabinet also considered the future provision of youth services in Kent, as existing contracts for the service are due to end at the end of March 2024.

A combination of services provided at Family Hubs for 0–19-year-olds (25 for SEND), as well as outreach community work, more information and advice online, will better enable young people to access support as and when they need it.

The council is currently facing significant budget challenges and, as part of the budget recovery plan, Securing Kent's Future, all services are having to undertake a sweeping review of future spend, in particular where contracts are coming to an end.

The decision taken by Cabinet to reconfigure and co-locate many services means that 43 buildings will close across Kent over the next two years. This will save £1.27m against the property revenue budget and reduce the authority's maintenance backlog by £5.85m.

However, Cabinet Members ruled out the proposed closure of two buildings, taking into account consultation responses and the fact that the journey on public transport to the nearest alternatives was more than the recommended 35 minutes.

KCC Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, Peter Oakford, said: "It's important for people in Kent to realise that it's not all about a building; it's about the support and services that are delivered to families in the right place and at the right time.

"It is no secret that KCC is facing very significant financial pressures and we cannot afford to maintain all of the buildings that we have, particularly those that are old and require many millions of pounds to repair and maintain. Some of the buildings that are now earmarked for closure were only used once or twice a week, and yet hugely expensive to both run and upkeep.

"The decision today to press on with this new Family Hub model of delivering services will mean that we can now use the best buildings possible, informed by a needs framework, to ensure that we target support in the areas of Kent where it is needed the most."

As with any Key Decision there will be a period of call in and scrutiny where our decision makers can review the paperwork and challenge the content, should they wish to. This is a formal part of the governance in KCC.

Once agreed, the first few months of 2024 will be spent working with service teams to ensure the transition towards different buildings and a different service model is as smooth as possible for service users.

I think that this approach is the right one, although, as with anything like this, the devil is in the detail.

1021. Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:

Main item to report from a Borough point of view, the cost-saving move from the Civic Centre unto International House was approved at an Extraordinary Meeting last week. The savings can now be incorporated into the draft budget for 24/25 and will be put to O & S Committee for the scrutiny process to begin.

Like all councils ABC is under pressure and will be seeking future cost savings unless government funding sees a sudden renaissance!

There will be a electricals recycling pilot by ABC in Aldington in the new year. The scheme provides residents with the ability to bring small electrical items to a prescribed point in a one day event.

A resident has complained about parking on Ruckinge Road which is affecting visibility from drives as well as where the road narrows. Contact is to be made with the County Councillor to see if anything can be done with the road as the highways improvement plan did not produce the results needed.

1022. Neighbourhood Watch:

Report attached.

1023. **Minutes:**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20th November 2023 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

1024. **Planning Matters:**

Planning application PA/2023/1343 – Weavers Cottage, Ashford Road – Retrospective planning permission for an outbuilding/store room and associated hardstanding following the retrospective demolition of two outbuildings.

Resolved: The Parish Council has no objection to the proposal however it would wish a condition of grant to be placed on approval that the building will be subservient to the main dwelling with services provided from the main house at all times. The gateway adjacent to the outbuilding should not be used as an access as the gate is a field gate with limited visibility.

1025. **Finance:**

Schedule of payments:

Staff costs October 2023	£650.70
Staff costs November 2023	£462.73
Clerk's expenses	£18.80
S Hudson (reimbursement)	£125.95

Resolved: To authorise payment of the items in the schedule of payments.

1026. **Budget 2024 / 2025:**

Report BPC/23/08 concludes the budget making process for 2024/5 and makes recommendations to enable the council to set its precept for 2024/25 and to notify the tax collecting authority in accordance with statutory legislation.

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report BPC/23/08.**
- 2. To determine the Parish Council's budget for 2024/25 as set out below.**
- 3. To confirm the Precept for 2024/25 in accordance with the provisions in Sections 39,41 and 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
- 4. To authorise the Clerk of the Parish Council to sign the Precept demand on the Borough Council.**

Staff costs	£5,000.00
Clerk's expenses	£250.00
Audit	£50.00
Insurance:	£430.00
Subscriptions	£300.00
Donations	£30.00
Room Hire	£150.00
Website	£120.00
Xmas tree	£100.00
Total Revenue budget	£6,430.00

Contingency	£1,081.00
Defibrillator	£300.00
IT replacement	£200.00
Total budget	£8,011.00

1027. **Biodiversity:**

Report BPC/23/09 attaches a new policy for adoption on biodiversity.

Resolved:

1. To receive and note **Report BPC/23/09**
2. To receive and adopt the **Biodiversity policy**.

1028. **Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024 – 2034**

Consultation:

Kent County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has an overview role for local flood, which is flooding that arises from surface runoff, ordinary watercourses, and groundwater. As LLFA, KCC have a duty to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (Local Strategy) that sets out how local flood risks will be managed in the County.

The current Local Strategy (2017 – 2023) needs to be replaced and KCC have drafted a new Local Strategy which is the subject of this consultation. This new Strategy will cover a 10-year period with a review after the first 5 years.

The draft Local Strategy builds upon lessons learnt from the previous strategy. Through it, KCC aim to improve the safety and wellbeing of Kent's residents and the economy of Kent with appropriate flood risk management. KCC will do this by working with communities and partners, adapting to climate change, and utilising natural processes to provide multiple benefits, where possible.

Details of the consultation can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/localfloodrisk the deadline for comments being 30th January 2024.

The Council is asked to consider if it wishes to respond.

1029. **Village Hall:**

The recent craft fair was well supported with a steady flow of visitors. The heating system will be replaced in the coming weeks, it has been recommended that insulation is placed in the roof to improve efficiency. Costs are to be calculated and the Borough Councillor to be asked for funding from her Ward Member Grant to cover the cost.

1030. **Other items for information:**

It has been reported that the Saxonsore Parish Magazine is to be discontinued.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:35pm.

DRAFT

REPORT TO BILSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL DECEMBER 2023

The areas I will focus on for our December meeting will be much the same as November in trying to anticipate where criminals will strike and use the Xmas celebrations and events to strike into the community. They will seek out our most vulnerable.

I am also very hopeful that I can give a full report of a one-to-one meeting with the Crime Commissioner on Wednesday 29th November at 1400 hrs.

Areas for discussion with him are as follows,

The poor standard of crime reports since 1st October 2023.

Role of NHW going forward into 2024 and onwards towards 2030.

Root and branch review of how Kent Police want to communicate with residents in the future.

Poor communications, the June new police model of crime reports. An example shown.

Violence against Women and Girls to get PREVENTION front and centre of the strategy.

Reports examples. Although not SAXON SHORE area it is important to brief council of the emerging standards.

Tontine Street
in **Folkestone**

On Friday 3rd of November between 22:30 and 23:30.
Somebody stole a vehicle from the road.

Crime Report No. 46/196919/23

Is that good enough?

Make? Model? Colour? Reg Number?

How can persons like me send that out into the community?

It will bring nothing other than criticism and mocking statements about the police. I have built up tremendous credibility in communities and I am respected for my level of commitment and work.

When high end vehicles are stolen, they are often parked up and the criminals watch to see any police action as the vehicles may have a "tracker device" It is while they are parked up that a decent appeal may be able to locate the car by an alert and vigilant public.

Theft of a phone.

Blean Forest	
No Road Name	On Friday 3rd of November around 14:05. Somebody stole an unattended mobile phone. Crime Report No. 46/196337/23

What road?

What town/village?

From a person Non-violent?

From a person with face-to-face violence?

From an insecure/unlocked vehicle?

From a break into a locked vehicle?

From a shopping basket in a shop (recent trend)

From a commercial outlet?

What chance does that give to get an appeal out?

Importantly it brings huge criticism from the community, maybe some will not risk sending out a nothing appeal. Some may just give up.

Someone thinks this is the standard not even a road name or town!!!. So the appeal is at 1405 in a road we will not name in a town we will not name a phone was taken?

How can we appeal for witnesses, CCTV, Camera Doorbell footage, Dashcam footage?

If officers say this is acceptable, I am clearly stating it isn't. I have challenged the officers that head up the NHW function for Kent.

The role of NHW going forwards and how do Kent police want to be able to communicate are strongly linked.

NHW has a proven track record since the early 80s.

Kent Police will naturally want to embrace all modern communication platforms.

However, they must never ever leave only landline residents stranded and left behind many of which will be our most vulnerable.

Just returning to the Kent Police model for Violence against women and Girls I make the following comment.



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 proposed the following.

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 would started with and have said.

“If your house is on fire, we will put it out”. Absolutely not the word was PREVENTION.



My early crime prevention advice is when Christmas shopping. Take great care if you return presents you have purchased to a vehicle to save carrying them all around town and then go off for further shopping. **Criminals know this!**

They will tour car parks looking into vehicles and if they can see anything on show they may strike.

When shopping with trolleys do not wander off and look at items and leave the trolley unattended with your bags. Purses are often just resting on top of shopping bags. **Criminals know this!**

Great care with internet shopping parcel deliveries which get left on doorsteps. Firstly, in town areas you are vulnerable to the passing chancer and opportunist who just happened to be walking by. However, secondly the vans are now followed and that means even the most rural of isolated properties are also vulnerable. **Criminals know this!**

CRIME

Parcel thefts rise from doorsteps as gangs follow courier vans



Some of us will be travelling early on Christmas morning, to get a flying early start we load our cars with all the presents and gifts we are taking the night before we leave. **Criminals know this!**

They will just walk the streets and looking into vehicles if they see rich pickings they will strike. Just get up 30 minutes earlier and load the car then!!

Santa sometimes stores presents from prying eyes in sheds and garages. **Criminals know this.**

Now people sometimes laugh when I say this but a good Christmas morning for the police is torrential rain. If not about 0900 hours Christmas day many front doors burst open, and children pour out with every form of new toy and present. Bikes, skates, scooters, footballs toys and games and many more gifts that Santa brought **Criminals know this!** About 1400 hours children are called to Christmas lunch, they would gladly miss and continue playing, however they go indoors and leave the items laying in front gardens. That is when vans drive around and just pick up anything laying there, breaking many young hearts in the process.

Burglaries are thankfully very low across the district but Christmas trees on show with presents stacked underneath may just tempt criminals if they feel residents are out.

Sadly, criminals have a fantastic opportunity withy SCAMS as we progress from Black Friday sales, which seem to be on all days as well as Fridays!!

Christmas sales and online bargains and then straight into January sales too. The whole period is a business opportunity for 'scammers.



A crime that struck in 2022 was the thefts of High-End cars like BMWs, Mercedes, and Audi's

My NHW work was front and centre of building a case against the criminals who struck around 40 times in East Kent especially Ashford District.

Many appeals and CCTV evidence collected from NHW members resulted in the following,

Trio jailed for keyless car thefts

Policing news

✓ Published: 16:50 15/11/2023

Three men behind a spate of keyless car thefts have been jailed for a total of more than seven years.

Alminas Satas, **Maksims Seluks** and **Olgierd Golubovski** were arrested and charged following an investigation by the Kent Crime Squad.

The trio were linked to the thefts of 29 vehicles from **Ashford**, **Hawkinge**, **Tonbridge**, **Tenterden** and **Maidstone** in October and November 2022.

They used an electronic device to capture the signals emitted by car keys and trick vehicles into thinking keys were present to steal them.



Left to right: Alminas Satas, Olgierd Golubovski and Maksims Seluks

Thefts

An investigation was launched after the first vehicles, a BMW and a Mercedes, were stolen in **Ashford** on **12 October 2022**.

Detectives found the thieves were travelling down from east London in vehicles which had cloned number plates on them to avoid detection, and they would target BMWs, Mercedes and Range Rovers around Kent, which would then be driven back to various locations in Essex and London, where it is believed they were stripped down and sold for parts.

In the early hours of **8 December**, officers in Kent established that a BMW seen on the **M25** was travelling on cloned plates.

It was followed by officers in unmarked cars and brought to a stop after exiting the **A249** near **Sittingbourne**. Occupants Satas and Seluks were arrested and a third man ran from the scene.

Arrests

The vehicle was found to be registered under a false name at an address in **Dagenham**. Officers later attended the address and arrested Golubovski.

Evidence from his and the other men's phones linked them to the numerous thefts around the county over the preceding two months.

Satas, Seluks and Golubovski all later admitted conspiring to steal vehicles and were sentenced at Canterbury Crown Court on Monday 13 November 2023.

Satas, 26, of Bell Farm Avenue, Dagenham, was jailed for three years, four months; Golubovski, 24, of Rowdowns Road, Dagenham, was sentenced to two years, four months; and Seluks, 23, of Vincent Road, Dagenham, got two years and one month.

You may have seen this locally but this was a result of your work and contacts supplying info and CCTV to us.

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent/news/two-charged-following-theft-of-30-keyless-cars-278587/>

If you wish to thank your contacts on my behalf then please do

Thank you for your help
Scott

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Charges brought in keyless car theft investigation

Two men have been charged following an investigation into keyless relay thefts of cars in Kent.

Community assistance

Detective Constable Scott Drake, Kent Police's investigating officer, said: 'These three men were relentless in their targeting of cars to steal and quickly take out of the county.'

'I would like to thank the local Neighbourhood Watch coordinators who worked tirelessly to obtain crucial CCTV footage and for the support of the local communities in providing important evidence in this case.'

'I am pleased our meticulous investigation saw these men arrested and charged, and they are now no longer at liberty to steal people's property.'

The sentences come two weeks after two other men were jailed for a total of five years for similar offences.

Advice

Following the cases, drivers of cars with keyless entry systems are advised to take steps to ensure their vehicles are secure. Motorists should:

- Check if their entry fobs can be turned off overnight and store them away from any household entry points.
- Drivers can also store their fobs in special foil-lined bags, which can be bought from retailers, to prevent any unwanted communication between the vehicle and its keys.
- Make sure you don't leave your car keys visible from the outside of your home and park in a garage, secure car park or well-lit area covered by CCTV if possible.
- Consider having windows etched with the vehicle registration number or use an invisible ink marker pen to mark these details and your postcode on the underside frame of the vehicle.

For more information, visit [the advice page on our website](#).

I am already working with officers from the Crime Squad who I worked on with the crimes above as this trend has begun again in the District and I am issuing crime prevention guidance into the community.



In closing down 2023 I look forward to working with you in 2024 how we have now for many years now.

Our Beat officer **BRAD LINDRIDGE** should have a second officer attached to his areas soon and I look forward to introducing both officers to you.

I also look forward to developing a strong relationship with the **Rural Team officers IAN NORTON and DEBBIE BISHOP** during 2024.

Crimes will become more sophisticated in 2024 however alongside them will always be the chancers and opportunists who will look for vehicles especially vans, garages, sheds, barns, allotment sheds, stables and any form of external storage whatsoever.

There will be bogus callers and rogue traders to content with.

Scams will get better and better; our prevention must match that.

Drugs will continue to drive so much of the lower-level crime to pay for the purchase of the product, however it must be always borne in mind that just above that level of drug activity in communities is a level of violence we would not want to see in East Kent.

As always thank you for all your support and may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a Healthy Happy New Year and the same to your families who without their support this work would be very difficult indeed.

We have had an excellent year, and with success comes work. We will need hit 2024 in good shape. In January I will set out my clear NHW plan for the year which I hope

keeps Bilsington residents crime free and importantly free from the fear of being a victim also.

Thank you.

Peter

Peter New

Kent Police Volunteer & Community Neighbourhood Watch

