

Minutes of a meeting of Bilsington Parish Council held at Bilsington Village Hall on Thursday 2nd November 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: P New (Neighbourhood Watch).

1006. Apologies for absence:

Cllr R Thompson, Cllr L Harman (ABC) and Cllr D Robey (KCC).

1007. Declarations of interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

1008. Public participation:

There were no public submissions.

1009. Kent County Councillor's Report:

The main issue at KCC is the budget, with an in year overspend forecast of £35m, and roughly the same projected for next year. We are working on both these, and expect to balance the books, but it obviously puts pressure on all services.

Now that I have a share of the Highways portfolio, with Neil Baker, we are trying to focus on potholes, the uncoordinated way that we allow the utilities to conduct roadworks and preventing HGVs using unsuitable roads. Doing something about all these things will not be easy, but we will do our best.

1010. Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:

The Council continues to work towards reducing costs while maintaining services. It is a huge challenge. Fortunately, ABC is fairly robust financially and has reserves for short term support. I was recently in a forward planning meeting at which officers made the need to make further savings very clear. Political uncertainty at government level is not making fiscal forecasting any easier for local councils but the current administration is determined to focus on delivering the services that residents expect. Work has just begun on the next iteration of the Corporate Plan for Ashford. These plans are always prepared to overlap the changes of elected administration in the Council and so we inherited a plan that we now have the opportunity to revise to reflect our priorities for the Council. We are clear that this is maintaining services, revitalising the town centre and building for local people. The need for social housing is undeniable; the number of people in temporary accommodation continues to grow. Unfortunately, we cannot build more council homes until Ashford is freed from the nutrient neutrality paralysis on building programmes.

The review of the Ashford Local Plan has started. The Call for Sites this time invites landowners to put forward land for nature projects as well as for the usual housing, employment, gypsy traveller sites and retail. Land allocated for nature projects will be places where Biodiversity is being actively cultivated. These sites will enable developers of sites in more urban areas to demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) by purchasing BNG credits, ie by paying for projects that are happening in other

places. The BNG scheme is still being developed by government, and though the detail of how it will work is yet to be published – it could be a fantastic opportunity for landowners to generate income from land whilst also improving the local environment.

1011. Neighbourhood Watch:

Report attached.

1012. Minutes:

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

1013. Planning:

Planning application PA/2023/1848 – Oak Tree Farm, Ashford Road – full time stationing of a residential caravan for an agricultural worker (retrospective)

Resolved: The Parish Council object to the application on the basis that the plot size is insufficient for the quantity of livestock detailed in the planning statement given that the grazing land is divided between 5 parcels of land, 2 being some 5 miles from the site and the remaining 3 in excess of 10 miles from the site.

1014. Finance:

Schedule of payments:

Staff costs September £485.79

Clerk's expenses £71.59

Westcotec Ltd £1,366.80

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal £30.00

Resolved to authorise payment of the items in the schedule of payments.

1015. Village Hall:

An application for a lottery grant for the replacement of the heating system has been successful. A craft fair is being organised for the 25th November.

1016. Other items for information:

The lighting of the Christmas Tree will take place on the 3rd December, Cllr Hudson to purchase the tree.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:15pm.

REPORT TO BILSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL NOVEMBER 2023

The three areas I will focus on for our November meeting will be.

1. **CHRISTMAS CRIME ALERTS.**
2. **INTRODUCTION OF NEW BEAT OFFICER BRADLEY LINDRIDGE.**
3. **GENERAL CRIME PREVENTION**

Following our November meeting we will be into the Christmas period run in and so guidance will be given to the community and for council and councillors I have produced the information below as you may be asked for advice.



Although Christmas is still weeks away, criminals will already be planning on way they can strike into the community, we must match those efforts with our prevention advice.

I will be constant and repetitive with my advice between now and Christmas.

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 trollies 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.

I know Christmas is weeks away but the time to think is now and I will ensure reminders are issued up until the day.

INTRODUCTION TO P.C. BRADLEY LINDRIDGE

I am very pleased to introduce P.C. Bradley Lindridge to our area.

Bradley will be covering SAXON SHORE and thereby BILSINGTON area and other parts of the wider district.

I have set out the full areas below.

I am working hard to build a strong working partnership with him.

[Downs North](#)
[Downs West](#)
[Saxon Shore](#)
[Charing](#)
[Bircholt](#)
[Wye with Hinxhill](#)
[Mersham Sevington South &
Finberry](#)
[Kingsnorth Village](#)
[Upper Weald](#)

Below on the left are the areas P C LINDRIDGE will cover and on the right the area and respective councils.

AREA

COUNCIL

Downs north	Chilham
	Crundale
	Godmersham
	Molash
Saxon shore	Aldington
	Bilsington
	Ruckinge
	Bonnington
Charing	Charing
Bircholt	Braebourne
	Smeeth
	Hastingleigh
	Brook
Wye with Hinxhill	Wye
Downs West	Challock
	Boughton Aluph and Eastwell
	Westwell
Mersham & Sevington south with finberry	Mersham
Kingsnorth village and Bridgefield	Kingsnorth
Upper weald	Pluckley
	Little chart
	Charing Heath
	Hothfield

As I have previously reported it is very important we manage public expectations as the word Beat Officers could mislead residents and good public engagement, which we will be planning, will ensure the communities know how the role of the officers will take shape.



As I said I will be looking to build a very strong working partnership with P.C. Lindridge and make my very strong and extensive Neighbourhood Watch network available to him to help with her work in the community.

Firstly, to prevent crime in the first instant and sadly if crime occurs then provide as much back up and support gathering information and intelligence to help solve crime and prevent further crime trends from the lessons we have learnt.

Essential to that work is that residents and communities report all instances and types of crime so that the full picture and extent of crimes can be seen.

Only then can we advise the community on steps to be taken by prevention advice we issue.

GENERAL MATTERS

1. Report all crimes and attempted crimes. Use 999 if the crimes are in progress or about to happen.
2. Be alert and vigilant to every form of scam which will come by landline phone. Mobile, on computers, laptops, tablets or again on mobile phones. Do nothing in a rush. Check, check and check again and if still in doubt do nothing. Those scam calls can come from 3, 30,300 0or 3000 miles away. They can also come by letter and face to face on the doorstep.
3. Ensure nothing is left on show in a vehicle when parking especially last park up for the night.

Stand and look inside the vehicle, can you see anything? If you can so can a criminal.

4. Care with vans carrying tools and equipment.
5. Internet parcel thefts
6. Bogus callers and Rogue Traders. Do not agree to unsolicited work on your doorstep.
7. Theft of number plates to facilitate fuel thefts at garages.
8. Catalytic converter thefts
9. Courier Fraud. Parcels delivered to an address and then picked up by a bogus delivery driver claiming it was a mistaken delivery.
10. Distraction purse thefts in supermarkets.
11. Care with selling items on platforms like ebay/marketplace where buyers say they will pay cash at your front door. Items were snatch last year and people injured.

12. Care with buyers saying they will send a courier to pick up items.
13. Care if purchasing a pet. Please do not send payment to a bogus dog/cat breeder on the strength of a photograph.

Generally, with all the above crimes it is about giving yourself time to think safe and secure.

It is not just Christmas it is the weeks leading up to Christmas when people come under pressure and are hurried in their actions and that is when we are at our most vulnerable.

As always, the elderly, especially those who live alone, our disabled, those with learning difficulties and those with any form of disability who are especially vulnerable and sort out by criminals to prey upon.

A strong united community working together, alert, and vigilant can help thwart criminals on the range of crimes mentioned above.

The last crime trend to mention at this council meeting is please ensure all cases of Anti-Social behaviour and Criminal damage is reported. Especially important is the use of catapults in the community.

I will comment on the future of Neighbourhood Watch and my own role in future.

Thank you all for your support as always and I know that the support you give me both for my Neighbourhood Watch work and for me personally will also be given to P.C. Lindridge in the last weeks of 2023 and then building to work together in 2024.

Stay safe, secure, alert and vigilant.

Thank you

Peter

Peter New

Kent Police Volunteer & Community Neighbourhood Watch

