

Minutes of a meeting of Bilsington Parish Council held at Bilsington Village Hall on Wednesday 20th September 2023 at 7:00pm.

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

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

Also present: P New (Neighbourhood Watch) and 1 resident

991. **Apologies for absence:**

Cllr D Robey (KCC), Cllr L Harman (ABC)

992. **Declarations of interest:**

There were no declarations of interest

993. **Public participation:**

The condition of the flag was raised as it is threadbare on the end. The Chairman will source a replacement.

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

- The budget position at KCC remains the overriding issue, with no easy answers, but obviously this has an effect on everything that KCC does. This is related to big strategic issues like the Structure of Local Government, how it is financed, Devolution and how Adult Social Care is financed, on which dialogue with Government is ongoing. Having said all of this, we expect to balance the books in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, although it will not be easy to do so.
- I have had quite a bit of correspondence on Bus Services. KCC subsidises some services, but budget pressures mean that we cannot do as much of this as we would like. I am in discussion with KCC Transport, about whether there is anything else that we can do with some money that the Government made available under the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Scheme, although this comes with a number of strings attached, that make this much harder than it should be in my view. I have recently been moved from Deputy Cabinet Member - Economic Development to Deputy Cabinet Member - Highways & Transportation at KCC, and this should be a bit of a help with all of this.

995. **Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:**

The council is starting work on the statutory review of the Ashford Local Plan, which will set the strategic vision and planned growth for housing and jobs within the borough to 2041. The Plan will need to identify sufficient land to meet future requirements. Following new government legislation and to reflect the council's ongoing commitment to create sustainable places potential sites for new green spaces, energy generation, Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities, and wetlands for Nutrient Neutrality mitigation and/or nature-based initiatives, are this time being sought alongside sites for new home and jobs. Each site submitted will be individually assessed for its suitability, availability and deliverability. To be considered as part of the process, applicants should complete the application form on the ABC website. The deadline for potential sites to be submitted for consideration is 5pm,

Monday 20 November 2023. Consultations with communities about the sites that come forward is anticipated to take place in Spring 2024.

Last week the Council announced that it has bought former Kent Wool Growers site. The 1.2ha site offers an unrivalled opportunity to create a vibrant community at the gateway to the town. Work is underway to shape a proposal that is likely to include one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments and four bedroom townhouses, parking bays concealed in undercrofts beneath gardens, a community and cultural hub and communal courtyards. The precise number of homes is yet to be finalised but will be fewer than the 254 residential units previously agreed for the site when developer U+I secured planning consent in 2019 and include social housing.

In other news, still planning related, the Leader of the Council, Cllr.Noel Ovenden has been working to highlight to government the impact of the Natural England pronouncement that all development must demonstrate nutrient neutrality to protect our rivers and wetlands. The constraint on Ashford means we are prevented from delivering housing that is included in Local Plan including social housing that is needed now more than ever before. The Government announced that it intended to legislate in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to make Natural England's rules on nutrient pollution advisory rather than mandatory and provide funding to help tackle the underlying problem of pollution in England's waterways. Unfortunately, the House of Lords voted against the amendment to the Bill.

Lastly I wanted to share the Ashford Communities Amenities Grants to which applications are invited. These aim to support community amenities across the borough, to make improvements to community infrastructure and are made up of two grant streams.

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund Grant (Ashford Urban Area) A grant of up to £10,000 for an organisation wishing to make improvements to community facilities such as community halls or playgrounds.
- Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant (Ashford Rural Area) A grant of up to £10,000 for an organisation wishing to make improvements to outdoors community facilities such as playing fields or village hall outdoor spaces. The deadline for applications is 29 October. The Clerk has more access to more information via a briefing note from ABC

996. **Neighbourhood Watch:**
Report attached.

997. **Minutes:**
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26th July 2023 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

998. **Planning matters:**

Planning application PA/2023/1167 – 4 Priory Cottages, Priory Rod – Proposed two-storey side extension covered front porch.

Resolved: To support the proposals.

Planning application PA/2023/1524 – New House Farm, Ashford Road – Change of use of land from paddock to garden and erection of 2 bay car barn.

Resolved: to support the proposals.

999. **Finance:**

Schedule of payments:
Staff costs July £390.12
Staff costs August £405.04
Clerk's expenses £289.60
ICO Subscription £40.00
Zurich Insurance £418.04

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

1000. **Parish Council website:**

Advice has been received from Hugofox, the Council's website host, that with effect from 30th September 2023 they will no longer be offering the facility free of charge. They are offering three different options: Bronze at £9.99 + VAT per month, Silver at £19.99 + VAT per month and Gold at £29.99 + VAT per month.

A quotation has been sought from a different host company who have quoted £19 per month, however there is an initial set up charge of £445 to build the site as the configuration of the current site is not transferable.

As the Parish Council is required to maintain a website to comply with transparency requirements it is recommended that the Parish Council retain the current provider on the Bronze tariff which provides the functionality required.

The Parish Council will need to take into account the new charges when it sets its budget going forward.

Resolved: To retain the existing website on the Bronze package with payments to be by direct debit.

1001. **Speed Indicator Device:**

The speed indicator device had been returned to the supplier as it was malfunctioning, they have submitted a report on their findings in that the radar in the sign has failed. To replace this the cost will be £1,072.50 + VAT.

Resolved: To authorise the replacement of the Radar.

1002. **Village Hall:**

Fund raising is continuing to replace the heating system in the hall, a Trivial Pursuits evening is to be held on 30th September 2023.

1003. **Highways:**

Following the site meeting at the crossroads of Priory Road and Frith Road KCC are due to pass the work on to the contractors in the next few days who then have up to 90 days to complete the works.

1004. Ashford Borough Local Plan 2041: Call for Sites:

The Borough Council is embarking on a statutory review of its Local Plan. A Local Plan to 2041 will need to identify sufficient land to provide for new homes, Gypsy and Traveller sites, and jobs in the borough as well as places for retail and leisure uses, community services, and visitor and tourism facilities. To reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to create sustainable places that support the environment, health and well-being and that seek to mitigate and adapt to, climate change potential sites for new green spaces, energy generation, opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain, and wetlands for Nutrient Neutrality mitigation (if required) and or nature-based initiatives, are also being sought.

The Call for Sites exercise went live on Friday 8th September, inviting landowners, developers, businesses, organisations and residents to submit any land that may be available to be considered for inclusion in the Local Plan by the 20th November 2023

Following the close of the 'Call for Sites', all the sites that have been submitted will be assessed for their suitability, availability and achievability, and be made publicly available on the Borough Council website in due course. It is to be noted that a site submission does not mean that it will be allocated, or provide any indication of the outcome of any assessment process through the Local Plan or any subsequent planning application that may be submitted.

1005. Other items for information:

Two people have expressed an interest in the vacancy, however neither live in the Parish.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

REPORT TO BILSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL. SEPTEMBER 2023.

Dear Council, I trust you had the chance to take some leave and recharge the batteries during August as we head into the final months of 2023. Sadly, criminals don't stop for a moment.

The plan I produced in January 2023 of how I would work was based on 2 important events which would occur during the year.

Council elections and the Kent Police new policing model for how the force would operate.

I have put reports before council on that policing model and refer to our local BEAT OFFICER later in the report.

It was essential I stayed focused on the routine business whilst the above events happened and then bedded in.

My work has been and will be still focused on these main themes of crime trends.

Thefts from CARS/VEHICLES. Thefts from SHEDS, GARAGES, and OUTBUILDINGS/EXTERNAL STORAGE.

Thefts of INTERNET PARCELS from doorsteps, the vans are now followed so no isolated premises are even safe.

DRUGS/ ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR/CRIMINAL DAMAGE. Also, to monitor any new crime trends that have occurred in the wider district and could arrive in Saxon Shore District.

Matters that also raise concerns among residents are CATAPULTS and ESCOOTERS.

Finally, the constant battle against SCAMS. At last, this issue is now on the Government's worry list and the national TV and Newspapers joining the debate, warning and helping the education process can only assist.

There are so many examples of Scams however to show you the speed at which these criminals react is shown in this report.

Barely had the announcements finished being made that the WILKO stores chain were in trouble (and we have a store in Ashford) than the "Scammers" began to target the community with scams linked to the store chain.

A combination of scams was into communities within hours especially offering a closing down type bargain.

I have spoken before about so many issues that become a 'business opportunity' for these criminals. This linked to the pressures residents are under with the cost of living and the need to look for bargain shop offers can create a 'perfect storm for criminals to action.

Sadly, the misery of rising mortgage interest rates offered another opportunity for scammers as residents struggled with this worry in their households.

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™



Wilko fake websites

Lookout for fake websites impersonating Wilko. The company has stopped selling goods online & is also no longer offering home delivery or click and collect services, so if you see anything like this, it is a SCAM. One fake site had a sofa for sale at £25 and an adult's electric bike also for sale at £25.

How to avoid copycat websites.

- Make sure that the website address (URL) is correct and matches the site you intended to visit. Copycat websites often have similar URLs to the legitimate sites, but with small differences such as spelling errors or a different domain extension.
- Check for the padlock icon in the address bar which indicates the connection is secure. However, don't rely on the padlock icon alone.
- Legitimate websites usually have contact information such as a phone number, email address, or physical address. But some copycat websites might have contact details, so don't rely on them alone either.
- Be wary of websites that have poor grammar, spelling errors or low-quality images.
- Check for reviews of the website. These can give you an idea of other people's experiences with the site and whether it is trustworthy.
- Don't rush. Take your time to research the website and make sure it is legitimate before making any transactions or providing personal information.

Preventing fraud

Together,
let's stop
scammers.



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm

Get the latest
scam advice:



@KentPoliceECU

(Source trading Standards)

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



**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   

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

Mortgage Scams

Criminals are using mortgage offers “as low as 2.39%” to lure people into phishing scams. They request that you click on a link that takes you to a realistic looking website that is under the control of the criminals, who are looking to steal your personal and financial data.

Remember if it looks too good to be true then it probably is. Always forward suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk Your reports have resulted in the removal of 235,000 malicious websites as of May 2023.

If you think that you may have been a victim of this or any other 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.

Preventing fraud

Together, let's stop scammers.



Remember, ABC:

-  never Assume
-  never Believe
-  always Confirm

Get the latest scam advice: 
[@KentPoliceECU](https://twitter.com/KentPoliceECU)

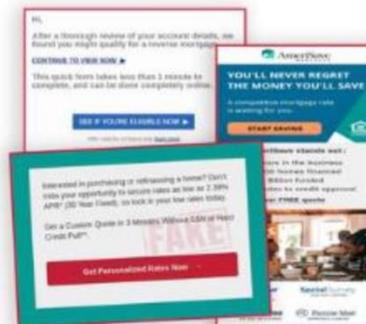
SCAM WARNING

Mortgage scams

Action Fraud has received 538 reports in two weeks relating to fake emails purporting to be from mortgage lenders. The emails claim to offer limited-time deals to low rate mortgages. The links in the emails lead to malicious websites designed to steal personal and financial information.

If you have any doubts about a message, contact the organisation directly. **Don't** use the numbers or address in the message - use the details from their official website. Your bank (or any other official source) will never ask you to supply personal information via email.

Spotted a suspicious email? Forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) - report@phishing.gov.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   

These criminals especially alongside ROGUE TRADERS and BOGUS CALLERS pose a constant threat to residents especially our vulnerable and elderly in the community.

You will recall I set up OPERATION GUARDIAN ANGEL to assist our vulnerable members of the community linking in with relatives and younger family members as we try to support independent living for those vulnerable and elderly in our



communities.



Now to introduce our Beat officer.



SAXON SHORE BEAT OFFICER JAMES MURRELL including Bilsington.

I am delighted to introduce via this meeting and announce JAMES MURRELL is our Beat Officer who joins us as part of the new policing model for policing in Kent going forwards.

P.C. JAMES MURRELL is our officer and James is a first class, very experienced officer and I have worked on public engagement meetings with him in other parts of the Ashford District, as well as Violence Against Women and Girls campaign meetings and engagements.

The new policing model will develop over time and as Ashford are not yet at full establishment, they will welcome new members to the policing team at Ashford over the coming months.

We are still encouraging all contact to be directed into the csu.ashford@kent.police.uk email box which will ensure we can continue to respond in the most effective way during this period of transition.

The key contacts for each strand of the policing model are:

- Beat Officer team (ward-based engagement and problem solving) – Sergeant Richard Batten
- Neighbourhood Task Force (district problem solving and partnership work) – Sergeant Kim Cameron
- Child Centred Policing Team – Sergeant Katie Reed

I work closely with Sergeants Batten and Cameron the latter especially in the Violence Against Women and Girls work.

Each ward across the district will now have a nominated Beat Officer and their primary role is to work within their local communities.

The two areas I wish to concentrate on from the above model are the

BEAT OFFICER TEAM and the NEIGHBOURHOOD TASK FORCE.

I know both Sergeant Richard Batten and Sergeant Kim Cameron and I have worked with both.

James is in the Beat Team, and they can call upon the Neighbourhood Task Team when required.

I think it very important to clarify the word Beat Officer. Sadly, resources do not allow P.C. Murrell to just police and patrol the Bilsington and surrounding areas and to give a full picture of the area he will cover I have set out the parts of the Ashford District which fall into his Beat Officer role.

Firstly, the areas James covers, don't forget some of those areas are growing as I write.

Rural North PC James Murrell

Areas and links:

[Downs North](#)

[Downs West](#)

[Saxon Shore](#)

[Charing](#)

[Bircholt](#)

[Wye with Hinxhill](#)

[Mersham Sevington South &](#)

[Finberry](#)

[Kingsnorth Village](#)

[Upper Weald](#)

Secondly the Villages and Parish Councils he covers so that should give council a feel for the size of the tasks in hand for James and why he will need the total support of The Council, every councillor, myself with Neighbourhood Watch but most importantly each and every resident and family in the area.

AREAS

VILLAGES AND COUNCILS

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

I am sure James will be introducing himself across the District at every opportunity plus attending Council meeting whenever possible. I will be sharing dates, times and events but at the time of writing this report his appointment is only hours old.

James knows he will get my total and full support with my Neighbourhood Watch network and from me personally across his areas.

It is absolutely essential we continue to grow our Neighbourhood Watch.

Going forwards the importance any Council's newsletter's/communications cannot be overstated in the overall strategy of crime prevention in the community.

Any publication delivered to each resident's home reaches all. As new technology is brought to bear to communicate with residents, I hope that any communication process that reaches everyone importantly to those that at best in 2023 only have a landline telephone and could so easily be left behind with our communications can be brought to bear in the crime prevention battle.

"Crime cannot flourish in communities that care". Working together we can demonstrate we care about the whole community and the residents who reside there.

Thank you for all your support as always.

Peter

Peter New

Kent Police Volunteer & Community neighbourhood Watch.

