

DARENTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 19 February 2025
Jubilee Hall, Waller Park Pavilion, Wood Lane, Darenth, Kent DA2 7LR

Councillor's Present: I Armitt, T Hicks, K Holmes, S Holmes, G Manuel, T Prentice, N Weavis and K Webb.

In Attendance: E Mote, Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

Visitors: Borough Councillor Denman, two members of the public

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the protocol regarding the audio and visual recording of proceedings.

111/02/25: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor D Risely.

112/02/25: TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY OR PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

None received.

113/02/25: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2025

RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15 January 2025 as a true record.

114/02/25: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Chairman confirmed no items for had been raised for Member consideration.

115/02/25: TO RECEIVE EXTERNAL REPORTS

At this juncture, Councillors Kelly and Manuel joined the meeting with Borough Councillor Denman (7:34pm). The Chairman continued with the meeting.

(a) Borough Councillor Report

Borough Councillor Denman confirmed that the public inquiry in respect of the Hawkspare Site, which whilst being located within Darenth Parish, is situated in the Longfield and New Barn Ward, remained ongoing.

Casework topics included: Leasehold properties; nuisance vehicles in Darenth Woods; off-road bike statistics; Kent Police request for more public reports of vehicle antisocial behaviour; ANPR motorbike arrest.

The Clerk asked to be advised of forthcoming Community Litter Pick dates to share with the public. Councillor Denman was asked if it was possible to monitor any improvements in the amount of litter outside Greenlands Primary School following the installation of two new waste bins. Councillor Hicks reported that litter picking had taken place at Darenth Road South due to increased waste being discarded.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Denman for his comprehensive report.

(b) KCC Community Warden Report

The KCC Community Warden for Darenth had submitted a report after distribution of the agenda. The Clerk would share the report with Members and note the details retrospectively at the Council Meeting in March.

(c) Update from Darenth Woods Partnership Working Group

Members received confirmation that Taskforce information would be passed on in due course and that, following a Partnership Working Group meeting with Dartford Borough Council regarding antisocial behaviour and nuisance vehicles, wording had been provided for the Parish Council to use when communicating with the public. Members agreed for the Clerk to share information initially via its social mediums, with Councillor Webb producing a visual communication which could be delivered throughout the village.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Partnership Working Group Terms of Reference would be deferred to the March Council Meeting.

(d) Friends of Darenth Country Park Minutes

Members noted the Minutes for the Friends of Darenth Country Park.

RESOLVED: To note reports as presented.

116/02/25: TO INCLUDE PARISH OWNED TREES LOCATED AT DARENTH ROAD SOUTH AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Members were asked to consider the inclusion of additional trees located in the Darenth Valley Ward to be mapped as part of the Council's Tree Inspection Report process. Adding the trees at Darenth Road South would ensure that all Parish owned trees would be recorded in line with the Council's long-term strategy of protecting and monitoring Parish owned trees. Alltree Consultancy Ltd had been requested to carry out their follow-up tree inspection survey in April 2025 as part of the Council's Tree Management Policy.

RESOLVED: To approve that Parish owned trees located at Darenth Road South in the Darenth Valley Ward, be included as part of the Council's Tree Mapping Inspection Survey and Tree Inspection Report from 1 April 2025.

117/02/25: TO CONSIDER HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Darenth Parish Council submitted a Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) in August 2024. The first proposal detailed vehicular activity outside the Lane End Co-op. The conclusion (following a six-month investigation) from the Kent County Council (KCC) Highways Engagement Team was that they would not be able to assist the Parish Council with this HIP item due to the presence of utilities underground in the form of a high-pressure gas mains at the location where the bollards were intended to be installed.

Our second scheme suggestion, following a public engagement request, resulted in one resident asking to have the speed limit reduced from 40mph to 30mph at the junction of Green Street Green Road and Sandbanks Hill. Our subsequent HIP submission resulted in an automatic traffic counter (ATC) speed survey being carried out between 9 to 15 November 2024 to the West (west of Shellbank Lane), Mid (outside Green Spice) and East (east of Sandbanks Hill) on Green Street Green Road. Results from the survey showed the existing 40mph speed limit was well complied with and it would be unlikely to see reasonable compliance if the road was to be reduced to 30mph.

The Engagement Team reported that to install a speed indicator device (SID) at this location, warning drivers of the speed limit, would cost in the region of £10k. KCC's Engagement Team Leader indicated a possible £4k contribution towards the project.

Members considered the financial commitment in respect of the remaining funding and concluded that it would not be viable due to budget constraints.

RESOLVED: To confirm that a speed indicator device could not be recommended at the junction of Green Street Green Road and Sandbanks Hill due to unbudgeted expenditure of approximately £6k.

118/02/25: TO RECORD THE INSTALLATION OF TWO ADDITIONAL WASTE BINS ON PARISH OWNED LAND OUTSIDE GREENLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, GREEN STREET GREEN ROAD

Members were asked to note that, following reports of excessive litter outside Greenlands Primary School, two new waste bins had been installed. The School had been duly informed, and Dartford Borough Council had confirmed weekly collections had been scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at no extra cost to the Parish Council. The Chairman thanked Councillor K Holmes for his assistance in installing the waste bins.

RESOLVED: That Members formally noted the installation of two new waste bins located on Council owned land outside Greenlands Primary School.

119/02/25: TO RECEIVE AND DISCUSS PROPOSALS FOR 2025-26 COMMUNITY EVENTS

Following discussion, the Chairman requested a proposal for a small-scale event be presented at the March Council meeting with Members noting their support.

120/02/25: FINANCE

- (a) **To note Cambridge & Counties interest rate decrease effective from 14 February 2025**
- (b) **To note that the amendment process for bank signatories has been instructed**
- (c) **To agree Monthly Bank Analysis as for 31 January 2024**
- (d) **To note Monthly Budget Analysis for 31 January 2024**

RESOLVED: To agree and note financial items as presented.

121/02/24: PLANNING

- (a) **To consider new applications**

DA/24/00846/FUL – Salinas Darenth Wood Road Darenth Kent DA2 8AA

Partially retrospective (3 existing Traveller pitches) application for a Gypsy / Traveller site, demolition of building and construction of a replacement bungalow.

Observations: *Due to timescales in respect of receipt of stakeholder comments, an objection had been previously submitted to the Local Planning Authority following Member approval.*

OBJECTION - Whilst the Parish Council has no comments on the proposed demolition of the existing building and the erection of a replacement bungalow, the proposed provision of 7 Gypsy/Traveller pitches to the rear of the property is a cause of concern.

No planning permission has been given for the existing three pitches on the site and notes that the Planning Statement (*the Statement*) refers to two being 'tolerated' whilst Table 9 within Policy M11 (*the Table*) of the Dartford Local Plan (*the Plan*) refers to the provision of three pitches with the 'Details' reading 'Existing one unauthorised would be able to be regularised as an extension to the existing tolerated site'. The Parish Council questions what is meant by 'tolerated' and what basis does it have in the planning process?

The Table suggests that the site has the potential to be extended to provide two additional pitches which would deem the site to be suitable as a '5 pitch /Traveller site' a point that is conceded at point 11 of the Statement. The Applicant seeks, at point 12 of the Statement to justify the proposed provision of a total of seven pitches by relying on the comments made by the Planning Inspector (*the Inspector*) following the examination of the current Plan in which the absence of a sufficient supply of Gypsy/Traveller sites for the first five years of the Plan. The Parish Council has, over many years, urged the Planning Authority to address this issue and is disappointed that, whilst accepting that there are 'limited options' as stated by the Inspector, no meaningful attention has been given to the shortfall. As a result, Darenth finds itself as the focus for Planning Applications such as this meaning that, in the Parish Council's view, the concentration of Gypsy and Traveller sites adversely affects the character of the area, in particular, the Parish Council Ward of Darenth Valley.

The Applicant concedes that the proposed development would encroach on to the Green Belt and the Parish Council does not consider that any special circumstances exist that would override the basic

premise that any development in the Green Belt is inappropriate. The Parish Council notes that it is the Applicant's contention that the site is in fact within the National Planning Policy Framework definition of the newly introduced Grey Belt a view strongly challenged by the Parish Council. The Parish Council understands that the definition to be so short of substance that a revised definition is expected to be announced by the Government shortly.

Whilst accepting that the proposed site layout and soft landscaping would improve the street scene, the Parish Council considers the provision of the seven Gypsy/Traveller pitches to be an inappropriate development in the Green Belt and should be refused.

Should the Planning Authority be minded to approve the Application in principle the Parish Council considers that it should be restricted to five and not seven pitches as proposed on the basis that the greater number would be an over intensification of the site.

DA/25/00067/FUL - 108 Coombfield Drive Darenth DA2 7LH

Conversion of loft with creation of rear dormer window and roof windows to front roof slope in connection with providing additional rooms in the roof space

Observations: Members noted the application.

DA/24/00608/FUL - Darent Valley Hospital Darenth Wood Road Darenth

Creation of Temporary contractors' compound and temporary drop-down zones around the Darent Valley Hospital site

Observations: Members noted the application.

(b) To note recent decisions and appeals

No decisions or appeals were received.

(c) To consider new applications/recent decisions received after agenda publication

Recent decisions received after agenda publication:

DA/25/00128/TPO – 55 The Green, Darenth DA2 6JT

Application to fell tree subject to Tree Preservation Order No. 1 1995.

Observations: Members noted the application.

DA/25/00168/TPO – 1 Darenth Park Avenue, Darenth DA2 6JN

Application for T6- (Estimated height of T6 is approx.) 12m. reduction on lateral aspect, to provide a clearance of 1.5 m from the wall and roof of the property and vertically to have a 4 m clearance from the ground as per annotated photos; T7- Proposed works: pruning and reduction, to match T6, with same clearance from the ground as per annotated photo subject to Tree Preservation Order No.1 1995.

Observations: Members noted the application.

122/02/25: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date for the next Meeting of the Council was confirmed as Wednesday 19 March 2025.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:46.