

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils held via Zoom Conference at 7pm on Monday, 23 November 2020.

Present: Due to issues with Microsoft Teams, parishes present were not recorded.

Guests: MBC: John Perry, Angela Woodhouse, Philip Coyne, Mark Egerton, Mark Green, Mike Evans. Insp Steve Kent, Kent Police and Guy Gardener, KRF

Apologies for absence. Due to an issue with Microsoft Teams, a number of Councillors and the Secretary were unable to connect to the meeting.

1. **Minutes.** The minutes of the 1 October 2020 meeting were taken as read, confirmed as a correct record. These will be signed at the next available meeting held in person.

2. **Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising

3. **Reports from Executive**

3.1 The draft minutes of the meeting dated 3 October 2020 have been circulated.

3.2 The KALC AGM will take place on Saturday 28 November 2020.

4. **Kent Police – Overview for Maidstone from Inspector Steve King**

4.1 PCSO's – There are currently 16 PCSO's covering the Maidstone area in both the town centre and rural wards. It is accepted that they are spread quite thinly but the police are only allowed a certain quota. Their work is often carried out in the background of other policing activities and visibility does need to be enhanced with more communication with communities required so that parishes are aware of the work that is carried out by them. Feedback from parishes would be helpful regarding visibility and communication within the parishes and the Chairman agreed to email all Clerks asking them to feed back to SK direct. It was noted that PCSO's responsibilities and powers have been assessed and whilst additional powers would perhaps be useful, it was agreed that this would be more detrimental in their roles of serving the community as they would likely be caught up in additional legalise work. New initiatives such as Op Innovate have been set up which allows PCSO's and Police officers to come together and to spend a dedicated time dealing with any issues that have arisen or are outstanding including licensing checks, modern slavery checks, building site assessments to minimise thefts of plant, materials and tools.

4.2 Rural Task Team have support from PCSO's regarding theft of farm equipment such as tractors, quad bikes plus nuisance vehicles/motorcyclists.

4.3 Police Crime Commissioner and Assistant Chief Constable have committed their involvement to the HGV pilot scheme when it goes live in the future although this is waiting the go-ahead from the Department of Transport still.

4.4 Parish Police Liaison meeting in new year to be arranged.

5. **Covid 19 Update and Recovery**

5.1 Maidstone Borough Council – A short report was given by Angela Woodhouse. The clinically extremely vulnerable have been the focus of the Council during the second lockdown period and allows those persons to request support and help. There are 5,780 people on the extremely clinically vulnerable list which includes children and young people and 47% of those live within a parished area. As of the date of the meeting, 284 residents have used the Government's National Support shielding system to register support and needs and so there is limited take up so far/volume of requests. All persons on the list have been written

via letter and a leaflet and a thank you to all parishes (approx 12) who allowed their details to be included on that letter as another contact to go to locally.

It is awaited this week on the Government tiering that will allocated to Kent. Business support grants are available, and details are on the Borough Council website, as well as details of individual grants available for the low-income families who are required to self-isolate.

6. Local Plan Review

6.1 Maidstone Borough Council gave a brief overview of the timeline of the Local Plan review and noted that the public consultation will be open for only 3 weeks from 1 December to 22 December 2020. A series of prior-consultation events will be held, and invitations have been sent to Parish Councils and key stakeholders to engage in this. Many of the sites up for consultation are within the town centre and urban areas with only a small percentage allocated to countryside areas. Two garden village communities have been taken forward into the plan at Lidsing near Bredhurst and Heathlands, Lenham.

7. Brexit

7.1 Community Impact Statements are being carried out by the Local Authorities to any villages that may be affected by Operation Stack. A reasonable worst case scenario with up to 50% of trucks not border ready, up to 7,000 trucks queuing into the channel ports, may not be an immediate impact but would build up during the first two weeks of border transition and then ease of as trucks get used to the new regime. Complications relating to passport control on other side of border may prolong the problem. The contra-flow on the M20 between junctions 8 and 9 is now designed that it can be erected within a matter of hours and this will allow trucks to be held stationary but allow a free flow of non-channel traffic in both directions. On 1 January 2021, the Kent Access permit will come into force and hauliers will require to come into Kent and a number of sites to help freight get border ready who already aren't are in Ashford, Manston and Ebbsfleet. Maidstone may be affected by traffic movements especially between junctions 8 and 9 on the A20 if the traffic is being diverted of the M20, junction 7 of the M20, A249 (north and southbound) with traffic diverting up to the M2, knock on affect into Maidstone Town Centre. The Kent Resilience Forum has Operation Fennel in place, overall plan for management of traffic and will be published shortly.

8. Parish Services Scheme 2021/22 – Grant is mainly to help fund grounds maintenance work, compliance costs on play areas, public toilets, war memorials and any churchyards looked after on behalf of MBC. The basic framework for 2021/22 will be kept with very minor tweaks if required and KALC representatives will be consulted in January.

9. Any other business – Fay Gooch, Barming thanked all the MBC officers who attended the meeting this evening.

Future Agenda item – Review of Parish Charter.

Resilience Planning for Parishes – encouragement has been provided to individual parishes to make their own resilience plans to deal with emergencies with mixed success. Those that have been done are mainly with parishes that have suffered issues and are likely to carry on from suffering issues, i.e flooding. KRF are working towards a strategy so that every community has its own plan. A new easier template will be provided shortly and a website www.kentprepared.org.uk has a lot of resources, advice, training available and distance learning courses especially one in emergency planning.

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10. It was agreed that the following meeting dates would be carried out via the Zoom Platform on 25 January 2021, 22 March 2021, 24 May 2021 and 26 July 2021. It was also agreed that the Leader and Deputy Leader of MBC (Cllr Martin Cox and Cllr Fay Gooch) will attend our meetings on 22 March 2021 and 26 July 2021. If Councils have any specific items that they would like to raise, then please forward to maidstonekalc@gmail.com and cc in chairman@yaldingparishcouncil.gov.uk in good time before the meeting so that MBC can be prepared.

The next meeting will be held by Zoom Conferencing on Monday, 25 January 2021 at 7pm.

Helen Anderson
Secretary
KALC Maidstone Area Committee