

## **KEEP WESTERHAM GREEN RESIDENTS GROUP** **4<sup>th</sup> AGM 24-11-2021– DRAFT MINUTES**

### **Chairman's Welcome and Introductions**

The current Keep Westerham Green Chairman Jenny Cowan opened the AGM and introduced those present:

Cllr Nick Chard, KCC Councillor for Sevenoaks West  
Cllr Diana Esler, Cllr for Westerham Ward, Chair of Sevenoaks District Council  
Cllr Kevin Maskell, Cllr for Westerham Ward, SDC Health and Housing portfolio holder  
Cllr Helen Ogden, Westerham Town Council Chair  
Cllr Keith Thompson, Westerham Town Councillor  
Sharon Lord, KWG Secretary/Membership Secretary  
John Warren, KWG Committee Member.

### **Apologies**

Apologies from current KWG Treasurer, Yvonne Tullett.

### **Minutes of Previous Keep Westerham Green AGM**

There were no outstanding Matters Arising, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> AGM Minutes were adopted after a show of hands.

### **Presentation of Annual Report**

#### Summary of activity in 2020

Doggie Day Care and four houses at Bloomfield Terrace: KWG publicised the applications and the dates of the decision meetings.

#### Covers Farm Quarry Stabilisation/Restoration (KCC/SE/0495/2018)

[Following the applicant's submission of slope stability assessments in February 2020, KWG appointed geotechnical expert Professor E. Bromhead to examine these. He found fault with the method used in connection with the safety of the haul road. This formed part to KWG's response to the KCC consultation in Feb 2020.

KWG conducted a survey at the school pick-up bus stops at the London Rd BP Garage, close to where most of the Covers Farm construction lorries would converge as they entered or left the 'haul road' The survey found that 70 children use these bus-stops daily.

The KWG Committee agreed to a contribution of £1,000 towards the RPS Traffic Consultancy Survey commissioned by Westerham Town Council. This established that during the morning peak hour at the BP garage roundabout the volume of lorries would be more than double the current numbers. It also provided evidence that on the Croydon Road in the 60mph stretch, the proposed stoplight junction would cause significant delays.

#### Summary of KWG activity in 2021

#### Covers Farm Quarry Stabilisation/Restoration (KCC/SE/0495/2018)

KWG responded to the KCC consultation on the *Environmental Statement Addendum*. KWG has been coordinating and working in partnership with Westerham Town Council and representatives from Brasted, Sundridge, Biggin Hill and Tatsfield, all of whom would be significantly affected by the Covers Farm proposal. This has been with the help of Cllr Nick Chard. The objective is to lobby the KCC Planning Application Committee members, who will eventually vote on the application at one of their meetings. WTC, in partnership with KWG and working with Nick Chard, pressurised for a site visit for Planning Committee

members and planning officers, covering all the affected communities. This was important as the Committee members do not live locally. During the actual site visit KWG ensured that there was good signage pointing out the specific impact if the application were approved.

KWG has been coordinating a campaign of last-minute lobbying letters to be addressed to KCC Planning Committee members ahead of the decisive meeting.

Chair Jenny Cowan concluded by saying that Keep Westerham Green will continue to inform residents about major planning applications in the area.

### **Presentation of Annual Accounts**

The 2021 Accounts were presented and approved by a show of hands.

### **Election of Committee Members**

Jenny Cowan was willing to continue as Chair. She was proposed by Sharon Lord and John Warren seconded this.

Sharon Lord was willing to continue as Secretary and Membership Secretary. She was proposed by Jenny Cowan and Richard Howard seconded this.

Yvonne Tullett would be willing to continue as Treasurer. She was proposed by Sharon Lord and Jenny Cowan seconded this.

John Warren (KWG Committee Member) was proposed by Jenny Cowan and seconded by Sharon Lord.

All were approved by a show of hands.

### **AOB**

The Chair asked whether there was 'Any Other Business' and when there wasn't the meeting was formally closed.

### **Update on the Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan**

Cllrs Diane Esler and Kevin Maskell were asked for updates on the Local Plan. Cllr Esler presented first and said that the reason given by the Inspector for rejecting the Plan was lack of consultation with neighbouring councils. However, this has been disputed as it was not the case. The Plan had then gone to judicial review, unsuccessfully from SDC's point of view. Cllr Esler said that SDC's Strategic Planning Manager is currently in the process of updating and resubmitting the Draft Plan, now called the Emerging Local Plan. The expected timetable includes two rounds of consultation. The Regulation 18 is scheduled for Apr/May 2022, and the Regulation 19, for Dec 2022-Jan 2023. It is envisaged that the revised Plan will be submitted by April 2023. Cllr Esler said that during the two consultations everyone should (re)submit their comments (about protection of the Green Belt, etc) even if they did so last time.

Cllr Esler said that there are two new *Call for Sites*, the first one to include land outside the Green Belt followed by another, to include Green Belt sites.

KWG Chair Jenny Cowan mentioned workshops supporting the SDC *Character Study Survey*, one aspect of its Emerging Plan activity. Lynda Bunyer was asked about her participation in this. She said that she was pleased to be able to comment and that she felt that the Council was listening.

Cllr Maskell, SDC portfolio holder for Health and Housing, was asked to comment. He spoke about the development of affordable housing and described SDC's work on the *Targeted*

*Review of Local Housing Needs.* He mentioned that the Glade Dale office space had been converted into affordable accommodation. He described how the lack of affordable accommodation has an impact on services such as education and that SDC needed to identify other buildings which may be suitable. He said that he would welcome it if people looked on housing in a different way.

In response, Chair Jenny Cowan said that she was glad to see that the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework still says that there should not be major development in AONB and she hoped that SDC planners will continue to consider the sustainability and deliverability of the sites coming forward for the Emerging Local Plan. Cllr Maskell said that SDC is still mindful of sustainability and deliverability. Jenny Cowan pointed out that compared to Westerham, the Broke Hill proposal, which had met with huge resistance from local residents, is not in an AONB and is located between two major routes, unlike Westerham's one strategic route.

### **The King George's Field Redevelopment proposals (Westerham Town Council)**

KWG Chair Jenny Cowan asked Cllr Helen Ogden, Chair of WTC, to update the meeting on the plans for King George's Playing Field. Helen said that over the last eighteen months KGF has proved to be a valuable asset and that the council is keen that all age groups will have access and use. A draft Master Plan has been shared with SDC. KGF is heavily used for football, especially junior football, and this will continue.

Costells Meadow Car Park - SDC is funding the resurfacing and extension to 34 spaces.

Playground - Children find it boring. WTC wants to refurbish and re energise it.

The Skate Park - This is well used and coming to the end of its life. It is proposed to build a concrete one for bikes and scooters as well as skateboards, with lots of landscaping.

The Pavilion - This is not usable at the moment. It is proposed to put in changing rooms and lockers, to make it usable for exercise classes, possibly with a café and rubbish bins.

MUGA - The current tennis courts would be transformed into a MUGA (multi-use games area) with an all-weather pitch for football, tennis and netball.

A Trim Trail - Encompassing the whole area, for mums with buggies and wheelchairs etc.

Helen Ogden asked attendees to complete the King George Playing Field Survey questionnaire and perhaps email the Town Clerk with further thoughts on the proposals.

Mary Louise Gilmore supported the update of the skate park, tennis courts and playground but queried the safety of the surfaces. Cllr Ogden assured her that modern surfaces would be applied. WTC Cllr Keith Thompson stated that the playground would be one of the first to be upgraded after the car park and all this would be a legacy for the town.

Funding of the proposals – The total cost would probably be a seven-figure sum. WTC has some available money and they wish to raise more. They would consider a loan, which would result in an increase of 30p per week on the Town Council precept part of the Council Tax for the next 30 years.

Mark Bannister remarked on the Local Plan hoping that SDC would take account of the irreversible change to the extent of home working brought about by the pandemic. He welcomed Cllr Maskell's comments and was supportive of the King George Field proposals.

Lynda Bunyer thanked Cllr Ogden for the clear outline and echoed the concern about the safety of the play area surfaces. Cllr Ogden assured her that there are strict safety rules.

Peter Cashmore applauded the KGF plans but suggested that the trail could be dropped if

finances fell short. Cllr Keith Thompson said that trim trial would be used for cycles and scooters. Peter pointed out the hazards of sharing the path between pedestrians and wheeled transportation.

Neil Proudfoot echoed thanks for plans but wasn't in favour of yet another café in Westerham and the potential for detracting from the Sports Association's hospitality facilities.

### **The Covers Farm Quarry Application – update and discussion**

KWG Chair invited KCC Cllr Nick Chard to describe how the Covers Farm site meeting went and the prospect of there being a decision meeting early in 2021.

Nick Chard said that on 12th October a site visit was undertaken by ten of the KCC Planning Committee members, the Clerk, two KCC planners, a KCC Highways officer and the Officers. There was a briefing from planning officers before they set off. During the journey to the site Nick was able to talk to members. He said that the protest signs had been very effective, and their consistency all along the route was evidence that the campaign had involved all of the communities along the A25 and up towards Biggin Hill. At the quarry site entrance they were met by Henry Warde and they went to see the north bank. Henry discussed his concerns. There the councillors asked some well-informed questions. They then went to the proposed haul road entrance. The proximity of the proposed access and the heavy lorry traffic to the school pick-up bus stops and to the M25 were of concern to the KCC traffic engineer.

Nick said that there was acceptance among planning officers that the application was complicated. He said that there is continuing correspondence between officers and key consultees. He said that the decision on Covers Farm will go to Committee possibly on 12<sup>th</sup> Jan or 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022.

Jenny Cowan thanked Nick Chard. She remarked that the application needed to take more account of the Conservation Areas of Sundridge and Brasted and the proximity of the A25 to homes there, that that Biggin Hill would also be badly affected. Mike Pendleton has assembled a group of letter writers there.

Helen Ogden said that the great strength is that the communities have worked together including Surrey County Council and Tatsfield Parish Council.

Lynda Bunyer said Force Green would be affected by the Covers Farm Beggars Lane and Westerham Hill construction traffic.

Cllr. Diana Esler mentioned that the application to SDC for the sound-proofing bunds at the Chevening Estate has been turned down by the SDC Planning Committee, despite the recommendation of SDC Planning to approve it. KWG Chair Jenny Cowan said that the campaign against the Covers Farm proposal needs to be equally persuasive with the actual decision-makers.

### **Closing remarks**

KWG Chair Jenny Cowan thanked all attendees and closed the meeting at 21:30.