

**Note. Item 11 Core Strategy: Strategic Sites Allocation Consultation and item 12 Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy.**

These minutes are an accurate record of the meeting however the responses to the above consultations were amended in a subsequent Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012. For details of the responses sent to Maidstone Borough Council see minutes of that meeting.

**Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm.**

Councillors present; Mr K Perry (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr I Davies Mr P Dengate, Mr A Springate and Mrs M Waller together with the Clerk and 10- members of the public.

**1. Apologies and absences**

Cllrs Spain, B Hinder and W Hinder (holidays).

**2. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**

All members declared lobbying, by residents, on MA/12/1426. The Chairman notified members that he personally knew the agent for the application and so that there could be no concerns raised he would abstain from voting. Councillors confirmed that they had not been lobbied by the developer. Later on in the meeting members declared lobbying, by Borough Councillors, on the Core Strategy consultations (items 11 & 12).

In view of the public interest the Chairman took MA/12/1426 and item 4 at this point in the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.33 pm to allow members of the public to comment on MA/12/1426 but as letters of objection had been written and seen by members they choose not to comment. The developers present offered to answer any questions but did not, at this stage, wish to make a statement. The meeting reconvened at 7.34 pm.

A 5 minute comfort break (8.02pm – 8.07 pm) was taken after MA/12/1426.

**3. Minutes of the Meetings of 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012.**

The minutes of the meetings were **agreed** and **signed** as a true and correct record.

**4. Land at Impton Lane.**

Mr Begeman of Kitewood addressed members about the land at Impton Lane and the wish of the company to engage with the Council about future development of the 5.5 hectare site. Issues covered in the general discussion covered.

- Areas of Ancient Woodland and the ecological restraints.
- Previous planning history.
- Community usage.
- Local housing needs.
- The previous plan to development the front of the site (adjacent to Walderslade Woods Road) with a Scout Hall was not now feasible.
- The company would now be interested in developing the middle area of the site.

It was **noted** that Cascade (part of the Kitewood Group) could work in conjunction with the Parish Council to arrange for a housing needs survey to be undertaken.

Mr Begeman was thanked for his attendance and it was **agreed** that the company would need to make some form of submission of ideas before the issue could be considered any further by the Council.

**5. Matters Arising From Minutes.**

5.1 Minute 2415/4.1 marker at Cossington Lane. After considering costs for an Oak fingerpost it was **agreed** that a cost for a metal and aluminium post would be sought. **Action** – parish office.

5.2 Minute 2415/4.2 PRow Round Wood valley. **Noted** the parish office was in consultation with KCC to have a deed of dedication (the most cost effective route for officers) submitted rather than a lengthy form.

- 5.3 Minute 2415/4.3 Lidsing Road additional signage request. **Noted** reasons why KCC would not consider additional signs. It was **agreed** to consider this is issue with the poor maintenance review. **Action** – parish office.
- 5.4 Minute 2416/8.1 Boxley Road/Grange Lane speed restriction. **Received** Cllr Bob Hinder's report. The Maidstone JTB response to parish council letter would be awaited.

6. **Planning applications and appeals decisions.**

MA/12/0529 – Amended plans for the erection of new two storey classroom block for Invicta Grammar School and new three-storey classroom block for Valley Park School at Valley Park Community School. **Ratified** Assistant Clerk's decision, after consulting with Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Kevin Perry. *Do not wish to object.*

MA/12/1426 – Erection of single storey building comprising four retail units for uses falling within Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A5 or D1 with associated pedestrian and vehicular access ways, refuse stores, car parking and landscaping at Land at Penhurst Close, Grove Green.

Lengthy discussion took place on the application with questions asked of the land owners and agent. It was **noted** that 8 objections from residents had been received. Members decided (5 votes for objection with the Chairman abstaining):

*Wish to see refused for the following planning reasons:*

- *Highway issues. The development would attract additional traffic and potential on-street car parking in Penhurst Close causing a hazard for pedestrians and other road users. The developers are relying on potential customers using the Tesco Car Park however if this becomes unavailable or proves an unattractive option to customers they would use the car parking at the rear which would be inadequate.*
- *Impact on residents. Any additional traffic, especially frequent traffic movements associated with such development, on the close would have an adverse impact on the residential amenity and quality of life for residents living there.*
- *Noise pollution. The type of development planned for the site, especially A3 & A5 is inappropriate for a small residential close. The late night traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) associated with such development will have a detrimental impact on Penhurst Close residential properties and would also impact on the residential properties on Grove Green Lane and Weaving Street. Machinery associated with A3 & A5 development is often poorly insulated and when in such close proximity to residential properties will have, especially late at night, an unacceptable impact on residents.*
- *Air pollution. It is impossible to eradicate food smells from A3 & A5 development and again the close proximity to residential properties would make such development unacceptable.*
- *Litter and anti-social behaviour. Penhurst Close and the open space at the end has, because of its isolation from the surrounding roads and its position close to the minor shopping area, attracted anti-social behaviour in the past and it is likely that this development, especially if A3 & A5 is allowed, would attract anti-social behaviour. Concern was raised about the alleyway between the development and the Dentist.*

*If the Planning Committee was minded to agree the development then members asked that the following conditions be imposed:*

1. *Do not allow A3 & A5 development. If allowed there should be a condition requiring owners to undertake regular litter picks of the Close and Open Space.*
2. *Restrictions on opening hours and delivery times to ensure residents are not subject to disturbance early in the morning, late at night or on Sundays.*
3. *Noise suppressors and relevant insulations on machinery to mitigate against noise.*
4. *Installation of proper controls/machinery to stop strong smells etc.*
5. *Landscaping should reflect and compliment the planting at the adjacent community orchard.*

6. *A proper planning out crime survey. Concern was raised over the alleyway being created and the lack of lighting and security.*
7. *No flashing or illuminated signs as this would disturb residents living in close proximity to the units.*

MA/12/1377 – Erection of a single storey rear extension at Randbrook, Tyland Lane, Sandling, ME14 3BL.  
*Do not wish to object.*

National Planning Policy Framework Training 2nd August 2012. **Noted** a copy of the presentation given by MBC was available from the parish office.

MA/12/1565 – Single storey extension at Ipplepen, Weaving Street, Weaving ME14 5JN.

*Do not wish to object, but wish to point out that the sky lights in the development may be overlooked if there is a window in the adjacent property.*

MA/12/1603 – Erection of a two side extension, single storey front and rear and extension of driveway and vehicular crossover at 24 Olivine Close, Walderslade ME5 9NQ.  
*Do not wish to object.*

TA/0085/12 – Tree Preservation Order application TPO No. 24 of 1987 an application for consent to reduce crown by 60% to 5m above ground level of 2 (no) Ash Trees and 4 Leylandii at Sandhurst, Grove Green Road, Weaving ME14 5JT.

*Parish Council wishes to reiterate its previous comments.*

TA/0125/12 Application for consent to crown lift canopy of Hornbeam to allow 4m ground clearance and reduce crown by 30% at 15 Celestine Close, Walderslade ME5 9NG 17/09/12.

*Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.*

TA/0129/12 application to reduce row of Field Maples to previous cuts and fell 2 no conifer trees at Trefilan, 6 Greenways, Weaving ME14 5JU.

*Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.*

TA/0137/12 – Tree Preservation Order No 1 1969: An application for consent to remove one branch of a hornbeam tree overhanging the rear garden at 10 Violet Close, Walderslade ME5 9ND

*Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.*

## 7. **Planning Applications and Appeals Decisions.**

MA/11/1414 REFUSED.

## 8. **Walderslade Woods and Volunteer Group**

**Received** Cllr Springate's report.

## 9. **Highways and Byways.**

9.1 Beechen Bank Road, Boxley Road. **Noted** the speed limit reduction work had been completed but there was still a missing sign, old white lining that should be refreshed etc. These issues had been notified to KCC. **Action** – parish office.

9.2 **Noted** KCC Member Highway Fund & Community Fund 2012/13. Members were asked to notify the parish office of any suggestions, including maps if appropriate. **Action** – Councillors and parish office.

9.3 Signage at KH64 – North Downs Way. **Noted** KCC are looking to update the website and change the post so that motorbike riders are kept away from the area.

9.4 Advertisement vehicles parked on Gleamingwood Drive. It was **noted** that 2 to 3 vehicles had been parked there for weeks on end often without moving. All were taxed but their positions and number of vehicles was causing safety

issues for other road users. It was **agreed** that the Police would be notified as would Enforcement. **Action** – parish office.

10. **Consultation on revision of DforT speed limit circular.**

Members **received** the briefing note and after discussion **agreed** the response.

**Q1. Do you agree that this advice about introducing 20mph zones and limits provides useful guidance to authorities considering speed management in urban areas? If not explain your reasons.** YES.

**Q2. Do you agreed that traffic authorities should be able to consider the implementation of 20mph limits over a number of roads, where mean speeds at or below 24mph are already achieved. If not explain your reasons.** YES.

**Q3** NO COMMENT.

**Q4. Do you agree that the compliance with air quality limits could be a factor in the choice of speed made by traffic authorities? If not explain your reasons.** YES.

**Q5. Do you have other comments about the drafting of the revised circular?**

The Parish Council welcomes the clarification in the draft circular but consider that the Department For Transport is missing an opportunity to vastly improve the safety and quality of life for rural and village residents and wishes to make the following comments.

Section 7. Rural Speed Management

Para 113. The 600m assessments should be increased or a safeguard put in place to ensure traffic authorities have to also take a holistic view too. The crash record of some rural roads can be extremely poor but this is not recognised if the road is divided into 600m sections.

Para 114. Should include a strong reference to the need to consider whether a footway exists and also to sight lines that are restricted by curves, hedgerows or banks.

Table 2. Consideration should be given to revising the table to ensure that rural lanes (A or B classification) without footways are not automatically allowed to have 60mph limits. It is considered that many rural roads without footways with a 60 mph limit are dangerous for vulnerable users.

Para 116. The Parish Council considers that the guidance should be changed so as not to allow a 60mph speed limit on a C or unclassified rural road. This is to protect vulnerable road users and drivers.

Para 118. Rather than 'welcome applications' for zonal speed limits (40 mph in an AONB for example) could the DFT not set a standard and automatically require traffic authorities to install 40 mph limits on undivided roads? Too often traffic authorities ignore the needs of residents and visitors to such areas and can use the guidance to 'prove' there is no requirement to do so. A safeguard could be included that would allow an appeal to the DFT if it felt that it could not allow a 40 mph speed limit.

It is the Parish Council's experience that despite all the evidence (much of it quoted in the guidance) that rural crashes are a) more lethal - *68% of road deaths in Britain occur on rural roads* and b) can be reduced - *A 90% death rate at 60mph is reduced to 50% at 48mph* there has been a reluctance, or that is the experience in this parish, for the traffic authority to proactively deal with the issue. Also due to the financial situation many Traffic Authorities have reduced roadside vegetation maintenance and this is having an adverse impact on sight lines so it is imperative that speed is reduced.

The Parish Council understands that the DFT is trying to give traffic authorities the flexibility to decide on speed limits but what protection is there for rural residents and visitors when that flexibility allows a traffic authority to choose not to act?

#### 11. **Core Strategy; Strategic Sites Allocation Consultation.**

Members **received** the Clerk's briefing notes including comments by the two Borough Councillors.

Lengthy consideration took place including discussions on:

- NPPF policy and Government's presumption for development.
- Core Strategy policies.
- Traffic issues surrounding Grove Green.
- Traffic flows through surrounding areas.
- The Strategic Gap and whether due to Government policy and the current development this was already lost.
- Impact on natural environment and AONB.
- Impact on residents from development at junction 7.
- Impact on Grove Green from traffic generated by the 'Sutton Road' development proposal.
- Parish Council wish list and community needs.
- Junction 8 and the impact of any or no development at the sites there.
- The almost certain inevitability that the strategy would be adopted, could there be benefit to the parish in offering to work with MBC in mitigating the effect of some at least of the proposals rather than objecting outright to the whole.

Members expressed concern that without strong proactive input from the Parish Council a chance to improve the lives and futures of Grove Green, especially the traffic issues, would be lost.

Members **agreed** to respond.

Policy SS1 Strategic housing location to the north west of the urban area.

Policy SS1a Bridge Nursery. **No comment.**

Policy SS1b - East of Hermitage Lane. **No comment.**

Policy SS1c - West of Hermitage Lane. **No comment.**

Policy SS2 - Strategic housing location to the south east of the urban area

Policy SS2a - Langley Park

Policy SS2b - North of Sutton Road

Policy SS2c - North of Bicknor Wood

*It is likely that many residents of the proposed 1,075 new dwellings will use Willington Street/Ashford Rd/New Cut to access the motorway at junction 7 although the area is slightly closer to junction 8. Policies SS2a-c contains S106 payments for highway improvements in the immediate area but with no contribution to highway improvements further afield.*

*Policy SS4, Newnham Park deals with traffic issues caused by the proposed development but it contains no reference to any additional traffic from the 3 'Sutton Road' development areas. The lack of a strategic overview connecting the 2 increased traffic flows is considered a weakness in both the Core and Integrated Transport Strategies.*

*It is considered that the SS2a-c policies should contain Section 106 contributions to highway improvements around Grove Green.*

*It should be a requirement of the policies that the infrastructure is improved prior to any development commencing.*

Strategic employment location at junction 8 of M20 motorway

*Boxley Parish Council fought against the KIG development at junction 8. While recognising that some limited development may eventually be allowed there, it objects to the development proposed at Woodcut Farm and objects to B1a development on any land as warehousing and distribution offers, in the main, only low-grade employment.*

Strategic employment site at junction 7 of M20 motorway Policy SS4 - Newnham Park.

*In an ideal world, Boxley Parish Council would not wish to see the Strategic Gap disappear. This has hitherto acted as a vital buffer zone between the urban development and the AONB. However this protection has been eroded in recent years and it is obvious, from the approval for the KIMS development, that the M20 is now seen by Maidstone Borough Council as the new urban boundary. The recent Government change to the planning legislation, with its presumption for development, has also made it likely that the strategic gap will be further developed. Rather than almost automatically, and probably fruitlessly, object to any future development, the Parish Council has reluctantly decided that it needs to be pragmatic and take a proactive stance to work with MBC and local developers to ensure that the local communities gain from, what it accepts is probably inevitable.*

*In view of this the following comments are made:*

**SS4 Newnham Park.**

*General comment 1. The Parish Council considers that the amount of land being allocated for development under SS4 is excessive and should be reduced. Additional nature reserves/wooded areas should be included in the policy to break up the mass of development and to create wildlife links to the AONB and Vinters Valley Nature Reserve etc.*

On site.

1. Provision of a maximum 150,000m<sup>2</sup> of specialist medical facilities set within an enhanced landscape structure.  
*MBC should include the relevant Use Classes Order details with, where necessary, restrictions on Permitted Changes allowable under Use Classes Order. This will ensure that no 'lower grade' development will be permitted on the site.*
2. Replacement retail facilities at Newnham Court Shopping Village, confined to the immediate vicinity of the existing footprint of the current retail park;  
*The Council would welcome the redevelopment, on its current footprint, of Nottcutts Shopping Village. However there is concern over the impact on businesses in the Town Centre. The policy should include height restrictions on such development.*
3. Creation of a parkland nature reserve of 3.03ha on land to the south east of the site, as shown on the policies map, to be transferred to the Borough Council or maintained by a Trust;  
*The Council agrees to the creation of a parkland nature reserve to the south east of the site but it does not consider that there is enough land protected (see general comments above).*
4. Construction of high quality buildings of a sustainable design that reflect the site's prime location as a gateway to Maidstone;  
*Agreed, however it is felt that MBC should go further and produce a design or character statement that should influence what goes on the site rather than wait for 'off the peg one size fits all' buildings being included in applications. This is a very sensitive site and MBC must protect the AONB and local communities from the fashions and vagaries of architects. The council does not want another Eclipse Park.*

5. Mitigation of the impact of development on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting by the provision of new and the retention and enhancement of existing structural and internal landscaping, by the use of the topography in site layout plans to exclude development on more prominent parts of the site, by the restriction of building heights to a maximum of two storeys and the use of low level lighting, and by the use of green roofs where practical;  
*Agreed, however MBC should include a reference to the need to mitigate the impact of any development on the views from Grove Green as well as the AONB. The reference to excluding development on the most prominent parts of the site, and by restricting height on others, is welcomed but considered weakly worded. MBC should include in the Core Strategy the creation of additional parkland nature reserves on some of the prominent parts of the site, thus requiring the developers to include landscaping and planting to mitigate the impact of the new development and to increase bio-diversity. At 6.10 MBC refers to the need for a robust internal landscape structure but unless it identifies, in the actual plan and policy, locations or minimum square footage there is little faith that it will be successfully delivered.*
6. Medical facilities on land to the south of the hospital and west of the stream will be delivered in advance of medical facilities on land to the east of the stream;  
*Agreed.*
7. The cumulative quantum of retail floorspace will be restricted to the provision of up to 500m<sup>2</sup> above that which already exists, and any additional retail floorspace above this limit must be complementary to town centre uses and, by means of a sequential sites assessment, demonstrably require an out of town location;  
*As stated in 2 the Parish Council is concerned about the impact on the Town Centre if more retail space is included at Newnham Park. Retail attracts more traffic from a wider area and this will have an impact on an already congested highway infrastructure. As the Parish Council considers that too much of the land is being given over to development it is suggested that this additional retail provision is dropped. It is believed that the proposed redevelopment of Nottcutts shopping village would give adequate provision for local needs.*
8. Submission of a retail impact assessment for both comparison and convenience goods, to be approved by the Borough Council, in order to assess the impact of retail park proposals on the town centre;  
*Agreed, however retail development at Newnham Park would also impact on the Grove Green Minor Shopping Centre and a retail impact assessment should be produced as any adverse impact would particularly affect the more vulnerable members of society in that area.*
9. Provision of a minimum 30m landscape buffer along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site to protect Ancient Woodland, with tracts of planting extending into the body of the development;  
*Agreed but without the quantity of land given over to this landscaping being identified this statement is weak.*
10. Provision of a minimum 10m landscape buffer on both sides of the stream running north-south through the site (minimum 20m width in total);  
*Agreed.*

*General Comment 2. No consideration appears to have been given to the residential properties at Gidds Pond Cottages. It is considered that a landscape buffer zone should be included to protect these properties from the massive development on their rear boundary. The provision of a small area, adjacent to Gidds Pond Cottages, of off road car parking, for property owners might be welcomed.*

11. Submission of a full landscape assessment and ecology survey, to be approved by the Borough Council;  
*Agreed.*
12. A watching archaeological brief;  
*Agreed.*
13. Vehicular access to the site from the New Cut roundabout, with bus and emergency access from the A249 Sittingbourne Road;  
*Agreed, but only if the proper improvements to the highway infrastructure are included.*
14. A bus interchange as part of the retail redevelopment together with a car park management plan;  
*Agreed.*
15. Enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to the residential areas of Grove Green, Vinters Park and Penenden Heath, and to Eclipse Business Park;  
*Agreed.*
16. Submission of a Travel Plan, to be approved by the Borough Council.  
*The Parish Council has little or no faith in travel plans, however if they are required then they should be properly produced and subject to local scrutiny before being accepted by the Borough Council.*

**Off site:**

17. (16 sic) A signed legal agreement for off-site highway improvements prior to the commencement of development;  
*Agreed and strongly supported.*
18. (17 sic) Capacity improvements to the Bearsted roundabout at the junction of Bearsted Road with the A249 Sittingbourne Road, together with the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities;  
*Agreed and strongly supported.*
19. (18 sic) Capacity improvements to the New Cut roundabout at the junction of Bearsted Road and New Cut Road, together with the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities;  
*Agreed and strongly supported.*  
*The Parish Council requests that Section 106 is obtained to install a roundabout at the junction of New Cut and Grovewood Drive South. The current junction cannot cope with the existing traffic and the changes and increased traffic caused by development at Newnham Park and also around Sutton Road will not only increase the existing congestion and problems of residents living on Grove Green but will also endanger lives as with only 2 access and egress as emergency vehicles will be further delayed.*

**General Comment 3.**

*The Parish Council requests that the document is changed to reflect the actual names of the roundabouts (previously agreed with KCC). The roundabout referred to in this section and also section 19 is Weaving Roundabout.*

20. (19 sic) The upgrading of Bearsted Road to a dual carriageway between Bearsted roundabout and New Cut roundabout;  
*Agreed, as long as any land that is required to do the work is supplied from the Newnham Court Site and not taken from Vinters Valley Nature Reserve or Maidstone Crematorium. The Core Strategy or associated document should clearly state that this.*

21. (20 sic) Traffic signalisation of the M20 motorway junction 7 roundabout;  
*Agreed and strongly supported.*
22. (21 sic) A subsidised shuttle bus to operate between the site and the town centre, via New Cut Road and Ashford Road;  
*It is not clear why MBC places a value on a subsidised bus service. It is unlikely that someone shopping at Newnham Park would want to also shop in the Town Centre (or visa versa) and , if they did, do so by bus. It is also highly unlikely that the workers at the proposed development would be able to go into Maidstone in their lunch break. The money would be better spent on providing a good bus service that took in other local residential areas or for subsidising the P&R bus service which could be required to stop off at Newnham Park.*
23. (22 sic) Bus priority measures on New Cut Road, where feasible, and traffic signal priority measures at the junction of New Cut Road and the A20 Ashford Road;  
*See response to 19 as an additional roundabout is needed on New Cut Road.*
24. (23 sic) Improved bus links to the site from the residential areas of Grove Green and Penenden Heath.  
*Agreed and strongly supported.*

General Comment 4.

*Highway improvements are required on Grove Wood Drive North and if development at Newnham Park means that there will be increased traffic use of this road then a S106 contribution should be sought to improve width of Grovewood Drive North and install better pedestrian crossing points.*

General Comment 5.

*Increased traffic and the introduction of a dedicated bus lane on New Cut Road will require Grove Green Roundabout (outside Maidstone Studios) to be improved.*

**Financial contributions:**

25 (22 sic) Provision of appropriate contributions towards highway improvements.  
*Agreed and strongly supported.*

General Comment 6.

*The Parish Council is aware that the Grove Green Scouts wish to have a dedicated Scout Hall and require land. As the land at Newnham Court is the only remaining land available for such development it is requested that some land is reserved for community use/facility.*

General Comment 7.

*It is regrettable that Maidstone Borough Council is not looking to use brownfield sites.*

General Comment 8.

*The Parish Council would welcome the opportunity to be proactive at the development stages of the site.*

In accordance with policy the Chairman used his devolved power, as it was 9.30 pm, to extend the meeting by up to 30 minutes.

**12. Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy.**

After discussion members **agreed** the response.

**Action 1 (2012 – 2015): Implement highway improvement schemes at strategic development locations in the north west and south east of Maidstone Urban Area and in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and M20 Junction 8 to enable development at strategic site allocations**

*Due to the proposed development in the Core Strategy at junction 7 (SS4 Newnham Park) the Parish Council would support improvements to the highway infrastructure around junction 7*

a). M20, Junction 7. This includes converting the M20 eastbound approach and the two A249 approaches to the roundabout to traffic signals, whilst leaving the M20 westbound approach as a give way; to prevent traffic tailing back on to the motorway during peak periods. In addition, road markings will be rearranged to improve visibility on the roundabout.

*Agreed and supported.*

b). A249 / Bearsted Road Roundabout. This includes capacity improvements and provision of a pedestrian crossing at Bearsted Roundabout.

*Agreed and supported.*

c). Bearsted Road / New Cut Road Roundabout. This includes capacity improvements and an enlargement of the roundabout.

*Agreed and supported.*

*The Parish Council requests that Section 106 is obtained to install a roundabout at the junction of New Cut and Grovewood Drive South. The current junction cannot cope with the existing traffic and the changes and increased traffic caused by development at Newnham Park and also around Sutton Road will not only increase the existing congestion and problems of residents living on Grove Green but will also endanger lives as with only 2 access and egress emergency vehicles will be further delayed.*

*The Parish Council requests that the document changed to reflect the actual names of the roundabouts (previously agreed with KCC). The roundabout referred to in this section is Weaving Roundabout.*

d). Bearsted Road, between Bearsted Roundabout and New Cut Road Roundabout. This includes the upgrading of the road to a dual carriageway in both directions.

*Agreed, as long as the land needed is not taken from Vinters Valley Nature Reserve or Maidstone Crematorium.*

e). Constructing bus priority measures on New Cut Road.

*While welcome in principle, it is feared that such measures will only exacerbate the serious congestion problems that already occur here.*

f). Signalising bus priority measures at the junction of New Cut Road and A20 Ashford Road.

*See above.*

#### **Action 4 (2012 – 2015): Introduce a 16+ Travel Pass for bus travel**

*Agree and supported however it is considered that this should be expanded to include any person (older than 19) who is in full time education.*

#### **Action 5 (2012 – 2015): Investigate a reorganisation of the Park and Ride fare structure to target private vehicles rather than passengers only**

*Pay to park would be supported however it is felt that an opportunity to further increase income is being missed. Boxley Parish Council has previously brought to MBC's attention that it should investigate the possibility of slightly amending the P&R bus routes to allow them to 'dip into' residential areas and pick up fare paying passengers. This 'opening' up of the P&R buses to use by residents would mean fewer empty buses and an improved service for residents. By increasing the frequency of public transport it is likely that residents will find it more convenient to use buses and hence reduce the amount of traffic on the road. It is understood that by having additional stops that it may discourage some people from using the P&R system so it should not be a full bus service but one that either compliments the current service. It could also be that*

*the 'extended' P&R service only operates at residential bus stops in off peak times. The Sittingbourne P & R by-passes 2 large residential areas with empty buses.*

**Action 6 (2012 – 2015): Introduce Parking Standards to ensure a means by which development can ensure an appropriate amount of parking is provided and reduce its overall demand for car parking**

*The Parish Council has long been concerned about the fact that on-street car parking is causing problems for residents especially in the Lordswood and Walderslade areas. The converting of residential garages into rooms and the fact that most residential garages are too small for modern cars means that some residents have no alternative but to park on the street which often causes problems for pedestrians and other road users. Perhaps the planning department should force developers to build bigger garages and put on a restriction that they cannot be used for any other purpose.*

**Action 7 (2012 – 2015): Increase long stay parking tariffs (4+ hours) and season ticket tariffs for Council owned car parks by 50% (excluding inflation)**

*It is unlikely that this will encourage many motoring commuters to use alternative means of transport. The convenience of the private car is too great and bus schedules often do not match today's extended working hours. But money spent on parking is money that cannot be spent to support town-centre businesses.*

**Action 8 (2012 – 2015): Increase short stay parking tariffs (<4 hours) for Council owned car parks by 20% (excluding inflation)".**

*It is felt that this would have a negative impact on the plans to rejuvenate and retain a buoyant Town Centre economy. Shoppers will find the readily available fee car parking at Bluewater and elsewhere even more attractive than now. See also Action 7 above.*

**Action 12 (2012 – 2015): Introduce a subsidised shuttle bus between the Strategic Development Location at M20 Junction 7 and the town centre, to be funded by development coming forward at this location**

*It is not clear why MBC places a value on such a subsidised bus service. It is unlikely that someone shopping at Newnham Park would want to also shop in the Town Centre and access this by a bus service. It is also highly unlikely that the workers at the proposed development would be able to go into Maidstone in their lunch break. The money would be better spent on providing a good bus service that took in other local residential areas or for subsidising the P&R bus service which could be required to stop off at Newnham Park.*

*Congestion along New Cut Road is currently bad and with the additional traffic likely to worsen. Sittingbourne Road should be considered as the bus route.*

**Action 22 (Ongoing): Implement Maidstone's Air Quality Action Plan to minimise the impact of transport on air quality and facilitate the delivery of low carbon vehicle infrastructure**

*The Parish Council supports action to improve air quality throughout the Borough not just within the Town Centre.*

*No mention is made of the need to increase street tree, green wall, semi-natural green space and other vegetation coverage in urban areas and areas near motorways etc. It is felt that an additional Action should be included to require every S106 funded highway improvement to include planting or landscaping that would benefit the community by reducing pollutant levels.*

**Objection: Action 17 (2012-2015) Maintain existing P & R provision at the current level of service**

*See response to Action 5.*

*General comment. No mention is made of the use of the River Medway. Whilst it is understood that river travel is slow and the issue of cyclists using the currently*

*inadequate tow path is problematical to ignore the potential of the river, if improvements could be made, is a lost opportunity.*

**13. Policy and procedures review.**

Pre application discussions – deferred to the October meeting.

**14. Neighbourhood Development Plans**

The draft audits on Lordswood and Walderslade and Grove Green were deferred to the October meeting. It was **noted** that a NDP had been produced for Upper Eden and details were available from the parish office.

**15. Beechen Bank.**

It was **agreed** that the issue needed further investigation and the Clerk was asked to contact MBC and if necessary the Land Registry to obtain further information on the number of private owners. **Action** – Clerk.

**16. Saracen Fields open area**

Members **agreed** that County Councillor Carter should be contacted about the situation as it was felt that KCC had a moral obligation to gain ownership of the land and maintain it in the future. **Action** – parish office.

**17. Matters for information.**

**Noted** 2 letters had been received from residents thanking the Parish Council for arranging and paying for the reduction in the speed limit on Boxley Road and Beechen Bank Road.

**18. Next Meeting.**

Next full environment meeting 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

In view of the confidential nature (personal details) of the next item a resolution was passed to exclude the public and press for the duration of the item.

**19. Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC.**

Members **received** and discussed the update on enforcement being under taken by MBC.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman.....Date .....