

Annual Parish Assembly – Draft Minutes

The annual Parish Assembly was held on Thursday 25th May 2023 at 7.00 pm at Markbeech Village Hall. 20 Members of the Public attended.

Councillors in attendance: Cllr Haydon (Chair), Cllr Wade, Cllr Brookes-Smith and Cllr Lark.

Also in attendance: County Cllr McArthur, District Cllr Barnett, Joanna Brown (Kent Community Trust), Kevin Savill (Police Community Safety Unit), Katie Butt (Edenbridge and Westerham Citizens Advice) and Rachael Turner (Clerk and RFO).

*Please see separate report

Cllr Haydon welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

1. *Chair's Report for 2022-2023
2. Apologies were received from Tom Tugendhat, Cllr Roberts, Cllr Thomas and Cllr Lindsay. The attendance register was completed.
3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 26th May 2022 were duly approved.
4. *Report from Tom Tugendhat MP was read out.
5. *Report from Cllr. Margot McArthur – Kent County Council
6. Cllr James Barnett – Sevenoaks District Council introduced himself to those present and encouraged residents to approach him with any questions or issues they wanted to raise.
7. Presentations from guest speakers:
 - 7.1. Joanna Brown from Kent Community Trust talked about the Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre which is due to open at the end of the year. A model was displayed and leaflets were distributed. The new centre would have accessible consulting rooms, a day centre, more GP rooms and a range of clinics. The Minor Injuries Unit would be open Monday to Friday. There would be ultrasound but no x-ray facilities. The Centre will be seeking more volunteer drivers.

The League of Friends have been generous in their support of the Memorial Gardens which are at final design stage.

- 7.2. Kevin Savill, Police Community Safety Unit. Following changes there will be a Beat Officer allocated to the parish. The process has been centralised with standardised reporting and streamlined targeting.

With regards to crime, Cowden and Hever crime statistics are down. These can be viewed on the Kent Police website. Please do report any crimes or concerns by calling 101 or report it via the website.

Residents are encouraged to subscribe for local alerts on <https://www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk/>

- 7.3. Katie Butt – Edenbridge and Westerham Citizens Advice.

Citizens Advice is a key service that relies on grants and donations to operate. It offers support, free independent and confidential advice to anyone who needs it be it on cost of living support, claiming benefits, debt, marriage breakdown, pensions and many other areas. The local office in Edenbridge is open Monday to Thursday with face to face appointments and drop-ins available and email and telephone helpline too.

They work closely with the foodbanks, Samaritans, Age UK, Carers First and other worthy causes. The Waitrose Foodbank donations go to local people in need. Boots also have a toiletries donation point.

They collect data and submit it to Government for policy review, such as a call for regulating buy now pay later schemes and PPI.

Recent months have seen a significant increase in people asking them for support.

How can you help? Citizens Advice are always looking for new volunteers for anything from advising, helping with admin or research & campaigning as well as fundraising. They also run a 200 Club to raise funds and gives participants the opportunity to win a prize.

The Adviceline number is 0808 278 7962 or email enquiries@edenbridgecab.cabnet.org.uk

8. Questions were invited from members of the public present and any matters reported:

- 8.1. For Joanna Brown – Kent Community Trust

Q1 – Is there parking at the new Centre as people will need to drive?

A – Yes, 101 spaces

Q2 – As there is space for more Doctors, where are they coming from?

A – Unable to answer as not on the clinical team

Q3 – Why is the Minor Injury Unit only open 5 days rather than 7?

A – This is due to staffing (the GP's only work 5 days) and also there is no large demand. Data on attendees from hospital visits elsewhere is gathered and shows there are not many attendees from the local area at weekends. The data will be monitored for any changes in need.

Q4 – Are there going to be more call handlers to answer larger volume of calls as currently a long time is spent waiting in a queue.

A – Unable to answer this as the GP's manage this area.

Q5 – Why is it not possible to get Covid vaccines at the medical centre?

A – Unable to answer as not on the clinical team. Someone added you could get a vaccine at Sevenoaks pharmacy.

8.2 For Councillor James Barnett – Sevenoaks District Council

Q6 – What is your remit?

A – Planning, licencing, bin collections. Please do feel free to approach me with any queries.

Q7 – Potholes. They are causing great issues, for example How Green Lane. What is being done about them?

A – Roads are not District Council responsibility, however, we have reported the issue. Cllr Barnett encouraged everyone report any potholes via the on-line reporting facility.

Q8 – The pothole App isn't recognised by SDC. The potholes on How Green Lane were reported in December and took nearly 6 months to repair. The repair has now been done but one is appearing again already. The public are very concerned over the poor quality of repairs and the need for repeat repairs.

A – Cllr McArthur confirmed that was being worked on. Cllr Barnett added that if two potholes were near each other then both needed reporting or wouldn't be repaired. Using location specifics such as What3Words was helpful.

8.3 – For Councillor Margot McArthur – Kent County Council

Q9 – Why is there no maintenance of drains? It isn't being done, despite reporting, and causes flooding, for example in Five Fields Lane.

A – It is down to lack of budget. Only reactive issues are being dealt with, not maintenance. If someone has been out to review the problem and it is no better then let Cllr McArthur know.

Q10 – Frequent temporary traffic lights are set up, often weekly, for example on Mill Hill/ Hartfield Road by companies such as BT. Why is this?

A – These are Permitted Works. Utility companies have the right to do works. KCC has no say over the frequency of them or when they can happen.

8.4 – For Kevin Savill - Police Community Safety Unit

Q11 - Are the Police moving into Edenbridge Fire Station?

A: No they are not.

CLlr Wade pointed out there was a noise nuisance reporting app that is available. More details to follow.

8.20 pm meeting closed. Chair informed everyone was welcome to stay for refreshments and to chat to the guest speakers and Councillors.

DRAFT