



Spring 2019

TDRA NEWSLETTER

TDRA Annual General Meeting

St Mildred's Church Hall, Church Road, Tenterden on Wednesday 15th May at 7.30 pm.

This is open to both members and non-members and is the perfect opportunity for you to raise issues affecting Tenterden. Our guest speaker, Richard Masefield will share progress with the recently approved Neighbourhood Plan focussing on the designation of Green Space within the Parish of Tenterden. John C Merrill, appointed artist for TENT1A has also kindly agreed to present his ideas for the two proposed sculptures to be located within the development. We hope to see you there.

Tenterden Regeneration Project

In our last newsletter we summarised the status of the project as we understood it - events have moved on and the Council have some big challenges ahead.

To recap, the Council have £3.5m to spend on Regeneration projects. So far, we know it has put a contract out to tender for the Town Hall refurbishment for £1.2m and spent £0.2m on Community Grants. The big unresolved question is the cost of the Recreation Ground. Until very recently, the position as expressed by the Town Clerk is that the £2.1m plan, which includes the complete relocation of the Bowls Club, is the only option the Council will consider.

However, just as we go to press, we hear that the Council sub-committee responsible for assessing the various projects has asked that this be re-assessed to come up with an alternative plan – not moving the Bowls Club, and at much reduced cost. This is good news – as many of you will know we have been vocal critics of the original plan.

Other potential claims on the Regeneration “pot” include a bid from St. Mildred's for £0.75m to assist their Re-ordering Project, the development of a possible cinema (but see separate comment below), and the provision of football facilities.

The St. Mildred's Re-Ordering Project was at an early stage last time we went to print, but is now considerably advanced and we know that St. Mildred's (with the support of other churches in the town) put in a pitch in October last for £0.75m. As a Committee, we have expressed our support for St. Mildred's and would be disappointed if a reasonably material amount from TTC was not forthcoming.

For the Cinema Project, the stated position of the Council has been that the maximum they might provide is the £0.5m that they need to spend in any event to bring The Pebbles building up to a standard where this is commercially lettable. We have not queried the Council on how such a cost is treated but assume at present it falls outside the claims on the Regeneration funds. The Focus Group has spent considerable time looking at additional funding sources and the need for the cinema to be commercially viable.

The only mention of football facilities has been of funding

access to the 3G pitch at Homewood School by the Town's football club. Is this enough or will we need greater capacity over time?

If the Recreation Ground project is significantly reduced, we believe there is adequate funding to meet the needs of the Town Hall and the Recreation Ground, support a new cinema, make a worthwhile contribution to the St. Mildred's, and even spend some money to improve the football capacity in the town.

The decision to re-look at the Recreation Ground plan is a major step which means that a worthwhile and fair outcome is at least possible. We hope the progress continues. By Howard Burnside

Cinema Focus Group

With its Cinema Focus Group appointed by Tenterden Town Council, the town is fortunate to have a widely experienced team who are working hard to advise and assist TTC in bringing a cinema to our town as part of the Regeneration project. The Focus Group has a clear vision that a cinema will not only be very popular with residents – meeting a widely expressed need – but also bring many economic benefits to other businesses in the town.

Nationally, we are becoming aware of the precarious state of our town centres as increasing numbers of shops stand empty. A Tenterden cinema would not only provide high-quality entertainment, it would provide new jobs and bring fresh life to the High Street. The local economy would be stimulated by the increased footfall of cinema goers, with a particular benefit to the evening economy between the hours of 6 and 9 pm.

A two-screen boutique cinema with disabled access in Tenterden would offer an entirely different experience from the multi-screen complexes already in existence in Ashford.

It is particularly fitting that The Pebbles was viewed as the best option of venue by the appointed architects: when the building was bequeathed to the town by Mrs Alice Wood in 1945, it was with her desire, expressed from as far back as 1928, that the building should be for the use of the town as an art gallery and museum. This never happened, due to nervousness about maintenance and running costs. A boutique cinema, offering live screenings of plays, operas and art exhibitions as well as films, would go a long way towards fulfilling the historic aim of the benefactor. The

public spaces in the venue could also provide local artists with space to show and sell their work.

So what is the current stage in the process? TTC has commissioned specialist architects Burrell Foley Fischer to prepare a pre-application to Ashford Borough Council. The purpose is to clarify any issues that might affect a full planning application. This submission will include a draft heritage impact assessment and will outline ways to minimise the impact on this listed building and the heritage of our High Street. This pre-application will be lodged in February and the feedback from ABC will inform the next phase of the project.

Future updates on progress will be posted on TDRA website as well as the TTC website. By Carol Parkin

Update on the Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Area designation (for the whole parish) is to be agreed by Ashford Borough Council, following their 6-week consultation, by the end of this month. Work on the selective Neighbourhood Plan for Tenterden can then begin and which is likely to take up to 2 years to complete. Three Town Councillors – John Crawford, Kate Walder and Jean Curteis – will be leading the Core Steering Group for the project, with initial funding from the Council and the support of the Town Clerk. Community planner, Jim Boot, who has wide experience of neighbourhood planning, has been appointed to guide the Council through the process.

Following a public announcement in March for the launch of a Neighbourhood Plan to determine what's most valued about this town by its residents and stakeholders, and to offer statutory protection to those green spaces considered vital to its wellbeing, there will be the widest possible public consultation to enable everyone to understand and discuss the process and contribute to its success. By Siggie Nepp

TENT1A Update

Our last published update of the progress on the TENT1A development was in the Chairman's Report in "The Resident" in April 2018. Since that time great strides have been made by both Dandara and Taylor Wimpey. The view of the Church View and Three Fields developments across the fields has drawn many appreciative comments from walkers using Six Fields Path.

Dandara report that 40 out of the 44 houses in Phase A are complete and almost all are occupied. Five houses (out of 26) in Phase B are also complete with three already occupied. Twenty five completed "affordable" house units have been handed over to Moat Housing Association. Dandara report that "most of the purchasers of larger homes are local people with homes to sell". Completion of purchase of 11 houses is held up pending the new owners' sale of their current houses. Upgrading works between the end of Bells Lane and Three Fields path have been rescheduled and are not now expected to be commenced until late-Spring.

Taylor Wimpey report that a total of 32 homes have been completed on the Three Fields Development since construction work started. 37 homes (out of 112 on the

total development) have been sold and there is currently a range of one, two, three and five bedroom homes to reserve. 25 residents have already moved into a new home at the development, with a further 38 expected to move in before the end of this year. As well as 73 private homes, Three Fields will also provide a total of 39 affordable homes. By Alan Bates

Planning Report

We have been actively monitoring planning applications over this period, and have formally issued our comments to Ashford Borough Council for a number of key applications - for more information please refer to our website:

17/00708/AS – Care Home on land north of 14 Westwell Court

' ... The recently submitted artist's impression has not been supported by any view angles or location data, there is also no view of the existing site to compare this too. As there is no evidence to ensure that this artist's impression is a reasonably accurate recording of the proposal it should be dismissed.'

'In addition to our previous objections and in response to the amended drawings two points seem the most pertinent – one is the access for emergency vehicles – there should be a second access in our opinion. Page 126 of Kent Design suggests a minor access road which this is, almost, "generally serves up to 100 dwellings, including those in other residential areas which feed onto it. The road should either be a through road or, if a cul-de-sac, serve no more than 50 dwellings unless an alternative emergency access route, to serve also as a pedestrian and cycle route, can be provided". There are more than 50 dwellings and we consider the need for an emergency access is especially pertinent for a care home where the population will be elderly by definition and may need more frequent emergency vehicle access.'

The second is the description of the site as sustainable. The data in section 3.3.3 of the Transport Assessment gives a table showing the walk distances that are preferred and then promptly illustrates that this site is at the extremities of what would be acceptable. No consideration of the topography has been made when applying PTAL walking speeds designed for London urban living. We find this a weak point. However KCC Highways, as the Highway Authority, has not reached the same conclusion – their letter dated 2nd November explains "for a proposal to receive a sustainable recommendation of refusal on highway grounds it must have a severe impact on highway capacity or highway safety. This is simply not the case with the tabled planning application." We think the need for an emergency access is something that has been overlooked and that should have been picked up in the safety audit and is possible grounds for refusal on highway safety. We support the legitimate concerns of the many objecting local residents. We would also point out that the Transport Statement and the latest highway drawings do not now match.'

This application is pending decision. By Siggie Nepp

Volunteers Required Please

We are running short on volunteers to assist in distribution of these Newsletters and the annual 'The Resident' magazine. This would involve posting newsletters through members' doors two or three times a year, as well as collecting members' donations once a year where feasible whilst distributing The Resident in April/ May each year.

Join Us

For more information and to join us go to ...

www.tdra.org.uk