



TDRA NEWSLETTER

TDRA Coffee Morning

White Lion Hotel Saddlery, Tenterden High Street on Saturday 26th October from 10–12pm. This is open to both members and non-members and is the perfect opportunity for you to chat with us on any of the ongoing issues affecting Tenterden – or any fresh thoughts you wish to share. We hope to see you there.

Plans for Town Hall Revamp Revealed

Plans for the revamp of the Town Hall were presented by the architects, Theis and Khan, to a networking meeting of the Chamber of Commerce on 2nd July and other invited guests. Disappointingly, the audience amounted to only some 30-40 people. Copies of the plans have since been released to attendees and can be seen on the TTC website.

After considering several options the architects have proposed a stunning development for the town hall building which will provide a large exhibition space on the ground floor and much improved accessibility throughout. A glazed extension to the side of the building will provide access to the rear at both ground and first floor levels. Council offices will be located to either side of the front entrance. A lift will provide access to the upper floor for disabled users and there will be much improved male, female and accessible toilet facilities.

The plans include removal of the false ceiling to the main assembly hall (which was only added in the 1970's) with the roof structure and rooflight being once again exposed. Improvements will be made to enhance the insulation and acoustics of the assembly hall – the poor acoustics were one of the main reasons for the installation of the false ceiling. The existing staircase and mayor's parlour will remain essentially unchanged. On the upper floor a new glazed corridor/walkway will provide a link to the kitchen and backstage areas.

TTC are planning to hold a public exhibition of the proposals for the Town Hall, Cinema and Recreation Ground later in the year – an event not to be missed!

The TDRA Committee are supportive of the plans for the Town Hall which are imaginative and will create a much more usable space with major improvements in accessibility. We understand that the estimated costs are higher than the budgeted figure. We consider that if necessary, TTC should borrow additional funds, taking advantage of current low interest rates, to allow the revamp to go ahead with repayment by means of a modest increase in the precept. This is a once-in-a-lifetime project - truly an investment for the future for the Town!

By Alan Bates

Cinema Focus Group

The good news is that progress continues to be made! The pre-application advice received from both ABC and Historic England has been positive with all parties appearing to prefer Option 2 of the alternatives; this would involve a courtyard to the rear of The Pebbles with the two screen cinema being constructed in a new build structure the other side of the courtyard. The courtyard would in effect become a contemporary recreation of the original arrangement of the Pebbles which had stableyard and stables to the rear. The furthest end of the Millennium garden would be retained – altogether some fifty percent of the current garden with improved access.

The cinema focus group has recommended to TTC that the full building feasibility study should now proceed and were delighted to receive a positive endorsement by TTC at the Council meeting on 9th September. As the new TTC tender threshold is now £25,000, the study will be going out to tender.

Answers to questions raised by ABC and KCC concerning archaeology and traffic issues will be addressed during the ongoing feasibility study.

In the meantime discussions have been held regarding legal and financial aspects as a preliminary to establishment of the most appropriate company structure having regard to fundraising, leasehold and taxation issues.

More information and the plans of Option 2 of Tenterden cinema will be available at the TDRA coffee morning on 26th October.

By Carol Parkin

Recreation Ground Focus Group

In the Spring Newsletter we reported that TTC had decided to re-examine the proposals for the improvement of the recreation ground with the bowling green left in its current location. The car park opposite the Ivy Court surgery will also remain in place. Together these would reduce the estimated costs by some £600,000.

The last few months has seen some progress to finalising proposals for the rec. The first phase of works will

concentrate on the new skatepark and youth hub together with new tennis and netball courts. It is expected that the works will include removal of much of the existing mound between the football pitch and the leisure centre in order to improve connectivity between the various facilities – this was the preferred outcome after a vote at the focus group meeting. The children's play facilities, which are in good condition, will remain unchanged in Phase 1.

Cost estimates for the youth hub and other aspects of the recreation ground improvements have been received. It is hoped to get the works under way in early 2020.

By Alan Bates

Tilden Gill and TENT1B Update

The recent approval by ABC of various reserved matters regarding the Tilden Gill planning application for 100 houses has led to an increase in activity at the site. More fencing has been installed – now surrounding virtually the entire site with regular walkers diverted to alternative routes.

Many will be wondering what is happening on the second phase of the TENT1 development – TENT1B. The original plan set out in the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document (adopted October 2010) was to have 175 dwellings and be commenced in 2016 with completion by 2020. The current Local Plan has increased the planned number of dwellings to 225 and the delivery timescale has been delayed to the period 2020 – 2030. So what is happening so far?

Until very recently there have been few signs of activity on the TENT1B site. Since the oil seed rape crop has been harvested ecological studies have commenced with a survey of sample sites using patches of roofing felt to attract invertebrates. Thursday 22 August saw a topographic survey team at work.

A spokesman for TENT1B owner Tom Lewis has confirmed that architects and other specialists have been appointed and that pre-planning is in progress. Public consultation regarding the proposed master plan will take place in due course but no dates have yet been set for either the consultation or submission of the planning application. Both TTC and ABC are being kept informed.

A concern to TDRA Committee has been the risk that an absence of activity at TENT1B might increase the probability of an early planning application being submitted by Wates for Limes Land, justified by the apparent non-delivery of housing to meet the 5 year target for the Borough. In this regard it is good to at last see some positive action starting at TENT1B.

By Alan Bates

Sixfields Path BMX Track

Sadly our efforts to ensure the continuation of use by children of all ages of the "mud jumps" in the woods off Sixfields Path were to no avail. The woods have now been

fenced off and the jumps flattened by an excavator. We are grateful for the many expressions of support by bikers, parents, residents along Sixfields Path and new occupiers of the houses in TENT1. We continue to hope that with the passage of time a more enlightened view will prevail and allow the return of the bikers.

By Alan Bates

Tenterden Neighbourhood Plan

Since the public launch of the selective green Neighbourhood Plan for Tenterden back in May of this year, 5 working groups of residents led by and reporting to the Steering Committee have been busy gathering evidence for further consultation with the community and a first draft of the Report.

The Green Space working group charged with the mammoth task of describing and photographing every green site in or in close proximity to the town, has produced a 'long list' of sites which could potentially qualify for statutory Local Green Space protection.

Meanwhile other groups are pursuing work plans suggested by Jim Boot, the Community Planner we have engaged – researching policies and histories, cartography and landscape features, walking routeways, photographing local views and recording wildlife species – with additional guidance from planning professionals at Ashford Borough Council and the High Weald AONB.

In defence of our local wildlife sites we've so far recorded and logged with the Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre more than 800 animal and plant varieties in the parish, including numbers of protected species, have commissioned an ecological assessment of 10 areas of grassland in proximity to the town and have been professionally trained in habitat surveying. From early October, members of our steering committee will be working with a group of Sixth Formers at Homewood School who are keen to be involved with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The next public consultation events are scheduled for Saturday 2nd November in St Mildred's Church, when an exhibition of work to date will include morning and afternoon presentations and opportunities for stakeholders and residents to review progress, discuss methodology and contribute to the selection of green sites for further study.

We remain confident in an eventual Neighbourhood Plan for Tenterden that will succeed in preserving for the future the special character that's earned our town its title: Jewel of the Weald.

By Richard Masefield - Chairman NP Steering Group

Trees for Tenterden

The TDRA has decided to resume our tree planting in Tenterden. We feel that the planting of trees will enhance the beauty of the town and will have environmental benefits. Currently our tree fund is rather depleted and we would welcome any donations (large or small) to the tree fund. We hope with your help we can continue our

tree planting programme. If you wish to make a donation please contact via the website.

By Bill Chantler

Yet Another Retirement Development?

Residents in the vicinity of Smallhythe Road have been invited to a public consultation event by Churchill Retirement Living to be held at St Mildred's Hall on 25th September 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Plans will be presented for the proposed new development occupying the sites of the current properties "Tawny Bank", "Smallhythe House", "Woodberry" and "Micken Lodge" which each have extensive rear gardens.

Does Tenterden need all of this proposed retirement accommodation?

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 including the following:

19/00715/AS – Land at Homewood School adjoining Fire Station

'I am writing on behalf of the Tenterden & District Residents Association (TDRA) to object to this application for the following reasons...

1. *Over intensification of development on a site that is near to ancient woodland and ponds – adversely impacting the surrounding ecology*

2. *Insufficient parking provision - national design guidance is 1.75 assigned spaces per 2 bedroom apartment – only 1 space per apartment has been provided with one shared visitor space between all the 7 flats. This is likely to impact the already congested nearby road ways.*

3. *Potential impact on a nearby badger set – evidence should be submitted to support any conclusions on potential impact to this badger set and surrounding wildlife*

4. *Likely privacy issues caused by overlooking to neighbouring properties due to height of proposed buildings – 3 storeys*

5. *It is our position that any significant development over and above the current Local Plan should be considered completely unsustainable.'*

This application is pending decision.

19/00007/EIA/AS – Land between Woodchurch Road and Appledore Road

'I am writing on behalf of the Tenterden & District Residents Association (TDRA) to state the importance of undertaking an EIA for this important greenfield site for the following reasons:

1. *The site is designated as a Local Character Area and is bounded by the High Weald AONB to the east; Ancient*

Woodland and Kent SLA (Special Landscape Area) to the north and Tenterden Conservation Area to the west with listed buildings abutting it.

2. *The proposed 250 units as well as the incremental development surrounding this site, including Tilden Gill (100 units) and Hales Place (4 units) will have a cumulative effect on the ecological environment as well as wild life.*

3. *There have been recent professional studies of this land showing it to be a 'special' example of unimproved grassland typical of the medieval Wealden field system with many historical hedgerows, some several hundreds of years old.*

4. *The land also has significant heritage, namely as the site of the town gallows for over 300 years.*

5. *There are a number of ancient ponds which are linked by a complex system of streams and ditches and we are concerned that domestic waste, including surface water drainage from this development will harm the surrounding ecology and wildlife, including protected species of amphibians. There is already precedent of an overloaded local sewerage system.*

6. *We believe that important strategic views will be significantly harmed, including the view to St Mildred's Church.*

7. *There will be an overall loss of mature trees harming the existing wild life including protected species such as roosting bats.*

8. *We refute the claim that a development of this scale can improve the current biodiversity of this land, which has evolved over hundreds of years and is extremely rich in both flora and fauna. This development proposal would be completely unsustainable when considering the development already included in the Local Plan for Tenterden'*

ABC has decided that an EIA is not required. The TDRA have urged TTC to seek legal counsel on the soundness of this decision with a view to pursuing an Appeal - TTC have approved this.

19/01206/AS – London Beach Golf Club

I am writing on behalf of the Tenterden & District Residents Association (TDRA) to object to this planning application for the following reasons:

'• The Ashford Local Plan states:

"This site is located on the A28, Ashford Road on the entrance to the built up settlement of St. Michaels, Tenterden. The London Beach Golf Club and Hotel is situated to the north of the site but is not visible, due to the setback nature of buildings. The site is overgrown scrub and contains a significant mature tree and hedgerow boundary, including a prominent Oak on the road frontage. There are views to the open countryside on the opposing side of the road and the housing directly to the south comprises of detached dwellings in large curtilages, creating a rural setting... The site was submitted for low density 'high quality' detached dwellings and is considered suitable for this 'exclusive' home purpose, for up to 3 dwellings only. This amount of development enables the retention of the mature trees and hedges, in particular the large Oak and enhancement of the

pond that lies beneath it.

The design of the properties here must be sensitive to characteristics of the local area and design proposals must indicate how the immediate setting will be enhanced. The buildings must be of innovative and high quality design and must not harm the immediate or wider setting...

- In Para 3.187 the Local Plan states "The Council is concerned that unplanned erosion of countryside between built up areas would have a serious and significant adverse impact on the character and individual identity of villages through loss of their setting or, more seriously, through coalescence. This could occur in a variety of locations across the borough, for example by the large scale expansion of villages to encompass nearby hamlets; through progressive 'ribbon' or linear development along roads that joins up settlements, or through the expansion of Ashford itself."

- POLICY SP7 – Separation of Settlements states "Proposals for built development on non-allocated sites outside the built up confines of settlements shall be permitted only where its impact, individually or cumulatively, would not result in the coalescence or merging of two (or more) separate settlements, or the significant erosion of a gap between settlements resulting in the loss of individual identity or character." This application would have all of the adverse impacts that the Council suggests in Para 3.187 and Policy SP7 that they are seeking to avoid.

- This proposal would result in significantly increased vehicular movements, impacting an already congested A28, particularly at peak travel times.

- The proposed designs do not reflect the local vernacular architectural character of the Low and High Weald, including Tenterden, both in use of materials, form and massing of the buildings.

- This site is not in the Ashford Local Plan and the proposals represent a significant additional number of residential units to Tenterden Parish, more than would typically be considered 'windfall'. We would consider this scale of development totally inappropriate for this location and completely unsustainable.

- There would be significant erosion to the ecology and wildlife that inhabit the site, particularly for foragers; bat roosting; amphibians and reptiles resulting in yet more loss of valuable green space within Tenterden Parish.

In summary, we object to this application as the proposed site is located in open countryside, beyond the urban zone of St Michaels and High Halden resulting in more unsustainable and unsuitable sprawl along the A28 towards High Halden. This would set an undesirable precedent for future linear development and would impact on the individual character and identity of the village of St Michaels and High Halden.'

This application is pending decision.

By Siggie Nepp

Meet Your Councillors Coffee Morning

All are welcome to attend and comment on community

matters including how the Town Council shares the £3.5 million from TENT1A between projects such as the Cinema, Recreation Ground and Town Hall Refurbishment, or any of the other top ten priorities on Saturday 19 October 10 - 12pm at the Town Hall.

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

We are always keen to welcome new members to TDRA. For more information and to join us go to ...

www.tdra.org.uk