



TDRA NEWSLETTER

TDRA Coffee Morning

White Lion Hotel Saddlery, Tenterden High Street on Saturday 13th 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.

Tenterden Regeneration Project

Members will recall the announcements from the Town Council in March last year of the £3.5 million available from the Tent 1 development, and the intention to invest a large percentage of these funds in improvements to the town.

Focus groups including town residents were set up and, from what we can tell, are coming towards a series of findings and final recommendations. The key groups and their progress so far is summarised as:

- Town Hall - Likely to recommend a total refurbishment of the Town Hall at a cost of approximately £1 million.
- Recreation Ground - Position so far is to support a substantial re-configuration of the Recreation Ground which includes re-siting the Bowling Club and putting in a new Skate Park. We have seen cost estimates (which as we understand have yet to be challenged by the Focus Group) of around £2 - £2.5 million.
- Cinema - Progress on this has been extensively reported elsewhere in the newsletter and the local press. In assessing the cost implications for the overall project, we have assumed the £0.5 million cost of bringing the Pebbles building up to the required standard comes out of the Regeneration funding.
- Sports facilities - This is somewhat of a grey area; we know that, through separate funding, the football pitch at Homewood is to be upgraded and is to become a resource utilised beyond just the school. We do not know what other plans are under consideration, but are conscious that any multiple pitch football facility will certainly require several hundred thousand pounds of funding.
- Community Grants - Tenterden Town Council have approved a series of grants to local organisations which total £165,000.

Over and above the Focus Group considerations we have seen evidence of a request for £0.75 million from St. Mildred's Church to assist with the re-configuration of the church.

In our view the issues and challenges facing the Council are:

- Ideally the Town Hall refurbishment should have been funded out of reserves and/or borrowing which is paid back through the regular income of the Council. However, we recognise that at this stage it is unlikely to be a viable option.
- The manageability of the overall cost is going to be a major issue. Some costs can be offset against grants from third parties, but in rough terms the summary above shows claims in excess of £4.5 million on the pot of funds of £3.5 million.
- The other key balancing act is to consider the benefits of each expense to the town and its residents against the cost of each item. By way of example, we are very much in favour of making improvements to the Recreation Ground as a core facility of the town, but to spend 60% of the money on that alone - not worth it in our view.

We can only recommend you watch this space - the Council will have some challenging times ahead!

By Howard Burnside

Cinema and Cultural Hub Focus Group

Following a meeting on 30th August of the Cinema and Cultural Hub Focus Group, three smaller working groups have been established to move the project forward. These groups will look at:

- Financial and legal structures required to establish a company to manage the cinema building. This will include contacting Ashford Borough Council to initiate a dialogue with them as potential investors.
- Contacting of independent cinema operators to gain evidence of potential interest in operating a cinema and cultural hub in Tenterden,
- Production of a Route Map which will form a model of the whole process from the current position through to project sanction and on to the opening of the cinema.

At this meeting the Focus Group were made aware by the Town Clerk of the reluctance of some councillors to invest TTC funds in the cinema project. The only financial commitment they are proposing to make is the estimated £500,000 it would cost the Town Council anyway to refurbish The Pebbles building to a reasonable standard in order to re-let the property if it is not converted to a cinema.

Other than this unavoidable expenditure It appears unlikely, at this stage, that any of the Tent 1 £3.5m will be earmarked for the cinema, and that the bulk of the funds will be used to repair and refurbish the Town Hall and for the changes to the recreation ground.

TDRA Committee, as well as the Focus Group, believe that the economic case for a cinema and cultural hub in Tenterden is strong. Tenterden Town Council would directly benefit from the income generated by investing in the project and leasing The Pebbles to a cinema operator. Shops, cafes, restaurants and pubs would benefit from the increased footfall in the town and the 'night time economy' would be significantly stimulated as a cinema would show films not only during the day, but also into the late evening.

The intention is that the cinema would incorporate a café where local artists would have a venue to exhibit and sell their artworks on a full time basis. This is something lacking at the present time in Tenterden, compared to other towns such as Rye.

Once the working groups have completed their initial work, the Focus Group will present a case for the cinema project to progress to the next stage at the Town Hall External Planning meeting at the beginning of November. At this meeting they will be seeking funding of up to £30,000 to facilitate this next stage of the development, a full building feasibility study. Subject to the council's approval a tender process would then be undertaken to find the company most suited to proceed with this work.

TDRA realise this may be difficult as it has already been indicated that councillors, "do not see a cinema in Tenterden as a priority". We hope the Focus Group will be able to demonstrate the benefits of a cinema and cultural hub to Tenterden and that councillors will recognise the opportunity this presents and come to acknowledge the strong desire for a cinema by local people.

For anyone wishing to attend the TTC External Planning meeting, it will take place on Monday 12th November in the Town Hall. The Cinema and Cultural Hub Focus Group presentation is likely to take place around 9pm.

By Carol Parkin

Recreation Ground Focus Group

"The Resident" in April 2018 provided a description of the proposed changes being considered to enhance

the Recreation Ground to offer a greater range of leisure and sporting facilities while also achieving a more coherent layout. A public presentation in the Town Hall was conducted in July. At that time two layouts were available for examination: one layout with tennis courts aligned East-West and an alternative with the courts aligned North-South to avoid players facing directly into the evening sun. A feature of one of these layouts was an access road and car park which appeared to be dedicated for use by the Bowls Club.

More recently, the cost estimate prepared by Ground Control has become available. This is summarised below:

Item No.	Item	Estimated Cost (£)
1	Removal of existing buildings, mounds, car park etc	144,500
2.1	Landscaping	242,940
2.2	Site Furnitures	77,300
2.3	Skate Park	125,000
2.4	Multi-use Games Area (MUGA)	62,234
2.5	Children's Play Area	222,500
2.6	Tennis and Netball Courts (including floodlighting)	238,000
2.7	New Car Park incl. off-road disabled bays	88,000
2.8	New Bowls Green	129,400
2.9	Planting	66,000
2.10	Drainage to boggy areas	20,000
3.0	Preliminaries	130,000
4.0	Contingency	50,000
5.0	Buildings (Kiosk, Toilet, Bowls Clubhouse)	400,000
6.0	Professional Fees	165,500
	TOTAL	2,161,374

It can be seen that the estimate comprises over £2.1 million. Of concern is the fact that the "contingency" sum allowed in the estimate is only £50,000, less than 2.5% of the overall estimated cost. My experience of estimating for engineering projects suggests that this figure is far too low. A contingency allowance of 15% is normally adopted. If this is taken into account it would amount to an additional £250,000, bringing the total estimated cost to some £2.4 million.

Potential external funding for the tennis courts could provide £59,500 (LTA) together with £60,000 for the Skate Park.

In the absence of substantial additional funding from other sources we think it would be appropriate for TTC to examine the scope for reduction in these costs either by reducing the overall scope of the works or carrying out the works phases linked to future availability of funds from other sources.

By Alan Bates

Results of TTC Residents Survey June 2018

The results of the TTC Public Engagement sub-Committee Residents Survey conducted in June 2018 have now been published. 675 completed questionnaires were received representing approximately 10% of the Town's population. Perhaps of most interest to Tenterden residents are the results to Question 8: What are the top priorities you would like to see Tenterden Town Council focus on over the next 1-2 years.

The top ten priorities in the TTC "Hit Parade" were:

1. Parking
2. High Street Shops
3. Potholes
4. Town Management
5. Police
6. Youth Provision
7. Cinema
8. Council revamp; list (not sure what this means???)
9. Summer Events / Tentertainment
10. Traffic Congestion

Several of these issues lie outside of the direct scope of the Town Council's remit. However, it is noteworthy that action on Youth Provision, a Tenterden Cinema and summer events such as Tentertainment were all highly ranked in the top 10 priorities by residents.

In contrast, the Recreation Ground was ranked at number 20 with the Town Hall revamp at the bottom of the chart at number 26, slightly lower priority than dog poo (22) and A-boards (23)!

By Alan Bates

ABC Local Plan to 2030

Following the examination hearing sessions and post hearings advice note received from the Inspectors, the Council is now consulting on Main Modifications to the Local Plan. This consultation runs from 13th September until 5pm on 26th October 2018.

For more information and to respond to the consultation please visit the Consultation Portal https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/consult.tj/MainMods_LocalPlan/consultationHome

The consultation and supporting documents have also been added to the examination documents page: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-to-2030/examination-documents/>

Ashford Local Plan - Housing Trajectory (December 2017)

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
TENT1A:	80	80	80	10			
TENT1B (S24):					70	80	75
POPE FARM (S60):		25	25				
BEECHWOOD (S42):	3						
PICKHILL BUSINESS VILLAGE (S25): EXPANSION OF BUSINESS PARK							

By Siggi Nepp

Tenterden Green Space Steering Group News

The new Tenterden Green Space Steering Group has been formed, with the encouragement of the Town Council, in response to the Government's introduction via the National Planning Policy Framework of a Local Green Space designation to provide a statutory protection for green areas of particular importance to local communities, whether it be for their beauty, for the opportunities for exercise and relaxation they afford or for the wildlife they contain. The Steering Group, which is supported by local MP, Damian Green, includes members of the Town

Council and their maintenance team, officers of the Kent Wildlife Trust, representatives of the Tenterden and District Residents' Association (TDRA), Sport Tenterden, the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, the Westview Integrated Care Centre, the Archdeaconry of Ashford, the Tenterden Schools' Trust, the William Judge Trust and the Weald of Kent Protection Society – with the Council for the Protection of Rural England, the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre and local Scouts, Guides and Footpath groups as consultants.

'We have identified up to nine sites within close proximity of the town centre which we believe to be worthy of protection,' says Siggi Nepp, TDRA Planning Secretary, 'including the Church Glebe field, the old Coombe Lane graveyard and the Bells Lane allotments. We have formed a working party to evaluate each site for possible designation on the basis of all available data. We plan to interview interested parties with knowledge of the areas at risk and to present the results at a public meeting in Tenterden Town Hall – to consult residents on their views and gain the support of Town and Borough Councillors for a comprehensive Green Space Strategy report. It is envisioned that the report will form a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for reference in the determination of planning applications.'

'The pressure to build and continue to build is relentless. We acknowledge the need for new housing, here as elsewhere, to meet central government targets,' Richard Masefield concedes. 'But Tenterden's growth needs to be sustainable, while there's a real danger of throwing the baby out with the bath water. If in the process of enlarging our beautiful old country market town we lose the very things that make it such a wonderful place to live in, we will be doing its current and future residents, and its indigenous wildlife, a huge disservice.'

By Richard Masefield - Chairman



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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:

18/00759/AS – Land to the South of Sicklefield House

'... This application appears to be misnamed since site lies within the Parish of High Halden, not St. Michaels. It should therefore properly be identified as being located within High Halden. In the same way as policies for Tenterden are different from those applicable to Ashford, so policies for High Halden should be different from those for Tenterden/St Michaels. This site should be judged on the basis of its true location – that is High Halden.'

The proposed new allocation (Policy S60) is located in open countryside and does not comprise a sustainable location. It is located some 2.7 km from the shops, school etc. in the centre of High Halden. There are many other sites located adjacent to the A28 road much closer to the centre of the High Halden settlement that could more appropriately be selected in preference to Pope House Farm. The new allocation (Policy S60) conflicts with Policy HOU5 which recognises that, whilst sites on the edges of existing settlements are generally acceptable as locations for further development sites beyond existing settlements are not sustainable, nor suitable. This site is well beyond the edge of the existing settlement of High Halden and as such, the proposed allocation defined in Policy S60 is not sustainable as a location.

Development of this site in High Halden would extend the built up confines of High Halden and would set a precedent for possible future development of the entire road frontage between St. Michaels and High Halden – a most undesirable outcome.

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.” The Pope House Farm allocation (Policy S60) would have all of the adverse impacts that the Council suggests in Para 3.187 and Policy SP7 that they are seeking to avoid.

Policy S60 attempts to justify the selection of this site by reference to the distance to the shops, school and other services in St Michaels. But to approve development of this site would create the injustice that future residents of the Pope House Farm development would be dependent on the services in St Michaels but would not contribute to the local taxes for Tenterden Town Council which is responsible for some of these services, since Pope House Farm site lies in a different Parish. The future residents would not be able to participate in local elections for St. Michaels, but would instead have voting rights in High Halden. Planning of new housing should not ignore such administrative boundaries.

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, however the site is considered acceptable by the Inspectors to be included in the Local Plan.

18/00448/AS – Land South of Tilden Gill Road

‘ ... a) We do not find any relevance to using the ‘arts and crafts’ style for Tenterden. A meaningful and detailed study of the local vernacular architecture is required and the materials and detailing need to be interpreted in a high quality and convincing manner.

b) The 3-storey flats at the southeast end of the proposed development will have a negative impact on the adjacent AONB and should be relocated towards the entrance to the site.

c) The protective buffer zone adjacent to the listed setting of Belgar is insufficient.

This application is pending decision.

18/00858/AS – Land South and East of Tilden Gill Road

Further to submitted comments online, the applicant has reportedly agreed to implement the original roundabout proposal. 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 20 October 10 - 12pm at the Town Hall.

TDRA Tenterden Quiz Winner

Congratulations to TDRA member Norma Peachey who won our Tenterden Quiz in this year’s Resident magazine. Norma wins a Waterstones Gift Voucher with our compliments.

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**](http://www.tdra.org.uk)