

Headline

Birling, Offham and Ryarsh

July / August 2021

Liberal
Democrats

Local Plan goes back to Drawing Board

Following the Planning Inspectorate repeating it was not satisfied the Borough Council co-operated with Sevenoaks during the preparation of the draft Plan as the law requires, the Borough Council have decided to withdraw it.

TMBC had tried to persuade the Inspectorate they were wrong but without success. This means the Borough Planners have to prepare a new plan reflecting up to date Government policies including the increased housing numbers now required. So this will be on top of the 6500 extra houses the abandoned plan proposed. There will also need to be fresh rounds of public consultation, so the whole process is likely to take another two years. And consult as required all the surrounding districts including Sevenoaks.

Meanwhile, the Government have been proposing further "reforms" to the planning system to make it easier for developers to get permission for new housing sites on green fields and reduce the role of both councils and residents to object to planning applications. While in theory this should not apply to the Green Belt or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty such as our North Downs this is all very worrying for the future of Kent's countryside. We will continue to urge Kent's MPs to resist such changes.

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New TMBC Leader vows to sort out Urbaser Waste Collections

Local Conservatives have forced out their Borough Council Leader for the last nine years, partly because of failures to get the bin collection scheme working properly. New Leader Matt Boughton, Cllr for Tonbridge Medway ward, has vowed to sort it out.

A two week suspension to allow collections to catch up didn't work, as many places continued to see missed collections. Urbaser claimed a national shortage of HGV drivers was the problem, but it doesn't appear to have affected other Boroughs in Kent.

Meantime cardboard awaiting collection is increasing the litter blowing in the streets. Please put a stone or brick on top of the pile, or string it together to help stop this happening.

West Malling public toilets closed

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council closed West Malling Public Toilets on April 1st as part of budget cuts. West Malling Parish Council refused to accept the £12k per year ongoing costs for the toilets which would have been a 10% increase in the Parish Council Tax Rate. The Parish Council feels the location of the toilets is poor and should be in the High Street Car Park.

The Parish Council is awaiting permission from TMBC to place temporary portaloos in the car park for Farmers Markets, Festivals and special events. The £10k Costs of the portaloos are coming from a Government Covid related grant for supporting businesses by helping the reopening High Streets.

Anybody else see the logic in this barmy situation?

Please let me know if you have suffered personally, or changed your shopping habits by the lack of public toilets in West Malling. Email me on nicholasgstapleton@gmail.com

Sign up to our regular news email bulletin!

We produce an email newsletter every few weeks, sharing local news, updates and info.

**To sign up, email
nicholasgstapleton@gmail.com**



LIB DEMS - WORKING HARD ALL YEAR ROUND

Do You Want a 20mph Limit in Your Street?

Government and KCC are now favouring 20mph schemes in residential areas. Whole town 20 mph zones have been introduced in Tonbridge and Faversham using Government Grant. Almost the whole of Larkfield has been approved as a 20mph zone for setting up before Christmas, funded by Trudy Dean's KCC Councillors Community Fund. She intends to extend this to East Malling next year. West Malling already has a 20mph zone covering most of the centre of town, but we are looking to extend this to include Norman Road, Offham Road, St Leonard's Street and Lucks Hill up to the bypass bridge.

On top of this, there are Speedwatch schemes currently in place in East Malling, Larkfield, Watlingtonbury and Hadlow, and Nick Stapleton coordinates the West Malling scheme. Speedwatch is an effective way to educate drivers on their speed and the speed limit, and those recorded as speeding will have their details passed on to Kent Police.

So, do you think traffic speeds are too high in your street?

Let us know. Post the survey below to 'FREEPOST, Kent Lib Dems' or complete our quick online survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9NTPL8G

1. Do you want a 20mph limit in your street?

YES NO

2. Do you support a 20mph zone for your whole village?

YES NO

3. If you support 20mph limits, please list 1 to 3 which of the following are most important to you.

- Road Safety
- Noise
- Pollution

4. Would you be prepared to join Nick Stapleton and other local volunteers on Speedwatch sessions monitoring speeds in local streets?

YES NO

Larkfield And Borough Green Libraries are open and **West Malling Library** is expected to open in the week beginning 9th August. Archive services in Maidstone will be operating by appointment. Ring 03000413131 or email Historyandlibrarycentre@kent.gov.uk

Larkfield Leisure Centre is reopening, easing restrictions to activities gradually on different dates so check on the website before you visit for swim, gym, exercise, dance, crèche, larkabout and cafe. The spa is undergoing maintenance work at present.

Tovil Waste Tip is still available only by Appointment. Ring 03000417373 or book online.

A Covid Vaccination Helpline has launched for Kent and Medway citizens. It aims to answer any questions or concerns about getting a vaccination. Translation services are available. Phone 0330 320 4444, between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Have you got an issue or question? Contact us!

Nick Stapleton - nicholasgstapleton@gmail.com 07534 459491

David Thornewell - davidthornewell@blueyonder.co.uk 01732 847415



Local councillors Nick Stapleton & Trudy Dean at the entrance of the existing 20mph zone in West Malling



Nick & WMPCCl Gwyneth doing Speedwatch on Swan St, W. Malling