

## **COUNCIL UPDATE 3/2021**

### **ROADSIDE DITCHES**

The last month has brought considerable challenges for a number of residents and communities because of the cumulative impacts from unsettled weather since December. Blockages in roadside ditches have caused significant drainage issues for roads and nearby properties. KCC is only responsible for maintaining a roadside ditch if it was constructed as part of the road and forms part of the highway. In other cases, responsibility for the ditch falls to the “riparian” owner, normally the owner of the field next to the road. KCC is the Land Drainage Authority in Kent except where it an “ordinary watercourse” or “main watercourse” which are managed by the Internal Drainage Board or Environment Agency respectively. Where KCC is the Land Drainage Authority it can serve notice on the riparian owner to have work carried out and if they do not carry out work, carry out the work and bill the riparian owner. KCC also has the duty to keep the highway free from flooding. So, KCC can be the first port of call for road and roadside drainage issues and can navigate through complexities.

### **COVID-19 VACCINATIONS**

Need help with transport for your covid vaccination? Ashford Voluntary Car Scheme could help. Their drivers are taking people from across Ashford Borough (including Tenterden and the villages) to get their jabs. They charge £2 plus 50 pence per mile to cover costs. Drivers and passengers must wear masks. Contact [transport@ashfordvc.org.uk](mailto:transport@ashfordvc.org.uk)

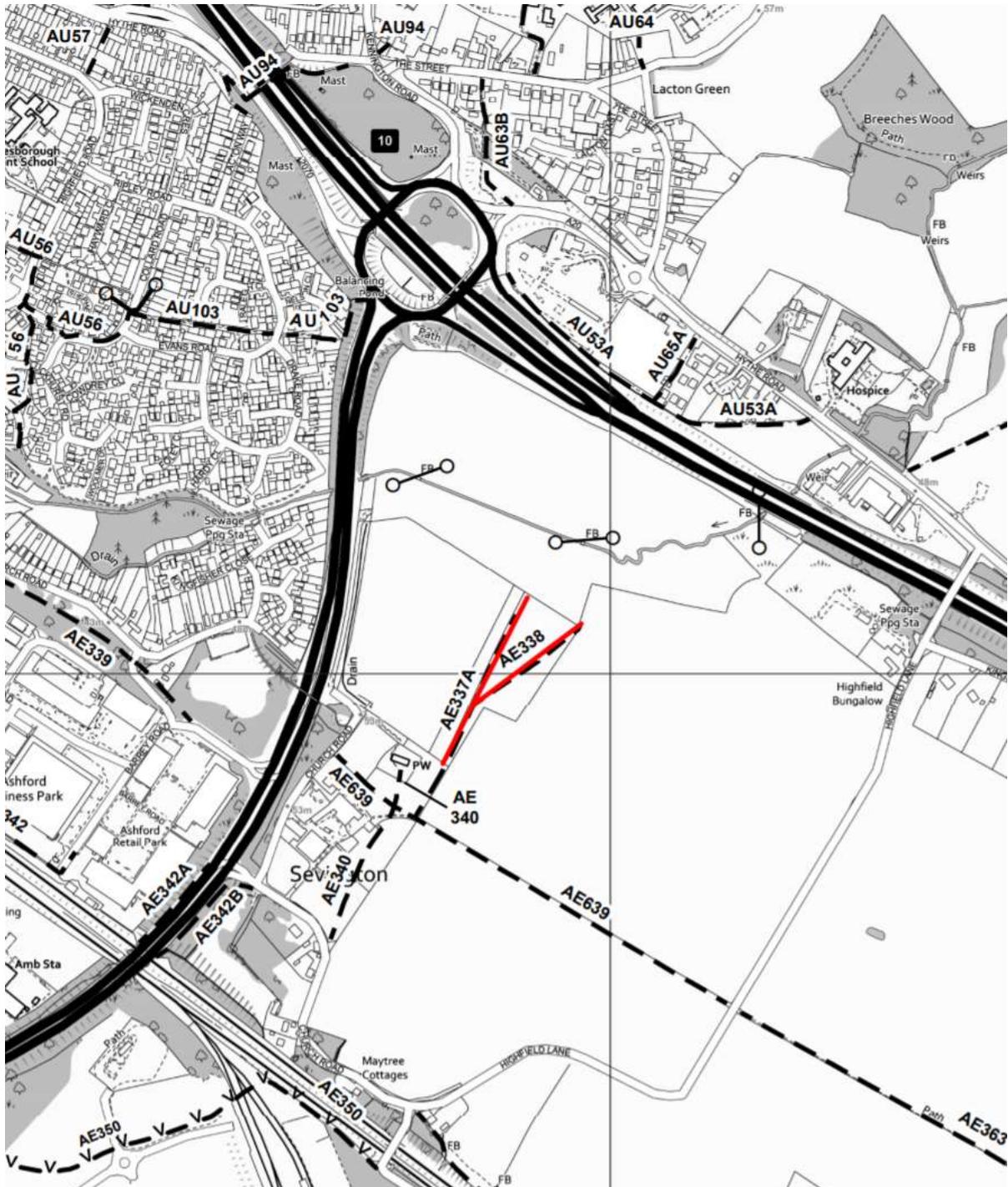
### **TIMEBANKING**

Ashford Volunteer Centre has its very own Timebank, Time4Ashford! How does timebanking work? 1 hour = 1 time credit, for every hour you spend helping someone, you earn one time credit. You can then use this to ask for help in return or donate it to our community pot where it will be used to help others. Everyone's time is valued equally regardless of what skills you can offer and it's a great way to offer support in a flexible way. Timebanking is for everyone, it's free to become a member and it's open to anyone aged 18 or over, regardless of ability, skills or situation. Why not join and find out just how rewarding timebanking can be. Joining is quick and easy. Sign up at <https://tol2.timebanking.org/ashford>

### **FOOTPATHS**

The Secretary of State for Transport has directed that the Order made by KCC on 10 August 2020, the effect of which was to prohibit all traffic from Public Footpaths AE337A and AE338, has been extended for a further 6 months until 10 August 2021. Public Footpath AE337A is closed between the field boundary of Sevington Church and its junction with the new A2070 footway.

Public Footpath AE338 is closed between its junction with Public Footpath AE337A and its junction with the new A2070 footway. The alternative route is via the footway of the new link road of the A2070 and Church Road and will be signed for the duration of the closure.

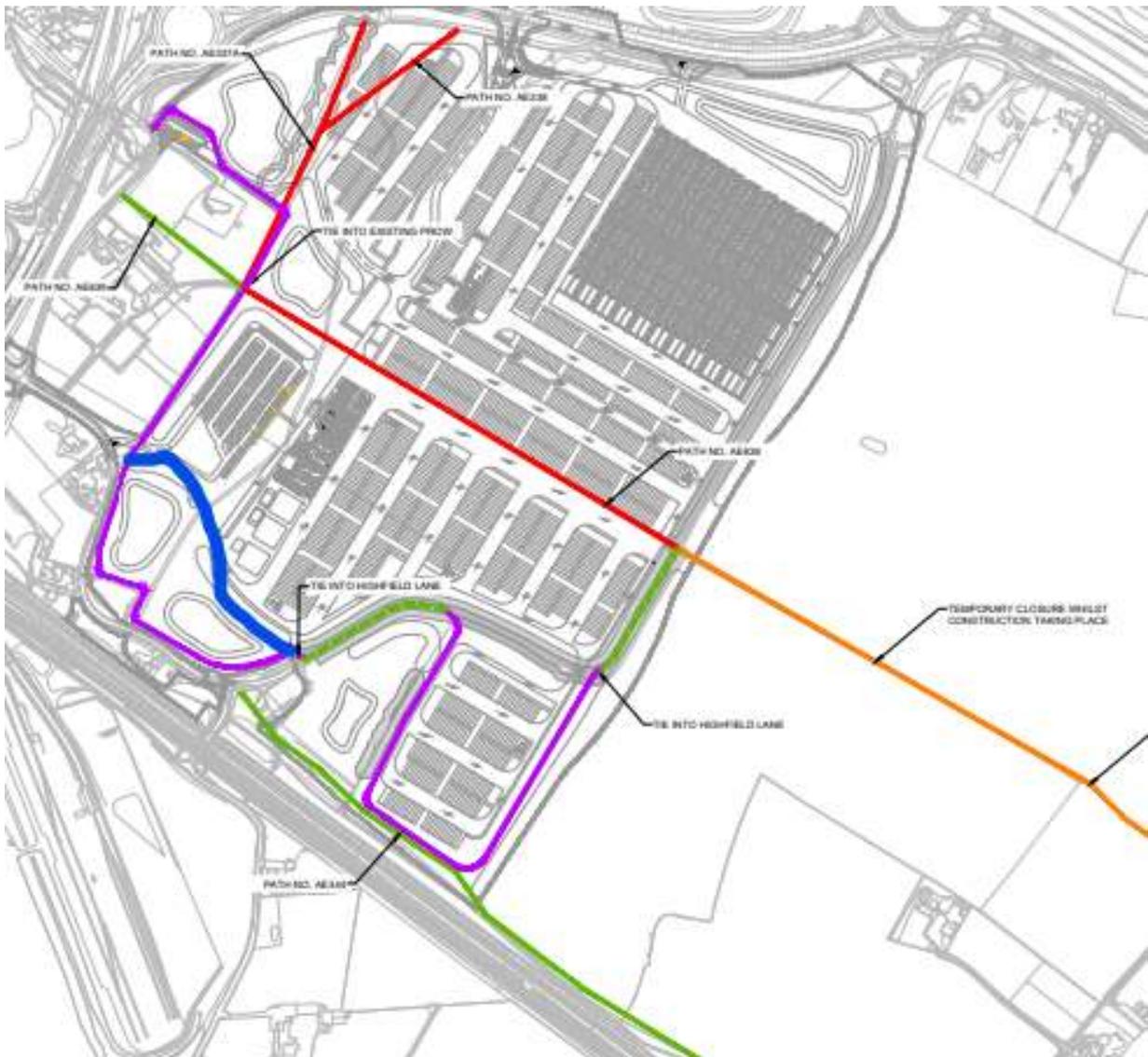


### SEVINGTON IBF

It is expected that the Sevington IBF will be opened for HMRC checks during February 2021, allowing Waterbrook IBF to close ahead of schedule. This will significantly reduce the lorry movements between Sevington IBF and

Waterbrook IBF and put an end to lorries arriving in Kingfisher Close and reduce congestion on the A2070. Waterbrook IBF now has its own postcode TN24 0GB which will help to direct traffic.

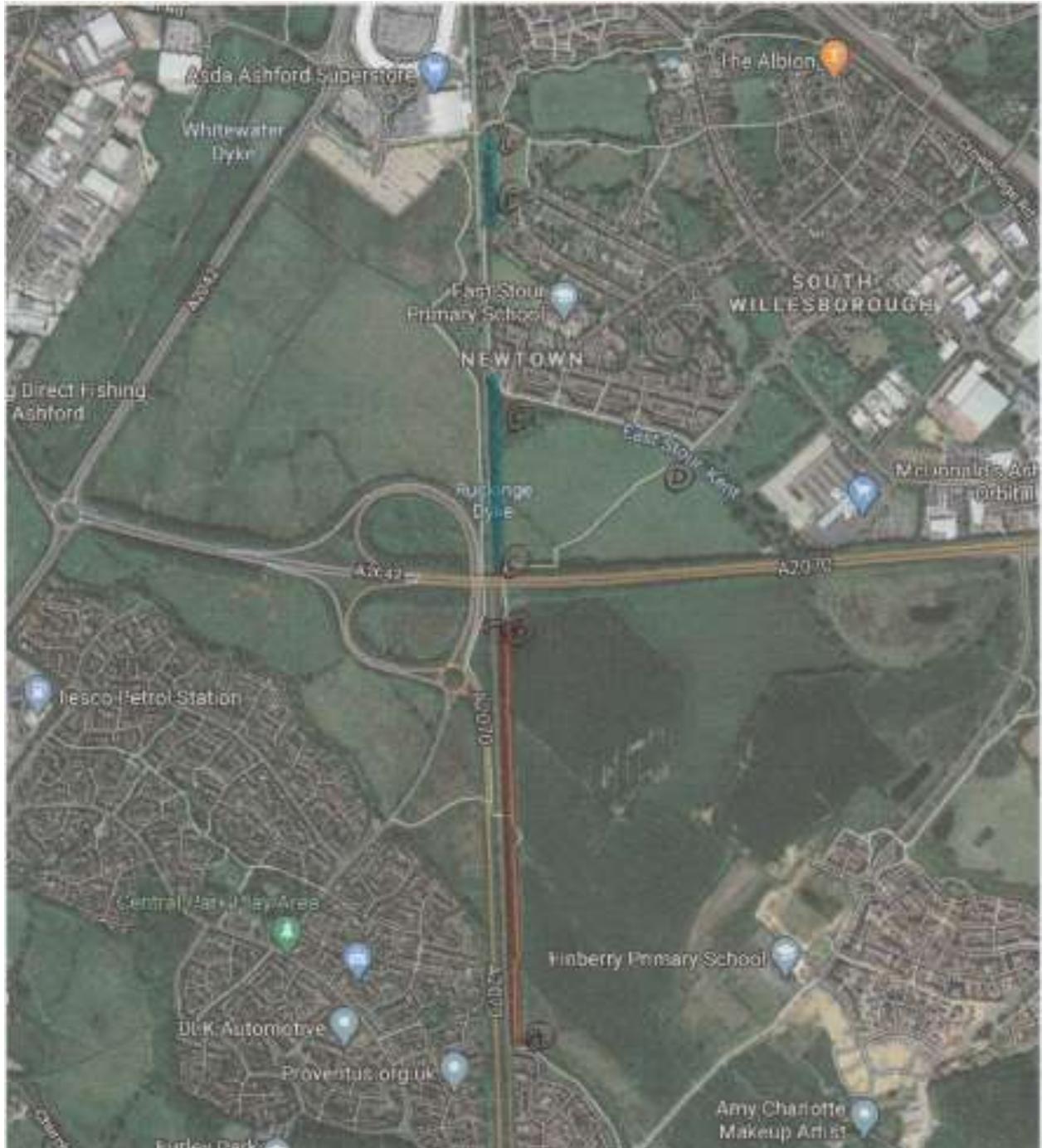
Community engagement continued during January with meetings on the buffer planting on Church Road and ongoing discussions over the location of the footpath to the south west of the Sevington IBF. The initial route is shown in purple, but I have asked for a relocation to where the tick blue line is shown to take it away from residents.



## CYCLEWAY

Crest and TW have each agreed to contribute towards a cycleway east of the Hastings railway line from Bridgefield towards Ashford. This will link up to the existing cycleway west of the railway line across the Ruckinge Dyke to Asda. TW are responsible for building the orange highlighted section (A to B) and

Crest are responsible for building a bridge over the railway (at B) to link up with the existing cycleway.



The Council was in detailed discussion with the developers during 2020 but this scheme could not be delivered to the Environment Agency's satisfaction. In addition, the bridge consents from Network Rail are far more complex than anyone allowed for.

To move things along an alternate cycleway is under consideration shown in blue on the map, being two new sections east of the railway line from C to E

and F to G. These will be cheaper than the new bridge over the railway and it is hoped that it will release funding to allow improvements of the path near the railway underpass near Asda which regularly floods. C to D on the map is the new Cycleway built in 2018 and this would link into a new scheme.

For now, the requirement is to get Crest and TW to support these changes and submit a planning application and discussions are ongoing in this regard.

### **PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO)**

The Ashford Urban PSPO has also been renewed until 2nd November 2023 with the same conditions as the previous order.

### **BYBROOK ROAD TRAFFIC CALMING**

I have submitted to KCC the minutes of the January 2021 Community Council demonstrating their support to the traffic scheme for Bybrook/Bockhanger. The next step is for KCC to carry out a safety audit.

### **16+ TRANSPORT POLICY**

KCC is currently consulting on the Post 16 Transport Policy 2021/22. The Department for Education requires KCC to consult each year, regardless of any changes, to ensure the policy provides a full picture of the available transport and support. This consultation closes at 5pm on 5 March 2021. Please visit [www.kent.gov.uk/post16transport](http://www.kent.gov.uk/post16transport) to find out more and to participate in this consultation.

### **ROAD FATALITIES**

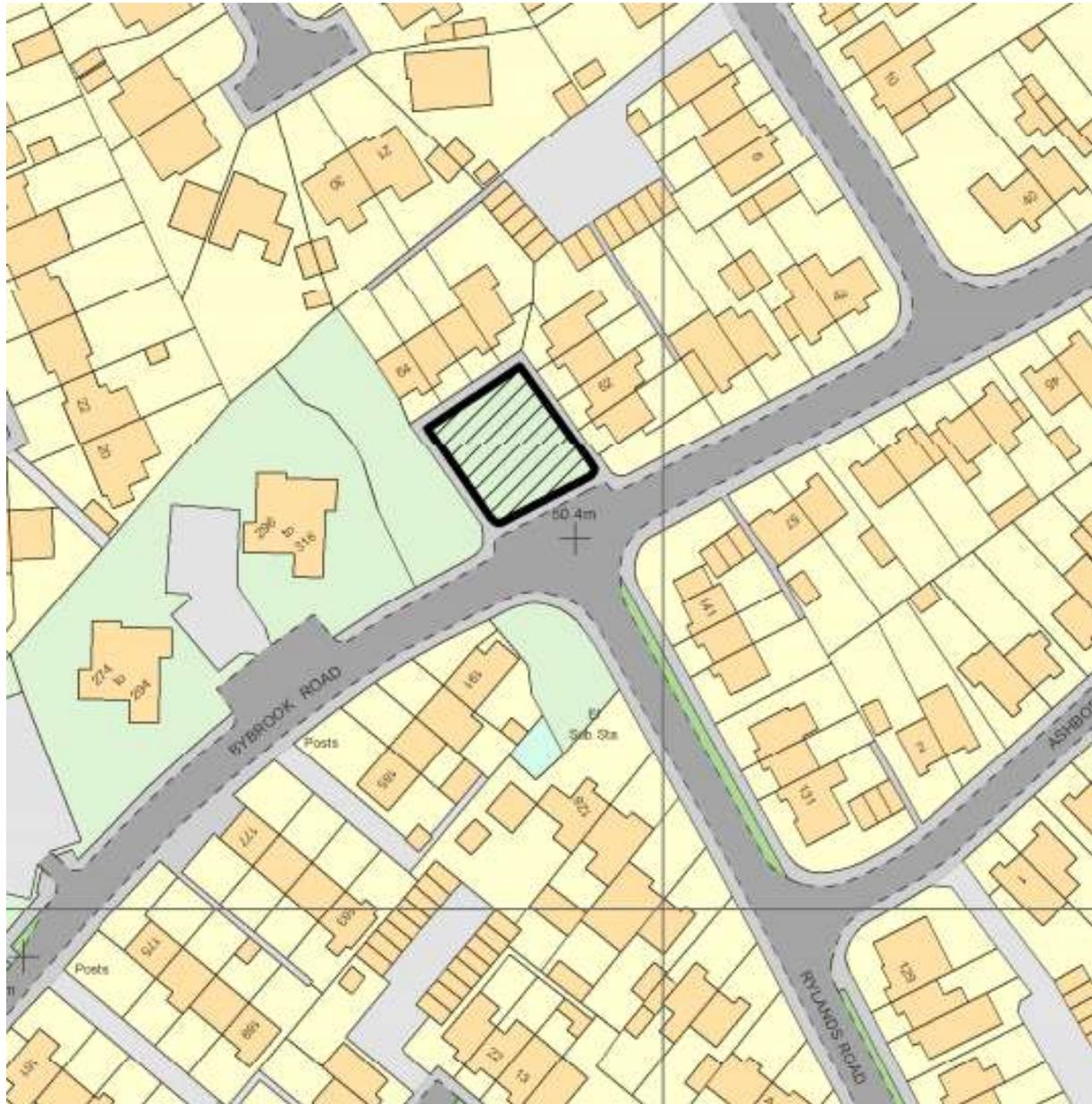
KCC is taking the ambitious step of aiming for zero fatalities on Kent's roads each year by 2050. Now out to public consultation, the strategy promotes shared responsibility for reducing road injuries. Whilst the council is taking the lead, the strategy will only succeed if everyone in Kent shares the responsibility to reduce road danger, the fear it creates and the casualties that result.

<https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/visionzero/consultationHome>

### **RYLANDS ROAD/BYBROOK ROAD VILLAGE GREEN**

KCC has received an application to register land shown below in Kennington as a Town or Village Green. Anyone may apply to the County Council for land to be registered as a Town or Village Green, but for land to qualify for registration it must be shown that "a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, have indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years". For use of the land to have been "as of right", it must have taken place without any force, secrecy or permission. Please ensure that any comments

you may wish to make reach [commons.villagegreens@kent.gov.uk](mailto:commons.villagegreens@kent.gov.uk) no later than Monday 15th March 2021.



## PLANNING REFORMS

Please look at the consultation as to whether a new national permitted development rights are created to cover the conversion of commercial and business premises to residential buildings. The consultation by the MHCLG, also covers public infrastructure.

If approved there is a risk that we could lose our local community facilities such as pubs and local shops. Under existing rules owners need to apply for planning consent for change of use. If owners are given permitted development rights then it could have devastating effect on communities who

rely on local shops and pubs which create the heart of the community. The new rule will not apply to conservation areas and listed properties but that will not offer protection from losing shops and pubs that are not listed or in conservation areas.

Separately, new 'right to regenerate' proposals are designed to make it easier to challenge local authorities and other public bodies to release underused public land for redevelopment. Under the new rules, land could be sold to individuals or communities as a default unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, and public bodies will need to have clear temporary or long-term plans for the use of land. This "Right to regenerate" is the simple way to turn public land into public good, with land sold by default, unless there is a very compelling reason not to do so. Ashford has a strong track recording of bringing underused land back into use. One under consideration is the old Headleys site in Lower Queen Road (20/00028/AS), although this is not public land. It will be interesting how these changes affect the control ABC has over these type of developments.

The consultation can be viewed on

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-housing-delivery-and-public-service-infrastructure/supporting-housing-delivery-and-public-service-infrastructure>

## **ADULT EDUCATION**

Kent Adult Education has launched a range of free online "Employment Essentials" courses to help workers upskill during lockdown and make good use of their spare time. Anyone looking for a new job or wanting to progress their career can obtain the important skills they need from courses covering vital areas such as increasing confidence, preparing for interviews and writing a CV. The Employment Essentials range of courses is now available to book and includes:

- Personal Power and Confidence
- Uncover Your Genius – Transferable Skills
- Personal Profiles and Tailored CVs
- Hunt Those Hidden Job Markets Find the Job for You
- Agency Work, Is it for You?
- Testing Times, What are Psychometrics?
- Digital Skills, How to Ace that Video Interview
- Staying Positive While Job Searching
- Skills in Action, Interview Practice - On-line Live.

Every course is for two hours and is free, but spaces are limited. Courses are taught online, in real-time to enable you to interact directly with your tutor. They are easy to access with a phone, laptop or tablet and an internet

connection. Find out more and book your course at [www.kentadulteducation.co.uk](http://www.kentadulteducation.co.uk) or call 03000 41 40 25.

## **NURSERY FUNDING**

Before the latest lockdown, parents were at risk of losing entitlement to free nursery hours unless their children were sent to their nursery during the week commencing 11 January for a 'headcount week'. Following pressure from KCC, the Government clarified funding for the Spring Term whereby open nurseries can now include on their return all eligible two, three and four year olds who are **expected** to attend the setting rather than only the ones who are currently attend. This allowed KCC to fund nurseries for a greater number of children, including those who are currently self-isolating or/and where a child was expecting to attend but a parent has chosen to keep at home until the end of the current COVID restrictions.

**Paul Bartlett**

**Mersham, Sevington South and Finberry Ward & Deputy Leader, ABC**

**Ashford Central Division, KCC**

**Grosvenor Hall Ward, Kennington Community Council**

**Sevington South Ward, Sevington with Finberry Parish Council**

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