

COUNCIL UPDATE FERUARY 2021

HGV PARKING IN ASHFORD

KCC introduced a prohibition of waiting 24/7 on all borough roads for HGVs 5 tonnes from 4 January 2021. The previous rules allow clamping of lorries parked in authorised places on just five locations in the borough (A20 Ashford to Charing, Ellingham, Wootton Road, Orbital and Ashford Business Park).

The new rule will avoid displacement of lorries from these places to other roads in the Borough if there is a repeat of the delays at Dover experienced at Christmas which causes lorry drives to wait for passage to the continent. It also applied to the 6 other districts in east Kent.

The Kent Access Permit is designed to avoid Brexit delays at the short straight crossing points, Dover and EuroTunnel. In essence it requires hauliers to submit electronic paperwork at the .gov website ahead of starting their journey. It will give them a “red”, “amber” and “green” alert. Red means do not travel to the port the paperwork is incorrect and should be resubmitted, if they do travel they will receive a £300 fine. Amber means the haulier has been selected for a HMRC compliance check at Waterbrook Inland Border Facility (IBF) until end February at which point Sevington IBF will open for HMRC checks. Green means passage to the crossing is permitted.

In addition to these trade related checks, lorry drives need a negative test COVID-19 within 72 hours of transit. There are 34 out of Kent testing centres and 70% of lorries arrive in Kent with a completed test. On 8 January 2021 there were 55 HGV COVID turnbacks at Dover and 44 tourist COVID turnbacks. There were 34 HGV COVID turnbacks at EuroTunnel 6 tourist COVID turnbacks. As at late afternoon on 8 January, there were 7 lorries at Sevington and 96 at Waterbrook.

There have been some issues with HGV's travelling through Mersham en route to Sevington. Improved signage has been implemented and incorrect postcode information removed from gov.uk website. KCC continue to monitor to ensure proper compliance with the route to Sevington.

COVID-19

Now that we are once again in a national lockdown and living under the same kind of restrictions we faced last March KCC will continue to focus on adapting their services to ensure that they look after those who are most vulnerable and in need. Kent Together can help people with:

- Making sure they have enough food and supplies
- Picking up prescriptions

- Making sure they have someone to talk to by phone, Skype or Facetime.

You can find out more at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/protect-kent-and-medway> or by calling 03000 41 92 92.

The army of volunteers and an amazing community effort was critical to the response during the last national lockdown.

Lockdown will also inevitably take its toll on businesses and livelihoods too. If you have a business please look on the ABC website at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/> where you can find all the latest advice you need to help you through this time and find out what support is available.

KCC are rolling out more venues where anyone, not just key workers, can have a rapid-result, symptom-free coronavirus test. These tests will identify people who may be unknowingly spreading the virus and are another way we are trying to keep people safe and continue the fight against COVID-19. Alongside this, KCC are also continuing to support residents with the local test and trace programme, to further help reduce infection rates. The big difference this time round is the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccination programme is already well underway across Kent and should give us all real optimism, no matter how difficult things may currently seem.

ASHFORD HOLIDAY KITCHEN



COMMUNITY HELP: FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

ASHFORD VINEYARD RENEW SOCIAL SUPERMARKET

Brunswick Rd, TN23 1EH

Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays
10.00 am - 12.00 pm

ashfordvineyard.org

Contact 01233 331919 or email.

WILLOW'S CHILDREN CENTRE CAFÉ, LIGHTBITES CAFÉ

Hulstow Way, Brookfield Road,
Ashford, TN23 4EY

Monday - Friday
12.00 pm - 2.00 pm

Contact 07732 385091

BRIGHT CITY CHURCH

Centrepiece, Bank St. TN23 1BA

**Mondays, Wednesdays,
and Fridays**
10.00 am - 12.00 pm

brightcitychurchuk.com

Contact 01233334007 or email.

TENTERDEN SOCIAL HUB

Church Rd, Tenterden, TN30 6AT

Monday - Friday
10.00 am - 12.00 pm

mytenterden.co.uk

Contact 01580 762882 or email.

THE SALVATION ARMY, ASHFORD CORPS

115 Cudworth Rd, TN24 0BE

Fridays 10.00 am - 12.00 pm
Available at other times in emergency situations.

salvationarmy.org.uk

Contact 01233 643480 or email.



LILY'S SOCIAL KITCHEN CIC

Unit 3, Montpelier Business Park,
Dencora Way, TN23 4FG

**Order online for Ashford
deliveries on Thursdays to
arrange collections.**

lilyscommunity.com

KENT COMMUNITY PANTRY STANHOPE

Ray Allen Centre, Stanhope Rd,
TN23 5RN

Fridays 10.30 am - 12.30 pm

kentcommunitypantry.org

Contact 01233 500477 or email

THE WELL CAFÉ

Willesborough Baptist Church, Hythe Rd, TN24 0QR

**Free take-away hot drinks, food boxes
and frozen meals.**

Tuesdays & Thursdays 9.30 am - 12.00 pm

wbc-ashford.org.uk

Contact 01233 632739 or email

office@willesboroughbaptist.church

REPTON CONNECT COMMUNITY CENTRE PEOPLE'S PANTRY

Repton Avenue, TN23 3BX

Mondays - Friday

reptonct.uk

Order online from peoplespantry@reptonct.uk
and ring 01233 808023 for collection.

**SEE ASHFORD.GOV.UK:
FOOD & ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES
OR RING 01233 331111.**

BYBROOK ROAD

I asked KCC how best to resolve speeding issues and rat running on / through Bybrook Road and their solution is a 20mph scheme across the whole Bockhanger / Bybrook area bounded by A28, Canterbury Road / Faversham Road / Lower Vicarage Road. Specifically:

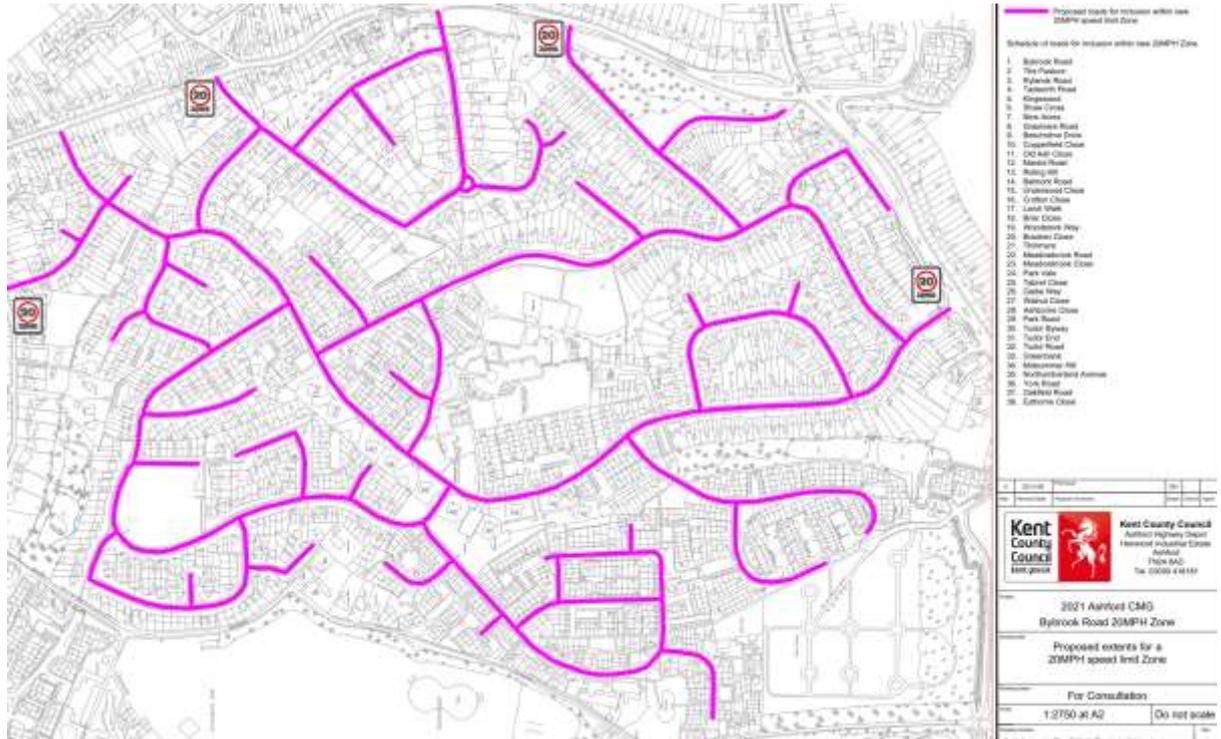
- 20mph zone for Bybrook Road / The Pasture and adjoining roads;
- 20mph roundels at the entry;
- an on road advisory cycle lane on the south western side of the road between Rylands Road and Old School Mews, and
- a raised table at the site of the existing zebra crossing on Bybrook Road (near Belmont Road).

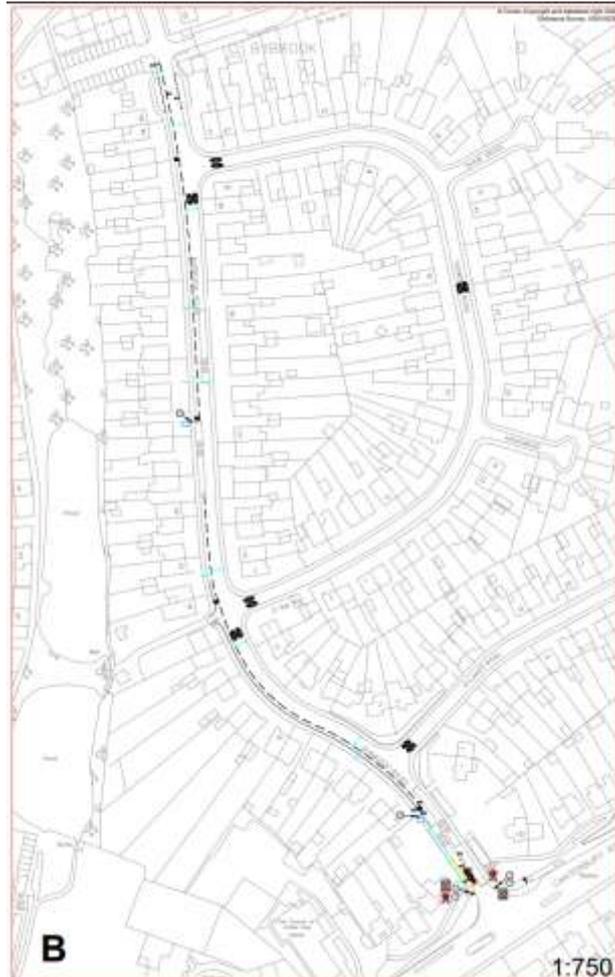
The extent of the proposed 20 zone is quite large as there are so many adjoining roads which, when considered, made sense to include within the zone. By covering this whole area, speed limit terminal signs / zone entry signs are kept to a minimum.

KCC carried out speed surveys to ensure these roads are suitable to be included in a 20 zone, which they are.

The raised table at the existing zebra crossing should help to keep speeds below 20mph at the point where there is relatively high footfall across the road, due to the proximity of the play park, shops and school.

The proposed cycle lane, while providing for cyclists also has the effect of narrowing the feel of the road, which in turn should encourage good compliance with a 20mph speed limit.





The next step is to get support for this scheme from Kennington Community Council.

Then, a Road Safety Audit (RSA) will need to be carried out. This has not yet been done in case the Community Council does not support the scheme or has some changes.

Once the Community Council confirms they would like to progress with this scheme and the RSA has been completed, it is necessary to engage with the local community to demonstrate support (to be carried out by Kennington CC).

Once KCC has proof of community support, a funding source will need to be identified, directly from the various Councils (Community Funding Grants etc) and from developers. This scheme has been costed at £31,625. This includes the cost of the physical works, traffic management (including temporary road closure), the Traffic Regulation Order for the 20mph speed limit and letter drops.

FINBERRY ACCESS

Here are the plans for the new entrance to Finberry:



Work is due to start on 1 March and will take 12 months to complete. Crest are obliged to start work on the secondary access to Finberry (to Rutledge Ave in Bridgefield) on the 401st completion. They are past this trigger point and I will now ask ABC planners to put pressure on Crest to get on with this work. I am hoping that a legal notice will not need to be issued as this would demonstrate a loss of trust, but it could come to that.

CAPTAINS WOOD

A 25 year Management Plan for the 11ha Captains Wood in Finberry was written in 2015. A condition of the planning permission (granted in 2015) was that a progress report should be submitted every 3 years to ABC. The key points in the Management Plan include:

- Captains Wood falls within South Willesborough Dykes Local Wildlife Site
- There are 4 compartments to Captains Wood,
 - (i) areas of hornbeam coppice,
 - (ii) derelict mixed coppice with mature oak and ash,
 - (iii) dense regenerating scrub and young trees, and
 - (iv) small open glades under a mature canopy.
- Around 30 years ago the central and eastern compartments were partially felled; the central area was grazed until 20 years ago
- Proposed main access cycleway/footpath and a secondary north/south access (alongside existing PROW)
- Controlled public access for central outdoor classroom, public recreation and natural play features.

Captain Wood stakeholders are,

- Church Commissioners, owners,

- ABC, by virtue of Captains Wood's Local Wildlife Site Status,
- Kent Wildlife Trust, by virtue of Captains Wood's involvement in the local landscape,
- Mersham Parish Council (to be replaced with Sevington With Finberry Parish Council), for community involvement,
- HML (management company), responsible for management on behalf of the Church Commissioners, financed by the management charge, and
- Residents, through a Friends of Captains Wood Group.

It is now desirable to create a 5m wide wildlife corridor into Captain Wood from expanding the finger of woodland to the south. This will enable sensitive mammal species (dormice, hedgehogs etc) move into the Wood from land in Church Commissioners ownership between Finberry and Bridgefield. This will rectify the isolation of Captain Wood and will support biodiversity and the aim of ABC to extend the tree planting opportunities being carried out in Chilmington Green to other areas south of Ashford. The location of this 5m wide corridor could be on land to the south of the proposed Rutledge Ave / Swift Ave link road and should be created at the same time.

TEMPOARARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS ON A2070

The temporary diversion illustrated below were intended to be put in place by 1 January 2021. Low number of lorries using Waterbrook has not required them to be used by Highways England continues to monitor the situation.



These temporary traffic management plans were expected to be in place to the end of February 2021 for the duration of Waterbrook IBF being used in place of Sevington IBF by HMRC until 1 March 2021.

The scheme consists of traffic signal controls on the A2070 westbound from the Orbital Park roundabout and Waterbrook Avenue. The lights would help manage HGV movements in and out of Waterbrook in the peak morning and afternoon periods. All traffic exiting Orbital Park would turn left onto the A2070 eastbound carriageway towards the M20 (even those motorists wishing to turn right at the roundabout to head westwards towards Finberry/Kingsnorth on the A2070).

Motorists wanting to head towards Finberry/Kingsnorth from Orbital would drive past the entrance to the Sevington Business Park before arriving at the A2070 Bad Munstereifel roundabout, where they 'loop' around the roundabout before returning westbound along the A2070 back to the Orbital Park roundabout, through the traffic lights and westwards towards Kingsnorth. Those living on Finberry from south Ashford would use the same 'loop' from Orbital and Kingsnorth because the Orbital Park roundabout is not available for U turns.

Emergency service vehicles travelling under a blue light would still be able to access the closed section of the Orbital Park roundabout.

ABC and KCC raised with the DfT and Highways England the need to monitor the working of any scheme, including making sure that those exiting Barrey Road, Church Road and Finberry are not unreasonably prejudiced by the altered traffic flows.

LAND EAST OF SEVINGTON IBF

A useful site visit was held on 18 December 2020 with Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT), Village Alliance, KCC and ABC. The purpose was to discuss the planting that may be suitable and develop costings so that progress can be made on the plans for the Parish Council and ABC to take over ownership and management of the site. This will be ABC's latest "Green Buffer Zone". Terms of Reference with KWT are hoped to be agreed by February 2021.

Sevington stakeholder Groups resumed 12 January with ongoing input on the boundary treatment along Church Road, footpath and highways matters. The following is a view back from the site towards Ashford.



FOOD VOUCHERS

Kent County Council issued more than 31,000 food vouchers to vulnerable families ahead of the December school holidays to help them feed their children over the festive period. The council set up a scheme last month to provide food vouchers to the families of children who are eligible to receive benefits-related Free School Meals. The intention was for vouchers to be issued before the end of the current school term in advance of the school break. The scheme is part of a wider range of measures to help the lowest income households with food and fuel costs over the winter.

PLANNING NUMBERS

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has scrapped the planning algorithm that would have dramatically increased housebuilding in Kent and Ashford. England's 20 biggest cities will instead take a larger share of new homes under revised plans. They will be required to provide up to 35% more housing than previously imposed, and will be encouraged to focus on family homes. It will mean ABC reverting to totals drawn up in 2019 of 888 dwellings per year. For any new Local Plan, Ashford's housing need figure would be framed around the need to meet 970 dwellings per year number, as a 'starting point'. Well done to all who wrote to Mr Jenrick, this is a good example where NUMBERS MATTER when writing.

SCHOOL PARKING

The PCSO is currently dealing with ongoing school parking issues at the Kennington CE Academy, Downs View infant school and the Towers school. There have been incidents where drivers have double parked preventing emergency vehicle access and drivers mounting the pavement and driving along them, this poses a serious risk to the children and parents that are walking on these pavements. Approximately 9 section 59 warnings have been issued to drivers that have mounted the pavement, which means if that are seen driving without due care and attention to other road users contrary to section 3 Road Traffic Act 1988 or driving elsewhere other than a road

contrary to section 34 Road Traffic Act 1988 in the next twelve months their vehicle will be seized.

How would you feel if your vehicle had caused an obstruction, and a Fire Engine or ambulance couldn't get through and putting lives at risk and possibly your loved ones? This is happening across the whole of Ashford daily.



STRAY HORSES

There has been a spate of horses being reported loose on the highway and on the on the 23 December two horses were hit by a car in the Ashford area. Unfortunately, one of these horses had to be Put To Sleep. This is a prime example off the risk posed to the horses and motorists and why for the safety of all concerned horses will be seized by Kent Police if found straying on the highway.

Horse owners need to be aware that there are costs associated to the return of a horse. I would urge that all those who have horses ensure that they are securely kept and that the perimeter of fields and stables are regularly checked with any gates padlocked.

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
0773 929 3502
paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk or paul.bartlett@kent.gov.uk