

**Notes taken at meeting held at 2pm on 25 March 2024
at DHA Offices, Maidstone.**

Present: Roz Cheesman (DPC), Kevin Hipkins (OPC), Sue Skipp (CAARA), Teresa Irving (Clerk - OPC/DPC), John Everett (DCA), Derren Bishop/Darrell Wilson – Bellway Homes.

Site Update.

- DW advised that hedgerow has been removed in accordance with plans and more trees will be planted in the next few days.

Due to slowing of the housing market, plans have been rephased and work on Housing Authority (HA) homes will start next.

40 to 50 private homes and 28 HA have already been handed over.

The pond in the middle of the site requires attention as it is currently leaking.

A meeting is being held with groundworkers and the artist prior to commencing work on the central plaza, this will include benches and mosaics. (A total of 30 benches will be provided in and around the site).

Piling will restart at the end of April for 4 to 6 weeks. The shroud will be fitted to help with noise and vibration monitoring will take place. Once complete, piling is not expected to be necessary again for a couple of years.

The mound of top soil that's adjacent to Rectory Cottage will be folic seeded and used on the site. It was stated that dust should not be a problem, as machinery will not be digging it up. A bowser will again be used around the site to dampen down.

The site footpath specification has been 'beefed up' to road construction standards as this will help with possible parking issues.

- Foxden Drive Ramp/Steps/Lighting.
The ramp is not yet officially open as it's awaiting signing off by Maidstone Borough Council. The bottom corner of the ramp should be finished in the next 3 months. DW confirmed that the request by DPC to clear mud from the steps is being actioned today.

A complaint received by DPC that the multidirectional lights are too bright and shine into residents' rear gardens and the play area, this in turn is causing noise and anti-social behaviour problems with youths gathering into the early hours. BH confirmed that the lights had been installed as instructed by MBC.

(Subsequent to the meeting, MBC confirmed that the lights should have been set up without disturbing residents' privacy and they propose to replace the lights with an LED down lighter to divert the light away.)

- Public Right of Way (PROW)
Bird and insect boxes to be installed, plus the artist's signs and 11 benches.
- Notice boards x 3 will be available at the end of April for the various sites in Otham.
- White Horse Lane/Gore Court closure was expected to take place during May but there is now some uncertainty whether this will take place, due to the various other roadworks in the locality. Further clearance work on the ditch in White Horse Lane is also due to be carried out.
- Part of Gore Court Road to Sutton Road is expected to be widened during November/December. The BT pole and hedgerow will need to be moved/replaced at the same time.
- The Water Board is due to close Church Road during May as the water main is too close to the surface. This will be a partial closure, with work expected to take approx. 1 week.
- Deringwood Drive/Willington St traffic lights are on schedule to be completed by the end of May. However, UKPN connection work could cause a delay. The work appears to be set up well, with traffic clearing quite quickly.
- St Nicholas Church
A special type of mortar will need to be used when rebuilding the Church wall – still waiting for planning permission.

Plans to cut through trees at the back of the Church will be delayed until November, as the nearby badger set cannot be disturbed during nesting season. As little as possible will be removed from the trees to accommodate the pathway.
(Trees planted by Kent Highways in and around the site/Downswood have been funded as part of the development).

- UKPN connection. Cabling in front of the Church needs to be removed and replaced but there is no room for ducting in the footpath.
- Woolley Road Footpath. Existing bollard needs to be replaced with a timber one, then the work should be signed off.
- Concerns have been raised by DPC that pedestrians are putting themselves in danger when crossing at the junction of Deringwood Drive/Church Road. Highways has already taken this onboard as part of the Highway Improvement Plan but are struggling to find appropriate safety measures.
- It was reported that a garden in The Beams is regularly waterlogged. BH stated that this is not from SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) as everything is self-contained and

nothing is running off the site, it's purely due to the amount of rain that we are currently experiencing.

- It was commented that the some of the fencing that runs along the footpath at the rear of The Beams/Chapman Avenue appears to look 'flimsy'.
- BH to investigate why the Otham road sign that was adjacent to the Church has not been replaced.
- BH were thanked for the large quantity of Easter eggs that were donated to the DCA.

The meeting concluded at 3.25 pm.

Date of next meeting: TBC.