

GUSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Mrs Tracey Creed BEM, 10, Chance Meadow, Guston, Dover, Kent CT15 5EP

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8th March 2021

Dear All,

I wanted to write to update you further on where we are with the Department for Transport - IBF, KCC Dover Fastrack new road application Section 2 & Section 3, and diversion of the North Downs Way national trail.

Department for Transport - Inland Border Facility

Guston Parish Council met with the DfT on Wednesday 3rd March, along with DDC and KCC councillors. This was a general update session. I can confirm that a final site design has again been requested and this is still not available. The site design is still being modified and the DfT have confirmed that they will not be issuing any further draft designs as they feel it encourages confusion. At this point we are anticipating a final design around the end of April, early May.

You may have thought like us that these dates are a little late if the DfT wish the site to be operational by 1st July. After challenging they have confirmed that the site is not expected to be operational until the first quarter of 2022. Construction will be expected to commence end of April/May once the Special Development Order has been signed off by the Secretary of State. We are not aware of what the delays have been, but we are confident that pressure applied by our parish has meant that the site has not been rushed or insensitively designed.

I would like to provide you with some additional details, but **I must emphasise that this information is not set-in stone and can be changed:**

- The closest property on St Martins Road to the IBF site has been measured at 140m distance.
- The NDW trail is still being redirected to run in front of the properties on Cherry Tree Mews and St Martins Road, however, this has now been pushed further away from the property boundaries and is currently measured at the closet point being 60m away.
- Lorry parking bays have been adjusted on the design to be located at the front of the IBF site (closer to B&Q) and not at the rear by residential properties.
- Bunds and mature tree planting will be put in place which will mean that the DEFRA and HMRC buildings will not be seen from 1st Floor windows.
- DEFRA and HMRC buildings to be sunk into the ground to help visually hide the facility.
- Entrance to the IBF Facility will be from a 100m new slip road from the B&Q roundabout; the Dover Fast Track new road section 2 from Dover Road to B&Q Roundabout is not being used as part of the current design.
- There is still no information as to what this site will become once the DfT close the site Dec 2025.

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Guston Parish Council are still firm in our approach that this is not the right site for such a large development considering the critical road infrastructure at Duke of York and Whitfield Roundabouts, and the knock-on effects on the A2 corridor. There are also concerns over the potential negative impact to the White Cliffs Business Park footfall and of course the detrimental effects this will have on our parish. However, we are realists and understand that the DfT have chosen this site for its proximity to the Dover Port and the fact that this site has been listed as a phase of the White Cliffs Business Park commercial development and forms part of Dover's Local Plan.

Guston Parish Council is very aware of your comments concerning site proximity to your homes, landscaping, nature, buffers etc. We are continuing to push the DfT for them to act sensitively to your requests. We are very much at the table of discussion and are there solely to support the views of our community.

DDC held an extraordinary council meeting on 9th February at 6pm which I hope many residents tuned in to watch. There was a large majority of DDC councillors that voted this development through. The IBF proposal therefore has the backing of Dover District Council.

KCC - Dover Fastrack

We continue to question the KCC planning application for the Dover Fastrack, in particular, Section 2 new road from B&Q roundabout to Dover Road, Guston and also Section 3 widening of pinch points of the Dover Road from the Dover Castle coach park right through to Frith Farm.

The hearing for this planning application was revoked in January after we raised legitimate concerns over the details in the application. We believe that the Dover Fastrack is being compromised by a much larger development and its primary use of being a 'greener alternative' for travel for use by the bus, pedestrians and cyclists was being affected. The planning application is now back on the table for determination on 17th March. Although current design by DfT shows that the HGV's will not be using the Fastrack road, should this KCC application be approved there will be nothing to stop them from reverting to the original plan to do so.

Section 3 widening of the Dover Road we are told is not a full widening of the whole road, but pinch points along the route will require width extension. We have asked for detailed plans of what works KCC wish to undertake but currently no information is forthcoming. The reason being that KCC are under negotiations with landowners over the purchase of land on this section of road.

GPC will be making further representations before the planning hearing.

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North Downs Way

The re-routing of the North Downs Way has already created a lot of public and media attention. We have been told that a separate engagement process will take place concerning the diversion application. No application has yet been submitted but is likely to happen once the Special Development Order has been granted.

Please be aware of any notices that are erected at the entrance to the NDW trail in due course, and we would urge you as members of the public to comment once the engagement process is underway. Works can start on site but the Order affecting the Byway diversion must be concluded before the works affecting the public right of way can be started.

If you have not done so already, please could I urge you to sign up to receive regular updates via the Guston Parish Council website. This will mean that you will receive an email when any news information is shared and will help you to keep up to date with any changes in your community.

Best wishes

Tracey Creed BEM
Chair -Guston Parish Council