

Cobham Parish Council
Annual Parish Assembly
9 April 2018, 7.30pm
Meadow Rooms, Cobham

Present: Cllr Rosemary Dymond (Chairman)
Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Margaret Haig
Cllr James Blackett
Cllr Ben Smith
In attendance:
Councillor Samir Jassal, Gravesham Borough Council
Tina Sampson (Clerk)
18 Parishioners

Apologies for absence, Cllr Mike Booth, Cllr Sue Arnott, Cllr Bella Gabittas, Kent County Councillor Bryan Sweetland, Sevie Ashby(Cobham Stores Manager) and Denise Bird (Forestry Commission).

1.Minutes.The Chairman confirmed that the minutes of the Parish Assembly, April 2017 were a true account of the meeting.

2.Finance Report. The clerk explained that the finances were healthy and gave the balance as at:

9 March 2018 Savings Account	£25,011.93
19 March 2018 Current account	£4,677.41
TOTAL	£29,689.34

A parishioner asked what the balance was at the end of 2017 – it was explained that the balance was slightly higher at £30884.69. Another parishioner asked about the children’s corner- and how often the work would need to be carried out, Cllr Dyer explained that this was the first renovation in ten years.

3. Report by Chairman of Cobham Parish Council,

Lower Thames Crossing -Cllr Rosemary Dymond mentioned that there had been a meeting on the 18th January with another one planned in April. There is some further news about the Lower Thames Crossing posted online and Cllr Dymond recommended that Parishioners took time to visit the site. <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/lower-thames-crossing-home/> There will be no junction on the A226, there will be 3 lanes in each direction in the tunnel, what is uncertain is the configuration on the A2 near Cobham. There has also been a request to LTC for further cut and cover either side of Thong Lane. The Lower Thames Crossing is due to open in 2028.

The Chairman explained that there would be discussions over the summer regarding the charges for the new Lower Thames Crossing and Dartford and Gravesham are working together on this.

London Resort- Cllr Dymond also mentioned that there hadn’t been any meetings or updates since November 2017 in relation to the London Resort.

Green Belt and Housing Needs-This will be a huge concern for the Parish in relation to the possible site allocation. Gravesham Borough Council needs to build around 8000 homes to meet the Government target, Cllr Dymond said that this was a matter the Parish Council would be keeping a close eye on and will be making sure that any local development was carefully examined. She also mentioned that there is a Facebook page which gave Parishioners the opportunity to gain information and join in conversations and share concerns. The consultation regarding local planning is due to take place from 25th April with questionnaires being distributed to each household, these must be returned to GBC by 20th June. (You can complete the form on line by accessing it through GBC’s website).

There is a rural parish working party, with which Cobham is involved and there may be some workshops to help Parishioners with the consultation. Cllr Dymond said that it was important for us to protect our Green Belt as much as possible and for Parishioners to contribute to the consultation.

Planning-The Parish Council has received many planning applications in the past year, which included requests for infills in back gardens and extensions. We also received a planning application for the old Norbond site which was rejected. There is an ongoing application in relation to Stable yarding on White Post Lane although this is not in our Parish, just on the border with Meopham.

Emergency planning- The Parish Council now has an emergency plan in place which is awaiting some final detail before being published.

Fire Hydrants -The Parish Council has been working with Kent Fire Service in relation to fire hydrants, Parish Councillors split the Village into sections and inspected each fire hydrant and reported back to the brigade and reported any faults, repairs were quickly undertaken.

Sole St flooding- thanks to Cllr Blackett two new drains were installed on Sole Street; which seem to be working quite well after one initial flood. Although the drains could be cleaned out more regularly.

Sole Street footway -The chairman had thought we were making headway with the plan. But Highways thought it was not needed and they had insufficient funding to take it forward, the Chairman has said that she will continue to fight for the footway. A Parishioner had sent an example of a painted footway to the CPC, the chairman thought it was an option but might not be safe, she would run it past Highways at next meeting.

Traffic management- Speeding and traffic chaos through the Village as roads are used as rat runs several possible solutions have been investigated and discounted. There was little support for speed-watch and the idea of paying a traffic consultant was expensive with few cases of evidence of where it had been productive. The Council has therefore decided to install Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) in both Sole Street and Cobham Village. It is hoped that these will be in place by May.

Footpaths-There are 32 footpaths in the Parish and a team of volunteers from the Luddesdown rights of way group help to keep them clear for the past two years. Cobham Parish Council has donated to them, of £150 to help with their equipment costs.

Collaboration between Adam Holloway MP and Cllr Bryan Sweetland had been successful in supporting parishioners with concerns about local buses and train timetables. The Community Bus is still providing a great service and is well used by parishioners and many enjoy the ad hoc visits to Bluewater in addition to the regular route. Collaboration is so important, and a fine example recently occurred between KCC, CPC and residents of the Street over the scaffolding needed for essential work on their property, this prevented the Street being closed for several weeks.

Youth Group This is an excellent facility for the Parish's young people, so the Parish Council has donated £700 to help with the costs of the venue and youth leaders.

The Landscape Detectives undertook various investigations around the village last year which turned out to be very revealing and the finds went on display in the Church and College and at the August Bank Holiday Fair; they are hoping to come back this summer.

Cobham Public toilets CPC has taken on the responsibility for the Public Toilets and we owe great thanks to Mr and Mrs Jackson for taking care of them so well.

Precept-According to the data Cobham's precept has increased this year by 55.5% compared to 1.7 over the past few years. As explained the increase was needed to help with the traffic management and donations to various community groups. This has meant that for Band D residents pay £2.04 for the upkeep of the Parish.

The Parish Council wants to keep Cobham and Sole Street, a beautiful place to live and we have great Parishioners supporting us, for example the farm workers cleared the pathway along the Street by the Church. We also have a parishioner who is doing a great job of working with GBC on the fly tipping problem.

We would like Parishioner's support to help make this year's Front of House competition a success with the theme this year being the Commonwealth. Additionally, we would like to see the village commemorate the end of WW1 as part of the 'Battles Over' commemoration by decorating their house and front garden in red. The Bell ringers already have something planned and there will be knitted poppies around the pump, provided by the local WI. We'd like all the different groups and societies to think what they can do.

The Chairman thanked fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their contributions over the past year.

4. Report by Gravesham Borough Councillor, Samir Jassal.

Cllr Jassal explained that the Lower Thames Crossing is something that we all despise but explained that pressure from up the chain meant the plan is going ahead.

Cllr Jassal thanked everyone in the parish for everything they do and added his thanks to the Jacksons for the work they have undertaken in managing the toilets. GBC had to make some savings, unfortunately this meant they were unable to keep managing all the public toilets in the Borough.

The next biggest issue is the planning and the Gov'ts demand to know the plan for the 8000 homes that Gravesham is being asked to provide, this has led to the need for the plan to go out to consultation and for people to demonstrate the dislike for aspects of the planning, otherwise the area is likely to get 'hammered' by central Gov't. We need to demonstrate that we are looking at planning sensibly and seriously. On the 25th April the consultation will open for 8 weeks. The Cabinet and councillors will be presented with the results next year. The strength will be in the volume of the number of people that return the consultations. All households will receive the consultation directly. GBC will be doing some drop-in sessions and will arrange one in Cobham.

Fly-tipping- Cllr Jassal explained that he had wanted to set up a joint team with Luddesdowne, a round table meeting was due to take place but didn't happen. He hopes to set something up with Cobham. Cllr Jassal said he was happy to take questions. Cllr Haig asked about funding for pot holes and the damage to cars. Cllr Jassal explained that it was a big problem and that although it was the responsibility of Highways he would try to find out what was going on. The Clerk also gave some feedback on what was happening with local roads. Cllr Haig also asked about the delay in relation to a particular planning application which impacts on the parish. Cllr Jassal explained that many planning department staff have left, and this has impacted on the planning department. A parishioner asked what is happening with the development in Gravesend. He explained that there had been a funding issue for developments. Cllr Jassell explained that the old hospital will be developed into flats, but other areas still need to be utilised, they want to maximise the use of brown fields rather than the green belt. Some of the Canal basin will be developed and some plans have already been agreed.

Chairman asked about the extra 2000 include the Brown field sites- yes, they were included. Some Brown fields were not included Homes SE will be able to act in June.

5. Report by Kent County Council; read by the Clerk in Cllr Sweetland's absence. –

The last few months have been hectic, they have also been highly productive. KCC has been very fortuitous on a number of fronts to help and support the delivery of our complex array of front line services as well as helping support the continued delivery of a balanced budget in the coming financial year and for our Medium Term Financial Plan.

Indeed, it was good to hear KCC's Financial Director give assurances that we will deliver a very modest underspend in the current year, accepting that we need to accelerate our pressure on the Home Office to get full cost recovery on Asylum costs (£4m). Kent being the main point of entry to the UK for unaccompanied young asylum seekers.

In addition to being chosen by Government as one of the few counties as a 100% Business Rate Pilot (worth £10m to Kent) and the additional Social Care Grant of £3.65m, we heard last week that the Department for Transport have allocated an additional £3.1m for pothole repairs across Kent. This now gives us a war chest for pothole and drainage repairs in excess of £11m. The recent snow and cold weather has caused a lot of damage, as I'm sure you have noticed. The Highway's crews will be out and about in earnest in the coming days, weeks and months ahead to repair the damage. Any Highways faults (as you know) can be reported online.

Reports from Village Groups and Organisations

6 St Mary Magdalene Church and St Mary's Church Room- Rev'd Angela Walker explained that they continue to hold regular services, with a new services timetable now in place

It is hoped that a new Notice Board can be put in place outside the Church.

Thankfully most of the repairs have now been undertaken and, on the whole, completed. During the work there was a problem with dust and the organ had to be shut off, sadly this led to cancellations of weddings because of the scaffolding. The Church is now looking wonderful with the organ emerging from its dust sheets. Visitors should really take the opportunity to appreciate the Chancel area during an open day on the 12th May from 12.30 to 3pm coffee and cake will be available. A medieval knight will be on hand to give a history talk, so please do bring along the Children!

Other groups use the Church for events, like the two women concerts and the community choir. The Church does have a financial struggle along with the need for more human resources, a treasurer is needed, and an organist is also required. The Church offers bereavement services, a coffee pop in and the fantastic messy church at the Church Rooms. There is a Toddler group, but sadly numbers are dropping, so this will need to be reviewed.

Work on St Mary's Church Room is still at a standstill, a previous organiser, has had to step down for personal reasons, but a meeting was held with the fund-raising team and the Parochial

3

Church Council and the recruitment of an architect was considered, but the funding is not available. A parishioner, P B has volunteered to help with the original plans it is hoped that a grant can be organised. The Church Room is also used for informal church services and as a prayer room. The Church does not get any help from the diocese- grateful for the help support of Geraldine, two women. The chairman thanked Angela for her full report.

Friends of Cobham Church (FOCC)

Since last year 'Friends' has had a new chairman (Geraldine Cracknell) and Secretary (Mary Palmer) following the resignation of Elizabeth and Alan Holland, after many years of commitment to the charity.

We undertook the August Bank holiday 'tea and cakes' in the Church, which was very successful. Christmas arrived with the annual 'Carols in the College Refectory'. Again, an enjoyable, successful event.

Late Summer saw the start of the work to the chancel, money provided by Heritage England/Lottery fund. David Palmer and Jane Bubb who are both members of the PCC and FOCC worked tirelessly to obtain the grant. David also played an active part in liaising with the builders on a daily basis. Whilst the work was taking place, woodworm was discovered in the Bell Tower and FOCC paid approx. £2000 for the eradication treatment.

Easter 2018 was early and, fortunately, the major restoration work was finished, the organ uncovered and retuned ready for the performance of 'Bob Chilcott's St John Passion' held on Good Friday, organised by Gabrielle Forster-Still, in conjunction with FOCC. The event was not financially successful, but the performance was enjoyed by many who attended as either a singer or listener. We will be reviewing this event at our next meeting on 30 April.

The PCC's next project will be connecting the Church to main drainage and installing a new kitchen. FOCC has already agreed (October 17) to fund, in principle, the preparation of drawings.

Fund raising is always a challenge with ever increasing competition to attract people to events but FOCC has loyal support and will do its best to raise money, awareness and new members in the future. To that end the PCCs Open Day on 12 May and at FOCC's August Bank holiday Monday 2018 'tea and cakes', it is proposed we will have a member of the re-enactment Society in attendance bringing to life some of the history of Cobham Church. It is hoped that this type of event will encourage more people to support 'Friends of Cobham Church'.

7 Local Funding Group (LFG), St Mary's Church Room

This year we thank Rosemary Dymond who raised £80.00 towards the project by cycling to 60 churches in the Friends of Kent Churches 'Ride and Stride'. This brings the total amount securely in our Barclays Bank account to £20,377. 50p. over-fulfilling our target of £20,000 to support the PCC with their grant applications providing proof that the community supports the project.

At the Cobham Parish Council Annual Assembly in 2017 I said that I was not prepared to lead fund raising events and take money under false pretences when there is no sign of the PCC proceeding with the project.

The plans submitted to Gravesham Borough Council and approved Building Regulations are not compatible with the present application drawn up by the PCC.

This document has been reviewed and amended with suggested additional/necessary information/revisions to enable building contractors to be approached to provide comparable fixed

price quotations and this has been submitted to the PCC for their comments. This document still has areas that need reviewing and amplification prior to a revised application to the relevant authorities.

On 4th February 2018 Rev. Angela Walker invited four members of the LFG to a meeting with the Standing Committee of the PCC to discuss the way forward.

At this meeting the PCC advised that money might be made available next year from the diocese for church-based community projects thought to be between £2,000 and £5,000.

The PCC offered us options for the project:

1. Continue as we are.
2. Simplify the project using the LFG funds.
3. Set up a new management group of LFG and PCC members – The PCC would remain the decision-making body.
4. A cheaper option, complete the whole project in stages, using money raised by the LFG.
5. Lease the building under the Albemarle Scheme that is, the tenants having charitable status and would rent the property for a peppercorn rent. They would then be responsible for the maintenance of the building and repairs/refurbishment.

The LFG and the PCC agreed that endeavours should be made to gain grants and work on the whole project but realistically modify the specification. It was hoped that this would include a new porch.

The PCC suggested that an architect should be appointed to provide plans for the church room. The LFG were asked to fund this from money already raised – around £15,000. The LFG pointed out that all our fund raising has been towards supporting the Cobham Church applications for grants for the refurbishment of the building. The money raised is public money and it is the responsibility of the LFG to ensure that it is correctly appropriated. The LFG would not agree to fund an architect. The PCC should go back to the beginning with a survey, architect's plans and schedule of works before planning permission is sought again. Cobham Church should be seen to play their part in funding architect's fees by participating in a fund-raising event. The LFG may be agreeable to organise a garden Safari, with the help of Cobham Gardeners, providing the PCC open a garden with stalls. Other participating gardens would raise funds for the Local Funding Group. This suggestion would be put to the whole PCC at their meeting on Tuesday, 13th March. They would advise the LFG the following day of their decision so that the LFG can commence organisation – we await advice.

The PCC were asked for the total figure being held towards the project. The PCC thought that £3,000 had been set aside but from information taken from the PCC Minutes; I calculate that there should be £5,360. I understand that there is no separate PCC Church Room Account.

Angela Walker expressed her concern over the actual status of the hall. She feared there may be restrictions on its use – possibly only lettings to charities would be acceptable, rather than to the community. Angela would clarify this with the diocese – we await advice.

There is a further meeting of this newly formed 'Management Committee' planned with the LFG and PCC when we need to ascertain who would manage the restoration project, i.e. contact architects with definite proposals to obtain quotations for their work, organise contracts, planning permission, building regulations, the work from beginning to end with authority to make decisions, applications for grants and any other responsibilities.

A letter will be circulated to all households in Sole Street and some in Cobham advising of LFG progress.

I wish once again to thank residents, friends, family and especially the LFG Committee for their patience and support.

Please help us as we try to encourage the PCC move forward to restore this valuable resource in Sole Street and attend our AGM at 2 pm on Saturday, 2nd June.
Thanks, from Chairman.

8 Community Warden - Paul Hassell. Spoke about his predecessor Steve's retirement- kept the same number – the email has changed- as been busy visiting once a week recently - ref potholes and fly tipping – parking in Sole Street, pavement parking will be reported- also referred to dog fouling in Sole Street and has approached at least one person. – Chairman thanked- no questions.

9 Cobham Community Pre-school – unfortunately the group did not receive their invitation and were not present this year.

10 Cobham Primary School – Cllr Dyer school governor.
218 children currently at Cobham. Attendance at 97%. 18 of the new Reception children are siblings from Cobham and Sole Street.

A Selection of Events this School Year Kent Selection and Medway 11+ tests took place back in September for the Year 6 pupils.

Reception class welcomed all families to a family picnic at the end of their first week starting at their new school.

The Bishop of Rochester made a special visit on his tour of Kent schools and gave a fascinating insight into his role.

The children have participated in Jeans for Genes day.

Walk a mile a day week was popular with the week ending with a very well attended Family Colour Run. Anti-Bullying week was a great success as the children learnt all about how to treat each other. The annual school choir visit to the O2 Young Voices event took place in January.

Year 1 visit Cobham College every Friday and read with the residents.

Upcoming Events Year 4 and Year 6 have their residential visits to Swattenden and Kingswood to look forward to before the end of this school year.

After School Clubs -Fantastic variety, with yoga, dance choir, cooking, powerwave, sewing and netball being some of them.

The PTA play an important part in fund raising for additional items for the school. They helped support an amazing Christmas Fayre with assistance from the teaching staff. Moving it to a Friday from a Saturday did not impact on the fund-raising aspect.

The PTA Comedy Night raised funds required for the 2 remaining electronic whiteboards.

Other Items of Note

The teaching staff have visited other schools to help with maintaining the high standards of teaching and learning that Cobham Primary demands. Currently supporting Holy Trinity in Gravesend and working with Tunbury, Lunsdown and East Peckham Primary schools.

Central Government Sports premium funding provided £7,000 for additional sporting activities.

Powerwave and other fitness classes now being run for all school years in addition to the other sports lessons and clubs.

School and grounds maintenance is an ongoing activity and Mrs Saunders, Mrs Styles and the Caretaker Mr Tyler do a grand job of preventing any small jobs becoming larger ones.

Thank you to Mrs Saunders and her dedicated team in giving our children a fabulous start to their education.

11 Cobham College – No report.

12 Cobham Community Stores – Severine Ashby (manager Community Shop) was unable to attend, however the Chairman said how well the shop was doing and thanked all the volunteers who help to keep the shop going. The Chairman also praised the Concerts that were being arranged; raising funds for both the Church and the community shops.

The Chairman said it was so important that we support our local business like the Little Shop in Sole Street and the Community Store.

13 The Meadow Room – Chairman, Chris Antrobus

Key events like the Munchies have been a success and well attended the event will take place on the 5th May this year. The Meadow rooms were involved with the Landscape Detectives; with the Youth Club discovering some interesting finds.

In September Movies on the Meadow was another success with the showing of the Goonies, there were some great examples of Fancy dress on the evening. They will carry on working with the Pre-school using the Chairman's room. Midnight on the Meadow took place on New Year's Eve and an enjoyable evening was had by all. There are many user groups including CPC, the Brownies, CADs, WI, Pilates, Dance and an Osteopath in the Chairman rooms.

The chairman's meetings are held twice a year with the user groups. Bookings are very busy and provide good revenue. Apart from the regular users there are ad-hoc users for parties, weddings and business meetings. Bookings are being taken 24 months in advance especially for weddings using Marques.

The Meadow Room Committee control the amount of bookings as they wish to respect the village and its residents. A big fundraising project is the replacement of the windows to help keep the rooms warm and Cllr Blackett helped with the electric repairs. A view was taken on the cost of hire for the rooms of the regulars and residents with the hiring by people outside of the Parish costing slightly more. The committee is looking for a vice chairman and could do with more volunteers. The fabric of building is still sound, but they have the project re: the windows with some funds already allocated but £80,000 needed for the windows and curtains, in the meantime they will be refreshing the interiors, floors and decorating there will also be a new sign post, notice board and a general tidy up of the area with a new bench etc.
The Meadow Rooms AGM will take place on 22 May
Movie on the Meadow -will once again be held in September

14 The National Trust -Jonathan Ireland represented the National Trust and explained that it had been another busy year with more groups of visitors. Winter thinning of the tree cover has taken place and last summer concern grew for the amount of Ash Die Back spreading through the woods, however they are planting Oaks in their place. There are 33 deer in the woods helping with the lower cover of the woods and the cattle are also doing well. This year's expense will be a fencing upgrade behind the mausoleum to Knight's place along with tree safety work taking place. They are setting up a tree trail with signage and benches built on site. They have also hosted a lot of people in the barn- Northfleet Nursery, Ramblers, a WI craft group and a Parish Council meeting.

15 Cobham Gardeners Society- Sadly there was not a representative present, however the chairman did mention the Spring Show taking place shortly.

16 Bell Ringers – Peter Hartley In 2017 we enjoyed a busy year of ringing with our band all progressing in their ringing and loyally turning out for Sunday Service ringing. We rang for four weddings and welcomed visiting ringers from Epping and St. Botolph's, Aldgate, London.

The bells were rung at the Thanksgiving Services for Jack Pye and for Marjorie Gander.

Quarter Peals were rung for the 80th birthdays of Michael Baker and of Jean Pickering; for the 60th wedding anniversaries of Alan and Elizabeth Holland and of Colin and Sheila Ralph and for the 70th wedding anniversary of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh; and in memory of Adam Bligh, 11th Earl of Darnley. A peal was rung in honour of the Cobham men killed a century ago in the First World War.

Our Cobham bells record the life of the village and our Cobham ringers make that possible. Various firsts were achieved in 2017 – Stuart Edwards rang his first full peal and conducted his first quarter peals of Plain Bob and Grandsire. Mike Hyde rang his first quarter of Grandsire and Byron Aldous rang his first quarter on the treble bell and a working bell. Christian Antrobus and Simon Williamson rang their first quarter peals.

A ringer's barbeque at Nigel and Sue Pagram's, a ringing outing arranged by Florence Hamp, and a Christmas lunch at the Darnley Arms co-ordinated by Byron Aldous all ensured we enjoyed a happy and successful ringing year.

17 WI Cobham & Luddesdown Cllr Haig (President of Cobham & Luddesdown WI) read the report compiled by Jenny Brooker (secretary).

Another year has whizzed by and we have filled it with an interesting and varied mix of activities, which have included talks about The Great Storm of October 1987, the beginning of midwifery; Robert Burns; Women at War - the Role of Women in World War 1; and a session where we tried to identify a number of museum items, including a wooden bird scarer and a vet's blood-letting tool. In November, we were all amazed when we managed to turn two pieces of paper into a box.

In June we will all learn about modern first aid and how to use a defibrillator, something we should all really know. At the time of writing this report, everyone is working on their entries to our Spring Show on Wednesday 4th April - always a popular day, when members can show off their art, craft, cooking, and floral display skills and hopefully take home a trophy, or perhaps more, and the Meadow Room is filled with glorious colours and delightful aromas.

This year we celebrate our 99th birthday in May, with our usual birthday lunch and we will join the rest of our federation in its centenary celebrations, which this year culminate in an event at The Friars, Aylesford on Wednesday 11th July, when all the WIs in the Kent-West Kent Federation will pray for fine weather and meet to enjoy the day. There will also be a Celebration Garden Party at Marlborough House School, Hawkhurst on 31st May.

We are, in fact, looking forward to our own centenary next year and Jill Beety is busy working on our programme of activities, which will include a talk by Christoph Bull about Cobham.

We were pleased to help in the tea tent at last year's Munchies on the Meadow and always encourage our members to take part in local activities.

We were sorry to see a few of our lovely members leave this year for various reasons and we are particularly sorry to see our Treasurer go. Gillian Neville has served in that role for five years and will be greatly missed when she moves house shortly to live in Northiam. Hopefully, someone will volunteer to take her place. We also hope to encourage other members to join our committee, without which our institute cannot function. We have a lot to offer potential members, the most important being friendship. As well as a wide range of activities at our monthly meetings, there are a number of groups that meet outside of those days where members can expand their interests in art, craft, embroidery and reading. These are all popular and well supported and give everyone the opportunity to meet, chat and generally enjoy life. There are also opportunities to take part in various workshops and events that take place throughout west Kent.

Our meetings take place at 2pm in the Meadow Room on the first Wednesday of each month. Everyone receives a warm and friendly welcome - if they are already members or if they want to join or simply come along as a visitor, even if it is only to enjoy our tea and home-made cakes.

We intend to make it to our centenary and beyond and will continue to be an important and active part of village life.

18 WI Sole Street

Sole Street WI will celebrate its 34th Anniversary on 24th April 2018 with a Birthday Lunch at the Green Man, Longfield. There are now twenty-five members, including sixteen who live in Sole Street or Cobham, eight who live in Higham or Gravesend and one who lives in a nursing home in Staplehurst. On 4th December 2017, Sole Street WI hosted the Thameside District WI Christmas Carol Service at South Street Baptist Church in Meopham. Nearly ninety ladies attended and there was a collection for Oxfam. Approx. £121.00 raised

Monthly meetings are held in the St Mary's Church Room, Sole Street at 7.30pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month, except in April, August and December. Visitors and new members are always very welcome. Visiting speakers at the monthly meetings talk about a variety of subjects, including Millbrooks, Mercy Ships, Oxfam, The Real Downton Abbey and the Chocolate Quakers. There is also a programme of monthly social activities, which have included walks around Jeskyns Country Park and the Bluewater lakes, coffee mornings at Millbrooks, special events at Bluewater and a New Year Pub Lunch at the Golden Lion. In previous years there have been trips to London to visit the Sky Garden and the Houses of Parliament. Two reading groups each meet about once a month to discuss books, which have been chosen by members.

Regular art and craft activities are held in members' homes. Christmas and birthday cards have been made using a variety of techniques. Christmas decorations, glass fusion, crochet and sewing projects have also been undertaken. The Annual Meeting and Resolutions will be held on 22nd May, when a new committee and president will be elected. In August, there will be a Garden Meeting and in December there will be an informal Christmas Lunch.

Sole Street WI members are actively involved in their local Churches, food banks, charity shops, sports activities, crafts, gardening and flower arranging. One member raised enough money, by running Boot Fair stalls over several years, to finish building a Baptist Church in Uganda and she also visited the country several times to encourage the work. Another member recently went as an Oxfam Ambassador to some refugee camps in Greece. Sole Street WI members have also been involved in fund raising for the refurbishment of the St Mary's Church Room, where the monthly meetings are held.

19 Monday Club – Cllr Dymond explained that the group met every Monday in the Church rooms, they invite speakers, hold events and go on visits, in fact they visited to Rochester Cathedral today. There is a solid membership with numbers increasing.

20 Sports Club - The Club is flourishing as always with football, cricket and tennis taking place. The Bowls club has extended the lease, so they can hopefully put down an artificial grass and install floodlights to make the green usable for longer in the year.

21 CADs – Ron Chamberlain

Once again, during 2017 CADs have entertained villagers and supporters, with two very different productions.

The first play of the year in May 2017 called "Curtain Up" by Adam Croft was a farce which followed the trials and tribulations of an amateur drama group attempting to stage a production in the village hall which developers plan to demolish to make way for a supermarket. Not only, we hope, was the organisation of this group unlike CADs, but we trust that the Meadow Room is safe from the desires of Lidl or Aldi.

In November CADs staged an ambitious sequel to "A Very Roman Family" entitled "A Very Roman Emperor", both plays were written by our own Roger Hodge. This second part of the story dealt with the life of Formaggius Vastus and family after he was unexpectedly elevated to the rank of Emperor of Rome by the Praetorian Guard. Involving a cast of 15 and giving almost all acting members of the society a part, this was a very ambitious production. Like the Shakespearean Roman Plays very few of the cast were left alive at the final curtain, making a further sequel very unlikely.

During the year members have also enjoyed social events, theatre visits and meals at local restaurants.

The first play of 2018 will be "A Fete Worse than Death" by Richard James,

Actor Ray Martin is opening the village fete, playing on his fame as a television policeman, "Inspector Bradley". Little does he know that ambition, infidelity, and envy will lead to murder.

There will be three performances of this play from Thursday 17th May to Saturday 19th May.

Tickets costing £8.00 will be on sale from the Box Office 01732 822616 from 16th April. Full details of this production are available on CADs website www.cobhamkentcads.org.uk

22 Youth Club - Just a bit of background about the Youth Club - it has been running for many years from the Meadow Room and CSL stands for Cobham, Sole Street and Luddesdown - and as the name suggest is open to the young people in the surrounding villages, and their friends. We run every 2 weeks, on a Friday 7pm to 9pm, during term time

How we are organised:

We are run as a Community Group Club via a voluntary committee, currently we have Rebecca Silk (Blythe's mum), Esther Dryland (Jessica's mum) and Chelsea Gregory, (Oliver's mum) on the committee.

A year ago, we asked The Grand if they would like to work with us and provide Youth Workers to ensure we had fun sessions, safe sessions (fully trained in health & safety, DBS checks etc).

Our Youth Workers are Stacey, Amit and Rav and are a real asset to the club, they have organised some fun sessions and are keen to ensure the club reaches out to the local community. We also need parent volunteers at every session (generally two) not to run activities (but you can if you want to!) but just to oversee each session.

We do need more committee members. It is an easy and sociable job which involves a little bit of decision making, finance, agreeing meeting dates and activities etc. you will also receive training. We are asking for at least 2 parents from each year group to join as this will ensure the consistency and longevity of the Youth Club. The current committee will meet at our next session on 9th March at 7pm in the Chairman's Room, please join us and we can explain a bit more about why we need a committee (we the club cannot without one!). If you already know you want to join then please email, WhatsApp or speak to us personally.

How we are financed:

Our main costs are the Meadow Room hire, annual insurance, our Youth Workers time and insurance. We raise money via the entrance fee which is £3 for members and £3.50 for visitors, this generally covers the room hire, we charge an annual membership fee of £10 which helps to cover our insurance, we also run a tuck shop which creates a very small profit, and then on top of that we need to fund the Youth Workers. We have successfully applied for a grant from the Cobham Parish Council and they have very kindly given us a grant of £700 from April which means we can cover some of these costs – however, with the help of our youth workers, we will still need to run fund raising activities to cover the rest.

What activities and events have we going forward:

We have some great events planned:

We need volunteers for each of these sessions, please let us know which sessions you can do (please note we will allocate people if we do not get volunteers)

23rd March - we going to do team games/community work ideas

9th March – Mother's Day Craft and pitta bread pizza

23rd March is Easter week + Sport Relief – sports activities and an Easter Egg Hunt

20 April is bowling week where we will be visiting a local bowling avenue

5th May - Munchies Festival Fund raising stall

TBC – Camp on The Meadow (Yr. 7's and above).

23 Jeskyns update / provided by Forestry Commission Denise Bird. Read by the Chairman.

It has been another busy 12months at Jeskyns with many things happening on site.

In July we celebrated Jeskyns Community Woodland's 10th birthday with an onsite photographic exhibition and a fun celebratory public event in lovely summer sunshine.

We hosted two very successful charity events – a winter walk for Eleanor Hospice and a Colour Dash for the local Beams charity.

Our dormouse monitoring programme continues, and we have added 20 new boxes, meaning we now have a total of 50 boxes and 20 nesting tubes on site.

We recently welcomed the arrival of five new Gruffalo character sculptures and are busy installing a range of new information panels which tell our visitors all about the special habitats we look after at Jeskyns.

The Jeskyns Young Farmers have been very active and have recently welcomed the arrival of both new calves and lambs – all born on site.

We have started a coppice rotation programme on some of our Walnut and Sweet Chestnut blocks, started removing some of the rabbit protection fences from the woodland blocks and our Orchard Volunteer team has been busy pruning our collection of heritage fruit trees.

Alongside all this, our Volunteer teams, Ifield School students and Community Payback teams have been working hard cutting grass, planting trees and keeping everything spick and span.

Roll on 2018.

24 Any other business

The Parish Council asked for an increase in this year's precept, the raising of the precept is due, in part, to the cost of the traffic management action we wish to undertake. There is no longer a speed group in the village and the Parish Council felt that a £5,000 payment to a traffic consultant was not best use of Parishioner's money, there is more of an issue with drivers rather than the roads. The Parish Council contacted the Kent County Council's Traffic & Network Solutions Team for their advice. The option that we are going with is the placement of three posts to accommodate a Speed Indicator Device (SIDs), in two positions on Sole Street and one on the approach to Cobham village. Cllr Bryan Sweetland has also offered a contribution from his own allocation of grants.

Grants Paid out.

£700 to the Cobham, Sole Street and Luddesdowne Youth Group

£400 to the PCC for the publication of the Parish Magazine

£150 to the Luddesdown Rights of Way Group for clearing the footpaths

£250 to the Meopham Welfare Committee for the up keep of the Community Bus

The Chairman hopes parishioners agree the money spent is worthwhile and a good use of funds

Mr Alan Rowe, former Chairman of Cobham Parish Council, congratulated the Chairman on her report. He also referred to the possible foot way along Sole Street and said that being a Councillor needs great patience, but you should never give up, never take no for an answer. Let's keep the village five star.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rowe for his encouragement.

The next meeting will be our AGM on Monday 14th May-St Mary's Church, Room Sole Street

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.37 pm