

COBHAM PARISH COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 2017

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in St Mary's Church Room Sole Street Monday 11 September 2017 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS:

CLLR R DYMOND (CHAIRMAN)
CLLR S DYER (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)
CLLR M HAIG
CLLR J BLACKETT
CLLR MIKE BOOTH
CLLR SUE ARNOTT
CLLR GABRIELLA BJÖRK GABBITAS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs T Sampson (Clerk)

- **Apologies for absence**
Cllr B Smith, Councillor Bryan Sweetland, Community Warden Steve Gray.
- **Minutes:** to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 10 July 2017. Following the highlighting of a typographical error, these were agreed.
- **Declaration of Interests** – none raised, however Cllr Gabbitas mentioned that an item on the agenda referred to Owletts and the proposal of National Trust Brown tourism signs being placed in the Village.

The Chairman, Cllr Rosemary Dymond welcomed everyone back after the August break.

1. Brown signs for Owletts

The National Trust (NT) has given first stage approval for a brown sign for Owletts, Cobham Wood & the Mausoleum. The parish council was consulted before it went any further and a brief discussion on where they should go took place. The Parish Councillors felt the best position would be near the Roundabout? Cllr Gabbitas will ask NT about how many and where the signs should be- the Parish Council will then advise NT. The Vegetation was also mentioned as a problem opposite the entrance of Owletts as people concentrating on traffic may miss the Owletts sign and entrance

2. Parish Emergency Plan

The Clerk explained that a draft plan had been drawn up and circulated to the Parish Councillors, feedback had been received from Cllr Haig regarding emergency shelters. The Clerk will complete the plan before the next PC meeting and will pass to Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) for consideration and the Emergency Planning Officer, Mr Stephen Scully will be invited to the next meeting. Feedback and ideas are also sought from parishioners.

3. Membership of the Parish Council

The Chairman explained that Mrs Kerry Smith will sadly be standing down from the Parish Council after 14 years. Cllr Dymond commented on the great work Kerry had contributed over the years.

4. Parishioner Comments

- a) Mr John Oxford of Sallows Shaw – mentioned that his Cherry tree was damaged by Council workers after they had been commissioned by KCC to do a 5 year maintenance of the trees in the area. The tree was on Mr Oxford's private property and the council had, erroneously thought it was on their map as needing KCC attention. The tree Officer has agreed that if KCC contractors are asked to stop work on a privately-owned tree that they should do so and then contact the office.

The contractors had also started to cut the Ivy from another tree before being stopped, the tree officer has agreed that the damaged Ivy will be removed from the tree at their cost. Mr Oxford has offered to act as a point of contact for all residents. He is unsure as to whether another resident is considering legal action. TPOs would prevent any further difficulties –he also asked if Sole Street is a conservation area. Clerk to contact GBC to check on TPOS etc. A parishioner from White Post Lane had had a similar situation with one of his trees being cut back.

- b) A parishioner also raised the matter of overhanging trees on Scratton Fields.

- c) Parishioner Nicola Carter—said that from next May SE Trains are looking to cut back on the number of evening trains and the 17.03 from Victoria will no longer stop at Sole Street. SE have said that they are re-jigging the timetable because of extra trains going through to Rochester, this will mean that there will only be one train an hour during rush hour. SE had launched a consultation but they hadn't consulted with the passengers. Nicola has asked that people contact SE about this matter, concerns were also raised regarding commuters that currently drive to Sole Street will drive elsewhere – leaving the numbers lower and open to suggested closure of the station.

The Chairman had spoken with the station manager, Jan Smith following receipt of Nicola's email- Jan emailed her manager with the concerns that had been raised, nothing further has been received from SE. Nicola explained that Adam Holloway MP is trying to set up a meeting in Westminster and he is happy for parishioners to attend. Mr Johnson of White Post Lane would like to attend the meeting. Nicola will let us know when the meeting will take place.

- d) Parishioner Mr John Harris raised the matter of cars speeding through Sole Street. It makes crossing the road to get to the little shop very dangerous as cars come over the hill at great speed. The parked cars outside St Mary's church room can also make it difficult to see the traffic approaching. Another parishioner mentioned that it is concerning in the dark evenings when cars are moving along at such speed. It was asked whether work like that undertaken in Cobham Village could be considered.

The Chairman explained about the work taking place to set up a speed-watch on Sole Street and that we recently had a visit from a member of the Kent Police speed-watch team. Three sites have been identified where it would be safe for a speed-watch to take place these are: The post box -Scratton Fields, Opposite Greenlands and the Junction near West Bank. Volunteers are sought to take part in the scheme.

Further concerns were raised about the bus stop area; however, it is not deemed safe enough to place a speed watch there, two serious accidents were mentioned but it is not clear whether these were registered.

Cllr Booth referred to the meeting with KCC Highways he, the chairman, the clerk and two parishioners attended at Aylesford recently and the need to gather speeding data before we can move forward with solutions. (See note of meeting in matters arising from previous meeting).

- e) Parishioner Mr Johnson mentioned the re-submitted planning application for a development in the garden of a house on White Post Lane, the original application was rejected by the Parish Council and he would like to see the further amendments objected to.
- f) The Chairman then raised several points which she had received in an email from Mr Peter Brierly. As follows:

Footpath number 190 - access into the Bramley apple orchard from Gold Street needs the vegetation pruning back to allow clear access. Footpath number 191, opposite the Railway Pub, tree partially fallen onto path and fence panels from Leighton are falling onto the path.

Gullies in The Street, Cobham and generally along Sole Street and Manor Road are blocked and need clearing. The footpath from the Railway Pub to the Weald Way has soil build up on path and in the gutter.

The drainage channel in front of Bridge Cottages and Bower Cottage is full of weeds and overgrown hedges and can no longer serve its purpose.

A house on Sole Street has a pyracantha bush growing across pavement which need pruning back

Sweeps Hole Pond is overgrown with nettles etc and appears to need attention.

There is a circular steel post with its concrete base that is lying in the hedgerow just before Sweeps Hole Pond. I believe it was the original post for the 30mph sign that has been replaced.

There is a tall fridge/freezer dumped on the side of the road just after turning into Halfpence Road from the A2. I have emailed the NT asking when the side of the garden in Manor Road will be cut back/cleared as brambles and nettles are getting out of control again and suggested that some low-level shrubs would enhance that boundary.

The tarmac surfaced pavements along both sides of Manor Road are crumbling and holes are forming in the sub-base at various locations. This situation is not helped with people using and blocking the pavements when parking their cars.

Most of these points had already been taken forward by the clerk and work reference numbers had been received via the Parish Portal.

The length of time The Street in Cobham was closed recently due to the fact the road needs to be open overnight was also raised as this causes more disruption and closures during the day

5. Matters arising from previous meeting

Sole Street Footways. The Chairman said that there was still some difficulty regarding a piece of land that we would need to get permission to use, as it is currently part of a probate case. Cllr Dymond is in contact with the solicitor. Cllr Dymond will also be contacting another parishioner about the use of land and a meeting will be arranged with both the resident and her son.

Flooding in Sole Street Cllr Blackett mentioned that even though a great deal of work had been carried out to stop Sole Street flooding; it has not been a 100% successful as there had been further flooding following an extremely heavy downpour. The Clerk has been in touch with the scheme engineer and a walkthrough of the area is to take place to discuss the blocked soakaways and the return of the bollards to Scratton Fields. Date to be set.

Cobham Public Toilets Cobham Parish Council, owns the toilets and will take responsibility for them from GBC on 1 October. The Sports Association are going to manage the toilets and they will stay open thanks to John Jackson and the Sports Association. Gravesham Borough Council have agreed to hand over the toilets in correct order; electricity and legionella checks etc. and will provide some money for toilet rolls/cleaning materials. Cllr Dyer mentioned that one of the toilets cubicles had recently been vandalised.

Cobham Bowls Club the new lease has been signed. The Bowls club can now seek planning permission and a grant for artificial grass and lighting. This means the club can be opened longer and it should encourage the local youngsters to become involved. The matter of unpaid utility bills was discussed.

Traffic management meeting –The Chairmen, Cllr Booth, two parishioners and the Clerk met with Emma Green the Schemes Program Manager (West). The following matters were discussed:

- The 20 MPH Signs are to be checked by KCC Operations Team
- The Purchase of Speed Indication Devices (SID) / Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)
- Cobham Parish Council to decide if wish to purchase SID / VAS with Parish Council funds.
- Feasibility Report – to consider traffic management options in Cobham. Cobham Parish Council may wish to commission a consultant to undertake a feasibility study on traffic management options.
- Reactivation of Speedwatch in Cobham. We discussed this at length at our meeting and Alan ? (speed-watch) explained the benefits of the scheme.
- Monitoring- KCC agreed to continue to monitor Cobham and Sole Street as part of KCC's Casualty Reduction Strategy. Please note, no works are currently planned at present.

Mr John Oxford has volunteered to oversee Speedwatch in Sole Street, however we still need someone for Cobham.

Mr Jon Parker mentioned that there is a general negativity towards Speedwatch and how it works. He went on to explain how the penalties are put together and actioned. He also mentioned the funding and the Chairman explained that Funding for Speedwatch is £900 and we would be able to use our own equipment and decide our own timings. This is better than having to share the equipment with another village. Mr Parker agreed that engaging a consultant would be a good idea and that it was necessary to do the Speedwatch first. Mr Parker also suggested that it would be a good idea to monitor the number of cars coming from each direction. Once we have enough Speedwatch volunteers a meeting will be set up.

- i. Playground refurb- Cllr Dyer mentioned that he was still trying to find a contractor to take forward the painting of the playground equipment.
- ii. Defibrillator - the Clerk fed-back that the Defib checking process was working and that another training session is to be set up in conjunction with the College – the date of which will be published on the website. The Parish Council has also been asked to provide feed-back on the defibrillator to the providers of the grant.
- iii. Fire Hydrants - Cobham Parish Council are part of Kent Fire's fire Hydrant initiative. Parish councillors have taken on the responsibility for checking the local fire hydrants. Cllr Blackett did a check on Sole Street hydrants and several needed attention. Cllr Dymond has undertaken checks on all the Cobham hydrants except Henhurst. The Clerk will report the faulty hydrants to Kent Fire. The checks take place monthly.
- iv. Big Dig update –Cllr Dymond fed back about the display at the fete- 33 Cobham properties had taken part. Many artefacts, including various clay pipes were found and the final display was fascinating. The school children dug several trenches and tracked water ways. The dig was handled very professionally and the gardens were put back in good order- the dig will be carrying on next year.

6. Committee feed back

Planning report. The Chairman took this opportunity to thank Mrs Kerry Smith for all the fantastic work she carried out in relation to the planning committee.

September Planning Report (as at 17/8/17)

Ref No 20170840 - Oldlands Barn Gold Street Cobham Gravesend Kent DA13 0XA

Application for the removal of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference number 20151139 for the demolition of the existing structure and erection of a dwelling with associated parking, access and landscaping works; to allow the substitution of approved drawing no. 16/0388 -01 with 16/0388 40C.
CPC no objections.

Ref No 20170833 - Oldlands Barn Gold Street Cobham Gravesend Kent DA13 0XA

Application for the approval of condition 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 attached to planning permission reference no. 20151139 relating to details of drainage, proposed earthworks, proposed external facing material, proposed hard surface treatments, fences etc, proposed soft landing proposals, proposed external lighting and proposed refuse arrangement.
CPC no objections.

Ref No 20170802 Attlee House 1 Chapelwood Place Cobham Gravesend Kent DA13 9AG

Erection of a single storey side extension to the existing garage and conversion into granny annexe.
CPC object to this proposal. The original plot was subdivided to provide 5 detached executive style houses with gardens. White post Lane is on the outermost boundary of Sole Street and is a secluded rural lane. Over time these very large properties have had alterations and extensions and the curtilage areas are gradually being eroded to provide additional garden space.

This proposal to extend the garage to provide an additional dwelling will set a precedent and will lead to further subdivisions to provide additional dwellings in garages. It will be detrimental to the character of this rural village and should not be permitted. It is an overdevelopment which would be detrimental to the main dwelling and surrounding properties.

Ref No 20170692 - Whitecroft Sole Street Cobham Gravesend Kent DA13 0XZ

Erection of single storey rear and side extensions to form a garage and orangery.
CPC has no objection to the proposal but feel that it does dominate the original dwelling.

Ref No 20170738 - Parsonage Farm The Street Cobham Gravesend Kent DA12 3DG

Conversion of existing building into a three bedroom dwelling and erection of a single storey rear extension with associated parking and amenity space.
CPC has no objection the proposal but query whether there are any agricultural ties or restrictions to dwellings attached to the Parsonage Farm.

Ref: 20170561 - Cobham Service Station, South, Watling Street.

CPC echoes the concerns of Les Seaborn the Highway Development Management officer at GBC:
1 disabled parking space is not sufficient and no provision has been made for where a lorry delivering to the shop itself parks and a better plan needs to be put in place.
Otherwise, there are no objections.

Former Varnish Factory, Sole Street - LPA ref: 17/00130/EN

In relation to the former varnish factory site, the owner has instructed a planning agent to represent him. I am presently waiting for his formal response. We have also visited White Post Lane and taken photos. We are today re-posting copies of the Injunction obtained in 2009 to act as a deterrent. Unfortunately, at this stage we cannot do anything further.

Results of Applications Pending

Ref No 20170467 - Dalginross Cottage Jeskyns Road Cobham Gravesend Kent

Demolition of existing garage and erection of a two bedroom dwelling and creation of a parking layby.

CPC objects to this proposal as we feel it constitutes a new dwelling being created in the MGB which would not normally be permitted and we are not aware of any Special Circumstances. The subsequent division of this plot is also detrimental to the original dwelling Dalginross which then sits on a reduced plot, and will no doubt lead to further applications for additional garage/storage in future. The access and parking proposals are inadequate for such a dangerous point on this road which is frequently used by locals wishing to access the A2/A227 via backroads. An increase in traffic may well be more likely once the proposed "Option C" works commence. The proposed "layby" is also detrimental to the rural character of this former hamlet of Dabbs Place.

GBC Pending consideration. 23 Aug 2017 revised parking plans were submitted – CPC need to consider; no comments have yet been sought by GBC

Ref No 20170586 - 1 Smallholdings Round Street Cobham Gravesend Kent DA13 9AY

Erection of two storey rear extension with front porch and first floor Juliet balcony to the east elevation, provision of vehicular access to Round Street including a change of use of a small area of agricultural land and demolition of existing greenhouse to construct a car port.

CPC has no objection to this proposal.

GBC Permitted.

Ref No: 20170472 - The Dairy, Cobham Hall, Brewers Road, Cobham DA12

Restoration of 18th-Century folly to provide holiday-let accommodation. Works include, minor repairs to stabilise the structure; Reinstatement of missing fabric, including stone floor finishes, plastered internal walls and flat and vaulted plaster ceilings; Reinstatement of slate cladding to original details; Infilling of the south cloister archways in order to provide kitchen and sanitary facilities; Upgrades to the thermal performance of the building with new insulation below the floor and above the ceilings; and, Introduction of services (to provide power, water, and foul drainage)

CPC has no objections to this application.

Ref No: 20170473 - The Dairy, Cobham Hall, Brewers Road, Cobham DA12

Application for Listed Building Consent for the restoration of 18th-Century folly to provide holiday-let accommodation. Works include, minor repairs to stabilise the structure; Reinstatement of missing fabric, including stone floor finishes, plastered internal walls and flat and vaulted plaster ceilings; Reinstatement of slate cladding to original details; Infilling of the south cloister archways in order to provide kitchen and sanitary facilities; Upgrades to the thermal performance of the building with new insulation below the floor and above the ceilings; and, Introduction of services (to provide power, water, and foul drainage)

CPC has no objections to this application.

Ref No 20170138 - 3 Chapelwood Place, DA13 9AG

Erection of single storey rear extension to form enlarged kitchen/dining room and erection of first floor front extension to form bedroom and bathroom.

CPC has no objections.

GBC Still Pending decision.

Ref No 20160967 - The Oaks, Sallows Shaw DA13 9BP

REVISED PLANS - Application for minor material amendment to planning permission reference number 20150636 for the conversion and extension of existing garage into a one bedroom annex and construction of a swimming pool; to allow the demolition of the existing garage and its re-building.

CPC has no objection to this amended application but note that the proximity of the proposed extension to the boundary remains.

GBC Still Pending Consideration

Ref No 20160774 – Revised Application, Knights Place Farm Watling Street, ME2 3UB

Retention of two storey building used as car port and store at ground floor with residential annexe above; conversion of ground floor to form part of residential annexe.

In light of the amendments CPC vigorously object to the revised planning application. Notwithstanding the intention to legally tie this outbuilding to the main building, Cobham PC objected to the original application and can find no reason why the amendments change our objections.

This Listed property sits in MGB and an area of AONB; this must surely be viewed as encroachment and flouting of the conditions imposed for its protection, and harmful in all respects.

GBC Still Pending Consideration

Ref No 20170123 - Knightsplace Equestrian Centre Ltd, Pond Cottage Stables Knights Place Farm, Watling St Cobham

Retention of mobile classroom for use in association with the equine teaching facility at Knights Place Equestrian Centre.

CPC do not object to the retention of the mobile classroom and would support a restriction on the continued use of this facility to prevent overnight accommodation. The temporary nature of the mobile classroom does not give rise to a need for a permanent structure, and as an educational facility cannot be converted into a dwelling of any sort.

GBC Refused - extract from decision notice below

1. The existing mobile unit building is inappropriate and harmful to the openness of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and any very special circumstances are insufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The development is therefore contrary to policy CS02, CS07, CS12 and CS13 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, and section 9 (Protecting Green Belt Land) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. The development would if permitted result in the encroachment and intrusion of a new build in the open countryside, as defined as ANOB for which in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority no justification has been demonstrated in compliance 80 of NPPF and 4.1.27 of National Planning Policy Framework and policy, CS12 and CS13 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy.

Ref No 20170034 - The Murrells 29-31 The Street

CPC has no objection to the application for listed building consent for internal alterations to the layout of the new stud walls, care of original timber posts, studs and sole plate, reinstallation of water, electricity and heating service, repairs to the fireplace and damp prevention. **GBC Permitted.**

Footpaths committee - nothing to report.

Transport Committee –Cllr Booth fed-back on meeting he attended On Friday 8 September –

'I attended a meeting at Gravesend Civic Centre on Friday afternoon 8th September chaired by Bob Lane - Lower Thames Action. It was a similar meeting as the one that CPC had with Highways England (HE) a few weeks ago but with less detail emerging. I felt the HE team were reluctant to give anything away for fear that it might be misconstrued and they might be miss-quoted on social media - which might then prejudice their ongoing work. A lot of time was spent discussing traffic modelling and HE justifying the importance and accuracy of the information in getting the design right.

The HE representative did say that they are prepared to share the traffic data that they are collecting. As part of HE being granted the Development Consent Order all the investigation mitigation, and the impact of traffic changes has to have been agreed. They say they are looking for constructive criticism and suggestions to improve on their current ideas for the design and are prepared to listen before they come back with more detailed proposals early in the New Year. On that basis, I suggested that they might like to come to another meeting with CPC sooner rather than late.

HE are imminently starting environmental surveys and collection of data on Air Quality, Soil Sampling, Noise, Wildlife, Fauna & Flora.

There were approx. 20 people at the meeting including four people from HE.'

Clerk to obtain a list of attendees and a copy of the minutes. Clerk to also contact HE for another meeting in the parish.

Meadow room report – The Movie on the Meadow was, once again, a great success with many pirates enjoying their picnics! The Chairman of the Meadow Rooms will be holding a meeting on the 20th September to hear back from the Meadow Room users.

The youth club cttee thanked the Chairman for inviting them to the meeting at the meadow room where they were encouraged to start fundraising- The Grand is a community Service/Youth Workers they are getting involved to help with fundraising ideas. There have been some newcomers join the youth club and membership currently stands at around 30, ages 11 to 14. Once their fundraising is underway there may be grants that they are able to apply for. Cllr Samir Jassal had been expected to attend this meeting to discuss Councillor Meade and funding.

Playing Field Committee – A successful fete was well attended and took approx. £13 thousand 7 thousand of which is profit which will be going to the Sports association. The Church benefitted too as it was a very warm day and people took shelter in the Church from the heat!

Cllr Haig mentioned that the playground has some sycamores coming through and enquired about the grass cutting? It was also mentioned that some more of the safety matting on the playground needs repairing. The Council will need to look at next year's precept budget for youth Club and playground

GBC matters - Councillor Samir Jassal was not in attendance and a report was not submitted. An election due to take place shortly for a new Councillor for Meopham.

KCC matters – Councillor Bryan Sweetland had sent his apologies, no report submitted.

KALC -meeting on 30 Sept –Main concerns to be raised are around Broad band speed, neighbourhood planning and toilets.

7. Matters raised by Parish Councillors

- i. Cllr Arnott reported that local knotweed areas are being managed - the manager of the Ship public house is speaking with his contractors about their area of knotweed.
- ii. Cllr Gabbitas reported on a three-way accident at the gate at Owletts. People appear to not take any notice of the give way sign and white lines. The National Trust are going to put in some white bollards in front of the gates, this will protect the gates damage caused by cars entering the drive.
- iii. Cllr Booth had not heard anything further regarding the road signs GBC had promised-for Halfpence Lane and Scotland Lane clerk to follow up. The Post Box in Cobham needs some attention and a coat of paint
- iv. Cllr Haig mentioned that the School's hedge needs cutting. Cllr Dyer who is also a school governor will make arrangements.
- v. Cllr Haig also mentioned the potholes on the side road next to the school.
- vi. Some graffiti still needs to be cleared from the sign on Halfpence lane. Clerk to contact County highways.

AOB – nothing further raised

Finance

Cheques previously signed.

Gullands Solicitors	£1,812.00
Business Stream water rates	£70.44
Barge group-playground repairs	£426.00
Reimbursement to Clerk for Microsoft renewal	£59.99
Maintenance Man (Aug)	£150.00
Clerk Salary (Aug)	£213.47

Cheques presented at PC meeting 11/9/17

Renewal of Zurich insurance	£941.84
Maintenance Man (Sept)	£120.00
Clerk Salary (Sept)	£213.00
EDF Energy	£792.65
Total	£2,067.49

Cheque received - £695.76 (Sports club Electricity bill)

Finance agreed Proposed by Cllr Blackett/seconded by Cllr Booth

The Public meeting finished at 9.55pm

The Minutes agreed and signed

The next Meeting will be held in St Mary's Church Room on Monday 9th October 2017