

COBHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 5th February 2018

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

CLLR R DYMOND (CHAIRMAN)
CLLR S DYER (VICE CHAIRMAN)
CLLR M HAIG
CLLR J BLACKETT
CLLR MIKE BOOTH
CLLR SUE ARNOTT
CLLR BEN SMITH
CLLR GABBITAS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Bryan Sweetland, Kent County Council
Representatives of the Cobham, Sole St and Luddesdowne Youth Group (CSL) & a Youth worker from the Grand, Armet.
Community Warden, Paul Hassell
Mrs T Sampson (Clerk) and 16 parishioners.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and introduced our guests from the Youth Group

1. **Apologies** – An email from Cllr Jassal was received during the meeting which explained that he was attending a GBC Cabinet Meeting and sent his apologies.
2. **Minutes of the 15th January** were agreed after typos and corrections were highlighted
3. **Declarations of interests** – none raised.

The meeting was attended by members of the CSL Youth Club. A youth worker from the Grand (Gravesend Youth Organisation) explained their work and the members of the club explained about the activities. They presented beautiful collages which showed some of the activities undertaken by the club and thanked the Parish Councillors for the financial donation.

All fundraising events are planned by the members of the club; such as their Halloween party and Christmas party. They put in place a plan for the next three months. One of their next projects is the setting up of a panic room. During the Summer they will be doing cooking sessions and they are actively working to reduce their intake of sugary snacks and drinks. The group will be taking part in a massive show at the Woodville Halls in which young people from the Gravesham area will star.

A Parishioner asked if the panic room will be opened to everyone- the youth worker confirmed that it will be.

Another parishioner asked about the ages of the youngsters attending. The age group is 10-16year olds. Approx. 20 to 30 young people attend the group.

A parishioner asked what a panic rooms is. The youth worker explained that it is a locked room in which the young people follow clues to find the key to exit the room.

The chairman asked about life skills – the youth worker explained that the young people are taught about budgeting, peer mentoring, preparation for secondary schools, bullying etc. They are specifically looking at the issue of hate crime.

The young people can also talk to trained youth workers in confidence. Looking to the future, the youth club hope to be doing more community work – clearing up around the village Pump for example. The Chairman explained that it was a good idea, but the pump and the walls around it are a heritage site and the upkeep and maintenance is a matter for the Council and the team of professional cleaners/conservators.

4. Parishioner comments

The chairman explained that she would like to follow the agenda and asked parishioners to keep this in mind when raising a subject.

A parishioner mentioned the bollards which have been placed in The Street and wanted to know why there are so many of them at one end of the street. She referred to a phone call to the Council in which they said the Parish Council instigated the placing of the bollards, she was unhappy about the lack of protection for pedestrians, against cars mounting the pavement, particularly for those living near to the Church.

The parishioner believes that the bollards are in the wrong place and too many are in the same area of the street. She shared her concerns about the people being hit by wing mirrors and some people are facing danger as they exit their homes on to The Street. The Parishioner said that KCC should be pressured to do something for the safety of the school children. She had witnessed cars mounting the pavement.

Cllr Sweetland said that he wished the bollards had never been put in – as there have been complaints from half the village about them and the other half wanted them; it is impossible to please everyone. He also emphasised that it is unlikely that any more bollards would be fitted as there is no money, the County's budget had been cut by 59 million pounds. Contractors would not be happy to put more in.

Councillor Bryan Sweetland spoke about the other parishes he supports and explained that his £20,000 grant doesn't go very far. He also highlighted that 97% of accidents are caused by drivers not the roads. It is thought that mobile speed cameras are more effective. Cllr Sweetland will go back to his office and ask if the mobile camera vans/cars can come out to the area more.

The Chairman also explained that there wasn't enough width on the pavement in the area the parishioner raised for the bollards to be placed. The parishioner said that she would continue to raise the matter for as long as she lives in Cobham.

A resident of Manor Road raised the issue of increased dog fouling in Manor Road and asked if we could put up some signs. Another parishioner thinks she has some of the posters that were used in the past and will action their use in the village.

The resident also raised the matter of pavement parking in Manor Road which means pedestrians must walk in the road. The Community warden advised that residents should dial 101 to tell the police.

The warden will keep an eye on this and might be able to provide some stickers to put on the offending vehicles, but he does not have any power to act himself.

The matter of fly-tipping on Copthall Road was raised, clerk is to arrange for the items to be cleared.

5. Planning-to be discussed along with planning report later in meeting.

6. Litter Pick-The Chairman mentioned that the Parish Council was hoping to arrange a litter pick sometime during March. Further information will be given once an area and date have been agreed. This will be part of a larger Gravesham initiative.

In relation to fly-tipping it was stated that enforcement officers are in place and prosecutions are happening. Other Counties will be launching a campaign, around Easter time, about Fly-tipping. The Community warden stated how important it is to check the licence details of any company collecting rubbish or undertaking building work, so you can be sure they dispose of the rubbish in the correct manner. If you are found to have employed an unlicensed company, you could be the one prosecuted.

7a. Parish Council -The Chairman, once again, referred to the Parish Council still being short of one councillor; any interest please contact the Chairman or Clerk.

7b. Sole Street footway The Chairman referred to a meeting with KCC and the contractors to see how far they have got with the whole project. The Chairman said that it is likely that the footway will be on the Westside of the road and this will negate the need to use any land from resident's gardens.

7c. Traffic Management-The Clerk, Cllr Dyer, Cllr Haig and a parishioner met with the Maintenance Engineer from the Traffic & Network Solutions Team to consider how we might reduce the speed of traffic by the placing of Speed Indicating Devices (SIDs) – the outcomes were:

Sole Street near Scratton Fields - Good visibility in both directions, and safe amount of verge to install a post.

Sole Street near Round Street -

This is one of the locations which has garnered the most fervent reaction locally. From the short time on site, it was clear that vehicles appear to exceed the speed limit at this point and tend to manoeuvre themselves more centrally on the carriageway approaching Round Street to navigate the small bend in the road.

The Street near The Terrace Cobham

A post on the back of the footway at this location would again offer good visibility in both directions, with appropriate available width to remain on the footway.

We did not look at any locations within the 20mph zone as these are not appropriate for the SID scheme. There is already a lot of speed reduction measures through Cobham The Street and if vehicles continue to excessively exceed the speed limit then this requires enforcement, which KCC are unable to provide.

Regarding the fixed VAS near Sole Street station, it was suggested that it would not be appropriate for this sign to be moved. This type of equipment has a life expectancy of approximately 6 years and as I understand it, this sign was installed in 2005. As such, I would not want to disturb it and think it should stay in situ until it no longer works and can no longer be repaired. KCC has agreed to the three positions for the SIDs at a cost of £6,946.73 exc. VAT. Councillor Sweetland will kindly provide a contribution of £3000 towards the cost.

7d. Correspondence- The clerk referred to one piece of correspondence regarding metal detecting.

7e. Cllr Sweetland confirmed that the 311 buses will continue to run. He explained that an idea to reduce some bus routes were considered to save money, because KCC subsidise many of the buses but they are not always used enough to warrant the money being spent.

He admitted that communications could have been clearer and prevented confusion and concern. KCC are trying to encourage the use of Mini buses. KCC are currently spending over 6million pounds a year on subsidising the buses. Cllr Sweetland suggested that a KCC manager meet with Arriva to find out what the plans are and to also mention the time keeping.

7f. Community Warden- Paul Hassell introduced himself and explained that he will be using the same contact number as his predecessor (number on Parish Council website) he will be covering the same areas as the former warden. He will try and help where he can. Paul explained he can-not enforce parking. Paul left the meeting at this point.

8. Committee Reports

Planning

There were concerns shared regarding the White Post Lane and Norbond Site applications. It was mentioned that over 90 people had written to object to the Norbond site application.

Planning Ref;20171348 – Corner Cottage, Round Street- Demolish existing extensions and garage/workshop. Erection a part two storey and part single storey rear extension, erection of a double garage /workshop. Alterations to existing property. [CPC Objected](#)

Planning Ref;20171371 -Darnley Arms - Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the existing use of part of the northern field for car parking associated with the use of the public house and residents of the village of Cobham. [CPC had No Objections.](#)

Planning Ref;20171213 - Hanworth -AMENDED DESCRIPTION- The proposed erection of a two-storey side extension to existing garage/outbuilding, the construction of one dormer extension in the front roof slop of the existing garage/out building, and erection of a pedestrian entrance gate and wall fronting Sole Street. [CPC Objected](#)

Planning Ref:20180028 Littlebeck application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension and erection of a front porch on Littlebeck, White Post Lane, Cobham. [CPC had No objections](#)

Planning Ref:20171000 – White Post Farm Erection of 16 stables, hay and tractor shed, the formation of a Car Park, the widening of the access drive and formation of an internal hard surfaced circulation area and the associated grazing land as an equine centre for the rest and recuperation of racehorses.

Planning Ref :20171001 –White Post Farm Erection of a two-storey bedroom* dwelling for an equestrian manager in connection with the use of adjoining land as an equestrian business. [CPC Objected to both](#)

Planning Ref: 20171274 Norbond site request of a change of use to establish a vehicle depot for highway maintenance and traffic management works on the former Norbond Site, Sole Street, Cobham. [CPC Objected](#)

A parishioner wanted to know how they could find out about planning applications. The chairman said the onus is on parishioners to keep an eye on the planning portal, but we would consider putting notices on the boards.

Footpaths- The footpath sign in Cobham was repaired. Cllr Arnott will check the footpath that runs from White Post Lane to Sole Street. Overhanging vegetation had been cleared on part of the footpath opposite the Railway Tavern.

Transport - The Chairman referred to a letter she had received from Adam Holloway MP, the Chairman is grateful for his support regarding Sole Street Station and timetable changes.

There was a meeting with Highways England and the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) people in January; several points were raised including the possible extension of the portal, the possibility of the Thong Lane bridge being a Green bridge, the meeting also considered the access to the A2. Unfortunately, LTC were not willing to share their traffic survey. The LTC engineering officer cover the Dartford and Gravesham areas, so traffic flow and highway access can be aligned sensibly. A legacy for each of the Parishes was discussed and the Chairman reiterated that we want ours to be the footway along Sole Street

Meadow room report – Cllr Gabbitas referred to the Chairman’s meeting on 20 Jan where it was reported that the bank account is looking healthy with just under £60,000. The events coming up are: Munchies 5th May
AGM May- date is still to be confirmed
Movie on the Meadow 8th September.

Some decoration and renovations will be taking place and they are considering erecting a replacement notice board to include more tourist information near the disabled parking area.

Playing fields- A water leak at the end of last year has caused a large water bill which is currently being disputed. Cllr Dyer thanked a parishioner for the work done he had undertaken on the playground. In relation to the grass cutting, one reasonable quote has been received and the Clerk is to get one more from a local gardener.

GBC- Greenbelt planning – chairman’s meeting
The Chairman spoke about the meeting and explained that previously it was thought that 4,600 -6,000 housing units were required but now there is a target of 8,000.

Unfortunately, there are not enough brown field sites for all the units needed, so some of the units will need to be built on greenbelt. GBC are likely to go out for pieces of land and it is possible that there will be a complete review of the greenbelt to make a new greenbelt boundary.

Cllr Sweetland said that Sole Street is a two-tier site and there have been rumours about Meopham and Sole Street being joined. It is possible that 100 houses will be built in each village. The Gov't may overpower GBC in relation to the plan, some expired planning sites may also be revisited.

A further GBC meeting will be taking place in February and then a consultation will be launched in March. It is VITAL that parishioners make their views known if they wish to shape the future of the Villages.

KCC – Councillor Sweetland fed back on the new Meopham Library, its official opening will be happening Tues 13 February.

KCC has been very pro-active with getting the gritter lorries out.

A tree that appeared to be leaning dangerously over Sole Street was cut down on the instruction of KCC.

Councillor Sweetland referred to a KCC Budget meeting which would be taking place in the next two weeks. It will be the 6th year in succession in which the budget has been cut. However, money is owed to KCC by the Home Office for the cost of caring for young unaccompanied refugees/migrants. There has been some dispersal of these youngsters around the country, but a lot are still left in Kent. Approx. 4million pound is needed to cover this.

KALC- the Chairman and the Clerk attended a GDPA/R (General Data Protection) course -the Clerk is to put in place a policy for the Parish Council to follow in relation to the Data Protection Act.

Matters raised by Parish Councillors

Councillor Smith mentioned that in Church Road verges are being used for parking by visitors to Jeskyns, this appears to be because they wish to avoid carpark charges. Cllr Smith will contact Jeskyns- to suggest they consider putting logs along the verges.

Cllr Booth referred to rubbish being dumped on Scotland Lane and metal and tyres that have been dumped on Jeskyns land. Clerk to contact the Forestry Commission.

Cllr Gabbitas raised concerns about Scripps Farm and the need to have the length-man cut and clear the pathway opposite Owletts. Last year the farmer kindly did it.

Cllr Booth also enquired whether the requested precept had been agreed by GBC. Clerk to check if approved.

Cllr Booth also mentioned that a house on Round Street has some excessively bright lights outside the property. Clerk to check with planning whether permission is needed for such lights as light pollution needs to be considered.

The Chairman explained that we had now taken over responsibility of the Public toilets and is considering organising some publicity for an official handover. Cllr Dyer explained that John and Michelle Jackson have volunteered to open and close the toilets and keep them clean.

The Chairman referred to the Bonham Hayes trust/charity fund. An award of £130-150 is given to the needy, traditionally the local widows and poor in Cobham. The Chairman would like Cobham parishioners to contact the Clerk if they are aware of anyone truly in need, with an explanation of the circumstances. The Parish Council would like to nominate worthy recipients.

AOB

The Chairman spoke about the commemoration of the end of WW1, 'Battle's over' Ideas are wanted for how we should mark the occasion – a Quarter Peal?

FINANCE

Cheques presented at PC meeting 5 February 2018

Non-Domestic Rate Bill for toilets	£169.99
Clerk's Pay	£213.00
Maintenance Man	£120.00
Total	£502.99

Agreement of the finance report was sought. Acceptance proposed by Cllr Haig-seconded by Cllr Dyer.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed-----

The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on the 5th March in the National Trust Barn, end of Lodge Lane

The Annual Parish Assembly will be held in the Meadow Rooms on the 9th of April starting at 7.30pm.