**COBHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 2014/15 (NO 8)**

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in The Meadow Rooms, Cobham

on Monday 9th February 2015 at 7.30 pm

**PRESENT**

**COUNCILLORS:** CLLR A ROWE (CHAIR)
CLLR R DYMOND
CLLR M HAIG
CLLR K SMITH
CLLR B GLENISTER
CLLR S DYER
CLLR J GILES

**IN ATTENDANCE:** MRS K LANE (CLERK)
CLLR A MOORE (GBC)
CLLR B SWEETLAND (KCC)

 15 + Parishioners

**Cllr Alan Rowe opened the meeting at 7.**30pm.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Ellis, Cllr N Haig and Laurence Worton, Kent Messenger Correspondent for Sole Street.
2. **Minutes: to confirm and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 5th January 2015.** All agreed and signedby the Chairman Cllr Alan Rowe.
3. **Declaration of Interest:** None
4. **Parishioners Comments**

Harry Seaford began by thanking the Chairman, Cllr A Rowe and Cllr B Glenister for all their assistance when a tree fell on his property last year. He also mentioned the issues he is having now with the road between Battle Street and Meadow Rooms with constant and increased vibration caused by vehicles. He has reported the matter to KCC Highways.

Cllr Rowe assured him that the Parish Council would continue to offer support once the matter has been properly looked into.

Another parishioner asked about alternating between meetings in the Meadow Rooms and Sole Street and whether there was a particular pattern. Cllr Rowe explained that the Meadow Rooms had been home to the Parish Council since 1896 but the Council do also meet at Sole Street from time-to-time. He explained that venues would be discussed further later in the meeting.

Another parishioner mentioned the spot just past Gold Street where cars park, probably commuters. It was noted that there are no parking restrictions there. General feeling was that tree trunks or similar would stop people parking. It was a useful passing point. Cllr Rowe said he would look into it.

One Parishioner asked about the blue awning that is still up in place of a wall at Rookery Corner. Cllr Rowe explained that this had been looked into and that GBC planning department had confirmed that the new wall was due to be built in August 2015.

The Rural Housing Needs Survey was raised next and the Council were asked what happened last time one of these surveys was conducted. Cllr Rowe and Cllr Glenister explained that following the survey GBC decided that seven new properties were needed in Cobham/Sole Street and as a result the flats were built in Yeomans Court. Only two ended up being rented to people within the village and they struggled to find tenants for the rest.

Cllr Glenister suggested that the Parish Council write to Sharon McDonald at GBC and explain that the survey is unnecessary in our Parish as there are no suitable sites even if it was decided that extra housing was needed. Cllr Rowe agreed that a letter would be sent. ***Clerk to action.***

Mrs G Grimes said that she had noticed a large gravelled area by the wooden gate on Halfpence Lane. It looked like a new driveway. Cllr Rowe said it only appeared a few days previously and he would look into it and report to GBC if necessary.

Another Parishioner mentioned litter around the Parish. Station approach is a particularly untidy area. ***Clerk to write to Southeastern.***

Cllr Moore said he would ask for the litter bin on the corner to be fixed – it has been wrenched from the ground and is sitting on the pavement. He will also ask for the old bin by Scratton Fields to be removed.

Cllr Glenister thanked resident Peter Brierley for picking up litter in Sole Street.

Peter also mentioned the hedges in Whitepost Lane/Copthall Rd and the brambles that needed cutting, and also the overgrown hedges by Broadfield that forces walkers into the road***. Clerk to report to Meopham Parish Council and ask GBC to cut back the part in our patch.***

1. **Speedwatch**

Cllr Rowe then welcomed Gay Grimes and Patricia Greenstreet from the Cobham Speedwatch Group, as well as the Community wardens Steve Gray and Mandy Cason.

Gay Grimes and Patricia Greenstreet then proceeded to give their presentation (please see separate attachment)

At the end of the presentation Gay read a report that she had just received from Kent Police which stated that “*In 2014 you reported 254 observations of speeding vehicles. These generated six letters for second detection and one for third detection of ‘mid-range’ speeding and 20 for ‘high-end’ (50+%) speeding. At 7.9% of all observations, this was the sixth equal highest proportion of ‘high-end’ offending reported in the whole of Kent in 2014.”*

Mrs Grimes also thanked the Headteacher of Cobham Primary School for her continued support, the ladies who delivered the petition around the Parish and all those involved in the Speedwatch.

Cllr Rowe thanked Mrs Grimes and Mrs Greenstreet for their informative presentation and hard work, and invited others to comment/ask questions.

Cllr Sweetland said that he would present the petition to the Chairman of the County Council at the County Council meeting that Thursday.

Cllr M Haig said she agreed with comments made during the presentation. She said that the same issues were discussed 40 years ago when her own family were young. She felt that ancient houses are being damaged by the heavy traffic through the village, and she said she would do whatever she could to support the cause.

Cllr Rowe and Cllr Glenister both said that the Parish Council would do all it could to support the cause too. Cllr Glenister also suggested that the Parish Council write to the Super Intendant to ask why none of their officers attended the meeting, despite being invited. ***Clerk to write letter.***

A discussion then ensued regarding the suggestions put forward to solve some of the issues.

It was agreed that larger 20mph signs were needed through the village and that faded signs should be replaced. Bollards were also discussed and it was explained that KCC Highways had previously refused bollards along the narrow footpaths on The Street because of wheelchair and pushchair access. It was agreed however that this could be raised with KCC again.

Yellow lines were discussed and Cllr Rowe explained that the Parish Council had fought for a year to get yellow lines by the junction of Manor Rd/Sole Street.

Cllr Giles agreed that the chicanes are not well signposted. He also talked about the ‘Not Suitable for HGV signs’ and there was some discussion about where might be the best place for them to be situated. Owletts and at the roundabout coming onto Henhurst Road were mentioned. A sign at Green Lane, Meopham end would also be needed. Cllr Rowe said we should follow this up.

Mrs Greenstreet said that when she had reported issues to KCC Highways she was told that there had not been enough incidents to warrant a visit.

Cllr Glenister said the Parish Council should also look into ways of controlling parking in conservation areas without using yellow lines.

Cllr Dymond questioned whether there was a safer spot for children to cross the road. It was felt that where they currently cross on the chicane was marginally safer than any alternative.

Mr Holland said that the problems extend beyond Cobham and that cars whizz through Sole Street to get to Cobham.

One Parishioner made the point that the town could be ‘painted yellow’ but it won’t change peoples’ behaviour on its own. So many of the problems in the village are due to inconsiderate and dangerous driving.

Community warden, Steve Gray backed up the points made by Mrs Grimes and Mrs Greenstreet during their presentation. He mentioned one particular morning when he had witnessed four people mounting and driving along the pavement within a one hour period. Their registration numbers were passed on to the police. He also suggested that wooden bollards should not be used as these are used in Higham and are frequently wiped out by lorries. Metal bollards are less unforgiving if someone hits them. It was Mr Gray’s view that signage needs to be looked at throughout the village, and that even one more official sign would have an effect. He also talked about the presentation he was due to give on Safety at the Primary School. He said he would have to add to his presentation and make the point that children need to be careful even when on the pavement.

1. **KCC**

Cllr Sweetland thanked the Speedwatch team for their research. He said he would take the petition to the Full Council meeting later that week and present it to the Chairman of the County Council. He went on to explain that he had represented a number of rural areas for six years and that this situation was not unique – it happens everywhere.

Cllr Sweetland said that signage and lineage would be looked at by KCC Highways but it was not as simple as just putting down yellow lines as there has to be a traffic regulation order first and a process followed, including consultation with residents. He said it took one year to get yellow lines at Istead Rise He also mentioned that Sole Street had already been put back on the mobile speed camera route.

Cllr Sweetland also mentioned that he had attended a site visit with KCC Highways to discuss the Manor Road pavement and rounding off the edge. He is now paying for this to me done out of his budget.

Cllr Rowe once again thanked the Speedwatch Team for presenting.

[Since the meeting, it has been decided that the Parish Council will try to arrange a site visit with all interested parties and KCC Highways to discuss next steps]

1. **GBC**

Cllr Alex Moore said that he felt that speeding continues to be a problem everywhere. He also made the point that if residents want to improve safety without sacrificing the conservation area too much then suggestions need to be put forward.

He mentioned Scratton Fields parking area and said it should be finished later that week. Residents seemed happy. Cllr Glenister said those spaces should be restricted to resident parking. Cllr Moore thought they would be permit-only spaces.

Cllr Moore went on to talk about Gravesham Borough Council budgets. He said that council tax is likely to go up by 1.97% (anything above 2% would have to have a referendum). He said that since 2011 council tax would have gone up by about 10%. Council car park charges would not be increasing (but in 2012 they increased by 60%). He said there was not much news on the Thames Crossing – unlikely to make a decision before the election.

Cllr Moore said that The Ship Inn had just lodged a planning application, and that 400 homes were also planned for an area of land close to the Toby carvery.

Cllr Haig mentioned that the road is sinking opposite her house – caused by the heavy lorries. ***Report to KCC Highways.***

1. **Matters Arising from previous meeting**

**Parking issues:** Manor Road – Cllr Glenister reported that the yellow lines were painted in Manor Road on 29th Dec.

Cllr Rowe said it seems to have been a great success and working as it should be.

**Roads:** Manor Road re-surfacing – the road was only patched, not whole road re-surfaced as Cllr Glenister had originally thought.

**Footpaths:** 192 – Sole Street to Sallows Shaw. Section of low hedge blocking path. Cllr Dymond to speak to resident of Bramley Cottage.

**No HGV sign at Gold Street/Sole Street junction:** Signs to go up in village soon.

**General:** Black sacks have now been received, graffiti on BT bin still has not been removed. ***Clerk to follow-up again.***

**Elections** – signs up. New website to be launched soon.

1. **Ongoing items**

**Playing Fields**

Cllr Dyer said he had asked for a quote for the fence repair. The missing gate had been reported to Jon Jackson.

Cllr Haig said littering after football games at the weekend was still a problem. Cllr Dyer to speak to Jon Jackson about the problem.

**Footpaths**

Cllr Ellis and Cllr Dymond are due to walk the footpaths at the end of February.

**Transport**

Nothing to report

**Planning**

**GBC Decisions.**

20140446 Cranbourne Farm Copt Hall Road Cobham

"Amended Description.” Erection of indoor riding arena and relocation of the existing outdoor riding arena.

Having listened carefully to local residents who would be adversely affected by the proposed development Cobham Parish Council objects to the application for the following reasons.

**·**      The likelihood of increased heavy vehicle traffic on very narrow country roads.

·      The proposed building is very large and would seriously compromise the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

·      The proposed new position of the open exercise yard will create light and noise pollution close to residential properties.

**Permitted with conditions**

20141077 Cobham Service Station South, Watling Street Cobham

Display of six externally illuminated 'Wave' signs, two externally illuminated 'blade' signs, eight non-illuminated 'Koala' signs and 16 non-illuminated number signs on the forecourt. Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

**Consent to Advertisement granted.**

20141137 Copperfield Round Street Sole Street Cobham.

Erection of a two storey side extension to form open car port with two bedrooms and a wet room over. Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

**Refused.**

**CPC Comments.**

20141082 Whitepost Farm White Post Lane Sole Street Cobham

Use of the land for the stationing of a caravan for security purposes.

Cobham Parish Council reiterates the comment on the previous application and subsequent appeal following refusal.

It is noted that the site is in Meopham Parish but close to the Cobham Parish boundary and the built area of Sole Street village.

The Council is also aware that the site is within the area subject to a High Court Injunction forbidding the stationing of caravans and mobile homes

Cobham Parish Council is strongly opposed to the application for the caravan to remain on this site in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The field is adjacent to the site previously used as a camp site for caravans and mobile homes. The clearance of the illegal site took 5 years and cost the council tax payers of Gravesham a great deal of money. The grazing land remains in a seriously damaged state. If permitted to remain the precedent created will make it difficult to stop more caravans being placed on the site.

There have been stables and horses in the field for many years and security has apparently never previously been a concern.

The temporary permission granted on appeal to retain the caravan is due to expire this month. The Council urges the Borough Council to take appropriate enforcement action to remove the illegal development from the site.

20141162 20 Sallows Shaw Sole Street Cobham

Erection of a single storey side extension to form dining room; conversion and extension of integral garage to form bedroom and ensuite shower room; single storey rear extension to form enlarged kitchen and erection of detached garage at the rear. Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

20141209 Oak Tree Cottage Knights Place Farm Watling Street Cobham Gravesend Rochester Kent ME2 3UB

Application for the variation of conditions 3 and 5 attached to planning permission reference number 20060917 for the erection of a detached triple garage and garden store with bedsit, bathroom and lobby in the roof space, in substitution of that part previously permitted under planning permission reference number 20060591; to allow conversion of two of the garages to residential use and alterations. Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

Application 20141108 Cobham Hall Cobham Kent.

Erection of a building to provide boiler room and fuel silo and installation of a biomass boiler heating system, with removal of oil boilers and related controls in the main house to be replaced with heat exchangers and associated updated pipework.

Application 20141109 Cobham Hall Cobham Kent.

Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of a biomass boiler heating system with purpose built plant room, associated 900mm deep trench to main house, with removal of oil boilers and related controls in the main house to be replaced with heat exchangers and associated updated pipework. Cobham Parish Council has no objection to these two applications provided adequate vegetation screening is maintained to prevent visibility of the building across the park.

Cllr Rowe said he was disappointed with the Cranbourne Farm decision. Cllr Glenister did however say that the conditions put in place were considerable.

Cllr Rowe reported that he and Cllr Dymond had been to London to meet Brandon Lewis, Minister of State for Housing and Planning. One of the things discussed was the benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan. A grant of up to £14000 could be applied for to prepare a plan. Cllr Glenister said he had looked into this in detail before and he had previously felt that the Parish Council could rely on the Borough Council to safeguard the village but his view was now changing. We could work with another Parish Council to draw up a joint plan and share costs. Cllr Rowe explained that having a neighbourhood plan would give us a greater say in planning matters and it carries the same weight as Borough Council’s local plan.

Cllr Glenister said we subscribe to a Planning newsletter and could ask for advice on the best way forward.

Cllr Rowe said it would ultimately be up to the new Council to decide on a way forward.

**Meadow Rooms**

Cllr Rowe explained that the Meadow Rooms had asked for a grant of £1500 donation towards the Munchies on the Meadow event. They are looking for a main sponsor. Cllr Rowe had turned down the request.

Cllr Rowe went on to explain that the Parish Council had also received an email from Mike Shipway on behalf of the Meadow Rooms Committee asking the Parish Council to clarify a point in the November meeting minutes. The minutes read *“Cllr Dymond reported that a Committee meeting was scheduled for that week. Some felt that what was being asked of local organisations was too demanding.”* We were asked to clarify whether the ‘some’ referred to Parish Councillors or parishioners. We can confirm that the comments were not made by the Parish Councillors or any parishioners present at the meeting, but the ‘some’referred to were the views of some other organisations.

The email went on to ask the Parish Council to consider applying for a Neighbourhood Forum grant, requested and applied for by CPC, to the benefit of the Meadow Room. This was discussed but the Councillors felt that grants should continue to be applied for by the individual organisations, although the Parish Council would of course support the Meadow Rooms in their application. Cllr Rowe went on to say that the Meadow Rooms Committee would of course be invited to present at the Annual Parish Assembly on 13th April.

Cllr Rowe reported that a further email had been received from the Meadow Rooms Committee asking the Parish Council to move their meeting day to a Wednesday to allow for the Meadow Rooms to accept a long-term regular booking that was important financially to the Meadow Rooms. This was discussed and it was decided that the Parish Council would move the March and 27th April meeting to Sole Street but that the 13th April Annual Assembly would have to remain at the Meadow Rooms. The 18th May AGM would be held in St Mary’s Church Room, Sole Street too.

Going forward we will book a few Wednesday dates and then it will be up to the new Council to make a decision on dates etc.

**Neighbourhood Forum**

Nothing to report.

**Jeskyns**

Jeskyns will start charging for parking from 2nd March. It will cost £1.50 per day or £30 for an annual pass.

**KALC**

Nothing to report.

1. **Correspondence**

The Parish Council had received a request from a resident in Sole Street to clarify a point made at the November meeting. The email read:

*“I’ve just read the minutes of the parish council meeting and it states that the residents who formerly had access to leased spaces in the railway station car park had said they were not prepared to pay.*

*I am one of those residents and one of the few remaining who was resident at the time.*

*The questionnaire asked us how much we would like to pay, which is not the same as asking how much we were prepared to pay. There is a big difference between what I’d like to pay and what I’m prepared to pay for a parking space.*

*Additionally, the questionnaire gave no indication of how much it would cost to retain a parking space, making it an unreasonable question.*

*I would like the minutes amended to reflect this. I am offended by the statement that I was not prepared to pay when I was never asked that question. Please confirm this has been addressed.”*

Cllr Rowe had tried to make contact with the resident to explain that the whole situation was managed by GBC not the Parish Council. He said he would try to contact her again.

The Parish Council had received another request to ask for the mobile police station to be moved from Jeskyns car park to somewhere in Cobham or Sole Street. It was explained that the police had previously said they didn’t see anyone when they used to hold them at the Meadow Rooms but it was agreed that we would ask again. Perhaps we could request that they visit the village every 2-3 months.

1. **Matters raised by Parish Councillors**

Cllr Glenister asked that we once again ask the police to confirm whether they enforce 20mph speed limits in the same way as 30mph limits. ***Clerk to action***

Cllr Haig reported that rubbish had been dumped in Lodge Lane. ***Clerk to report.***

1. **Finance**

On the proposal of Cllr Dyer, seconded by Cllr Glensiter, the following cheques were signed and

**09/02/15 Clerk’s salary (Feb) £250.00**

**09/02/15 M Lisney Maintenance salary (Feb) £104.00**

**Total £354.00**

**As there was no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.05pm.**

Chairman.........................................................................................................................

**The next meeting is on Monday 9th March at 7.30pm in St Mary’s Church Room, Sole Street.**